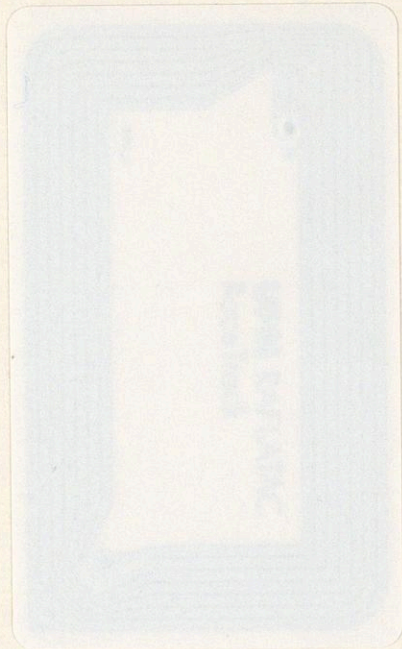




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Editorial

Jamie Grant

Writing this introductory editorial is a somewhat strange experience inasmuch as it is only my second editorial for *EuroJTh* but it will also be my last. New and increased responsibilities in my work setting mean that I have to give up some external commitments, and the editorship of *EuroJTh* is one such responsibility that I must forsake. I do so with some reluctance! I have been editor of *EuroJTh* for only one year (although I have also been a review editor for English book reviews for some six years now) but I am immensely encouraged regarding the condition of evangelical, academic theology in Europe. I firmly believe that both *EuroJTh* and its parent body, the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians, are well-placed to continue to grow and develop in the years to come. Increasing membership in Central and Eastern Europe and well as the growth of evangelical scholarship in some of the countries of Southern Europe are combining with the more traditional sources of evangelical scholarship in Northern Europe to create an exciting, international intellectual community of faith. It is my hope and prayer that this continent-wide, creative interaction will continue to grow all the more in the years to come.

I am comforted by the fact that I leave *EuroJTh* in

good hands. Dr Pieter Lalleman – Academic Dean and Lecturer in New Testament at Spurgeon's College, London – will take over the reigns of *EuroJTh* from the next issue (18:2). Pieter is ideally suited to the task. He is from the Netherlands, yet working in England and is comfortable with the European languages that form the backbone of *EuroJTh*. What is more, Pieter's wife, Hetty, has had a long association both with FEET and the journal and will be more than able to provide Pieter with the support that he needs as he finds his feet as editor of *EuroJTh*! Pieter has also written several reviews for *EuroJTh* and they have always been marked by careful scholarship and a warm spirit. So we have every reason to hope that *EuroJTh* will continue to go from strength to strength.

In closing, I commend this issue of the journal to you. As usual, we have an eclectic group of essays looking at themes as varied as Genesis, science and hermeneutics; the church practices of the Covenanters in Scotland and the *Völkstestament* of 1930s Germany. I am sure that readers will find much of interest both in the articles and the reviews in this issue of *EuroJTh*. It has been a privilege to be involved in the journal and I look forward to seeing it continue to flourish.

Latest news:

Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians

Next conference:

Woltersdorf (Berlin) 20-24 August 2010

Theme: *Evangelical Theological Interpretation within Contemporary European Culture(s)*

Papers expected on

1. *Evangelicalism and the Challenge of European Cultural Change*
2. *Word, Words and Worship: Revelation, Truth, Authority and Worship in Postmodern and Pluralistic Europe*
3. *The Old Testament: Just a Story?*
4. *Unity, Diversity, Canonical Openness and the New Testament*
5. *The Changing Face of Ethics: An Evangelical Theological Framework*
6. *Reaching Europe: Evangelical Challenges in Contemporary Missiology*

Do mark these dates in your diaries!

NEW FROM PATERNOSTER

Debating Darwin

Two Debates: Is Darwinism True and Does it Matter?

Graeme Finlay, Stephen Lloyd, Stephen Pattemore and David Swift

2009 is the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species* and Christians continue to disagree about whether Darwinism should be baptised into our theology or rejected as anti-Christian. This book is aimed at Christians on both sides of the debate and hopes to further discussion by giving space for an open airing of the case both ways. Two distinct questions are under the microscope:

- Is Darwinism compatible with orthodox Christian faith?
- Does the scientific evidence support Darwinism?

Stephen Lloyd opens the first debate by making a theological and biblical case against Darwinism. He is met 'in battle' by Graeme Finlay and Stephen Pattemore who argue that Christian Scripture and theology are compatible with Darwinism.

In the second debate David Swift argues that whilst the science does support microevolution by natural selection it does not support macro-evolution. In fact, he says, the science *undermines* neo-Darwinian claims.

'Not so!' says Graeme Finlay, who argues that the latest work in genetics demonstrates the truth of neo-Darwinism beyond reasonable doubt. This book will not tell readers what to think but it will inform the more intelligent debate.

Graeme Finlay lectures in the department of Molecular Medicine and Pathology at the University of Auckland; **Stephen Lloyd** is pastor of Hope Baptist Church in Gravesend, UK; **Stephen Pattemore** works for the United Bible Society in New Zealand; **David Swift** lectures on environmental issues and works for the Christian Medical Fellowship in Scotland.

978-1-84227-619-8 / 216 x 140mm / 144pp / £8.99

Think God, Think Science

Conversation on Life, the Universe and Faith

Michael Pfunder in discussion with Ernest Lucas

Has science killed God? How, if at all, are we to 'think God' in the scientific twenty-first century? That question is at the heart of this introductory yet intelligent book in which Michael Pfunder talks to biblical scholar and biochemist, Ernest Lucas. The conversation engages three broad areas

- *The Sky*: as our scientific understanding of the universe – its vastness, its age, and its origins – has increased, have the stars stopped declaring the glory of God?
- *The Cell*: What place is there for a good creator amidst the random genetic mutations and brutal processes of neo-Darwinian evolution? How can mere 'naked apes' think of themselves as being made in the image of God? Did Genesis get it wrong?
- *The Faith*: Has the recent work of historians and archaeologists undermined traditional Christian belief in the historical reliability of the gospels and in Jesus' resurrection?

Ernest Lucas argues that modern science is fully compatible with Christian theology and Scripture.

'This is a wonderfully inspiring book. Think God, Think Science an immensely valuable – and readable – contribution to the field.'

John Bryant, Professor of Genetics at Exeter University

Ernest Lucas is Vice-Principal and Tutor in Biblical Studies, Bristol Baptist College, UK. **Michael Pfunder** is Bible & Church Development Officer, Bible Society, UK.

978-1-84227-609-9 / 216 x 140mm / 144pp / £8.99

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Interpreting Science and Scripture: Genesis 1-3

George R. Diepstra and Gregory J. Laughery
L'Abri, Switzerland

SUMMARY

The early chapters of Genesis continue to be the subject of important debates among theologians and scientists. Our aim in this paper is to briefly explore three inter-related issues that, taken together, can point us toward a general configuration that best represents Genesis 1-3 in the science and Scripture discussion. The key issues

considered are the contextual setting of the story of creation, its narrative beginnings as a creation story and its narrative trajectories. The concerted force of these investigations, aided by insights drawn from the work of Paul Ricoeur, will allow us to propose that Genesis 1-3 is a semantic innovation that has the attributes of a poetic historiography.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die ersten Kapitel des Buches Genesis sind weiterhin Gegenstand wichtiger Debatten von Theologen und Naturwissenschaftlern. Mit diesem Artikel beabsichtigen wir, kurz drei miteinander verbundene Themenkreise zu untersuchen. Zusammengefasst können uns diese Themenkreise auf eine allgemeine Struktur hinweisen, die Genesis 1-3 am besten in der Diskussion von Natur-

wissenschaft und Schrift repräsentiert. Die behandelten Schlüsselthemen sind: die kontextuelle Verortung der Schöpfungsgeschichte, ihre narrativen Anfänge als Schöpfungsgeschichte sowie ihre narrativen Verlaufslinien. Die konzentrierte Kraft dieser Untersuchungen, unterstützt von Einsichten aus dem Werk Paul Ricoeurs, erlaubt uns vorzuschlagen, dass Genesis 1-3 eine semantische Innovation ist, die die Merkmale einer poetischen Historiographie trägt.

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RÉSUMÉ

Les premiers chapitres de la Genèse continuent de faire l'objet de débats importants entre théologiens et scientifiques. Cet article aborde trois problèmes interdépendants qui, considérés ensemble, donnent une bonne idée des débats sur le rapport entre la science et l'Écriture occa-

sionnés par ces textes bibliques. Les auteurs examinent donc le contexte dans lequel le récit de la création a été rédigé, les débuts de ce récit et sa trajectoire narrative, en s'appuyant sur l'apport de l'œuvre de Paul Ricoeur. Ils en concluent que ces chapitres sont une innovation sémantique présentant les caractéristiques d'une historiographie poétique.

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Introduction

What is Life?

Resembles Life what once was held of Light,
Too ample in itself for human sight?
An absolute Self – an element ungrounded-
All, that we see, all colours of all shade
By encroach of darkness made?-

Is very life by consciousness unbounded?
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,
A war-embrace of wrestling Life and Death?¹

These words, penned in the nineteenth century by the famous poet and author Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poetically capture the human quest to understand and explain life. Reflecting on this passage raises a host of questions. What is life, how

do we perceive it, what does it mean, and what is the nature and character of the world around us? Prior to the nineteenth century there was widespread agreement in the West, particularly in Protestant Christian circles, that resolution to these questions could be achieved by combining insights from both science and Scripture in a unified field of knowledge. If such an integrated view on the level of method and reference was established, it would become the focal point on which the understanding of life depended. Consequently, science and the Christian faith were presumed to be on the same side, mutually compatible, and dealing with the discovery of truth through a uniform epistemology. Today, many scholars find this approach untenable and aim to keep the two portrayals of life entirely separate.

In our eyes, one of the key problems in the science and Scripture discussion is that it is frequently characterized by a rigid double polarization. This polarization is often expressed as either a complete *distinction* that barricades exchange between them, or a comprehensive synthesis that collapses them together to create a tight and seamless *relation*. The hallmark of these approaches, represented in a variety of forms, is that the complexity of non-resolution is avoided at all cost. One of the major drawbacks of such double polarizations is the diminishment of tension, which in our judgment should remain rooted in the vital configuration of the relation *and* distinction between these two informers.

We highlighted, in a previous article, our view that both science and Scripture are informers that contribute to the interpretation of life.² In their role as informers, we began to make a case for a more candid dialogue between the two. We maintained that as we live in and work with the natural world and the biblical text, it is crucial to acknowledge that world and text are informers and therefore hermeneutical factors that have to contend with each other's stories. This challenging formulation, we argued, shatters any notion of a reductionistic monologue that embraces one voice at the cost of the other, and suggests that a dynamic dialogical interaction is the way forward, allowing each informer to have a fecund role in a configuration of beginnings.

What are we to make of Scripture's contribution, in particular its Genesis 1-3 recounting, to the explanation and understanding of the world around us? Does science have a legitimate claim in conceiving itself to be an all encompassing story of

beginnings in the face of and opposed to the early chapters of Genesis? Discussions in theological and scientific circles concerning these issues often occur without a clear sense of the general trajectory and orchestration of Genesis 1-3. There are some who engage with these chapters in a highly literalistic manner, while others ignore them completely. Our wager is that neither of these polarizations is an adequate orientation if we wish to have a better picture of our world. Paying close attention to the beats and rhythms of the text is essential for raising an awareness of its unfolding meaning and for challenging both literalist and disregarder.

Traditionally, there has been a diversity of approaches to Genesis 1-3. Form, source, historical, redaction and narrative criticism identify themselves either by seeking ways behind the text, detecting its structure, being able to decode and delimit its parts and pieces, or working with the unity or whole of the text. The revelatory, literary, theological, and historical context of Genesis 1-3 clearly fits into the whole of the Genesis narrative, the Pentateuch, and the megastory of the Scriptures. Although this narrative network opens up a myriad of directions that could be explored, our interest is in the more specific concern of how Genesis 1-3 is still able to speak into our scientifically informed, technologically advanced culture. We contend that a stronger articulation of the overall character, function, and genre of these chapters will contribute to our assessment of how the text can inform our ability to comprehend the natural world today.

Our aim in this paper is to briefly explore three vital issues that, taken together, can point us toward a general configuration that best represents Genesis 1-3 in the science and Scripture discussion. These include the contextual setting of the story of creation, its narrative beginnings as a creation story; and finally, its narrative trajectories. Drawing from the concerted force of these investigations, we will then propose what we think is the most hermeneutically sound approach to the textual material. In conclusion, we will offer a provisional suggestion as to how Genesis 1-3 speaks as a valid and credible informer in our current context.

1) Interpretive Signals

Hermeneutical studies have emphasized the important role context should play in our interpretive strategies. In deciphering a text, what is being communicated and how it is being communicated

is strongly shaped by the intellectual and literary environment of a particular historical, cultural, and linguistic context. This implies that the originating context, within which a text was composed, will be a limiting factor in determining how far we can stretch the text to speak into our context. In other words, recognition of context can give off interpretive signals that direct our thinking about how to configure and appropriate the text.

The early chapters of Genesis were framed within the literary conventions and conceptual world of the ancient Near East. A glimpse into this world can be gained by examining the literature and artifacts of the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite cultures. Although there were cultural differences, we intend to minimize these and synthesize a general picture of what the encounter with the world was like in this environment.³

When it came to nature, Conrad Hyers notes, "For most peoples in the ancient world, all the various regions of nature were divine."⁴ Thus, natural phenomena were interpreted as and associated with the activities of an assortment of gods. Nature became endowed and saturated with the powers of deities. What was material, the sky or the sea for example, was personalized into the spiritual or ideal.⁵ This personalization and deification of the natural world often carried over into the animal kingdom. Animals could function as representatives or forms of various divine beings.⁶ The result of this blending of nature and religion is that explanations about how the natural world worked became embedded in a mythological dimension. Ancient Egyptians, for example, connected the alterations in the seasonal elevations of the sun and the ripening and rotting of crops with the power of heaven, the sky god.⁷ Since the encounter with nature was intensely personal, the observation of nature and its orderly rhythms was aligned with human life through religious ritual and ceremony. Not surprisingly, early astronomers were also priests since the observation of the heavens was primarily a religious exercise.⁸

It seems safe to conclude that in this ancient context, conceptual partitions between natural and divine causation would have been difficult to comprehend. Consequently, this ancient "cognitive environment"⁹ did not lend itself to either purely material explanations about the natural world or to the empirical exploration of that world. Thus, any correlation between our scientific understanding and this ancient understanding of the world must be viewed cautiously. The common experience and

description of the appearance of things should not be mistaken for an accurate statement as to their material properties and causes. The natural phenomena that these ancient people experienced were the same ones we experience, but how they were encountered and described was different in these ancient cultures.

Differences between the ancient context and ours can also be detected when we examine the ontological dimension. In the ancient Near East, something came into existence when it was separated out, named, and given a function.¹⁰ The act of separation was associated with the process of creation and the establishment of order. The use of the separation motif is evident in both the ancient creation myths and the biblical text. The issuance of a name to an entity also had special significance in the ancient Near East, particularly in light of the deification of nature. It signified the entity's very essence and assigned a function or destiny to it.¹¹ For example, fifty names are conferred on Marduk in the *Enuma Elish* to declare his destiny and role as head of the gods.¹² This ancient ontological perspective stands in stark contrast to our scientific discussions about existence, which are dominated by more materialistic descriptions that focus on the physical properties of the world.

Another feature that plays prominently in the mythology of the ancient Near East is that the gods had origins. Not only was the world polytheistic, but there were family relationships between the gods. Separation and/or procreation were common procedures for the birth of the gods. The origin and existence of diverse gods would then be connected to their operational roles in bringing about the natural phenomena in the world.¹³ Explanations were hence overlaid with this mythical ordering of the world.

Frequently, the state of affairs before the creation of the cosmos is depicted as one that is unordered and uniform in character. These precosmic conditions were represented by water and darkness, which continued to lurk in the background of the created world in the form of the sea, dark night sky, and desert.¹⁴ In this context, the creation of the cosmos involved bringing order and differentiation to the world out of this primordial state. In Mesopotamian mythology, the creation of the world included an element of conflict. The prime example of this can be found in the *Enuma Elish* where Marduk slays Tiamat and from her corpse the world is made. Tiamat's body is divided, again an act of separation, and boundaries are laid down

for the waters to establish order. Sometimes, the pending forces of disorder were personalized. In Ugaritic myth, the chaotic forces could be represented in the form of the mythical sea monster *Lothan* or *Leviathan*, a seven-headed serpent that had to be overcome by the creator god to establish order.¹⁵

In summary, the composite perspective of the world in the ancient Near East was highly personalized, deified, and rooted in mythical stories and symbols of beginnings. Natural phenomena were described as they appeared and were explained within this mythical framework. In a nutshell this is the cultural milieu that forms the backdrop for Genesis' alternative story of beginnings.

What disruptive effect did this alternative story have? If we focus at the outset solely on the first creation story in Genesis 1-2:4a, we can conclude that it deftly empties the natural world of meddling deities. In other words, it "clears the cosmic stage of its mythical scenes and polytheistic dramas, making way for different scenes and dramas, both monotheistic and naturalistic."¹⁶ There is no theogony in this recounting. The Hebrew God stands alone as the Creator, without a beginning, related to and distinct from His creation. The story pictures one Divine Being who establishes creative authority over the entire natural order.

Thus, the Genesis creation story conceptually reorganizes the entire known world so that the cosmos and all that is in it are placed in creaturely status. For example, why are the sun and moon referred to as the greater and lesser light, respectively? There were certainly names in the Hebrew language to apply to these entities. Since the sun and moon were important deities in the ancient Near Eastern setting, this non-naming of them in Genesis seems to be a strategic move to forcefully remove them as deities in the world. From a functional point of view, the sun and the moon are to serve human existence not vice versa, suggesting a contextual reversal of roles in Genesis. Even the formulation of reproducing after its kind emphasizes the natural flow and order of things. No living creatures are divine or will transform into deity. The cosmic order "is now defined as nature."¹⁷

This first strike creation story is polemical in nature in that it uses the thought forms and symbols common to the ancient Near East and fills them with radically new meaning. Common literary and conceptual conventions like separation, differentiation, precosmic conditions,¹⁸ and possibly allusions to chaos beasts¹⁹ are deployed in a well

orchestrated and structured assault on the deification of nature with the result that the true Creator is identified. For example, the first three days of creation consist of strong acts of separation setting the boundaries of the cosmos in place so that it can be filled with diverse occupants. The world offers no resistance to the authority of the true Creator. One might even infer that the separation motif was extended into the third chapter where the Creator exits the scene and is thereby separated from the act of disobedience. With this twist in the story line, the identity and character of the Creator, as well as humanity's relationship with Him, is further exposed. Many other examples of conceptual correspondence between the biblical text and its cultural setting can be found.²⁰

Nowhere is this correspondence more germane than when the subject of human origins is broached. Again, there are both parallels and differences between the biblical story of human origins and those from other contiguous cultures. Suffice it to say, however, the biblical description of human beginnings shares a degree of concordism with its cultural setting.²¹

It is important to note that there is no indication that the biblical text breaks with the cosmic geography of its time. The biblical reconfiguration of the world offered by the Genesis story of beginnings did not negate the prevailing notions of the structure of the world. There are ample Old Testament references that confirm the observation that the biblical authors deployed context-laden features of cosmic architecture in their understanding.²²

Furthermore, there is no sign that the story of beginnings in Genesis led to any immediate paradigm breaking-thoughts about the architecture of the cosmos. What is altered by the Genesis story is not new thinking about the structure and form of the natural world; but rather, the theological perspective of the world. The natural world, no matter what form it took, was structurally decoupled from its Creator and "naturalized" as a creation. Accordingly, humanity's role was freed from the false religious service to the deified components of the world.

The inevitable conclusion is that the delivery system of the biblical informer is packaged with the conceptual and literary features of its context. As we have seen, in many ways the early chapters of Genesis share a common understanding about the architectural features of the world that were widely held at the time; while in other ways, they offer a radically unique theological interpretation

that explains the origin and existence of the natural world in a revolutionary manner. Therefore, the configuration and interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis is strongly influenced by, yet not reduced to, its ancient Near East context.

2) Interpreting Beginnings

In the beginning there was God: then came humans, hermeneutics, narrative, and later, Genesis 1-3. As we have highlighted in the previous section, these chapters portray God as the unrivalled Creator who has authority over the world and humanity. The God of the Hebrews is declared to be the God of the story of beginnings. Early Genesis then is scripted from the ancient Hebrew perspective that God had revealed Himself in and acted through nature and nation to make Himself known.

Several notions of hermeneutics permeate the landscape of the science and theology discussion today.²³ Our position is that hermeneutics, at the outset of the revealing Genesis narrative, plays a key role as the biblical writer offers a reflective interpretation of the world and God. That is, interpretation is neither fault nor detriment, but has been present from the beginning of creation.²⁴ Being hermeneutical then is partially constitutive of what it means to be human, whether biblical author or contemporary “reader” of the text and/or world. The force of this ontological reality highlights our finitude and translates into the recognition that all, including both biblical interpreters and scientists, are “situated” interpreters that operate from within context-laden environments. This negates any pretense of naïve idealism or neutral realism.

Consequently, the lens through which we are configuring this paper is that of being hermeneutical realists. There are at least two points that emerge from this acknowledgment. First, as realists we believe that a world exists that can be known, and our knowledge of the world informs our interpretation of reality. Therefore, the world is far more than a mere projection or construction of our mind. Second, being hermeneutical means that we are always pre-involved interpreters of the world. Interpretation initially unfolds from inside a gender, place, time, culture, and so forth, not outside it. This interpretive reality encompasses who we are as knowers and needs to be plainly in view in contending with scientific, theological, or any other issues.

While in our contemporary context hermeneutics is deeply connected to human understanding, one

of its previous considerations and no doubt an equally valid concern today is the interpretation of texts, particularly biblical texts.²⁵ As we approach Genesis 1-3, it is important to recognize that, hermeneutically speaking, biblical texts have the capacity to inform and shape our understanding and explanation of God, ourselves and the world leading to new understanding.²⁶ More specifically, biblical stories reveal God and open up new ways of seeing, knowing, and being in the world, which is vital to the hermeneutical enterprise. This trajectory implies that we are not left alone to be our own referents, and that the epistemological horizon of the biblical text cannot be ignored when it comes to a proper consideration of hermeneutics.

Building on the previous paragraphs, we suggest that a detour through the Genesis 1-3 world will provide us with three significant vectors that are hermeneutically relevant. First, we have a text that still vies for a place in our general interpretation of the world. Second, the text informs and expands our ontological understanding as being is “called out” and spoken to from beyond the realms of self indulgence, entrapment, or containment. Third, there is an action-oriented, unfolding representation of the natural world presented in the text vector

Having clarified our hermeneutical stance, we now turn to focus more closely on Genesis 1-3. Genesis, as story, functions at a number of levels and our task is to listen to the text and its orchestration. How do we hear the text? First, Genesis 1-3 is *revelatory*. As noted in the previous section, the story gives readers a unique revelation referenced portrait of beginnings, related to but distinct from other ancient Near Eastern perspectives. This is not a present day story, yet the text maintains the capacity to speak from its own time into ours. Second, Genesis 1-3 is a *historical* text. The term historical is not to be understood as referring to a detailed and precise account of beginnings, but rather as a mega-recounting using bold and broad brush strokes, thereby leaving behind a substantial number of unresolved questions. Third, Genesis 1-3 is *literature*. Written as narrative, it is a literary act laced with drama and saturated with symbolic artistry that engages the imagination of the reader. And finally, Genesis 1-3 is a *theological* text. That is, it informs readers about God and the truth that Israel’s God created nature and humanity.

Thus, these early chapters of Genesis combine the revelatory, historical, literary, and theological levels of orchestration into an interwoven organic

whole that creates a polyphonic recounting of beginnings. To take the musical analogy further, listening to Genesis 1-3 is like hearing a symphony perform wherein a number of different instruments, rhythms, and notes coalesce to produce an emerging sound offered to interpretation.

While there may be general agreement as to what parts make up the total orchestration of the text as traced out in the previous paragraphs, debates and polarizations often flare up over which part best defines these chapters. This leads to a tendency to interpret Genesis 1-3 solely and conclusively in terms of its revelatory, historical, literary, or theological dimension, and thereby loses the overall polyphonic discourse of the text. Returning to our musical analogy, this is like listening to a solo instrument playing when the score calls for the concerted action of the whole orchestra. To finally single out one part of the score at the exclusion of others results in a divide and conquer type of hermeneutical strategy that has more in common with a modernist critical paradigm than it does with the configuration of an ancient text.²⁷

Attentive to this ancient backdrop for Genesis 1-3 and in full view of the symphonic orchestration of the text that consists of revelatory, literary, theological, and historical rhythms, we readily acknowledge that there is a *provisional* place for drawing out and listening to each rhythmic part of the text. However, each part must eventually be reinserted into a tensional web of the interactive whole where it contributes to the overall function and configuration of Genesis 1-3, and where each part's meaning and purpose is more fully discovered. With this caveat in mind, we intend to momentarily break the historical part out for closer inspection since it has been a source of considerable controversy.²⁸ Furthermore, by identifying the kind of historical rhythms that play through the text, we will be in a better position to determine what general configuration best suits Genesis 1-3. But again, these historical rhythms must ultimately re-connect into the harmonics of the whole textual orchestration in a compatible way. Later, we will pursue the task of re-connection, but for now, what does it mean to call Genesis 1-3 historical?

Discussions concerning the truth value of history have had a long tradition and more recently postmodern ideas have broken onto the scene, creating and arguing for new ways of viewing history and historiography.²⁹ Disagreements flourish on this issue: however, we shall not respond here to the wide diversity of views represented.³⁰ Rather,

we wish to briefly address an important, though frequently neglected question which arises on this register and applies to all disciplines, especially biblical interpretation:³¹ What is history? An answer may appear obvious, until someone asks us to clarify and elucidate.

Elaboration of the historical rhythm of the text can be aided by considering the relation and distinction between history and historiography. The word history, from our perspective, has the capacity to refer to actual past events in time, while historiography is defined as the complex matter of interpreting and recounting a selection of these events thematically and configuring them into a written narrative.³² Consequently, event and textual representation of the past never have a one to one correspondence, yet this does not undermine the capacity of historiography to have historical credibility. Based on these distinctions, the wide-ranging genre of Genesis 1-3 can be identified as historiography. But, if the first three chapters of Genesis carry a historical rhythm, how should we configure this part of the text in a manner that keeps it tuned into its context, yet does not reduce it to merely its context?

Paul Ricoeur has given us an interesting perspective that may contribute to this controversial aporia.³³ According to Ricoeur, the philosophy of history has moved away from the grand schemes of Hegel or Marx and their notions of universal history to more modest aims of reflecting on the work and critical engagement of the historian. One of the advantages of this trajectory is that the historian is understood to be situated in, as opposed to being viewed as located outside the work of writing history.

Ricoeur maintains that there are three types of historiography, or written interpretive accounts of events in time, and each have a link to the other. In order to illustrate the point, we shall use the metaphor of a battle to distinguish different kinds of historical writing. First, the documentary type of historiography seeks to establish what battle was fought and won, by whom and when. Second, the explicative type aims to recount the results of the battle from a social, political, or economic angle. And third, the poetic type takes the reality of the past, interprets why the battle was won, and then shapes it into a narrative through which a community of readers understands itself in the present. One of the outstanding values of Ricoeur's taxonomy is that it alerts us to the possibility that there are several legitimate ways of writing history, not

just one credible way.³⁴

Returning to Genesis 1-3, we would argue that the text displays the more prominent features of a poetic historiography, while not completely excluding the cumulative character of the other historiographical aims. That is, the text incorporates a number of levels of historiography in order to reveal a larger portrait of God and life than a straight documentary historiography with its factual selectivity (although such selectivity is not entirely irrelevant to the informing nature of the text). The Genesis story, for example, is not centered on giving a list of empirically verifiable historical or scientific facts, but it actually interprets and redescribes the world from within and beyond the boundaries of space and time, naming Israel's God as the one and only God – the great Creator in the unfolding drama of beginnings. In this narrative portrayal God is powerfully at work, among other things, creating, speaking, commenting, blessing, and providing. The genius of Genesis 1-3 rests in its magnificent panoply of operative layers of contentful subversive convergence, interconnected on the register of imagination (writer and reader), but disconnected at the level of revelatory reference (God). Thus, the chapters reveal, convey, and represent a selection of God actions and sayings, various occurrences, people, situations and contexts that have left traces in the world which evoke the reality of the past and interpret it so that God's people will have an explanation and new understanding of something of who the creator God is, who they are, and what the natural world is like.

The historiography of Genesis 1-3 on this register is a cumulative poetic historiography and a meeting place for the relation and distinction between imaginative literary art and thematic eventful interpretive recounting. In this case, recounting imaginatively in symbolic formulations is not the same thing as imaginary recounting.³⁵ The former refers to creative artistry in interpreting and vividly representing an understanding of God and the world in a manner connected to its time, while the latter concerns escape and fantasy that becomes a referent for itself.³⁶ Biblical authors, as Sailhamer contends in an essay on Genesis, were attempting to connect their stories to the world that was really there. He puts it this way:

By representing reality in their narratives, they were defining its essential characteristics. This is surely not to say they were making it up. There is every reason to maintain that the world we

find depicted in these narratives was, in fact, intended by them to be identified as the real world.³⁷

As a cumulative poetic historiography, the early chapters of Genesis are not a straight-telling of history, but rather a skillfully recounted story of beginnings precipitated by the action's of the divine Creator and based on the Hebrews' encounter with the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This founding narrative, a poetic historiography, is attested to by the way God speaks, acts, engages, and intervenes in a symbolic scenario that recounts according to its goals and purposes that this God, as the God of Israel, is the only true God. The detection and recognition of the historiographical character and quality of the text heightens our awareness that forlorn attempts to interpret it in a reductionistic manner, by imposing contemporary standards of history writing, is unwarranted and superfluous. Exclusionary strategies act as a catalyst for historiographical confusion and fail to be attuned to the complex poetic filaments which make up the ancient Genesis narrative.³⁸

Retaining and building on the Ricoeurian notion of poetic historiography, we would like to take this configuration a step further. Thus, we propose the notion that Genesis 1-3 is a *poetic* text and offer this as a constructive way forward for its interpretation. Poetic, in our eyes, is the act and art – a creative mimesis rolled into the verb *poiesis* – of making *saturated phenomena*.³⁹ By saturated phenomena, we mean that this story of beginnings is divinely-driven and imaginatively pre-loaded with a demonstration of God's creative action, guidance, and organization that results in meaningful layers of explanation and new understanding about God, humanity, and the world. This poetic rendition of the text allows it to function as a symbiotic community, where the different downloads into the story perform a mutually enhancing, yet tensional dialogue. For example, whatever differences exist between the two biblical creation accounts may not merely reflect different traditions in the Hebrew community,⁴⁰ but may be part of a larger symbiosis as strands of relevant thought converge into an organic whole that is not unduly burdened by the need to rig the material for complete correspondence between the accounts.⁴¹

In summary, these early chapters in Genesis comprise a twofold convergence. First, the revelatory, historical, theological, and literary rhythms that God is the Creator are configured and inseparably

interlinked in this story of beginnings. While each of these rhythms can be explored and developed on their own, as we have done with the historical (and could have done with others), the text's trajectory cannot finally be reduced to any one of them. Second, operative levels of historiography are skillfully, artistically, and symbolically interwoven into a poetic recounting that God the Creator has acted in creating the world. Consequently, these chapters defy a *strip mining* approach so prevalent today which endeavours to merely embrace one of the parts.⁴² The veins run too deep and are so intimately intertwined into an organic whole that any ultimate textual dissection which disregards this unity will underplay the provocative nature of the text. As Gudas points out:

In contemporary criticism 'organic,' though widely used, has all but lost its metaphoric significance. The term is claimed by or attributed to critical systems which hold that the chief concern of criticism should be with the unity of the literary work. Thus it follows that the parts of an artistic whole have qualities, meanings, or effects which they would not have separately and that the most important excellence that can be attributed to any of the parts is to show that it is a necessary element of that whole.⁴³

In that there is no absolute object or subject, at least on the level of knowledge, an organic poetic configuration may rightly offer interpreters a greater flexibility when engaging text and world, and therefore counter various forms of reductionism. Hence, we suggest that Genesis 1-3 is a poetic text that re-describes reality in a story of beginnings, which deftly and artistically brings us into God's world.

While in one sense Genesis 1-3 is deeply embedded in its context and therefore should not be viewed as a precise scientific-like informer, in another sense it transcends and cannot be reduced to a scientific categorization.⁴⁴ For example, this text tells us nothing about DNA, cells, and molecules; yet, it has the capacity to capture an accurate, innovative, enduring, and always avant-garde portrayal of nature as a general category and place of contact between God, humanity, and other creatures.

3) Interpreting Trajectories

Today more than ever interpreters are drawing on the knowledge of histories, societies, cultures,

natural sciences and texts to explain the world. A noteworthy feature of this orientation has been a rediscovery of the relevance of narrative. Dramatic fascination with stories and the worlds they create, represent, and signify has now become a prominent feature in the quest for the meaning of life in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This interest in narrative has clearly marked our times in a surprising way. When it seemed as if the unquestionable merits of a mechanical, technological, and scientifically-driven world would have explained the entirety of life, stories have again released and captured the attention of imaginations, hearts, and minds. From this strong contemporary interest in narrative, a basic question arises: What is narrative? While a full answer to this question, which David Carr has identified as the battle ground for the disciplines,⁴⁵ lies beyond the scope of this paper,⁴⁶ it is nevertheless important to highlight key elements in the discussion as they will apply to Genesis 1-3.

We again turn to the work of Ricoeur, who addressed the 'what is narrative' question in his three volume work *Temps et récit* (*Time and Narrative*).⁴⁷ To be sure, narrative is a story with a narrator, plot, characters, action, time, intrigue, conflict, point of view, and mystery. Yet according to Ricoeur, narrative is not merely a traditional story of representation. Ricoeur's notion of narrative is that it creates a world – something new is created that did not previously exist. This narrative world is meant to be entered, inhabited, and appropriated by the reader. As the reader dwells in the created world of the story, new possibilities are opened up for articulating and conveying truth and meaning. Hence, on this understanding, narrative is a semantic innovation in that it configures a world that has the potential power to refigure the reader's world.

To take the discussion of narrative a step further, we turn to a brief description of Ricoeur's notion of a three-fold mimesis.⁴⁸ Mimesis I operates as a *pre-figurative* capacity to detect action versus mere motion. Actions are connected to motives and goals, symbols, and time, and to the questions of "who" and "why." Mimesis II is a specific literary act that creates a world and *configures* actions into a structured timeframe of beginning, middle, and end. Mimesis III occurs when the reader's world is connected to the story world and through entering that world, taking possession of it, and being possessed by it, their own world is *refigured*.⁴⁹

Emplotment is a key for understanding mimesis II. To *make* a plot, for Ricoeur, is a synthesis

of the heterogeneous in the following ways. First, it makes one story out of a multiplicity of incidents. Second, plot organizes unintended circumstances, relationships between actors, and planned or unplanned encounters, drawing them together into a single story. And third, a plot provides a time totality in the story, which can be understood as a creative act of configuration out of a succession of events.⁵⁰ This Ricoeurian notion of plot making, coupled with the poetic historiography of Genesis 1-3, has the power to weld together interpreted actions and thematic events into an organic narrative whole.

Written from the vantage point of the sacred experience of God over many years, the Genesis story of beginnings opens up a new way for the Hebrew writer to testify to that which was already known in Israel.⁵¹ God, nature, and humanity were not the “who” and the “why” that other ancient Near Eastern stories had configured them to be (Mimesis I & II). Thus, these early chapters of Genesis are a product of sedimentation and innovation culminating in a revealing narrative of God’s story (Mimesis I & II). Like a transfusion, the life of God’s people flows into this narrative recounting of beginnings, while in turn the story flows back out into the life of Israel, the prophets, the apostles and the churches, surging right through and having the capacity to powerfully refigure the lives of readers today and in the future (Mimesis III).

As we have observed in the previous paragraph, Genesis 1-3 presents an unfolding drama of creation. This story of beginnings, written for God’s people, narrates a point of arrival where God, nature, and humanity appear, and it also marks a point of departure from which life can unfold. The saturated revelatory story of beginnings dynamically transforms and continually radicalizes our understanding of God, nature, and humanity and functions as a catalyst for all that follows in its wake. In our judgment, one of the chief aims of this creation semantic innovation is to draw the reader into God’s “sacred world” of beginnings and to illuminate the path ahead for the people of God. Consequently, there is a significant forward moving trajectory in the narrative concerning the nature of the world, the relation and distinction of God to it, and the life of the people of God. Several examples can be highlighted: land, blessings, Sabbath, family, covenant, nation, sacrifice, and sanctuary-temple are noteworthy connecting filaments that electrify this early recounting of the times.⁵² Therefore, in reading Genesis 1-3 readers’ lives are

refigured in line with the truth of the revelation of the Creator as they become part of the intricate web of connections that stream in, out, and ripple through the biblical story and its relation and distinction to the world. In this sense, the Genesis 1-3 narrative is a “living” text.

Narrative, Carr suggests, is a form of life before it is a form of discourse.⁵³ From this perspective, Genesis 1-3 represents a form of life that is translated into a story. While this story is a revelatory semantic innovation, it is prefigured by and configured from a lived life in the world. Consequently, the narrative point of view is made up of a constellation of complex interactions flowing from God, author, narrator, character, audience, and world, and then back through world, audience, character, narrator, author, and God. This spherical refraction alters, yet imaginatively represents reality by narrating it as a story of beginnings.

Conclusion

We began this paper with the provocative words of Coleridge, who poetically probed the fascinating question: What is Life? Answers to this enigmatic mystery today, whether coming from Scriptural or scientific quarters, are understood to be complex and diverse. As we have seen, discussions on this topic are often marked by strong polarizations that tend to negate the contribution of either the scriptural or scientific informer.

In our view, this situation may be alleviated to some extent by reconsidering and identifying the proper configuration of the early chapters of Genesis. While it is clear that Genesis 1-3 lends itself to closer examination at several levels, our objective was to listen to the various rhythms of its orchestration, and to provisionally hear the controversial historical rhythm of the text, before re-integrating it into its symphonic whole.

Our critique of mutually exclusive hermeneutical strategies that in the final analysis atomize the text into revelatory, historical, literary, or theological hegemony (though each plays a part in the whole), brought us to the conclusion that the biblical story of beginnings can best be seen as a cumulative historiographical poetic narrative. Drawing from Ricoeur’s helpful insights lends credence to the idea that the story of beginnings in Genesis is an imaginative and revelatory semantic innovation – a *founding narrative*, framed by Israel’s illuminating encounter with the Creator and the world of the time. Thereby, this founding narrative is enabled

to form links with the unfolding realities of Israel's unique identity and covenantal relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Furthermore, the narrative trajectory functions in a historical sense as an identifiable location of God's arrival and as the point of departure for the whole biblical story. As a revelatory, historical, theological, and literary-oriented orchestration, it can be deployed as both reference and backdrop for God's continuing and future actions in the world.

So, where does Genesis 1-3's credibility lie for both science and Scripture? It lies in the "power of story" where imagination and the revelatory realities of God, and the world He created meet. The biblical story of beginnings brings together the meaningful structure of reality without wedding itself to a static architectural statement about the world. Through our engagement with God's story, our vision of the world is changed and placed within the same trajectory that the ancient Hebrews experienced. Consequently, these early chapters of Genesis are best understood as an organic poetic text that re-describes reality placing it in a sacred and destiny oriented context that invites the reader into a world – God's unfolding world. In this sense, the text is a living text that recycles our interpretive trajectory through a poetic network of divine and creaturely actions, purposes, and goals.

Notes

- 1 S. T. Coleridge, *What is Life?* This poem is believed to have been written around 1805 and only published in 1829.
- 2 G. J. Laughery and G. R. Diepstra, "Scripture, Science and Hermeneutics," *European Journal of Theology* XV (2006), 35-49.
- 3 J. H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990, 32.
- 4 C. Hyers, *The Meaning of Creation: Genesis and Modern Science*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984, 44.
- 5 Anthony Alioto, *A History of Western Science*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993, 6.
- 6 For example: the bull-god Baal, the falcon-god Horus, the golden calf, etc. This divination could extend into the human realm as pharaohs, kings, and heroes were depicted as sons of god or mediators between the divine and human realm. See Hyers, 44.
- 7 Alioto, 8.
- 8 Ibid. 8.
- 9 We borrowed this term from J. H. Walton, *Ancient*

Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Old Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006, 21.

- 10 Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 88.
- 11 Ibid. 188.
- 12 Ibid. 90.
- 13 H. J. Van Till, *The Fourth Day*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 32-33.
- 14 Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 186.
- 15 B. W. Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987, 134-135. However, R.A. Simkins in *Creator & Creation*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, notes that "the conflict myth is a secondary development, a personification, of [the] primary creation metaphors of separation and differentiation." See p. 78.
- 16 Hyers, 47.
- 17 Ibid., 47.
- 18 Echoes from the ancient Near East context may be heard in Genesis 1:2 and 2:5 where water and darkness, and desert-like conditions, respectively, may recall common conceptualizations of precosmic conditions.
- 19 On the fifth day of creation (verse 21), sea monsters are singled out for special treatment. The verb *bara*, reserved exclusively for God's creative action, is applied and may hearken back to the importance of such creatures in Mesopotamian myth. The existence of such creatures is not negated, but simply placed under the creative authority of God. No conflict here, just submission. See E. Lucas, *Interpreting Genesis in the 21st Century* published by the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, April 2007.
- 20 See Simkins, *Creator & Creation*, and Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*.
- 21 The ancient Near Eastern setting encourages the view that Adam and Eve be understood in archetypal terms. See Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 208-209.
- 22 There is good reason to believe that the 3-tiered cosmic architecture of the ancient Near East was presupposed by the ancient Hebrews. Basically, the architecture consisted of a flat, disk-like earth floating on water that was supported by pillars with the heavens above and the netherworld beneath. The dome-like sky, which the sun and stars tracked through, was relatively solid and held back the cosmic waters. References to the features of this cosmic structure can be found in a number of biblical references. See, for example, Genesis 1:20, Job 9:6-7, Job 22:14, Psalm 24:2, Psalm 104:2-3, Isaiah 40:22.
- 23 Laughery and Diepstra, 35-49.
- 24 J. K. A. Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic*, Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.
- 25 Laughery and Diepstra, esp. 36-37.
- 26 Ibid., 37-40.

- 27 We would agree with the assessment of many authors who note that early Genesis is not a scientific text and that context-dependent theological issues are of utmost importance to the text's communicative purposes. See E. Lucas, "Science and the Bible: Are They Incompatible?" *Science and Christian Belief* 17 (2005), 137-154 and *Interpreting Genesis*. However, we would argue that the proper contrast is not between a theological text and a scientific one, but between a scientific text and an ancient one that is imaginatively and poetically formatted within the framework of the Hebrews existence and their attending knowledge of God and the world. On this register, the early chapters of Genesis would function as more than merely a theological or historical text inasmuch as they are expressly connected to the larger meganarrative picture of God's unfolding interaction with humanity in general, and Israel in particular.
- 28 No doubt any of the four rhythms could be explored and listened to more carefully.
- 29 K. Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History*, London: Routledge, 1991; *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed., London: Routledge, 1997. A. Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, London: Routledge, 1997. P. Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative Reflections on Postmodernism Now," *History and Theory* 38, (1999), 1-24.
- 30 Laughery, "Ricoeur on History, Fiction and Biblical Hermeneutics," in: *'Behind' the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation*, Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Zondervan/Paternoster, 2003, 339-362.
- 31 B. Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.
- 32 Following P. R. Davies and J. Rogerson, *The Old Testament World*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989, 218. See also, G. J. Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics in Motion: An Analysis and Evaluation of Paul Ricoeur's Contribution to Biblical Hermeneutics*, Lanham: University Press of America, 2002.
- 33 P. Ricoeur has been a formidable force in a diversity of discussions, including those related to interpreting Scripture and science. See "Sur l'exégèse de Genèse 1,1-2,4a," in: *Exégèse et herméneutique*, X. Leon Dufour, ed., Paris: Seuil, 1971, 57-97; *Philosophie de la volonté. Finitude et culpabilité II, La symbolique du mal*, Paris: Aubier, 1960 (*The Symbolism of Evil*, English Translation, E. Buchanan, New York: Harper & Row, 1967); *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, L. S. Mudge, ed., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980; *Ce qui nous fait penser? La nature et la règle*, avec Jean-Pierre Changeux, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2000 (*What Makes us Think? A Neuroscientist and A Philosopher Argue About Ethics, Human Nature and the Brain*, English Translation, M. B. DeBevoise, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); *Penser la bible*, avec A. LaCocque, Paris: Seuil, 1998 (*Thinking Biblically*, English Translation, D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- 34 Ricoeur, "Philosophies critiques de l'histoire: Recherche, explication, écriture," in: *Philosophical problems today*, G. Fløistad, ed., vol 1, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994, 139-201. D. Marguerat, *Le première histoire du christianisme*, Paris: Cerf, 1999, (*The First Christian Historian*, English Translation, G. J. Laughery, K. McKinney, R. Bauckham, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 5-25).
- 35 E. A. Speiser, "The Rivers of Paradise," in: J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, eds., *Oriental and Biblical Studies: Collected Writings of E. A. Speiser*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967, 23-34.
- 36 A biblical worldview maintains that there is a real world which is related to and distinct from God and the cultural constructions and productions of science or theology. How could there be an imaginary if there was no real world from which to evaluate and measure? In other words, a necessary presupposition for the imaginary is the real, and it could not exist without it. On this register, imaginary is parasitic, as it must presuppose that which it is not in the attempt to have a theatre of its own.
- 37 J. H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995, 290.
- 38 For insights on biblical narrative see M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985, 1987. R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York: Basic Books, 1981. V. P. Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- 39 See J-L. Marion, *Etant donné: Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997. (*Being Given: Toward A Phenomenology of Givenness*, English Translation J. L. Kosky, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, 199-220, for somewhat similar terminology – saturated phenomenon, although with a different meaning).
- 40 Hyers, 41.
- 41 Due to lack of space here, further elaboration of this perspective will have to await a future paper.
- 42 J. B. Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story: Its Literary Structure*, Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1978, who refers to these early chapters of Genesis as a profound unity, characterized by a conscious literary act.
- 43 See *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, A. Preminger, ed., London: Macmillan, 1975, 593-594.
- 44 Laughery and Diepstra, 'Scripture', 35-49.
- 45 D. Carr, "Ricoeur on Narrative," in: D. Wood, ed., *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, London: Routledge, 1991, 160-187, esp. 160-173. Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, 113.
- 46 See Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, for a fuller treat-

- ment of this vital issue.
- 47 Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, 3 tomes, Paris: Seuil, 1983-1985. (*Time and Narrative*, 3 vols, English Translation, K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, vols. 1-2; K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, vol. 3, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-1987).
- 48 Mimesis is a creative imitation of action – “the dynamic sense of making a representation, a transposition into representative works,” resulting in the art of composition. See Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 31-37.
- 49 Ibid., 52-87. Also see Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, 131-162, for a fuller discussion.
- 50 See Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 38-50.
- 51 Doukhan, *Genesis*, 246, states: “Revelation implies Reality and both imply a real existential engagement with the One who revealed.”
- 52 G. J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in: R. S. Hess and D. T. Tsumura, eds., *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994, 399-404. Wenham helpfully focuses on the Eden portrait as “sanctuary symbolism.” We believe the other filaments in the story are connected and can be developed in a similar fashion.
- 53 Carr, “Ricoeur,” 160-173.

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Prayer, Sacrifice and Forgiveness¹

Robin Routledge
Mattersley Hall, England

SUMMARY

A key factor in the approach to God in the Old Testament is sacrifice. However, there are occasions where the sacrificial system proves inadequate, and appeal is made directly to God, on the basis of his *hesed*. This second approach to God, which does not depend on sacrifices, is sometimes seen to open the way for a development (for which support is also claimed from some pre-exilic prophetic literature) away from sacrifice as the primary factor in forgiveness, towards something more interior and spiritual. In this paper I will suggest that the

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appeal for forgiveness on the basis of God's *hesed* alone is made necessary because the sinner has overstepped the boundaries of the covenant, and so the sacrificial system is not effective. For those within the covenant, the sacrificial system, which also has a spiritual and interior aspect, is the prescribed way of approaching God for forgiveness and the Old Testament writers do not envisage its replacement. Recognising the ongoing significance of the Old Testament sacrificial system (up to its fulfilment in the sacrifice of Christ) allows us to draw from it theological principles that continue to be relevant to the life of the Church.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Opfer sind ein Schlüsselement bei den Annäherungen an Gott im Alten Testament. Es gibt allerdings Punkte, an denen sich das Opfersystem als inadäquat erweist und man sich direkt an Gott wendet – auf der Grundlage seines *hesed*. Diese zweite Annäherung an Gott, die nicht auf dem Opfer basiert, wird manchmal als Anstoß zu einer Entwicklung gesehen, für die man auch Unterstützung aus Teilen der vor-exilischen prophetischen Literatur in Anspruch nimmt und die sich vom Opfer als primärem Faktor bei der Vergebung ab- und einer stärker innerlichen und spirituellen Dimension zuwendet. In diesem Artikel schlage ich vor, dass die Bitte um Ver-

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gebung auf der alleinigen Grundlage derselben *hesed*. Gottes notwendig ist, weil der Sünder die Grenzen des Bundes überschritten hat und das Opfersystem daher nicht wirksam ist. Für diejenigen innerhalb des Bundes ist das Opfersystem, das ebenfalls einen spirituellen und innerlichen Aspekt besitzt, der vorgeschriebene Weg der Annäherung an Gott im Blick auf Vergebung, und die Schreiber des Alten Testaments haben nicht die Ersetzung dieses Systems in ihrem Blickfeld. Die Anerkennung der bleibenden Bedeutung des alttestamentlichen Opfersystems (bis zu seiner Erfüllung im Opfer Christi) erlaubt uns, theologische Prinzipien aus diesem System abzuleiten, die von bleibender Bedeutung für das Leben der Kirche sind.

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RÉSUMÉ

Dans l'Ancien Testament, les sacrifices jouent un rôle important pour permettre aux Israélites de s'approcher de Dieu. Dans certains cas, les sacrifices s'avèrent inadéquats et il est fait directement appel à Dieu, sur la base de sa *hesed*. Cette autre manière de s'approcher de Dieu sans offrir de sacrifice est parfois considérée comme ouvrant la voie à une évolution ôtant aux sacrifices leur rôle de moyen principal pour obtenir le pardon en mettant l'accent davantage sur une attitude spirituelle intérieure (et l'on prétend aussi trouver la même tendance dans certains textes de la littérature prophétique préexilique). L'auteur tente de montrer que, lorsqu'on fait appel

à la *hesed* divine seule, c'est parce que le pécheur a outrepassé les limites fixées par l'alliance et se situe en dehors des cas pour lesquels il était possible d'offrir des sacrifices. Pour les cas prévus par l'alliance, l'offrande de sacrifices, qui devait aussi être accompagnée d'une certaine attitude spirituelle intérieure, demeure la condition requise pour s'approcher de Dieu et obtenir son pardon et les auteurs de l'Ancien Testament n'envisagent aucunement son remplacement. De la valeur constante du système sacrificiel de l'Ancien Testament (jusqu'à son accomplissement dans le sacrifice de Christ), on peut tirer des principes théologiques qui demeurent pertinents pour la vie de l'Église.

Sacrifice and Forgiveness

There is debate about whether Genesis 3 may properly be characterised as a 'Fall' through which sin entered the world and infected every member of the human race. However, though the term 'fall' may not be used, and we need to be wary of reading too much into the text, the effect of sin described in Genesis 3:14-19, on human beings and on the order of creation, does indicate a far-reaching and continuing significance. God's good creation was spoilt by human disobedience; and the remainder of the primaeval history catalogues a continuing and deepening decline into sin. From the start, this is a key factor affecting human relationships with God, and needs to be addressed.

In Israel, formal provision for forgiveness was provided within the sacrificial system.² A key term here is 'atonement', which may indicate cleansing or purification, or the payment of a ransom.³ The burnt offering played a major role in making atonement for sin (e.g. Lev. 1:4; Num. 15:28; 2 Sam. 24:25; Job 1:5; 42:8), and turning away God's wrath (Gen. 8:20-21; 2 Chr. 29:7-8).⁴ Two further offerings, also specifically linked with 'making atonement', are the *purification offering* (*hatta't*), often referred to as the *sin offering*,⁵ and the reparation or guilt offering (*'asam*). Each of these sacrifices is accompanied by a distinctive ritual; though they have several factors in common, indicating key elements in sacrificial atonement. Where the offering was made by an individual, he brought an unblemished animal to the sanctuary; in the case of the burnt offering and the purification offering he laid (or pressed) a hand on it and slaughtered it. The blood was then taken by the priest and, for the burnt and reparation offerings, was sprinkled on all sides of the altar; for the purification offering, it was smeared on the horns of the altar and the rest poured at the base of the altar.

The practice of pressing a hand on the animal before killing it is significant. In the case of the burnt offering, some explanation is given: *he is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him* (Lev. 1:4).⁶ This suggests an element of substitution: the animal is offered on behalf of the sinner. By putting his hand on the animal's head, the worshipper identified himself with the sacrifice, which was then killed in his place. One way of understanding this is as an act of surrender: through the sacrifice the worshipper offered his own life up to God.⁷ Another, not mutually exclusive, possibil-

ity is that the sacrifice was offered as a ransom: the victim died instead of the worshipper. In this case the sacrifice would have the effect of turning away God's punishment. The idea that it gives up a *soothing aroma* (Lev. 1:9) also suggests turning away wrath and attracting God's favour to the one who offered it.⁸ Pressing a hand on the victim has also been traditionally linked with the transference of sin, as in the case of the goat *for Azazel* on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:21-22). However, the goat for *Azazel* was then led out of the camp, not sacrificed on the altar;⁹ and it seems unlikely that the practice in relation to the burnt and purification offerings envisages the literal transference of sin – which is often linked with the idea of penal substitution, whereby the animal became guilty and was punished in place of the sinner.¹⁰ It may be possible, though, to think in terms of a more symbolic 'transference', in the sense that the sin of the worshipper necessitates the death of the sacrifice; and as a result of that death, the sinner is freed from guilt. This continues the idea of the sacrifice as a ransom – which seems to be more explicitly associated with the reparation offering (though in that case a hand is not laid on the animal). There may, though, still be a link with the ritual of the Day of Atonement. On that occasion, laying (both) hands on the animal was accompanied by the confession of sin (Lev. 16:21). Confession is also specifically mentioned in relation to the purification offering (Lev. 5:5); and an appropriate point for this would be when the worshipper put his hand on the animal's head prior to killing it. In this, it is important to note that, however mechanistic the ritual of sacrifice became, a significant interior aspect was present, and vital, from the beginning.

A second common factor in sacrifice is the shedding of blood. Sacrifices fulfil different roles, and that accounts for the differences in the particular animals offered and the way the blood was used. However, despite the different emphases, it is clear that the shedding of blood plays an important part in dealing with the separation from God caused by sin. This is best explained by the idea of substitutionary atonement: shedding blood signifies death; and the death of the animal, on behalf of the sinner or sinful community, opens the way for cleansing and forgiveness, and for God's continued presence among his people.

The sacrificial system, then, offered a partial solution to the need for forgiveness and to maintain the relationship with God in the face of human sin. But it was partial: not all sins could be atoned

for in this way. In general, the burnt offerings and the purification offerings covered only unintentional sins. The annual Day of Atonement made provision for the deliberate sins of the nation; but there appears to have been no similar provision for the deliberate sins of individuals. Some wilful sin directed against the property of others may have been covered by the reparation offering, which was accompanied by compensation for the wronged party.¹¹ But wilful defiance of the laws that touched the nature and character of God himself could not be atoned for through sacrifice. Numbers 15:27-31 sets out the alternatives: for those who sin unintentionally, atonement can be made through sacrifice (vv. 27-29); whereas anyone who sins wilfully *must be cut off from his people* (vv. 30-31). This is probably to be linked with God's direct activity.¹² On some occasions that is explicit: *I will set my face against that person... and will cut him off from his people* (Lev. 17:10; see also Lev. 20:3, 5-6; Ezek. 14:8). It is likely that there would also be some corresponding action within the legal system; so, in Numbers 15:32-36, as an example of what it means to sin wilfully, the Sabbath-breaker is taken outside the camp and stoned to death (cf. Exod. 31:14; Lev. 23:29); and in Leviticus 20:3, sacrificing children to the god Molech, which results in God cutting the offender off from his people, also calls for the death penalty. However, the community action is not described specifically as effecting the 'cutting off'; that seems to remain God's prerogative. And if the community does not carry out its judicial responsibility, God will still take action against the guilty party and any others who condone his conduct (Lev. 20:5). The nature of the threat in a legal context is unclear.¹³ It may refer to premature (though not necessarily immediate) death, to judgment beyond the grave by being denied the proper burial that would enable continued fellowship with ancestors, or to being denied descendants. It is more natural, though, to take it, primarily, to refer to severing the sinner's link with the community. Similar expressions refer to offenders being cut off from the community (Num. 19:20) and from Israel (Exod. 12:15, 19; Num. 19:13). This may involve formal expulsion from the nation,¹⁴ but is not limited to it, since excommunication would require judicial action and God's threat may be carried out without the cooperation of the judiciary. Genesis 17:14 suggests a link between being cut off from the people and moving outside the boundaries of the covenant. In that verse, *[he] will be cut off from his people* is in

apposition to *he has broken my covenant*, indicating a level of equivalence between the two expressions. Breaking the covenant might thus be seen, not as one more offence that results in being cut off from the people (the particular offence here is the failure to be circumcised), but the general category into which all of the offences deserving of that particular punishment are incorporated. The expression 'cut off from his people' (*nikrat me'ammayw*) might, therefore, be taken to indicate that, under certain circumstances, God will act to put a guilty party outside the covenant community and so outside the protection of the covenant.¹⁵ The Sinaitic Covenant provided safeguards for the nation as a whole in their relationship with God; this included turning away God's wrath by offering appropriate sacrifices, and providing a worship environment in which sinful human beings could approach and meet with a holy God. Certain offences might lead to those safeguards being withdrawn; putting the sinner beyond the scope of the covenant and so beyond the provision of sacrifices, which are only valid to those who are within the covenant.¹⁶

In such circumstances, where the sinner is beyond the reach of the sacrificial system, there is still, though, the possibility of forgiveness through direct appeal to the *hesed* of God.

Hesed and Forgiveness

Hesed is a characteristically Hebrew word with no precise English equivalent.¹⁷ It includes kindness and mercy; and there is a close link between *hesed* and *rahamim* (kindness). However, *hesed* is more than the emotional, benevolent response to the need of another; it also includes loyalty and obligation: a sense of duty and faithful commitment to do what is right.¹⁸ In the Old Testament, the term occurs predominantly in the context of relationships, and especially covenant relationships. The term is frequently translated 'love'; though the use of qualifiers, such as *steadfast* love, *covenant* love, and *unfailing* love, emphasises that the term includes loyal commitment; *hesed* 'expresses, essentially, faithfulness and loyal conduct within the context of a relationship; it is an inward commitment and disposition of goodwill together with its outward expression in dutiful and compassionate action'.¹⁹

Hesed refers to proper conduct within human relationships and within society,²⁰ and, occasionally, to the proper response of people to God.²¹ It is also, more frequently, associated with God's

response to humankind. It figures prominently in the orthodox summary of the attributes of God that appears in its basic form in Exodus 34:6: *the LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in hesed and faithfulness*;²² and in the extended summary, which continues into Exodus 34:7, it is the only divine attribute to be mentioned twice.²³ Because of its close association with covenants in a social setting, it is not surprising that *hesed* is closely linked, too, with divine covenants. God's relationship with his people is referred to as a *covenant of hesed*;²⁴ and in several passages the terms *hesed* and *berit* (referring to a divine covenant) occur in parallel couplets.²⁵

The relationship between *hesed* and the covenant between God and his people is expressed in two complementary ways. First, *hesed* derives from the covenant. By entering into a covenant with his people, God has bound himself to show *hesed* to them. This is emphasised, for example, in Psalm 106:45 – *for their sake [Yahweh] remembered his covenant and out of his great hesed he relented*. Here, *hesed* is the content of *berit* and the existence of the covenant (that God has not forgotten) provides the basis for the *hesed* that he shows to the people. This divine *hesed* that flows from the covenant includes love, loyalty and faithfulness to God's covenant promises. It might include, too, the kindness, mercy and grace that bears with, and remains committed to, his people despite their sin, and provides the basis for forgiveness and restoration; though again, in the context of their previously established relationship.²⁶ This leads to the second important characteristic of God's *hesed*. As well as deriving from the relationship between God and his people, it also becomes the means by which that relationship continues, even though, because of the people's unfaithfulness, it might properly be terminated. This is evident, in relation to the Davidic covenant, in Psalm 89:28 – *I [Yahweh] will maintain my hesed to [the Davidic king] and my covenant with him will never fail*. Here, rather than flowing from the covenant, *hesed* provides the basis on which God will maintain the covenant and ensure that it will not end. When applied more generally, this provides the basis for the restoration of the nation, and leads, ultimately, to the promise of a new covenant.²⁷ Corresponding to these two ways of understanding *hesed*, individual and national prayers which appeal to God's *hesed* generally fall into two categories: those based on the uprightness of the one in need; and those based not on human merit, but on God's willingness to

show mercy to the undeserving.²⁸

The first of these builds on the idea of obligation. God has committed himself to his people and they can expect him to behave towards them in a particular way. Thus, the Psalmist says: *from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's hesed is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children – with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts* (Psa. 103:17-17).²⁹ In this case, the relationship is perceived to be in good order, and faithful divine action, which corresponds to *hesed*, may be expected. Although the link is not specific in the Old Testament, it is reasonable to think of sacrifice in this category. Where offerings are brought in a right spirit in accordance with the requirements of the covenant, the divine response, also in faithfulness to the covenant, is to forgive. The offering of sacrifices is thus not opposed to *hesed*; the sacrificial system, along with every other aspect of the covenant, is effective precisely because of God's *hesed*: because of his loving, faithful and ongoing commitment to his covenant people.

In the second case, *hesed* comes closer in meaning to *grace*. Here, the relationship is not in good order; the appellant cannot make any claims on God and has no right to expect a favourable response from him. Any appeal is on the basis of God's grace and mercy alone. Such appeals are particularly prominent in the Psalms – especially, as might be expected, in the context of prayers for forgiveness.³⁰ An important example is in Psalm 51:1[3]. Here, the psalmist, who as the psalm's title suggests,³¹ has committed the kind of serious, deliberate sin that would put him outside the provision of the sacrificial system, prays: *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your hesed; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions*. In this situation the offender has stepped outside the bounds of the covenant; his sin has put him beyond the normal covenantal provisions for forgiveness and should lead to him, rightly, being cut off from his people.³² Aware that he might face direct divine action, the psalmist pleads, on the basis of God's *hesed*, here parallel with *rahamim* ('compassion'), that he will not be cast from God's presence (v. 11a [13a]). The strength of the language – *save me from bloodguilt* (v. 14 [16]); *do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me* (v. 11 [13]) – indicates the real possibility of separation from God. That may also be suggested by verses 18-19 [20-21], which, when read as part of a canonical whole, point to a time after the appeal to God's *hesed* has been heard, when the psalmist may again

join in the worship of the believing community, and so bring *righteous sacrifices and whole burnt offerings*. This implies that those sacrifices are not presently being offered; and indicates a breach in fellowship that needs to be restored.³³

Sacrifice, then, is limited within the boundaries of the covenant; and is unable to help those who overstep those boundaries. By contrast, God's *hesed*, which also operates largely within the mutual relationship established by the covenant, is nevertheless able to reach out to those beyond its limits, and to offer the forgiveness that allows them to be drawn back into a restored relationship with God.

Is sacrifice necessary?

In Psalm 51, the psalmist not only appeals to God's *hesed*, but also appears to take a negative view of sacrifice: *You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise* (vv. 16-17 [18-19]). Some take this to imply a repudiation of animal sacrifices and claim support from the pre-exilic prophets, who also appear to reject sacrifice in favour of a right interior attitude (e.g. Isa. 1:11-17; Jer. 6:20; Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8).³⁴ It is very unlikely, though, that the prophets condemn sacrifices *per se*. What they do condemn is all worship that has been corrupted by a long term exposure to the worship of other gods, and reduced to formal, external ritual without inward consecration. And that might even include *prayer* which was offered inappropriately (Isa. 1:15); though there is no serious suggestion that the prophets rejected the practice of prayer.

One way of interpreting this negative language is that it is relative: not rejecting sacrifice outright, but asserting that it has meaning only when accompanied by, and subordinated to, a right interior attitude.³⁵ The prophet Samuel, who was certainly not against sacrifice, says something similar when he criticises Saul's disobedience: *Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams* (1 Sam. 15:22). In the discussion of the ongoing significance of the sacrificial system, it is also worth noting that sacrifices still have a place after the return from exile (e.g. Ezra 3:1-6; Neh. 12:43; Mal. 1:6-9), and, perhaps even more significantly, within the prophetic vision of the kingdom of God (Jer. 33:18; Ezek. 40:38-43; 46; Zec. 14:20-21;

Mal. 1:11).³⁶ The spiritual renewal of Israel will result in the right and sincere offering of sacrifices, rather than in their cessation. Condemnation is not of sacrifice itself, but of the idea that the ritual act alone is a sufficient response to God.³⁷

In the case of Psalm 51, the explanation might be more straightforward. The suppliant has placed himself beyond the scope of the sacrificial system; and his words might be taken, not as a general statement about sacrifice, but as a comment *on his own situation before God*. Because his sin puts him outside the provisions of the covenant, there is no animal sacrifice *that he can bring*. This fits with the canonical setting of the psalm, since the sacrificial system contains no provision to atone for adultery and murder.³⁸ All that is left to the psalmist is true contrition. This, too, fits with the psalm's canonical context: and in the narrative in 2 Samuel 12:1-14, where Nathan confronts David over his sin, David's repentance is immediately followed by Nathan's pronouncement of absolution – *the LORD has taken away your sin* (v. 13) – with no mention of sacrifice.

There may be an element of this, too, in the prophetic indictment of sacrifice. Indeed, it might even be possible to see Psalm 51 as providing a pattern for the repentance of the nation as a whole. As well as condemning religious formalism and syncretism, the prophets also announce the breakdown of the covenant relationship between God and his people.³⁹ For them, as for the psalmist, standing outside the covenant, there are no longer any sacrifices that can be offered to make atonement for their sin. And comments about God not accepting or being pleased with sacrifice could be related specifically to that context, rather than taken as general statements about the continuing relevance (or otherwise) of the sacrificial system. Given the spiritual condition of the nation, *there are no sacrifices that the people can bring*;⁴⁰ all that remains, as in the case of the psalmist, is a sincere and heartfelt repentance and return to God. And also, as in the case of the psalmist, forgiveness and the possibility of restoration is based on divine *hesed*. The covenant has been broken; but God's faithful commitment to his people opens the way for the possibility of a new relationship and a new covenant – based on God's *hesed*;⁴¹ and, as in Psalm 51, for the opportunity to offer righteous sacrifices.⁴²

However, if more serious sin can be forgiven by direct appeal to God's *hesed*, surely lesser sins could be dealt with in the same way; so is there any fur-

ther need for sacrifice? Commenting on Psalm 51, Tate says: 'the suppliant is sure that the sacrifices of a "broken spirit" and a "contrite heart" would be acceptable to God... The worshiper who offers this sacrifice, accompanied by burnt offerings or not, can be sure of divine acceptance'.⁴³ While this does not indicate the rejection of animal sacrifices, it suggests that they may be an optional extra, and that when it comes to forgiveness, the psalmist has turned from them to penitent prayer, which provides a better way. Kiuchi appears to take a similar view: 'when the symbol and what is symbolized become one in reality, there is no need for sacrifices and offerings'.⁴⁴ From a Christian perspective, that strikes a chord; but it is not what the psalmist is saying. He appeals to God's *hesed*, not because of a profound theological awakening as to the true nature of sacrifice, but because he has no choice. He would bring burnt offerings if he could (Ps. 51:16 [18]); it is only because he cannot, that he looks for a different basis of appeal. And he looks forward to a restored relationship where he may again offer *righteous sacrifices*, including *burnt offerings* (v. 19 [21]).

More generally, in the life of the nation, the prophets' condemnation of sacrifice is not presented as the result of theological enlightenment; it is a necessity occasioned by the corruption of true worship, and the people's spiritual condition. And there is no reason to suppose that if these factors were not present, and the sacrificial system was sincerely applied, such a negative view of sacrifices would be so evident. And, as we have noted, sacrifice and other elements of cultic worship condemned by the prophets, continue to feature in the vision of God's coming kingdom, and are still acceptable after the spiritual renewal of the nation.

Focusing on the attitude to sacrifice in some of the Psalms, Eichrodt points to the priority of prayer without the need for sacrifices, and speaks about God's 'right to dispense with sacrifices, wherever their essential meaning, spiritual intercourse with God, has been overpoweringly experienced in prayer'.⁴⁵ This emphasises the importance of spiritual communion with God; however, it almost certainly overstates the case, since none of the passages quoted in support need imply that sacrifices are actually dispensed with.⁴⁶ A right interior approach to God need not, and may not, be separated from the appropriate offering of sacrifices. Rowley rightly emphasises the need to maintain the balance between spirit and ritual: 'where

the ritual act was prescribed, sincerity of penitence could not dispense with it. Neither could the act dispense with the spirit, and the prophets therefore insisted that the act must be infused with the spirit'.⁴⁷ The move from dependence on sacrifices to a direct appeal to God's *hesed* is not the result of a development from external ritual to a deeper communion with God. As we have seen, a significant factor in the negative attitude towards sacrifice is that outside of the covenant its provisions do not apply. The problem is not with the system, but with the people, who have failed to maintain the relationship with God that would allow the cultic provisions to remain effective.⁴⁸ The prophets also condemn corrupt syncretistic worship and a mechanistic view of sacrifice; but that, too, is not the fault of the sacrificial system, which included interior elements of penitence and contrition from the start.

Prayer and Sacrifice

I have argued that the appeal for forgiveness on the basis of God's *hesed* is an alternative to the sacrificial system only in cases where the appellant has placed himself outside the covenant and so in a place where the provisions of the cult in general, and the sacrificial system in particular, do not apply. In other cases, where sacrifices may be offered appropriately, the existence of true penitence and contrition does not dispense with the need for them. In the canonical form of Psalm 51 these approaches to God – one from outside the provision of the covenant, the other from inside it – exist side by side. The argument about which approach is better is academic: they apply to different circumstances, and the worshipper does not have a choice between them. We may, though, ask the question: why are two approaches necessary? If sin can be forgiven without sacrifice, why continue with (or even start with) such a complicated ritual framework? What is the distinctive significance of sacrifice within the context of the covenant that makes it the prescribed way of approach to God in that setting?

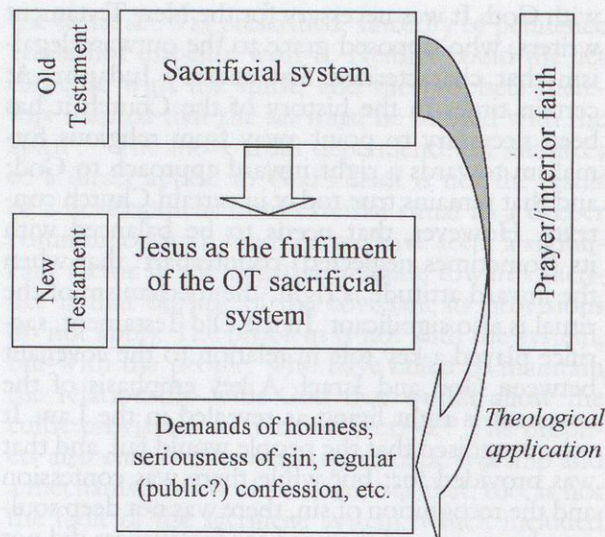
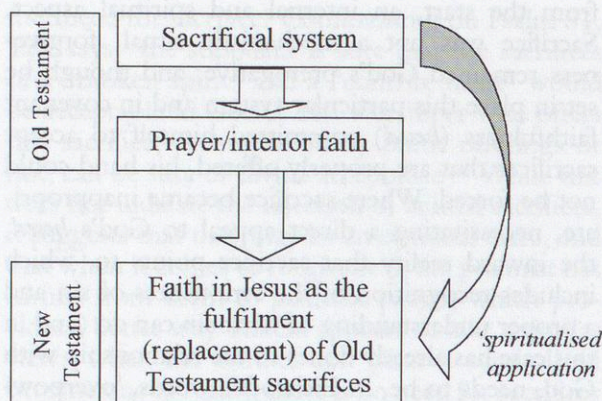
Discussions of sacrifice in the Old Testament often emphasise the importance of inward consecration, without which the ritual act has no meaning.⁴⁹ And, in the right context, that is an appropriate, even necessary, emphasis. It was necessary for the Old Testament prophets, who had to contend with a growing dependence on the outward rite at the expense of a real relationship

with God. It was necessary for the New Testament writers, who opposed grace to the outward legalism that characterised first century Judaism. At certain times in the history of the Church it has been necessary to point away from religious formalism towards a right inward approach to God; and that remains true today in certain Church contexts. However, that needs to be balanced with its (sometimes neglected) counterpart: that when the inward attitude is right, the mechanism of the ritual is also significant. In the Old Testament, sacrifice played a key role in relation to the covenant between God and Israel. A key emphasis of the covenant is right living as revealed in the Law. It was recognised that the people would fail, and that was provided for; but while there was confession and the recognition of sin, there was not deep soul-searching; sin and the need for forgiveness did not become a pre-occupation. Sacrifices were never a formality, but they were routine; with the emphasis on sorting out the problem and getting back to the real issue of living as the covenant people of God. This requires a delicate balance between being aware of the seriousness of sin on the one hand, and confidence in the readiness of God to forgive on the other; a balance that Christians also seek to maintain – and not always with great success. Within the Old Testament context, sacrifice and the shedding of blood play an important part in holding that balance. The sacrificial system, set in the context of relationship and of the worshippers' sincere desire to maintain that relationship, asserts God's willingness to forgive; and provides the assurance that when a worshipper offers his sacrifice in the right way, he will be forgiven, and accepted by God. Also, though sacrifice may be routine, it demonstrates the nature and serious effect of sin. Bringing an unblemished animal is costly, and shows that sin cannot simply be ignored. The worshipper's full involvement in killing the animal would have been a stark reminder of the effect of the sin he confesses, and a warning not to step outside the provision of the covenant, where substitutionary atonement did not apply – and where, as a result, the sinner might perish instead. Its public nature also recognises that individual sin has an effect on the life of the community – and this may also be linked to the fact that the most serious sin resulted in being cut off from the community. The worshipper's identification with the animal, through the laying on of his hand, might also indicate full and complete dedication to God.

As we have noted, the sacrificial system had,

from the start, an internal and spiritual aspect. Sacrifice was not a mechanistic ritual; forgiveness remained God's prerogative, and though he set in place this particular system and in covenant faithfulness (*hesed*) committed himself to accept sacrifices that are properly offered, his hand could not be forced. Where sacrifice became inappropriate, necessitating a direct appeal to God's *hesed*, the inward reality that sacrifice points to, which includes recognition of the seriousness of sin and a proper understanding of what sin can do (and in this case has already done) to the relationship with God, needs to be, in Eichrodt's words, 'overpoweringly experienced in prayer'.⁵⁰ Such exceptional circumstances mean that the sinner is no longer in a place where his sin can be dealt with as a matter of routine, and calls for a different approach involving greater contrition. We see this in Psalm 51, where the level of soul-searching and expressions of contrition and repentance is entirely appropriate, but goes beyond what was formally required within the sacrificial system. The goal, though, is to restore the sinner to the covenant community, where such exceptional provision is no longer necessary.

Christians have tended to favour the idea that the attitude to sacrifice developed within the Old Testament faith from exterior ritual to interior reality, and to see the attitude to prayer and forgiveness in the NT as part of that development. Earlier interpretations even suggested that the sacrificial system was an aberration: it was never part of God's plan, and was only adopted because Israel failed to understand God's purposes.⁵¹ Viewing the sacrificial system in this way, as a temporary, less spiritual element of Old Testament faith, limits the way we see its relevance to the Church – emphasising mainly its inadequacy and so focusing, particularly, on its 'spiritualised' fulfilment in Christ, rather than on any ongoing theological significance.⁵² This may be illustrated in a diagram.



I have argued that that view is inadequate; the sacrificial system was part of God's intention, and within the faith of the Old Testament was not intended to be replaced.⁵³ The Old Testament writers point to the need for the renewal of the people; but with a view, not to dispensing with the need for sacrifice, but to offering sacrifices properly. And in this way, sacrifice continues to figure in the prophetic view of God's kingdom. It remains in force until its fulfilment in Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. This does replace the offerings for sin in the Old Testament sacrificial system, not in the sense of driving a final nail into the coffin of a spiritually defunct system, but in the sense of fulfilling an important Old Testament theme. This ongoing significance of sacrifice within the faith of the Old Testament suggests that the principles underlying it – such as the seriousness of sin and the demands of God's holiness, the recognition that sin affects the community's as well as the individual's relationship with him, and the importance of seeking forgiveness regularly, even routinely,⁵⁴ in order to maintain the relationship and go on with the primary task of living out what it means to be the people of God – remain relevant to the life of the Church. This is now not just a spiritualisation of an Old Testament theme. Old Testament texts relating to sacrifice can be examined in their own right and seen to set out theological principles that may be applied to our relationship with, and approach to, God through Christ. This may be expressed in a different diagram, which emphasises the continuing theological significance and relevance of the Old Testament sacrificial texts to the life of the Church.

Conclusion

The primary mechanism for dealing with the separation between God and Israel caused by sin was the sacrificial system, which is primarily associated with the Sinaitic covenant. The offering of sacrifices represented, from the start, an interior, spiritual response to God, and, within the Old Testament, was not intended to be replaced – though its continuation into the era of salvation would require the spiritual renewal of the people. Wilful and defiant sin, however, could not be dealt with by the sacrificial system, and resulted in the sinner being 'cut off from his people' – which included being put outside the protection and provision of the covenant, and so in a place where sacrifice is no longer effective in making atonement. In these circumstances there is still the possibility of forgiveness through a direct appeal to divine *hesed*. However, that is an exception and does not represent a general movement away from sacrifice towards a better way of approaching God, through penitential prayer. Its emphasis on the need for inward consecration was a necessary corrective to a mechanistic view of sacrifice, which focused on external ritual; however, its purpose was to restore the sinner to the covenantal community; to a place where sacrifice could again be offered, as an important outward expression of an inward reality.

Recognising the ongoing significance of the sacrificial system, and its intentional role within the covenant relationship between God and his people, allows us to interrogate it for theological principles that are still applicable in the life of the Church

today. Old Testament sacrifice has been completed and perfectly fulfilled in Christ; in the light of his once and for all self-offering, the ritual act has passed away and the approach to God focuses primarily on inward reality – and there is a danger in looking at Old Testament sacrifice only in terms of its inadequacy and its spiritualised realisation in Christ. Whilst recognising the different covenantal situation that Christ has inaugurated, we must not lose sight of those things that Old Testament sacrifice represents – in order to appreciate, more fully, what Christ's sacrifice means; and in order to better understand what it means to live as the covenant people of God. The ritual act may have passed away in the light of its perfect fulfilment; but the theological significance of sacrifice, as with other aspects of the relationship between God and his people in the Old Testament, still stands.

Notes

- 1 A limited discussion of the issues raised in this article is included in my recent book, Robin Routledge, *Old Testament Theology: A Thematic Approach* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008), see especially pp. 194-204.
- 2 I am using the term 'sacrificial system' primarily in relation to the organised approach to sacrifice and offering associated with the Sinaitic covenant. There are questions of when this 'system' was established in Israel. Some scholars, following Wellhausen's evolutionary view, argue that it reflects a late development in Israel's worship. There is no time or need to enter that debate here, since our focus is on the way sacrifice is viewed in the canonical text. Some passages refer to the offering of sacrifices before the Sinaitic covenant. These are, though, relatively infrequent; do not appear to be prescribed; and are not linked with sin and forgiveness. The first cultic link between sacrifice and sin is in the context of the community established through the Sinaitic covenant.
- 3 The Hebrew term *kipper* ('make atonement') is a Piel form of the verb. It may be linked with the Akkadian, *kuppuru*, and so mean 'purify, cleanse'; the Hebrew, *koper*, from the same root, refers to a ransom paid for a life (e.g. Exod. 21:30; 30:12; Ps. 49:8; Isa. 43:3); and it is possible that both ideas are present in the idea of atonement; see further, Richard E. Averbeck, *NIDOTTE* 2:689-710; Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *Leviticus* (AOTC; Nottingham: Apollos / Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), pp. 56-57; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* (Anchor Bible, vol. 3; New York, NY: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 1079-1084; Gordon J. Wenham, *Leviticus* (NICOT; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979), pp. 28, 59-61; cf. John E. Hartley, *Leviticus 1-27* (WBC 4; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1992), pp. 64-66 [63];
- 4 See Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, pp. 60-61; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 175; Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 57-63.
- 5 Although associated with atonement for sin, this offering has much more to do with purification – for example after childbirth (Lev. 12:6-7), which results in ceremonial uncleanness, but is not sinful. See Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 55; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, pp. 253-254; Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 88-89; cf. Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, pp. 90-91.
- 6 There is debate about the translation of Lev. 1:3 – whether the purpose is to make *him* (the worshipper) or *it* (the sacrifice) acceptable. Verse 4 suggests that it is the latter (see, e.g., Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 13; however cf. Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, p. 56; Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 55-56); though it is offered on behalf of the worshipper, so, presumably, his acceptance is also in view.
- 7 Kiuchi emphasises this in relation to the burnt offering; it symbolised 'wholehearted' commitment, including the death of earthly hopes and desires (*Leviticus*, pp. 63-64). The case, though, is probably overstated, and rests too much on the Christian distinction between the spiritual and the physical, which is far less pronounced in Old Testament theology.
- 8 'Soothing aroma' is probably a better translation than 'pleasing' aroma' (as NIV, NRSV). The expression is usually linked with the burnt offering (Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18; Lev. 1:9, 13, 17) maybe because only the aroma remained and, in the form of smoke, was seen going up to God; though it might apply to other sacrifices offered by fire (Num. 15:3).
- 9 Hartley notes that both hands are laid on the scapegoat, which becomes defiled and so is sent away; if the burnt offering was similarly defiled it could not be burnt on the altar (*Leviticus*, pp. 20-21); see also Richard E. Averbeck, *NIDOTTE* 3:412; Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (London: SCM, 1961-1967), 1:165-166; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, pp. 150-152; cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 62-63.
- 10 There may be a suggestion of this in Isa. 53:5, where the punishment that the people deserve falls on the Servant and Oswalt views this as penal substitution, satisfying divine justice; see John N. Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 388. Another interpretation, more in line with the idea of the Servant as a guilt/reparation offering (Isa. 53:10), is that the people's punishment falls on the Servant in the sense that his death has turned away the punishment they deserve. See also Frank S. Thielman, 'The Atonement' in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. by Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Leicester: Apollos / Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), pp. 102-127.

- 11 Offences for which a guilt offering was required include deceiving, lying and cheating (Lev. 6:1-7); these are unlikely to be inadvertent, yet when the sinner offers the sacrifice and pays the fine, atonement is made and the sinner is accounted forgiven (Lev. 6:7).
- 12 The NIV translation 'he *must* be cut off from his people' (Exod. 30:33, 38; 31:14 Lev. 7:20-21, 25-27; 17:4, 9-10; 18:29; 19:8, 20:17-18; 22:3; 23:29; Num. 9:13; 15:30-31) implies that some action is expected from the community against the offender; however the niphal, *nikrat*, is better translated 'he *will* be cut off' (Gen. 17:4; cf. NRSV), which is probably a warning of divine action, rather than instruction to the community.
- 13 It is possible that 'cutting off' was generally effected by death (e.g. Jer. 9:21); and in the legal material it is sometimes set alongside execution (Exod. 31:14; Lev. 20:2-3). However, the link is made specific on relatively few occasions. Where the expression occurs in other passages, it is frequently linked with failed inheritance (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:33; 24:21 cf. 1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25), including the failure to inherit divine blessings (e.g. 1 Kgs 9:7; Ps. 37:9, 22, 28, 34, 38). For further discussion, of the expression, see Eryl W. Davies, *Numbers* (NCB; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans / London: Marshall Pickering, 1995), pp. 83-84; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, pp. 457-460; Kiuchi, *Leviticus, passim*; Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 241-243.
- 14 Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (London: SCM, 1962-1965), 1:264, n. 182; however, cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus*, pp. 457-458. Davies notes that for the offender, excommunication would be tantamount to a death sentence (*Numbers*, p. 84); see also von Rad, *OT Theology*, 1:268; Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, p. 140.
- 15 Kiuchi sees an antonymous link between 'cutting off' and atonement: 'the sacrificial blood prevents and saves the offerer from being cut off (*nikrat*) from his or her people and enables the person to remain within the covenant community' (*Leviticus*, p. 322). This implies that a person is cut off when there is no possibility of atonement through sacrifice; which reverses the order I am proposing: that there is no possibility of atonement through sacrifice because a person has been cut off. However, it is possible to see this as a more mutual relationship: where sin can be atoned for, the person is enabled to remain within the community – and that is a key role of the sacrificial system. Where sin cannot be atoned for, the individual sinner is cut off from the covenant community, and so deprived of any future benefit of the sacrificial system until his or her place within the community is restored.
- 16 This is not necessarily the same as formal excommunication; it relates, rather, to how offenders stand in God's sight. They might still take part in worship; but sacrifices would not be accepted and so would be ineffective in securing forgiveness. The ineffectuality of inappropriately offered sacrifices is not an uncommon idea in the Old Testament.
- 17 Among the words and expressions used to render the term in English are: mercy, kindness, love, covenant love, steadfast love, everlasting or unfailing love and lovingkindness.
- 18 For further discussion of *hesed*, including an overview of current opinion, see Gordon Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTS 157; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Robin Routledge, 'Hesed as Obligation', *TynBul* 46.1 (1995), pp. 179-96; Brian Britt, 'Unexpected Attachments: A Literary Approach to the Term *hesed* in the Hebrew Bible' *JSOT* 27.3 (2003), pp. 289-307.
- 19 Routledge, 'Hesed as Obligation', p. 186.
- 20 E.g. Hos. 12:6[7]; Mic. 6:8; Zec. 7:9
- 21 E.g. Jer. 2:2; Hos. 6:4,6
- 22 See also, e.g., Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; cf. Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997), pp. 215-218.
- 23 Brueggemann, *Theology*, p. 216.
- 24 Deut. 7:9, 12; 1 Kings 8:23 (=2 Chr. 6:14); Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4. These verses probably refer to the Sinaitic covenant.
- 25 E.g. Ps. 89:28; 106:45; Isa. 54:10.
- 26 It is the existence of a recognised relationship that distinguishes *hesed* from the Hebrew term *hen* (grace, favour). This is also included in the orthodox summary of God's attributes (Ex. 34:6), where it is linked with divine compassion (*rahamim*). *Hen* and *rahamim* refer to a disposition of good will towards someone in need, and often to God's grace or compassion (e.g. Prov. 3:34; Isa. 26:10) but do not have the close links with faithfulness, obligation and commitment that is present with *hesed*. On *hen* see further, e.g., H-J. Fabry, *TDOT* 5:22-36; Terence E. Fretheim, *NIDOTTE*, 2:203-206; on *rahamim* see further, e.g., George Michael Butterworth, *NIDOTTE*, 3:1093-95; H. Simeon-Yofre and U. Dahmen, *TDOT* 13:437-54.
- 27 E.g. Jer. 31:3; Hos. 2:18-20.
- 28 See also Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Enquiry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1978), p. 148.
- 29 See also Ps. 36:10[11] – *continue your hesed to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart*.
- 30 E.g. Ps. 25:7; 51:3; 130:7.
- 31 The title of the Psalm provides a canonical link with David's adultery with Bathsheba, and indicates that the theological content of Psalm 51 was thought applicable to David's situation at an early stage in the text's transmission, and it seems reasonable to assume that the basis of appeal and the hope of forgiveness are relevant to someone who, like David, is

- guilty of a serious, deliberate sin.
- 32 The expression is not used specifically in connection with adultery and murder; though it is applied to those guilty of shedding blood (Lev. 17:4), and this may be linked with the reference to *bloodguilt* in Psalm 51:14 [16]; see also Num. 35:30-34.
- 33 Cf. Artur Weiser, *Psalms* (OTL; London: SCM, 1962; repr. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000). Weiser sees vv. 18-19 as a post-exilic appendix, which re-emphasises the importance of sacrifice, and re-interprets the earlier part of the psalm, which for Weiser questions the value of sacrifice, 'in the light of the absence of cultic observances during the exile' (p. 410). It is possible that these verses were added later, though to interpret, not contradict, the earlier verses; maybe to adapt the psalm for community use; see, e.g., Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*. (TOTC; Leicester: Inter-varsity, 1976), p. 194; and maybe to provide a balance to what some might take as anti-cultic sentiments; see, e.g., Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (WBC 20; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), pp. 29-30. The argument set out below offers an interpretation of the psalm as a unified canonical whole.
- 34 See, e.g., Weiser, *Psalms*, pp. 409-410.
- 35 E.g. Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, pp. 193-194.
- 36 Goldingay speaks about God's commitment to and renewal of the priesthood which includes bringing appropriate sacrifices; see John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity / Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2003-2006), 2:491-504 [492-493].
- 37 See the discussion by Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans / Livonia, MI: Dove, 1997), pp. 454-456.
- 38 See, e.g., A. A. Anderson, *Psalms*, 2 vols. (NCB; Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), 1:400-401; H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel* (London: SPCK, 1967), p. 246.
- 39 Isa. 24:5; Jer. 11:10; 31:32; Hos. 6:7; 8:1; Mal. 2:14; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8.
- 40 See Mic. 6:6-8 and maybe also Jer. 6:20; Hos. 6:6. See Eichrodt's discussion, *Theology*, 1:168.
- 41 A further factor in the attitude towards sacrifice of the pre-exilic prophets may be the imminence of exile. The interior approach to God might be seen as preparing the way for an approach to God in a situation where sacrifices would not be possible. However, the exile is also viewed as a separation from God, reflecting the breakdown of the covenant relationship; and the inability to offer sacrifices (which are in any case corrupt) may be part of that (Jer. 3:6-10; Ezek. 16; Hos. 2:11-13; 3:3-4).
- 42 This might also provide the basis on which the non-Israelite nations, who are from the start outside the sacrificial system, may be accepted by God and participate in the worship of the covenant community – which includes offering acceptable sacrifices (e.g. Isa. 56:3-8).
- 43 Tate, *Psalms* 51-100, p.28.
- 44 Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, p. 32.
- 45 Eichrodt, *Theology*, 1:168.
- 46 Eichrodt claims support from Ps. 40:6 [7]; 51:18-19 [20-21]; 69:30-31 [31-32]. We have already noted problems with this interpretation of Ps. 51:18-19[20-21]. Ps. 40:6[7] may envisage a similar situation to Ps. 51 – where the cult is not applicable, and appeal is made to God's mercy (*rahamim*) and *hesed* (v. 11[12]); or it might be as Craigie suggests, that the king will have carried out all the cultic requirements, but knows that more is required of him; see, e.g., Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), p. 315. It is not obedience and listening to God *instead* of sacrifice, but *in addition* to it, as part of its true meaning. Again, this does not reflect a rejection of the sacrificial system. Ps. 69:31[32] does imply that sincere praise and thanksgiving is more acceptable to God than sacrifice. This is set in the context of thanksgiving for deliverance rather than an appeal for forgiveness; but here, too, it does not imply a repudiation of the cult. The passage is relative: the right attitude of the worshipper is vital to sacrifice, and more pleasing to God than mechanistic sacrifice alone. This may also be seen in the wisdom literature; so, for example, the statement in Prov. 15:8 – *The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him* – does not oppose sacrifice to prayer, but emphasises the importance of a right inner response over against a rite that is wholly external, lacking inward reality; see de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 455.
- 47 Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, p. 246.
- 48 We see the same kind of problem with the old covenant. The covenant itself is not at fault; but the people have broken it, and so have put their relationship with God in jeopardy. It is on the basis of God's *hesed* that he promises to restore the relationship and to establish a New Covenant, which includes within it the necessary spiritual renewal that will enable the people to live by its terms.
- 49 See, for example, Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, pp. 30-32.
- 50 Eichrodt, *Theology*, 1:168.
- 51 The Epistle of Barnabas (2) translates Jer. 7:22-23 – *'When your fathers came out of the land of Egypt, did I ever tell them to offer me burnt offerings and sacrifices? Never...'* and implies that physical sacrifice was never part of God's plan.
- 52 Kiuchi has the tendency to spiritualise the significance of sacrifice in what is otherwise a fine commentary on Leviticus. So, for example, the burnt offering symbolises death to self and the world; the burning of the fat of the sin offering symbolises the 'annihilation of the egocentric nature by which a person forfeits his relationship with God' (*Leviti-*

cus, p. 106). These are valid New Testament ideas, which may be developed from the Old Testament, but it is unlikely that they would have been understood in those terms by the Old Testament writers.

- 53 This view of sacrifice does seem to be presented in the Letter to the Hebrews (7:26-10:18). However, this seems to be concerned to emphasise the superiority of Christ's sacrifice and to challenge those who might be tempted to go on trusting the sacrificial

system. The emphasis is on the fulfilment of Old Testament sacrifices through Christ rather than their replacement with a more internal faith at an earlier stage. Even passages that some take to imply such a transition (e.g. 10:5-10) are directly linked with Christ.

- 54 This is not to suggest that confession and forgiveness should become a mere formality; what I am suggesting here is the idea that we keep short accounts with God.

Old Testament Theology Vol. 1: Israel's Gospel

John Goldingay

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John Goldingay is the David Allan Hubbard Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena.

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Old Testament Theology Vol. 2: Israel's Faith

John Goldingay

This second volume in Goldingay's trilogy finds its point of departure in the Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom literature. Whereas the first volume followed the epochal divine acts of Israel's 'gospel' narrative, here Goldingay sets out the faith of Israel under the major rubrics of God, Israel, The Nightmare, The Vision, The World, The Nations, Humanity.

In a style that cleaves closely to the text, Goldingay offers up a masterful exposition of the faith of the First Testament, one born of living long with the text and the refined skill of asking interesting questions and listening with trained attention. Never one to sacrifice a close hearing of a text for an easy generality, or to mute a discordant note for the sake of reassuring harmony, Goldingay gives us an Old Testament theology shot through with the edge-of-the-seat vitality of discovery.

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Paternoster

9 Holdom Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1QR, UK

Das „Volkstestament der Deutschen“: „Die Botschaft Gottes“ – ein deutsch-christliches Neues Testament im Dritten Reich

Jochen Eber

Friedrich-Haus-Studienzentrum, Schriesheim, Deutschland

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wenig bekannt ist bisher, dass Wissenschaftler im Dritten Reich auch auf kirchlicher Seite mit ihrer Arbeit aktiv den Prozess der „Entjudung“ des deutschen Volkes unterstützt haben. Unterstützt von elf Landeskirchen widmete sich das Eisenacher „Institut zur Erforschung (und Beseitigung) des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben“ ab 1939 dieser Aufgabe im Sinne der damals herrschenden Weltanschauung. Ein Kreis von etwa 190 Freunden unterstützte die Forschungstätigkeit; an Tagungen nahmen einige hundert Personen teil. Auf

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SUMMARY

It is a little known fact that some church scholars actively supported the process of “dejudaizing” the German people. From 1939 onwards, the Eisenach-based “Institute for the exploration (and elimination) of Jewish influence upon the life of the German church” devoted itself to this task in accordance to the then-ruling worldview – supported by eleven *Landeskirchen*. A circle of about 190 friends supported the research; conferences were attended by several hundred people. Against the back-

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RÉSUMÉ

C’est un fait peu connu que, au sein même de l’Église, des intellectuels ont apporté par leurs travaux un soutien actif au III^e Reich dans sa tentative de «déjudaiser» le peuple allemand. À partir de 1939, «l’Institut pour l’étude (et l’élimination) de l’influence juive sur la vie de l’Église en Allemagne», situé à Eisenach, s’est consacré à cette tâche dans la ligne de ce qui constituait alors la vision du monde dominante, et ce avec le soutien des Églises officielles de onze régions (*Landeskirchen*). Un cercle d’environ cent quatre-vingt-dix amis a apporté son soutien à ce projet de recherche. Des centaines de personnes ont assisté aux conférences de l’Institut. Dans le contexte de

dem Hintergrund des Zweiten Weltkrieges deutete man die eigenen Aktivitäten als „ein Stück des Kriegseinsatzes der deutschen Religionswissenschaft“. Unter den Publikationen der Eisenacher Forschungsstätte zieht die 1940 erstmals veröffentlichte Auswahlausgabe des Neuen Testaments besondere Aufmerksamkeit auf sich. Das Institut verfolgte mit diesem Werk eine volksmissionarische Absicht. Der unter ideologischen Vorzeichen völlig umorganisierte, neu übersetzte und „entjudete“ Text sollte den völkisch orientierten Zeitgenossen den Weg freimachen, Weltanschauung und Religion wieder zu vereinbaren.

* * * *

ground of the second world war they interpreted their own activities as “part of the war efforts of German religious studies”. Among the publications of the Eisenach Institute the publication of parts of the New Testament attracts special attention (first published in 1940). With this work the Institute pursued a missionary agenda aimed at the German people. Utilizing ideological assumptions, the text was completely reorganised, retranslated and “dejudaized” and was meant to help their nationalistically-inclined contemporaries to reunite worldview and religion.

* * * *

la seconde guerre mondiale, ils considéraient leurs activités comme «la contribution du département des études religieuses à l’effort de guerre». Parmi les publications de l’Institut d’Eisenach, l’édition de parties du Nouveau Testament (publié 1940) peut retenir une attention particulière. Par cet ouvrage, l’Institut visait un objectif missionnaire à l’intention du peuple allemand. En fonction de leurs partis-pris idéologiques, ses membres ont complètement réorganisé le texte du Nouveau Testament, en ont produit une nouvelle traduction et l’ont «déjudaisé» dans le but de favoriser la réconciliation de la religion avec la vision du monde de leurs contemporains imprégnés d’idées nationalistes.

Seit dem Erscheinen der „Volxbibel“ (Neues Testament) und der „Bibel in gerechter Sprache“ im Jahr 2006 widmet man in Deutschland dem Thema Bibelübersetzung wieder breite Aufmerksamkeit. Ein Zeichen der anhaltenden Diskussion ist, dass zahlreiche Bücher neu erschienen sind, die sich auf populärer Ebene mit dem Vergleich der verschiedenen Bibelübersetzungen beschäftigen.¹

Nicht zum ersten Mal wird in diesen umstrittenen Übertragungen ins Deutsche versucht, mit wohlgemeinten Argumenten oder ideologischen Rastern die Bibel nicht „nur richtig“ zu übersetzen, sondern es den Leuten recht zu machen. Diese Versuche sind nicht neu – das kann jeder entdecken, der sich mit der Geschichte der Bibelübersetzung in die deutsche Sprache beschäftigt.

So war es zum Beispiel der Aufklärung wichtig, die Bibel dem Denken des damaligen Zeitgenossen anzupassen. Neue Übersetzungen erschienen so zahlreich wie nie zuvor in der Geschichte der deutschen Bibel. Johann Lorenz Schmidt (1702-1749) wollte mit dem ersten Band seiner „Wertheimer Bibel“ 1735 die christliche Offenbarung für den vernünftigen Menschen seiner Zeit verständlich machen und legte sein deistisches Gottesbild als Maßstab an den Text, den er ausgiebig mit Anmerkungen versah. Er schaffte es immerhin, innerhalb eines Jahres über tausend Exemplare seines Werkes abzusetzen. Dann wurde er durch Anzeige des pietistischen Theologieprofessors Joachim Lange in Halle bei Reichshofrat angeklagt und in Untersuchungshaft genommen. Die nicht verkauften Exemplare seines Werkes wurden konfisziert und der Gebrauch dieser Bibelausgabe in evangelischen und katholischen Ländern verboten. Nach einjährigem Gefängnisarrest betätigte sich Schmidt als Übersetzer deistischen Schrifttums. Sein aufklärerischer Übersetzungsversuch und der Streit, den er ausgelöst hat, findet bis heute breite Beachtung auch außerhalb der Kirchengeschichtsforschung.²

Ein wenig bekanntes Beispiel der Bibelübersetzung aufgrund ideologischer Vorentscheidungen ist „Die Botschaft Gottes“, „im Jahr des deutschen Entscheidungskampfes“ 1940 herausgegeben vom „Institut zur Erforschung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben“. Unter den Vorzeichen nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft in Deutschland wollten deutsch-christliche Kreise dem Volk eine Bibel an die Hand geben, die der herrschenden politischen Weltanschauung entsprach. Im folgenden Beitrag wird ein kurzer Überblick über die Arbeit des Eisenacher Instituts sowie über Grundsätze und Beispiele des von ihm

herausgegebenen Neuen Testaments gegeben.

Wer stand hinter diesem Institut und welche Ziele hat es sich seiner Arbeit gesetzt?

1. Das Eisenacher „Institut zur Erforschung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben“ und seine Mitarbeiter

Bezeichnenderweise wird diese Einrichtung auch zitiert als (und hat sich bei der Gründung auch so benannt) „Institut zur Erforschung *und Beseitigung* des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben“ oder kurz als „Eisenacher Entjudungsinstitut“.³

1.1 Die Gründung

Das Institut entstand 1939 auf Initiative deutsch-christlicher Theologen und Kirchenleiter von elf Landeskirchen. Diese hatten schon ab 1938 ein Institut gefordert, das sich mit der „Entjudung des kirchlichen Lebens“ befassen sollte.⁴ Am 6. Mai wurde es im Gasthof der Wartburg in Eisenach feierlich gegründet. Als Leiter amtierte der ehemalige bayerische Pfarrer und Gründer der Thüringer DC, Oberregierungsrat Siegfried Leffler. Die wissenschaftliche Leitung lag bei Walter Grundmann aus Jena, Kassierer war der Eisenacher Kirchenregierungsrat Erwin Brauer. Die Geschäfte des Instituts in Eisenach führte Pfarrer Heinz Hunger.⁵

Das Institut musste sich *im Gegensatz zu zwei theologischen Anschauungen* positionieren: gegen die Bekennende Kirche, für die eine unaufgebbare Verbindung mit dem alttestamentlichen Glauben zum Wesen des Christentums gehörte, und gegen das Neuheidentum, das aus demselben Grund den Ansatz des Instituts für unmöglich hielt.⁶ Neuheidnische „Gottgläubige“ kommentieren in ihren Zeitschriften, dass die Eisenacher Neugründung sowieso nur bestätige, was sie schon immer gedacht hatten: Der christliche Glaube sei untrennbar mit dem jüdischen verbunden. Wenn nun der „unüberbrückbare Gegensatz zum Judentum“ herausgearbeitet und die Kirche „entjudet“ werden solle, sei dies doch wohl der Anfang vom Ende: „Wenn ihr das Christentum entjuden wollt, bleibt vom Christentum überhaupt nichts, aber auch gar nichts übrig! Zu dieser Erkenntnis hat sich deutsche Gläubigkeit bereits durchgerungen, und das Ergebnis eurer Arbeit in eurem Institut wird dieselbe Erkenntnis sein!...“⁷

1.2 Mitarbeiter

Kritik von nicht-christlicher Seite konnte die Mitarbeiter des Instituts nicht bremsen. Auch wenn die Gründungs- und Trägerkirchen von Altpreußen, Sachsen, Hessen-Nassau, Schleswig-Holstein, Thüringen, Mecklenburg, Pfalz, Anhalt, Oldenburg, Lübeck und die neudeutsche Evangelische Kirche in Österreich nur geringe Geldmittel zur Verfügung gestellt hatten, sorgten fast ausschließlich ehrenamtliche Mitarbeiter und Förderer aller kirchlichen Dienstebenen für den Fortschritt der „Entjudung“ von Glaube und Kirche. Hans Prolingheuer hat alte Frakturschrift-Namenslisten aus Originaldokumenten neu veröffentlicht; eine neuere Liste zählt rund 190 Freunde auf.⁸ Zwar rekrutiert sich der Freundeskreis des Instituts in der Mehrzahl aus Pfarrern. Zahlreich sind jedoch Kirchenleitungsmitglieder, Superintenden ten und Professoren vertreten. 33 Kirchenleitungsmitglieder waren vertreten, 67 Hochschullehrer und Akademiker und 88 Pfarrer. Die wenigsten von ihnen publizierten allerdings in den Veröffentlichungen des Instituts und sind daher als reine Unterstützer zu betrachten. Einige zumeist noch bekannte Namen von Landesbischöfen sind Erwin Balzer (Lübeck), Heinrich Josef Oberheid (Bad Godesberg), Adalbert Paulsen (Kiel), Friedrich Peter (Berlin), Martin Sasse (Eisenach), Walter Schultz (Schwerin) und Johannes Volkers (Oldenburg).⁹

Der prominenteste Hochschullehrer und mit Abstand eifrigste Publizist des Instituts war zweifellos Walter Grundmann (1906-1976) aus Jena.¹⁰ Prominente Unterstützer und weitere – zum Teil weniger bekannte – Mitarbeiter waren: Georg Bertram (Gießen), Walter Birnbaum (Göttingen), Heinz Heinrich Eisenhuth (Jena), Theodor Ellwein (Berlin), Wolf Meyer-Erlach (Jena), Karl-Friedrich Euler (Gießen), Paul Fiebig (Leipzig), Johannes Hempel (Berlin), Heinz Hunger (Eisenach), Paul Jäger (Freiburg), Wilhelm Koepp (Greifswald), Johannes Leipoldt¹¹ (Leipzig), Theodor Odenwald (Heidelberg), Rudolf Paret (Bonn), Werner Petersmann (Breslau), Herbert Preisker (Breslau), Martin Redeker (Kiel), Carl Schneider (Königsberg), Wilhelm Stapel (Hamburg), Hermann Werdermann (Dortmund, Rostock) und Georg Wobbermin (Berlin, Göttingen). Wichtig für die Neuherausgabe des Neuen Testaments war der Altenburger Oberpfarrer Erich Fromm (1892-1944).¹²

Aus heutiger Perspektive verwundert, dass Personen, die wir vielleicht erwartet hätten, nicht als

Institutsmitglieder aufgeführt sind – etwa Emanuel Hirsch¹³ und Gerhard Kittel.¹⁴ Die Ursache dafür ist entweder unsere Fehleinschätzung dieser Persönlichkeiten, die den streng antisemitischen Kurs des Instituts vermutlich nicht teilten. Oder man muss auf den weiteren Kreis von Theologen verweisen, die auf theologischen Tagungen der Deutschen Christen als Redner oder Teilnehmer anwesend waren, aber nicht Institutsmitglieder geworden sind¹⁵: Es gab verschiedene Gruppierungen von Theologen, die mit den DC sympathisierten, aber untereinander nicht zusammenarbeiteten. Auch wenn die Zahlen nicht zu hoch veranschlagt werden dürfen – es gab schließlich Dutzende Theologieprofessoren und tausende Pfarrer in Deutschland –, wird es doch eine nicht geringe Zahl von Mitläufern gegeben haben, die nicht Mitglieder des Instituts gewesen sind, aber dessen Zielen zustimmten.

1.3 Theologisch-politische Grundlagen

Walter Grundmann erhielt 1936 einen Lehrauftrag für Neues Testament und „Völkische Theologie“, 1938 eine ordentliche Professur an der Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Jena. In dieser Position engagiert er sich für die „Entjudung“ des christlichen und kirchlichen Lebens als „entscheidende Pflicht in der Gegenwart des kirchlichen Lebens“.¹⁶ 1937 veröffentlichte er das Programm einer „völkischen Theologie“, das die real existierende nationalsozialistische Anthropologie zur Grundlage der Theologie erklärte. Es geht in der Theologie wie in den anderen Wissenschaften um den Menschen: „Denn die Theologie ist nicht Wissenschaft von Gott her. Wer wollte sich vermessen, das zu tun? *Es geht in der Theologie um die Gottesbeziehung der Menschen, und zwar in christlicher Theologie um die Beziehung zwischen dem in Christus zu uns kommenden und sich uns kündenden Gott und den Menschen...*“¹⁷ Mit der rassistisch-völkisch-politischen Anthropologie im Sinne des NS-Hofpädagogen Ernst Krieck ist aller Wissenschaft und damit auch der Theologie ein neuer Ansatzpunkt vorgegeben, der auch ihre Universitätszugehörigkeit legitimiert. „*Völkische Theologie unterscheidet sich darin von der bisherigen Theologie, daß sie nicht anders denken kann und will, als von der Grundlage einer völkisch-politischen Anthropologie aus...*“¹⁸

Im Eröffnungsvortrag über *Die Entjudung des religiösen Lebens als Aufgabe deutscher Theologie und Kirche* am 6. Mai 1939 in Eisenach kritisiert der vom Führer begeisterte Grundmann vom Rasse-

begriff aus den Kanon. Der jüdische Einfluss auf das deutsche religiöse Leben müsse ausgeschaltet werden: Es geht also eindeutig um „Beseitigung“ und nicht nur Erforschung jüdisch-christlicher Beziehungen.¹⁹ Grundmann fordert im Sinne einer fortgeführten Reformation die „Ablösung bisheriger Selbstverständlichkeiten“: Es gibt kein heilsgeschichtliches Monopol für das Alte Testament; die Gotteserfahrungen der anderen Völker sind zu rehabilitieren. Daher kann es auch „Kirche“ in bisherigem Sinn nicht mehr geben. Die christliche Kirche kann nach seiner Ansicht das Alte Testament nicht mehr als normativ akzeptieren.²⁰

Ein Aufruf zur Gründung eines Förderkreises von 1940 charakterisiert die Zielsetzung der Arbeit folgendermaßen:

Das Institut: „... hat sich die Aufgabe gesetzt, den jüdischen Geist innerhalb der religiösen Welt zu erkennen und auszuschalten. Es will die Eigenart des Christentums erkennen, die es befähigte, die entscheidende religiöse Größe innerhalb der europäischen Welt zu werden, und in ihm eine klare Scheidung zwischen christlichem Gut und jüdischen Elementen herbeiführen. Es erstrebt die Erkenntnis der eigenen Gesetzlichkeit der germanisch-deutschen Seele im Gegensatz zur jüdischen Art, wie sie im Ringen der deutschen Menschen um das Christentum zum Ausdruck kommt.

Diese Aufgabe will das Institut durch eine ernste wissenschaftliche Arbeit und durch Vorschläge zur praktischen religiösen Gestaltung, die aus der wissenschaftlichen Einsicht erwachsen, in Angriff nehmen...“²¹

Wenn man die Vorworte der 1940 bis 1943 erschienenen Aufsatzbände vergleicht, sieht man, dass sich die Schwere der Beschuldigungen gegenüber den Juden auf dem Hintergrund des Krieges immer mehr steigert. Im Vorwort zu Christentum und Judentum vom Mai 1940 heißt es noch eher milde und allgemein über den Arbeitsbereich der „Fragen von Gemüt und Seele“, zu denen die religiöse Frage gehöre:

Die Arbeit des Instituts dient dem deutschen Volk, dem Suchen und Kämpfen der deutschen Seele. Das deutsche Volk steht unter letztem Einsatz von Blut und Leben seiner Männer im entscheidenden Schicksalskampf um die deutsche Freiheit und eine Neuordnung Europas.

Und zur religiösen Frage wird verlautet:

Hier zu prüfen, was uns die Vergangenheit an

Werten überliefert hat und was an Gefahren in ihr liegt, um den Weg in die Zukunft in echter Verbundenheit mit den Werten der Vergangenheit und in klarer Überwindung der in ihr liegenden Gefahren gehen zu können, ist der eigentliche Sinn unserer Arbeit.

Im Jahr 1941 liest man dann schon:

Aber die eine Tatsache wird durch alle Zeiten unverrückbar bleiben: ein gesundes Volk muß und wird das Judentum in jeder Form ablehnen. Diese Tatsache ist vor der Geschichte und durch die Geschichte gerechtfertigt. Möge man sich auch über Deutschlands Haltung gegen das Judentum ereifern, *Deutschland hat dennoch die geschichtliche Rechtfertigung und die geschichtliche Berechtigung zum Kampf gegen das Judentum auf seiner Seite!*²²

Im Oktober 1941 werden das „Weltjudentum“ und weitere Gegner als die Hauptgegner Deutschlands ausgemacht, die auch das Institut mit seiner Arbeit bekämpfen will:

Die Forschungs- und Gestaltungsarbeit des Instituts gehört keiner Konfession oder religiösen Gruppe, sondern allein dem frommen deutschen Leben. Im großdeutschen Schicksalskampf, der ein Kampf gegen das Weltjudentum und gegen alle zersetzenden und nihilistischen Kräfte ist, gibt die Arbeit des Instituts an ihrem Platze das Rüstzeug zur Überwindung aller religiösen Überfremdung im Innern des Reiches an die Hand und dient dem Glauben des Reiches. So stellt sie ein Stück des Kriegseinsatzes der deutschen Religionswissenschaft dar... Das Motto aber unserer Arbeit lautet: Jetzt und allezeit dem Reich und seinem Führer!²³

Im März 1943 ist nur noch „der Jude“ die Wurzel allen Übels in der Welt, der durch den Krieg und die geistige Unterstützung der Institutsarbeit ausgerottet werden muss:

Der entscheidende deutsche Kampf um Freiheit und Leben unseres Volkes offenbart sich immer deutlicher als Kampf gegen die zersetzenden und zerstörenden Mächte auf allen Gebieten des Lebens. Überall wird hinter diesen zersetzenden Mächten der Jude sichtbar. Die Aufgabe deutscher Geistes- und Religionswissenschaft wird in diesem Zusammenhang immer größer. Denn den Kampf der Waffen begleitet der Kampf des Geistes. Schlagen die Waffen den Feind, so spürt der Geist seine Wege und Methoden auf, mit denen er in das innere Leben der Nation

einzudringen sucht, zeigt ihn in seiner wirklichen Gestalt und hilft die geistigen Voraussetzungen zu seiner Überwindung zu schaffen. In diesen Dienst hat sich die Arbeit des Institutes zur Erforschung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben seit Anbeginn gestellt...²⁴

Das Eisenacher Institut wollte gar keine eigenständige Beitrag zu kirchlich-theologischer Arbeit leisten. Der Hauptaugenmerk galt nicht mehr der Kirche, sondern der Politik. Dies zeigt sich auch daran, dass in den Eisenacher *Verbandsmitteilungen* von 1941 die Eröffnung einer „Außenstelle Frankfurt a. M. der Hohen Schule der NSDAP, Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage“ begrüßt und ausführlich von dessen Eröffnungsfeier und der ersten Arbeitstagung vom 26. bis 28.3.1941 berichtet wird.²⁵ Es sei wichtig, dass es keine Monopolisierung der Forschungsarbeit gebe. Die Arbeit „verwandter Institute“ wird von Frankfurt begrüßt, man will sie anregen, fördern und unterstützen. – Dazu die Eisenacher: „Es bedarf keiner Versicherung, daß uns an einer Zusammenarbeit sehr viel gelegen ist und wir alles tun, um sie zu verwirklichen, da unsere Arbeit Dienst an der deutschen Nation sein will.“ – Entsprechend weist man auf die Zeitschrift *Weltkampf* aus Frankfurt hin und auf die Hauptveröffentlichung des Instituts, das *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*,²⁶ das von 1940 bis 1943 in einer Gesamtauflage von 14.000 Exemplaren erschienen ist.²⁷ – Die Eisenacher sahen sich also nicht als ein *theologisch*-wissenschaftliche Forschungseinrichtung neben ihresgleichen, sie deuteten ihre Existenz vielmehr aus der Geistesverwandtschaft mit völkisch-politischen Instituten.

1.4 Was wollte das Institut erreichen: Ziele und Projekte

Das Entjudungsinstitut plante umfangreiche Forschungsarbeiten, die nicht nur in wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen, Vorträge und Konferenzen, sondern auch in praktische Arbeitshilfen für den Gemeindegebrauch einmünden sollten. Über die Planungen wurde die Öffentlichkeit durch die *Verbandsmitteilungen* informiert.²⁸ Im Bereich der Gemeindeliteratur gab es allerdings schon mehrere deutsch-christliche Veröffentlichungen, die im Weimarer Verlag *Deutsche Christen* bzw. *Der neue Dom* erschienen waren. Daher wurden einige Arbeitsprojekte nicht realisiert, weil zwischenzeitlich in derselben Sparte schon in Weimar Werke publiziert worden waren.

So wurde 1941 mitgeteilt, die „nationalkirchliche Einung „Deutsche Christen““ habe im Verlag „Der neue Dom“ ein entjudetes „deutsches Gesangbuch“ *Großer Gott, wir loben dich* herausgegeben. Es wurde am 13.6. in der Wartburgkapelle der Öffentlichkeit übergeben. Da die Kommission nach denselben Grundsätzen arbeitete, die sich auch das Institut zu eigen gemacht hatte, verzichteten die Eisenacher auf eigene hymnologische Forschungen: „*Das Institut macht es zu seiner eigenen Sache und empfiehlt es seinen Freunden und Förderern.*“²⁹

Praktische Ergebnisse wollte das Institut neben dem Gesangbuch in zwei wichtigen Bereichen vorlegen:

1. Die Evangelienausgabe bzw. später das Neue Testament und eine ganze Bibelausgabe, die das Jüdische getilgt hat.
2. Ein Volksbuch deutscher Frömmigkeit als eine Art Glaubenskatechismus.

Außerdem war weiteres Aufklärungsmaterial geplant.³⁰

Als deutsches Volksbuch wurde unter der Federführung von Walter Grundmann das Buch *Deutsche mit Gott : Ein deutsches Glaubensbuch*³¹ geplant, es erschien 1941. Die Christologie der bunten völkischen Textmischung sieht in Christus eindeutig nicht den wahren Gott des Nizänums, sondern einen „Helfer zum Glauben“ und „Heiland der Deutschen“. Das neu formulierte Glaubensbekenntnis lautet:

Wir glauben an Gott. / Ursprung, Kraft und Ziel aller Dinge, den allmächtigen Herrn über Leben und Tod, / den Lenker der Völker und Menschen, / der unser Leben uns anvertraut, / der uns ruft zu Treue und Dienst, unseren Vater.

Wir glauben an Gott, / Von ihm kommt Jesus Christus, / des Vaters Sohn, / der Menschen Bruder, / der Ueberwinder von Sünde, Leid und Tod, / der Sieger am Kreuz, / der uns das Herz füllt mit Freude zu Gott, / der uns zu Kindern ruft in Gottes Reich, / unser Heiland.

Wir glauben an Gott. / Er verbindet sich mit uns durch seinen Geist, / schafft die glaubende Gemeinde in unserem Volk, / tut uns das Herz auf für sein heiliges Walten, / macht uns gewiß seiner Gnade und Treue, / führt uns hinein in das ewige Leben.³²

Im Dezember 1941 wird in den *Verbandsmitteilungen* gemeldet, das Lebensgeleitbuch „Der Ruf des Lebens“ – eine Art Andachtsbuch – sei „im wesentlichen fertiggestellt“.³³ Es scheint jedoch

nicht erschienen zu sein. 1941 waren außerdem in Planung: ein größeres Werk über „Die Geschichte Gottes mit den Deutschen und der Deutschen mit Gott“, drei religiöse Bücher für Kinder, Jugendliche und für das deutsche Haus sowie ein deutscher Psalter als ein Buch, „das in gleicher Weise der Besinnung und Anbetung dient“.³⁴ Diese Werke sind alle nicht nachweisbar, d. h. offensichtlich nicht mehr erschienen.

EXKURS

Welche Art von Gemeindeliteratur zu erwarten gewesen wäre, kann man an der Konfirmationsgabe *Bereitschaft und Ausfahrt: Ein Lebensgeleitbuch für junge Deutsche* von Rudolf Heubel sehen. Das 55 Seiten starke Heft erschien 1941 im Verlag Deutsche Christen in Weimar. Der Inhalt des Heftes konzentriert sich auf Heimat, Beruf und Arbeit, eine soldatische Gesinnung, die dem Führer verpflichtet ist und das Heldentum. Neben Gedichten und Werkausschnitten deutscher Dichter und Denker findet sich auch ein Führergedicht des Herausgebers und ein Abschnitt aus *Mein Kampf* von Adolf Hitler. Mehrere Gedichte stammen aus dem deutsch-christlichen Gedichtband *Erde in Gottes Hand* von Hermann Ohland. Eines seiner Gedichte beschließt das Konfirmationsbuch, es schwört die Konfirmanden auf „die Fahne“ ein und bereitet sie auf den Tod auf dem Schlachtfeld vor.³⁵ Im Nachwort legt der Herausgeber Heubel Rechenschaft vom Zweck der Konfirmation. Sie soll stark machen im Glauben, und den Weg zu Tapferkeit und Tätigkeit lehren. Dazu braucht es „Vorbilder gläubiger deutscher Menschen“.³⁶ Wer hätte gedacht, dass in der Konfirmation ein Gelübde auf eine bestimmte Glaubenslehre oder Konfession abgelegt werden solle! Vielmehr geht es mit Goethe um das Bedürfnis der Menschen, „auf den Höhepunkten ihres Lebens Gott zu begegnen“.³⁷ So wird die Konfirmation zur deutsch-christlichen Jugendweihe: „Ihr tretet vor Gott hin, der alles deutschen Wesens Ursprung ist, unser Schöpfer... In der Stunde unserer ‚Konfirmation‘, unsrer Jugendfeier, stehen wir vor Gott, der uns als Deutsche schuf, der uns den Führer gab, der ein ewiger Vater ist über unserem Volk und Land.“³⁸

Auf der letzten Seite seines Werkes schlägt der Autor militaristische Töne an und will die Jugendlichen auf ihr Vaterland verpflichten:

Unsres Wesens Ursprung hat Gott eingebettet in unser Volk, wie die Quelle eingebettet ist um

Grund des Gebirges. Unser Werk und *unsre Aufgabe* hat er uns gewiesen: Deutschland zu dienen allezeit! Nun wollen wir uns auf den *Weg* machen:

Wir wollen stark sein in unsrer Liebe, stark in unsrer Treue zu dir, Vaterland, Mutterland, denn es ist auf Erden kein Land wie du. Du bist uns heiliges Land, du bist uns Gottesland, frei und stark, stolz und schön, du liebes Land!

Deutschland, o Deutschland!³⁹

Das Eisenacher Institut verstand seine wissenschaftliche und publizistische Arbeit als „ein Stück Kriegseinsatz deutscher Wissenschaft“,⁴⁰ ehe die Mitarbeiter selber 1943 zum Dienst an der Waffe eingezogen werden. Auf der ersten Arbeitstagung im März 1940 konnte man immerhin 600 Teilnehmer zählen.⁴¹ Es hat dem Institut auch in der Kriegszeit offensichtlich nicht an Unterstützung aus den Landeskirchen gefehlt.

2. Das „entjudete“ Neue Testament

2.1 Grundsätzliches

Der Jenaer Professor Walter Grundmann (1906-1976) und der Altenburger Oberpfarrer Erich Fromm (1892-1944) haben von der Übersetzungsarbeit am Neuen Testament Rechenschaft abgelegt. Grundmann beschrieb die Bearbeitung der Evangelien in den *Verbandsmitteilungen* von 1939. Gemeinsam mit Fromm, Wilhelm Büchner, Heinz Hunger und Heinrich Weinmann schrieb er 1940 das Vorwort zur Gesamtausgabe des Neuen Testaments. Erich Fromm verfasste noch im gleichen Jahr eine Fortsetzung von Grundmanns Aufsatz in den *Verbandsmitteilungen* über die Redaktion der Briefe und übrigen Schriften des Neuen Testaments und ein separat erschienenenes „Geleitwort“ von knapp 60 Seiten.⁴²

1. Grundmanns Neuübersetzung des NT geschieht „aus einer dreifachen Verantwortung heraus“ gegenüber der Wissenschaft, dem Christentum und dem deutschen Volk (22). „Die Ergebnisse auch der deutschen theologischen Wissenschaft gehören dem deutschen Volk.“ (22) Christliche Verantwortung bedeutet, dass „in den schweren Entscheidungsstunden des völkischen Gesamtlebens... auch die Entscheidung über die zukünftige Gestalt christlichen Glaubens im deutschen Volke“ fällt (ebd.) „... unser deutsches Volk brauch die letzten tragfähigen religiösen Kräfte und soll sie erlangen in einer positiven Verbindung mit dem Glauben seiner Väter.“ (ebd.)

Grundmann Überlegungen in den *Verbandsmitteilungen* setzt ein bei der Begegnung von Christentum und Germanentum. Im Prozess der Christianisierung der Germanen hat die Kirche einen Beitrag zur Vereinigung der germanischen Stämme zu einem deutschen Reich geleistet. Die neuzeitliche Entwicklung des Verhältnisses von Staat und Kirche brachte eine zunehmende Entfremdung der Massen von der Kirche mit sich. Daran hat sich auch mit der Machtergreifung nichts geändert.

Das Jahr 1933 ist deshalb für das deutsche religiöse Leben von so epochaler Bedeutung wie kein anderes Ereignis zuvor, weil in diesem Jahr in einer großen Revolution eine neue Grundlage, auf der sich ein großer Teil des deutschen Volkes gefunden hatte und auf der das ganze Volk zusammengeführt werden sollte, sich durchsetzte, die nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung. Zum ersten Male in der deutschen Geschichte seit ihrem Beginn unter Heinrich I. war hier wieder eine alle umschließende Basis und Ordnung des deutschen Lebens geschaffen und in Erscheinung getreten. (6)

Die Kirchen sind durch den nationalsozialistischen Staat endgültig überflüssig geworden, weshalb alle Rechristianisierungsversuche scheitern müssen. Doch ist das Christentum damit nicht überflüssig geworden:

Es muß vielmehr restlos deutlich werden, herausgearbeitet und herausgelebt werden, was das spezifisch Christliche innerhalb der irdischen Existenz ist und was es für diese Existenz bedeutet, und zwar nicht nur, was es einmal bedeutet hat, sondern was es heute bedeutet. (6, im Original gesperrt)

Das Wesentliche der christlichen Botschaft in der neuen Situation formuliert Grundmann als „die Zusage Gottes, sich uns zu verbinden über alle Schuld und über allen Tod hinweg, daß wir ihn im Vertrauen anrufen und aus ihm in Gehorsam leben.“ (7) Diese Kernbotschaft findet sich (nicht in der Bibel sondern) im Neuen Testament, „und deshalb glauben wir, daß diese Arbeit entscheidend für die Lösung der deutschen religiösen Frage ist.“ (7)

Die epochemachende Bibelübersetzung Martin Luthers ist durch die Änderung von Lebensgefühl und Lebensanschauung in der Zwischenzeit problematisch geworden; auch kann die Bibel als Ergebnis historisch-kritischer Schriftforschung nicht mehr als ganze als Wort Gottes gelten. Dazu kommen die „ernsten Probleme“ durch den „völ-

kischen Aufbruch“ des Dritten Reichs. Zwar hat die kritische Forschung den Unterschied zwischen AT und NT herausgearbeitet, „so tritt nun mit voller Wucht die Erkenntnis des Jüdischen im Alten Testament und auch in bestimmten Partien des Neuen Testaments als ein neues Element hinzu, das für unzählige deutsche Menschen den Zugang zur Bibel versperrt.“ (7-8, Zitat 8)⁴³ Daher ist ein neues Schriftverständnis nötig, das auf die durch Wissenschaft und Volkstum gegebene Situation eingeht. Die textkritische Arbeit am NT soll dessen älteste Traditionen ablösen von sekundären Umformungen und Zusätzen. Das ursprüngliche Jesusbild ist „judenchristlich verunstaltet“ (ebd.). Die Arbeit am NT muss dort einsetzen, wo der „Gehalt an Gottesgemeinschaft und Gottesdienst“, der Jesu Leben „zur Gottesoffenbarung macht“, erkennbar ist:

Wir ziehen die Konsequenzen für unser Volk und versuchen den Überlieferungsgehalt, der auch uns so lebendig und wirkungskräftig erscheint, daß wir immer wieder zu diesem Buch greifen und von ihm gepackt werden, in seiner alten Form herauszuarbeiten und zugleich in eine Sprache zu gießen, die heute gesprochen wird. (ebd.)

Kritisch eruierte, lebendige Originalquellen sollen also in zeitgemäßer Sprache herausgebracht werden, um den erwünschten Effekt der Anerkennung durch die Volksgenossen zu erzielen.

Die Herausgabe des Volkstestaments ist durch den Zweiten Weltkrieg vordringlich geworden. Grundmann interpretiert ihn in apokalyptischen Termini als „den letzten Entscheidungskampf“ des deutschen Volkes. Hinter dieser Aufgabe muss eine komplexere Ausgabe (im Stil des amerikanischen *Jesus Seminars*) zurückgestellt werden; sie sollte durch verschiedene Drucktypen Originales und Sekundäres kenntlich machen (8-9).

In einer Arbeitsgemeinschaft sollen wissenschaftliche, praktisch-gemeindeorientierte und dichterische Anliegen zusammenfließen, um ein optimales Übersetzungsergebnis zu erzielen: „Die Gestaltung muß wissenschaftlich in Ordnung, praktisch verwertbar und sprachlich einwandfrei sein.“ (9, im Original gesperrt) Das „volksmissionarische“ Anliegen, den Volksgenossen zu erreichen, bestimmt die Arbeit, die nicht Luthers NT ersetzen soll. „Wir haben von Luther die Bibel deutsch erhalten, um an ihrer deutschen Gestalt dem Wachsen unserer Erkenntnis entsprechend weiter zu arbeiten.“ (9)

Nach diesen grundsätzlichen Überlegungen stellt Grundmann die „methodischen Erwägungen“ und „wissenschaftlichen Grundsätze“ seiner Arbeit dar (9-10). Er unterscheidet primäre und sekundäre Überlieferungen. Gemeindebildungen wie Chorschlüsse und weitere Stellen, die Bedürfnisse der Gemeinde reflektieren, werden tendenzkritisch ausgeschlossen, ebenso die theologischen Deutungskategorien der Evangelisten (10). Parallelüberlieferungen fallen weg (12), und Jesusworte können, wo nötig, kritisch korrigiert werden: „Sind also in den Worten Jesu Änderungen vorgenommen, so nur auf grund der synoptischen Vergleichung und Durchdenkung des Zusammenhanges, an keiner Stelle willkürlich.“ (12) Legenden werden ausgeschieden (13), ebenso der überwiegende Teil des apokalyptischen Stoffs, denn damit sei Jesus sparsam umgegangen (14). Offensichtliche Doppelüberlieferungen fallen weg, zum Beispiel die Speisung der 4000 oder das Gleichnis von der bittenden Witwe (Lk 18.1-8), das im Gleichnis vom bittenden Freund (Lk 11,5-13) enthalten ist. Die Geburts- und Kindheitsgeschichten werden radikal entjudaisiert; die Messiasdogmatik, die die Weihnachtsgeschichte mit Micha 5,1 verbindet, wird weggelassen: „Wir erachten uns nicht an judenchristliche Dogmatik von der Davidssohnschaft des Christus, der Jesus selbst gleichgültig gegenüberstand, wie Mark. 12, 35-37 erweist, gebunden.“ Die judenchristliche Jerusalemtradition der Passions- und Auferstehungserzählungen wird zugunsten der Galiläatradition (Joh 21) aufgegeben, denn schließlich war Jesus Galiläer und nicht Jude.⁴⁴

Wenn die im NT vorausgesetzten Verhältnisse „unseren Zeitgenossen nicht mehr bekannt sind“ (16), können auch erklärende Zusätze in den Text eingefügt werden, die „in jedem Fall knapp gehalten und dem Stil der Perikope angepaßt“ sind (17). „Im Grunde ist nur fortgeführt, was Markus 7,3-5 bereits für die hellenistischen Leser, die palästinische Sitten nicht kannten, geschehen ist.“ (ebd.) Auch einige Agrapha werden beigegeben (19). Der liberale Grundsatz „nicht an Jesus glauben, sondern wie Jesus glauben“ wird also auf der Ebene der Textkonstruktion weitergeführt: nicht *was* die Evangelisten schreiben, ist Gegenstand der theologischen Arbeit, sondern ein Forscher muss *wie* die Evangelisten schreiben. Neutestamentliche Begriffe werden methodisch so übersetzt:

Es ist bei den verschiedenen Vorstellungen und Begriffen der Versuch gemacht, sich zunächst

das zeitgenössische Verständnis und die zeitgenössischen Verhältnisse zu verdeutlichen, um dann eine Verdeutschung zu finden, die nicht dem aus dem Nichtwissen um die Verhältnisse kommenden Mißverständnis ausgesetzt ist. (18, im Original gesperrt)

2. Erich Fromms Aufsatz in den *Verbandsmitteilungen* gibt nur knapp Auskunft über die angewendeten Übersetzungsmaßstäbe. Die *Botschaft Gottes* hat vor allem „eine volksseelsorgerliche Aufgabe“: „Es will den erwachten deutschen Menschen zu einem vertieften Verständnis der Wirklichkeit Jesu Christi verhelfen.“ (45) Daher wurden geschichtliche Fakten nur beibehalten, insofern sie Informationen über die Entstehung der frühen Kirche enthielten. Alle anderen wie Reisepläne etc. wurden ausgeschieden. Die parakletischen Abschnitte der Apostelbriefe wurden reduziert: „Es wurden jene Mahnungen religiös-sittlicher Art aufgenommen, die auch heute wichtig und bedeutsam sind.“ (46) Wiederholungen und „für unsre heutigen Verhältnisse“ nicht mehr anwendbare Weisungen wurden entfernt. Fromm meint, damit den christlichen Glauben in der Gewissensbindung an den Willen Gottes gegen Gesetzlichkeit und Buchstabenknechtschaft zu verteidigen (ebd.). Zudem wollten die Apostelbriefe als Gelegenheitsschriften nicht Regeln für die kommenden Jahrhunderte aufstellen. „Wie *sie* den Gemeinden *ihrer* Zeit dienen wollten, so will *unsre* Wiedergabe *unserm* Volke dienen.“ (ebd., kursiver Text im Original gesperrt)

Mit der Sprache der Paulusbriefe hat sich Fromm schwergetan. Er stellt „Überladenes und Schwerfälliges“ fest, die Sprache werde durch den „Schwall von Worten unklar und ungenau im Ausdruck“ (47). „Hier konnte nur eine rücksichtslose Vereinfachung helfen, die den sachlichen Inhalt in prägnanter Ausdrucksweise herauszustellen sucht. Für „schlichtes religiöses Denken“ sind die Formulierungen des Paulus „schwer verständlich“ (ebd.) Wo Paulus „zu unserm Herzen spricht und uns unmittelbar etwas zu sagen hat, wo er aus der Gottinnigkeit seines Lebens in Christus spricht“, zeigt sich besonders die Botschaft Gottes, die mit der „Grundhaltung Jesu Christi“ übereinstimmt (ebd.). „Dort verwendet er auch jene Vorstellungen, die aus arischem religiösen Denken ihm zugeflossen sind, die auch in der Verkündigung Jesu nachweisbar sind.“ (ebd.) Dies ist von den Themen zu trennen, die seine jüdische Vergangenheit und Umwelt betreffen. Nur das Neue an der

Paulinischen Botschaft ist wichtig: „Wir glauben so dem deutschen Volke das Entscheidende und Bleibende der in seinen Briefen enthaltenen Botschaft Gottes unverkürzt und unverfälscht zu bieten.“ (ebd.) – Zweifellos wird hier wieder einmal das alte Gegensatzpaar von Kern und Schale, zeitloser Botschaft und zeitgebundener Ausdrucksweise benutzt. Hier soll ein neue Jesusverkündigung geschaffen werden, die jüdische Bezüge des Evangeliums ausscheidet und die gute Nachricht dem Erwartungshorizont des arischen Volksgenossen anpasst.

Der Hebräerbrief stellt mit seinen alttestamentlichen Bezügen für dieses Denken unvermeidlich einen besonderen Widerstand dar: „Diese Ausführungen bleiben uns fast durchweg unzugänglich.“ (48) Aber einige Christuszeugnisse und Mahnungen haben bleibenden Wert: „Diese Christusbotschaft greift tiefer in unsre Herzen als manche dogmatischen Ausführungen des Paulus.“ (ebd.) Daher wurden einige Passagen übernommen bzw. umformuliert.⁴⁵ Auch die Apostelgeschichte musste von „judenchristlicher Umdeutung“ und ihrer Konzentration auf die Jerusalemer Gemeinde befreit werden; damit wird die religiöse Klärung im deutschen Volk gefördert (48).

3. Ausführlicher als in den *Verbandsmitteilungen* legt Fromm in der Broschüre *Das Volkstestament der Deutschen* von dem Übersetzungsprojekt Rechenschaft ab. Fromm stellt einleitend die Übersetzungsarbeit in den Kontext des „deutschen Ringens“ um die Zukunft des Volkes im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Die Geschichtsbedeutung des Christentums für das Volk ist unbestritten. „Heute aber ist es zu einer ernsten Frage geworden, ob Jesus Christus auch weiterhin dem deutschen Volke auf seinem Weg zu Gott der Heiland sein kann.“ (5) Die deutschen Menschen, die „zur Erkenntnis ihrer völkischen Verantwortung erwacht sind“, sollen durch das neu bearbeitete NT die Kraft erfahren, die von Jesus Christus ausgeht (6). Die Wirksamkeit der Botschaft zeigt sich nicht etwa darin, dass sie dem Empfänger neues Leben schenkt; sie gibt vielmehr dem Herzen „Licht, Tapferkeit und Frieden“ (ebd.). Als Zielgruppe werden „die Suchenden, die Fragenden, die Ringenden in unsrem Volke, vor allem in der deutschen Jugend“ angegeben. Sie sollen in gut liberaler Manier gerufen werden, „mit Jesus an den ‚Vater‘ zu glauben und mit ihm nach Gottes ewigem Reich zu streben“ (ebd.).

a. Notwendig ist die Neuübersetzung nach Fromm, weil das Christentum in den deutschen

Ländern von Anfang an eine deutsche Form angenommen und selber Deutschland mit geformt habe. Luther habe es aus der römischen Knechtschaft befreit und das „deutsche fromme Leben“ erneuert (8). Seine Übersetzungswerk soll unangetastet bleiben, aber es muss doch fortgesetzt werden. Nach Fromm hat Luther zwischen Bedeutung des Textes und Wortlaut unterschieden: „Die ‚Meinung‘ des ‚Wortes Gottes‘ wollte er wiedergeben, aber er wollte sich nicht sklavisches an den Wortlaut des überlieferten fremdsprachigen und darum auch fremd denkenden und fühlenden Textes binden.“ (10) Die veraltete Sprache und die Zeitgebundenheit von Begriffen, Anschauungen und Lebensbeziehungen machen es im 20. Jahrhundert notwendig, nicht nur in naturwissenschaftlichen, rechtlichen und geschichtshermeneutischen, sondern auch bei religiösen Themen die Bibel als Grundlage der Wahrheitserkenntnis zu hinterfragen.

Die biblische Formung des Christenglaubens ist nicht mehr ohne weiteres auch der wahrhaftige Ausdruck unsres Christenglaubens. Wir können sie nicht mehr einfach als maßgebend übernehmen, nachdem uns die religionsgeschichtliche Forschung den Blick für die zeitgeschichtlichen und religionsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhänge in der biblischen Überlieferung geöffnet und die nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung uns zu bewußtem Deutschein in jeder Hinsicht und zu entschiedener Absage an allen jüdischen Geist erzogen hat. Wir verstehen es, dass die Bibel gerade ernsten Menschen den Weg zu einer echten Christusbegegnung versperrt, wenn man sie zur einzigen und unantastbaren Norm für den Christenglauben aller Zeiten erklärt. (11-12)

Es ist daher Aufgabe der Theologie im Dritten Reich, die biblische Botschaft aus den zeitgeschichtlichen Vorstellungen und Denkformen, konkret: aus seinen judenchristlichen Einflüssen herauszulösen, „... um sie so als Antwort auf die besonderen Fragen und Anliegen unsrer Gegenwart wesentlich und lebensmächtig in heute verständlicher Sprache darzubieten“ (12). Für diese Aufgabe nimmt Fromm auch Luther in Anspruch und zitiert dessen Gegnerschaft gegen alle Knechtschaft unter dem Buchstaben des geschriebenen Wortes und den beliebten Spruch „was Christum treibt“. Fromm versteht sich als Nachfolger Luthers:

Wir haben in Übereinstimmung mit Luthers

Grundhaltung unsre für weiteste Kreise des deutschen Volkes bestimmte Darstellung der ‚Botschaft Gottes‘ von den Stoffen entlastet, in denen wir eine reine und lautere Ausprägung ihres Inhaltes für unser Volk nicht sehen können. (13-14)

b. Unter „Botschaft Gottes“ versteht Fromm nicht nur Lehre und Leben von Jesus Christus, sondern auch das Zeugnis der Gemeinde von ihm und dem durch ihn bewirkten Leben mit Gott (15). Auf fünf Seiten entfaltet er, was er unter der Botschaft Gottes versteht (14-19). Gottes liebendes Wesen verwandelt den Menschen, der sich ihm zuwendet, lässt Glauben und Vertrauen gegen Gott entstehen. „Wenn so der Mensch gottgehorsam und gottaufgeschlossen lebt und in Gott geborgen sein Schicksal meistert, ist er zum ‚Sohn Gottes‘ geworden.“ (15) Die weltverwandelnde Gottesliebe wird in der Offenbarung von Jesus Christus offenbar. Es ist aus dem Text nicht klar, dass Fromm an der vollen Gottheit Christi im Sinne des nizänischen „Gott von Gott, Licht vom Lichte“ festhält. Zwar fällt das Stichwort „Urbild“, aber Christus scheint nicht die Funktion eines Heilsmittlers, sondern nur die eines Vorbilds zu haben. Er hat als prophetische Gestalt in der Welt als erster das realisiert, was Ziel für alle Menschen ist:

Als der einzigartige „Sohn Gottes“. der durch Leiden und Sterben vollendet wird, der nicht im Tode bleibt, sondern sich als lebendig und Leben schaffend kund tut, ist er das „Urbild“ dessen, was wir Menschen werden sollen. (16)

Jesu Verkündigung ist zentral geprägt von „Gott dem Vater“.

Die Botschaft vom „Vater“ beruft alle Menschen, die sie annehmen, zu Gottes Söhnen, die in den Spuren Jesu ihren eignen Gottesweg vollenden, und offenbart im Zeichen des Kreuzes Jesu das Wesen solcher Gottessohnschaft als Gehorsam und Treue, Gottgeborgenheit und Zuversicht, als Sieg durch Kampf und Opfer, Leiden und Tod hindurch. (17)

Von dieser Botschaft Jesu vom „Vater“ behauptet Fromm, dass sie „reicher und umfassender“ sei als die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre, auf die sich Luther im wesentlichen stütze (18). Über ihn hinaus will Fromm mit seiner Übersetzungsarbeit die „Wirklichkeit Jesu Christi“ wieder freilegen, durch die Gott zum heutigen Menschen redet. Daher habe das Volkstestament den Titel „Die Botschaft Gottes“ erhalten (19).

c. Die Zielsetzung der *deutschen* „Botschaft Gottes“ besteht darin, den Kampf des Volkes gegen fremde Einflüsse im Bereich der Theologie durchzuführen. Der völkische Antijudaismus wird zum hermeneutischen Schlüssel einer Textherstellung, die letztlich den Zielen der NSDAP dienen soll.

Unser Volk steht vor der geschichtlichen Aufgabe, aus seinem Leben alle jene Einflüsse auszuschalten, die zu einer Überfremdung oder Entartung deutschen Wesens führen können. Dieser Aufgabe durfte sich auch unser Darstellung der Botschaft Gottes nicht entziehen, obgleich sich daraus eine besondere Schwierigkeit für unsre Arbeit ergab. (22)

Dieses eigentliche Problem der „Verdeutschung“ des Neuen Testaments lag in der Einbettung seiner Botschaft in das jüdische Leben. Doch haben die Übersetzer herausgefunden, dass kein Wesenszusammenhang zwischen Jesu Botschaft und „jüdischer Art und Frömmigkeit“ besteht. Vielmehr gibt es einen Gegensatz zwischen der Botschaft Jesu einerseits und dem Judentum und Judenchristentum andererseits (23). Als Galiläer ist Jesus „mit aller Wahrscheinlichkeit“ *nicht* Jude (23f). Aber seine Rede vom Vatergott, seine Stellung zum Gesetz und seine Ethik sind nicht-jüdisch, er bekämpfte das jüdische Wesen! (24f)

Seine Worte und Weisungen wachsen heraus aus dem Wissen um die religiös-sittliche Bestimmung des Menschen, die von Gott gefordert ist und auf die hin das Einzelverhalten ausgerichtet wird. Das Gottesbild wirkt sich aus auf das Handeln des Menschen. So erscheint Jesus mehr einem griechischen Weisheitslehrer verwandt als einem jüdischen Schriftgelehrten. (24-25)

Der arisch beeinflusste Jesus kämpft gegen die Pharisäer und Schriftgelehrten, die „als die typischen Vertreter des jüdischen Wesens in jener Zeit gelten müssen“ (25). Auch die „galiläischen Jünger“ von Jesus stehen gegen das Judentum ihrer Zeit, denen die hellenistischen Christen nahe stehen. Ihre heidenchristliche Missionstätigkeit hat stärkste Widersacher in den Juden (26f).

Auch die Arbeit des Paulus zeichnet Fromm in diesen Gegensatz von hellenistischer Weltmissionsarbeit und jüdischer Opposition ein. Den stärksten Widerspruch findet er im Johannesevangelium, dessen Antijudaismus er für seine Zwecke ausschaltet.

Der Sohn Gottes allein führt zur Freiheit, ist der Weg und die Wahrheit und das Leben. Er

schenkt die Gemeinschaft mit dem Vater. So wird hier aus arischem Denken heraus in treuem Festhalten an der Grundhaltung Jesu die christliche Botschaft dargestellt. (30)

Judaisierende bzw. judenchristliche Einflüsse, die den Gegensatz zwischen Judentum und neutestamentlichem Christentum nach Fromm „zu verwischen suchen“, müssen besonders aus dem Matthäusevangelium und dem Geschichtsbild der Apostelgeschichte eliminiert werden (31-36). Fromm erteilt aufgrund seiner ideologischen Vorentscheidungen jeder „Heilsgeschichte“ eine Absage.

Die angebliche „Heilsgeschichte“, die eine geschlossene und ausschließliche Gottesoffenbarung über das Alte Testament, d. h. durch die israelitisch-jüdische Geschichte hindurch zu Jesus hin behauptet, muß als eine verhängnisvolle Nachwirkung jüdischer religiöser Überheblichkeit innerhalb des Christentums abgelehnt werden. In Jesus Christus finden die religiösen Ansätze anderer Völker mit höherem Recht ihre Erfüllung als die jüdischen. (36)

Ausgehend von diesen sachkritischen Aussagen sind die Teile der „Botschaft Gottes“ aufgebaut.⁴⁶

d. Bei einigen Themen sieht sich Fromm genötigt, im Einzelnen Stellung zu nehmen (41-49). Wunder, Kindheitsgeschichten und Osterberichte belästigt Fromm im Text, obwohl sich viele Deutsche daran stoßen und die Erzählungen unhistorisch sind. Im Johannesevangelium sind Wundergeschichten „Sinnbilder der in Jesus Christus erscheinenden Gotterwahrheit geworden“ (46). Jesus gibt das ewige Leben und ist die Liebe, die sich im Höhepunkt des Kreuzes offenbart: „Wer diese Schau des Johannesevangeliums einmal ergriffen hat, wird gepackt von der dichterischen Kraft eines Glaubens, der die vorhandenen legendenhaften Überlieferungen dem Grundanliegen seiner Botschaft dienstbar macht.“ (46) Der Logosbegriff wird als „ewiger Geist“ interpretiert: „Der ‚ewige Geist‘ ist für uns jene schöpferische Kraft, die alles Werden trägt und der ganzen Welt den Sinn gibt.“ (47) Diese Übersetzung sieht Fromm durch die Formulierung des „lebenschaffenden Geistes“ bei Paulus gestützt, und: „Zugleich stellt dieser Begriff ungesucht den Anschluß an die großen Gedanken unserer deutschen Dichter und Denker her“ (ebd.). Bei Paulus moniert Fromm wiederum das „Starre und Unanschauliche“ seines Denkens, trotz vorhandener einleuchtender Schlussfolgerungen. Für Fromms völkischen Ansatz ist die Kirchensprache

seiner Zeit eindeutig eine schlechte Konsequenz des paulinischen Vorbilds: „Hier liegt die Erklärung dafür, daß alle Seltsamkeiten des theologischen Denkens bis in unsre Tage immer wieder in der Berufung auf Paulus ihre Begründung gesucht und gefunden haben.“ (48) „Schwülstigkeit und Phrasenhaftigkeit“ müssen durch rücksichtslose Vereinfachung der Ausdrucksweise verständlich gemacht werden (49).

e. Abschließend betont Fromm noch einmal auf dem Hintergrund des andauernden Weltkrieges, dass durch die *Botschaft Gottes* das Glaubenserbe für die Christen seiner Zeit zugänglich gemacht wird. Es geht ihm um die „Einheit... zwischen der ewigen ‚Botschaft Gottes‘ in Christus Jesus und der in unserm Blut liegenden Wirklichkeit deutschen Wesens, auf die unsre geschichtliche Führung hinielt.“ (50)⁴⁷

2.2 Der Aufbau des Werkes

Grundmann ist der festen Überzeugung, wie die Evangelisten zu arbeiten, wenn er den Inhalt der Evangelien neu arrangiert. Da er die sekundäre Reihenfolge auflöst und die ursprüngliche Überlieferung von sekundären Elementen trennt, steht der Neugliederung nichts mehr im Wege.⁴⁸ Die vier Hauptteile lauten:

1. Jesus der Heiland
2. Jesus der Gottessohn
3. Jesus der Herr
- und 4. Das Werden der Christusgemeinde.

Im *ersten Teil* ist die synoptische Tradition von Jesus zusammengestellt unter den Überschriften:

1. Sein Ursprung, 2. Sein Aufbruch, 3. Seine Botschaft, 4. Seine Gefolgschaft, 5. Sein Kampf, 6. Sein Kreuz, 7. Sein Sieg.

Der *zweite Teil* enthält das Johannesevangelium in den Abschnitten

1. Die Offenbarung des Weltgeheimnisses, 2. Der Aufbruch des Gottessohnes, 3. Die Offenbarung des neuen Gottesdienstes, 4. Die Entscheidung in Galiläa, 5. Der Kampf in Judäa, 6. Die Lebensspende als Todesanlaß, 7. Der Abschied im Jüngerkreis, 8. Die Erhöhung am Kreuz, 9. Der Sieg des Lebens.

Als Anhang wird beigegeben: 10. In das Johannesevangelium eingefügte Sprüche und Berichte.

Der *dritte Teil* enthält den Lehrgehalt der Briefe⁴⁹ in den Rubriken

1. Der Mittler des neuen Lebens
2. Gottes Boten
3. Die Weltenwende

Abschnitte a) Aus Verhängnis zum Heil, b) Aus Knechtschaft zur Freiheit, c) Aus Vergänglichkeit zur Ewigkeit, d) Aus Ziellosigkeit zu ewiger Bestimmung

4. Das neue Leben

Abschnitte a) In Ehre und Ausdauer, b) In Hoffnung und Leiden, c) In Glaube und Liebe d) In Trost und Vollendung

5. Die Gemeinde Gottes

Der *vierte Teil* schildert in Auszügen das Werden der jungen Kirche in den Teilen

1. Ostern

2. Die Entstehung der Gemeinde von Jerusalem

3. Schicksal und Taten der Hellenisten

4. Die Bekehrung des Paulus

5. Die Auseinandersetzung des Paulus mit der Jerusalemer Gemeinde

6. Die Missionswirksamkeit des Paulus

Mit der Neuordnung und selektiven Verkürzung des ntl. Textes können die Herausgeber ihre redaktionellen Eingriffe verschleiern. Auch die Beigabe der Stellenbelege im Inhaltsverzeichnis am Ende des Buchs verschafft nicht auf die Schnelle den Überblick über das Maß der Textbearbeitung. Sinn der Neuordnung ist es, den Deutschen einen lebendigen Eindruck von Leben und Botschaft des nicht-jüdischen Jesus Christus und seiner Bewegung zu geben, so dass sie sich mit ihm als Vorbild identifizieren können.

2.3 Textbeispiele

Wenn der Unwille oder die Unfähigkeit des Lesers, ihm fremde Sachverhalte und damit auch neue Begriffe kennenzulernen, das Maß der Übersetzungsarbeit wird, sind der Willkür keine Schranken mehr gesetzt. Dies zeigt sich in der *Botschaft Gottes* an der Änderung ganzer Abschnitte genauso wie an der Übersetzung einzelner Begriffe. Zum Logos-Begriff in Joh. 1. konstatiert Grundmann in den *Verbandsmitteilungen*: „Die Welt, aus der die gnostische Formung des Logosbegriffes stammt, ist uns fremd“.⁵⁰ Daher müsse man „das Grundwort deutscher Weltanschauung“ *Wille* für *Logos* im deutschen Text setzen: „Uns ist in Jesus Christus der ewige Gotteswille als Bild Gottes und Wort Gottes erschienen“.⁵¹ In *Jesus der Galiläer und das Judentum* von 1940 schlägt er als weitere Übersetzung *Weltsinn* vor: „Wir meinen damit jenen Sinn, der dem Weltgeschehen über alles Vergehen hinaus tief verborgen innewohnt, aus dem es wird und auf dessen Verwirklichung die Welt angelegt ist.“⁵²

In der *Botschaft Gottes* steht dann für den Logos-Begriff „der ewige Geist“,⁵³ weil sich die Herausgeber offensichtlich doch nicht auf Grundmanns völkische Kontextualisierung des Wortes einigen konnten.

Weitere Beispiele: Der Begriff Sünder wird oft zu „Gottsucher“ umfunktioniert oder in Anführungszeichen gesetzt. Erich Fromm rechtfertigt diese Entscheidung gegenüber dem sächsischen BK-Pfarrer Fischer: „Die Sünder waren doch wirklich alles andre als Gesindel. In Jesu Augen waren dabei manche hochanständige Herren, die ihrer religiösen Vollkommenheit völlig bewusst waren. Ist es wirklich so abwegig, da einmal um Verständnis zu werben, indem man sagt: ‚Gottentfremdete‘ oder ‚vor Gott Verstockte‘?“⁵⁴ Aus Christus wird in Joh. 1 „der Offenbarer“, aus dem Lamm Gottes der „Erkorene Gottes“.⁵⁵ Christus ist in Joh. 1,18 nicht *monogenēs theos*, der „Eingeborene, der Gott ist“, sondern „der einzigartige Sohn, der in des Vaters Herz schaut“.⁵⁶ Aus dem „rechten Israeliten“ Nathanael in Joh 1,47 wird „einer, der mit aufrichtigem Ernst Gott sucht“. Aber die Geschichte geht noch besser weiter: Nathanaels Bekenntnis zum Gottessohne und „König von Israel“ in 1,49 wird zum „Sohn Gottes, der die Suchenden zum Leben führt“.⁵⁷ Die entjudaisierende Tendenz dieser Änderungen ist mit den Händen zu greifen.

Hier folgen einige Textbeispiele, die zeigen, wie in der *Botschaft Gottes* übersetzt, ausgelassen, hinzugefügt und verändert wird. Stücke aus dem Römerbrief,⁵⁸ im Abschnitt „Die Weltenwende a) Aus Verhängnis zum Heil“, Absätze „9. In Gott vor jeder Macht geborgen!“ Röm 8,31-35. [8,36 fehlt] 37-39; 11,33-36 [11,34-35 fehlt], „10. Gottesdienst der Tat“ Röm 12,1-2

9. „... Was will uns scheiden von der Liebe Christi? Trübsal, Angst oder Verfolgung, Hunger oder Mangel, Gefahr oder Krieg? In alledem werden wir Sieger durch den, der in Liebe zu uns steht. Ich bin gewiß: Weder Tod noch Leben, weder Himmel noch Hölle, weder Gegenwart noch Zukunft, keine Gewalt, auch die Sterne nicht in ihrem Aufgang und Niedergang, nichts kann uns scheiden von der Liebe Gottes, die erschienen ist in Jesus Christus, unserm Herrn.

Welch eine Tiefe des Reichtums an Weisheit und Erkenntnis Gottes! Wie unerforschlich sind seine Entscheidungen, wie unaufspürbar seine Wege. Denn von ihm und durch ihn und zu ihm sind alle Dinge.

10. Brüder, angesichts der unerschöpflichen

Güte Gottes weihet euch zu einem lebendigen Opfer, wie Gott es will, und zu einem Gottesdienst, wie ihn Jesus Christus fordert! Löst euch aus der Welt der Eigensucht! Laßt Euch wandeln zu Söhnen Gottes! Laßt euch einen neuen Sinn schenken, so daß ihr richtig abwägen könnt, was da ist Gottes segnender, fordernder und vollkommener Wille!“

Aus dem Gespräch von Jesus mit der Samaritanerin, in dem der Satz fehlt: „das Heil kommt von den Juden“,⁵⁹ Joh 4,21-26: „... Da sprach Jesus zu ihr: ‚Glaube mir, Frau, es kommt die Stunde, da werdet ihr weder auf diesem Berg noch in Jerusalem anbeten. Und jetzt ist die Stunde da, wo alle, die Gott wahrhaft anbeten, ihn anrufen werden als Vater, geboren aus seinem Geist, mit offenen Augen für seine Wahrheit; denn der Vater sucht, die ihn so anrufen. Gott ist Geist, und die ihn anbeten, müssen ihn im Geist und in der Wahrheit anbeten.‘ Die Frau sagt zu ihm: ‚Ich weiß: der Verheißene kommt, und wenn er kommt, wird er uns alles offenbaren.‘ Da sprach Jesus zu ihr: ‚Ich bin es, der ich mit dir rede.“

Die Auferstehungserzählungen von 1 Kor 15 und Mk 16 werden am Anfang von Teil IV („Das Werden der Christusgemeinde“) mit folgenden Worten kommentiert: „Die älteste Urkunde über die Geschehnisse, die zur Gründung der christlichen Gemeinde führten, ist uns in einem Brief des Apostels Paulus überliefert“... [folgt 1 Kor 15,1-11] „Die Jünger, die nach Karfreitag in ihre Heimat Galiläa zurückgekehrt sind, kommen dort zur Gewißheit: Jesus lebt. Als Boten des Auferstandenen kehren sie nach Jerusalem zurück, um an der Stätte seines Kreuzestodes zu verkünden: Jesus ist von den Toten auferweckt. Aus den Kreisen der Anhänger Jesu in Jerusalem, die sich mit ihnen zusammenfinden, sind aus der Zeit nach Jesu Tod folgende wundersame Erzählungen überliefert...“ [folgt Mk 16,1-8]⁶⁰ – Die Erweckung des Lazarus in Joh 10 wird in einer Marginalnote mit den Worten kommentiert: „Die Erweckung des Lazarus: Das Sinnbild der Lebensspende.“⁶¹ Zur Auferweckung der Tochter des Jairus wird marginal bemerkt: „Vom Tode Gezeichnete stehen auf“.⁶² – Die inhaltliche Kritik der Herausgeber des Textes ist auch an diesen Stellen deutlich. Man kann hier nur die geradezu sprichwörtliche Redewendung anfügen: „Die Liste ließe sich beliebig verlängern.“

3. Abschließende Bemerkungen

Friso Melzer hat von den Zentralbegriffen der Bibelsprache gesagt: „man lerne diese Sprache wie eine Fremdsprache, und in kurzer Zeit hat man den Sinn der Wörter verstanden“.⁶³ Fremde Inhalte kommen in der Regel nicht ohne fremde Begriffe aus, das ist selbstverständlich. Aber ebenso selbstverständlich sollte es sein, dass vom Bibellesenden ein gewisser Lernwille verlangt werden kann, weil sich eine Bibelübersetzung nicht um vermeintlich besserer Verständlichkeit willen mit „einfacheren“, aber unzutreffenden deutschen Begriffen behelfen darf. Über dieses schlichte Problem hinaus geht es bei der *Botschaft Gottes* um konsequente Kontextualisierung des Neuen Testaments auf der Grundlage der völkischen Weltanschauung des Dritten Reiches. Menschen, die von der Gesinnung der NSDAP beeinflusst sind, sind nicht nur die Hörer der *Botschaft Gottes*; die Ideologie ist vielmehr selbst unhinterfragte Basis der Übersetzungsarbeit geworden. Dieses Problem soll mit einigen abschließenden Bemerkungen bedacht werden.

1. Das evangelische Prinzip *sola Scriptura* muss auch immer *tota Scriptura* heißen. Natürlich bildet sich jeder Bibelleser seinen privaten Lesekanon, in dem bestimmte Bücher der Bibel an erster Stelle stehen und andere so gut wie gar nicht vorkommen. Dieser Privatkanon ist mag nicht nur von spirituellen, sondern vielleicht auch von ideologischen Vorentscheidungen geprägt sein. Entscheidend jedoch ist, dass eine evangelische Schriftlehre immer davon ausgehen muss, dass der private Lesekanon nicht zum kirchlichen Kanon erhoben werden darf! Nur so kann die Bibel auch Korrektiv sein, wenn sie als Ganze frei zu Wort kommen darf. Wer wollte behaupten, dass es jemals einen besseren Kanon gegeben habe als den, auf den sich die Alte Kirche festgelegt hat?

2. Tatian schuf um 170 n. Chr. das Diatessaron als Evangelienharmonie. Das Werk wurde weit verbreitet und in mehrere Sprachen übersetzt. Auf Syrisch wurde es anstelle der Evangelien jahrhundertlang gelesen. Doch die Alte Kirche hat sich dagegen entschieden. Sie hielt es für besser, mit vier eigenständigen, nicht harmonisierten, aber alten Quellschriften zu leben als mit einem künstlich geschaffenen Text, der Doppelüberlieferungen gestrichen und Texte umgestellt hat und insgesamt sicher noch besser war als die Evangelienharmonie der *Botschaft Gottes*. Nur wenn die Kirche die ältesten greifbaren Evangelientexte beibehält, bilden diese einen Widerstand gegen umformende Privat-

interessen, für die im 2. Jahrhundert das traurige Vorbild von Marcion steht.

3. Eigentlich sollte es in Erschrecken, aber zumindest in Staunen versetzen, dass die historisch-kritische Methode nicht genügend Kriterien vorgab, dass ein solcher Missbrauch mit ihr getrieben werden konnte. Ein radikaler völkischer Subjektivismus, bei dem das Volk zum Kollektivsubjekt erhoben wurde, hat die Grundlagen der Forschung derart beeinflusst, dass an der Objektivität der Ergebnisse mit Recht gezweifelt werden kann. Das alte liberale Prinzip, den bleibenden Kern von der unbrauchbaren Schale zu trennen und so – von völkischen Voraussetzungen ausgehend – „das Entscheidende und Bleibende“⁶⁴ herauszuarbeiten und in die nationaldeutsche Zeitgenossenschaft zu übersetzen, dieses Prinzip hat sich unter den Voraussetzungen einer Ideologie als unbrauchbar für die Wahrheitsfindung erwiesen. Die Leben-Jesu-Forschung wird um ein arisches Jesusbild erweitert, das einmal mehr nur den Zeitgeschmack reflektiert. Dagegen wäre auf die von den altkirchlichen Bekenntnissen herkommende Theologie der Bekenntnenden Kirche im Dritten Reich zu verweisen, die zwar nicht immer, aber doch am stärksten Theologen zu kritischen Urteilen über völkischen Rassenwahn und Führerkult befähigt hat.⁶⁵

Müssen wir nicht daraus schließen, dass historische Forschung nur durch die Bindung an die Bekenntnisse vor ideologischen Verbiegungen und Anbiederung an den Zeitgeist geschützt wird?

4. „In Wirklichkeit wagen die Herausgeber Grundwahrheiten der Bibel ihren Lesern nicht mehr zuzumuten und biegen durch eine andere Übersetzung den ursprünglichen Sinn um.“⁶⁶ Forscher tragen gerne das hehre Prinzip der Wahrheitssuche vor sich her: sie wollen die alte Wahrheit einer neuen Zeit verständlich machen. Neben und hinter dieser Motivation gibt es aber auch ein unausgesprochenes Motiv, das der sächsische BKPfarrer Karl Fischer in seiner Rezension der *Botschaft Gottes* aufgedeckt hat: man will sich mit dem altmodischen Wort nicht blamieren (Röm 1,16). Nicht mehr die Bibel bestimmt unsere Wirklichkeit, sondern umgekehrt. Dass bei diesem Thema auch im Dritten Reich eine andere Option möglich war, zeigen wiederum die Mitglieder der Bekenntnenden Kirche.

5. Diese kurze Einführung in die *Botschaft Gottes* und die Arbeit des Eisenacher Entjudungsinstituts fordert dazu heraus, dass Wissenschaftler und Kirchenleitungen auch heute entschieden gegen

ideologische Verfälschung des Wortes Gottes durch weltanschaulich vorbestimmte „Neuübersetzungen“ vorgehen. Dies gehört zum Lehramt der Kirchenleitungen nach Confessio Augustana (1530) 28. Es geht bei diesen neuen „Übersetzungen“ nicht um Übersetzungsmöglichkeiten oder schichtspezifische Übertragungsvarianten. Hier steht vielmehr auf dem Spiel, ob das Wort Gottes noch das normative Gegenüber der Gemeinde ist in seiner historischen Einmaligkeit, oder ob wir ihm ins Wort fallen wollen, ohne es zu hören.

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Anmerkungen

BK=Bekennende Kirche

DC= Deutsche Christen

- 1 Vortrag auf dem 4. Forum Bibelübersetzung in Wiedenest am 3. Juni 2008. – Neuere Werke in chronologischer Reihenfolge: Heinzpeter Hempelmann: Wortgetreu oder leserfreundlich? *Grundfragen der Bibelübersetzung*, Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 2005; Rudolf Ebertshäuser: *Gottes Wort oder Menschenwort? Moderne Bibelübersetzungen unter der Lupe*, Oerlinghausen: Betanien, 2006; Michael Kotsch: *Moderne Bibel oder modernes Babel?* Lage: Lichtzeichen, 2006; Urs Stingelin: *Welche Bibel darf's denn sein?* ABCteam, Basel: Brunnen, 2006; Monika u. Rainer Kuschmierz: *Handbuch Bibelübersetzungen: Von Luther bis zur Volksbibel*, Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 2007; Gerhard Tauberschmidt: *Streit um die richtige Bibelübersetzung: Warum können Bibelausgaben so verschieden sein?* TVG, Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 2007.
- 2 Vgl. zur umfangreichen Diskussion über die „Wertheimer Bibel“: Johann Nicolaus Sinnhold: *Ausführliche Historie der verrufenen sogenannten Wertheimischen Bibel...*, Vorw. von J. G. Walch, Erfurt: Nonne, 1739; Hermann Ehmer: Die Wertheimer Bibel, in: *Jahrbuch der hessischen kirchengeschichtlichen Vereinigung* 43 (1992), 289-312; Ursula Goldenbaum: *Appell an das Publikum: Die öffentliche Debatte in der deutschen Aufklärung 1687-1796*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 2004; Jonathan Sheehan: *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- 3 Vgl. zum Beispiel Heschel 125; Jerke, 201 und 229, Anm. 2; Prolingheuer 57, 66, 90 Anm. 50 u. ö. Ob das Stichwort „Beseitigung“ beim Anführen des offiziellen Institutsnamens zu nennen sei, ist umstritten, vgl. Heschel 142-143, Arnhold 62-63, Osten-Sacken: „Die große Lästerung: Beobachtungen zur Gründung des Eisenacher Instituts...“, in: ders., *Das missbrauchte Evangelium*, 316-322.
- 4 Vgl. zu weiteren Details Heschel 133-136, Jerke 201-202, Prolingheuer 63-80.
- 5 Prolingheuer 66. Die Entstehung kann hier nur kurz dargestellt werden, vgl. Siegele-Wenschkewitz 14-20. Es waren mehrere Institute vorgesehen, die aber mangels Finanzen scheiterten. Zu Leffler und anderen Thüringern vgl. Böhm 61-81.
- 6 Zum Neuheidentum vgl. Lothar, *Neugermanische Religion und Christentum*, der führende Gruppen und Persönlichkeiten: die deutsche Glaubensbewegung, J. W. Hauer, H. Wirth, A. Rosenberg und E. Bergmann vorstellt. Vgl. auch die Aufsätze zu Deutschkirche, Tannenbergbund und Herman Wirth in dem 1933 – durchaus nicht ohne Sympathie für den „deutschen Selbsterhaltungswillen“ unter Hitlers Führung – von Walter Künneth und Helmuth Schreiner herausgegebenen Band *Die Nation vor Gott: Zur Botschaft der Kirche im Dritten Reich*, Berlin: Wichern, 1933, 320-440. Eine Kritik der Deutschen Christen aus Sicht eines BK-Anhängers findet sich in: Julius Sammetreuther: *Die falsche Lehre der „Deutschen Christen“*.
- 7 Nordland: *Wochenschrift für gottgläubige Deutsche* 7 (1939), H.22, zitiert bei Prolingheuer, 65.
- 8 Art. „Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben“ in Wikipedia, <http://www.wikipedia.org> [Stand: 1.2.2008]; Prolingheuer 68-69, 77, vgl. ders.: *Wir sind in die Irre gegangen – die Schuld der Kirche unterm Hakenkreuz, nach dem Bekenntnis des „Darmstädter Wortes“ von 1947*, Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1987.
- 9 Siegele-Wenschkewitz zählt 23 Theologen von 11 evangelisch-theologischen Fakultäten in Deutschland und darüber hinaus, in: dies., 16; Heschel kommt auf über 40 Theologieprofessoren und -Dozenten, Heschel, 140. – Zu den Problemen mit der kirchlichen Finanzierung vgl. Arnhold 50-59, Prolingheuer, 67, Heschel 146-148.
- 10 Vgl. dazu Osten-Sacken: „Walter Grundmann – Nationalsozialist, Kirchemann und Theologe“, in: ders.: *Das missbrauchte Evangelium*, 280-312; Wolfgang Schenk: „Der Jenaer Jesus“, ebd., 167-279; *Walter Grundmann: Ein Neutestamentler im Dritten Reich*, hrsg. v. Roland Deines, Volker Leppin und Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, 2007. Darin auf S. 236 Tobias Schüfer über Grundmann: „Evangelische Theologie galt ihm – abfällig, bisherige Theologie“ genannt – als erstarrte, nicht mehr zeitgemäße Größe, die es nur noch zu überwinden galt.“ Daher könne man bei Grundmann besser von einem „art-eigenen Glaubenssystem“ sprechen.
- 11 Zur Institutsmitarbeit von Leipoldt vgl. Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz in Denzler u. a.: *Theologische Wissenschaft im „Dritten Reich“*, 123-131.
- 12 Über Erich Ludwig Hermann Fromm berichtet die Sekundärliteratur fast nichts. Nach Auskunft des LKArchivs Eisenach vom 23.5.2008 wurde er am 31.12.1892 in Posen geboren, studierte in Halle, Marburg und Berlin, wurde 1921 in Elberfeld ordiniert und als 2. Geistlicher des Bergischen Diakonissen-Mutterhauses eingesetzt. Ab 1926 amtierte er als Pfarrer in Teichwolframsdorf, 1933 in Kaltenordheim, zusätzlich als Oberpfarrer des Kirchenkreises. 1937 wurde er Oberpfarrer in Altenburg. Seine 1919 geschlossene Ehe mit Edith Fromm (gest. 22.12.1948) blieb kinderlos. Fromm wurde seit 1944 beim Kriegseinsatz an der Ostfront vermisst.
- 13 Grundmann nimmt in seinem programmatischen

- Eröffnungsvortrag von 1939 Bezug auf Emanuel Hirsch, vgl. ebd. 15 und zu Hirsch über die „nicht-jüdischen“ Lehren Jesu: Ericksen 223-225.
- 14 Vgl. Siegele-Wenschkewitz, *Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 21, 95, beschreibt Kittels Position als „Vermittlungskonzept“ bzw. den Versuch, einen überparteilichen Standpunkt, der Christentum, Nationalsozialismus und Judentum vermittelt, zu vertreten. Kittel war Mitglied der Deutschen Christen und wurde 1936 Mitarbeiter des Tübinger „Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands“, vgl. ebd. 28; dazu Ericksen 48, 55.
 - 15 Zum Beispiel referierten 1935 auf einer Breslauer DC-Veranstaltung die Professoren Duhm, Fabricius, Winkler, Lothar, Leube, Schmökel, Hoennicke und Preisker: Ulrich Hutten-Wolandt in Deines u. a.: *Walter Grundmann*, 284.
 - 16 Siegele-Wenschkewitz, 15-16.
 - 17 Grundmann, *Völkische Theologie*, 3. Kursiver Text im Original gesperrt.
 - 18 A.a.O., 5-6. Kursiver Text im Original gesperrt.
 - 19 Grundmann, *Entjudung*, 10. Zur Eröffnungsfeier vgl. Arnhold 38-45, Photo auf S. 191 (aus: *Die Nationalkirche*, Nr. 22, 1939).
 - 20 Grundmann, *Entjudung* 5, 9, 14-16, 19; vgl. Siegele-Wenschkewitz 18, Heschel 137.
 - 21 *Christentum und Judentum*, Anhang; zum Förderkreis vgl. Arnhold, 64-68.
 - 22 Euler Grundmann 1941, Vorwort
 - 23 *Germanentum, Christentum und Judentum*, Bd. 2, Vorwort (ungezählt).
 - 24 *Germanentum, Christentum und Judentum*, Bd. 3, Vorwort (ungezählt), vgl. zur „Radikalisierung“ der von den Institutsmitarbeitern vertretenen Ideologie: Arnhold, 110-112.
 - 25 *Verbandsmitteilungen* H. 4, 1941, S. 84, und 99-100 (Zitat). Zu Wilhelm Graus Mitarbeit bei der Gründung und Eröffnung dieses Instituts vgl. Patricia von Papen in: Denzler u. a., *Theologische Wissenschaft im „Dritten Reich“*, 94-95, 99-100, 103-105.
 - 26 *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik: mit einem Titelverzeichnis jüdischer Werke* zusammengestellt im Auftrag der Reichsleitung der NSDAP auf Grund behördlicher, parteiamtlich geprüfter Unterlagen bearb. von Theo Stengel in Verbindung mit Herbert Gerigk, Reihe: Veröffentlichungen des Instituts der NSDAP. zur Erforschung der Judenfrage, Bd. 2, Berlin: Hahnefeld, 1940 / 1943.
 - 27 Mit offensichtlicher Erleichterung [!] stellen die Eisenacher fest, dass es wenige Juden, Halbjuden usw. in der Kirchenmusik gebe bzw. gegeben habe, und sie kommen zu dem Ergebnis: „... daß sich die evangelische Kirchenmusikpflege fast völlig judenrein gehalten hat“ (kursiver Text im Original gesperrt), *Verbandsmitteilungen* H. 5/6, 15.12.1941, S. 132. Vgl. dazu Eva Weissweiler: *Ausgemerzt! Das Lexikon der Juden in der Musik und seine mörderischen Folgen*, Köln: Dittrich, 1999.
 - 28 Vgl. *Verbandsmitteilungen* H. 1, 30.12.1939, S. 3-4.
 - 29 *Verbandsmitteilungen* H. 4, 25.9.1941, 100. [Kursiver Text im Original gesperrt.] Vgl. dazu und zu seinen Vorgängern jetzt Susanne Böhm, 141-170 und Arnhold 126-138.
 - 30 *Verbandsmitteilungen*, H. 1, 30.12.1939, S. 4, vgl. Prolingheuer 70-71.
 - 31 *Verbandsmitteilungen* H. 4, 25.9.1941, 87-89 und H. 5/6, S. 111, vgl. dazu Arnhold 139-143.
 - 32 *Deutsche mit Gott*, S. 90.
 - 33 Vgl. *Verbandsmitteilungen* H. 5/6, 15.12.1941, S. 111 und den Artikel von Kirchenrat Wilhelm Bauer aus Eisenach zum *Lebensgeleitbuch* in H. 2/3, 31.12.1940, 61-66.
 - 34 A.a.O., H. 5/6, S. 111.
 - 35 *Bereitschaft und Ausfahrt*, S. 27, 31 und 52. Hermann Ohland: *Erde in Gottes Hand*, Schild-Reihe, Bd. 1, Weimar: Verlag Deutsche Christen, 1936, 2. Aufl. 1938.
 - 36 *Bereitschaft und Ausfahrt*, S. 53.
 - 37 *Bereitschaft und Ausfahrt*, S. 54.
 - 38 Ebd.
 - 39 A.a.O., S. 55, kursiver Text im Original gesperrt.
 - 40 *Verbandsmitteilungen* H. 5/6, 15.12.1941, S. 109.
 - 41 Prolingheuer 72, vgl. Vorwort zu *Germanentum* 2.
 - 42 Vgl. das Literaturverzeichnis: *Verbandsmitteilungen*, H. 1, 1939 und H. 2/3, 1940;
 - 43 Vgl. ähnlich Grundmann, *Entjudung* 10-11.
 - 44 Vgl. hierzu besonders Grundmann *Jesus der Galiläer und das Judentum* u. a. 175 und 196-200. G. beruft sich ebd. auf den Anhang über die Abstammung Jesu in Emanuel Hirschs, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 1939, 158-165. – Die Jungfrauengeburt ist für Grundmann „eine fromme, das Geheimnis Jesu ausdeutende Deutung“, „die eines genügenden geschichtlichen Grundes entbehrt“, ebd. 177.
 - 45 Vgl. unten 2.3 Textbeispiele.
 - 46 Fromm 36-40, vgl. unten Teil 2.2.
 - 47 In einem Anhang (51-61) geht Fromm auf die Broschüre ein, in der sich der sächsische Bekenntnispfarrer Karl Fischer kritisch über das Volkstestament geäußert hatte.
 - 48 Vgl. seine grundsätzlichen Ausführungen in den *Verbandsmitteilungen*, H. 1, 30.12.1939, S. 10-21, bes. 13 und Fromm, *Volkstestament*, 19-20 und 36-40.
 - 49 Dazu Erich Fromm in den *Verbandsmitteilungen*, H. 2/3, 31.12.1940, 46; ders., *Volkstestament*, 37: „Die Gliederung des Stoffes nach Sachgruppen ergab sich ungezwungen. Dabei haben wir größere Zusammenhänge, die in der Überlieferung gegeben sind, wie die Bergrede, nach Möglichkeit erhalten.“
 - 50 *Verbandsmitteilungen*, H. 1, 30.12.1939, S. 21.
 - 51 Ebd., vgl. Grundmann, *Entjudung*, 14: „Deutsches Denken hat, etwa im Unterschied zum griechischen, das im reinen Sein, also in Ordnung und

- Gesetz, das Letzte der Welt sah, immer wieder empfunden, daß das letzte Geheimnis der Welt im Willen steht, und hat diesen Willen als schaffenden und fügenden, aber auch als zerstörenden und vernichtenden Willen verstanden.“
- 52 Grundmann, *Jesus der Galiläer*, 207. Zu diesem Buch vgl. Deines, in: *Walter Grundmann: Ein Neutestamentler im Dritten Reich*, hg. v. Roland Deines u. a., 43-131.
- 53 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 99-100 vgl. zur Begründung Fromm, *Völkstestament*, 46-47.
- 54 Fromm, *Völkstestament*, 57.
- 55 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 101-102.
- 56 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 100.
- 57 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 103.
- 58 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 185-186.
- 59 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 110, zu Joh. 4,22 Grundmann, *Jesus der Galiläer*, 224-231.
- 60 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 227-228.
- 61 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, 135.
- 62 *Die Botschaft Gottes*, Marginaltext: 12, Erzählung: 13-14.
- 63 Friso Melzer, *Das Wort in den Wörtern*, 1965, 2. Aufl. Gießen, 1990, IX.
- 64 So Erich Fromm in den *Verbandsmitteilungen*, H. 2/3, 31.12.1940, 47.
- 65 Zum Antijudaismus bei BK-Mitgliedern vgl. Heschel: „Deutsche Theologen für Hitler“, in: Osten-Sacken: *Das missbrauchte Evangelium*, 88-89.
- 66 Karl Fischer, *Völkstestament*, 12.

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Tentatives théocratiques en Ecosse et édification de la communauté-ecclesia dans la première moitié du dix-septième siècle: idéologie de résistance et purification de l'Église

Dr. Claire Kaczmarek
Université de Provence

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article considère les méthodes mises en œuvre par les acteurs de la seconde réforme écossaise, les *covenanters*, pour poursuivre l'établissement de la communauté-ecclesia, une entreprise précédemment entamée par les réformateurs écossais John Knox et Andrew Melville. Le projet des *covenanters* était double : édifier la commu-

* * * *

nauté-ecclesia et « purifier » l'Église et la société de toute influence catholique et anglicane. Néanmoins, leurs objectifs spirituels ont dû être redéfinis à la lumière des enjeux politico-religieux de l'Écosse et de l'Angleterre. Résistance, exclusion, assimilation et uniformisation sont autant de péripéties qui jalonnent l'histoire des rapports entre l'Église d'Écosse et l'Église d'Angleterre.

* * * *

SUMMARY

This article examines the methods used by the Covenanters who led the second Scottish Reformation. They sought to carry on the construction of a Church community, an ambitious scheme previously initiated by the Scottish Reformers, John Knox and Andrew Melville. The Covenanters were eager to build the Church community and

* * * *

to “purify” the Church and the society from any Catholic and Anglican influences. Nevertheless, the spiritual undertakings of the Covenanters were re-defined in the light of the complex relationships between the Church and State, both in England and in Scotland. Resistance, exclusion, assimilation and elements of uniformity of practice are symbols of the links between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England.

* * * *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Methoden, die von den „Covenanters“ angewandt wurde, die die zweite schottische Reformation leiteten. Sie versuchten, den Aufbau einer Kirchengemeinschaft fortzusetzen, ein ehrgeiziges Projekt, das von den schottischen Reformern John Knox und Andrew Melville begonnen worden war. Die „Covenanters“ bemühten sich sehr, die Kirchengemein-

* * * *

schaft aufzubauen und Kirche und Gesellschaft von jeglichen katholischen und anglikanischen Einflüssen zu „reinigen“. Nichts desto trotz wurden die geistlichen Vorhaben der „Covenanters“ im Lichte der komplexen Beziehungen zwischen der Kirche und dem Staat sowohl in England als auch in Schottland redefiniert. Widerstand, Ausschluss, Assimilierung und Versuche, die Praxis zu vereinheitlichen illustrieren die Verbindungen zwischen der Church of Scotland und der Church of England.

* * * *

La maxime de la Réforme, *Ecclesia Reformata Semper Reformanda*, est annonciatrice d'une succession de réformes mises en œuvre par l'Église d'Ecosse, la Kirk, et le Parlement afin de fonder un commonwealth divin sur terre, lequel devait refléter

la perfection de la cité céleste.¹ Ainsi, la Réforme en Écosse ne s'achève pas en 1560. Il est question d'un ambitieux programme dans lequel l'Église et l'État doivent alors travailler de concert. John Knox, très admiratif de l'œuvre de Jean Calvin, reprend ce

principe à son compte: «*The State should serve the Church after the manner of the Kings of Israel, and public life should be controlled by the ministers after the manner of the prophets.*»² À cet égard, comme le décrit Richard Tawney, cette mission fait la part belle à la Kirk: «*The real State in Scotland had been represented, not by Parliament and Council, but by the Church of Knox.*»³ En conséquence, cette tentative théocratique explicite qui se trouve au cœur de la Réforme suscite des tensions entre l'Église et l'État, tensions que la Kirk prend soin de taire en se munissant d'un véritable arsenal législatif.

Au début du dix-septième siècle, la Kirk peine toujours à installer définitivement la Réforme en Écosse, notamment en raison de l'union des couronnes de 1603. En effet, les tentatives d'immixtion du souverain dans le religieux constituent un grain de sable dans le mécanisme presbytérien. Bien qu'éduqué par le théologien George Buchanan (1506-1582), auteur du traité politique *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, le roi Jacques VI, par l'intermédiaire du Conseil privé, ordonna l'emprisonnement de Andrew Melville, auteur de la théorie des deux royaumes et figure de proue du Second Livre de Discipline.⁴ Charles I, successeur de Jacques VI en 1625, fut averti par le comte de Loudoun à l'égard des Écossais et de leur religion majoritaire réformée: «*Sire, the people of Scotland will obey you in everything with the utmost cheerfulness, provided you do not touch their religion and conscience.*»⁵ Les symboles de cette résistance sont les signatures du *National Covenant* de 1638 et du *Solemn League and Covenant* de 1643. Ils incarnent le ralliement du peuple écossais autour d'une foi commune. C'est pour sauvegarder l'œuvre knoxienne et pour se prémunir contre tout retour des prélats que le peuple écossais s'unit aux covenantaires, acteurs de la seconde Réforme. Pour ces derniers, il s'agit de préserver l'essence même du presbytérianisme: l'indépendance de la Kirk contre toute ingérence de l'État, tout en continuant d'édifier la communauté-ecclesia.⁶ Ainsi, l'idéal knoxien et melvillien défendu par les covenantaires devait mener, l'espéraient-ils, à la fondation d'une Église universelle.

Pour ce faire, la Kirk poursuit l'œuvre knoxienne de purification par des moyens tant dogmatiques que juridiques. La Kirk cherche à légaliser ses initiatives à plusieurs niveaux. Dans un premier temps, nous nous proposons de montrer que la Kirk, dans sa constitution, est pourvue d'un véritable appareil juridique, la reliant au Parlement. Cette entente cordiale va être malmenée par des contraintes historiques. En effet, lorsque le roi Jacques VI d'Écosse

monte sur le trône, les covenantaires vont répliquer en fournissant une réponse légale à sa politique. Il en résulte alors des tensions entre l'Église et l'État, ce qui provoque un brouillage des rôles.

Dans un second temps, nous nous proposons d'étudier les effets des tentatives théocratiques menées par la Kirk à l'intérieur même du royaume, et ce afin de purifier de façon légale la société écossaise. Néanmoins, les contraintes historiques vont renforcer les objectifs de purification que s'est assignée la Kirk. En effet, les covenantaires ont recours à la discipline, moyen de résister face à la menace potentielle de l'épiscopat, sorte de relique catholique, mais aussi un moyen de convertir les Écossais à la foi presbytérienne. Cette résistance et ce prosélytisme ne sont pas sans conséquence sur la société écossaise.

I-Les fondations légales de la Kirk, tentatives théocratiques et contraintes historiques: la législation au service de la théocratie

La construction d'un *corpus christianum*, donc d'une théocratie, présuppose la nécessaire alliance entre l'Église et l'État. À cet égard, Jean Calvin et John Knox s'approprient ce principe. Pour ce faire, il convenait de donner à l'ecclesia une dimension légale et juridique comme pour mieux fixer les fondations. Fort de l'héritage théologique et juridique européen – l'Écosse est le pays où la réforme est la dernière en date – John Knox et ses fidèles vont donner naissance à un système original fortement axé sur la vie pratique, le presbytérianisme écossais: «*it was a pragmatic faith rather than an intellectualised one.*»⁷ Il existe des documents fondateurs de l'Église d'Écosse qui ont fait longtemps autorité.

En décembre 1560, la première assemblée générale de l'Église d'Écosse promulgue un Livre de discipline qui abolit l'épiscopat et instaure deux ministères, celui des pasteurs et celui des anciens. La Kirk fonctionne à la manière de petites cours de justice, paroisse, Kirk-session, presbytère, synode et assemblée générale et les pasteurs sont élus par les fidèles, ce qui confère à l'Église d'Écosse une dimension démocratique. Grâce à son organisation et aux fonctions attribuées aux laïcs (anciens et diacres), la Kirk engage toute la société dans son organisation, de sorte que *société et ecclesia* se superposent.

Les réformateurs avaient compris qu'ils ne pouvaient mettre la Réforme sur pied sans la coopé-

ration des autorités civiles. Pour que soit préservé ce lien, indispensable dans sa construction, le rôle d'un médiateur est fondamental, ce qui constitue un trait d'union entre le civil et le religieux. Le magistrat civil est investi du pouvoir de mettre en application les lois ecclésiastiques: «*it is also his duty to hearken the voice of the Lord given through the Church, God's educative agent for the enlightening and guiding of His people*».⁸ Ainsi, le médiateur, le représentant de l'autorité civile, était à la fois pasteur et magistrat.

Voici donc le modèle idéal, le grand projet que s'étaient assignés les architectes de la Réforme. Or, au début du dix-septième siècle, la Réforme en Écosse en est à encore ses premiers balbutiements, tentant de s'édifier et de se consolider. Mais en raison de contraintes historiques qu'incarnent à la fois l'union des couronnes et la politique ecclésiastique du souverain, l'assemblée générale de la Kirk sort à nouveau ses lois pour réaffirmer sa constitution presbytérienne, et notamment la souveraineté du Christ dans ses affaires. L'illustration frappante de ces relations entre l'Eglise et l'État est le *National Covenant*, symbole de l'union spirituelle de l'Écosse représentatif d'un glissement vers un schéma d'Eglise-institution – au détriment de l'extension du projet knoxien à plus grande échelle.

Ainsi, le *Covenant* est une réponse légale à la politique en vigueur. Il s'agit d'un document élaboré par les célèbres covenantaires, Alexander Henderson (1583-1649), le second Réformateur, et l'avocat Archibald Johnston of Warriston (1611-1663), en réponse à la Liturgie de Laud (*Book of Common Prayer*) de 1637 imposée par le souverain Charles I ainsi qu'en raison du refus de celui-ci d'accepter une pétition à l'encontre de la liturgie. Partisan du *jus divinum dominicum*, le souverain n'a cure des doléances des Presbytériens comme du Parlement. En 1618, les cinq articles de Perth, introduisant quelques éléments liturgiques anglicans dans le presbytérianisme, n'avaient jamais été mis en application sous le règne de Jacques VI d'Écosse. Mais Charles I, élevé à Londres dans la foi anglicane, était déterminé à mettre fin à l'insoumission presbytérienne. Une assemblée générale se réunit en novembre 1638 à Glasgow dans laquelle les ministres du culte dénoncent l'alliance entre les évêques épiscopaux et le roi Charles I.

Dans ce pacte de l'alliance, on y trouve toutes les données historiques et légales qui ont fait du presbytérianisme une religion établie. Puis, les signataires s'engagent à maintenir l'indépendance de l'Eglise contre toute intrusion de l'État dans ses

affaires spirituelles et son organisation. Seule l'assemblée générale de la Kirk a le droit de légiférer sur la question. Néanmoins, la kirk ne remet pas en question le rôle du souverain dans la société dans la mesure où le *Covenant* reste fidèle au principe des deux royaumes défendu par Andrew Melville, auteur du Second Livre de Discipline; le Christ étant l'autorité suprême. Somme toute, le souverain était limité par l'arsenal législatif des covenantaires, lesquels citaient des lois du Parlement pour prouver la légalité de leur action ou l'illégalité des lois civiles.

En 1643, la Kirk étend ses sphères d'influence au-delà de son royaume, grâce au *Solemn League and Covenant*. Dans ce document, un accord signé entre les covenantaires et les Anglais, les covenantaires renforcent la doctrine presbytérienne, reconnaissant une seule nation, un roi et une seule religion réformée. Conscient du décalage notable entre anglicanisme et presbytérianisme, l'accord spécifie que tout est mis en oeuvre pour favoriser au mieux un rapprochement entre les deux confessions: «*nearest Conjunction and Uniformity in Religion*».⁹ De leur côté, les Anglais sont soucieux de purifier leur Eglise: «*vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions*».¹⁰ Cet accord arrive donc à point nommé entre les deux parties. Notons cependant que les covenantaires envisageaient une uniformité religieuse préfigurant la communauté-ecclésiastique tandis que les Anglais y voyaient surtout une coopération militaire, comme l'exprime le covenantaire Robert Baillie: «*The English were for a civil League, we for a religious Covenant*».¹¹ Les Anglais souhaitaient mettre un terme au despotisme du monarque tout en garantissant la préservation de la religion réformée. *League* d'une part et *Covenant* de l'autre montraient que l'accord n'était pas fondé sur les mêmes principes. Nécessité faisant loi, les Anglais, jouant sur la corde sensible des presbytériens, acceptaient de céder du terrain au religieux.

Enfin, la Confession de foi de Westminster est élaborée par les covenantaires et votée par le Parlement. C'est une tentative d'unifier la Réforme, tant dans le culte, les prédications que dans la fonction des pasteurs et des laïcs.

De cette première partie, on peut retenir qu'il y a bien continuité dans la Réforme malgré des écueils d'ordre historique. Ces trois documents étaient bel et bien en accord avec les deux Manuels de Discipline, réaffirmant clairement les principes de la première Réforme. Ils réitérèrent les principes,

entre autres, selon lesquels «*God alone is the Lord of conscience*»¹² et également que le magistrat civil se doit de préserver l'unité, la paix et le respect de la doctrine. Enfin, notons qu'il ne s'agit pas de religion seule mais qu'il est aussi question de politique. Ainsi, pour le *Solemn League and Covenant*, il s'agit ni plus ni moins d'un marché diplomatique, d'un contrat, dans lequel est troqué le matériel contre le spirituel, ce qui ne pouvait conduire qu'à une confusion, celle du temporel et du spirituel. Cette confusion s'incarnait aussi dans la fonction du second réformateur, Alexander Henderson: «*the greatest, wisest, and most liberal of the Scottish Presbyterians... a cabinet minister without office.*»¹³

II-Purification de la société et discipline ecclésiale

L'alliance entre les autorités religieuses et civiles qu'illustraient les différents documents de la réforme était supposée favoriser conjointement l'édification et la purification de la communauté-ecclésia. Ainsi, afin de purifier la Kirk, les réformateurs, en s'assurant du soutien du Parlement, donnaient-ils une valeur légale à la discipline, laquelle apparaît explicitement dans la Confession de Foi écossaise de 1560 et également dans *Form and Order of Excommunication and Public Repentance* de 1563: «*ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered as God's word prescribeth whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished.*»¹⁴

Avec la Réforme, les caractéristiques de l'Église se devaient d'être suffisamment explicites car l'Église d'Écosse devait se distinguer de l'Église épiscopale, marquant en particulier une différence cruciale avec le dogme catholique. Trois grands principes se dégagent de la Confession : d'abord, respecter et véhiculer «*the pure word of God*»/la «vraie» parole de Dieu, administrer les justes sacrements et exercer fidèlement la discipline. Ce dernier point est capital car il permet de mettre en application les préceptes bibliques. Selon le théologien Louis Berkhof, la purification de la Kirk passe par l'exercice de la discipline: «*And though the exercise of discipline may not be peculiar to the Church, that is, is not found in it exclusively, yet it is absolutely essential to the purity of the Church.*»¹⁵

Au début du dix-septième siècle, l'objectif d'instaurer un ordre moral puritain qu'incarnent les covenantaires va conditionner les pratiques ecclésiales. En effet, les obstacles que représentent la monarchie et l'anglicanisme sont comme des signes du divin, un appel à la purification: «*God has*

good reasons for sending upon us His Church periodical trials, hardship, persecutions... Such tests of faith purify the Church, run off the dross, throw out the counterfeits, break off the dead branches.»¹⁶

Cet appel à la purification se manifeste par le renforcement de la discipline. Celle-ci s'illustre de plusieurs manières: d'abord, par l'éducation et le catéchisme. En effet, les mesures disciplinaires visent, au delà de l'instruction, à éduquer le paroissien: «*The Reformers' plans to punish the adult for sins were, from the start, intended to be implemented by an ambitious scheme for education.*»¹⁷ Les structures éducatives sont au cœur de la Réforme. Le Manuel de Discipline, texte fondateur du presbytérianisme, présente une organisation précise de la nation écossaise, dont l'éducation constitue l'un des piliers. Les auteurs, les six John, exhortent à la création d'écoles dans chaque paroisse et chaque bourg – idéal qui verra le jour trois siècles plus tard. En 1616, le *Privy Seal* /Conseil privé s'engage à créer une école dans chaque paroisse. Le Parlement s'y engage aussi en 1633: les *Heritors* devront payer un impôt pour financer l'école. Cette initiative sera renouvelée en 1646 et en 1696 par le Parlement. Ces projets, sous l'impulsion des presbytériens, feront de l'Écosse un creuset du savoir dans de nombreuses paroisses comme dans ses augustes universités.

L'exhortation à l'instruction donne l'occasion à la Kirk d'asseoir son autorité aussi bien temporelle que spirituelle. D'autre part, l'instruction sert de moyen de lutte contre le péché. Il s'agit d'instiller les nouveaux préceptes de la Réforme afin de se garantir contre tout retour en force des évêques et par extension du catholicisme. L'instruction est un devoir spirituel car «*celui qui ne sait lire s'interdit l'accès à la connaissance de Dieu, ce qui provoque chez les presbytériens la perte de leur âme.*»¹⁸ Les enfants étant «*ignorant of Godliness*» doivent être éduqués dès leur jeune âge.¹⁹ L'objectif était de former de futurs pasteurs, garantissant ainsi l'avenir de la Kirk et leur occupation à des fonctions clés du monde séculier.

Au développement du système éducatif s'ajoutait le catéchisme. La Confession de Foi de Westminster, œuvre des covenantaires, sert de support pour le catéchisme: «*in every house where there is any who can read there be at least one copy of the Shorter and Larger Catechism, Confession of Faith, and Directory of Public worship.*»²⁰

L'école et le catéchisme n'étaient pas les seuls moyens pour réformer les mœurs de la population. Aussi, existait-il des moyens disciplinaires, «*remedial*» and «*restorative*», pour ramener les ouailles

à la vertu, ceux qui notamment n'avaient pas respecté les dix commandements. Pour les adultes, cette fois, les thèmes d'incrimination principaux étaient l'adultère, la fornication et toute activité dominicale profane. Ces péchés sont condamnés simultanément par l'Église et par le Parlement. Ce dernier légifère sur ces crimes contre la couronne. L'adultère est reconnu comme crime en 1563, la fornication, en 1567, l'activité dominicale profane en 1579. Noël et la Saint-Jean ne sont plus fériés.²¹ En réponse aux cinq articles de Perth, le respect du dimanche en tant que jour sacré et férié est renforcé. Opérant de concert, la Kirk et le Parlement tentent d'imposer la doctrine presbytérienne.

Au sein de la kirk, ces péchés sont condamnés par le *stool of repentance/cutty stool (low)*: «*adultères et fornicateurs, une fois débusqués par les conseillers presbytéraux, sont condamnés à faire pénitence pendant le service sur le Stool of Repentance, la sellette érigée dans l'Église.*»²² Ceux qui osent s'y opposer, sont passibles de la peine de mort en vertu des statuts de 1563 et 1581. La restauration de l'épiscopat en 1610 n'abroge pas ces lois. Covenantaires et cromwelliens redonneront à ces lois toute leur légitimité en 1638 et 1659. Dès 1660, le Parlement cesse d'avaliser les peines infligées par l'Église, d'où une progressive séparation des forces temporelles et du spirituel.

L'une des alliances les plus spectaculaires entre l'Église et l'État concerne les procès en sorcellerie. Dès 1563, la sorcellerie est rendue passible de peine de mort par le Parlement, qu'il s'agisse d'ailleurs de pratiques de sorcellerie ou de consultations de sorcières. En 1597, Jacques VI écrit un traité de *Démonologie* dans lequel il condamne sans vergogne la sorcellerie comme la manifestation du démon. S'amorce alors une véritable chasse aux sorcières. Les périodes les plus fortes sont 1623, 1629-1630 qui correspondent à une période de famine et les années 1649-50 à un contexte d'instabilité politique. Cette loi sera abrogée en 1736 après avoir mené au bûcher, ou fait noyer et torturer, femmes et homosexuels en nombre significatif – on en compterait environ un millier. Les condamnations pour sorcellerie auraient été en augmentation à l'époque covenantaire. Il est cependant à noter en premier lieu qu'il s'agissait d'un phénomène européen à la même période.²³ En outre, sorcellerie et superstition n'ont fait qu'accroître le sentiment de superstition propre au paysage écossais qu'entretenaient déjà rebouteux et guérisseuses. Les réformateurs avaient amené de l'eau au moulin de la seconde Réforme et de la justice civile. En effet,

Jean Calvin et John Knox citaient un passage de l'Ancien Testament pour dénoncer les sorcières et leurs pratiques démoniaques: «*Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*»²⁴ Au regard de ces informations, on ne peut pas en conclure pour autant que les presbytériens, et en particulier l'aile la plus radicale de la Kirk, les covenantaires, aient mis le feu aux poudres car c'est bel et bien Jacques VI qui lança l'offensive avec son traité et ses lois. Dans les faits, un procès reste mémorable en Écosse: le procès de North Berwick. Les accusés, sous la torture, avaient avoué avoir vus Satan prêcher à minuit pile dans l'Eglise de North Berwick: «*At which time the witches demaunded of the Diuel why he did beare such hatred to the King, who answered, by reason the King is the greatest enemy he hath in the worlde: all which their confessions and depositions are still extant upon record.*»²⁵ Ainsi, dans ce procès, le souverain et la Kirk faisaient-ils cause commune. Néanmoins, vers la fin du seizième siècle, alors que le phénomène tend à s'essouffler, la Kirk renforce sa discipline: «*The kirk threatened to «proceed... with the highest censures» against magistrates who set witches free after they had been convicted.*»²⁶ En somme, la Kirk prend le relai de la justice civile lorsque cette dernière ne remplit pas ses fonctions morales.

Le retour des évêques, au début du dix-septième siècle, ne tait point le phénomène. Ils sont même de la noce: «*whenever Presbytery was dominant witches became prominent.*»²⁷ Toutefois, ce phénomène de terreur atteint son paroxysme avec l'Assemblée Générale de la Kirk qui, menée d'une main de fer par les covenantaires, passe une série de réformes: 1640, 1644, 1645, 1649. La chasse aux sorcières lancée par les conseils presbytéraux covenantaires en 1643 et 1644, 1649 et 1650 marque une répression très forte, allant jusqu'à la mort. Il se peut que les Hautes Terres pourtant traditionnellement considérées comme le haut lieu des superstitions, furent relativement épargnées lors de cette répression.²⁸ Ceci s'expliquerait par la prédominance de l'Eglise épiscopale dans cette partie de l'Ecosse.

Si les Hautes Terres étaient relativement épargnées par ce fléau, les Borders, en revanche, étaient le berceau covenantaire et l'un des hauts lieux de la chasse aux sorcières: «*As is well known this area acquired a more 'radical' reputation than the rest of the country due to the activities of the covenanters, whose stance in defence of religion in opposition to anglicising tendencies in the Kirk, and what was perceived to be the excesses of Stewart despotism, earned them sustained persecution by the government and increasing marginalization on the part of the Scottish*

establishment by the 1680s.»²⁹

Aux yeux des covenantaires, la sorcellerie s'apparentait étroitement à l'Église de Rome et à l'Église d'Angleterre, incarnant l'expression même de l'enfer et de Satan, tant et si bien que la frontière était mince entre ces ennemies et que la confusion était grande pour le paroissien.

Les complices et parfois les juges de ces procès n'étaient autres que les kirk-sessions affublées de leurs pasteurs et de leurs anciens, lesquels se substituaient parfois aux autorités civiles puisque les Églises locales constituaient souvent le point de départ. Une plainte faisait l'objet d'une enquête. S'ensuivait la rédaction d'un rapport qui était transmis au *Privy council* qui jugeait de la mise en place d'un procès. Par le truchement du système presbytérien, la Kirk était suffisamment dotée de laïcs pour mener à bien ses entreprises spirituelles. À ce propos, la Confession de Foi de Westminster redonne une place de choix au laïc : «*that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein* » (*Second Manuel de discipline*), «*the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins.*»³⁰

Dans une certaine mesure, ces périodes sombres de l'histoire écossaise mettent en lumière une confusion entre «*sin*» et «*crime*», le premier logiquement du ressort de la Kirk et le second des autorités civiles comme le *Privy council* : le point commun étant l'immoralité. Somme toute, les historiens témoignent, dans leur ensemble, de la forte présence de la Kirk Session en tant qu'institution disciplinaire, en tant que tribunal moral à part entière, en tant que bras droit de la société civile.³¹

Dans les Églises, les projets de purification passaient aussi par la prédication dominicale. En effet, les prédicateurs prenaient soin d'élaborer des sermons qui devaient participer à ce processus. Ces sermons étaient souvent exécutés *extempore*, c'est à dire improvisés, comme si le prédicateur était doué d'un pouvoir surnaturel. La méthode de purification par la chaire pastorale renforçait la traque qui s'opérait au sein du royaume. À l'annonce de l'Évangile s'adjoignait la dénonciation des vices et des hérésies (catholicisme, arminianisme, érastianisme), lesquelles étaient si amplement décriées à la chaire que bientôt une grande confusion régna entre «*sin* » et «*crime* », entre figure pastorale et autorité civile, entre superstition et religion, entre catholicisme et épiscopalisme, entre catholicisme et sorcellerie. À titre d'illustration, lorsque les pasteurs prêchent à l'occasion de l'appel à la signature du *National Covenant*, les réactions ont tout

d'un phénomène de conversion religieuse : «*I have seen more than a thousand all at once lifting up their hands and the tears falling down their eyes.*»³² Face à ce phénomène de conversion, dans l'autre camp, se trouvent les plus récalcitrants, menacés d'excommunication, expulsés de leur paroisse et réduits au silence.

Superstition religieuse d'une part et austérité religieuse de l'autre sont autant d'éléments qui vont donner naissance à l'archétype du covenantaire. En effet, l'image du pasteur et de l'ancien a été véhiculée par le biais de la littérature écossaise, notamment par Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg, faisant du pasteur et des anciens l'archétype du covenantaire calviniste puritain – «*Scottish Calvinism, A dark repressive force?*» pour reprendre l'interrogation du théologien Donald MacLeod.³³

Nous avons tenté, de façon schématique, d'analyser les différentes méthodes pratiques, la praxis, qui ont été mises en œuvre par les covenantaires tant au niveau paroissial que national pour poursuivre l'ambitieux projet des réformateurs d'un commonwealth divin sur terre. Somme toute, résistance, exclusion et assimilation dans un objectif d'uniformisation furent autant de moyens pour installer définitivement la Réforme en terre d'Écosse. Qu'il s'agisse de propagandes véhiculées par les sermons (catéchisme, homilétique et prédication) ou de discipline paroissiale (*Stool of repentance*, respect du dimanche...), la politique ecclésiale des covenantaires ne s'est pas bornée à confirmer une pratique sociale des Évangiles qui se traduit par une structure presbytérienne mais a tenté de coordonner théologie et pratique dans une perspective de construction théocratique, au-delà des frontières écossaises. À cet égard, Écossais et Anglais scellent un accord, le *Solemn League and Covenant*, emblème d'un projet de foi commune. Or, on note un écart entre la théorie et la pratique, entre l'Église-Institution, et la communauté-ecclésia. Ce traité finit par creuser le fossé entre les deux nations, ce qui met davantage en relief les institutions religieuses et leurs différences dogmatiques et théologiques, taisant, pour un temps, l'ambitieux projet de communauté-ecclésia.

Somme toute, les documents du dix-septième siècle sont une réaffirmation de la politique de la première Réforme et du système presbytérien en raison d'une menace catholique et/ou épiscopale qui plane au-dessus de l'Écosse. Une incursion liturgique de l'Église épiscopale suffit à mettre le feu aux poudres. Tout ce qui a un relent de papisme

est rédhibitoire aux yeux du covenantaire. À ce propos, John Knox n'avait-il pas déclaré en 1558 «*The papistical religion is a mortal pestilence*»?³⁴ Ses successeurs covenantaires s'étaient fait les héritiers de ce radicalisme de sorte que l'image du covenantaire était celle de la résistance mais aussi celle de l'offensive. Si le *National Covenant* est un symbole de résistance, le *Solemn League and Covenant* et la Confession de Foi de Westminster représentent bien des espoirs de voir la «*pure word of God*» conquérir la communauté-ecclesia.

Mais notre étude serait incomplète si on se contentait de la conclure sur un schéma archétypal et sur des espoirs vains. Dans une certaine mesure, nous pouvons déduire de ce qui précède que les covenantaires sont parvenus à imposer leur doctrine et à mettre sur pied leur Église-Institution en dépit des contraintes historiques qui sont des au cours de son édification. Les méthodes employées par les covenantaires furent parfois dures et violentes mais elles étaient aussi le propre du dix-septième siècle, n'épargnant aucun dogme et institution. Ils ont dû résister face au pouvoir cromwellien et protéger le système presbytérien secrètement, se réunissant en conventicules. Mais c'est précisément aussi grâce aux pressions anglaises et par la suite cromwelliennes que les covenantaires ont renforcé leur cohésion. En 1690, l'Église d'Écosse est rendue légitime en devenant Église nationale. Ce Statut sera confirmé dans le Traité d'Union de 1707. Néanmoins, bien que ce statut contribue d'une certaine manière à la purification dogmatique de l'Écosse, il n'en reste pas moins qu'émergent de nouvelles contraintes liées précisément à ce lien entre l'Église et l'État. L'érastianisme, à travers la question épineuse du Patronage, contribuera à diviser l'unité spirituelle de l'Écosse pour conduire notamment à la scission spectaculaire de la Kirk en 1843 et à la création de l'Église Libre d'Écosse.

Notes

- 1 «*Ecclesia Reformata Semper Reformanda*»: l'Église réformée, toujours à réformer (en accord avec la Parole de Dieu).
- 2 Bainton, R. H., «*Ernst Troeltsch – Thirty years After*», in *Theology Today*, avril 1951, p. 87.
- 3 Tawney, R. H., *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: An Historical Study*, J. Murray, London, 1926, p. 124.
- 4 Jacques VI fut un souverain érudit, auteur de *Dæmonology* (1597), *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1598) et *Basilikon Doron* (1599).
- 5 Collins, G. N. M., *The Heritage of our Fathers*, The

- Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1974, p. 14
- 6 Pour des pistes de réflexion sur les termes «*Église-institution*» et «*communauté-ecclesia*», consulter Kaempf, B. (sous la direction de), *Introduction à la théologie pratique*, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 1997.
- 7 Lynch, M., *Edinburgh and the Reformation*, E. J. Donald Publisher, 1981, p. 214.
- 8 Douglas, A. M., *Church and School in Scotland*, The Chalmers Lectures, Saint Andrew Press, 1985, p. 23.
- 9 Lachman, D. C., *Solemn League and Covenant*, cité dans le *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, T & T Clark, Intervarsity Press, 1993, p. 787.
- 10 Toon, P., *Puritans and Calvinism*, Westminster Publishing House, 1973, p. 38.
- 11 Baillie, R., *Letters and Journals*, II, p. 90. Cité Lachman, D. C., *Solemn League and Covenant*, cité dans le *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 786.
- 12 Cameron, N., cité dans le *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 203.
- 13 Masson, D., *The Life of John Milton*, vol. 3, 1643-1649, cité dans l'article de Douglas, J. D., *Alexander Henderson*, *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 397.
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- 15 Berkhof, L., *Systematic Theology*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1939, p. 577.
- 16 McFeeters, J. C., *Sketches of the Covenanters, Approaching a Crisis--A.D. 1622.*, BiblioBazaar, 2008, chap. X.
- 17 Douglas, A. M., *Church and School in Scotland*, the Chalmers Lectures, Edinburgh: St. Andrew's Press, 1985, p. 20.
- 18 Prunier, C., *Catholiques, Presbytériens et enjeux de l'instruction dans les Highlands d'Ecosse au dix-huitième siècle*, thèse de doctorat sous la direction du Professeur Pierre Morère, Université Stendhal Grenoble III, 1996, p. 273.
- 19 Smout, T.C., *History of the Scottish People 1560-1830*, Collins/Fontana, 1973, p. 422.
- 20 Session 30, July 30, 1649, ante meridiem.--Act concerning catechising, Act of General Assembly, p. 211. Cité dans McCrie, *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, p. 48.
- 21 Civardi, C., *L'Ecosse depuis 1528*, Ophrys, 1998, p. 37.
- 22 Ibidem, p. 37.
- 23 La bulle du Pape Innocent VIII suivie de la publication de *Malleus Maleficarum* par les dominicains Jacob Sprenger et Heinrich Krämer en 1487 avait amorcé une lutte sans merci contre les sorcières,

- lutte qui avait flambé comme un fétu de paille dans toute l'Europe, la France en tête.
- 24 La Bible (Version du roi Jacques), Ancien Testament, Exode 22:18.
 - 25 *Newes from Scotland, A true discourse, Of the apprehension of sundrye, Witches lately taken in Scotland: wherof some are executed, and some are yet imprisoned. With a particuler recitall of their examinations, taken in the presence of the Kinges Maiestie*, William Wright, London, 1591, p. 15.
 - 26 Black, G. F., *A Calendar of cases of witchcraft in Scotland 1510-1727*, New York, 1938, p. 30, cité dans Smout, T. C., p. 188.
 - 27 Stephen, W., *History of the Scottish Church*, Edinburgh, 1896, II, p. 282, in T.C Smout, p. 189.
 - 28 Campbell, J. G., *Superstitions of the Highlands*, J.G. Campbell, Glasgow, 1900, in T.C Smout, p. 189.
 - 29 Henderson, L., *The Survival of Witchcraft Prosecutions and Witch Belief in South-West Scotland*, p. 53. in *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. LXXXV. N°219, avril 2006, Edinburgh University Press.
 - 30 *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1647.
 - 31 Goodare, J., dans *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland* (1999), ch. 8 M. Smith, L. M., 'Sackcloth for the sinner or punishment for the crime?', mais aussi *Church and Secular courts in Cromwellian Scotland*, in John Dwyer. Mason R. A., and Murdoch A.(eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (2nd ed. [1982]). Voir aussi : Briggs, R., *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (2002); Levack, TB. P., *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (2004), Henderson, L., and Cowan, E. J., *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (2001; 2007).
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The Biblical Canon according to Lee McDonald: An Evaluation

Timothy J. Stone
St Andrew's University, Scotland

SUMMARY

The Biblical Canon by Lee MacDonald is the most substantial and formative outworking of a position on the canon that has come to dominate the discussion. Nevertheless, there is good reason to question some of his fundamental conclusions. The article examines the piv-

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

The Biblical Canon von Lee MacDonald ist die substantiellste und formativste Darlegung einer Position zum Kanon, die gegenwärtig die Diskussion dominiert. Nichtsdestotrotz gibt es gute Gründe, einige seiner grundlegenden Schlussfolgerungen in Frage zu stellen.

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RÉSUMÉ

L'ouvrage de Lee MacDonald sur le canon biblique constitue la présentation la plus substantielle et la plus élaborée d'une position sur le canon qui a acquis une influence prépondérante dans les études sur cette question. Il y a cependant de bonnes raisons de contester certaines de ses conclusions fondamentales. L'auteur de la recension

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Anyone attempting to delve into the issue of the biblical canon may conclude that the literature on the topic is endless and that study in this area is wearying to the body. So instead of beginning this journey, students, pastors, and even scholars will probably want to turn to a good introductory book that covers all the basics. Lee MacDonald's latest book, which is called a "masterpiece" and hailed as his "magnum opus", meets this need. To date the book is the most substantial and formative outworking of a position on the canon that

otal role played in MacDonald's thesis by his definition of canon, the rabbinic disputes, and LXX tradition, in contrast to the *marginal* role he assigns to Josephus and an important passage from 4 Ezra. This is followed by a look at the *foundational* role of the rule of faith in Irenaeus for MacDonald's project.

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Der Artikel untersucht die *zentrale* Rolle, die die Definition von „Kanon“, die rabbinischen Diskussionen sowie die Septuagintatradition in McDonalds Argumentation spielen – im Gegensatz zu der *marginalen* Rolle von Josephus und einer wichtigen Passage aus dem 4. Buch Esra. Danach folgt ein Blick auf die grundlegende Rolle, die die Glaubensregel bei Irenäus in McDonalds Projekt spielt.

* * * *

considère le rôle central joué dans sa thèse par la définition que McDonald donne du canon, son approche des désaccords entre rabbins et la tradition de la Septante, en contraste avec l'attention très marginale qu'il accorde à Josèphe et à un important passage de *IV Esdras*. Il considère ensuite le rôle fondamental du thème de la règle de la foi chez Irénée pour l'approche de McDonald.

* * * *

has continued to gain ground over the past forty years as represented by most contributors to *The Canon Debate* (a large volume edition by James Sanders and MacDonald), and the seminal works of Albert Sundberg, James Barr, and John Barton. The breadth of the work is impressive. It is the only up-to-date introduction of its kind that covers both the OT and NT canon in one volume. Before an evaluation can be undertaken it is necessary to summarize the basic position of the book.

Summary of *The Biblical Canon*

In this latest installment McDonald adds 162 pages to the last edition (1995), already a substantial 384 pages, yet maintains that “many of the most important conclusions remain the same” and have “been strengthened considerably.”¹ In the preface he reassures his readers that he did not approach the topic with a thesis that he wanted to prove, but with “a natural curiosity about the truth of canon formation.”² This curiosity has taken McDonald on a twenty-four year investigation into the biblical canon involving, among other things, a PhD thesis at Harvard and two revised and expanded editions of the original work. With the goal of pushing aside “unsubstantiated claims” he attempts to cut through past research on the canon by avoiding assumptions he could not demonstrate from the “primary evidence.”³

McDonald begins his examination of the OT by defining canon as a universally⁴ accepted and closed list of books for a faith tradition. McDonald holds to a three-stage theory in which the Pentateuch is closed in the time of Ezra, the Prophets in the time of Ben Sira, and the Writings much later in rabbinic Judaism – sometime in the second to fourth century CE. He concludes: “The rabbis who shaped the Mishnah and put it into its final form are the same individuals who gave shape to the final form of the Hebrew Bible.”⁵ During the time of Jesus and the early church, however, the Hebrew Bible was “much larger” than it eventually became in the following centuries.⁶ To support this claim he cites the use of *1 Enoch* in Jude, the large collection of texts at Qumran, the citations of Ben Sira in rabbinic Judaism, the use of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books in the NT and LXX of the early church.⁷ In this model the rabbis *excluded* from their canon many books that had scriptural status in the first century. During the first century CE, however, there is “no evidence” that “the Jews or the followers of Jesus were even remotely interested in the notion of a closed collection of sacred Scriptures...”⁸ Therefore, those scholars who hold to a well-established canon in the first century make an “anachronistic” claim because they cannot show this to be the case.⁹ The Christian church, then, inherited this “much larger” and open collection of Scripture from Judaism. McDonald’s explanation is worth quoting at length:

The contents of the LXX have always been elusive, but it is likely that the Greek Bible used by the Christians included writings that were a

part of this collection from the earliest Christian community, before their separation from Judaism in the first century C.E. There is no evidence that their OT Scripture collection got bigger with time.¹⁰

McDonald is not clear when this occurred, yet it appears that the Christian church selected and fixed its OT canon from this “much larger” Jewish collection sometime in the fifth and sixth centuries CE.¹¹

Like the OT discussion, dates for the canonization of the NT are consistently later than traditional understandings of the canon. Focusing on citations of the NT books in the church fathers, McDonald argues that the Gospels and Paul were among the first to be read as Scripture in the second century and then – only at the end of the fourth century – was a “general consensus reached” about the extent of the NT collection.¹² Heretics (e.g. Marcion), the invention of the codex, persecution (the burning of sacred books), Eusebius’ catalogues of canonical lists, and the political activity of Constantine, among other forces, all played a role in the development and closure of the NT canon. But more important than the canon for the early church were the rule of faith and the authority of Jesus. “Irenaeus and others who argued against the Gnostics in the second and third centuries did not combat heresy with a canon of Scripture, but with a canon of faith (*regula fidei*) that had been passed on from the apostles to their successors in the churches.”¹³ Thus the “true canon of faith for the church” is Christ.¹⁴ This means a diminished role for the canon. For instance, “New inquiry into the origins of the biblical canon might permit the church to feel freer to allow other ancient (or modern) voices to inform its understanding of God today.”¹⁵

One cannot help but admire the dogged determination of McDonald’s pursuit of canonical questions; no doubt he has accumulated many scholarly blisters from examining a vast array of primary and secondary literature on a topic so complex as the canon. Certainly this is a learned, painstakingly researched, and formidable account of the biblical canon and the complicated historical process surrounding its formation. In particular, McDonald reminds his readers that the universal church has never agreed exactly upon which books belong in its canon.¹⁶ Finally, his attraction to the rule of faith in Irenaeus is commendable.

Nevertheless, there is good reason to question some of his fundamental conclusions. I do not

think this will be accomplished through another short sound bite in a review that has space only to register a disagreement in the last few lines, but rather through a more substantial and well-deserved engagement with the core of McDonald's thesis. For practical reasons, this must be limited; there is not adequate room to evaluate the entire book. My inquiry will focus on the OT portion of the work. I will examine the *pivotal* role played by McDonald's definition of canon, the rabbinic disputes, and LXX tradition, in contrast to the *marginal* role of Josephus and a very important passage from *4 Ezra*. This will be followed by a look at the *foundational* role of the rule of faith in Irenaeus for the project.

McDonald's Definition of Canon

McDonald's definition of canon is essentially derived from Eugene Ulrich: it is "the final, fixed, and closed list of the books of Scriptures that are officially and permanently accepted as supremely authoritative by a faith tradition, in conscious contradistinction from those books that are not accepted."¹⁷ If left *conceptually* as a fixed collection this is not problematic, but the "closed," "official" and "conscious" elements of the definition bleed over into the *form* of the "closed list" required to support such a definition.¹⁸ Who is the official group that consciously closed the canon by listing each book in a catalogue? For McDonald, absence of canon in this form is absence of canon. He wants direct (not inferential) evidence and claims that scholars relying on "inferences" make anachronistic suppositions by importing notions of canon from the second to fourth century CE.¹⁹

McDonald is certainly right that one cannot find a canon in the *form* of a catalogue, but it does not necessarily follow that the concept is alien and can only be applied via anachronistic suppositions. If this concept were present, where would it be housed in the mental furniture of the Jewish mind? In a word: temple. It is not anachronistic to argue that the temple held a focal point across the diverse groups of Judaism while it stood. McDonald himself affirms this, but stops short of teasing out its symbolic power for the canon.²⁰ Most scholars would agree an archive of sacred literature existed in the temple in Jerusalem.²¹ Famously, Josiah discovers the book of the law in the temple. 1 and 2 Maccabees, Josephus, and later, the rabbis, all bear witness to this reality. Throughout the ancient Near East, societies housed their sacred books in

their temples or cultic centres. Within Judaism, the temple is the only institution with enough authority to determine and set the boundaries of the canon. Thus the sacred space of the temple is the primary vehicle for the collection, preservation, and dissemination of the canon in the Jewish tradition until its destruction. As a result, it is this sacred *space*, and not some sacred *list*, that one would expect to be meaningful in the conceptual world of Judaism. To make lists of the holy books while the temple remained standing would be superfluous and such a demand by McDonald may (ironically) betray an anachronistic appeal to the *formulation* of canons *as* lists in the second to fourth century CE in the church. Within Judaism, however, catalogues of canonical books never occur in the period under investigation. After the temple was destroyed, the synagogue (in all its variety), in so far as it came to symbolically represent the temple, carried on this practice by housing the sacred books in either the Torah shrine or in an adjacent house of study.²² These practices may explain why there was no talk about the number of the canonical books within Judaism before 70 CE, even though the NT and other writings strongly presuppose a relatively limited collection of sacred books. Approximately thirty years after the destruction of the temple, Josephus and *4 Ezra* each record the number of books they consider canonical.

If McDonald's definition of canon is anachronistic to the first century, it has trouble finding solid footing in his investigation of Jewish sources in the second to fourth century CE. Most important in this regard is his discussion of *Baba Bathra* 14b-15a, which records the order of the books in the Prophets and the Writings and then discusses their authorship. *Baba Bathra* "clearly identifies the twenty-four books that make up the Jewish collection of sacred writings," writes McDonald.²³ This is simply not the case because it does not list the books of the Pentateuch. Quibbling about such small matters might seem overly critical, but it is essential for understanding the purposes of the rabbinic discussion. The Pentateuch is probably not listed because its order and authorship are uncontested, which isn't the case for the Prophets and the Writings. Prior to this document within Judaism there is no list of the Pentateuch. Thus *Baba Bathra* is not concerned about establishing the identity or authority of the books in the Prophets and Writings, but rather with questions of order and authorship.

What does this all mean for McDonald's defini-

tion of canon? As we have seen, in the first century CE there is no authoritative list of books, and so there is no canon for McDonald, and all such claims are only based on inferences. In the second century CE *Baba Bathra* is the best candidate to fit McDonald's definition of canon. It is not establishing the authority of these books, but holds their authority as its most basic presupposition. What is lacking, therefore, in the first century is also lacking in the second to fourth century CE and later. There is no time when these books are declared authoritative or even officially acknowledged as such in the form of a list, but there is a time after which they are *conceptually* treated as a fixed and authoritative collection. Thus, McDonald's inability to find something that fits his definition of canon in the first century is rendered problematic since he cannot find anything to match it in the following centuries either.²⁴ No matter when one dates the fixed canon of Judaism, the evidence under investigation requires a degree of inference.

After McDonald squeezes *Baba Bathra* into his definition of canon, he then tries to marginalize its testimony. He argues that this does not reflect the "view of all Jews" because it was not included in the Mishnah. Furthermore, it had little influence on early Christians and probably comes from Babylon, and, as such, does not reflect later rabbinic debates in the land of Israel about the fringes of the canon.²⁵ While each supposition could be questioned, for McDonald, the rabbinic disputes are pivotal in his investigation of the Jewish evidence. He uses these disputes to discredit all earlier signs that there was a fixed canon within Judaism. The weight McDonald gives these disputes requires another look at the primary evidence.

Rabbinic Disputes

McDonald prefaces and concludes his examination of the early evidence for a closed canon with an appeal to rabbinic discussions concerning which books defile the hands or have once been withdrawn.²⁶ If there was a fixed canon in the first century CE, according to McDonald, then "why is there so much discussion among the rabbis of the second through the fifth centuries C.E. about whether books like Ezekiel, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Sirach 'defile the hands'?"²⁷ The imprecision of this statement is in danger of muffling the distinct nature of the notoriously difficult phrase of the rabbis "to defile the hands." In these discussions there are legitimate concerns only about

Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Esther.²⁸

John Barton, among many other scholars on the canon, has argued (persuasively, in my view) that these and only these three books are singled out because they alone in the Hebrew canon lack the divine Name. Taking his cue from the paradoxical notion that a sacred book can defile the hands, Barton argues that this designation could have begun as a precaution to ensure that people would carefully handle the Scriptures.²⁹ As such the defilement concerns physical contact with these books in ritual situations not their "metaphysical existence."³⁰ The Hebrew Scriptures do not defile the hands if they are translated from Aramaic to Hebrew or Hebrew to Aramaic, while they do defile the hands if they are written in Assyrian characters on parchment and in ink.³¹ Or again, the books in the temple do not defile the hands unless they are removed from the temple.³² Barton argues that the lack of the divine Name in *only* these three books would lead to questions of purification when handling them. If his estimation is accurate, it also explains why some books that were clearly extracanonical, which contained the divine Name, were said to "not defile the hands."³³ This pronouncement was needed for those who came into contact with these texts because of the special status of the divine Name, even though these texts were never considered Scripture.³⁴ This distinction is particularly hard to grasp. All the canonical books defile the hands and at times this designation is equal to their canonical status but it is not equated with it. Canonical books are so sacred that one can only touch them with gloves on, so to speak, but in the case of these three books, the necessity of the gloves was questioned due to the absence of the divine Name. The rabbis concluded that gloves were necessary.

Again, McDonald supposes that the rabbis are engaged in canonical activity when they discuss why a book was once "stored away" or "withdrawn." The book of Ezekiel was said to have been withdrawn because it appeared to contradict the Torah,³⁵ while Proverbs and Ecclesiastes were said to once be withdrawn because they are self-contradictory.³⁶ Only in the case of Avot of Rabbi Nathan 1:4 does it say that Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs were at one time withdrawn because they were mere parables, and not Scripture. Theodore Swanson has pointed out the late date of this composition and the unlikelihood that it reflects a view held in the Tannaitic period (i.e. 70-200 CE).³⁷ It is likely that this can only

be anachronistically applied to the situation of the first and second century CE. More likely is Roger Beckwith's theory that these quibbles are the result of exegetical efforts to reconcile conflicts within an already established canon.³⁸

In contrast, the discussions about Ben Sira are notably different than those about canonical books. It was withdrawn without question and was not later vindicated; probably due to the rabbis' belief that it is not a prophetic book because it was written after the cessation of prophecy.³⁹ This belief doesn't originate in the rabbinic period – it can be seen as far back as 1 Maccabees 6:46, 24:41 and the writing of Josephus.⁴⁰ These disputes are about books already in the canon, with the possible but unlikely exception of Ben Sira. Where is the evidence showing that the rabbis *excluded* books from a “much larger” collection of sacred scripture? In McDonald's view, the rabbis dispute the status of books in their collection – surely the debates that excluded so many books would have been recorded. Even if one grants, for argument's sake, that these are canonical disputes, they did not change the status of any book. The canon can remain fixed even when certain books are disputed, as Luther demonstrated during the Reformation and McDonald demonstrates today.

The LXX Tradition

Additionally, McDonald argues that the LXX reveals the state of affairs when the church separated from Judaism. According to him there is no evidence that the LXX “got bigger with time.” To prove this, McDonald relies heavily on the citation of these books in the NT, the early church, and their eventual location in canonical lists and codices in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. Appendix D of McDonald's book lists 13 pages of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books cited or alluded to in the NT. At first glance this list is impressive, but apart from the highly debated⁴¹ exception of *1 Enoch* in Jude, none are cited with a scriptural formula and in most cases the connection is extremely tenuous or merely indicates a shared social and historical background.⁴² Jude does treat *1 Enoch* as prophecy from God, but as Richard Bauckham points out, this “need not imply that he regarded the books as canonical Scripture.” He argues that the Enoch literature was valued at Qumran, but was not included in their canon of Scripture.⁴³ On the other hand, if *1 Enoch* were cited authoritatively as Scripture, it would seem best to consider

it the exception that proves the general rule: the number of allusions and citations from books in the Hebrew canon in proportion to those from books outside of it is staggering.⁴⁴ Regardless of one's conclusions about *1 Enoch*, the NT does not support McDonald's basic position. From the NT alone, one would expect a smaller – not a larger – canon. If a larger collection of Scripture existed in the first century, why are none of these books explicitly cited as Scripture in the NT, or again, why are they alluded to so infrequently?⁴⁵

In early church literature, however, some of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books are cited with scriptural formulae. In his analysis of this literature, McDonald relies almost exclusively on citations (inferences), rather than explicit canonical lists, which his definition of canon favors. Retreating from these lists effectively reverses McDonald's criterion for canon. Inferences are played down in the first century, only to then be played off against explicit catalogues of canonical books in the following centuries. This involves the church fathers in contradictions, when they cite a text authoritatively that they have excluded from their canonical list. This tension, at the very least, should be recorded.

McDonald has helpfully summarized most of these lists in Appendix B. A quick glance at them reveals that they were relatively stable at first and then began to *grow* to include more apocryphal books. Melito of Sardis (around 170 CE), the *Bryennios* manuscript (1st or 2nd cent. CE?), Origen (before 231 CE), Eusebius of Caesarea (339 CE), Cyril of Jerusalem (about 350 CE), the Council of Laodicea (363 CE), Athanasius of Alexandria (367 CE), Hilary of Poitiers (367 CE), and Epiphanius of Salamis (376 CE), Gregory of Nazianzus (390 CE), Amphilochius (396 CE), Jerome (about 390 CE), and Rufinus (410 CE), all witness to a relatively stable canon containing the same twenty-two books, although counted and arranged in various ways.⁴⁶ In some of these catalogues, Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah are appended to the book of Jeremiah, which for the church fathers does not indicate a different judgment about the number of the books, and in a few Esther is omitted or placed among the apocryphal books. In contrast, only Augustine (395 CE), the Council of Carthage (397 CE), and the great codices – Vaticanus (4th cent. CE), Sinaiticus (4th cent. CE), and Alexandrinus (5th cent. CE) – include a number of apocryphal books. Where is the primary evidence showing that the views of the fourth century were

held in the second or third century?

These rather uniform lists, which witness to a smaller canon well before the larger, are marginalized and sometimes misrepresented in his analysis of the early church. For instance, in his discussion of Origen he does not list his catalogue of canonical books (except of course in Appendix B), but notes that 1-2 Maccabees are included in it. This omits that Origen counted the Maccabees as “outside” of the twenty-two books. It is also not surprising that Origen would recommend, as McDonald observes, the reading of Judith, Tobith, and Wisdom of Solomon. For, as Earle Ellis has persuasively argued, most of the early church distinguished between canonical and deuterocanonical books, yet cited both with scriptural formulae. These extra books were good and useful to read, yet still remained outside of the Hebrew canon. While the precise relationship between the LXX tradition and the Hebrew canon is essentially insoluble, Ellis’s conclusion on the matter is possible if not probable. According to him, the pivotal decision of Augustine on this issue – which Jerome opposed – appears to be the result of an unreflective judgment based on the popular use of these extra books.⁴⁷ Finally, most of the books in the LXX tradition, broadly conceived, did exist when the Christians broke off from Judaism, and so in one sense the LXX did not grow (at least not much) over time. What does appear to have changed, however, is the inclusion of more and more of these books into the Christian canon.

Josephus and 4 Ezra

Does any evidence contradict McDonald’s claim that no fixed canon existed in the first century? The two most impressive witnesses are Josephus and 4 Ezra. In *Against Apion*, Josephus lays out a twenty-two-book canon adhered to by all Jews for “long ages.” First, McDonald rightly stresses that Josephus had access to the sacred books stored in the temple, of which we have noted the importance; then, strangely, he moves on to argue that his list probably came from Babylon and, as such, Josephus is “ahead of his time in terms of limiting the books of the Jewish sacred collection.”⁴⁸ Here even Josephus is accused of being anachronistic! To support his accusation, McDonald appeals to the polemical context of Josephus’s writings, the freedom at Qumran to add and subtract from the biblical text, and the lack of any clear parallel. All of this suggests that there was no “universally accepted

closed biblical canon in the first century C.E.”⁴⁹ There may be no universally accepted canon, but one would need to prove first that Qumran had a larger or different canon, which is not clear, and then, that this collection is not sectarian. One might ask what type of totality McDonald is loading into the term ‘universal.’ At this point a helpful distinction that McDonald himself adheres to is needed: scholars often fail “to distinguish disagreements about the canon between different parties from uncertainty about the canon within those parties.”⁵⁰ If Qumran had a different or an unfixed canon, it does not necessarily follow that mainstream Judaism in all its variety had an unfixed canon.

In any case, McDonald attempts to marginalize Josephus by quoting Steve Mason’s conclusion: “Further, Mason suggests that Josephus’s fixed collection was ‘an inner-Pharisaic view that could only have gradually come to prominence with the emergence of the rabbinic coalition after 70 [C.E.]; it cannot reflect a common first-century Jewish view.”⁵¹ It is no doubt unconsciously done, but this is the view of Rudolf Meyer, whom Mason is refuting in the context. Mason suggests, however, that it is hard to justify isolating Josephus as “idiosyncratic.” Josephus strongly adheres to a “closed canon,” yet treats other works, like Pseudo-Aristeas and 1 Maccabees, similarly to texts within his fixed canon. From this Mason concludes: “This willingness to alter the biblical text in manifold ways proves nothing about his formal view of the canon. His example removes the force from appeals to circumstantial evidence as proof that the Dead Sea Scrolls’ authors or Philo or Ben Sira had an open canon.”⁵² In other words, the mere use of canonical and noncanonical works side by side and the freedom to alter the canonical text to fit Josephus’s own ‘historical’ agendas does not indicate that he believed the canon was open for the Jewish people or for himself. If Mason is correct, it negates the validity of the circumstantial evidence McDonald cites to establish his distrust of Josephus.

But what about McDonald’s charge that there are “no other clear parallels” to Josephus’ conception of a fixed canon?⁵³ Indeed, there is no identical parallel to Josephus in the first century, yet in the case of 4 Ezra there is a witness, which reluctantly but nevertheless emphatically testifies to a fixed canon in the first century. 4 Ezra is a Jewish apocalypse written sometime around 100 CE by an unknown Jew who adopts the pseudonym of Ezra and uses the destruction of the temple by

the Babylonians to address its destruction by the Romans. In this fictitious context Ezra dictates to five scribes ninety-four books, which had been burned when the 'Babylonians' destroyed the temple. As McDonald notes, *4 Ezra* 14:44 divides these books "between the twenty-four books that everyone can read and the seventy books that are reserved for the 'wise among your people.'"⁵⁴ He concludes that both collections are "held in equally high regard."⁵⁵ Barton's reading of this text, however, in which he argues that the seventy books were considered of greater importance than the twenty-four, suggests a much different conclusion.⁵⁶ More specifically, *4 Ezra* conjures up everything in its power to support the significance of the unidentified seventy books. They are dictated in the same miraculous manner as the twenty-four – the five scribes even wrote "in characters which they did not know." Even the "unworthy" can read the twenty-four while the seventy are reserved exclusively for the wise, for only in the seventy are hidden "the springs of understanding, the fountain of wisdom and the river of knowledge." Most telling of all, Ezra appears to include his work among this register. In *4 Ezra* 12:36-38, he refers to his own book as revealing the "secrets of the Most High" to the "wise among your people." This is the exact same language with which he refers to the seventy books! *4 Ezra* does not hold both sets of books in "equally high regard" but works rather hard to portray the seventy as having a more distinguished status.

This small but significant distinction tells us two essential things about the canon. First, there exist other holy books that hold some degree of authority for various communities or individuals at this time, but these are *still* differentiated from the twenty-four-books – there can be a fixed, clearly demarcated canon, in the midst of other holy books.⁵⁷ Second, surely *4 Ezra* protests too much in favour of itself and the seventy books. The agenda of this text makes the "involuntary evidence all the stronger."⁵⁸ If there were no fixed canon at this time in mainstream Judaism, why would *4 Ezra* make "this grudging admission" that the twenty-four books are *known to the public*?⁵⁹ Thus, it is better to conclude with Beckwith that *4 Ezra* is "striving for the recognition of his pseudepigrapha against a public opinion which recognizes only the 24 canonical books."⁶⁰ In sum, *4 Ezra* reveals the *traditional* status of a fixed canon in the public square of Judaism by his dismissive use and yet acknowledgment of twenty-four books in support

of a "superior" collection of secret knowledge not transmitted though open tradition.

Yet this has not completely answered McDonald's request for a clear parallel. Can the scheme of twenty-four books be squared with the twenty-two of Josephus? According to the able historian Jerome, some count Judges and Ruth as one book and Jeremiah and Lamentations as one book, thus they count twenty-two books, while others place Ruth and Lamentations in the Writings, as independent books, and end up with a count of twenty-four-books. *Baba Bathra* confirms this within Judaism and Origen within Christianity. McDonald's only objection to this line of reasoning is his continual appeals to rabbinic disputes and his definition of canon. In contrast, it is more economical, reasonable, and probable that Josephus and *4 Ezra* both testify to a fixed canon made up of the same books at the end of the first century CE. From this one should not conclude that there was a fixed canon only at the end of the first century; rather, both witnesses, when explicitly addressing canonical concerns reveal that the canon has been fixed for some time within mainstream Judaism.

The Rule of Faith in Irenaeus

Finally, since McDonald does not find sufficient evidence for a fixed canon, he moves away from Scripture to the rule of faith. He claims that Irenaeus and others "did not combat heresy with a canon of Scripture or a list of books, but with a canon of faith."⁶¹ There simply was no need for Irenaeus to develop the canon against the Gnostics. The argument was not over the borders of the canon, but over the true interpretation of the Scriptures. In *Against the Heresies*, Irenaeus sets forth the problem in the preface: "These men falsify the oracles of God and prove themselves evil interpreters of the good word of revelation."⁶² According to John O'Keefe and Rusty Reno: "The root of the controversy was exegesis."⁶³ The relationship between Scripture, tradition and Christ is complex and probably not entirely consistent in Irenaeus's works; nevertheless, they are inextricable bound up with one another and together are intended to stand in complete harmony.⁶⁴ McDonald presents a false dichotomy when he makes one choose between the rule of faith and the canon of Scripture. Nor does Christ somehow stand in opposition to the canon; rather, he is, as the recapitulation of all things, the decisive and final summary that clarifies the economy or scope of the canon.⁶⁵ In a wonder-

ful metaphor, Irenaeus sums up the hermeneutical activity of his opponents: “their manner of acting is just as if one, when a beautiful image of the king has been constructed by some skilful artist out of precious jewels, should then take this likeness of the man all to pieces, should re-arrange the gems, and so fit them together as to make them into the form of a dog or of a fox.”⁶⁶ Christ is the image that orients the mosaic and the *raison d’être* of the Scriptures. It is not the identity of the tiles, but their arrangement, that is in question here. Although McDonald is attracted to Irenaeus, one wonders how faithfully he has construed his works.

Conclusion

More could be said, but a few concluding comments about historical methodology and the authority of Christ must suffice. First, much of the disagreement on the canon can be explained by what constitutes sufficient evidence to support a historical claim. For McDonald, the mere use of deuterocanonical books in the NT and elsewhere provides evidence in favour of their scriptural status rather than their social and cultural influence. In my judgment, there is nothing strange about authors who, while holding to a fixed canon, use and allude to books outside their canon. If one wants to say something about the Maccabean period, the best place to go is 1 and 2 Maccabees (i.e. Josephus). It would be odd if *Jubilees* was not alluded to or cited in documents concerned with the Jewish calendar (i.e. Qumran). Nor is the wide influence of Ben Sira both on the NT and rabbinic Judaism (i.e. James) at all peculiar. The book is a deep reflection on the sapiential tradition of the OT and stands in its own right as a book of wisdom. While this is a thorny issue, it appears in McDonald’s work that a type of *sola scriptura* is being wielded to interpret the evidence that is foreign to the tradition, from the first to the twenty-first century. It is no wonder then, when the canon is weighed on these scales, it is found wanting.

Yet the historical project is further complicated by the form of the material one presupposes as important to find and the weight or proportion given to that same evidence. Nowhere is this clearer than in our discussion of McDonald’s definition of canon and the inconsistent manner in which it is employed. Moreover, an argument that elevates the citation of *1 Enoch* in Jude over the testimony of the rest of the NT, Josephus, *4 Ezra*, *Baba Bathra*, Melito and Origen lacks proper proportion. Like

McDonald, “I am not convinced that scholarship advances significantly if we do not force ourselves to root our conclusions in the primary literature of antiquity.”⁶⁷ At statements like this, one wonders how McDonald can hold to a definition of canon that finds no support among Jewish sources in antiquity. In my judgment, McDonald has let his “assumptions clutter the way”⁶⁸ with troubling historical and theological results.

Second, at its most basic level, McDonald’s project attempts to dislodge the canon of OT and NT by historically distancing them from the person and work of Christ. It is for this reason that the *when* of canon formation is almost the exclusive concern of the project. The canon is only helpful, according to McDonald, when it bears true testimony to the Christ of history, and it is this Christ who will filter out all the inappropriate parts of the canon. Fracturing the witness of the OT to Christ, however, runs counter to the confessions of the NT. As Stephen Chapman perceptively notes: “Ironically, McDonald’s christological solution also stands on its head a fundamental aspect of the New Testament’s witness to Christ, for in the NT it is not the OT that is professed to be ‘in accordance with’ Christ, but Christ who is confessed to be ‘in accordance with’ the OT Scriptures.”⁶⁹ The *authority* of Christ is bound up with the OT witness to Christ. McDonald’s attempt to distance the canon from Christ undercuts – and on a more basic level, misunderstands – how the early church professed the authority of Christ. No doubt McDonald’s focus on the authority of Christ is an attempt to combat bibliolatry, which is a real problem. Yet his solution does not explain how one would even know Christ, much less how obedience to his authority could be followed apart from the canonical testimony. Far more helpful is N.T. Wright’s formulation of the relationship between God, Scripture and the church: God alone is authoritative, but he exercises his authority for the church in the Scriptures.⁷⁰ Or from a different angle, Brevard Childs: “It is a basic Christian confession that all scripture bear testimony to Jesus Christ,” which means that he is the “one scope of scripture.”⁷¹ Marginalizing the canon will not “free the church from inappropriate loyalties,”⁷² rather, it is through neglect of the word of God that Christ is remade in the image of the age. The church needs to be called again and again through the power of the Spirit and by the grace of God to a consistent and humble engagement with the full canonical witness in all its variety and richness in order to have as its

vision the beautiful image of the King of Kings who is revealed in the New Testament in accordance with the Old.

Notes

- 1 Lee McDonald, *Biblical Canon* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), xv.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid., xv-xvi.
- 4 McDonald does not include the term “universal” in his definition, but it comes up enough in connection to what he means by canon in the remainder of the book to warrant its inclusion here.
- 5 Ibid., 187.
- 6 Ibid., 104.
- 7 Ibid., see respectively 105-110, 126-136, 177-178, 195-196, and 200-223.
- 8 Ibid., 18.
- 9 Ibid., 36.
- 10 Ibid., 206.
- 11 Ibid., 438.
- 12 Ibid., 366.
- 13 Ibid., 388.
- 14 Ibid., 429.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Today the differences between the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant canons are still very real. This point, however, is clear and does not require an investigation into the origins of the canon.
- 17 Eugene Ulrich, “The Notion and Definition of Canon” in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 31.
- 18 Ibid., 31.
- 19 Ibid., 110.
- 20 Ibid., 114.
- 21 For a discussion of the sources in support of a temple collection see Roger T. Beckwith, “Formation of the Hebrew Bible” in *Mikra*, ed. M. J. Mulder (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 40-45; Philip Davies, *Scribes and Schools* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 178-182; Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 195-96; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 236-247. The most important sources are: Exod 25:16, 21; 40:20; Deut 10:5; 31:24-26; 1 Kgs 8:6-9; 2 Kgs 22:8; 23:2, 24; 2 Chr 5:7-10; 34:15, 30; 1 Macc 1:54-57; 2 Macc 2:13-15; *Ant.* 3.38, 4.302-4, 5.61; *B.J.* 7.150; *Vita* 418; *m. Yoma* 1.6-7, 7.1; *m. Sotah* 7.7-8; *m. Mo’ed Qat.* 3.4 (variant text); *m. Kelim* 15.6; *t. B. Mesi’a* 5:8 (variant text); *t. Yoma* 1.9; *bar. y. Yoma* 1.6; and *Sifrie Deut.* 356 (p. 423).
- 22 IDB, Synagogue, 485-88.
- 23 Ibid., 163-64.
- 24 This problem has already been noted by Stephen Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 108, who observed that McDonald’s strict definition of canon “does not seem to have ever [sic] existed.” Cf. Idem, “The Old Testament Canon and Its Authority for the Christian Church”, *Ex Audito* 19 (2003): 135-36. It is unclear to me why McDonald, who acknowledges Chapman’s critique, does not go on to engage with it. The latest edition could have been improved if McDonald had incorporated and/or addressed the insights of Chapman on the definition of canon and other issues as well.
- 25 Ibid., 164-65.
- 26 Ibid., 81, 187-89.
- 27 Ibid., 56.
- 28 There is no rabbinic text, as McDonald claims, where Ezekiel is one of the books that defile the hands. In one text only does it say that Ruth *does* defile the hands, like all Scripture (*b. Meg.* 7a.), while in another text it says that Sirach (Ben Sira) does *not* defile the hands along with other books that are without question uncanonical (*t. Yad.* 2:13).
- 29 Ibid., 114.
- 30 Ibid., 111.
- 31 *m. Yad.* 4:5.
- 32 *m. Kelim* 15:6 and *t. B. Mesi’a* 5:8. In *b. Meg.* 7a physical contact with the scroll of Esther is the point in question.
- 33 *t. Yad.* 2:12-13.
- 34 Barton, *Writings*, 118.
- 35 *b. Sabb.* 13b.
- 36 *b. Sabb.* 30b.
- 37 Theodore Swanson, *The Closing of the Collection of Holy Scriptures* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1970), 286-87. For the problem of dating this text see Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. by Markus Bockmuehl, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 226-27. They date the origin sometime in the third century, but the final version between the seventh and ninth centuries.
- 38 Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (London: SPCK, 1985), 315.
- 39 E.g. *t. Sotah* 13:2.
- 40 *Ag. Ap.* 1:7f, and 4 *Ezra* 14:44-48. See Beckwith, *OT Canon*, 369-76.
- 41 E.g. Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 62.
- 42 E.g. Daniel Harrington, “The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Early Church and Today”, in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 196-210.
- 43 Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 96. Cf. Bauckham’s more detailed

- and well reasoned comments in *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (New York: T and T Clark, 2004), 225-234.
- 44 Christopher R. Seitz, "The Canonical Approach and Theological Interpretation", in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew and Anthony Thiselton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 95-96.
- 45 While the evidence is ambiguous and as such is debated, the same is true of Qumran, which only provides *compelling* evidence for a smaller, rather than a larger canon. The strained reference to the 'authoritative' citation of Jubilees in support of its scriptural status only strengthens this impression. E.g. Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Brill, 1999), 22, note 17; James VanderKam, "Authoritative Literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls" *DSD* 5, (1998): 398-399. If there was a larger collection of Scripture at Qumran, one would then expect to find those books cited as Scripture since forty-two quotations, introduced by an authoritative formulae, survived at Qumran from books in the Hebrew canon. See Eugene Ulrich, "Qumran and the Canon of the Old Testament," in *The Biblical Canons*, ed. J.-M. Auwers and H. J. De Jonge (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 80.
- 46 For more see E. E. Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991), 6-36; and Peter Katz, "The Old Testament Canon in Palestine and Alexandria", in *The Canon and the Masorah of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Sid Leiman (New York: Ktav, 1974) 72-98; J. C. H. Lebram, "Aspekte der alttestamentlichen Kanonbildung" *VT* 18 (1968): 173-189.
- 47 Ellis, *Early Christianity*.
- 48 McDonald, *Biblical Canon*, 157.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ibid., 191.
- 51 Ibid., 156-7.
- 52 Steve Mason, "Josephus and His Twenty-Two Book Canon" in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 127.
- 53 McDonald, *Biblical Canon*, 157.
- 54 Ibid., 163.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Barton, *Oracles of God* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986), 64, 66.
- 57 Cf. Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 230.
- 58 Roger Beckwith, "A Modern Theory of the Old Testament Canon" *VT* 49/4 (1991), 392.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 McDonald, *Biblical Canon*, 338.
- 62 Preface, 1, *ANF*, Vol. 1.
- 63 John O'Keefe and Russell Reno, *Sanctified Vision* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 34.
- 64 See Norbert Brox, "Irenaeus and the Bible", in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* Vol. 1, ed. Charles Kannengiesser (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 483-506.
- 65 O'Keefe, *Sanctified Vision*, 38.
- 66 *Against the Heresies*, 1.8.1. *ANF* Vol. 1.
- 67 McDonald, *Biblical Canon*, xvi.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Chapman, "Old Testament Canon," 130.
- 70 N.T. Wright, "How Can The Bible Be Authoritative?" *Vox Evangelica* 21 (1991): 7-32.
- 71 Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 725.
- 72 McDonald, *Biblical Canon*, 429.

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Book Reviews – Recensions – Buchbesprechungen

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The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies

John W. Rogerson, Judith Lieu (eds.)

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, XVIII + 896

pp. hb., £ 85, ISBN 978-0-19-925425-5

pb., £27.50 ISBN 978-0-19-923777-7

SUMMARY

This substantial collection of essays provides a good survey to current Biblical Studies. The forty-five essays of varying length cover the recent history of Biblical Studies, the impact of other historical disciplines, the languages, translation and textual transmission of the Bible, historical background of the Bible and the institutions as well as the genres of both Testaments, the composition of the Bible, methods in Biblical Studies as well as the theology and authority of the Bible. The arrangement of the articles as well as the focus of the volume raises a number of interesting issues for evangelical readers.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese substanzielle Artikelsammlung bietet einen guten Überblick über die gegenwärtige biblische Forschung. Die 45 Artikel von unterschiedlicher Länge decken die neuere Geschichte der Bibelwissenschaften, den Einfluss anderer historischer Disziplinen, die Sprachen, Übersetzungen und Textüberlieferung der Bibel, den historischen Hintergrund der Bibel und der Institutionen ebenso ab wie die Gattungen beider Testamente, die Komposition der Bibel, Methoden in der Erforschung der Bibel sowie die Theologie und Autorität der Bibel. Die Anordnung der Artikel wie auch der Fokus des Bandes werfen für evangelikale Leser eine Reihe von interessanten Fragen auf.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette collection d'articles substantielle constitue un bon manuel présentant l'état actuel de la recherche sur la Bible. Au nombre de quarante-cinq, de longueur variable, ils traitent de l'histoire récente de l'étude de la Bible, de la portée d'autres disciplines historiques, des langues bibliques, de la traduction et de la transmission des textes, de l'arrière-plan historique, des institutions, ainsi que des genres littéraires des deux Testaments, de la rédaction de la Bible, des méthodes dans les sciences bibliques, ou encore de la théologie et de l'autorité de la Bible. L'agencement des articles et le centre d'intérêt de l'ouvrage soulèvent diverses questions intéressantes pour les lecteurs évangéliques.

* * * * *

The present exhaustive volume offers an up-to-date comprehensive survey of Biblical studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Each of the articles is written by a specialist in the area and includes a selected bibliography. Most of the authors come from Great Britain; there are some North Americans and four Germans. Accord-

ing to the editors of this volume, biblical studies

is a collection of various and in some cases independent, disciplines clustering around a collection of texts known as the Bible whose precise limits... are still a matter of disagreement among various branches of the Christian churches.... No comparable collection of texts has been subjected to such sustained critical examination and elucidation over such a long period of time. The present *Handbook* aims to indicate to readers the current state of scholarship associated with the Bible (preface).

Part one, entitled *On the Discipline* starts with a survey of the history of the discipline of Biblical Studies in the last seventy years. J. W. Rogerson writes on the Old Testament (5-26), R. Morgan on New Testament research (27-49, continuity, transition, innovation). Section two of this part is devoted to the impact of other historical disciplines upon biblical scholarship (contributions from other disciplines appear in the part on methods in biblical studies): J. R. Bartlett writes on archaeology (53-73, including a brief section on archaeology and the Herodian period; New Testament sites outside of Palestine and their exploration is not treated), the Assyriologist W. G. Lambert on "Ancient Near Eastern Studies: Mesopotamia" (74-88), the Egyptologist K. Kitchen on "Ancient Near Eastern Studies: Egypt" (89-98) and P. Davies on "Qumran Studies" (99-107), P. Richardson on the study of the Greco-Roman world (108-19) and C. Hezser on "Diaspora and Rabbinic Judaism" (120-32, the significance of the Torah in ancient Judaism, the Greco-Roman cultural context, literary analogies, institutions and offices, prayer and liturgy, the question of contacts and influence).

Part two covers *Languages, Translation, and Textual Transmission of the Bible*. It includes J. Elwode on "Language and Translation of the Old Testament" (135-58), M. A. Knibb on "Language, Translation, Versions, and Text of the Apocrypha" (159-83), S. E. Porter on "Language and Translation of the New Testament" (184-210), G. J. Norton on "Ancient Versions and Textual Transmission of the Old Testament" (211-236) and J. N. Birdsall on "Textual Transmission and Versions of the New Testament" (237-49).

Part three, *Historical and Social Study of the Bible*, has three sub-sections. "Background and context" includes "Introduction: General Problems of Studying the Text of the Bible in order to Reconstruct History and Social Background" by K. W. Whitelam (255-67), "Israel to the End of the Persian Period: History, Social, Political, and Economic Background" by J. W. Rogerson (268-84), "Israel from the Rise of Hellenism to 70 CE" by L. L. Grabbe (285-300) and "The Life and Teaching of Jesus and the Rise of Christianity" by C. A. Evans (301-16).

Subsection two examines the "Institutions of the Old and New Testaments". R. Hayward examines "Priesthood, Temple(s), and Sacrifice" (319-50), G. Wenham "Law in the Old Testament" (351-61), L. L. Grabbe "Scribes and Synagogues" (362-71), J. M. Lieu, "Movements" (372-81, various early Jewish groups). Section three surveys "Genres of the Old and New Testaments". D. W. Rooke looks at prophecy (385-96), P. Davies at apocalyptic (397-408), K. J. Dell at wisdom (409-19), E. S. Gruen at novella (420-31), R. A. Burridge at gospels (432-44) and J. M. Lieu at letters (445-56).

Part four, *The Composition of the Bible*, consists of R. G. Kratz' essay on "The Growth of the Old Testament" (459-88), A. Salvesen on "The Growth of the Apocrypha" (489-517), J. M. Court on "The Growth of the New Testament" (518-43) and A. Millard on "Authors, Books, and Readers in the Ancient World" (544-64, Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Levant, NT times). The origin and nature of the canon of the Bible is discussed in the part *The authority of the Bible*.

Part five covers *Methods in Biblical Scholarship*. J. R. Bartlett describes archaeology (567-78), A. van der Kooij textual criticism (579-90), J. P. Floss form, source, and redaction criticism (591-614), M. M. Mitchell rhetorical and new literary criticism (615-33), M.-T. Wacker feminist criticism and related aspects (634-54) and C. Rowland social, political, and ideological criticism (655-71). There are no separate essays on historical criticism, on theological readings of biblical texts or readings that are inspired by psychological insights.

The next part, *The Interpretation of the Bible*, is actually devoted to the theology of the Bible and its study (raising interesting questions on the relationship between interpretation and theology). Old Testament theology is treated in one article only (W. Brueggemann, 675-97; would the theology of the Law, the historical writings, the prophetic literature and wisdom literature not have deserved articles of their own?) as well as one article on all of New Testament theology (J. D. G. Dunn, 698-715, here one might ask the same question). Should there have been separate articles on the presuppositions and methods of biblical theology and on the unity and diversity in the theology of the Bible? B. Janowski covers "Biblical Theology" (716-31) and E. W. Davies "The Bible in Ethics" (732-53). Likewise attempts to describe the theology of the whole Bible such as B. Childs or C. Scobie may have called for a separate article. Also in this part appears J. Magonet's essay on "Jewish Interpretation of the Bible" (754-74, would an article on Christian interpretation of the Bible be superfluous?).

The final part deals with The Authority of the Bible. L. M. McDonald looks at the canon (777-809) and H. A. Harris at "Fundamentalism(s)" in biblical study and much beyond (810-40, there is relatively little on hermeneutical presuppositions and interpretation of Biblical texts). Is this one of the major problems in Christian biblical studies? Is a dogmatic mindset restricted to one side of the range of positions or rather a danger all bibli-

cal scholars are prone to fall prey to? J. W. Rogerson discusses the relationship between historical criticism and the authority of the Bible (841-59). Indexes of subjects and names (860-82) and of references (883-96) round off this well produced volume.

A review cannot assess each article, any selection would be subjective. In addition to the questions raised above, the outline of the volume and the selection of the authors invite some reflection. A number of the essays have been written by conservative or evangelical scholars (e. g. Evans, Millard, Wenham). This is indicative of the welcome fact that there are several highly qualified evangelical biblical scholars who made competent contributions over many years and are well recognised in their field. While many people from non-Western countries have made contributions to "Western Biblical Studies", one wonders whether a volume such as this should have also included authors from this context or at least an article surveying what is happening outside of Western biblical studies in scholarly discussions and how such approaches and insights can be mutually enriching. Obviously it is interesting to speculate what such a volume might look like at the end of the century.

With all its approaches and advances biblical scholarship as described here (a representative survey of the current state of *academic* biblical studies!), it has apparently little to offer for a *theological* interpretation of biblical texts in the context of faith and of the church. While it can warn us of the dangers of fundamentalism, it has little to offer itself. How do we reach sound applications from biblical texts? The editors ask in their preface whether Biblical Studies is "a watered-down version of theology with the doctrinal parts omitted". The volume seems to affirm this view. This is an area where evangelical scholars need to and can make a contribution that will be recognised beyond the confines of their own camp. For some suggestions see I. H. Marshall, *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

I want to close with an observation of the editors:

... it will be noticeable that English-speaking contributors from North America seem to read a different set of books from those in Britain, while contributors from Germany concentrate primarily on German-speaking scholarship. These differences are representative of the state of scholarship, which has become so technical and specialized that even scholars working in a comparatively small area cannot hope to master the secondary literature produced by experts working in different countries and languages. However... the diversity that becomes apparent in the Handbook is a reliable guide to the present state of Biblical Studies (Preface).

Christoph Stenschke, Bergneustadt, Germany

*Acts in its ancient literary context: a classicist
looks at the Acts of the Apostles*
(Library of New Testament studies 298)

Alexander, Loveday C. A.

London: T & T Clark, 2007, xi + 290 pp., £29.99,
pb, ISBN 978-0-567-08219-0

Acts

(Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New
Testament)

Bock, Darrell L.

Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, xxi + 848 pp., £22.75, hb,
ISBN 978-0-8010-2668-3

Acts

(Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, NT
series V)

Martin, Francis (ed)

Downers Grove: IVP, 2006, xxvi + 368 pp., £17.95,
hb, ISBN 978-0-8308-1490-9

SUMMARY

Of the three books on Acts discussed, Bock's is a lengthy and very good but not groundbreaking commentary which will serve a large public. Both Martin's compilation of ancient commentaries and Alexander's essays on the genre of Acts are very specialist. Alexander does break new ground in showing that Acts is not historiography but still potentially factual.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Von den drei besprochenen Büchern zur Apostelgeschichte ist das Buch von Bock ein ausführlicher, sehr guter, wenn auch nicht Bahn brechender Kommentar, der einer größeren Öffentlichkeit dienen wird. Sowohl Martins Zusammenstellung antiker Kommentare als auch Alexanders Artikel zum Genre der Apostelgeschichte sind sehr fachspezifische Beiträge. Alexander eröffnet neue Perspektiven, indem sie zeigt, dass die Apostelgeschichte zwar keine Historiographie, aber dennoch potentiell tatsachenbezogen ist.

RÉSUMÉ

Le commentaire de Bock sur le livre des Actes est développé et très bon, sans apporter de grande nouveauté; il sera utile à un large public. La compilation de commentaires anciens par Martin et les travaux d'Alexander sur le genre littéraire du livre des Actes sont des ouvrages très spécialisés. Alexander a une approche nouvelle en ce qu'elle montre que le livre des Actes, tout en n'étant pas historiographique, peut cependant contenir des données factuelles.

* * * *

In a recent issue of this Journal I reviewed three recent books on John's Gospel and this time I have been sent three recent publications on Acts. I must say that these

three are so different that a comparison would not be meaningful and they have to be dealt with individually.

Pride of place goes to Darrell Bock's commentary on Acts in the Baker series. Bock is best known for his various works on Luke's Gospel: the massive two volume commentary in this same Baker series, the NIV Application Commentary and the IVP New Testament Commentary. He now turns his skills to Acts but only uses one volume to do the job. The commentary proper still fills over 700 pages; it is preceded by 50 pages of introduction and followed by the bibliography and several indexes. As usual in the Baker series, at the beginning of each passage there is an introduction which already states its key elements and its message; at the end of the expositions there are no further conclusions or applications. The notes are full, fair and useful.

Bock focuses on historical questions and for a more narrative approach he refers to Gaventa and Spencer. This is regrettable as a major commentary like this should be able to cover all aspects of the book. And when it comes to historiography, Loveday Alexander and Daniel Marguerat are almost absent from the discussion so that the discussion is not fully up to date. Otherwise the discussion partners are as one would expect. Bock carefully argues for a date of origin pre-AD 70 and identifies Acts 11 with Galatians 2. Overall he defends the historicity of the narrative.

Among my students this is already is the most popular commentary on Acts, I presume because they find it accessible and full. To those who can only afford one commentary on Acts I would say: If you have Bruce, Marshall, Witherington, Johnson or Fitzmyer, no need to trade yours in. Bock is on a par with them and we are grateful for another sound Evangelical commentary.

The second book is the volume on Acts in the IVP series *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* which is now nearly complete. This volume contains a short modern introduction and modern headings but is of course largely devoted to selected patristic comments. The only two complete extant ancient commentaries on Acts, by Chrysostom and Bede, dominate the scene – and the 8th century Brit Bede is not really a Father of the Church. In the Introduction the Roman Catholic background of the editor shines through quite clearly. This volume raises the same issues as the rest of the series. The approach has a fragmented feel about it because there is no real continuous argument. Entire verses and lines of thought get no attention. Secondly, the English text printed is the RSV not the NRSV, and the footnotes are in very small print indeed which is unnecessary in a large-size volume like this.

For those who do not buy the entire series, this beautifully produced volume will have to compete with Pelikan's 2006 SCM Theological Commentary which majors on the history of interpretation and is similar in price.

Last but not least there are collected essays on Acts by Loveday Alexander, professor in Sheffield. Like Bock she

first became known for her work on Luke, in this case her dissertation on the preface of the Gospel in which she argues that it is not the typical preface of a piece of historiography. On Acts she has so far published a fine small commentary (in *The People's Commentary*) as well as numerous essays and she announces that she will write a new edition of Black's NT Commentary to succeed C.S.C. William's work. The essays have now been gathered in one volume. The first chapter was written specifically for this collection and shows what Alexander's long term research project is and where each essay fits in. She is studying (Luke and) Acts against the background of the secular literature of the time; more specifically she investigates the genre and the generic characteristics of Acts.

Throughout Alexander defends and develops her view that Luke and Acts are not to be classified as ancient historiography but she explains that this does not necessarily imply that they are therefore fictional writings. She patiently takes the reader by the hand and shows how Acts does not fit the definition of historiography in the tradition of Herodotus and Thucydides which in Hellenistic times had become a genre dominated by rhetoric. Not only does the common preface point in a different direction, so does the register of the Greek Luke writes: his is not the atticising Greek of the elite but a simpler yet educated language. Perhaps surprisingly, from the point of view of Luke's reliability his severance from historiography is not a bad conclusion for Alexander shows that in the second century historiography had a pretty bad reputation. On the other hand, although Acts has some similarities with the ancient novel such as an interest in travel, in particular travel by sea, it also differs from the novel in fundamental ways. Luke consciously writes about a very recent past in which the Roman Empire plays a large role, not about a distant romanticised past as we find in the novels. There are some affinities with the genre of the intellectual biography although this too is not a close fit. Alexander shows that the portrait of Paul resembles what readers would have known about Socrates in at least eight major respects. The nearest parallels, however, are with the Old Testament which has clearly served as Luke's model in several ways. Luke writes the kind of Greek that cultured Jews would have appreciated most. Alexander does not develop this line of thought very far but others have written extensively about it. The conclusion is that an ancient reader who took up Acts would probably expect a factual not a fictional work, a piece of 'technical literature', at the level of popular culture. Of course factuality does not exclude selectivity and the use of particular perspectives.

Alexander's work is very focused. She hardly touches other issues such as place and date of Acts, or Luke's background, although she does hint at a late origin and at the likelihood that Luke was Jewish. The book can be read without knowledge of Greek; one essay, however, contains much untranslated French. It is well-produced but at an official price of £32.99 for the paperback it

is still not cheap. It is a must-have for libraries and all subject specialists, though.

Pieter J. Lalleman London, England

The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels

Stephen C. Barton (ed.)

Cambridge: CUP, 2006

p/b; £15.99; ISBN-13: 9780521807661

SUMMARY

This volume is a collection of introductory essays on the canonical Gospels. The papers pay specific attention to historical background, literary and theological content, and the impact of the Gospels on Church life and modern society. The collection is useful as it combines theological, historical, and literary approaches together and deliberately tries to avoid a faith versus academy approach to the Gospels.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Band ist eine Sammlung einleitender Artikel zu den kanonischen Evangelien. Die Artikel widmen ihre besondere Aufmerksamkeit dem historischen Hintergrund, dem literarischen und theologischen Inhalt und dem Einfluss der Evangelien auf das kirchliche Leben und die moderne Gesellschaft. Die Sammlung ist nützlich, da sie theologische, historische und literarische Ansätze verbindet und bewusst zu vermeiden versucht, dem Glauben verpflichtete Ansätze gegen akademische Ansätze in Bezug auf die Evangelien auszuspielen.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage contient un ensemble d'articles d'introduction aux Évangiles canoniques. Ils s'intéressent particulièrement à l'arrière-plan historique, au contenu littéraire et théologique des Évangiles et à leur influence sur la vie de l'Église et la société moderne. L'ouvrage associe des approches théologiques, historiques et littéraires en s'efforçant d'éviter d'opposer la foi et la recherche académique.

* * * *

This volume in the Cambridge Companion Series looks at the canonical Gospels with a special emphasis on the canonical context of the Gospels and Christian life as a continued performance of the Gospels. The book is divided into three parts: (1) Approaching the Gospels – Context and Method; (2) The Gospels as Witnesses to Christ – Content and Interpretation; and (3) The Afterlife of the Gospels – Impact on Church and Society.

The 'Introduction' by Stephen Barton draws attention to the dichotomy of interpretation of the Bible in academic universities that stands 'over' the text and the interpretation of the Bible in the church that stands 'under' the text. According to Barton the present volume seeks to go beyond this divide by incorporating historical, literary, rhetorical, theological, and aesthetic approaches to the Gospels which does better justice to

their christological subject matter and function as Christian Scripture.

Loveday Alexander asks 'What is a gospel?' in search of the genre of the canonical Gospels. She notes their largely biographical shape and compares them to orally traditioned literature, school traditions, Greek literature like *bios* and aretalogies, rabbinic hagiography, and the biographical episodes from the Hebrew Bible. In the end she concludes that the gospels are reminiscent of the Greek *bios* but written in a theological framework indebted to the Hebrew Bible.

Francis Watson investigates 'The fourfold gospel' and notes that a pluriform Gospel collection was by no means intended or inevitable. According to Watson, in the early church some (e.g. Papias) could prefer the living voice of oral tradition over the written word. Some could privilege a certain Gospel over others in order to supplant competing Jesus narratives (e.g. *Gospel of Thomas*). Some could opt for a purified Gospel shorn of all disagreeable traits (e.g. Marcion and Luke). Some could write supplementary Gospels to fill in the blanks about events in Jesus' life such as his childhood and birth (e.g. *Protoevangelium of James*). Others (e.g. Tatian) opted for a Gospel harmony comprised of elements of all four canonical accounts. Watson also draws attention to the efforts of Origen and Augustine who dealt with the pluriformity and lack of cohesion between the canonical accounts. For Origen spiritual truth was not dependent upon material truth, while for Augustine the crucial element is in the intended sense and not in actual details.

Richard Hays examines 'The canonical matrix of the Gospels' where he works through all of the four canonical Gospels to show how the story of Israel is determinative for the contours and shape of each particular Gospel. Mark's story enveloped in apocalyptic urgency draws on the theme of 'new exodus', in Matthew the life story of Jesus recapitulates the story of Israel, in Luke the long held promises for liberation in Israel's Scriptures came to fulfilment through Jesus and the church, and in the Johannine Gospel the narration is saturated in a vast matrix of symbols from the Scriptures. According to Hays, the task of the interpreter is to trace these intertextual links between the Gospel stories and their Old Testament precursors.

Stephen E. Fowl engages the subject of 'The Gospels and the historical Jesus' where he notes that the rise of historical-critical studies has significantly altered the way that the Gospels are read today. He examines three particular stances concerning the study of Jesus: i. adopt the framework provided by the canonical Gospels (e.g. Luke Timothy Johnson), ii. situate Jesus in a framework that would be recognizable to his peers (e.g. N.T. Wright), and iii. locate Jesus in a particular theoretical framework (e.g. John Dominic Crossan). Fowl himself suggests a Christian reading of the Gospels should prioritize theology over history with the result that Christians learn how Scripture renders the world in which they live.

Sandra M. Schneiders approaches the topic of 'The

Gospels and the reader' where she sets out the hermeneutical issues related to readers and texts concerning biblical interpretation. She describes pragmatic uses of biblical text (i.e. liberation, feminist, ethical, and spiritual hermeneutics) and interacts with the theories of Ricoeur and Gadamer concerning the creation of meaning by readers of texts. It includes a helpful discussion of the role of faith in biblical hermeneutics.

The 'Gospel according to Matthew' is covered by Stephen C. Barton who emphasizes that Matthew's Gospel tries to hold together the old and the new in light of the post-70 CE situation of the church and synagogue (i.e. 'rupture and innovation'). He provides an outline of the Gospel along the lines of the birth of the Messiah, the testing of the Messiah, the teaching of the Messiah, the deeds of the Messiah, the transfiguration of the Messiah, the resurrection of the Messiah.

Joel Green introduces 'The Gospel according to Mark' and he begins by noting how the cross is interwoven throughout the Marcan narrative. For Green, Mark is the continuation and actualization of the story of God. He notices how Mark juxtaposes two apparently irreconcilable facts: Jesus is a powerful and rejected Messiah. The resolution is that it is precisely as the worker of powerful deeds and as an authoritative teacher that Jesus goes to the cross. Although Green is very reserved about attributing a particular background or setting to Mark's Gospel he intimates that Mark may have been written for those experiencing duress and wrestling with their own failures. Green proposes that Mark's abrupt staccato ending leaves the question of the proclamation of the gospel open-ended and disciples must decide if they will let the good news of God be written in their lives.

John T. Squires covers the 'Gospel according to Luke' and initially examines the nature and purpose of Luke's Gospel as set within the wider Hellenistic world. He then provides an overview of Luke's story of Jesus and he notes its connection to the story of Israel and to the story of the church. Squires also provides a very succinct and helpful survey of the key themes in Luke's Gospel including: the sovereignty of God, the salvation of God, the kingdom of God (proclamation, embodiment, discipleship), stewardship of possessions, table-fellowship, the marginalized, men and women, and Jews and Gentiles. Squires finds in Luke a picture of God's care for the marginalized and an emphasis on his providential and compassion concern for the entire world.

Concerning the 'Gospel according to John' M.M. Thompson begins by noting the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels and contends that no single factor can account for John's distinctiveness. She finds in the prologue the Gospel in a nutshell particularly as an encapsulation of the Fourth Evangelists' overall christology. Thompson then proceeds to describe how the main themes of the Johannine narratives and discourses about Jesus. This is followed by helpful explorations on the mission of Jesus, symbolism, dualism, and discipleship as they are expressed in

John's Gospel.

The final section of the volume includes the afterlife of the Gospels and looks at the Gospels and doctrinal development (Frances Young), the Gospels and the lives of saints and martyrs (David Matzko McCarthy), the Gospels and spirituality/worship (Gordon Mursell), and the Gospels and morality/politics (Scott Bader-Saye).

Overall this is a sound volume with good introductions to the Gospels and it covers material not always included in most Gospel introductions.

Michael F. Bird,
Dingwall, Scotland

Introduction to Modern Theology. Trajectories in the German Tradition

John E. Wilson

Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2007

Pp. 286 + x; p/b; £16.99; 978-0664228620

SUMMARY

John Wilson shares insights into the history of modern theology won from years of teaching. Centred on the German tradition, and focussed on explicating seminal texts, Wilson's history provides a series of insightful portraits of leading Protestant theologians and their work in conversation with the key philosophical developments which so greatly effected theology in the 19th and 20th centuries.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

John Wilson gibt Anteil an seinen Einsichten in die Geschichte der modernen Theologie, die sich auf jahrelanger Lehrerfahrung stützen. Wilsons Geschichte bietet eine Reihe aufschlussreicher Portraits führender protestantischer Theologen und ihrer Werke im Gespräch mit philosophischen Schlüsselentwicklungen, die im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert die Theologie stark beeinflussten. Er widmet seine besondere Aufmerksamkeit der deutschen Tradition und konzentriert sich auf die Erläuterung wegweisender Texte.

RÉSUMÉ

John Wilson montre ce que l'on peut apprendre de l'histoire de la théologie moderne en mettant à profit son expérience de nombreuses années d'enseignement. Il s'intéresse principalement à la tradition allemande et procède par l'explication de textes. Il livre une série de portraits de théologiens protestants éminents et expose leur œuvre de façon éclairante en la mettant en rapport avec les courants de pensée philosophiques qui ont grandement influencé la théologie des XIX^e et XX^e siècles.

* * * *

The fruit of decades of teaching in the area of the history of modern theology, Wilson's textbook delivers what the title suggests, namely a concise introduction to the main currents of 19th and 20th century German

language theology. The focus is further narrowed almost exclusively to Protestant figures and trends (with Karl Rahner as perhaps the sole exception) though widened by the inclusion of a number of English speaking theologians significantly influenced by this German trajectory, e.g., Emerson, James, Rauschenbusch, Niebuhr, King. Wilson organises his presentation around key figures, providing in each case very brief biographical and bibliographical notes before expositing one or more representative texts. These concise expositions are the core of the book and its signal strength. Wilson's aim in each case is to provide a summary discussion of the central arguments of these particular figures and texts and to highlight their connections with the wider story of theological development across these centuries. The text is helpfully cross-referenced throughout in the service of this end. Footnotes usefully indicate the standard editions of primary texts and leading secondary literature.

Wilson devotes the first third of his book to the 'formative period' of German Idealism. Key works and arguments of Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Schleiermacher and other related figures are explicated here. The focus is upon questions concerning the scope of reason, the nature of knowledge, the 'absolute' and its relation to contingency, and the idea of 'religion' and its relation to *Wissenschaft*. The expositions of the leading figures are quite detailed, and though technical at times, are always clear and concise. For Wilson, these philosophical struggles of the first half of the 19th century are decisive, for they generate the *problématique* of all 'modern' German theology, as well as providing the predominating categories by which the theological tradition will negotiate the challenge of modernity for the next two hundred years.

The six chapters which compose the remaining two-thirds of the work are in the main chronologically arranged. Discussion of several leading proponents of the theology of 'mediation' (chapter 3) is followed by exposition of a longer list of 'Ritschlian' and liberal theologians reaching as far into the 20th century as Fritz Buri (chapter 4). Brief treatments of Kähler and Overbeck (chapter 5) set the stage for a more extended presentation of the work of Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Ebeling and Bonhoeffer under the rubric of 'Dialectical Theology' (chapter 6). The penultimate chapter considers the 'post-liberal' theologies of Tillich, Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr and King. The book's final chapter is devoted to comment upon some leading German theologians of the post-World War II period, including Sölle, Moltmann, Pannenberg and Jüngel.

Wilson's aim of offering a responsible, annotated chronicle of the progress of German Protestant theology of the past two centuries is well achieved and students of this period will be well served by the entrée the book affords into the theological conversation of modernity. It is a shame that the author's modesty precluded him advancing any explicit and overarching judgments about the course of this history, a modesty signalled most clearly by the absence of a summary conclusion to the

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).

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham, England

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.

* * * *

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

Burridge's main dialogue partner as he sets out to rectify what he sees as a deficit.

His response is oriented by three basic theoretical commitments. The first is to work from the best historical-critical consensus on the historical Jesus, that is, using the "usual criterion of authenticity, such as dissimilarity, coherence and multiple attestation." The Q document and Josephus are the main non-biblical sources regularly adduced, and his is indeed a familiar and uncontentious biblical studies portrait of the historical Jesus.

The second and methodologically dominant move is to emphasize that the main texts providing access to the historical Jesus are the synoptic gospels, which Burridge is at pains to locate within the ancient genre of biography. "The central argument of this book arises from the fact that ancient biographies held together both words and deeds in portraying their central subject [and]...were written explicitly to give an example to others to emulate..." (73). Burridge regularly reminds us that none of the New Testament books function like an ancient ethical treatise, but draw their ethical force in implicitly or explicitly setting out a picture of Jesus to be emulated by his followers. Here the contemporary believer is intended to emulate not Jesus' particularities, but those things he said and did that are universally binding, namely, "his open pastoral acceptance of others, especially those whom some may consider to be 'sinners'." Furthermore, such following and such accepting have to be done within the community of others who also respond, yet who may be very different from ourselves" (77).

This understanding of the historical Jesus' ethic grows out of the stated aim to balance the extreme demands of Jesus' rigorist ethical teaching with his open-handed pastoral fellowship with sinners. A trajectory away from the rigorous and toward inclusivism is next discovered in the writings of Paul, who seems to be less concerned with Jesus' teaching, calling instead "for an imitation of Jesus' deeds in his accepting others, what we have called his open pastoral practice" (148). The material discussion concludes with a chronological journey through the gospels, in which Burridge finds, rather remarkably, that each evangelist in their own way is urging mimesis of Jesus' "open acceptance of others within the inclusive community of all who are following," (Burridge's gloss of Mark's emphasis on "discipleship", 184). Of the gospels, Burridge suggests that Luke best articulates Jesus' ethical ideal. The remaining New Testament books are not surveyed, primarily on the grounds that they are more difficult to fit into Burridge's biographical mimesis methodology. This survey treatment of the main texts of the New Testament has a familiar feel in a biblical studies genre that manages to be at once bulky and tantalizingly brief on difficult passages, though in most cases a comprehensive bibliography of contemporary scholarship is supplied.

A third but less explicitly articulated methodological commitment is to the importance of the reader's bio-

graphical honesty in promoting self-criticism. This is not systematically discussed (for that, see Daniel Patte's *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation*) though it is regularly practiced, from the opening confession that the book was conceived in a pent-house hot tub, to the last chapter's regular references to private conversations with prominent figures in the South African church. In this last chapter Burridge tests his thesis against the fraught exegetical terrain in apartheid South Africa, commending a virtue ethic whose function is to remind us that moral change takes time and thus the church should accept people where they are. Burridge learns from the South African context that only the church that practices such inclusion can read scripture rightly. The role of biblical scholars in all this is as experts serving "ordinary" readers in the pews (again, the methodological implications of such a claim are much more fully developed in Charles Cosgrove, *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate*).

Three questions emerged for this reader. First, what does it mean if the historical guild, rather than the church, sets the basic criterion of what can be believed about Jesus? Burridge seems to suggest his own answer in one telling biographical footnote in explaining that he finds beginning with the historical Jesus appealing not because of his ecclesial commitments, but because he trained in classics in Oxford. Second, does beginning from the historical Jesus not screen out important parts of his life, and set up false dichotomies? Is it theologically necessary to polarize Jesus' teaching and deeds (as historians apparently must), and furthermore to begin as they do by subtracting the resurrection and ascension from the list of Jesus' authentic deeds? Finally, can pastoral and ethical concerns be pitted against one another? This book is probably best appreciated as a construal of Christian ethics in which pastoral concerns systematically *override* ethical discussion, at least those fraught discussions that appear to challenge the formation of wholly accepting communities. The New Testament's most striking ethical statements are typically diffused in this book by the claim that they stand as time-bound gestures of pastoral concern rather than strong moral claims to be taken seriously in their own right.

Brian Brock, Aberdeen, Scotland

Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election:

A Systematic-Theological Comparison

Matthias Gockel

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, vii + 299 pp., £47.00, hb, ISBN 978-0-19-920322-2

SUMMARY

Matthias Gockel explores the resemblance between Friedrich Schleiermacher's and Karl Barth's doctrines of election. According to the author, the similarities suggest that Barth still worked from a liberal theological framework even while he most sharply announced his abandonment of it. Gockel's contribution is to show how what is often taken to be the most radical doctrinal revision in Barth's theology is in fact already present in Schleiermacher.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Matthias Gockel untersucht die Ähnlichkeit zwischen Schleiermachers und Barths Lehre von der Erwählung. Dem Autor zufolge legen die Ähnlichkeiten nahe, dass Barth weiterhin von einem liberalen theologischen Bezugsrahmen aus arbeitete, während er scharf verkündete, denselben hinter sich gelassen zu haben. Gockels Beitrag liegt darin, dass er aufzeigt, wie das, was häufig als radikalste lehrmäßige Revision in der Theologie Barths verstanden wird, tatsächlich bereits bei Schleiermacher vorliegt.

RÉSUMÉ

Matthias Gockel examine les ressemblances entre la pensée de Schleiermacher et la doctrine de l'élection de Karl Barth. D'après l'auteur, les similarités suggèrent que la pensée de Barth se situait toujours dans un cadre théologique libéral alors même qu'il annonçait avec force l'avoir abandonné. Gockel montre comment ce qui est souvent présenté comme la révision doctrinale la plus radicale dans la théologie de Barth se trouvait en fait déjà présent dans la pensée de Schleiermacher.

* * * *

In this revision of his 2002 doctoral dissertation under Bruce McCormack at Princeton Theological Seminary, Matthias Gockel analyses Friedrich Schleiermacher's and Karl Barth's doctrines of election. The conclusion is that Barth early on engages in a Schleiermacherian reconstruction of the doctrine, and, even as he develops it according to his own theological impulses, remains close to Schleiermacher's revision of the traditional view. This has a number of implications for Barth scholarship, not least of which is how one construes Barth's divergence from Schleiermacher. It also demonstrates that even in the locus that is often understood to be decisive for Barth's 'mature' theology, there still exists fundamental continuity between Barth's early and mature theology.

The first chapter considers Schleiermacher's 1819 essay 'On the Doctrine of Election' in its historical-theological context (the unity of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Prussia). Gockel argues that Schleiermacher

uniquely interpreted election in terms of a single divine decree that concerns God's action in Christ rather than the salvation of particular persons.

Gockel then examines the development of this revision in *The Christian Faith* with detailed attention to how the doctrine functions in and coheres with Schleiermacher's theology as a whole. Gockel explains that 'Schleiermacher supposes that the main weakness of previous models of election consisted in their correlation of divine mercy and divine righteousness with two distinct groups of people. [...] The thrust of his argument is directed against a doctrine of election that contradicts the unity of God's will' (p. 87). The difference between this more mature articulation and the 1819 essay, Gockel discerns, is that 'the earlier idea of universal predestination to receive the Holy Spirit in the event of regeneration is now replaced by the idea of a universal predestination to salvation in Christ'. Consequently, 'the process of individual regeneration is set in the larger context of the relevance of divine election for the generation of the Christian church, as the result of Christ's appearance in history' (p. 102). Throughout this treatment, Gockel redresses misinterpretations of Schleiermacher that he is proto-process theologian or a pantheist or an 'experiential-expressivist'.

Turning to Karl Barth in chapter 3, Gockel explores the doctrine of election in the 1922 edition of *Der Römerbrief*. With respect to Schleiermacher, he observes that Barth 'rejects the division between God's righteous wrath (as if it were for unbelievers only) and God's gracious love (as if it were for believers only), mirroring Schleiermacher's rejection of a division of God's righteousness and mercy in accordance with the distinction between unbelievers and believers' (p. 123). Moreover, both theologians do not tie the historical phenomena of faith and unbelief to two divine decrees – election and reprobation – but maintain only one decree that corresponds to God's redemptive will. Regarding the relationship between *Römerbrief* and *Church Dogmatics* II/2, Gockel senses several hints of what would become Barth's christological doctrine of election.

The Schleiermacherian inclination continues through Barth's *Göttingen Dogmatics* even as Barth becomes 'more actualistic and less speculative' (p. 155). By the time Gockel comes to *Church Dogmatics* II/2, he is ready to call Barth's early doctrine of election a 'Schleiermacherian position' (p. 158), though this must still be seen as resemblance not dependence, for Gockel admits that Barth 'did not refer to Schleiermacher as a source' (p. 200). Concerning the development of Barth's doctrine of election, Gockel concludes that the 'teleological view of the relation between reprobation and election, which the earlier Barth shared with Schleiermacher, is affirmed' even as election is given a christological reference by Barth (p. 196). Interestingly, this christological orientation causes Barth to reconsider 'the corporate and individual aspects of election' which leads him once again down paths blazed by Schleiermacher.

I found the sentiment, peppered throughout, that Barth's and Schleiermacher's 'view is closer to the biblical view of election than the traditional individualistic view' (p. 201) unsupported, a claim now more difficult to assert in light of the challenges registered by David Gibson (see idem and Daniel Strange [eds], *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques* [Nottingham: Apollos, 2008], pp. 136-167). I was also expecting a bit more sustained discussion of the issues surrounding Barth's relationship to Schleiermacher or Gockel's supervisor's thesis about the role election played in Barth's development. I suspect this is due to the fact that Gockel is engaged in a 'systematic-theological comparison' rather than a genetic study. Still, readers should understand that the bulk of the material is an exposition of Barth and Schleiermacher with relatively minor and brief discussion of the study's implications.

Nevertheless, Gockel's study is detailed and attentive. It is, above all, a theological analysis. Therefore, scholars of these two modern theologians are not the only beneficiaries. Those working on the locus of election will find much to consider as they see the doctrinal repercussions of Barth's and Schleiermacher's views surfaced by Gockel.

James R. A. Merrick, Aberdeen, Scotland

Liberating Texts?

Sacred Scriptures in Public Life

eds. Sebastian C.H. Kim and Jonathan Draper

London: SPCK, 2008, xxii + 150 pp., £12.99, pb,

ISBN 978-0-281-05856-3

Rescuing the Bible

(Blackwell Manifestos)

Roland Boer

Oxford: Blackwell, 2007, vi + 177 pp., £15.99, pb,

ISBN 978-1-4501-7020-8

SUMMARY:

Two very different books offer perspectives on how the Bible might play a role in public life and politics. One is a collection of essays offering a broadly positive vision of how non-fundamentalist approaches to sacred texts can liberate them to be, in their turn, liberating. One essay, though, suggests a darker possibility: that the Bible must be left behind to make progress. Roland Boer's book explores how to rescue what is liberating in the Bible, and incorporate it into a Marxist vision for a new worldly left. Both books explore an important question, but with significant limitations.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Zwei sehr unterschiedliche Bücher bieten Perspektiven zur Frage, welche Rolle die Bibel im öffentlichen Leben und in der Politik spielen könnte. Das eine ist eine Artikel-

sammlung, die eine positive Vision zur Frage anbietet, wie nicht-fundamentalistische Ansätze zu heiligen Texten diese Texte befreien können, um ihrerseits befreiend wirken zu können. Ein Artikel schlägt jedoch eine dunklere Möglichkeit vor: dass man die Bibel hinter sich lassen muss, um Fortschritte zu machen. Roland Boers Buch untersucht, wie das, was in der Bibel befreiend ist, zu retten und in eine marxistische Vision einer neuen weltweiten Linken einzuverleiben ist. Beide Bücher untersuchen eine wichtige Frage – allerdings mit erheblichen Einschränkungen.

RÉSUMÉ

Deux ouvrages très différents apportent des perspectives sur le rôle que pourrait jouer la Bible dans la vie publique et la politique. L'un rassemble des articles qui offrent une vision positive de la façon dont des approches non fondamentalistes des textes sacrés peut les libérer pour qu'ils deviennent à leur tour libérateurs. L'une des contributions prône une approche plus négative: l'abandon de la Bible comme une nécessité du progrès. Le livre de Roland Boer cherche à mettre en lumière ce qui est libérateur dans la Bible, pour l'incorporer à une vision marxiste d'une nouvelle gauche mondaine. Ces deux livres traitent d'une question importante, mais leur apport présente de sérieuses limitations.

* * * *

Two rather different volumes here provide an interesting contrast on the same topic: what is the most helpful way to conceptualise the role of scripture in the public and political world at the beginning of the 21st century?

The six essays gathered by Kim and Draper were originally delivered as the Ebor lectures in York in 2006-07, serving as public occasions for theologians of various traditions to present overviews of their topic. The result is high-level snapshots, inevitably better at broad sketches of the terrain than detail. Thus we have Archbishop John Sentamu urging us to 'uncover the purposes of God' within the Bible, which include emphases on justice, vision, grace and change. David Ford offers some highlights of his project on *Christian Wisdom*, neatly contrasting the standard 'settlements' of religion in the public square found in France (too secular), the US (too separated) and the UK (appropriately complex), while calling for 'a minimal religious and secular framework'. Ataulah Siddiqui offers a summary of the Qu'ran as the eternal Revelation of Islam, before reviewing changing paradigms of interpretation in it as Islam wrestles with various ways of engaging with the canons of modernity. Frances Young suggests that each major religious tradition will be better enabled to find its role in a pluralist society by holding fast to its own sacred scripture. Shirley Williams gives a brief review of human rights in recent global conflicts and the disease with which the category of 'just war' has been too readily appropriated (and she includes a well-judged defence of the European Union as too little appreciated in the UK for a range of populist reasons).

A common theme in these essays (except perhaps the last) is the wide range of non-fundamentalist ways forward in each tradition. Thus the word-play of the title: one can liberate these texts from their captivity to the fundamentalist, and restore a glorious vision of the healing power of God/faith/tradition (depending on the essayist), thus revealing the text as newly liberating. I would like to believe it, and indeed largely agree with much of the (somewhat general) sentiment expressed here. But the gatecrasher to the party is Dan Cohn-Sherbok, who reviews with bracing clarity the fact that the Bible (or in his case, Jewish scripture) simply doesn't match up to such a vision consistently, and by way of a disarmingly frank reading of Christian Zionism as well as some blunt texts from Joshua, he concludes that the only way forward in religious debate (or at least in his chosen case study of the occupation of the land of Israel) is to 'take leave of the Bible' and embrace instead 'good will, compassion and common sense.' Which rather indicates that the discussion this book calls for has not yet begun, since none of the other contributors (in the limited space allotted to them, obviously) seems to feel the force of this problematic side to scripture.

But here the book by Boer comes marching centre stage and announces that the project of 'rescuing' the Bible from its own darker side and its captivity to right-wing political thought is exactly what is called for by what he describes as the 'worldly left', an alliance of good old liberal secularism and the minority 'religious left'. Boer's book faces head on the challenge of finding a liberating text in the midst of so much that tends to the reactionary, whether in intent or in its actual reception through the centuries. The book is written with typical Australian energy and eschews close referencing of its targets. Those solemnly sitting in public lectures in York may find analyses such as 'You simply have to be kidding if you think [the Synagogue and the Church] can on their own become prophetic bodies' slightly blunt, and evaluations such as 'ridiculous' and (the admittedly critiqued) 'Omigod isn't this terrible!' won't perhaps win him a sympathetic hearing.

Nevertheless, there is an important focus here on how the Bible can be read with an appropriate theological suspicion which will seek to discern how it can become life-giving while not ignoring its oppressive potential. There is also a striking and largely successful critique of secularism when it is confused with atheism. And there is much to appreciate in Boer's call for a recovery of the tradition of revolutionary readings of the Bible (which is almost exactly in line with the recent book by Rowland and Roberts, *The Bible for Sinners*), arguing that given the diversity of readings enabled by the polyvalent canon, one simply has to take a stand and mine the Bible for its own political myth of liberation, the condemnation of oppression, and the celebration of revolutionary chaos.

Boer is Marxist, and cheerfully admits up front that one may find echoes of *The Communist Manifesto* in this

book. How might one evaluate it? Well, it is I think a coherent political position (and this is basically an exercise in conceptualising a biblical politics after all), and one may have some sympathy with his critique of the religious right. His use of Ernst Bloch to describe the Bible as the 'bad conscience' of the Church is quite illuminating, and he has little difficulty running rings around various ways the politically conservative appeal to scripture, drawing examples from Australian public discourse as well as creation science in the USA (and Christian Zionism, again). Nevertheless, this political coherence does not of course map onto the contours of the biblical conception(s) of how life is to be lived. Boer somewhat takes this in his stride (hermeneutically this is a kind of *sachkritik* approach judging the text by its political vision), but then it is interesting to find him critiquing some right-wing polemic on the grounds of misappropriating the text. His view of the canon as the practice of political suppression of discordant voices is also problematic, not just because it is too simplistic to be of use historically, but also because if it were true it would surely undermine his insistence on the irreducible polyvalence of the biblical text in the first place.

In the end, then, Boer breaks out of the civilised discussion of the Kim/Draper volume to offer a prophetic rallying cry, and for my money is more alert to the difficulties of the liberating project envisioned by the essayists than they are (Cohn-Sherbok excepted), but his own view of the Bible as resource for the new world left will not satisfy those who would like to see the Bible taken on its own terms. The right discussion is being had in these two books, but there is a long way to go.

Richard S. Briggs, Durham, England

The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah

Walter Brueggemann

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007

xviii + 213 pp., p/b, ISBN 9780521606295/ISBN 9780521844543

SUMMARY

In this volume the author discusses the main theological themes of the book of Jeremiah and asserts that the resounding theological note in the book is the sovereignty of God. The book's theology of restoration is quite different from that of Deuteronomy since the return of the nation is not dependent upon Israel's repentance, but is exclusively grounded in divine forgiveness. The place and function of the book of Jeremiah within the Old Testament canon is also considered, and Brueggemann concludes that it held a defining position in emerging Judaism.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Autor diskutiert in diesem Band die theologischen Hauptthemen des Jeremiabuches und bekräftigt, dass die Souveränität Gottes die weithin klingende theologische

Note des Buches bildet. Die Restaurationstheologie des Buches unterscheidet sich klar von derjenigen des Deuteronomiums, da die Rückkehr der Nation nicht von Israels Umkehr abhängt, sondern ausschließlich in der göttlichen Vergebung wurzelt. Der Ort und die Funktion des Jeremiabuches innerhalb des alttestamentlichen Kanons werden ebenfalls betrachtet, und Brueggemann schließt, dass das Buch eine wichtige Rolle im entstehenden Judentum spielte.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage, l'auteur traite des thèmes théologiques principaux du livre de Jérémie et affirme que la souveraineté divine y est la note théologique dominante. Sa théologie de la restauration est bien différente de celle du Deutéronome dans la mesure où le retour de la nation ne dépend pas de la repentance d'Israël mais découle exclusivement du pardon divin. Brueggemann se penche sur la question de la fonction du livre de Jérémie dans le canon de l'Ancien Testament et conclut qu'il a joué un rôle déterminant dans l'émergence du judaïsme.

* * * *

Walter Brueggemann has written prolifically on the book of Jeremiah and may very well be the most influential Jeremiah interpreter of our day from North America. In this little book, he seeks to extract the theology which has been woven into the complex book we know as Jeremiah.

The book consists of four chapters. In chapter one Brueggemann synthesizes the complexities which are involved in interpreting this canonical book. Here he quickly sweeps over older approaches to the book of Jeremiah – whose primary focus was to recover the “authentic” material of the prophet – and shows how these have since gone out of fashion. He proposes that “a move from ‘source’ to ‘voice’ permits us to understand the variety and tension in the book as a part of its organic coherence, albeit a quite complex coherence” (p. 5). He then goes on to discuss some of the streams of tradition in which the book of Jeremiah is rooted, namely the Sinai Pericope, Hosea, and Deuteronomy. Next, Brueggemann outlines in broad strokes the portrait of the prophet Jeremiah as it is painted in the book. Though he does not go as far as Robert Carroll, who says that any access to the historical prophet has been hopelessly lost in the ideological construct of later Deuteronomists, Brueggemann does not believe that the book offers a “reportage” of the person of Jeremiah. The prophetic persona, rather, has undergone later development in the hands of Deuteronomic traditionalists. However, this latter portrayal is not a distortion of the historical prophet because Brueggemann asserts that Jeremiah himself stood firmly in the Deuteronomic tradition. Finally, Brueggemann shows how the material in the book is structured according to the bi-partite theme of *judgment* and *hope*. In this sense, Jeremiah’s prophetic call (Jer 1:10) sets up the reading strategy for the book.

At the heart of the prophetic claim is the conviction that God will judge his rebellious nation, but cannot – and will not – abandon his people (p. 38). In sum, although the book of Jeremiah is riddled with tension, Brueggemann believes that these “competing voices” reflect an interpretive struggle concerning the *continuity* of Israel’s life with Yhwh and the *discontinuity* of Israel’s life which is caused by severe judgment (p. 41).

The meat of the book is found in chapter two – “The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah.” According to Brueggemann, the resounding theological note of the book of Jeremiah is the sovereignty of God. As the canonical book makes clear, Yahweh is the decisive agent in Jerusalem; he is the punisher of his nation. Brueggemann asserts that everything which unfolds in Jeremiah is concerned with fleshing out the claim that Yahweh is powerful and gracious, will not be mocked, and wills relationships, but wholly on his own terms (p. 56). He suggests that Yahweh’s sovereignty is displayed in three principle arenas. The first – Yahweh’s sovereignty through prophecy – is evident already in Jeremiah’s prophetic call. The placement of this call at the outset of the book is a purposeful move designed to give authority to the entire book. This caption makes it clear that all of the material in Jeremiah constitutes “the words of Jeremiah” (1:1). Thus, from the call narrative we are to conclude that the work of the prophet Jeremiah is to be the means whereby Yahweh punishes and saves Jerusalem (p. 61). Yahweh’s sovereignty is also displayed through judgment. Since Yahweh has been wronged by his people, his judgment is fully in the right. Brueggemann examines six cases of poetic rhetoric which are used by the prophet to support this claim. For example, Yahweh is depicted a husband who has been affronted by his wife (particularly in Jer 2-4). Does not such a scorned spouse have every right to judge his errant marriage partner (i.e. his nation)? Another image which is used is that of Yahweh as a powerful healer who does not heal his ill-stricken nation because they have gone so far away from him that they are beyond recovery. The purpose of these metaphors is to put the blame for the nation’s demise squarely on the shoulders of the rebellious nation. In the third and final section of chapter 2, Brueggemann shows how Yahweh’s sovereignty is displayed in his plan of restoration. Though the poetry is preoccupied with the exile of the nation, this in reality is penultimate because the God who scattered is also the one who will restore. This is what Brueggemann terms the “two-stage theology” of the book (i.e. destruction – restoration). This theology comes to head in chapters 30-33 where most of the oracles of promise have been clustered. But whereas the basis for the demise of Israel was her own sin, restoration in Jeremiah is entirely grounded in divine forgiveness. There is no call to repentance, and thus the future of Israel is solely dependent upon Yahweh’s *own* inclination. This theology is a “genuine *novum*” in Jeremiah and does not grow out of the theology of Deuteronomy, for in that tradition, according to Brueggemann, the

future depends on repentance (cf. pp. 40-41, 120-128, 136-143).

In chapter 3 Brueggemann explores the place and function of the book of Jeremiah within the Old Testament. Here he develops his thesis that the book of Jeremiah is at its core saturated with Deuteronomic theology, suggesting that the key players in the book (e.g. Baruch, Seriah, Shaphan, and even Jeremiah himself) themselves propounded the covenant theology of Deuteronomy, yet moved beyond that tradition in their programme of restoration (as just mentioned). Brueggemann then moves on to discuss the similarities and differences between Jeremiah and the prophets, and finally the writings. Given the breadth of material he attempts to cover, however, he can only offer a sketchy overview of the relationships between Jeremiah and the various books he addresses. He concludes that while it is not the dominant or triumphant voice in the "interpretive contest for the future of Judaism," the book of Jeremiah "occupies a defining position in emerging Judaism" (p. 135).

In the fourth chapter – "The Continuing Influence of the Book of Jeremiah" – Brueggemann devotes a few pages to the contribution of the book of Jeremiah to the New Testament, and then rounds off this short chapter with a reflection on what the book of Jeremiah has to say today. He proposes that Jeremiah is "a powerful script in the contemporary context for giving dramatic articulation to the new vulnerability we face" (p. 195).

Brueggemann is to be commended for his ability to synthesize concisely and clearly the massive amount of subject matter found in the book of Jeremiah. What I missed from the volume, however, was a discussion of how the material in Jeremiah contributes to development of Old Testament eschatology and messianism. Additionally, I would have appreciated a discussion on how Jer 29:10-14 (which says that Israel will repent before she is restored) fits in with Brueggemann's assertion that the plan of restoration in Jeremiah is not preceded by national repentance. Is a different plan of restoration envisioned here? On the whole, however, Brueggemann has succeeded in providing us with a well-written book whose main concern is to discuss the theology of the received text (MT), and is accessible to students and pastors alike (though scholars may find a few valuable nuggets in the book as well).

Benjamin A. Foreman, Aberdeen, Scotland

Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables

Boccaccini, Gabriele, ed.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xv + 539 pp.

£27.99, pb, ISBN: 978-0-8028-0377-1

SUMMARY

The essays in this volume cover a variety of topics related to the Parables of 1 Enoch. Topics covered include the structure of the text, its place in 1 Enoch and Second Temple Judaism, the social setting and date, and the concept of the son of man. Emerging from the essays is a consensus that the Parables were composed in the period of Herod. The work is outstanding in its breadth and detail.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Artikel in diesem Band decken eine Vielfalt von Themen an, die mit den Gleichnissen des 1. Henochbuches verbunden sind. Die behandelten Themen umfassen die Struktur des Textes, seinen Platz im 1. Henochbuch und im Judentum der Zeit des zweiten Tempels, die soziale Verortung und Datierung sowie das Konzept des Menschensohnes. Die Artikel fördern einen Konsens zutage, der die Komposition der Gleichnisse in die Zeit des Herodes legt. Das Werk ist herausragend in seiner Breite und in den Details.

RÉSUMÉ

Les textes contenus dans cet ouvrage couvrent une variété de sujets relatifs aux paraboles de 1 Enoch, parmi lesquels la structure du texte, sa place dans le livre, son rapport avec le judaïsme du second temple, son contexte social et sa date, ainsi que la notion du fils de l'homme. Il en ressort un consensus selon lequel ces paraboles ont été composées au temps d'Hérode. L'ouvrage est remarquable tant par son champ d'investigation que par ses analyses détaillées.

* * * *

Gabriele Boccaccini is to be praised for putting together a fascinating collection of essays on the Parables of 1 Enoch. These essays originated from the Third Enoch Seminar held at Camaldoli, Italy. After an introduction from Boccaccini, the book divides into six sections and concludes with an essay by Sacchi. The bibliography compiled by von Ehrenkrook is simply outstanding and will greatly assist anyone working on this material.

Each section of the book consists of several main essays with responses, and in some sections there are several shorter essays. The first section, 'The Structure of the Text', with major essays by Nickelsburg and Knibb, addresses the redactional and compositional history of the text. The location of the Parables is discussed in the second section, 'The Parables within the Enoch Tradition', as several scholars note various grammatical and literary links with other portions of 1 Enoch. VanderKam particularly argues that the Parables are dependant literally on the Book of the Watchers but not on the Astronomical Book. In the third section, 'The Son of

Man', Chialà traces how the concept of 'the son of man' developed throughout the Second Temple Period while Kvanvig focuses on the expression in the Parables. The fourth section, 'The Parables within Second Temple Literature', opens with an essay by Boccaccini in which he divides Judaism into five 'paradigms'. He then describes how these five 'paradigms' developed and intersected and shows how the Parables fit into this scheme. Henze's response is a must read for it exposes several problems with Boccaccini's system that has become so popular. Walck's essay in this section addresses the particular relationship between the Parables and the Gospels. The social setting of the Parables is discussed in the fifth section, which in contrast to the fourth section is concerned not with the relationship between texts but with the people who composed the text and their motivations. The final section addresses one of the most controversial and significant issues, the date the Parables were written. Suter provides a well-balanced survey of the scholarly debate, while Charlesworth argues that the Parables were written during the peak of Herod's reign (20-4 B.C.E.). Sacchi concludes that in light of the Camaldoli meeting a turn of the era date has been firmly established: 'The burden of proof has shifted to those who disagree with the Herodian date. It is now their responsibility to provide evidence that would reopen the discussion' (p.511).

The breadth of material covered in this book is outstanding, and the work marks a real breakthrough in scholarship. Three questions remain for this reviewer. First, much attention was given to the unity of the parables and especially whether chapters 70-71, where Enoch is identified as the Son of Man, were the original ending or added later. This issue remains unresolved and is crucially important. Some discussion about how one determines whether a text was written by the original author or added by a later redactor would be helpful since contradictory positions are advocated. Second, the attention devoted to the Parables arises primarily because of the use of the phrase 'Son of Man' in the New Testament. Even with the agreement that the Parables should be dated prior to the New Testament period, the exact relationship of the 'son of man' tradition in the Parables and the New Testament and specifically the Gospels remains unclear. Moreover, more attention needs to be given to Jesus' use (as distinct from the Gospel writers') of the phrase. Third, the title of the book, *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man*, is striking since the Son of Man is identified as a messianic concept. The book would have benefited from a discussion about the concept of the messiah and a more direct engagement with whether or not the son of man in the Parables is a messianic concept and title.

This book will greatly serve the scholarly community. Scholars working in early Judaism will find these essays helpful, and those working primarily with the New Testament will benefit particularly from the sections on the place of the Parables in Second Temple Judaism and on the date of the Parables. Boccaccini and the authors have

significantly helped our understanding of this text, and it is with eagerness that we await the results of the next Enoch Seminar.

Jason Maston, Aberdeen, Scotland

Galatians Through the Centuries (Blackwell Bible Commentaries)

John Riches

Oxford: Blackwell, 2008, xvi + 336 pp., £55.00, hb,
ISBN 978-0-631-23084-7

SUMMARY

John Riches has provided a helpful commentary on Galatians, which summarises the views of major interpreters from the second century through today. He ably brings these interpreters into an interesting conversation about the debated issues within the letter; however, his selection clearly reflects an interest in Lutheran/Reformed Protestant issues, and it might have been strengthened by including some interaction with Orthodox and Roman Catholic interpreters as well.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

John Riches stellt einen hilfreichen Galaterkommentar zur Verfügung, der die Ansichten wichtiger Interpreten vom 2. Jahrhundert bis heute zusammenfasst. Gekonnt bringt er diese Interpreten in ein interessantes Gespräch über die innerhalb des Briefes debattierten Fragen; allerdings reflektieren die von ihm gewählten Repräsentanten deutlich ein Interesse an lutherischen / reformierten protestantischen Fragen. Das Buch hätte an Stärke gewinnen können, wenn auch ein wenig Interaktion mit orthodoxen und katholischen Interpreten einbezogen worden wäre.

RÉSUMÉ

John Riches a produit un commentaire utile sur l'épître aux Galates, qui résume les points de vue des interprètes principaux depuis le II^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours. Il compare habilement les options de ces interprètes concernant les questions débattues dans cette épître. Il a cependant privilégié les commentateurs qui se situent dans la tradition protestante luthérienne et réformée et son étude aurait gagné à prendre aussi en compte des interprètes orthodoxes et catholiques romains.

* * * *

John Riches has provided a helpful commentary on Galatians, which summarises the views of major interpreters from the second century through today. This is the third New Testament commentary in the new Blackwell Bible Commentaries, which focus on reception history. In this series, some focus on the history of interpretation through the arts, literature, and popular culture, but Riches has decided to focus upon literary history. The principal commentators Riches has chosen are Marcion, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Perkins

(English Puritan), Ferdinand Christian Baur (and Adolf Hilgenfeld), Joseph Barber Lightfoot and various recent commentators. Of the recent commentators, Bultmann, E.P. Sanders, J.D.G. Dunn, and J.L. Martyn are the most frequently discussed.

Building upon the ideology of Hans Robert Jauss, Riches gives a substantive introduction to each commentator in order to help the reader to understand the 'horizon of expectation' of each. With the number of points of view Riches incorporates, he obviously cannot focus upon each exegetical issue. Riches divides the letter into 10 sections (1.1-9; 2.10-24; 2.1-10; 2.11-21; 3.1-14; 3.15-29; 4.1-20; 4.21-31; 5; and 6). Within each section he gives a brief summary of the text and central questions and debates that rise from it. He then summarises the views of the different commentators in chronological order.

While Riches focuses on certain interpreters, he integrates comments from a wide variety of other writers and sources. Though he has his list of significant commentators, he does not let this list limit his discussion. He also incorporates a wide number of other relevant commentators depending on their importance to the topic at hand. At times he presumes some, but not a detailed, knowledge of Protestant debates not covered in the introductions. In case the reader is unfamiliar with a particular interpreter or theological position, Riches has provided a glossary in the back giving a brief description and dates for authors.

Different from traditional commentaries on biblical texts, Riches does not give his 'own' interpretation of the text along with the other commentators (p. 64-65); however, this does not limit him to merely summarising the different authors. He also provides evaluative comments of commentators, which sharpen the debate but can also periodically reveal his personal perspective. For example, in his discussion of chapter 5 Riches notes how Chrysostom's interpretation 'is achieved at the cost of screening out the darker, dualist side of Paul's thought' (p. 270) while 'Calvin shows himself to be a sensitive reader of Paul' (p. 276) in this chapter. Thus, Riches carefully highlights different strengths and weaknesses of the readings which he explores, while treating each on its own terms.

Riches' list of principle commentators, along with his freedom to interact with those not on the list, allows him to address central theological issues. In particular, his inclusion of Marcion and other 'dualists' (e.g., the Valentinians) captures the voice of primary Pauline interpreters in the second and third centuries, who are often neglected by others. At the same time, Riches' selection of interpreters betrays primarily western and specifically Protestant readings of Paul. Chrysostom is offered as an eastern voice, but his interpretive method tends to align more closely to those of modern Protestants than someone like Origen, whose method might strike readers as more challenging. Examples of modern Orthodox interpreters (e.g., Paul Nadim Tarazi) are not numerous,

but I did not notice any cited in Riches' discussion. In the same way, Roman Catholic interpretations were also not explored other than Aquinas, though the interpretations of the Council of Trent are noted a couple of times. Any number of Roman Catholic interpreters could be included to give more balance to the discussion (e.g., John Bligh). In addition, the protestant interpreters that Riches has chosen fall within the Calvinist and Lutheran traditions, rather than those following Arminian or Wesleyan interpretations. While the addition of Perkins is refreshing because he stands outside the normal list of those consulted, Riches' project would have been strengthened had he included Orthodox and Catholic interpreters.

Riches provides an in-depth, clear, and interesting study of Galatians by highlighting debated issues within the letter. Those studying Galatians would find this commentary well worth their study in order to understand better the basis of interpretive decisions inherited, often unknowingly, from others.

Ben Blackwell, Durham, England

Theology and Film:

Challenging the Sacred/ Secular Divide

Christopher Deacy and Gaye Williams Ortiz

Oxford: Blackwell, 2008

xiv + 245 pp., £17.99 pb, £50 hb, ISBN

9781405144384

SUMMARY

This textbook outlines the potentially stimulating dialogue between Christian theologies and so-called secular film. A first part samples various methodological approaches whereby theology can engage films with respect rather than reading in its own themes. A second part offers useful examples of dialogue with films which address themes of interest to theology: women, the environment, violence, justice, war and eschatology.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Textbuch skizziert den potentiell stimulierenden Dialog zwischen christlichen Theologien und dem so genannten säkularen Film. Ein erster Teil bringt beispielhaft verschiedene methodische Ansätze, mit deren Hilfe die Theologie Filme mit Respekt behandeln kann, anstatt sie durch die Linse ihrer eigenen Themen zu sehen. Ein zweiter Teil bietet nützliche Beispiele von Dialogen mit Filmen, die Themen behandeln, die für die Theologie von Interesse sind: Frauen, die Umwelt, Gewalt, Gerechtigkeit, Krieg und Eschatologie.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage montre comment la théologie peut entrer en un dialogue stimulant avec la production cinématographique séculière. Une première partie indique des approches méthodologiques pour considérer les films d'un point

de vue théologique, mais en respectant leur perspective propre sans vouloir y retrouver nécessairement les thèmes habituellement abordés par la théologie. Une seconde partie donne des exemples de films présentant un apport utile sur des thèmes touchant aux préoccupations de la théologie: la place des femmes, l'environnement, la violence, la justice, la guerre et l'eschatologie.

* * * *

Deacy and Ortiz continue to advance the emerging discipline of 'Theology and Film'. They show that films and theology often treat similar themes and questions, and that there is value in conversations between the two. They have succeeded in producing a stimulating introductory textbook, accompanied by useful online resources.

Part I, 'Methodological Considerations', aims to move beyond subjective readings towards consistent methods of understanding film, and not just traditionally religious films but those with 'secular' concerns (that term is challenged after Bonhoeffer's explanation of the Incarnation as God participating in the world) and films that challenge and subvert theological paradigms. Here is a valuable sampler of a range of current approaches to Theology and Film. Reinhold Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* (1952) provides the overall organising categories: Christ against Culture; Christ of Culture; Christ above Culture; Christ and Culture in Paradox; and Christ the Transformer of Culture. At times Niebuhr's categories can seem to strain to contain the theorists assigned to them, and a half-century of critiques and adaptations of Niebuhr are not deployed. A section considers the axis between so-called high and low cultures after Neil Postman, and how theology could respond.

A key caveat is that films must be read on their own terms rather than selectively interpreted to support a theological agenda, and films can suffer at the hands of uncritical, too-convenient theological readings: for example, seeing Christ-figures behind every cinematic hero can distort what is really on the screen. Robert Jewett is used as a contra-example for allowing Biblical texts more authority in the dialogue with film (as 'first among equals') but it is not demonstrated that this necessarily makes him less attentive to films and the themes expressed in their details, even if he may find Pauline concepts richer. Jewett's frank acknowledgement that he is not a trained film critic is rather used in evidence against him when, in fairness, many pioneering writers in this discipline are formally trained theologians but enthusiastic amateurs or at best autodidacts in film theory.

Part II, 'Theological Perspectives and Filmic Themes', considers films which address subjects relevant to systematic theology (with the admirably self-critical acknowledgement that one's theological agenda may show in one's very choice of films). Chapter 3 briefly applies feminism to film and theology, showing instructive parallels. Chapter 4 considers environmental films. Chapter 5 considers violence as anathema to Christianity

but questions whether it may be redemptive, analysing Mel Gibson's Christ as victim of violence, and provocatively regarding the Bible's eschatological Christ as warrior-judge, conqueror and violent destroyer of enemies; here are penetrating questions about violence inherent in heroes and Christ-figures, and in religion. Chapter 6 explores links between human justice and theodicy. Chapter 7 examines the mythology of war, sampling war films (and 'peace films') which reflect a range of eras and political stances. It distinguishes the Christian notion of 'just war' from the empire war to sustain a lifestyle exploiting other people's resources, and controversially applies this to George W. Bush's 'theology of war', examining documentaries which critique the 'war on terror' and its worldview, and drawing disturbing parallels to historical films on oppression. It discusses *Paradise Now*, a film depicting a Palestinian's decision to become a suicide bomber and claiming root causes in the lack of economic prospects, human rights and hope. Whether or not a reader agrees at all points – or at all – this chapter is theology at its provocative, catalytic, relevant best. Chapter 8 samples a fascinating range of eschatologies, from subjective and other-worldly (*What Dreams May Come*) to virtual (*Vanilla Sky*) to this-worldly (*Terminator II*) even to beachside after-years as earthly reward (*Shawshank Redemption*). Chapter 9 considers narrative itself, and its role in the search for meaning.

Overall, Deacy and Ortiz demonstrate their thesis that cinema is a rich site for theological exchange. The selection of films is commendably catholic: the treatment of Iranian women's films particularly will open up new areas for Western readers.

They also suggest ways forward for research, observing that the discipline often neglects 'the rich resources of film criticism and theory' – sound, editing, cinematography and *mise-en-scène* (the artful use of visual details), and theoretical approaches including psychoanalytic, semiotic, formalist, impressionistic and poststructuralist, Marxist, feminist, and gay and lesbian. Their book delivers chapters on some theoretical areas but others are still open territory, and detailed aesthetic analysis of how individual films work to produce theology is left to others. The discipline could profitably take up their challenge.

Grenville J.R. Kent, Cambridge, England

The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture

Brevard S. Childs

Grand Rapids / Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004, xii + 332 pp.,

\$35.00 / £22.95, hb, ISBN: 0-8028-2761-6

SUMMARY

Childs here offers a history of the interpretation of Isaiah that focuses specifically on the question of how it is understood as Christian scripture. The focus is thus hermeneutical, and enables Childs to demonstrate a 'family resemblance' in Christian interpretation in spite of the different exegetical methods employed. Few could have covered this material with this level of insight, but there is a rich payoff in the concluding hermeneutical reflections where Childs enters a passionate plea for the canonical form of the Scripture to provide the rule of faith that continues to guide its interpretation.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Childs bietet hier eine Geschichte der Interpretation des Jesajabuches, die sich insbesondere auf die Frage konzentriert, wie das Buch als christliche Schrift verstanden wird. Das Augenmerk ist also hermeneutisch und versetzt Childs in die Lage, trotz der Unterschiede in den angewandten exegetischen Methoden eine „Familienähnlichkeit“ in der christlichen Interpretation aufzuzeigen. Nur wenige hätten dieses Material auf dieser einsichtsreichen Ebene behandeln können, doch die Lektüre wird mit den abschließenden hermeneutischen Reflektionen belohnt, in denen Childs ein leidenschaftliches Plädoyer für die kanonische Form der Schrift hält, die die Glaubensregel bereitstellt, die weiterhin die Schriftauslegung leitet.

RÉSUMÉ

Childs retrace ici l'histoire de l'interprétation du livre d'Ésaïe en s'intéressant particulièrement à la manière dont il a été compris en tant qu'écrit appartenant au canon chrétien des Écritures. L'approche est donc herméneutique et permet à l'auteur de démontrer l'existence d'une « ressemblance familiale » entre les interprétations chrétiennes du livre, en dépit des diverses méthodes exégétiques mises en œuvre. Peu de spécialistes auraient pu embrasser un tel champ d'étude avec autant de perspicacité, et l'entreprise recueille un riche butin: elle aboutit à des conclusions herméneutiques dans lesquelles Childs se fait le vibrant avocat de l'approche qui tire des Écritures sous leur forme canonique la règle de la foi qui continue à orienter leur interprétation.

* * * *

One of the recurring themes in the work of Brevard Childs was the importance of attention to the history of exegesis. The importance of this in the interpretation of individual passages was much in evidence in his *Exodus* commentary (OTL, London: SCM Press, 1974), and continued to be evident in his subsequent works. It was,

therefore, something of a surprise that it played such a relatively minor role in his *Isaiah* commentary (OTL, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), though there were occasional exceptions to this where he included sections reflecting on passages in light of the canon and their specific relationship to the New Testament (e.g., Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12, 61). In some senses, these omissions blunted Childs' hermeneutical programme, especially given the relatively brief space afforded to introductory matters which were largely treated on a section by section basis rather. Although we are not treated to passage by passage analysis of the history of exegesis, this work (Child's last book before his death) fills at least part of the gap by providing an overview of the history of the interpretation of Isaiah, though with a specific focus on how it could be understood as Christian scripture.

To achieve this, Childs surveys the interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX through to post-modern interpretation. Including the LXX might seem odd at first since its production was hardly a Christian activity, but because it was constitutive for so much early Christian interpretation its importance cannot be set aside. Along with the LXX, Childs considers the NT as evidence of the earliest reception of Isaiah in his first chapter. This sets the pattern followed throughout the book, where Childs outlines the central hermeneutical issues evidenced by the interpreter under consideration, making use of contemporary debates about that interpreter (or interpreters) before examining sample texts and drawing his own conclusions. Childs demonstrates an astonishing breadth of reading and awareness as he leads readers through this, covering various Church Fathers (Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret), medieval interpreters (Aquinas, Nicholas of Lyra), Reformers (Luther, Calvin) and a collection of interpreters from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and then post-modern interpretation represented by Walter Brueggemann. Each chapter closes with an extensive bibliography. Every selection of relevant interpreters is personal, but Childs' follows the central criterion that the interpreter concerned had to have written a commentary on Isaiah though there are points where he seems to chafe at the limitation he has placed on himself.

In a closing chapter, Childs offers his own hermeneutical reflections on this history, demonstrating that there is a family resemblance in Christian interpretations of Isaiah, although the exegetical models that were followed varied considerably. Here, we come to the heart of Childs' concerns as he stresses again the importance of understanding the Old Testament as Christian scripture, and thus consciously opposes himself to Brueggemann's post-modern turn. He is sympathetic to Brueggemann's concerns that the OT not be removed from its Jewish roots, but insists that faithful Christian interpretation cannot set aside the control that scripture as a whole, through the Spirit, exerts on us. Brueggemann's insist-

ence on the importance of imaginative construal by interpreters is thus rejected for failing to understand the nature of scripture. Rather, following the structure of his earlier work on Biblical Theology, the Christological content of the Bible is to be honoured whilst attending to its development and relationship to history. Here then is the book's great contribution, and it is a fitting memorial to a pivotal scholar. Faithful Christian interpretation cannot be constrained by the limits of modernity, but neither can it accept the relativity of post-modernity. Instead, Childs challenges us to seek a reading of scripture as a whole that is controlled by the canon as the rule of faith.

David G. Firth, Calver, England

Dizionario di teologia evangelica

Pietro Bolognesi, Leonardo De Chirico,
Andrea Ferrari

Editrice Uomini Nuovi, Marchirolo (Va), Italy, 2007
876 pages, €58

SUMMARY

The *Dizionario di Teologia Evangelica* is a one-volume compilation of articles across a broad spectrum of disciplines. Its distinctiveness rests in its *interdisciplinary* nature, with articles ranging from Biblical studies, to historical, systematic and practical theology. The entries are impressively clear and concise, self-consciously within Reformed classical evangelicalism. The dictionary draws together the best of international evangelical theology, both English-speaking and European, and presents it as an essential holistic unity; a noteworthy achievement within the fragmented evangelical context of Roman Catholic Europe. Useful bibliographies and appendices give freedom to explore topics to greater depth, beyond this collection of over 600 articles. An excellent work.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das *Dizionario di Teologia Evangelica* ist eine einbändige Zusammenstellung von Artikeln, die eine große Bandbreite an Disziplinen abdecken. Seine Besonderheit beruht auf seinem *interdisziplinären* Wesen, mit Artikeln, die von bibelwissenschaftlichen über historische und systematische bis zu Beiträgen der praktischen Theologie reichen. Die Beiträge sind beeindruckend klar und nicht ausschweifend; sie bewegen sich bewusst innerhalb des reformierten klassischen Evangelikalismus. Das Lexikon vereint das Beste aus der internationalen evangelikalen Theologie der englischsprachigen und europäischen Welt, und es präsentiert diese Theologie als eine im Wesentlichen ganzheitliche Einheit; eine bemerkenswerte Leistung innerhalb des fragmentierten evangelikalen Kontextes im römisch-katholischen Europa. Nützliche Bibliographien und Anhänge ermöglichen es, die Themen vertieft und über diese Sammlung von 600 Artikeln hinaus zu untersuchen. Ein hervorragendes Werk.

RÉSUMÉ

Le *Dizionario di Teologia Evangelica* rassemble en un volume des articles qui couvrent une large gamme de disciplines. Sa particularité réside en son caractère interdisciplinaire. Il contient en effet des articles d'études bibliques et de théologie historique, systématique et pratique. Les articles sont remarquablement clairs et concis ; ils s'inscrivent délibérément dans une ligne évangélique calviniste classique. L'ouvrage rassemble ce que la théologie évangélique internationale a produit de meilleur, à la fois dans le monde anglo-saxon et en Europe. L'ensemble présente une unité fondamentale, ce qui apparaît comme un exploit au sein du monde évangélique fragmenté que l'on rencontre dans la partie catholique romaine de l'Europe. Des bibliographies et des appendices donnent d'utiles indications pour aller au-delà de ces six cents articles et creuser davantage les sujets abordés. Un excellent ouvrage!

* * * *

The *Dizionario di teologia evangelica* (*Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*) is an impressive one-volume work, boasting a collection of clear and concise articles across a broad spectrum of theological disciplines. In fact, this is precisely its purpose – here is a dictionary which presents itself as an *interdisciplinary* work, seeking to establish fruitful connections across a range of theological disciplines, in ways that distinguish it from many other theological dictionaries. Articles range from Biblical studies (eg. books and key characters of the Bible), to questions of Historical theology (with articles describing important figures of church history and theological debates surrounding them), to those of Systematic theology (with articles exploring key doctrinal questions), and Practical theology (with articles exploring ethical, ecclesiological and missiological issues). It is an impressively clear, concise and integrated project, self-consciously defined within the tradition of Reformed classical evangelicalism.

Although conceived intentionally within and for the Italian church context, it is by no means 'parochial'. Rather, it seeks to draw together the best of international evangelical theology, both English-speaking and from other parts of Europe. Some of its articles are therefore adapted from other evangelical dictionaries (eg. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed Elwell, *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed Ferguson/Packer/Wright, as well as *Grand Dictionnaire de la Bible*). The breadth of articles is noteworthy, from introduction of Biblical books and characters, to key historical theologians, an exploration of Biblical and systematic doctrines, questions of Biblical ethics, key events and debates of church history, to articles on present evangelicalism. Yet the interdisciplinary range of articles does not leave the dictionary without an essential core; it serves rather to highlight the essential holistic unity and integrity of evangelical theology. This is an immensely useful and enriching vision, all the more so for the historically fragmented evangelical context of Italy. The book introduces not only a historical

perspective to church life and practice, but also presents, within its subtleties and distinctives, a classical evangelical theology that finds expression in each discipline. In this sense, it models an integrated vision rarely observed and greatly needed within Italian evangelicalism.

Certainly the interdisciplinary nature of the project is its particular strength and distinctive contribution; all the more important within the tiny and fragmented evangelical context of Roman Catholic Europe. It is a strength modelled further by the bibliographical mention of articles drawn from broader sources, not only English speaking, but also elsewhere in mainland Europe. In this way, the notion of a distinct evangelical theology across the plethora of worldwide evangelical groupings and societies gains greater credence. Another strength is the concise writing style of the varied articles, with the topic in hand described and explored with precision and brevity. Clearly, what is written is not exhaustive, but each article focuses on the heart of the question, and after each comes a very useful short bibliography (as well as reference to other articles in the dictionary connected to that particular subject), giving freedom to research the matter in hand at greater depth. The brevity of each article is thus neither restrictive nor inhibiting, as provision is made for extending and deepening study.

The structure of the dictionary is therefore sympathetic to its integrated aim, as reflected also particularly in the wealth of information listed in the appendices. Included here are the various evangelical theological faculties, publishing houses and journals found throughout Europe, America and the rest of the world, as well as a more detailed list of institutions, publishing houses and journals within the Italian context. The risk of articles grouped alphabetically disorientating the reader, due to their interdisciplinary nature, is avoided with an extensive closing index, listing [alphabetically] the dictionary's articles, as well as indexes with references to Biblical texts, Biblical characters and the various theologians mentioned within articles. The appendices therefore facilitate access to the wealth of material included.

In total, the dictionary comprises over 600 articles, in a process involving over 200 contributors and collaborators. Each article bibliography rightly favours Italian works and translations, whilst retaining an impressive grasp of English-speaking scholarship. The *Dizionario di Teologia Biblica* is an extensive, rich and authoritative tool, which I suggest should be an essential reference-point for pastors, students and others interested in theological study. In fact, it is difficult to overestimate the usefulness and distinctive contribution of this work, for those committed to the proclamation and strengthening of the historic faith in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.

John Paul Aranzulla, Bologna, Italia

Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity

William S. Campbell

London: T & T Clark, 2008

xiv + 203

£24.99; pb; ISBN: 978-0-567-03367-3

SUMMARY

William Campbell's new book is a protest against the scholarly consensus that for Paul the equality of Jew and Gentile in Christ requires the abrogation of difference or, at best, an indifference to difference. On the majority view, Paul taught that our unity in Christ meant that believers are no longer Jews or Gentiles but are 'Christians'. Campbell's alternative understanding of Paul's teaching is that our unity in Christ does not abolish difference. Christ does indeed *relativize* everything else, and the identity of all believers is transformed in Christ but *not* so as to *obliterate* their previous social identity. In 'new creation' there is continuity with the old. Thus Jewish believers in Jesus continued to be, and to behave as, Jews (including keeping Torah). Similarly Gentile Christ-believers remained Gentiles and were not required to convert to Judaism. And both Jews and Gentiles in Christ needed to accept and create space for each other. This is an important and thought-provoking corrective to a lot of Pauline scholarship.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

William Campbells neues Buch ist ein Protest gegen den wissenschaftlichen Konsens, dass die Ebenbürtigkeit von Juden und Heiden in Christus für Paulus die Aufhebung von Unterschieden oder bestenfalls Gleichgültigkeit im Blick auf Unterschiede erfordert. Nach der Mehrheitssicht lehrte Paulus, dass unsere Einheit in Christus bedeutet, dass Gläubige nicht mehr Juden oder Heiden, sondern „Christen“ sind. Campbells alternatives Verständnis der paulinischen Lehre lautet, dass unsere Einheit in Christus nicht jeden Unterschied abschafft. In der Tat *relativiert* Christus alles andere, und die Identität aller Gläubigen *wird* in Christus transformiert, jedoch nicht so, dass ihre vorherige soziale Identität *ausgemerzt* wird. In der „neuen Schöpfung“ gibt es Kontinuität mit dem Alten. Von daher waren jüdische Jesus-Gläubige weiterhin Juden und verhielten sich auch so (inklusive der Einhaltung der Tora). In ähnlicher Weise blieben heidnische Christus-Gläubige Heiden und man verlangte von ihnen nicht, zum Judentum zu konvertieren. Sowohl Juden als auch Heiden mussten für sich selbst Raum schaffen und diesen akzeptieren. Das Buch ist eine wichtige und anregende Korrektur eines Großteils gelehrter Beiträge zu Paulus.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage, William Campbell s'élève contre le consensus académique selon lequel Paul aurait considéré que l'égalité entre Juifs et non Juifs requerrait l'abolition des différences, ou, tout du moins, une indifférence vis-à-vis des différences. Selon le point de vue majoritaire, Paul aurait enseigné que notre unité en Christ impliquait que les croyants ne sont désormais plus ni Juifs ni non Juifs,

mais simplement « chrétiens ». Selon la thèse défendue par Campbell, Paul enseignait au contraire que l'unité des croyants en Christ n'oblitérait pas les différences entre eux. Il est vrai que Christ rend relative l'importance de tout autre chose et que l'identité de tout croyant se trouve transformée en Christ, mais sans que cela annule sa précédente identité sociale. La « nouvelle création » présente une certaine continuité avec l'ancienne. Ainsi les croyants d'origine juive continuent d'être juifs et de se comporter comme tels (et cela inclut l'observation de la Torah). De même, les croyants d'origine non juive restaient des non Juifs et on ne leur demandait pas de se convertir au judaïsme. Les uns comme les autres devaient s'accueillir mutuellement en Christ et laisser à chacun la possibilité d'être soi-même à cet égard. C'est là un important et stimulant correctif à beaucoup d'études pauliniennes.

* * * *

William Campbell's new book is a protest against the scholarly consensus that for Paul the equality of Jew and Gentile in Christ requires the abrogation of difference. On the majority view, Paul taught that our unity in Christ meant that believers are no longer Jews or Gentiles but are 'Christians'. Campbell's alternative understanding of Paul's teaching is that our unity in Christ does not abolish difference. Christ does indeed *relativize* everything else, and the identity of all believers *is* transformed in Christ but *not* so as to *obliterate* their previous social identity. In 'new creation' there is continuity with the old. Thus Jewish believers in Jesus continued to be, and to behave as, Jews (including keeping Torah). Similarly Gentile Christ-believers remained Gentiles and were not required to convert to Judaism. Paul taught that Jews and Gentiles in Christ needed to accept and create space for each other.

Paul's teaching was certainly used by a later majority-Gentile Church to justify supersessionism but, says Campbell, we must distinguish Paul's own intentions from later misuses of his work. Paul's *intra*-Jewish debates were misread by later Christians as *anti*-Jewish debates and Paul was mistakenly seen to be setting Christianity up as the eschatological replacement for Judaism in the economy of salvation. But Campbell resists the historic Christian claim that Paul saw the Church as a 'new Israel' or a 'redefined Israel' that replaced Judaism. Paul, he thinks, did seek to theologically position Gentile believers in a close relationship to Israel but never saw them *as* Israel. So where did Jews stand after Christ? Paul saw the 'remnant' of gospel-believing Jews not as elect *instead of* 'the rest' of Israel but as a sign of hope of the eventual salvation of 'all Israel'. God's covenant faithfulness to all Israel is nonnegotiable for Paul.

Critical scholarship has come a long way since F.C. Baur and there has been a growing appreciation of Paul's Jewishness but Campbell's contention is that New Testament scholarship – even that of the 'New Perspective' – still misinterprets Paul through *later* Christian theological lenses.

Campbell is very keen not to abstract Paul's theology from its historical, social and cultural setting. In particular he wishes to locate Paul's communities not simply in relation to Judaism but also in relation to the Roman state. The complex inter-relations in this tripartite context constrained Paul's options in various ways and need more attention than they are usually given. He argues that Paul worked hard to promote solidarity within his communities but *not* in order for them to split from Judaism. Paul sought to maintain links, despite conflicts, between his Gentile communities and the synagogue. He himself was determined to cling to his ancestral faith and, though Campbell does not develop this point, never ceased to be a practising Jew. (Indeed I believe, against the majority, that Paul was Torah observant as a matter of *principle*.)

Scholars have often set Paul in opposition to Peter, James and the Jerusalem church. Campbell argues that Paul's own statements and his teaching about relating to other believers undermine this view. This means that whilst Paul's congregations were majority-Gentile he recognised the legitimacy of the majority-Jewish congregations of James and Peter. Paul did not think that his communities embodied the only legitimate way of following Christ. This cautions us against automatically universalising Paul's words to specific *Gentile* congregations as if he saw them as necessarily applying to *all* Christ-believers.

Paul had a very particular problem in that he was seeking to create predominantly Gentile communities that retained strong links with Judaism, claimed equal status as the people of God with Israel, and yet were not Jewish. These communities were a challenge to Jewish self-understanding and this sometimes generated antagonism from the synagogues. If Paul had been founding a new religion self-consciously distinct from Judaism Jews would not have objected and life for Paul and his communities would have been easier. Paul's challenge was to conceptualise a new identity 'in Christ', with an accompanying new way of life, for Gentiles. But he did not follow the conventional Jewish pattern of designating Gentiles as either pagans, God-fearers (with only 'guests' status in the household of Abraham), or Proselytes (and thus no longer Gentiles). Christ has made it possible for Gentiles to be adopted sons in the family of Abraham *whilst remaining Gentile*. They are 'elect' and share in Israel's inheritance without being Israel (though *not apart from being related to Israel*, in Christ). This was a new, eschatological category of person.

But although Paul's Gentile converts did not have to submit to full Torah-obedience they were expected to relocate within the symbolic universe of Israel's God, Israel's scriptures and to embrace a lifestyle not unlike that of a 'righteous Gentile'. The resocialization required of them far outstripped that required of Jews-in-Christ. Understandably such Gentile believers had a liminal status in both Jewish and pagan society and this generated some of the problems Paul deals with in his letters.

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.

Robin Parry, Worcester, England

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

Joel Willitts

Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 147. Berlin:

Walter de Gruyter, 2007, xiii + 270 pp., € 99, hb,
ISBN 9783110193435

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.

* * * *

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.

Jason Hood, Dingwall, Scotland

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.

* * * *

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-

trine of providence appears as if God is manipulating everything to fulfil his divine plan but this view would be transformed if viewed within a Trinitarian framework, and more precisely, 'Trinitarian talk about God's ordering of creaturely affairs must take its bearings decisively from what is disclosed of God's manner of working in Jesus Christ' (89).

I thought the book suffered from two major weaknesses. Firstly, Wood does not engage to any great extent with the biblical texts that have provided the backbone for the traditional doctrine of providence to be held by so many for so long. Secondly, his choices of works to engage with were quite obscure. Aside from Sherlock's work as a representative of the traditional doctrine, these are the Calhoun Commission, a study of the Federal Counsel of the Churches of Christ in America entitled '*The Relation of the Church to the War in the Light of the Christian Faith*,' and the ideas of the non-Christian American poet Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962). Wood suggests the Calhoun Report to be 'the most valuable brief articulation of the Christian doctrine of providence produced during the past century' (94), even though on the next page he adds, 'The word "providence" appears only rarely in the document... The traditional terminology of the doctrine is likewise scarce, but the substance is unmistakable' (95).

In summary, the author is clearly dissatisfied with the traditional doctrine of providence. In such a brief work however, the fresh proposals he brings for discussion, fail to provide, in my view, convincing enough arguments to reject the traditional doctrine of providence. However, the book is welcomed as an attempt to examine the best way to express how God is said to act in and with the world.

J. P. Mackenzie, Culloden, Scotland

***Participatory Biblical Exegesis:
A Theology of Biblical Interpretation***

Matthew Levering

Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2008, ix + 302.

\$25.00, £18.50, pb, ISBN 0-268-03408-7

SUMMARY

We do not read the bible like we used to read it and this, according to Matthew Levering, is not necessarily a good thing. Something has been lost in the way we do exegesis and Levering argues that our exegetical practice has suffered under the strain of a faulty and unbiblical understanding of reality. Levering offers a helpful approach to exegesis without becoming bogged down in overly-complicated hermeneutical theory.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wir lesen die Bibel nicht mehr so, wie wir es gewohnt waren, und das ist laut Matthew Levering nicht notwen-

digerweise eine gute Sache. In der Art und Weise, wie wir Exegese betreiben, ist etwas verloren gegangen, und in *Participatory Biblical Exegesis* argumentiert Levering, dass unsere exegetische Praxis unter der Belastung eines fehlerhaften und unbiblischen Verständnisses der Wirklichkeit gelitten hat. Levering bietet einen hilfreichen exegetischen Ansatz an, ohne sich in einer überkomplizierten hermeneutischen Theorie zu verzetteln.

RÉSUMÉ

Nous ne lisons plus la Bible comme on la lisait autrefois et, aux yeux de Matthew Levering, ce n'est pas nécessairement heureux. Nous avons perdu quelque chose par notre manière de faire de l'exégèse et notre pratique exégétique souffre à ses yeux d'une compréhension de la réalité erronée et contraire à la Bible. Il propose de façon salutaire une autre approche de l'exégèse, sans se perdre dans des théories herméneutiques trop compliquées.

* * * *

We don't read the bible like we used to read it and this, according to Matthew Levering, is not necessarily a good thing. Something has been lost in the way we do exegesis and, in *Participatory Biblical Exegesis*, Levering argues that our exegetical practice has suffered under the strain of a faulty and unbiblical understanding of reality.

As the argument runs, exegesis today is almost entirely informed by a linear-historical perspective that views reality as a sequence of moments unrelated to God's reality. The consequence of such for Scripture is a view that regards the biblical text and its interpretation as ends in themselves and thus closed off from hearing the voice of God or referring to realities beyond the text. Levering grants that while moment follows moment in succession, these moments are not atomistic, 'but rather constitute an organic web of interrelation' (p. 1). This is so, he argues, because 'the intimate "vertical" presence of the Trinity's creative and redemptive action suffuses the "linear" or "horizontal" succession of moments' (p. 1). This appeal to doing exegesis under the governance of the divine economy is not, however, something new but is in fact a call to return to a patristic-medieval model of interpretation that sees the text as more than simply a product of natural processes.

The harvest of findings gathered in from literary and linguistic studies, from archaeology, philology, the study of origins and so forth is found to replace those participatory tools that include doctrines and practices. These participatory tools had been commonplace throughout church history and, for Levering, it is not simply a matter of making use of one set over the other, but rather both sets of tools are required to enter fully into the realities taught in the biblical text.

In the second chapter Levering traces the gradual decline of a participatory model by examining the exegetical practice of ten prominent Catholic interpreters and their treatment of John 3. 27-36, ranging from the thought of Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) to 'the full-

scale development of Catholic historical-critical biblical scholarship in the twentieth century' (p. 145) as evidenced in the work of Raymond Brown (1928-1998). In the third and fourth chapters, Levering explores what it means to do exegesis under the instruction of God, the Teacher, in whom the reader participates.

In the fifth chapter Levering addresses the challenge posed by the Enlightenment thinkers Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza that biblical interpretation fosters division and inevitably leads to a violent exegesis. Essentially, religious communities are not to be trusted with the Bible as their interpretations easily morph into oppressive power. The solution put forth by the aforementioned is 'that neutral parties must take over the exegetical task' (p. 108), which in both cases means the state is sovereign over religion in the public sphere. As one of the finest contemporary readers of Thomas Aquinas, Levering's appeal to the medievalist's exegesis of John 14.15-17 is a fruitful example that grounds interpretation in the Church as an exercise in wisdom and love that also side-steps the accusation of religion's appeal to power per Hobbes and Spinoza (p.132).

Readers should be aware that, while the argument is straightforward and well structured, the footnotes almost don the form of an encyclopaedia and amount to a towering 113 pages. Yet, if one is prepared to track along, one will be well rewarded with Levering's labour in reading deeply on the subject.

One reservation concerns a central aspect of the notion of participation. It makes perfect sense for Levering to appeal to his Catholic tradition to make this claim, yet in light of Christ's resurrection, surely we have to acknowledge that Christ's presence is now one that sees the risen Christ communicating through his Word in the power of the Spirit to a redeemed people. This still admits to the need for a Christological and Pneumatological metaphysics but also holds firmly to a Creator-creature distinction that refuses to attribute to the text, or the people of God, properties belonging only to God.

Aside from this single reservation, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis* stands out from the ever-growing mass of books on bibliography by offering a cogent pathology of contemporary biblical exegesis, which manages to free itself from the quagmire of hermeneutical theory. Yet it goes beyond the task of diagnosis and, by appealing to Aquinas, illustrates the way exegesis can be done, and indeed has been done, when unencumbered by the conventions of contemporary hermeneutics which have in large part been underwritten by a linear-historical view of reality. This book marks a substantial step forward in the discussion about the nature of the bible and those devoted to reading it.

Mark McDowell, Aberdeen, Scotland

Ziel und Ende: Einweisung in die christliche Endzeiterwartung: „Der Herr ist nahe“

Reinhard Slenczka

Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2008, hb., Euro 39,80, 520 pp., ISBN 978-3-86540-054-3

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das umfangreiche Werk des Erlanger Professors für Systematische Theologie will mehr sein als eine klassische Eschatologie. Es will auf Sterben, Tod und auf die Endzeit vorbereiten. Slenczka, der auch neun Jahre an der Luther-Akademie in Riga (Lettland) unterrichtet hat, geht davon aus, dass es sich bei den neutestamentlichen eschatologischen Aussagen nicht nur um zeitgebundene Vorstellungen handelt. Vielmehr ist von kommenden Ereignissen die Rede, auf die die Bibel vorbereiten will. In Auseinandersetzung mit neueren Entwürfen der Eschatologie und klassischen Konzepten von Unsterblichkeit der Seele und Ewigkeit hat Slenczka sein Buch erarbeitet. Er hat mit seinem seelsorglichen Ansatz und seinen profunden Kenntnissen eine Untersuchung veröffentlicht, die wegen ihres schriftgemäßen Ansatzes in evangelikalen Kreisen weit verbreitet werden sollte.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage de Slenczka, professeur de théologie systématique à Erlangen, se veut plus qu'une eschatologie typique. Il veut aider à se préparer à la fin de vie, à la mort et aux fins dernières. Ce théologien, qui a aussi enseigné pendant neuf ans à l'université Luther de Riga en Lettonie, considère que les affirmations eschatologiques du Nouveau Testament ne se contentent pas d'énoncer des idées liées à leur époque, mais qu'elles visent à préparer le lecteur aux événements à venir. Il présente les approches récentes de l'eschatologie et les théories classiques sur l'immortalité de l'âme humaine et l'éternité. Grâce à son souci pastoral et son profond savoir, et en vertu de son approche biblique, cette étude mérite une large diffusion dans les milieux évangéliques.

SUMMARY

The comprehensive oeuvre of the Erlangen Professor of Systematic Theology intends to represent more than a typical eschatology. It seeks to prepare for dying, death and the eschatological times. Slenczka, who also taught theology for nine years at the Luther-Academy in Riga (Latvia), avows that the eschatological statements of the New Testament do not only embody temporary ideas, but also address future events for which the Bible aims to prepare the reader. Slenczka develops his book by discussing both recent approaches to eschatology and classic theories about the immortality of the soul and eternity. Thanks to his pastoral perspective and profound knowledge, he has published a study which, because of its scriptural approach, deserves extensive circulation in evangelical circles.

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„Eine neue Eschatologie“? – nein, gerade nicht bzw.

nicht nur, sondern Unterricht und Einübung in die christliche Erwartung des Endes der Welt und des eigenen Lebens: das möchte Reinhard Slenczka mit dieser umfangreichen Monographie bieten. Der Erlanger Professor für Systematische Theologie, der von 1996 bis 2005 im „Ruhestand“ als Rektor der Luther-Akademie in Riga (Lettland) amtierte und weiter lehrte, möchte mit seiner Abhandlung nicht für ein weiteres Buch auf den schon übervollen Regalbrettern der Eschatologie-Spezialisten sorgen. Er verfolgt vielmehr das eminent seelsorgliche Ziel, das auch die Johannesapokalypse kennzeichnet: Christen, die in biblisch geprägter Erwartung des Eschatons leben, zu stärken und zu unterrichten. Dass ihm dies gelingt, zeigt die Lektüre des Buchs, dessen anspruchsvoller Text sich – und das muss vorweggeschickt werden – an gebildete Laien und an Theologen richtet. Auch wenn Fachbegriffe erklärt und Zitate in heutigem Deutsch wiedergegeben werden, ist die Untersuchung nicht für jedes Gemeindeglied, das sich an „Endzeitfragen“ interessiert, geeignet.

Wer sich die Abhandlung vornimmt, erfährt dafür nicht nur vieles zu eschatologischen Themen, sondern wird auch grundsätzlich im Umgang mit theologischen Fragen orientiert und besonders über die Probleme der gegenwärtigen kritischen Schulwissenschaft aufgeklärt. Dies gilt besonders für den einführenden Teil des Werkes (13-35), der mit einem Gebet von Augustinus endet (36-41). In drei Grundsätzen erklärt der Verfasser knapp, welche Position er in der Lehre von der Heiligen Schrift als Wort des Dreieinigten Gottes, in der Lehre von der Taufe und von der Aufgabe der Theologie vertritt.

Das erste Kapitel („Worauf es ankommt“, 43-66) betrachtet die Grundlagen der Christusverkündigung und der mit Christus beginnenden Endzeit. Anschließend gibt der Verfasser einen kritischen Überblick über Grundlagen und Begriffe der Eschatologie sowie über 13 neuere Werke zum Thema (Kap. 2, 67-115, u.a. Asendorf, P. Brunner, Althaus, Moltmann, Beißer, Sauter und Marquardt). Entscheidendes Kriterium ist die Frage, ob der Inhalt eschatologischer Aussagen kommende Ereignisse oder nur Erfahrungen des menschlichen Bewusstseins betrifft und damit die Unterscheidung von Schöpfer und Geschöpf sowie Gottes Wort und Menschenwort (78, vgl. 115).

Das dritte Kapitel beschäftigt sich mit Tod und Auferstehung im Licht der Christusoffenbarung sowie sehr ausführlich mit dem Begriff der „Seele“, der Unsterblichkeit der Seele, Ganztod-Theorie und Auferstehung der Toten (117-216). Im nächsten Teil wird das Leben jenseits des Todes von okkulten, reinkarnatorischen und verwandten Vorstellungen abgegrenzt (Kap. 4, 217-267). Dieser Teil enthält auch eine eigentümliche und wenig problematisierte mediumistische Befragung der angeblichen Totengeister von Gerhard Bergmann und Rudolf Bultmann, bei der „Bultmann“ seine zu Lebzeiten geäußerte Kritik am Jenseitsglauben und am Spiritismus zurücknimmt (230-235).

Das fünfte Kapitel bildet mit dem Thema „Christli-

che Bereitung zum Sterben“ das zentrale Kapitel, das die seelsorgliche Ausrichtung des Buches zusammenfasst (269-315). Mit einer Fülle biblischer Bilder und anhand von Texten aus der Kirchengeschichte (Beda, Anselm, Luther, Melanchthon, Löhe und andere) wird hier aufgezeigt, wie sich Christen auf das Sterben vorbereiten können bzw. in früheren Zeiten vorbereitet haben. Dieser Abschnitt des Buches enthält viele kostbare Impulse für das geistliche Leben des Lesers.

Im 6. Kapitel („Zeit und Ewigkeit“, 317-373) wird auf dem Hintergrund philosophischer Konzepte von Zeit und Ewigkeit die Durchbrechung des geozentrischen zugunsten eines theozentrischen Zeitbegriffs gefordert. Wiederkunft Christi und Ende der Zeit sind auf der Grundlage von 2 Tim 3, Mk 13 (u. par.) und 1 Kor 15 zu entwickeln (Kap. 7, 375-438). Die Endzeit wird im NT „vor Augen gestellt als ein schrecklicher Zusammenbruch der ganzen von Gott geschaffenen und erhaltenen Welt“ (385). Das biblisch bezeugte Gericht Gottes am Jüngsten Tag steht im Gegensatz zur Allversöhnungslehre (Kap. 8, 439-484). Es ist eine Anfrage an alle Versuche, ein Namenschristentum zu rechtfertigen, bei dem die persönliche Anrufung Christi fehlt: „Diese Anrufung des Namens ist aber gerade das, was im Endgericht rettet“ (479). Die Erwartung der Endzeit geht über in ihre Erfüllung, wenn „Gott alles in allem“ sein wird (Kap. 9, 485-515).

Beim Vergleichen des Werkes mit gängigen und vergangenen pietistischen und evangelikalen Entwürfen der Eschatologie fällt die seelsorglich-tröstende Ausrichtung des Buches positiv auf. Inhaltlich verschieden von der evangelikalen Literatur ist der theologische Einsatz bei der synoptischen Apokalypse und den eschatologischen Aussagen der neutestamentlichen Briefe, weniger dagegen bei der Johannesoffenbarung selbst. Deren Hauptthemen wie Chiliasmus, Antichrist, Allversöhnung, Parusieverzögerung etc. werden zwar bearbeitet. Hingegen wird nicht die übliche Frage nach der Chronologie der in der Apk. geschilderten Endzeitereignisse gestellt. Auch die im amerikanischen Bereich üblichen Standardprobleme des Zeitpunkts von Entrückung und Tausendjährigem Reich (pre-, postmillennial etc.) werden nicht behandelt. – Dennoch ist mit diesem äußerst kenntnisreichen und quellenintensiv ausgearbeitetem Werk des konservativen lutherischen Professors eine Abhandlung veröffentlicht worden, die auch in evangelikalen Kreisen höchste Aufmerksamkeit verdient hat.

Jochen Eber, Schriesheim/Heidelberg, Deutschland

Jesus und das Judentum

Martin Hengel und Anna Maria Schwemer

Geschichte des frühen Christentums, Bd. 1.

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007, XXIV + 749 pp., € 99,-, Ln., ISBN 978-3-16-149359-1

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser umfangreiche Band ist der erste von vier geplanten Bänden zur „Geschichte des frühen Christentums“ bis ca. 200 nach Chr. Inhalt dieses Bandes ist vor allem Jesu Wirken; vorangestellt ist die Geschichte des Judentums in den Jahrzehnten vor und nach Jesus. Die Ergebnisse von Hengel und Schwemer sind teils konservativ (zum Beispiel akzeptieren sie die den Evangelien vorangestellten Verfasseramenen), teils nicht (so datieren sie zum Beispiel nur sieben Paulusbriefe, Mk sowie eventuell Jak und Hebr vor 70).

RÉSUMÉ

Ce volume est le premier d'une série de quatre sur l'histoire du christianisme primitif jusque vers la fin du II^e siècle. Il traite essentiellement de l'œuvre de Jésus. Il commence par retracer l'histoire du judaïsme dans les décennies qui ont précédé et suivi la vie terrestre de Jésus. Les conclusions sont pour certaines conservatrices (par exemple, la validité des noms d'auteurs cités dans les prologues des Évangiles est reconnue), d'autres reprennent les thèses critiques (sept lettres de Paul seulement sont datées d'avant 70, de même que l'Évangile de Marc et peut-être aussi l'épître de Jacques et l'épître aux Hébreux).

SUMMARY

This comprehensive volume is the first of four intended volumes about the "History of Early Christianity" until approximately 200 AD. The content of this volume concentrates, above all, on the work of Jesus. It begins with the history of Judaism in the decades before and after the earthly life of Jesus. The results of Hengel and Schwemer are partly conservative (e.g. they accept the names of the authors mentioned in the prologues of the gospels) and partly the opposite (e.g. they date only seven Pauline epistles before 70 AD together with Mark as well as possibly James and Hebrews).

* * * *

Dieser umfangreiche Band ist der erste von vier geplanten Bänden (erläutert in § 1) zur „Geschichte des frühen Christentums“, bis Tertullian und Klemens v. Alexandrien (also bis ca. 200). „Der vorliegende Band wird von beiden Autoren gemeinsam verantwortet“ (S.V). Wenn im Buch eine bestimmte Meinung geäußert wird, so durchwegs in Wir-Form. Das ist zu beachten, denn wenn ein berühmter Forscher (wie Hengel) mit einer nicht ebenso bekannten Forscherin (hier Schwemer, Professorin für NT an der Univ. Tübingen) zusammenarbeitet, neigen Leser dazu, das Ergebnis vorwiegend der berühmteren Person zuzuordnen. Das ist jedoch nicht korrekt, und ich möchte im Folgenden konse-

quent von *Hengel und Schwemer* (abgekürzt H-S) reden. Darüber hinaus werden im Vorwort die Namen von insgesamt neun – zumindest überwiegend theologisch ausgebildeten – Helfern genannt, u.a. für das Korrekturlesen. Tatsächlich fand ich kaum Druckfehler, allerdings manche Versehen (zum Beispiel wird für Kählers berühmtes Buch über den „sogenannten historischen Jesus und den geschichtlichen, biblischen Christus“ von 1892 auf S. 188 Fn. sowie S. XX ein falsches Erscheinungsjahr genannt) und Unstimmigkeiten (dazu unten mehr).

Inhalt dieses Bandes ist vor allem Jesu Wirken (diesem werden etwa 500 Seiten gewidmet); vorangestellt ist die Geschichte des Judentums von etwa 63 v.Chr. bis 73 n.Chr. (dafür werden mehr als 100 Seiten verwendet).

Wo sind H-S theologisch einzuordnen? Sie bezeichnen zwei andere Neutestamentler, nämlich Theodor Zahn und Adolf Schlatter, als „ganz konservativ“ (215). Demnach könnte man H-S als „gemäßigt konservativ“ bezeichnen. Konservativ sind sie insofern, als sie die wesentlichen ntl. Aussagelinien als historisch bewerten. Das wird bereits im Vorwort sichtbar, in der Bemerkung: „Den immer noch so beliebten ‚unmessianischen Jesus‘ hat es nie gegeben.“ Oder in der Meinung, „daß die Verfasserangaben aller Evangelien ernst zu nehmen sind“ (217). H-S teilen manchmal kleine Seitenhiebe auf Kollegen aus, so sprechen sie etwa vom „heute weithin überschätzten Thomasevangelium“ (197), oder sie führen die Meinung, Paulus kannte nur wenig Jesustradition, auf den „bei Theologen beliebten Mißbrauch des argumentum e silentio“ zurück (200). Damit in Verbindung präsentieren sie die zahlreichen Bezüge auf Jesustradition in den Paulusbriefen (§ 6.2). Andererseits unterscheiden sich H-S zum Bsp. in der Frage der Datierung der ntl. Schriften kaum vom – sicherlich nicht konservativen – mainstream der deutschen Theologie: *Vor 70* wurden bloß die sieben echten Paulusbriefe, das Markus-Evangelium und vielleicht der Jakobusbrief geschrieben (5). Danach erwähnen H-S jedoch beim Hebräerbrief die Möglichkeit seiner Abfassung schon vor 70 (11), die sie schließlich (204) sogar als wahrscheinlich bezeichnen. (Mehrere Sachverhalte werden im Verlauf des Buches mehrmals angesprochen, dabei kommt es zu inhaltlichen Wiederholungen, tw. aber auch zu abweichenden Darstellungen.)

Nun zu einigen Unstimmigkeiten. Das 15. Jahr von Kaiser Tiberius rechnen H-S mit 27/28 n.Chr. um (3, 346), andererseits verlegen sie auch die Sonnenfinsternis vom Nov. 29 n.Chr. in dieses 15. Jahr des Tiberius (211f). Bei der „Renovierung und Vergrößerung des Jerusalemer Tempels (20-19 v.Chr.)“ (59) bezieht sich die Zeitangabe wohl auf den Beginn dieses Bauprojektes des Herodes. Dagegen sagen H-S später: „Der von Herodes dem Großen ab 18 v.Chr. in prachtvoller Weise ausgebaut zweite Tempel... war das religiöse Zentrum des Judentums der damaligen Welt“ (558). Solche Unterschiede sind für den Leser verwirrend; falls jeweils etwas anderes gemeint ist, sollte das präzise dazugesagt

werden. Überhaupt wäre eine Erläuterung des Rechenganges günstig, so etwa in Bezug auf das Übertragen der Kaiserjahre auf unsere Zeitrechnung.

H-S meinen, „daß sich nach Johannes Jesu Wirken über drei Passafeste, das heißt über mehr als zwei Jahre, erstreckt.“ (343, ähnlich 238 oder 308.) Das in Joh 5,1 genannte Fest war nach H-S vermutlich das Laubhüttenfest (325). In Verbindung mit Jesu Angabe nach dem Gespräch mit der Samariterin in Joh 4,35: „noch vier Monate bis zur Ernte“ (d.h. dieses Gespräch fand etwa im Januar statt), ergibt sich, dass zwischen den beiden ersten bei Joh genannten Passafesten (Joh 2 und 6) ein weiteres lag. Somit ergibt sich nach Joh ein mehr als dreijähriges Wirken Jesu. H-S halten jedenfalls einem deutlich kürzeren Zeitraum für historisch: „Diese etwa ein bis eineinhalb Jahre der öffentlichen Wirksamkeit Jesu...“ (346). Dort meinen sie auch, eine zwei- bis dreijährige Wirkungszeit Jesu sei „schon aus diesem Grunde unwahrscheinlich“. Dabei ist nicht ganz klar, was „dieser Grund“ ist. Vermutlich folgender: H-S gehen davon aus, dass der Täufer sowie Jesus auf die „Machthaber so provozierend wirkten, daß man sie nicht allzu lange gewähren ließ“. Dass Jesus provokant auftrat, wird zutreffen, aber es ist spekulativ, die Dauer dieses „nicht allzu lange“ so genau festlegen zu wollen, und zu behaupten, dass es bis zur Hinrichtung keine zwei oder drei Jahre gedauert haben könne. Solche etwas vorschnell hingeworfenen Formulierungen trüben die Überzeugungskraft des Buches. Die Ausbreitung der christlichen Bewegung profitierte zweifellos vom „römischen Reichsfrieden“, aber dass es ohne diesen „keine Heidenmission gegeben hätte“ (174), ist zu apodiktisch formuliert. Diese Ausbreitung wird ja dann das Thema der folgenden Bände sein, aber auch im vorliegenden Band wird sie mehrmals angesprochenen. Dabei habe ich einige Vorbehalte. Die in Apg 21,20 genannte Zahl von *zehntausenden* „Judenchristen in Jerusalem“ sei nach H-S „sicher übertrieben“ (635). Aber erstens erwähnt Lukas Jerusalem hier nicht; Jakobus könnte mit seiner Angabe die Gesamtzahl aller damaligen Judenchristen gemeint haben – dann wäre diese Angabe wohl realistisch. (Außerdem meint das Wort „Myriaden“ ohnehin oft nicht exakt „Zehntausende“.) H-S behaupten, „daß das Urchristentum die ersten rund zwanzig Jahre fast ausschließlich auf Palästina und Syrien/Kilikien beschränkt war“ (24). Kurz davor nennen sie darüber hinaus auch „die Insel Zypern und angrenzende Gebiete Kleinasien“ sowie Rom (9). H-S beschränken ihren Blick somit auf jene Regionen, über die wir durch Tätigkeit sowie Briefe des Paulus informiert sind. Das ist eine quellenbedingt verständliche Einschränkung, aber manche Indizien weisen auf eine rasche Ausbreitung auch in anderen Regionen hin: Beim Pfingstfest wurden durch die Predigt des Petrus viele Juden und Proselyten gläubig (Apg 2,9-11), und sie werden nach einer Zeit der Vertiefung zurück in ihre Heimat gegangen sein, etwa nach Osten (Parther, Bewohner von Mesopotamien) und nach Süden (Ägypter). Dadurch kann es zu Gemeindebildungen gekom-

men sein. Im Zusammenhang mit seinen Spanienplänen legt Paulus dar, dass er im Osten des Römischen Reiches keine Gelegenheit für seine Pionier-Stadtmission mehr sieht (Röm 15,23). D.h. während Paulus in den Ländern um seine Heimat Kilikien gewirkt hatte (also nördlich von Palästina), hatten andere z.B. in Ägypten missioniert (sonst wäre es für Paulus naheliegend gewesen, dorthin zu gehen). Die Apg informiert uns anscheinend exemplarisch über die Arbeit vor allem des Missionsteams um Paulus. Solche Teams gab es aber sicher mehrere, und wenn es auch schwierig ist, deren Wirken örtlich und zeitlich genau festzulegen, so wäre es doch verfehlt zu meinen, dass die christliche Mission anfangs von Palästina aus lediglich in nördliche Richtung wirkte (sowie die Stadt Rom erreichte).

Wieweit man diesen Band (und die folgenden Bände) zur Hand nimmt, um sich dadurch die Entwicklung des Christentums aufschließen zu lassen, hängt wohl vor allem davon ab, wieweit man Grundentscheidungen von H-S teilt, etwa in Bezug auf die Datierung ntl. Schriften. In stilistischer Hinsicht kann ich den Ausführungen jedenfalls gut folgen, und ich bin beeindruckt von der Fülle der hier sorgfältig verarbeiteten Primär- und Sekundärliteratur.

Franz Graf-Stuhlhofer, Vienna, Austria

***All About Evil: Das Böse* Silke Seybold (ed.)**

Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2007, 211 pp., Hb., € 30,
- ISBN 978-3-8053-3780-9

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Sammelband zeigt die Inhalte aber auch den Wandel im Verständnis des Bösen von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart in verschiedenen Kulturen. Die interdisziplinären Beiträge fragen nach Wesen und Ursprung des Bösen und beschreiben die Versuche, sich vor dem Bösen zu schützen bzw. sich mit ihm zu arrangieren. Interessante Perspektiven für die Religionswissenschaft, die systematische und praktische Theologie sowie die Missiologie.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage collectif présente la conception du mal de diverses cultures depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à l'époque contemporaine, et l'évolution de cette conception au fil du temps. Faisant appel à plusieurs disciplines, les contributions posent la question de l'essence et de l'origine du mal et examinent divers moyens par lesquels l'humanité a cherché à s'en protéger. L'apport du livre est intéressant pour l'étude des religions, la théologie systématique, la théologie pratique et la missiologie.

SUMMARY

This collection demonstrates how various cultures from antiquity until the present era have perceived evil and how this perception has changed over time. The interdisciplinary contributions ask questions about the essence and

origin of evil and describe various attempts of mankind to protect themselves from it as a means of coming to terms with evil. This work includes interesting perspectives for the science of religions, systematic and practical theology as well as for missiology.

* * * *

Der vorliegende Band geht auf eine Ausstellung im Überseemuseum Bremen zurück. Er dokumentiert eine Spurensuche nach Ursprung und Wesen des Bösen in unterschiedlichen Kulturen und Zeiten: „Es zeigt sich, wie sehr sich mit dem Wandel der Gesellschaft auch das Verständnis des Bösen durch die Jahrhunderte verändert hat. Der zeitliche Bogen spannt sich vom Alten Ägypten bis in die Gothic-Subkultur unserer heutigen Zeit. Dabei zeigt sich auch, wie Menschen zu allen Zeiten versucht haben, sich vor den Mächten des Bösen zu schützen. Wie auch immer das Böse im Wandel der Geschichte aussah, die Menschen mussten einen Weg finden, damit zu leben – bis heute“ (Klappentext). Die umfangreicheren grundsätzlichen Artikel werden jeweils durch ein oder mehrere Beispiele von Konkretionen ergänzt. Der Band ist mit 115 teils großformatigen Farb- und 26 Schwarzweißabbildungen großzügig illustriert. Sein Inhalt wird hier nur selektiv wiedergegeben.

Nach der Einleitung (6-11, Einführung in die Thematik und in die einzelnen Beiträge) widmet sich der erste Teil dem Ursprung des Bösen. B. U. Schipper beginnt mit einem Überblick über „Das Böse in den Religionen“ (18-24, das Böse im Polytheismus – der Alte Orient, das Böse im Judentum, der eine Gott und das Böse – das Christentum, Iblis, der Teufel im Islam, Gut und Böse in den asiatischen Religionen, das Böse in der modernen Welt – der Kampf gegen das Böse, ergänzt von Beschreibungen des Sündenfalls und Rads des Lebens im Buddhismus von D. Klar). B. Luchesi schreibt über „Schrecklich und heilvoll: Furcht erregende Göttinnen in hinduistischen Religionen“ (30-37; ergänzt von „Kampf ‚Gut‘ gegen ‚Böse‘“ – Beispiel aus Thailand, A. Lüderwaldt).

B. Meyer beleuchtet abschließend die Thematik „Der Teufel und die einheimischen Götter“ (40-47). Sie beobachtet:

Die Ausbreitung des Christentums in alle Welt implizierte nicht nur die Bekehrung zum christlichen Gott, sondern auch die Bekanntschaft mit seinem dunklen Gegenspieler, dem Teufel. Während die Religionsforschung sich nachdrücklich mit einheimischen Gottes- und Jesusbildern beschäftigt hat, ist das Interesse an der Bedeutung des Teufels in Bekehrungsprozessen relative gering. Dies mag damit zusammenhängen, dass der Teufel für westliche Wissenschaftler, liberale Theologen eingeschlossen, schon lange seine Existenz eingebüßt hat (40).

Sie beschreibt das Teufelsbild der pietistisch geprägten Missionare und schildert an einem konkreten Beispiel, wie der Teufel zu den Ewe nach Südghana kam und welche Folgen diese Begegnung bis heute hat. Die

einheimische Religion wurde von den Missionaren – hier der Norddeutschen Mission Bremen – nicht nur bekämpft, sondern diabolisiert: „die Missionare und ihre einheimischen Helfer sprachen viel über den Teufel, den sie in ihren Predigten als Oberhaupt der traditionellen Götter anführten“. Ferner skizziert die Autorin das Teufelsbild der Bekehrten und die Folgen der Zerstörung magischer Schutzmittel: „Indirekt wurde durch diesen aggressiven Umgang mit den Objekten der Ewe-Religion deren Macht potenziert“ (44).

Die Figur des Teufels integrierte die den Ewe bekannten Götter als seine Diener in das christliche Universum. Die bisherige Religion erlangte so im Lichte des Christentums eine neue Bedeutung, büßte aber nichts von ihrer Realität und Macht ein. Da der Teufel auch im missionarischen Weltbild eine so wichtige Rolle spielte, ist es kein Wunder, dass dies umso mehr für die Ewe galt und die bisherige Religion durch ihn ein wichtiger Baustein ihres Christentums wurde... Über die Vorstellung des Teufels kann die einheimische Religion zwar diabolisiert, aber nicht entmachtet werden (46f).

Hier öffnen sich neue Perspektiven für Missionsgeschichte und Missionstheologie, denn Meyer notiert zurecht „... dass die wissenschaftliche Vernachlässigung des Teufelsbildes höchst problematisch ist. Eine nähere Beschäftigung mit der ‚dunklen Dimension des Christentums‘ ist für das Verstehen interreligiöser Begegnungen und der Genese lokaler Interpretationen unerlässlich“ (41).

Teil 2 gilt dem Gesicht des Bösen und enthält folgende Beiträge: I. Backmeister-Collacott, „Der durch die Hölle ging: Dantes Inferno in Bildern“ (54-61, die Hölle: Annäherungen an einen Ort, die Fiktion eines Dichters: Dantes Wanderung durch die Hölle, von Höllenforschern und -vermessern und Dante „reloaded“ die Megacity als Hölle des 21. Jh.; ergänzt von D. Deterts, „Hölle auf Bali“); W. Mey, „Das vielgesichtige Böse“ (64-71; ergänzt von D. Deterts, „Fürst der Finsternis und der Fasnacht“, W. Ahrndt, „Tod und Teufel“ in Mexiko, B. U. Schipper, „Der altägyptische Gott Seth“, A. V. Siebert, „Panischer Schrecken“, wie der griechische Gott Pan zum Inbegriff der Darstellung des Teufels wurde); P.-R. Becker, „Des Bösen wissenschaftliche Zähmung oder Die Macht des Wortes“ (80-87, Entzauberung der Natur im westlichen Kontext; ergänzt von D. Klar, „Drachen im Reich der Mitte“); P. Huber, „Der Verführer Mephistopheles im Wandel der Zeit“ (90-97; H. Hespens, „Verführerische Schönheit“, eine Fruchtbarkeitsgöttin in afro-brasilianischer Tradition); I. Gareis, „Hexen und Teufel in Lateinamerika“ (100-107, Hexerei in Amerika in präkolumbianischer und kolonialer Zeit, Dämonisierung der indigenen Götterwelt, Fusion europäischer und amerikanischer Vorstellungen; ergänzt von A. Lüderwaldt, „Eine Hexe aus Bali“); M. Steinhof, „Pflanzen und das Böse“ (110-17, Überblick über verschiedene Hexenpflanzen, Pflanzen für oder gegen das Böse, teuflische Pflanzennamen, religiös verteuflerte

Pflanzen; ergänzt I. Backmeister-Collacott, „Hexensabbat“); M. Krings, „Afrikanische Video-Vampire – Wiedergänger zwischen den Kulturen“ (120-27, mit Ergänzungen) und G. Klosinski, „Das Böse – Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrische Anmerkungen“ (132-39, mit Ergänzungen, u. a. zum Kaspertheater mit seinem ewigen Kampf Gut gegen Böse).

Der dritte Teil schildert den unterschiedlichen Umgang mit dem Bösen: S. Seybold, „Es schadet ja nicht, oder...?“ Schutz und Kraft durch Amulette“ (148-55; Ergänzung A. V. Siebert, „Das Übel mit Steinen bekämpfen“ – antike Gemmen als Amulette); C. Kocher Schmid, „Ambivalenz des Bösen: Zauberei in Papua New Guinea“ (160-67, Ergänzung D. Deterts, „Zauberpriester“); D. Brill, „Auf Tod und Teufel? Das ‚Böse‘ in der Gothic-Subkultur“ (170-77, guter Überblick und Analyse, Ergänzungen A. Schnell, „Teuflisch gut“ über N. Paganini, „Ein Date mit dem Teufel“, „Spiel mit dem Feuer“ über die Rolling Stones); W. Freund, „Gut, dass es das Böse gibt: Der Umgang der Werbung mit dem Bösen“ (184-91). Der Band endet mit einem „Epilog auf Erden“ von W. Holzwarth.

Dieser Sammelband gibt einen instruktiven Einblick in die Welt des Bösen aus soziologischer, religionsgeschichtlicher, religionsphänomenologischer und kulturanthropologischer Perspektive. Aus theologischer Sicht wäre zu wünschen, dass neben der Schilderung der unterschiedlichen Erscheinungsformen des Bösen auch nach dahinterliegenden, transzendenten Bezügen gefragt wird. Neben dem instruktiven Aufsatz über das Böse, bzw. dessen im Abendland traditioneller Symbolik in der Werbung, wäre noch stärker nach dem Bösen bzw. der Verteufelung in politischer und ökonomischer Ideologie und Propaganda zu fragen (Ansätze im Epilog und bei Schipper, S. 24f, zur Rhetorik amerikanischer Politiker nach dem 11. 9. 2001, man könnte auch auf Äußerungen von Politikern anderer Länder verweisen!). Schipper schreibt: „... so zeigt sich gerade an der Formel ‚vom Kampf gegen das Böse‘, wie stark religiöse Kategorien auch die moderne säkulare Welt prägen. Denn letztlich setzt die Rede vom Bösen bei der Welterfahrung des Menschen selbst an. Sie ist bezogen auf die menschliche Existenz und findet ihren Ausdruck im jeweiligen religiösen oder kulturellen System – und dies seit über 4500 Jahren“ (25). Zu fragen wäre auch, ob angesichts ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte bis in die Gegenwart die Exorzismen der jüdischen und christlichen Tradition nicht mehr Aufmerksamkeit verdient hätten. B. Meyer erwähnt J. C. Blumhardt knapp (41f). Weiter zu untersuchen wäre auch wie sich z. B. die nationalsozialistische antisemitische Propaganda gerade jüdischer und christlicher Vorstellungen bedient haben, um Juden (und Christen) zu dämonisieren und zu verteufeln.

Insgesamt legen die Autoren und Autorinnen einen anregenden Band vor, der gewollt oder ungewollt eine ganze Reihe Fragen aus verschiedenen theologischen Disziplinen aufwirft.

Christoph Stenschke, Wiedenest, Deutschland

Vater, sag mir ein Wort. Geistliche Begleitung in den Traditionen von Ost und West

Rudolf Prokschi und Marianne Schlosser,
Hrsg.

Würzburg: Echter 2007, 208 pp., € 16,80, ISBN 978-3-429-02942-5

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Geistliche Begleitung ist zur Zeit ein Thema, das nicht nur in der katholischen und in den orthodoxen, sondern auch in evangelischen Kirchen angesagt ist. Besonders bei den Ordensgemeinschaften findet sich ein reicher Erfahrungsschatz geistlicher Begleitung. Die Sammlung von elf Beiträgen hat ihren Ursprung in einer Tagung im Kloster Heiligenkreuz bei Wien. Sie vereint Beiträge katholischer und orthodoxer, aber leider nicht evangelischer Theologen. Geistliche Begleitung ist weder ein unfehlbares Allheilmittel noch ein unumgänglicher Weg des geistlichen Lebens für alle. Die Übergänge zwischen geistlicher Vaterschaft und Beichte und geistlicher Begleitung können fließend sein. Geistliche Begleitung ist auch nicht im herkömmlichen Sinn lehrbar. Ein Christ kann nicht von sich aus geistlicher Begleiter werden wollen. Wie jede individuelle Seelsorge muss sie – so die Kirchenväter – als Kunst aller Künste verstanden werden.

RÉSUMÉ

La direction spirituelle est devenue un sujet de réflexion courant non seulement dans l'Église catholique et les Églises orthodoxes, mais aussi dans le monde protestant. Les ordres religieux ont accumulé un abondant trésor de traditions et d'expériences dans ce domaine. Cet ouvrage reprend onze contributions apportées lors d'une conférence qui s'est tenue dans le couvent Heiligenkreuz, près de Vienne. Elles émanent de théologiens catholiques et orthodoxes et l'on peut regretter l'absence d'apport de protestants. La direction spirituelle n'est ni un remède universellement infaillible, ni un chemin de vie spirituelle nécessaire à tous. Il peut y avoir des transitions naturelles de la paternité spirituelle ou de la confession à la direction spirituelle. La direction spirituelle ne peut pas s'enseigner par les voies conventionnelles. Il n'est pas non plus possible à un chrétien de décider par lui-même de devenir un directeur spirituel. Tout comme les diverses manières d'exercer la cure d'âme, on doit, avec les pères de l'Église, considérer la direction spirituelle comme un art.

SUMMARY

At present, spiritual mentoring is a current topic not only in the Catholic church and the Orthodox churches, but also in Protestant ones. Especially religious orders store an abundant treasure of traditions and experiences with regard to spiritual mentoring. This collection of eleven contributions originates from a conference at a convent, Kloster Heiligenkreuz, near Vienna. It draws together contributions of Catholic and Orthodox theologians, but, unfortunately, not from Protestant scholars. Spiritual mentoring is neither an infallible universal remedy nor an inevitable way of spir-

itual life for everybody. There may be smooth transitions between spiritual fatherhood and confession and spiritual mentoring. Besides, spiritual mentoring cannot be taught in the conventional way. Nor is it possible for a Christian to decide by himself to become a spiritual mentor. Like each individual way of counselling, spiritual mentoring, according to the Church Fathers, needs to be appreciated as an art.

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Das Thema geistliche Begleitung hat gegenwärtig Hochkonjunktur. Das gilt gleichermaßen für Katholizismus und Protestantismus. In zunehmendem Maß suchen Menschen nach geistlicher Begleitung. Der vorliegende Band geht zurück auf ein Symposium im Kloster Heiligenkreuz bei Wien im November 2006. Es wurde ausgerichtet von Prof. Rudolf Prokschi, der dem Institut für Theologie und Geschichte des christlichen Ostens an der Katholisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Wien vorsteht, und Frau Prof. Marianne Schlosser, die ebendort das Institut für Theologie der Spiritualität leitet. Das Symposium hatte sich zum Ziel gesetzt, den Inhalt geistlicher Beileitung im Unterschied zu Beichte, Beratungsgespräch und den Aufgaben eines Novizenmeisters näher zu definieren.

Das Thema wurde in ökumenischer Perspektive angegangen. Auf diese Weise sollte ein Brückenschlag zwischen den Traditionen der Westkirche und denen des Ostens erfolgen. Diesen Brückenschlag gewährleisteten Vertreter der orthodoxen Kirche (Archimann Drit, Job Getcha, Prof. für Kirchengeschichte und Liturgie am Institut für Orthodoxe Theologie St. Serge in Paris), der koptischen Kirche (Bischof Mar Gabriel, Bischof der Koptisch-orthodoxen Kirche in Österreich) und der griechisch-katholischen Kirche von Ungarn (Atanaz Orosz, Hochschullehrer an der Griechisch-Katholischen Theologischen Hochschule St. Athanasius von Nyiregyhaza). Es fällt auf, dass im vorliegenden Buch die Neuentdeckung der geistlichen Begleitung im Raum des Protestantismus leider keine Berücksichtigung gefunden hat.

Ein zweiter Schwerpunkt des Tagungsbandes bildet das Gespräch zwischen Praktikern und Theoretikern der geistlichen Begleitung, wobei auch die theoretischen Beiträge von in geistlicher Begleitung Erfahrenen verfasst worden sind. Der Vorteil, dass Stimmen aus der Praxis unmittelbar zu Wort kommen, ist allerdings mit dem Nachteil erkauft, dass manche der aufgenommenen Beiträge mehr assoziativen Charakter besitzen.

Es kann in dieser Rezension nun nicht darum gehen, die elf Beiträge im Einzelnen darzustellen und zu würdigen. Stattdessen möchte ich exemplarisch auf vier Artikel eingehen und im Anschluss daran ein Resümee ziehen. Der Jesuit Andreas Schönfeld hat seinen Artikel mit „Grunddynamik geistlicher Begleitung. Integrativedialogische Spiritualität“ überschrieben. Dieser grundlegende Beitrag schreitet das ganze Feld der geistlichen Begleitung inhaltlich ab. Hervorheben möchte ich den Gedanken Schönfelds, dass geistliche Begleitung beim

Begleiter und beim Begleiteten ein mystisches Glaubensbewusstsein voraussetzt. Es geht darum, dem Begleiteten auf dem Hintergrund der eigenen aktuellen Glaubenserfahrung Wege des Glaubens heute zu eröffnen.

Einen wichtigen Punkt der geistlichen Begleitung scheint mir auch Bruno Rieder, Lehrer an der Hochschule für Deutsch, Philosophie und Religion und Novizenmeister seines Klosters, der Benediktinerabtei Disentis in der Schweiz, anzusprechen. Sein Artikel „Christus führe uns gemeinsam zum ewigen Leben. Erfahrungen als geistlicher Begleiter aus benediktinischer Sicht“ thematisiert die Erfahrung des Stillstands in der geistlichen Begleitung. Der Begleiter habe eine doppelte Funktion zu erfüllen, einerseits sei er Arzt, andererseits Hirte. Dabei müsse er sich jedoch immer bewusst sein, dass geistliches Wachstum im Sinne von Heilung der Lebenswunden nicht menschlich machbar sei. Es gehe für den Begleiter als Hirten vor allem darum, mit dem Begleiteten „in unerschöpflicher Geduld“ auszuhalten und ihn angesichts seiner Verletzungen zu trösten. Geistliche Begleitung darf also nicht verwechselt werden mit der Beseitigung aller Lebens- und Glaubensprobleme.

Ludger Ägidius Schulte, Prof. für Dogmatik und Dogmengeschichte an der Philosophisch-Theologischen Hochschule in Münster, hat einen Artikel unter der Überschrift „Der Sehnsucht nach Gott ein Gesicht geben. Wozu geistliche Begleitung?“ vorgelegt. In seinem Beitrag fragt Schulte grundsätzlich nach dem Wesen und dem Ziel geistlicher Begleitung. Entscheidende Voraussetzung sei dafür die christliche Anthropologie, die den Menschen als im Werden begriffen versteht. Dabei ist christliches Menschsein nicht anders als in Gemeinschaft mit Brüdern und Schwestern, also innerhalb der Kirche denkbar. Schulte entwickelt dann eine Typologie geistlicher Begleitung. Die erste Form richtet den Fokus auf die Grundlegung des geistlichen Lebens. In der zweiten Form der geistlichen Begleitung geht es um Wachstum in der Persönlichkeit und Glaubensentwicklung des Begleiteten. Die dritte Form der Begleitung sieht Schulte in der geistlichen Vaterschaft gegeben, die ihrem Wesen nach einzigartig und jede andere nachfolgende Begleitung ähnlicher Qualität ausschließt. Ziel der geistlichen Vaterschaft ist es, den Begleiteten zu einem selbstständigen geistlichen Leben, seinerseits zur Übernahme von geistlicher Vaterschaft zu führen. Schulte fragt schließlich nach Eigenschaften des geistlichen Begleiters. Entscheidend ist, dass der Begleiter selbst ein Leben der Umkehr führt. Wichtig ist weiter ein hohes Maß an Selbsterkenntnis. Überdies braucht der Begleiter seelische Kraft, um sich die Sorgen und Probleme des Begleiteten zu eigen machen zu können. Dabei zeichnet sich die geistliche Begleitung durch die Fähigkeit eines doppelten Hörens aus: Einerseits auf den zu Begleitenden und andererseits auf Gott hören zu können. Zur Geistlichen Begleitung gehöre schließlich auch die Fähigkeit, zu konfrontieren.

Im Artikel „Geistliche Begleitung als Novizenmeister“ von Maximilian Heim, der acht Jahre lang Novizenmeis-

ter im Kloster Heiligenkreuz war, wird erkennbar, dass die geistliche Begleitung im Raum des Katholizismus wesentlich aus der Regula Benedicti schöpft. Benedikt hat das Kloster als „Schule für den Dienst des Herrn“ definiert. Heim zeigt, dass sämtliche klösterlichen Lebensvollzüge – unter Einschluss sogar der räumlichen Beschaffenheiten der Klostergebäude – der geistlichen Begleitung der Mitglieder der Mönchsgemeinschaft dienen. Dabei steht im Zentrum des zisterziensischen Klosters die bernhardinische Christumystik. Entsprechend geht es für den geistlichen Begleiter darum, aus seiner Leidenschaft für Christus die Liebe zu den Menschen, die sich seiner geistlichen Begleitung anvertrauen, zu empfangen.

Der vorliegende Band gibt keine abschließenden Antworten. Man gewinnt den Eindruck, dass gerade in der orthodoxen Tradition die Unterschiede zwischen geistlicher Begleitung und geistlicher Vaterschaft und Beichte fließend sind. Aber auch in der westlichen Tradition lässt sich noch kein eindeutiges, für alle verbindliches Profil geistlicher Begleitung erkennen. Dabei scheint die Sehnsucht nach einem Guru bzw. das moderne Paradigma des coaching heute die geistliche Begleitung zu überformen. Zurecht hebt Marianne Schlosser in ihrem einführenden Beitrag hervor, dass geistliche Begleitung weder ein unfehlbares Allheilmittel noch ein unumgängliches Mittel des geistlichen Lebens für alle darstellt (S. 10). Geistlichen Begleitung sei auch nicht im herkömmlichen Sinn lehrbar. Wie jede individuelle Seelsorge müsse sie stattdessen als Kunst aller Künste (so die Aussage der Kirchenväter) verstanden werden. Ein Christ könne sich nie von sich aus zum geistlichen Begleiter bzw. zur geistlichen Begleiterin machen. In der Alten Kirche war es so, dass andere Christen diese Begabung bei besonderen Menschen erkannten. Trotz dieser Einsicht scheint mir wesentlich, das Gespräch über Wesen, Inhalt und Ziel der geistlichen Begleitung fortzuführen. Angesichts des Verlangens vieler moderner Menschen nach geistlicher Begleitung ist es unerlässlich, auch in theologischer Hinsicht weitere Klarheit über Chancen und Grenzen derselben zu gewinnen. Ein beachtlicher Baustein auf dem Weg dahin stellt der vorliegende Band dar.

Prof. Peter Zimmerling, Universität Leipzig, Deutschland

***Bibelkritik und Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift:
Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese und
Hermeneutik***

Marius Reiser

WUNT 217, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2007, IX + 420 pp., Ln., € 94,-, ISBN 978-3-16-149412-3

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Sammelband fasst Studien aus den Jahren 1999 bis 2006 zur Geschichte der Bibelauslegung und der Bibelwissenschaft und zu Grundfragen der Hermeneutik zusammen. Mit großem Sachverstand zeichnet Reiser die Entstehung und Merkmale historischer Bibelkritik nach. Unter Rückgriff auf die Allegorese der Kirchenväter, vor allem Origenes, setzt sich Reiser für eine symbolische Auslegung ein, um so die biblischen Texte als Buch der Kirche auszulegen und wieder fruchtbar zu machen sowie um die Bibelwissenschaften aus ihrer Dürre und Belanglosigkeit herauszuführen. Fazit: hervorragende Analysen, interessante Vorschläge, eine gute Ergänzung zur evangelikalen Beiträgen zur Hermeneutik.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage collectif reprend des études des années 1999 à 2006 sur l'histoire de l'interprétation biblique et des études académiques de la Bible, ainsi que sur les principes de bases de l'herméneutique. Avec une grande compétence, Reiser retrace les origines de la critique biblique et en expose les caractéristiques. Prenant en compte les approches allégoriques des pères de l'Église, et en particulier d'Origène, Reiser recommande une interprétation symbolique. Il cherche à interpréter de la sorte les textes bibliques comme étant Livre de l'Église pour leur rendre de la pertinence et pour délivrer les études de la Bible de la stérilité des approches critiques. Il offre ainsi des analyses excellentes, des suggestions intéressantes et apporte une contribution utile à l'herméneutique d'un point de vue évangélique.

SUMMARY

This collection comprises studies from the years 1999 to 2006 about the history of biblical interpretation and biblical studies as well as the basic subject matter of hermeneutics. Given his profound expertise, Reiser maps out the origins and characteristics of historical biblical criticism. By taking into account the allegorical approaches of the Church Fathers, above all Origen, Reiser insists on a symbolic interpretation. His aim is to elucidate in this way biblical texts as the Book of the Church and make them beneficial again as well as to bring biblical studies out of any sense of barrenness and irrelevance that has resulted from critical approaches. The result: excellent analyses, interesting suggestions, a helpful addition to evangelical contributions to hermeneutics.

* * *

Im vorliegenden Band legt der Mainzer katholische Neutestamentler Marius Reiser zwölf Aufsätze zur

Geschichte der Bibelauslegung und ihrer wissenschaftlichen Erforschung sowie zu Grundfragen der Hermeneutik vor. Während einige Beiträge weniger bekannte Aspekte katholischer Bibelwissenschaft beispielhaft beleuchten, fragen andere Beiträge nach Anknüpfungspunkten an der Väterexegese für heutige Bibelwissenschaft und geistliche Schriftlesung. R.s diesbezüglichen, gründlichen und anregenden Überlegungen sind Teil einer seit zwei Jahrzehnten an Bedeutung zunehmenden kleinen „Renaissance“ patristischer Exegese, die sich in vielen Einzeluntersuchungen, in neuen Textausgaben sowie in einigen Monographien- und Kommentarreihen niederschlägt.

R. will mit seinen Studien eruieren, wie und warum es in der Aufklärung zu einem einschneidenden Traditionsbruch in der biblischen Exegese kam und ob dieser Bruch wirklich irreparabel ist. Dabei untersucht er in Einzelstudien „wie sich der Wandel der Zeiten und Betrachtungsweisen auf die Auslegung biblischer Texte konkret ausgewirkt hat“. Dafür hat R. Texte und Fragen gewählt, die für das christliche Selbstverständnis grundlegend sind (Gen 22, Jes 7.14, Jes 53 und das Verständnis der biblischen Urgeschichte). In den direkt hermeneutisch orientierten Beiträgen bricht R. der mit dem Aufkommen der modernen Exegese in Verruf geratenen Methode der Allegorese eine Lanze: „Mit Hilfe des Begriffs der symbolischen Auslegung versuche ich diese Interpretationsweise zu verstehen und zu erneuern. Ich bin überzeugt, dass nur eine Verbindung von literaturwissenschaftlicher, historischer und theologischer Betrachtungsweise die Bibelexegese aus ihrer derzeitigen Wirrnis, Dürre und Belanglosigkeit führen kann“ (V). Die zehn bereits früher veröffentlichten Beiträge wurden durchgehend überarbeitet und teilweise stark erweitert.

Die „Einführung“ (1-38, bisher unveröffentlicht) gibt einen hervorragenden Überblick über die Geschichte der Exegese (Grundannahmen und die Heimat der Exegese, die Geschichte der Exegese im Spiegel ihrer Darstellungen, Motive und Umstände der Entwicklung, das Verhältnis von Kritik und historischer Forschung).

Die weiteren Aufsätze sind: „Bibel und Kirche: Eine Antwort an Ulrich Luz“ (39-61), „Geist und Buchstabe: Zur Situation der östlichen und der westlichen Exegese“ (63-80, Darstellung und Analyse des Sammelbandes von J. D. G. Dunn et al. (Hrsg.), *Auslegung der Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Perspektive*, WUNT 130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000; „Biblische Metaphorik und Symbolik“ (81-98; Johannes der Täufer, Jesus und Paulus, mythische und apokalyptische Schilderungen, Vorstellung der Kategorie des symbolischen Erzählens, 88-98).

Im Aufsatz „Biblische und nachbiblische Allegorese“ (99-118) beschreibt R. biblische Vorstufen der Allegorese, das Verhältnis von Typologie und Allegorese, Allegorese der Jesusüberlieferung in Joh 2.17-22 sowie die Allegorese der Kirchenväter und will zu einer sachgemäßen Anwendung der Allegorese anleiten. Dabei notiert R., dass die Lehre von der Inspiration der Schrift

konsequent zur Allegorese geführt hat und ihre inhaltliche Voraussetzung ist: „Nach Auffassung der Väter ist es der Heilige Geist, der die Schrift zu einer Einheit gemacht hat und die Bezüge und Zusammenhänge geschaffen hat, die durch Allegorese entdeckt werden können. Deshalb benötigt natürlich auch der Exeget seinerseits diesen Heiligen Geist, da ihm kein anderer diese Bezüge und Zusammenhänge entdecken kann“ (116). Dem gleichen Thema gilt auch der Beitrag „Allegorese und Metaphorik: Vorüberlegungen zu einer Erneuerung der Väterhermeneutik“ (119-152, u. a. Analyse der Auslegung von Joh 2.13 durch Origenes – 123-130, Bezug von AT und NT, das Wesen der Allegorese, die Frage mehrerer Schriftsinne, Grundsätze für Allegorese und Überlegungen zur symbolischen Deutung).

Dann untersucht R. „Die Opferung Isaaks im Genesiskommentar des Jesuiten Benito Perera (1535-1610)“ (153-184), „Richard Simons biblische Hermeneutik“ (185-217, bisher unveröffentlicht) und detailliert „Die Prinzipien der biblischen Hermeneutik und ihr Wandel unter dem Einfluss der Aufklärung“ (219-275). Darin schildert R. die Geschichte der kritischen Exegese (kritische Erforschung des NT in der Sicht Richard Simons sowie katholische und protestantische Bibelkritik bis zur Mitte des 18. Jh.), die Wende durch die Aufklärung und ihre Folgen bzw. hermeneutischen Prinzipien (im instruktiven Vergleich zwischen der Zeit vor, während und nach der Aufklärung).

Dem folgen „Aufruhr um Isenbiehl oder: Was hat Jes 7,14 mit Jesus und Maria zu tun?“ (277-330, mit ausführlicher Darstellung der Auslegungsgeschichte, 294-318, bisher unveröffentlicht); „Drei Präfigurationen Jesu: Jesajas Gottesknecht, Platons Gerechter und der Gottessohn im Buch der Weisheit“ (331-53); „Wahrheit und literarische Arten der biblischen Erzählung“ (355-371; anhand von Thesen des Jesuiten F. von Hummelauer, Rückgriff auf Origenes und Augustinus, „Wir müssen es wieder neu lernen, die biblischen Erzählungen, ob sie nun tatsächlich Geschehenes wiedergeben oder nicht, als *symbolische Erzählungen* zu begreifen, die auf eine Wahrheit hinweisen, die niemals obsolet werden darf. Diesen symbolischen Sinn und damit die von den Texten symbolisierte Wahrheit genauer herauszuarbeiten, müsste wieder zu unserer vornehmsten Aufgabe werden“ (371). Zu fragen wäre, wie R. seine symbolische Auslegung genau von (tiefen)psychologischen Ansätzen abgrenzt.

Abschließend fragt R.: „Hat die spirituelle Exegese eine eigene Methode?“ (373-388, die Methode ist die Allegorese). R. bietet eine gute Analyse und Kritik gegenwärtiger Hermeneutik und ihres oft bewussten Verzichts darauf, die Gegenwartsrelevanz biblischer Texte zu reflektieren, diskutiert das Verhältnis zwischen Hermeneutik und Methoden und schließt mit dem Beispiel des verdorrten Feigenbaums aus Mk 11.12-14 (u. a. mit Bezug auf Origenes und A. von Droste-Hülshoff). Der Band endet mit Schriftstellen-, Personen- und Sachregister, die erlauben, den Band auch als Nachschlage-

werk zur Bibelauslegung zu verwenden.

Evangelikale Leser werden in Vielem R.s sachkundiger und scharfer Analyse der modernen Exegese und ihrer Aporien zustimmen können. Auch wenn man seinem Ansatz der Erneuerung allegorischer Auslegung mit einer ganzen Reihe von Anfragen begegnen wird, wird man R. zustimmen, dass die Auslegung eines inspirierten Textes sich nicht ausschließlich auf den Literal-sinn beschränken kann – schon gar nicht angesichts der Art und Weise, wie die ntl. Autoren das AT interpretiert haben. R. stellt in den Bibelwissenschaften kaum mehr gestellte, aber brisante Fragen, bietet interessante Perspektiven und hat seine Alternativen gründlich reflektiert. Damit ist er ein herausfordernder Gesprächspartner. Insgesamt ein anregender Band, der große Linien mit instruktiven Detailblicken verbindet, Wissenschaftsgeschichte aufarbeitet und kritisch analysiert, immer wieder den vermeintlichen Konsens hinterfragt und dabei durchweg die Bedeutung der Bibel als Buch der Kirche im Blick hat. Der Band ist eine anspruchsvolle Einführung in den Geschichte der Bibelauslegung, in Grundfragen der Hermeneutik sowie in die Grundaxiome historisch-kritischer Exegese, aber auch in Ansätze zu ihrer Überwindung (gerade die „Einführung“, 1-38, und der Aufsatz „Die Prinzipien der biblischen Hermeneutik und ihr Wandel unter dem Einfluss der Aufklärung“, 219-275). Er bietet damit eine gute Ergänzung zu deutschen und englischen Darstellungen aus evangelikaler Feder.

R.s Anfragen sind an vielen Stellen so überzeugend wie unkonventionell und erfrischend, zum Beispiel: „Ich sehe keinen vernünftigen Grund, warum ich die Allmacht Gottes für beschränkt halten soll, nur um mit E. Troeltsch an die ‚Allmacht der Analogie‘ und die ‚prinzipielle Gleichartigkeit alles historischen Geschehens‘ glauben zu können“ (77) oder: „Die mannigfach und lange vorbereitete Wende in der exegetischen Forschung des 18. Jh. kam aus berechtigtem Anliegen. Aber die berechtigten Anliegen verbanden sich mit Ideen und Interessen, die der Sache wenig dienlich waren. So führte die Entwicklung dazu, dass nicht selten das Kind mit dem Bad ausgeschüttet wurde. Das ausgeschüttete Kind jedoch erwies sich immer wieder als das Christkind“ (273).

Christoph Stenschke, Bergneustadt, Germany

Der Orient für Christus: Johannes Lepsius – Biographie und Missiologie

Andreas Baumann

TVG 546, Kirchengeschichtliche Monographien
(KGM) 15

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Begründer der Deutschen Orient-Mission Johannes Lepsius (1858-1926) ist heute leider weitgehend unbekannt, obwohl er in seiner Zeit einer der bekanntesten Führungspersönlichkeiten in Missionskreisen war. Besonders hat er sich unauslöschlich in die Erinnerung des christlichen armenischen Volkes eingepägt, weil er deutlich gegen den Genozid an den Armeniern im Hintergrund des 1. Weltkrieges seine Stimme erhob. Baumann stellt den Lebenslauf von Lepsius ausführlich dar, arbeitet seine zentralen theologischen Grundlagen heraus und fasst etwa in der Hälfte der in Südafrika eingereichten Dissertation Lepsius missionarisches Anliegen in der Moslemmission und sein missiologisches Erbe zusammen. Die Untersuchung informiert gut verständlich und gründlich mit ausführlichen Zitaten aus Originaltexten jeden, den die Förderung des Christentums im Orient interessiert.

RÉSUMÉ

Le fondateur de la Mission Orientale Allemande, Johannes Lepsius (1858-1926), reconnu à son époque comme l'un des plus importants chefs de file dans les cercles missionnaires, a malheureusement sombré dans l'oubli. Il a pourtant laissé une marque indélébile dans la mémoire des communautés chrétiennes arméniennes pour ses protestations contre le génocide du peuple arménien à la fin de la première guerre mondiale. Baumann nous livre une biographie détaillée de Lepsius et présente ses convictions théologiques centrales. La moitié de cette thèse de doctorat soutenue en Afrique du Sud est consacrée à l'intérêt de Lepsius pour la mission parmi les musulmans et à sa contribution missiologique. L'ouvrage apporte des informations claires et complètes, en s'appuyant sur des citations détaillées de textes originaux. Il sera utile à tous ceux que la promotion du christianisme en Orient intéresse.

SUMMARY

The founder of the German Oriental Mission Johannes Lepsius (1858-1926) has unfortunately become largely unknown nowadays, although during his era he was numbered among the most famous leaders in missionary circles. He left an indelible impression in the memory of the Christian Armenian communities especially because he raised his voice audibly against the genocide of the Armenian people towards the end of the First World War. Baumann presents a detailed biography of Lepsius drawing out his central theological foundations. In almost half of his dissertation, which Baumann submitted in South Africa, he summarizes Lepsius' missionary concerns in Muslim missions and his missiological legacy. Based upon detailed

quotations from original texts, the review enlightens, in a comprehensible and comprehensive way, anybody who is interested in promoting Christendom in the Orient.

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Andreas Baumann leitet den Christlichen Hilfsbund im Orient e. V. Seine Untersuchung zum Lebenswerk von Johannes Lepsius (1858-1926) hat er 2006 an im Fachbereich Missiologie an der University of South Africa in Pretoria eingereicht. Speziell interessierte Baumann die Missionsarbeit, die Lepsius und die Deutsche Orient-Mission unter Muslimen betrieben haben. Lepsius ist bis heute vor allem noch beim Volk der Armenier bekannt, auf dessen Schicksal er im Verlauf des Zweiten Weltkriegs und danach aufmerksam gemacht hat.

Die materialreiche Forschungsarbeit gliedert sich in sechs Teile und die umfangreiche Bibliographie (511-566). Die Einleitung grenzt die Aufgabenstellung ab, nennt die zugrundegelegten Quellen und gibt einen Überblick über die Lepsius-Forschung (Kap. 1; 1-19). Das zweite Kapitel präsentiert sehr ausführlich Lepsius' Lebenslauf (20-132). Die Stationen Erlangen und Greifswald in seinem Lebenslauf zeigen, dass er theologisch zwar eher dem Pietismus als dem liberalen Lager zuzurechnen ist, am besten jedoch der konservativen „positiven Theologie“ um die Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert zugeordnet werden kann. Die Gründung der Deutschen Orient-Mission 1895 fiel in die Zeit, in der es schon zu ersten Verfolgungen der armenischen Christen im Orient kam (40f). Lepsius Verhältnis zur neupietistischen Gemeinschaftsbewegung war nicht spannungsfrei (58f, vgl. mit einigen Wiederholungen 371f; 383f), deshalb zählte er zusammen mit anderen „Positiven“ zu den Begründern der Eisenacher Konferenzen (65f) und kann auch ein gewisses Maß an liberaler Dogmenkritik in sein Denken integrieren (401f, vgl. 327f). Der systematische Vernichtung des armenischen Volkes durch die Türkei im Hintergrund des Ersten Weltkriegs versuchte Lepsius durch Öffentlichkeitsarbeit zu begegnen (96f).

Den Grundlagen von Lepsius' theologischem Denken widmet sich der dritte Teil der Arbeit (Kap. 3; 133-247). Das Reich Gottes ist Zentralbegriff von Lepsius' Theologie (152). Er hatte sehr optimistische Vorstellungen von der Entwicklung des Reiches Gottes bis hin zur Parusie Christi, der der Sieg des Christentums vorangehen sollte (163). So kann er dann auch etwas unbedarft von „evangelischer Weltherrschaft Christi“ oder einer christlichen Weltkultur, die von Deutschen geprägt würde, reden (192f). Die Wiedergeburt des Einzelnen ist nur ein Teilziel der angestrebten Erweckung der Völker (223f). Evangelisierung und Christianisierung sind Ziel der Missionsarbeit, bis es keine anderen Religionen mehr gibt (229f).

Die Hälfte des Textes von Baumanns Dissertation machen die drei folgenden Kapitel über missiologische Fragestellungen aus (Kap. 4-6; 248-510). Im Islam sieht Lepsius zwei Grundkräfte am Werk; Das Gesetz und die Mystik (255). Grundlegend für die Missionsarbeit unter Muslimen sind Diakonie, Verkündigung, vorbereitende Forschung und Literaturarbeit (309f). Es gibt keine einheitlich zu empfehlende Missionsmethode; diese wird vielmehr durch das Vorgehen vor Ort bestimmt (334). Die Wiedergeburt des Orients, nicht die Bekehrung Einzelner ist Missionsziel (356). Lepsius' missiologisches Erbe (Kap. 6; 460-510) lokalisiert Baumann vor allem in dessen universaler Reich-Gottes-Perspektive, die den Missionsauftrag Christi auch unter den vom Islam geprägten Völkern verwirklicht sehen will (vgl. 460-471).

Im Gesamten von Baumanns Arbeit stellt sich Lepsius als ein Grenzgänger zwischen Pietismus und Volkskirchlichkeit dar, dessen Theologie sich einerseits kritischen Anfragen stellen muss, von dem man andererseits jedoch viel lernen kann. Dies belegt Baumanns manchmal an einer Überfülle von ausführlichen Zitaten in vorzüglicher Weise.

Jochen Eber, Schriesheim bei Heidelberg, Deutschland

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Editorial

Pieter J. Lalleman

In the editorial of the previous issue, Dr Jamie Grant already told you that his tenure as editor of the *European Journal of Theology* would be cut short as his employer needed more of his time. He has since been appointed Vice-Principal of Highland Theological College, Dingwall, Scotland, and we wish him God's blessing for the role. We are glad that Jamie remains on the Editorial Board of the *Journal*.

I am glad to announce that the role of review editor, which Jamie had before he became the general editor, has been filled again. Dr Pekka Pitkanen, originally from Finland but working in England, has agreed to take this job on. Pekka is Senior Lecturer and Course Leader of the Open Theological College at the University of Gloucestershire. Books for review can be sent to Pekka at the address

Francis Close Hall
Swindon Road
Cheltenham GL50 4AZ
UK

The situation now is that *EJT* is being put together by two non-Brits who live and work in England. It is our sincere hope that we can attract more contributions from east, south, north and central Europe so that the journal will once again be a real forum for all of Europe.

Exceptionally, all articles in the present issue have one theme. They were first delivered as papers at the Annual Book Colloquium of the Kirby Laing

Institute for Christian Ethics (KLICE), held at Tyndale House, Cambridge in September 2008. Each year KLICE selects a recent book which breaks new ground in the field of Christian ethics and invites the author to Cambridge to participate in a day of discussion, hearing and responding to papers from several scholars in the field. Thirty participants attended the colloquium. Subsequently, Simon Woodman prepared a summary of the book to aid readers of the *European Journal of Theology* who are so far unfamiliar with the book. Major editorial work was undertaken by Dr Jonathan Chaplin, the Director of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics at Tyndale House and we are grateful to him.

It has come to our attention that an index of past issues of *EJT* and some full text articles have been put online by Rob Bradshaw at http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_european-journal-theology_01.php. This is a helpful way of making sure that the good things of the past will be remembered and indeed read and used again. The entire website www.biblicalstudies.org.uk can be commended as a great resource for finding evangelical material on the Bible and the Church. Especially in times of economic crisis, intelligent use of the internet can be a great help to teachers, pastors and students who would struggle to buy expensive books.

Let me end with an apology to Dr Lydia Jaeger. In issue 17.2 (2008), her name was accidentally spelt as Jäger. We regret the mistake.

The next conference of the **Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians** (FEET) will be held in Woltersdorf (Berlin) on 20-24 August 2010. The theme is *Evangelical Theological Interpretation within Contemporary European Culture(s)*. Among the speakers will be professors Howard Marshall and Henri Blocher.

Papers are expected on issues such as *Evangelicalism and the challenge of European cultural change*; *Revelation, truth, authority and worship in postmodern and pluralistic Europe*; *The changing face of ethics: An evangelical theological framework* and *Reaching Europe: evangelical challenges in contemporary missiology*. Mark these dates in your diaries so you can attend this truly pan-European meeting!

PATERNOSTER BIBLICAL MONOGRAPHS

Joseph Wise and Otherwise: The Intersection of Covenant and Wisdom in Genesis 37-50

Lindsay Wilson

This book offers a careful literary reading of Genesis 37–50 that argues that the Joseph story contains both strong covenant themes and many wisdom-like elements. The author examines how these ‘wisdom-like elements’ relate to the story as a whole. Chapter 37 establishes that God will cause Joseph to rise to prominence. The intriguing story of Tamar in chapter 38 is seen as a kind of microcosm of the entire Joseph story, with Tamar securing life, justice and reconciliation through her wise initiatives, leading ultimately to the preservation of the line of promise. Joseph’s public use of wisdom is considered in chapters 39–41, where he uses power successfully and with discernment. Joseph’s private use of wisdom occupies chapters 42–45, as Joseph brings about change in his brothers and extends forgiveness to them. Chapters 46–50 complete the story by weaving the concerns of the previous chapters into the fabric of God’s purposes for his covenant people.

Lindsay Wilson is Vice Principal and Lecturer in Old Testament at Ridley College, University of Melbourne, Australia.

978-1-84227-140-7 / 229x152mm / 350pp / £24.99

YHWH, Pharaoh and Moses Explaining God’s Actions in the Exodus Plagues

William A. Ford

The story of the Exodus from Egypt is of fundamental importance, both in the Old Testament and beyond. However, it also contains issues that are theologically problematic for readers, especially concerning the actions of God. Why does God send a series of plagues on Egypt? How do we understand the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart? What do the answers to these questions say about the character of God? This book addresses these questions, taking a narrative theological approach, reading the story as story. The picture that emerges is of God as responsive, speaking and acting to challenge the hearer to make the appropriate response to him.

William A. Ford studied at Oxford before completing his doctorate at Durham University

978-1-84227-420-0 / 229x152mm / 300pp (est.) / £19.99 (est.)

On the Road Encounters in Luke-Acts Hellenistic Mimesis and Luke’s Theology of the Way

Octavian D. Baban

Baban argues on theological and literary grounds that Luke’s on-the-road encounters, especially those belonging to the post-Easter period, are part of his complex theology of ‘the Way’. Jesus’ teaching and that of the apostles is presented by Luke as a challenging answer to the Hellenistic reader’s thirst for adventure, good literature, and existential paradigms.

Octavian D. Baban is New Testament and New Testament Greek Lecturer at the Bucharest State University and at the Baptist Theological Institute, Bucharest, Romania.

978-1-84227-253-4 / 229x152mm / 350pp / £24.99

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‘An alien in the land’: A summary of *Singing the Ethos of God* by Brian Brock¹

Simon Woodman

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Zusammenfassung des Buches *Singing the Ethos of God* von Brian Brock zeigt, wie Brock versucht, seine Leser auf eine „Reise in unbekanntes Land“ mitzunehmen, das seltsame Land von Schrift und Ethik. Das Buch trägt den subversiven Untertitel „On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture“ („Zum Ort der christlichen Ethik in der Schrift“), eine bewusste Umkehrung der vertrauten Frage nach dem Ort der Schrift in der christlichen Ethik. Statt wieder einmal zu fragen, wie die Schrift Ethik informieren kann, versucht Brooks, Ethik innerhalb der Begegnung zwischen Gott und Mensch zu verorten, welche die Schrift hervorruft. Er behauptet, ethische Imperative tauchten in der Gemeinschaft des Glaubens beim „Singen“ der Schrift durch die gemeinschaftliche Artikulation der Psalmen auf, da das Ethos Gottes dadurch in der Gemeinschaft vergegenwärtigt wird, dass das Volk Gottes die Schrift singt.

Für Brock stellt sich die Sache folgendermaßen da: Während Menschen sowohl der Schrift als auch Gott als etwas „Fremdem“ begegnen könnten, beginnt die Gemeinschaft bei der Vereinigung ihrer Stimmen mit den Stimmen der Schrift, die Sprache des Königreiches Gottes zu lernen, sammelt Erfahrung in ihren Gewohnheiten und ihrer Grammatik und wird dadurch transformiert, da ihr eigenes Ethos mit dem Ethos der Schrift in Einklang gebracht wird. Brock bezieht die Metapher von Bonhoeffer: Die Kirche ist ein Chor, der eine unbekannte Melodie einübt, und die anarchische Kakophonie wird nur durch Wiederholung und ständige Auseinandersetzung in eine transformierende Harmonie verwandelt. Auf diese Weise untersucht er die Frage, was es bedeutet, subjektiv in die Story der Schrift einzutauchen, eben durch das Singen der Psalmen, um daraus durch die Begegnung mit dem unbekannten Anderen wieder aufzutauchen, dem man dort begegnet ist. Christliche Ethik wird dadurch zum konstruktiven Abgleich der Gläubigen mit dem Ethos Gottes, wie es in der Schrift offenbart ist.

Zeitgenössische Christen haben sich von der Schrift

als einer moralischen und ethischen Kraft entfremdet, weil sie sie zu oft auf ein Studienobjekt für Gebiete wie Kirchengeschichte, Bibelwissenschaften und philosophische Ethik reduziert haben. Im Gegensatz dazu bietet Brock einen Ansatz zur Schrift an, der eine *Moraltheologie* erzeugt, weil er die treuen Leser einlädt, ihre Entfremdung von der Schrift dadurch anzugehen, dass sie ihre Sprache und Redewendungen lernen, dass sie durch die anbetende Begegnung innerhalb der Grenzen der Schrift heimisch werden und dass sie eine wachsende Vertrautheit zulassen, die darin resultiert, eine ursprüngliche und gelebte Beziehung mit dem Text als Schrift zu gestalten. So wird die Bibel zu einem „transformierenden Text“, und diejenigen, die sich entscheiden, als Fremde in ihrem seltsamen Land zu leben, entdecken „wundersame Dinge“ im Gesetz, in den Geboten und Ordnungen Gottes.

Der Artikel fasst den Argumentationsgang von Brocks Buch durch seine drei Teile hindurch zusammen. Der erste Teil gibt einen Überblick über gegenwärtige Ansätze zur Rolle der Bibel in der christlichen Ethik und stellt die Frage: „Wie lernen wir, die Bibel ethisch zu lesen?“ In den ersten fünf Kapiteln diskutiert Brock führende gegenwärtige Ansätze: hermeneutisch, kommunitär, biblisch-ethisch, biblisch-theologisch und exegetisch-theologisch (hier ist Bonhoeffers Leseweise der Psalmen das Hauptbeispiel). Der zweite Teil bietet den Lesern eine Gelegenheit, selbst in die Moraltheologien von Augustinus (Kapitel 6) und Luther (Kapitel 7) einzutauchen; hier wird die Frage gestellt: „Wie können wir anfangen, in die Fremdheit der Story Gottes einzutauchen?“ Der dritte Teil positioniert christliche Ethik *innerhalb* der Schrift und fragt: „Was passiert, wenn Gläubige lernen, das „Ethos Gottes“ zu singen?“ Kapitel 8 tut das, indem es das Konzept einer „ethischen Exegese“ vertieft untersucht, und Kapitel 9 erreicht dies, indem es demonstriert, was dieser bestimmte Ansatz in der Praxis bedeutet. Das geschieht durch ausführliche Anwendung von „ethischer Exegese“, besonders in Bezug auf Psalm 130 und 104.

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RÉSUMÉ

Ce résumé du livre de Brian Brock intitulé *Singing the Ethos of God* (« Chanter l'ethos de Dieu ») montre comment l'auteur emmène ses lecteurs « en voyage en pays étranger », le pays étrange de l'Écriture et de l'éthique. Il a donné à ce livre un titre subversif : « Du rôle de l'éthique chrétienne dans l'Écriture », qui renverse délibérément les termes de la question plus courante du rôle de l'Écriture dans l'éthique chrétienne. Au lieu de se demander comment l'Écriture peut être utilisée pour bâtir une éthique, Brock cherche à déterminer quelle place tient l'éthique dans la rencontre entre Dieu et l'homme que l'Écriture produit. Il considère que les impératifs éthiques apparaissent alors que la communauté de la foi chante les psaumes, car c'est lorsque le peuple de Dieu chante l'Écriture que l'ethos divin se trouve réalisée en son sein.

Bien que l'Écriture et Dieu puissent être rencontrés comme étrangers au départ, c'est alors que la communauté joint sa voix à celle de l'Écriture qu'elle commence à apprendre la langue du royaume de Dieu et à se familiariser avec ses coutumes et sa grammaire. Elle est ainsi transformée par la conformité de son ethos à celui de l'Écriture. Brock reprend à Bonhoeffer la métaphore suivante : l'Église est une chorale qui apprend à chanter une mélodie dont elle n'est pas familière, et c'est par la répétition continue que la cacophonie anarchique se change en harmonie. Il examine donc comment on entre subjectivement dans l'histoire scripturaire, par le chant des Psaumes, pour ressortir transformé par la rencontre avec l'Autre mal connu que l'on rencontre ainsi. L'éthique chrétienne devient ainsi une façon pour le peuple de la foi de se conformer à l'ethos de Dieu révélé dans les Écritures.

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ABSTRACT

This summary of Brian Brock's book *Singing the Ethos of God* shows how Brock seeks to take his readers on a 'journey to a foreign land', the strange land of Scripture and ethics. The book is subversively subtitled 'On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture', a deliberate reversal of a more familiar question regarding the place of Scripture in Christian ethics. Instead of asking once again the question of how Scripture can speak to ethics, Brock seeks rather to locate ethics within the divine-human encounter which Scripture engenders. He claims that ethical imperatives emerge as the community of faith engages in the 'singing' of Scripture through the communal articulation of the Psalms, because it is as the people of God sing Scripture that the ethos of God is actualised amongst them.

For Brock, while both Scripture and God may initially be encountered as 'foreign', it is as the community joins its voices with those of Scripture that they begin to learn the language of the kingdom of God, becoming skilled

in its customs and grammar, and so being transformed as their own ethos becomes synchronized with the ethos of Scripture. Brock draws the metaphor from Bonhoeffer: the church is a choir learning to sing an unfamiliar melody, and it is only through repetition and continual engagement that anarchic cacophony turns to transformative harmony. In this way, he explores what it means to enter subjectively into the story of Scripture, through the singing of the Psalms, in such a way as to emerge transformed by the encounter with the unfamiliar Other who is met there. Christian ethics thus becomes the constructive alignment of the people of faith with the ethos of God as revealed in Scripture.

Cet article résume les trois parties du développement de Brock. La première présente un survol des approches contemporaines du rôle de la Bible dans l'éthique chrétienne, en posant la question de la manière dont nous apprenons à lire la Bible d'un point de vue éthique : l'approche herméneutique, l'approche communautaire, celles de l'éthique biblique, de la théologie biblique et de la théologie exégétique (notamment chez Bonhoeffer). La deuxième partie immerge le lecteur dans la théologie morale de St Augustin et dans celle de Luther, en posant la question de savoir comment nous pouvons commencer à pénétrer dans ce monde étranger de l'histoire de Dieu. La troisième montre la place que tient l'éthique dans l'Écriture, en posant la question de ce qui advient lorsque le peuple de la foi apprend à chanter l'ethos de Dieu. Il traite à fond de la notion d'exégèse éthique, et termine par des exemples concrets de cette approche particulière pour les Psaumes 130 et 104.

Contemporary Christians have become estranged from Scripture as a moral and ethical force because they have too often reduced it to an object of study in disciplines such as church history, biblical studies and philosophical ethics. Against this, Brock offers an approach to Scripture which generates *moral theology* because it invites the faithful reader to address their estrangement from Scripture by learning its language and idiom, by

taking up residence within its borders through worshipful encounter, and by allowing the growing familiarity which results to shape a genuine and lived relationship with the text as Scripture. Thus the Bible becomes 'a transformatory text' and those who choose to live as aliens within its strange land discover 'wondrous things' in the law, commandments and ordinances of God.

The article summarizes the development of Brock's book through its three parts. Part I surveys contemporary accounts of the role of the Bible in Christian ethics, asking the question, 'how we learn to read the Bible ethically'. In the first five chapters Brock discusses leading contemporary approaches: hermeneutical, communitarian, biblical ethics, biblical theology, and exegetical the-

ology (of which Bonhoeffer's reading of the Psalms is the main example). Part II offers readers an opportunity to immerse themselves in the moral theologies of Augustine (chapter 6) and Luther (chapter 7), asking the question, 'how we might begin to enter into the foreignness of God's story'. Part III locates Christian ethics *within* Scripture, asking the question, 'what happens when people of faith learn to sing the "ethos of God"'. Chapter 8 does so by expounding in depth the notion of "ethical exegesis", and chapter 9 achieves this by demonstrating what this distinctive approach means in practice by engaging in extended 'ethical exegesis', especially of Psalms 130 and 104.

* * * * *

Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. I live as an alien in the land; do not hide your commandments from me. My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances at all times (Psalm 119:18-20).

Introduction

Brian Brock takes those who read his book on a journey to a foreign land. He invites them to travel, with him as their guide, into the strange land of Scripture and ethics. The book is subversively subtitled 'On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture', a deliberate reversal of a more familiar question regarding the place of Scripture in Christian ethics. Instead of asking once again the question of how Scripture can speak to ethics, Brock seeks rather to locate ethics within the divine-human encounter which Scripture engenders. Specifically, he claims that ethical imperatives emerge as the community of faith engages in the singing of Scripture through the communal articulation of the Psalms, because it is as the people of God sing Scripture that the ethos of God is actualised amongst them.

While both Scripture and God may initially be encountered as 'foreign', it is as the community joins its voices with those of Scripture that they begin to learn the language of the kingdom of God, becoming skilled in its customs and grammar, and so being transformed as their own ethos becomes synchronized with the ethos of Scripture. The metaphor is Bonhoeffer's: the church is a choir learning to sing an unfamiliar melody, and it is only through repetition and continual engagement that anarchic cacophony turns to transformatory harmony. In this way, Brock explores what it means to enter subjectively into the story of Scripture,

through the singing of the Psalms, in such a way as to emerge transformed by the encounter with the unfamiliar Other who is met there. Christian ethics thus becomes the constructive alignment of the people of faith with the ethos of God as revealed in Scripture.

Brock's assertion is that contemporary Christians have become estranged from Scripture as a moral and ethical force, because they have too often reduced it to an object of study in disciplines such as church history, biblical studies, and philosophical ethics. Against this, he offers an approach to Scripture which generates *moral theology* because it invites the faithful reader to address their estrangement from Scripture by learning its language and idiom, by taking up residence within its borders through worshipful encounter, and by allowing the growing familiarity which results to shape a genuine and lived relationship with the text as Scripture. In this way, the Bible becomes a transformatory text, with those who choose to live as aliens within its strange land discovering 'wondrous things' in the law, commandments and ordinances of God.

Brock's invitation to encounter the foreignness of Scripture in transformatory relationship takes shape as a three-part discussion of Christian ethics. Although Brock rightly warns that 'a good book is always better than its summary' (xiii), nonetheless the précis which follows will hopefully assist a reader unfamiliar with the detail of his argument to orientate themselves quickly in relation to the salient points. Brock's argument is presented below in condensed form with minimal critical comment, leaving such engagement to the articles which follow. Part I of Brock's book provides a survey of contemporary accounts of the role of the Bible in Christian ethics, asking the question of how one

learns to read the Bible ethically. Part II offers an opportunity to immerse oneself in the moral theologies of Augustine and Luther, asking the question of how one begins to enter into the foreignness of God's story. Finally, Part III locates Christian ethics within Scripture, asking the question of what happens when people of faith learn to sing the 'ethos of God'.

Part I – Learning about reading the Bible for ethics

The five chapters which comprise Part I provide a detailed survey of a range of contemporary discussions on the role of the Bible in Christian ethics. Clarity and consistency are provided through asking of each approach how it might answer a specific ethical issue: namely the use of the Bible to determine understandings of the male-female relationship.

Chapter 1 surveys the contributions of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Daniel Patte and Charles Cosgrove. All three espouse approaches which are predicated on a desire to read with methodological self-awareness in order to prevent the Bible from being read oppressively. Underlying each of these three *hermeneutical solutions* is the question of whether the reader brings to the text inherently oppressive assumptions which ultimately render their reading unethical.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza writes as a self-consciously feminist critic, having notoriously challenged the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1988 to recognise their oppressive reading practices which, she claimed, systematically excluded female interpreters and interpretations of the Bible. Her preferred approach to the Bible is through the discipline of rhetorical criticism, which she sees as providing a route towards critical responsibility. Such an approach allows the text to be critically yet ethically engaged, as its ideology is recognised as 'foreign' to that of the reader.

Daniel Patte builds on the work of Schüssler Fiorenza, addressing what he perceives to be a weakness in her approach, namely a lack of attention to the role which community plays in interpretation. Like Schüssler Fiorenza, Patte self-consciously articulates his own ideology, speaking as an 'insider' member of the academic guild. He sees biographical self-analysis as the way to achieving an ethical reading, because it opens the way to reflective biblical exegesis which pays attention to the ideology of the 'other'. In this way, those

reading the Bible from within the academic guild can helpfully and productively interact with those doing so from within faith communities.

Charles Cosgrove takes Patte's distinction between the academic and faith communities a stage further, suggesting that justice in reading emerges when the reader achieves the status of expert or impartial referee. However, in enforcing this distinction, Cosgrove diminishes the Bible's ability to challenge the moral presuppositions of the reader. For Schüssler Fiorenza, Patte and Cosgrove, ethics is conceived of as a human activity, with the reader deciding the just course of action as they approach the text. Such a reader-centred approach raises profound questions about the place of the child and disabled, as well as leaving little room to critique the ideology of the suicide bomber. Nonetheless, there is an important insight to be gained in recognising that Bible reading cannot be divorced from the reader's ethical and moral presuppositions.

Chapter 2 asks whether a Christian exegetical and ethical methodology can ever exist. If the approaches outlined in Chapter 1 found morality certain and the Bible and the church foreign, those addressed in Chapter 2 find the church and ethics familiar, but the Bible foreign and unfamiliar, and so they seek ways in which the Bible can be brought to bear on the world of Christian ethics. These *communitarian solutions* emphasise the dependence of people on each other, locating a rediscovery of Christian ethics in a rediscovery of Christian community.

Bruce Birch and *Larry Rasmussen* affirm the inherent moral force of all human communities to shape behaviour, with the Bible simply playing its part in those ethical formulations determined within Christian communities. *Stephen Fowl* and *L. Gregory Jones* suggest that the problem of the relationship between the Bible and ethics is not one of temporal distance from the biblical writers, but of moral distance from the ethical worldview they construct, and that the church needs to pay more attention to moral self-criticism than to textual and historical biblical criticism. *Stephen Fowl* takes this approach one stage further with his suggestion that it is the activity of the Spirit which both draws the Christian community of faith together, and brings the stories of Scripture to bear on that community with ethical force. Significantly, these communitarian solutions recognise the place of divine action in the appropriation of the Bible for Christian ethics, as the people of God turn to Scripture for ethical guidance. However, by focussing primarily on the

narrative portions of Scripture, they also allow the formation of an ethical canon within the canon. The analytic and critical readings of Chapter 1 thus give way to an approach which locates interpretation within the Christian community.

Chapter 3 furthers the debate by surveying those who adopt a *biblical ethics* approach, where the ethical teaching of the Bible is synthesised and then applied through the use of overarching moral claims, principles, and guiding images. By this account, it is the church and specific parts of the Bible which seem familiar, while the Bible's unity and the morality it demands seem distant and foreign. Central to this approach is the attempt to summarise the Bible's moral teaching for use in Christian ethics.

Frank Matera recognises the diversity of Scripture's moral claims, and sees this as problematic for its contemporary moral relevance. His response is to treat each biblical book as a discrete unit, summarising the moral ideology of each text whilst retaining the diversity of the ethical voices found in the whole. *Richard Hays* also begins by summarising the teaching of the New Testament books, but then seeks to go a stage further in developing a robust synthetic account of the moral claims which emerge. His approach is a demanding one, requiring the Christian reader of Scripture to relate any given scriptural passage to the wider ethical synthesis he describes. *John Howard Yoder* takes a different approach, questioning whether it is actually necessary to produce a general survey of the New Testament's teaching before developing a synthetic view of the whole. His assumption is that the moral unity of Scripture will be especially visible in ethically problematic texts, such as those which address slavery or the role of women. Yoder concludes that such difficult passages testify to a collision between the messianic liberation of Jesus' message and a patriarchal culture, and that by engaging with them a reader is enabled to bring their own moral problems to Scripture, not with the intent of arriving at a definitive summary of Scripture, but of going deeper into it.

The biblical ethics solutions outlined in this chapter provide some important insights: Hays and Yoder agree that Christian action is the proper context for Scriptural interpretation, while Yoder compellingly suggests that of first importance for the development of a Christian ethic is perseverance in bringing ethical problems to Scripture, rather than in attempts to summarise the ethical teaching of Scripture. However, they also highlight the meth-

odological difficulties encountered when trying to arrive at a summary of the Bible's moral teaching for Christian ethics. Besides, it is important to note that there is a disproportionate attention paid to the New Testament, and an unspoken implication that the Old Testament has less value for Christian ethical enquiry.

Chapter 4 moves from a biblical ethics approach to those who seek a *biblical theology* solution to the question of the relation of Christian ethics and Scripture. The common thread in this chapter's examination of Brevard Childs, Francis Watson and John Webster is that they are all indebted to Karl Barth's insight that God's life is foreign to all human designs, meaning that those who wish to become familiar with the story of God must make a journey into the unknown. This is a journey which can only be undertaken at the invitation of God himself, as by his grace he draws the church into his story.

Brevard Childs builds on Barth's claim that the Bible is the history of God's speaking, and so surveys the whole canon of Scripture to discern the development of Christian doctrine. Childs, like Barth, sees in Scripture a collection of different witnesses to the single subject of God as revealed in the Trinity, with the biblical witness to the trinitarian God becoming actualised in the reading community through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Childs describes Scripture as 'a prism through which light from the different aspects of the Christian life is refracted' (55), meaning that for him the diversity of the Bible, as revealed by historical criticism, is not a liability but a resource. The Holy Spirit brings this diversity to reality in the diverse contexts of those who read Scripture. Therefore, for Childs, the church's ethical methodology must parallel this 'great diversity as a theological witness to life under the rule of God' (55). To this end, the believer does not turn to Scripture as a moral rule system, but rather discerns God's ethical commands by entering the foreign land of God's activity as revealed in Scripture.

Francis Watson differs from Childs in that he does not begin his exercise in biblical theology with a comprehensive summary of the Bible's ethical witness. Rather, he suggests that an ethical reading of Scripture is an ongoing process, and not something which can be completed. It is as the church engages with the complexity of Scripture, bringing together both secular and theological ethical traditions, that the Bible is re-read for the contemporary time and culture. The focal point of

this re-reading is the person and work of Christ calling the world to new relationship with himself and with Scripture. This Christological ethic is predicated on love of God and love of neighbour as the Christian hermeneutical criterion for reading the Old Testament. However, as with the biblical ethics solutions of Chapter 3, it provides an opportunity to disengage from those parts of the Old Testament which do not resonate with the dominant Christological ethic.

John Webster offers an approach to theological ethics which places doctrinal engagement with Scripture at centre-stage, something which is best expressed through the equation 'theology is exegesis'. For Webster, a proper reading of Scripture requires the transformation of character appropriate to Christian discipleship, meaning that the heart of Christian ethics lies in 'amazed acknowledgment' of the moral and theological truths revealed in 'the drama of human nature, origin and destiny'. It is this recognition of the Lordship of Christ over the entirety of history which generates appropriate Christian ethical engagement with Scripture. The significance of Webster's approach is in its re-emphasis of the way Christian doctrine can help hold open a methodological space for God's speaking in Christian ethics and biblical exegesis. He joins with Childs and Watson in asserting that the ethical imperative of the life of faith is found in the gradual assumption of an identity which is not yet fully possessed.

Chapter 5 focuses on Dietrich Bonhoeffer as an example of an exercise in *exegetical theology*. As with Chapter 4, it builds on the insights of Karl Barth, particularly his insistence that theology should begin with biblical engagement. In Barth's case, it was his *Epistle to the Romans* (1922) which set his theological trajectory. Bonhoeffer continues this tradition, charting his course by way of a lifelong engagement with the Psalms. For Bonhoeffer, as for Luther, the Psalms provided a 'child's primer' for learning to talk to God, and his daily meditation on them provided a framework for his writings in Christian ethics. His search for scriptural *mandates* represented his articulation of the ongoing and creative moral claim of Christ through Scripture, and in his exegesis of Psalm 119 Bonhoeffer sought to explore the possibilities for Christian ethics opened up by verbal meditation on Scripture. To this end, the quest of *philosophical ethics* for good acts becomes redefined as the desire to encounter Torah in lived relationship.

It is Bonhoeffer's close attention to the text of

the Psalms which shapes his ethical understanding, according to which it is only by learning to live in the strange land of Scripture that the moral decisions of the present are discerned. For Bonhoeffer, it is through the act of conscious listening that new connections within Scripture emerge as new questions are put to it. In this way, the word of God is not related to as an ethical programme, but as something which reveals the path of discipleship as it is 'treasured in the heart'. The metaphor of 'ethics as a path' becomes key, as the community of faith seeks to prepare a way for Christ through a continual process of theological exegesis of Scripture. In this way, ethical judgments are made 'in the middle' of life, not in the abstract. God is encountered *on the way*, and Bonhoeffer's *mandates* provide, not the answer to all of life's ethical problems, but the main categories through which particular moral questions may be addressed.

Part II – Listening to the saints encountering the ethos of Scripture

Brock claims that: 'The task for Part II is to experience for ourselves life on the other side of the ugly ditch between biblical hermeneutics and ethics' (99), and in issuing this invitation he draws the reader into the foreign land that is occupied by the 'saints' of old. If Part I was about charting the landscape of contemporary Christian ethical engagement, Part II is about navigating the turbulent seas of Augustine and Luther. It is through participation in the reading tradition, as articulated by these two exegetes, that new light is shed on what it means to read the Bible as Scripture, and so new light is also shed on the place of Christian ethics in Scriptural engagement. It will be seen that, in spite of their many differences, both Augustine and Luther demonstrate an understanding of reading Scripture as an activity of praise, which facilitates the entry of the church into its new life in Christ.

Chapter 6 begins by unpicking a common misunderstanding regarding Augustine's exegetical methodology, namely the accusation that he constantly uses an arcane typological or allegorical method to uncover the Christ symbolically foretold in the Psalms. The reality, for Augustine, is far more nuanced and can be paraphrased by saying that, 'if we read the Old Testament chronologically, the whole community, including Christ and the church, comes clearly into view for the first time in the Psalms' (111). In this way, for example, the psalm of praise offered by Hannah in the temple

becomes a parallel expression to that offered by Simeon at the birth of Christ. For Augustine, the original historical setting of the song does not preclude its functioning within the wider context of the biblical witness to Christ. By this understanding, the Psalms of the Old Testament can invite the Christological community of faith to sing God's praises, something which is significant because it opens up the Psalms as a source for Christian worshipful engagement with God revealed in Christ.

It is in this context, of the Psalms as a valid expression of Christian worship, that Augustine's ethical reading is developed. In his exegesis of *Psalms* 32 Augustine utilises the metaphor of the good, or fulfilled, life as a road on which God sets Christians by his work of forgiveness. It is this path of attentiveness to God in praise that leads the believer to recognise their difference from Christ, the necessity of moral reorientation, and the need for forgiveness. In the singing of God's praises, the believer articulates hope and confession in such a way as to shape their moral behaviour. In *Psalms* 22, Augustine finds that the strange land of the Bible becomes familiar to the believer through the activity of Christ, as the community of the body of Christ becomes the context for the living out of the ethically good life of mutual service encountered in the Psalms and exemplified in Christ. The church is thus conceived not as a safe haven from the world, but as the focal point of a praising people caught up in Christ's service to the world. *Psalms* 27 provides Augustine with the opportunity to explore the practical implications of his conclusions. He explores the human experience of fear, particularly fear of pain, and concludes that such fear is actually idolatry, because it requires humans to make obeisance to the gods of society which promise the good life through material gain or self-reliance. Augustine is thus driven to reject the idolatrous ethos of human society, which he characterises as Babylon, and to turn once again to God in praise, aligning himself with the ethos of God rather than the ethos of Babylon. In this way, for Augustine, Christ uses Scripture to shape the ethical response of the Christian believer.

Chapter 7 turns from Augustine to Luther, and immediately the differences in their exegetical styles become apparent. Whereas Augustine uses long and complex narratives to explore large chunks of the Psalms, Luther's theological points grow from concentrated analyses of Hebrew etymologies, single verses, and phrases. These differences of approach directly affect the way they

interpret Scripture: where Augustine sought the narratives that would generate the ethically good life, Luther wants to know specifically how God is present with the individual, and what it means to live with God. It is significant that Luther turned first to the Psalms for his answer to this quest. Barth noted that 'it was by studying and meditating on the Book of the Psalms that Luther was impelled to his remarkable discovery of justification: his movement was from the Psalms to Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, not vice versa' (167). Luther's approach to the Psalms was shaped by his exegesis of *Psalms* 1, which he understood as a summary of the whole Psalter. From this *Psalms* he drew four key hermeneutical points: firstly that Scripture is an indispensable part of learning of the divine; secondly that he cannot possibly have fully understood Scripture; thirdly that the Psalms are interpreted from within the processes of transformation into the form of Christ; and fourthly that the first-person voice of the Psalms facilitates the individual's entry into God's presence. In this way, for Luther, the Psalms draw the believer into the mystery of God, and in so doing act to transform the believer into the likeness of Christ.

Psalms 118:15-18 are presented as verses which demand a response from the reader, namely either to join voice with that of the Psalmist and sing these words of praise, or to withhold their voice and so reject the ethos of the *Psalms*. These verses defy analysis as they call forth performance, and those who join the Psalmist's song find that in so doing they begin to learn the grammar of life with God. In other words, it is through talking with God in praise that the language of God is learned. As with learning any foreign language, 'total immersion' is always more effective than abstract learning, and the Psalms provide that 'total immersion' experience by virtue of their all-or-nothing calls to praise. But in addition to praise, the Psalms also call believers to prayer, as Luther demonstrates in his exegesis of *Psalms* 1. It is in prayer that the believer moves toward God and away from their own ideas, and the Psalms provide a school for faith in which prayer is learned by repetition and through which God's grace becomes known. In his 1537 sermon on *Psalms* 8 Luther develops his claim that the Psalms place prayer and praise formed by Scripture at the centre of the Christian life, by naming this *Psalms* as the work of the prophetic Christ. By Luther's understanding, *Psalms* 8 requires those who encounter it as Christians to read it as an expression of longing which can only

be satisfactorily answered in Christ. On this reading, Christ is to be heard in every Psalm, because the presence of Christ is the rescue that the Psalms ask for, receive, and praise.

Psalm 111 provides Luther with an opportunity to explore the role played by the church in the redemption of all creation. For Luther this Psalm functions to inflame the gratitude of the faithful for God's provision of the Eucharist, something which is logically sustainable because he understands the Christian Eucharist to be the continuation of Israel's Passover. Accordingly, he offers a double reading of the Psalm: first as an expression of Israel's praise and second as an expression of the church's praise. It is this expression of gratitude to God which underlies the response of the whole of creation to the death of Christ. However, there is a dark underbelly to Luther's Christological reading of the Psalms, which is that it has been taken by many as opening the door to supersessionism and anti-Semitism. His use of phrases such as 'our Easter' and 'their Easter' in his exegesis of Psalm 111 can be read as pointing to an understanding that 'different' might represent 'inferior'. Whilst it is true that Luther inadequately appreciated the New Testament's affirmations that God has not rejected his people, nonetheless it needs to be remembered that he was writing to clarify how Christians can access Scripture, not passing judgment on the relationship between Jews and Christians. It may be that his double reading of Psalm 111 actually allows for a positive way forward by opening the door for both Christian and Jew to join voices against the idolatrous rejection of God by a rebellious world.

Part III – Singing the ethos of God

Part III represents a constructive task, in which the survey of Part I and the historical exegesis of Part II are seen to have cleared the ground for the task of reconceiving biblical interpretation as a continually developing craft through which the readers of Scripture are drawn into the divine drama and ethos. The key question is that of how scriptural form and content can shape both exegetical and ethical methodologies.

Chapter 8 offers a redefinition of Christian ethics as the task of making the grammar, or ethos, of a person's life explicit by bringing it into contact with Scripture. It then develops an account of this process as God's way of drawing humans into the divine drama, within which Scripture speaks

of God's transformational self-giving to humans. If contemporary Christians find the Bible and Christian tradition foreign, this is because they are insecure about whether they are participants in God's ongoing drama with humanity. The task of becoming familiar with this foreign land, the task of learning its patterns of behaviour, begins with learning the language. By this analogy, the task of exploring Christian ethics becomes that of discovering God's work in the world through exploring his words and learning his language. The essence of Christian ethics thus becomes an active participation in the process of acquiring the language, grammar and ethos of Scripture.

This understanding of Christian ethics suggests that learning ethically good words is the first step on the path to living an ethically good life, and that this learning of God's good words must take place within the context of a community which has positioned itself within the acoustic realm of Scripture. Such an engagement suggests a relocation of hermeneutics, away from seeking the meaning of the text, towards encountering the text through lived, intimate, generative relationship.

Chapter 9 is best understood as a conversation with Augustine, Luther and the thinkers surveyed in Part I, as well as more diverse discourses. This conversation is themed around a commentary on Psalms 130 and 104, in which Brock demonstrates what it means to 'sing the ethos of God' through Scripture. The engagement with *Psalm 130* explores what it means to pray when all hope is lost, to turn to God as the only source of hope when all other hopes have departed. The discovery that emerges is that prayer is itself an ethos, that to live as one 'waiting for the Lord' is fundamentally and sweepingly different from all other forms of life, because such a prayer contextualises the whole of the Christian life. The Psalm's emphasis on prayerful waiting grounds Christian ethics in an eschatologically based hopefulness, as the believer waits faithfully in expectancy for forgiveness. By this understanding, to confess powerlessness to God, to wait and to be forgiven, is to learn the ethos of God against an ethos of despair.

Psalm 104 turns the discussion from hopelessness and despair to praise for God's faithfulness, as the ethos of faithful waiting unfolds through articulated praise to encompass the whole range of contemporary ethical questions. The psalmist issues a call to praise because, without praise, life is valueless. It is through praise that the human life can encounter the eschatological reality of God's

being, and it is in that encounter that they can receive the gift of meaning and value. It is through the singing of praise that the notes sung to the tune of other gods are revealed. It is through the singing of praise that human voices join the eternal voice and find harmony with one another and with God. Transformative praise such as this can only be sustained in utter reliance on divine provision and presence, casting the believer onto the mercy of God.

Singing the Psalter thus becomes the activity of singing the ethos of God, as the voice of the church combines with the voices of the saints and the voice of creation itself in praise of Christ as Lord of all. Such singing brings the church into tuneful rhythm, turning it from an assembly into a communion, such that the singing of the community engenders an ethical reality. As the Psalms are sung, heaven and earth touch, and human time

conflates. It is in the singing of praise to God that all other gods are relativised, while those engaged in the song are themselves shaped ethically through the divine-human encounter.

Brock concludes: 'Praise takes us inside God's works....In praise the communion of saints continually rediscovers that God uses our faltering collaboration to bring humanity in tune with himself' (363).

Simon Woodman is Tutor in Biblical Studies at South Wales Baptist College. His most recent book is *The Book of Revelation* (SCM 2008).

Notes

- 1 Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God: On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Page references in the text are to this work.

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Reflections on *"Singing the Ethos of God"*¹

Gordon J. Wenham

ABSTRACT

The article begins by summarising and evaluating Brock's analysis of the five main approaches to biblical ethics. It concurs with Brock's preference for the communitarian, biblical ethical, and exegetical approaches. But whereas Brock would give preeminent place to the exegetical/meditative approach of Bonhoeffer, this article argues that the communitarian approach should be supreme. Interpretation of the Bible's teaching on ethics should not reflect the whims of individual scholars but reflect the consensus interpretation of the universal Church. This may sometimes be difficult to recover, but it should be the goal. The rest of the article is devoted to arguing that the Psalms have been much more important in the formation of Christian and Jewish ethics than is usually realised. Books on biblical ethics tend to overlook the contribution of the Psalter, although it is the most quoted Old Testament book in the New, and the most used part of the Old Testament in the Church.

Two aspects of the Psalms have made them especially influential in determining ethical thought. First they have been set to music and sung, and what is sung is easily memorised and dwells in the consciousness in a

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way that tuneless prose or poetry does not. Second, they have been prayed and this makes their sentiments peculiarly powerful. Reader-response theory has analysed the ethics of the Psalms and pointed out how those who pray the Psalms are made to identify with the psalmist's viewpoint. This is done by naming their prestigious author David, by the use of the first person so that persons praying make the words their own, and by portraying the righteous positively and the wicked negatively. The use of the Psalms as prayers may also be analysed by speech-act theory. Praying the Psalms in public worship is akin to taking an oath in court: the words are addressed to God in the presence of human witnesses. In this way worshippers commit themselves to the words and attitudes of the Psalms in a strong way. Whereas merely listening to laws, proverbs or stories involves a passive engagement with their teaching, no one else will know if one silently decides to ignore an ethical principle, praying a Psalm actively involves making promises to God who knows whether or not the worshipper is sincere. It is because the Psalms have been central to Christian worship down the centuries that their influence on theology and ethics has been so profound.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Artikel beginnt mit der Zusammenfassung und Bewertung von Brocks Analyse der fünf Hauptansätze zur biblischen Ethik. Er pflichtet Brocks Vorliebe für die gemeinschaftsorientierten, biblisch-ethischen und exegetischen Ansätze bei. Während Brock jedoch dem exegetisch-meditativen Ansatz Bonhoeffers den Vorrang einräumt, argumentiert dieser Artikel, dass diese Rolle dem gemeinschaftlichen Ansatz zukommen sollte. Die Interpretation der ethischen Lehren der Bibel sollte nicht die Launen einzelner Gelehrter widerspiegeln, sondern den interpretativen Konsens der universalen Kirche. Dieser mag manchmal schwer zu erheben sein, dennoch sollte dies das Ziel sein. Der Rest des Artikels widmet sich der These, dass die Psalmen in der Gestaltung der christlichen und jüdischen Ethik viel wichtiger waren als üblicherweise erkannt wird. Bücher zur biblischen Ethik tendieren oft dazu, den Beitrag des Psalters zu übersehen, obwohl er das meistzitierte alttestamentliche Buch

im Neuen Testament ist und der in der Kirche am meisten verwendete Teil des Alten Testaments.

Zwei Aspekte der Psalmen waren besonders einflussreich in der Bestimmung ethischen Denkens. Zunächst wurden sie vertont und gesungen, und was gesungen wird, wird leicht auswendig gelernt und lebt auf eine Weise im Bewusstsein, wie es Prosa oder Poesie ohne Melodie nicht können. Zweitens wurden die Psalmen gebetet, und die Gesinnung der Psalmen bekommt durch diese Tatsache eine besondere Kraft. Die Rezeptionsästhetik hat die Ethik der Psalmen untersucht und darauf hingewiesen, wie diejenigen, die die Psalmen beten, angeleitet werden, sich mit der Sichtweise des Psalmisten zu identifizieren. Das geschieht durch die Nennung ihres renommierten Autors David, durch den Gebrauch der ersten Person, so dass die betende Person sich die Worte zueigen macht, und dadurch, dass die Gerechten positiv und die Bösen negativ dargestellt werden. Der Gebrauch der Psalmen als Gebete kann auch von der Sprechaktheorie her untersucht werden. Im öffentlichen Gottesdienst

die Psalmen zu beten ist dem Schwur vor Gericht ähnlich: die Worte richten sich vor menschlichen Zeugen an Gott. Auf diese Weise binden sich die Beter recht stark an die Worte und Haltungen der Psalmen. Während das bloße Anhören von Gesetzen, Weisheitssprüchen oder Storys eine passive Beschäftigung mit ihren Lehren involviert, wobei niemand weiß, ob jemand stillschweigend

entscheidet, ein ethisches Prinzip zu ignorieren, beinhaltet das aktive Beten eines Psalms, Gott Dinge zu versprechen, und Gott weiß, ob der Beter ehrlich ist oder nicht. Weil die Psalmen über die Jahrhunderte im christlichen Gottesdienst so zentral waren, war ihr Einfluss auf die Theologie und Ethik so tiefgreifend.

* * * *

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article propose un résumé et une évaluation de l'analyse faite par Brock des cinq manières principales d'aborder l'éthique biblique. Il affirme avec Brock sa préférence pour les approches communautaire, exégétique et celle de l'éthique biblique. Mais, tandis que Brock privilégie l'approche exégétique et méditative de Bonhoeffer, Wenham pense que l'on devrait plutôt privilégier l'approche communautaire. L'interprétation de l'enseignement biblique éthique ne devrait pas refléter les préférences de chaque spécialiste, mais le consensus interprétatif de l'Église universelle. Cela peut s'avérer parfois difficile à réaliser, mais ce devrait être le but. Le reste de l'article montre que les Psaumes ont joué un rôle bien plus important qu'on ne le pense souvent dans la

formation de l'éthique juive et chrétienne. Les ouvrages consacrés à l'éthique biblique tendent à ignorer la contribution du psautier, alors que c'est là le livre de l'Ancien Testament le plus souvent cité dans le Nouveau et le plus fréquemment utilisé dans l'Église.

Deux facteurs ont contribué à l'influence des Psaumes dans la détermination de la pensée éthique. D'une part, ils ont été mis en musique et chantés, et les paroles des chants sont facilement mémorisées et imprègnent la pensée d'une manière qui ne se retrouve pas pour des textes qu'on ne chante pas. D'autre part, ils ont été priés et les sentiments qu'ils expriment ont ainsi puissamment affecté ceux qui les ont priés. C'est parce que les Psaumes ont été au centre du culte chrétien au cours des siècles qu'ils ont exercé une si profonde influence sur la théologie et l'éthique.

* * * *

It is a pleasure to respond to Brian Brock's *Singing the Ethos of God*. Seldom have I awaited the publication of a book with such anticipation. It is a fine work and most stimulating in its ideas, most of which I wholeheartedly endorse, but inevitably an ethicist focuses on different issues from a biblical exegete. This difference in perspective will, I hope, prove mutually enriching. I was asked to reflect on the first section of the book which is an illuminating survey of the main contemporary approaches to biblical ethics. I will not repeat Simon Woodman's overview of these approaches, but simply give my own reactions to Brock's summaries of different views and suggest where his ideas could be further developed. Then I shall review three different approaches to the Psalms in particular that suggest that at least historically, if not today, the Psalms have been even more important in the formation of Christian ethical attitudes than Brock argues.

Assessment of Part 1

The Introduction begins with a short sketch of Augustine's conversion to the reading of Scripture. His initial distaste for Scripture was prompted by his moral estrangement from its norms, Augustine having accepted the mores of his contemporaries.

To start with he questioned Scripture, but later he allowed it to question him. In Scripture he heard God's voice calling to him and shattering his deafness. As he prayed the Psalms, a genuine love for God was kindled in his heart. Though Brock states that he does not regard Augustine's account of the relationship between ethics and Scripture as normative,² he believes modern students have much to learn from him. 'He is aware that one must be morally transformed to read Scripture, and that we learn to read the Bible in communities of tradition.'³ The first third of Brock's work offers an overview of how far different approaches have taken on board these ancient insights.

The first chapter, 'Reading Self-Consciously: the Hermeneutical Solution', reviews the approaches of Schüssler Fiorenza, Patte and Cosgrove. Brock thinks all three are inadequate, but for different reasons. Though Brock does not agree with Schüssler Fiorenza's claim that the Bible is oppressive, he agrees with her that interpretation involves commitment, whether this interpretation supports the biblical writer's views or criticises them, and applauds her concern for the poor and the weak. On the other hand, he argues that Patte and Cosgrove's claim to neutrality and their attempt to referee objectively between different views is

misguided. They fail to recognise fully their own prejudice and how it distorts their own judgment. They base themselves on Enlightenment canons of objectivity, which minimise the involvement of God in human affairs, and thus they miss his voice speaking through Scripture. This seems to me a fair assessment of these positions.

The authors discussed in the second chapter entitled 'Reading Together: the Communitarian Solution' claim that the Church is the community in which the Bible is properly interpreted and which should embody the ethic of Scripture, pre-eminently manifested in the life and teaching of Jesus. 'The Christ story orders Christians' lives as they tell their own stories through the lens of that story.⁷⁴

Brock is more sympathetic to this communitarian approach than to the hermeneutical, in particular its acknowledgement that God speaks through Scripture and that the Church should acknowledge his voice. He also approves of their emphasis on an ethic which moulds every thought and action, not just big and problematic decisions. But two things about the communitarian approach make him very uneasy. First, their insistence that it is within the Church that the ethic is created and learned leads, he thinks, to an anthropocentric approach to the Bible and its interpretation. Where there are differences of view, how do we judge who is being led by the Spirit? Brock's second concern is the over-emphasis of this approach on narratives and the downplaying of explicitly ethical texts found in the law, wisdom and Psalms.

I sympathise with Brock's concerns, but I would not share his objections on principle. From the church fathers to Calvin and some of his modern adherents, it has been recognised that the Bible belongs to the Church, and that the Church must interpret it, not outsiders. The problem has not been the principle of the Church being the authoritative interpreter of Scripture, but that often it has refused to listen to Scripture, or as Schüssler Fiorenza has pointed out, that it has used Scripture to oppress. Then of course there is the problem of schism, so that every ecclesiastical body claims it has the right to interpret Scripture its own way, with a multitude of conflicting interpretations then being advocated. Ideally, as Calvin argued,⁵ Scripture needs to be interpreted by bishops of the universal Church who subject themselves to its authority. So I favour the communitarian approach in principle, though I fear, from Brock's summary, that some of their views would not command uni-

versal consent in the world-wide Church.

As far as his second concern about the over-reliance on narrative for ethics, he may have a point as far as New Testament studies are concerned, but in Old Testament studies of Old Testament ethics the neglect of narrative has been conspicuous. The standard German introduction to OT ethics by Otto⁶ has very little. John Goldingay cautions against using the narratives for ethics in *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*: 'When we take stories as examples of what we should do or be, we risk turning the faith into something we do rather than something God has done.'⁷ Similarly the popular book *How to Read the Bible for all Its Worth* discourages its readers from drawing moral points from biblical stories.⁸ Yet, as St Paul says, from their first composition biblical stories have been told in order to make ethical points: 'For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope (Rom. 15:4, ESV).

It has been standard Christian and Jewish practice ever since to read the OT narratives for their ethical instruction. It is a modern aberration to neglect it. Not, of course, that it is always easy to pick up the author's intention in telling these stories. For example, very often people suppose that OT accounts of war are glorifying it, whereas the perspective of the writers is that violence is so abhorrent to God that, to eliminate it, he was prepared to destroy all mankind save Noah and his family (Gen. 6:11, 13). It is essential that *description* of behaviour is not confused with *prescription*: often the biblical writers intend us to be horrified by what they describe; they do not want us to imitate it. And in this regard the law and wisdom books do help us to see where the narrators are coming from and what their assumptions are.⁹ So once again I find myself in basic sympathy with the communitarians, though, like Brock, cautious about some of their conclusions.

The third chapter 'Focusing Reading: the Biblical Ethics Solution' discusses what is the most familiar, synthesising, approach to deriving ethical teaching from the Bible. For example, Frank Matera's *New Testament Ethics: the Legacies of Jesus and Paul* takes each Pauline epistle and each gospel separately, seeking to define its particular ethical teaching first, before integrating it into a broader synthesis. Matera insists that one must begin with the canonical books as they stand, not for example trying to distinguish between the historical Jesus

(or Paul) and the Jesus of Matthew. 'The *primary* object of New Testament ethics should be the writings of the New Testament rather than a historical reconstruction of the ethical teachings of Jesus, the early church, Paul, and so on.'¹⁰ While not disagreeing with Matera's starting point, Brock argues that describing the teaching of different biblical books is only a start in formulating a biblical ethic. The contributions of the different books do need to be combined and then compared with the modern situation to determine their relevance and application to the modern Christian.

By contrast, Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* goes much further in this direction. Again it is focused on the New Testament, whose teaching he surveys on a number of topics. However, Hays insists that one should not just look at the explicit ethical injunctions of the New Testament, but on the images it uses to describe the Christian life and the narratives, especially of the life of Christ, to produce a rounded Christian ethic. He sums this up under three headings: community, cross and new creation. The Church is called to be a countercultural community. Jesus' death is the paradigm for human action. The Church must demonstrate resurrection life in the as-yet-unredeemed world. In studying the teaching of the New Testament the exegete will note parallels and analogies with modern situations and by the guidance of the Spirit will be able to apply them to today's issues. Hays illustrates his method by looking at a variety of problems, such as violence, divorce and homosexuality.

Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* skips much of the preliminary descriptive work that Matera and Hays do and goes straight to the relevant biblical texts, and then tries to explain them. For example he sees the New Testament *Haustafeln*, which advocate reciprocal responsibilities between husband and wife, master and slave, child and parent, as exemplifying behaviour inspired by Christ. These injunctions contrast with the Stoic lists where only the adult male was the free agent and other ranks in society had to obey his rules. Brock warms to this approach, especially when it is combined with insights from the communitarian one. He gently chides Hays and Yoder for not drawing out the implications of mutual submission in response to politically correct egalitarians.¹¹ More serious is his charge of Marcionism. 'These analyses disproportionately favor the New Testament, with the implication that Christians, in their actual use of the Bible, should look for moral guidance to the New

Testament, which, in Marcionite fashion, they treat *de facto* as more important and accessible to Christian ethical enquiry.'¹²

These seem to me fair comments. Hays himself says: 'the New Testament vision trumps the Old.'¹³ I would add that when New Testament scholars do ethics and compare its teaching with that of the Old, they tend to focus on the Law and Wisdom and perhaps the Prophets, but neglect the contribution of the narratives and Psalms, probably the parts of the Old Testament most quoted and alluded to in the New. They often fail to realise that the provisions in the law often do not represent the behaviour that the biblical writers would regard as ideal, only the minimum social requirements.¹⁴

Brock would like to see the Biblical Ethics approach supplemented by insights from the Communitarian. I think I would argue the reverse. It seems to me that the insights of the Communitarians are more basic than the Biblical Ethics school of thought. The Biblical Ethics school of thought, at least as expounded by Brock, seems to leave the determination of interpretation to individual experts, who probably disagree, rather than seeing theologians as members of the body of Christ, the Church, whom they serve and to whom they must answer.

Chapter 4, 'Reading Doctrinally: the Biblical Theology Solution' focuses on the work of Brock's colleagues in Aberdeen, Francis Watson and John Webster, both of whom stand in the stream of biblical theology that goes back to Barth. This follows a brief discussion of Brevard Childs, who developed canonical criticism.¹⁵ I was a little surprised at how little attention was given to canonical criticism in Brock's discussion of the Psalms,¹⁶ for it has been the main area of discussion in Psalm studies in the last two decades. Ever since Childs' disciple G. H. Wilson wrote *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (1985) there have been many articles and monographs and two major commentaries¹⁷ exploiting this method. Canonical criticism of the Psalms focuses on the structure of the Psalter, the sequence of Psalms, their titles, the arrangement of the Psalms into books, and so on, with a view to determining how the Psalms were understood when they were collected into the current anthology. This gives a much more focused approach to their understanding than did the older methods such as form criticism. It aims to elucidate what the Psalms meant to those who first read them canonically. Opinions differ as to the success of this approach and there are differences between canonical critics on certain

issues of interpretation,¹⁸ but intrinsically canonical criticism seems to me the method that takes the texts as Scripture most seriously.¹⁹

Brock finds merit in the positions of Watson and Webster. He praises Watson for actually discussing biblical texts and applying them to current issues. His work *Agape, Eros, Gender* brings together biblical criticism, Christian dogmatics and cultural sensitivity.²⁰ However Brock hints that he thinks Watson is more sensitive to culture than a Christian theologian ought to be: 'Watson is happier to admit that the Spirit speaks to the church through the world than he is with prophetic speech within the church itself.'²¹

Brock seems happier with Webster's theory of exegesis, but he laments that Webster does not put his programme into action. He sums up the programme in three points: first, the subject of all Scripture is Christ; second, the reader of Scripture must be ready to repent when Scripture convicts him of error; third, readers must discover their place in the scriptural narrative. Reflecting on contemporary hermeneutics Webster claims that they often miss the mark because they fail to submit to God's demands mediated through Scripture. It is by listening to the word that a Christian conscience is formed, not through developing more and more hermeneutical rules. 'In conscience I attend to the call of myself as perfected in Christ, who both reveals my distance from perfection and urges and guides the closing of that gap.'²²

After a very broad endorsement of Webster's programme, Brock offers this justified criticism: 'In arriving at the conclusion that theology is exegesis, Webster leaves undone what he asks his readers to do. Having said that theologians should not make exegesis a secondary or tertiary part of theology, he nevertheless takes as his primary texts the writings of Barth and Bonhoeffer on theological hermeneutics.'²³

The final chapter of Part 1, 'Reading as Meditation: The Exegetical Theology Solution', is devoted to expounding the approach of Bonhoeffer, both to the Psalms and to ethics. Brock gives more space to Bonhoeffer's ideas than to those of anyone else save Augustine and Luther. One wonders if he feels that Bonhoeffer's approach fulfils Webster's programme of exegesis. Bonhoeffer's key idea is that the Psalms are meant for meditation, as Psalm 1 puts it: 'On his law he meditates day and night.' Meditation (*hagah* in Hebrew) is not silent thought, so much as speaking it aloud either to oneself or with others. Like Luther, Bonhoeffer

sees the Psalter as providing us with appropriate words to address God. It is designed to train our speech and affections towards God.²⁴ This meditation is focused on the law, which Bonhoeffer finds not only in the Pentateuch, but throughout Scripture.

While the Bible does contain principles and rules, meditation on the law is not really a question of formulating these rules and applying them, so much as involvement in a conversation with God so that the meditator is moulded and guided to live in a godly way. It involves living with an undivided heart and seeing all that we receive as a gift from God,²⁵ allowing our outlook and behaviour to be changed by them. It is above all prayer: only prayer enables us to let go of sin and follow God's way. For Bonhoeffer the Christian life is not based on rules or principles, but on intimacy with God mediated by obedience to the guidance found in the Bible. Ethics is a journey on a path on which God guides us, not by giving a long-range map, but by telling us what the next step is.

Brock basically concurs with Bonhoeffer's approach, though he thinks he gave too little scope for the work of the Spirit, and emphasised creation at the expense of redemption. But he agrees with Bonhoeffer that producing rules from the Bible is a mistake. 'Bonhoeffer has substantiated our worries that summaries of the Bible's ethical content are methodologically problematic. Such summaries turn Scripture into a book that contains moral claims rather than being the point at which meditation on God's Word can become even richer.'²⁶

Like Brock I appreciate Bonhoeffer's method of meditation on Scripture as a way to find God's guidance, but it seems to me to run the risk of becoming very subjective unless it is controlled by the communitarian and biblical ethics approaches. Individualism can run riot, and all sorts of outrageous ideas may be claimed to be justified on the basis of meditation on the Scriptures. Nor am I persuaded that principles and rules, models and virtues, cannot be derived from Scripture. What is wrong with affirming that the Bible rules out adultery and murder, but insists on honouring parents, keeping the Sabbath, and caring for the poor? Admittedly there are many grey areas and tricky situations where it is not clear how one should act on the basis of Scripture, and what might be the right course of action for one person might not be right for another. But that does not mean there are no clear, firm principles that must characterise Christian life and behaviour.

The influence of the Psalter over three millennia

This then is what Brock has to say in part I of his book. Much of the rest of the book is taken up with expounding Augustine and Luther's use of the Psalms. That two of the greatest theologians in the Western church should pay such attention to the Psalter is of course significant, but the influence of the Psalms is much more pervasive than this. It was among both Jews and Christians the most widely used part of the Old Testament, as the evidence from both Qumran and the New Testament shows.

The Psalms were a regular part of Christian worship both in monasteries and in public worship for nearly two millennia, until hymns and worship songs displaced them in some branches of Protestantism. In the Middle Ages a Psalter was the only part of the Bible a layman was likely to own. Set to music people would sing the Psalms at home and at work as described in Athanasius' letter to Marcellinus. This wide diffusion of the Psalms gave them a profound and wide influence in forming the Christian ethic. But the very nature of the Psalms makes it likely that their influence went deeper than other forms of ethical instruction in the Church. I want to mention three facets of their power.²⁷

Singing and the Psalms

First they have most often been sung. The saying 'Let me make the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws', is often ascribed to Plato, but actually comes from Andrew Fletcher, a leading Scottish politician at the opening of the seventeenth century. Whoever said it matters little, for it expresses very well the power of songs.

In his Letter to Marcellinus Athanasius wrote:

Words of this kind should be not merely said, but rendered with melody and song; for there are actually some simple folk among us who... think the reason for singing them is just to make them more pleasing to the ear! This is by no means so; Holy Scripture is not designed to tickle the aesthetic palate, and it is rather for the soul's own profit that the Psalms are sung. This is so chiefly for two reasons. In the first place, it is fitting that the sacred writings should praise God in poetry as well prose, because the freer, less restricted form of verse, in which the Psalms... are cast, ensures that by them men should express their love to God with all the

strength and power they possess. And secondly, the reason lies in the unifying effect which chanting the Psalms has upon the singer. For to sing the Psalms demands such concentration of a man's whole being on them that, in doing it, his usual disharmony of mind and corresponding bodily confusion is resolved, just as the notes of several flutes are brought by harmony to one effect.²⁸

Jews have also commented on the value of music in intensifying devotion. Judah he-Hasid, a twelfth-century rabbi wrote:

Say your prayer in the melody that is most pleasant and sweet in your eyes. Then you shall pray with proper concentration; because the melody will draw your heart after the words that come from you mouth. Supplication in a melody makes the heart weep, and praise in a melody makes the heart happy. Thus you will be filled with love and joy for Him that sees your heart, and you will bless Him with great love and with joy.²⁹

Martin Luther in 1538 wrote:

Music is to be praised as second only to the Word of God because by her are all the emotions swayed. Nothing on earth is more mighty to make the sad gay and the gay sad, to hearten the downcast, mellow the overweening, temper the exuberant, or mollify the vengeful... That is why there are so many songs and psalms. This precious gift has been bestowed on men alone to remind them that they are created to praise and magnify the Lord.³⁰

More recently David Ford has commented:

What does (singing) do with the crucial Christian medium of words? It does with them what praise aims to do with the whole of reality: it takes them up into a transformed, heightened expression, yet without at all taking away their ordinary meaning. Language itself is transcended and its delights and power are intensified, and at the same time those who join in are bound together more strongly. So singing is a model of the way praise can take up ordinary life and transpose it to a higher level without losing what is good in other levels. The social power of music in general (for good or ill) is well known, and it moves at levels and in ways that nothing else can.³¹

Thus set to music and sung communally the Psalms have even more power than when they are

merely recited. But even mere recitation is a more powerful instructor than listening to stories, commands or wisdom sayings. Listening is passive, indeed the message can be ignored by the listener, but recitation and especially singing is an activity which involves the whole person and cannot be honestly undertaken without real commitment to what is being said or sung.

Singing or reciting the Psalms is a form of prayer, and this has important ethical consequences. For example, when we pray 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us', we are committing ourselves to forgive other people. What worshippers say in prayer ought to have a profound effect on them, because these words are addressed to God, who can evaluate their sincerity and worthiness. If we praise a certain type of behaviour in our prayers, we are telling God that this is how we intend to behave. On the other hand, if in prayer we denounce certain acts and pray for God to punish them, we are in effect inviting God to judge us if we do the same. This makes the ethics of liturgy uniquely powerful. It makes a stronger claim on the believer than law, wisdom or story, which are simply subject to passive reception: one can listen to a proverb or a story and then take it or leave it, but if you pray ethically, you commit yourself to a path of action.

Reader-response theory and the Psalms

Reader-response theory has been partially explored by Dorothea Erbele-Küster in her book *Lesen als Akt des Betens: Eine Rezeptionsästhetik der Psalmen*³² in which she uses reader-response theory to illuminate the rhetorical situation of praying the Psalms. She asks: how does the person praying the Psalms become involved and experience their significance?

She starts her discussion by endorsing the insights of canonical critics who have seen the sequencing of the Psalms as significant. Psalm 2 proclaims the triumph of the Davidic house, but this is immediately followed by a collection of Psalms each headed 'by David', many of which relate the trials that dogged his life. Like most canonical critics she does not assume that the titles are historically reliable, but they do constrain the uncritical reader to value them, because they represent the words and experience of Israel's greatest king. Thus Erbele-Küster thinks these Davidic titles give the Psalms a paradigmatic quality and encourage the later reader to identify with their sentiments.³³

Erbele-Küster draws attention to other devices in the text that clearly aim to influence the reader's perspective. There are general blessings pronounced: 'Blessed is the man who / blessed are all who / blessed is the one who' (1:1; 2:12; 84:12). The paradigmatic quality of the lifestyle that is pronounced blessed invites the reader to identify with it. The prospect of blessing should encourage all to adopt this way of life.

Another device inviting the worshipper to identify with the sentiments of the Psalm is the use of the first person. The psalmist often speaks in the first person 'I will bless the LORD at all times' (34:1). Someone singing or praying this Psalm later is thus invited to do the same. Indeed the suggestion may well be reformulated as a command to share in the psalmist's experience. Psalm 34 continues: 'Oh taste and see that the LORD is good' (34:8). There then follows a blessing in the third person on anyone who puts his trust in God: 'Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!' (34:8) The Psalm concludes with the general lessons that the psalmist has learned which he wishes future generations to appropriate for themselves:

Come, O children, listen to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

What man is there who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?

Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.

Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.....

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all. (34:11-14, 19)

This switch between first and third person encourages the user of the Psalm to identify with the viewpoint of the psalmist.³⁴ But particularly the use of the first person encourages such identification: 'The experience of the I of the psalm embodies a religious ideal, whose reality is open to the reader to experience.'³⁵

Speech-act theory and the Psalms

Another approach that sheds light on the uniqueness of the Psalmic ethic draws on the insights of speech-act theory. Speech-act theory was developed in the late twentieth century by philosophers of language such as Austin and Searle, and then applied to theology by various scholars such as Evans and Thiselton. Unfortunately there have

been no major attempts to use speech-act theory to illuminate the ethics of the Psalms but it seems to me to offer great potential.

I have already observed that the Psalms differ from other parts of the Bible in that they are meant to be recited or sung as prayers. That is, they are public address to God. The Psalms put powerful words into the worshipper's mouth:

For there is no truth in their mouth;
their inmost self is destruction;
their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongue.
Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;
because of the abundance of their transgressions
cast them out,
for they have rebelled against you (5:9-10).

Here the psalmist is accusing the wicked and summoning God to intervene against them. We have a similar scenario in Psalm 52. This involvement of the worshipper in expressing assent to these sentiments makes the Psalms quite different from the other modes of teaching ethics in the OT. The OT narratives were presumably recited by storytellers within the family or in the tribes, but they rarely make explicit their judgments on the actions that are recited, so the moral of the story might have been missed and certainly did not have to be endorsed by the listeners. They could have just ignored the point, as I suspect many listening to worthy sermons often do.

The same is true of the laws. We are not sure how they were passed on in Bible times. Few people would have had written copies of the law: some texts suggest the Levites were involved in teaching the law. In the light of the practice in neighbouring cultures, it would seem likely that most people's knowledge, if any, would have come from hearing recitations of the laws at religious festivals. But once again for the listener the reception of the law was essentially passive. You listened to the law and maybe an explanation of it by a preacher, and then it was up to you to keep it or reject it as you saw fit (Neh. 8:1-10). As long as you did not publicly reject or break the law you would survive, socially at least. Thus receiving the ethical teaching of the law or the history books of the OT was basically a silent passive affair.

Reciting the Psalms is different. The prayer of the Psalms is taking these words on his lips and saying them to God in a personal and solemn way. An example is Psalm 7:8-9:

The Lord judges the peoples;
judge me, O Lord, according to my
righteousness
and according to the integrity that is in me.
Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end,
and may you establish the righteous –
you who test the minds and hearts,
O righteous God!

The psalmist affirms that God will judge all the peoples but then invites God to judge him, despite affirming that God tests the minds and hearts. It is a quite challenging and disturbing prayer: do all worshippers really want God to test their innermost motives? But time and again in the Psalms we meet this sort of prayer. The reciter or singer of the Psalms is thus involved in giving very active assent to the standards of life implied in the Psalms.

The closest analogy in Scripture to this affirmation of standards, I think, is found in Deuteronomy 27. There in a ceremony to be performed shortly after entry into the promised land. All the tribes stand before the Levites who then pronounce curses on certain types of, mostly secret, sins. After each curse 'all the people shall answer and say, "Amen".'

But even saying 'Amen' to a curse seems to me semi-passive when compared with reciting the Psalm. When you pray a Psalm, you are describing the actions you will take and what you will avoid. It is more like taking an oath or making a vow.

Austin pointed out that many remarks are much more than statements about facts, which are either true or false. Promises for example change the situation and impose obligations on the speaker and create expectations in the listener. A promise is an example of a speech act. Wedding vows are speech acts too. The key words in a marriage ceremony are spoken publicly and to God. 'I A take you B to my wedded wife to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part.' One trusts that brides and bridegrooms pronounce these words after careful thought beforehand and with complete sincerity on the big day. The words themselves transform their status: they become man and wife. Thus the words are performative.³⁶ They change the situation.

One of the earliest writers to apply speech-act theory to the language of worship was Donald Evans in *The Logic of Self-Involvement*.³⁷ He does not specifically discuss the language of the Psalms,

but his more general observations are most pertinent to our discussion. He argues that most theological statements from a believer have a stronger or weaker commissive sense. This observation, I believe, aptly describes the situation of those praying the Psalms. It is particularly pertinent to a study of the ethics of the Psalms. Evans begins by noting that when God addresses humankind he makes a commitment, and when a person addresses God there is a commitment in response:

Similarly man does not (or does not merely) assert certain facts about God; he addresses God in the activity of worship, committing himself to God and expressing his attitude to God. In so far as God's self-revelation is a self-involving verbal activity ('His Word is claim and promise, gift and demand') and man's religious language is also a self-involving verbal activity ('obedient, thankful confession and prayer'), theology needs an outline of the various ways in which language is self-involving.³⁸

Evans' book attempts to provide such an analysis of how the language of worship involves the worshipper. Evans says that statements like 'I promise' are commissive performatives, for the speaker *commits* himself in more than a verbal way. They have a 'content', for the speaker is undertaking to behave in a specified way in the future; for example, he is undertaking to 'return this book tomorrow'.³⁹

God's promises are also commissives, e.g., Psalm 2:7-8:

I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your
heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession'.

These divine commitments evoke a response from humans. In fact, in many of the Psalms divine promises are quoted by the psalmists in their prayer and praise. Following Austin's terminology, Evans calls sentiments such as 'I thank you', 'we praise thee, O Lord', 'I apologise', behabitives, because

they related the speaker to another person in the context of human *behaviour* and social relations, without being strongly commissive. The speaker implies that he has certain attitudes in relation to the person whom he addresses, or towards what he is talking about. In saying, 'I thank you', I imply (but do not report) that I am grateful to you; in saying, 'I apologize for

my behaviour', I imply (but do not report), that I have an unfavourable attitude towards my behaviour. Behabitives imply attitudes.⁴⁰

Evans argues that most language about God is either commissive or behabitive and therefore self-involving. Self-involvement is particularly evident in first-person utterances. 'Where I report my attitude in the present tense, my utterance is rarely a mere report, equivalent to *your* report of my attitude. It tends to *commit* me to the pattern of behaviour to which I am referring; it has a forward reference to behaviour for which I am the responsible agent, not merely an observer.'⁴¹

Many Psalms illustrate this:

Blessed be the Lord,
for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love
to me
when I was in a besieged city.
I had said in my alarm,
'I am cut off from your sight.'
But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy
when I cried to you for help (Ps. 31:21-22).

Many remarks which on first sight seem to be mere statements of fact, constatives, within the context of worship have clearly performative force. According to the Old Testament, 'man in general is created with a role as nature's steward and God's articulate worshipper. In the biblical context, to say, "God is my Creator" is to acknowledge the *role* which God has assigned'.⁴² To say 'I acknowledge you as my king' or 'You are my king' is to express a strong commitment.⁴³ The so-called enthronement Psalms (93-100) offer many examples of this.

The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his
belt. (Ps. 93:1)

These 'Commissives are utterances in which the speaker commits himself to future patterns of more-than-merely-verbal behaviour'.⁴⁴

Praying the Psalms is a performative, typically a commissive, act: saying these solemn words to God alters one's relationship in a way that mere listening does not. This is not a new insight: St. Paul saw confession of faith as altering one's status before God: 'if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.' (Rom. 10:9-10)

Paul's argument may be applied to the Psalms.

Throughout the Psalter one is confessing that the LORD is God, and as the Psalms often insist this is supposed to be a confession that comes from a pure and sincere heart. And it is certainly salvation that the Psalmist seeks: time and again he pleads to God to save him, to deliver him, to hear his prayer and so on. Whether this always occurs or not is not my purpose to discuss now. I simply want to draw out some of the similarities between taking an oath, making a vow, confessing faith and praying the Psalms. I think these parallels may help us to see how powerful the commitment is that the Psalms make of their user.

Professor Gordon J. Wenham teaches Old Testament at Trinity College, Bristol. He is author of many books, including *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically* (T & T Clark, 2000). From 2005-2008 he was a member of the KLICE Advisory Council.

Notes

- 1 This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Annual Book Colloquium of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics (KLICE), Tyndale House, Cambridge, 3-4 September 2008.
- 2 Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) xi.
- 3 Brock, *Singing*, xi.
- 4 Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1989), 105 quoted in Brock, *Singing*, 22.
- 5 E.g. *Institutes* IV. 9:13.
- 6 Eckart Otto, *Theologische Ethik des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994) 273-275, which contains just 13 references to the historical books (Joshua – Chronicles) as opposed to over 100 to Deuteronomy alone.
- 7 *Models for Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 57.
- 8 Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (London: Scripture Union, 1983) 77-78.
- 9 For further discussion see Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading the OT Ethically* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000).
- 10 Frank Matera, *New Testament Ethics: the Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 7 quoted in Brock, *Singing*, 37.
- 11 Brock, *Singing*, 47-49.
- 12 Brock, *Singing*, 50.
- 13 Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997) 336.
- 14 See Gordon J. Wenham, 'The Gap between Law

and Ethics in the Bible', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48 (1997) 17-29.

- 15 This involves studying the final form of the biblical books alongside their critically reconstructed history. As Childs has not given an account of biblical ethics using canonical criticism, Brock wonders whether it is actually possible.
- 16 There are glimpses of the method in Brock, *Singing*, 310, 316.
- 17 F. L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51 – 100* (2000) and J. L. Vesco, *Le psautier de David* (2006).
- 18 E.g. on the messianic expectations of the Psalter.
- 19 For a basic introduction to this approach see J. Clinton McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of the Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).
- 20 Brock, *Singing*, 59.
- 21 *Singing*, 62.
- 22 *Singing*, 66.
- 23 *Singing*, 68.
- 24 *Singing*, 73.
- 25 *Singing*, 79.
- 26 *Singing*, 95.
- 27 These ideas are more fully developed in my forthcoming book, *Songs as Torah*.
- 28 Athanasius Schaefer, *Spiritual Texts: The Letter of Athanasius...to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms* (<http://www.athanasius.com/psalms/aleterm.hum> based on Robert C. Gregg, *Athanasius: the Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus* (London: SPCK, 1980) 123-124.
- 29 Quoted by Abraham E. Millgram, *Jewish Worship* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), 29.
- 30 Quoted by Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Mentor, 1955) 268-269.
- 31 David F. Ford and Daniel W. Hardy, *Living in Praise: Worshipping and Knowing God* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2005) 19.
- 32 WMANT 87; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001.
- 33 Erbele-Küster, *Lesen*, 68, 109.
- 34 *Lesen*, 112.
- 35 *Lesen*, 112.
- 36 Paul Ramsey, 'Liturgy and Ethics', *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7.2 (1979) 139-171 argued that many liturgical remarks are performative, see 145-146.
- 37 Donald D. Evans, *The Logic of Self-Involvement* (London: SCM, 1963).
- 38 Evans, *Logic*, 14.
- 39 *Logic*, 32.
- 40 *Logic*, 34-35.
- 41 *Logic*, 119.
- 42 *Logic*, 155.
- 43 *Logic*, 52-53.
- 44 *Logic*, 57.

Conversing with the Saints as they converse with Scripture

In conversation with Brian Brock's *Singing the Ethos of God*¹

Bernd Wannenwetsch

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article, l'auteur considère la deuxième partie de l'ouvrage de Brock et examine divers aspects du concept de tradition théologique. Dans une tradition, les accords sont plus intéressants et fondamentaux que les désaccords. On peut se rattacher à une tradition et la présenter à d'autres. La notion de communion des saints permet de retrouver la portée éthique de l'exégèse chrétienne. Il ne s'agit pas là de l'appel à la communauté devenu populaire dans le débat sur l'Écriture et l'éthique depuis le milieu des années 80. Il s'agit plutôt de considérer l'Église comme engendrée par la Parole. L'autorité scripturaire se définit en fonction de sa capacité à produire la vie : cette définition est dépendante d'une pneumatologie développée. L'autorité de l'Écriture apparaît comme un phénomène qui se produit entre l'Écriture et ses lecteurs. Lorsque la communauté reconnaît l'efficacité des livres bibliques qu'elle lit comme Écriture, elle lui reconnaît le pouvoir de façonner la vie de ses membres en fonction du contenu des textes. Cette approche pneumatologique de l'autorité de l'Écriture combinée à la prise en compte de la communion des saints conduit à une critique sévère des conceptions populaires de l'histoire comme d'une séquence d'époques séparant les croyants d'aujourd'hui des saints d'autrefois. Ceci demande qu'on veuille bien méditer l'Écriture en y consacrant du temps. On peut

alors se demander si la quête moderne de méthodes exégétiques objectives, de procédures interprétatives stables et solides, n'est pas au fond due au fait que nous n'avons pas le temps de nous exposer patiemment à l'Écriture. Il faut préserver le caractère étranger de l'Écriture. S'ils méconnaissent l'apport des chrétiens d'autres temps, s'ils ne le laissent pas corriger leur vision des choses, les exégètes contemporains restent prisonniers des schémas de pensée de leur époque, à la fois dans leurs habitudes interprétatives et dans toute autre activité intellectuelle ou pratique. Les exégètes chrétiens d'aujourd'hui doivent non seulement lire l'exégèse des saints, mais, pour s'ouvrir à l'œuvre de transformation divine en eux, apprendre à entendre la voix particulière de ceux-ci comme de guides dans la lecture de l'Écriture. S'il peut y avoir un principe à suivre pour favoriser cela, le voici : ne risque jamais de jugement moral, ne construit jamais d'argument et n'utilise pas la Bible d'une manière qui ne laisse pas de place au Saint-Esprit.

Brock n'aborde pas les Psaumes en offrant son propre apport interprétatif, mais il les étudie, en quelque sorte, « en train d'opérer » : il considère de quelle manière les pères les ont lu et prié et observe ainsi les Psaumes à l'œuvre pour façonner l'intellect, les émotions et la volition de ceux qui avaient l'habitude de chanter l'ethos de Dieu.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In Reaktion auf den zweiten Teil von *Singing the Ethos of God* analysiert dieser Artikel mehrere Aspekte des Konzeptes einer „theologischen Tradition“. In einer Tradition ist Übereinstimmung aufregender und fundamentaler als Dissens. Man kann Teil einer Tradition werden und andere darin einführen. Das Konzept der *sanctorum communio* bringt die ethische Dimension christlicher Exegese neu ans Licht. Dieses Konzept ist von der „Wende zur Gemeinschaft“ zu unterscheiden, die in der Debatte um

Schrift und Ethik seit der Mitte der 1980er Jahre beliebt geworden ist. Das Konzept schlägt ein Verständnis von der Kirche als *creatura verbi* vor, einem Geschöpf des Wortes. Die Autorität der Schrift wird in Bezug auf ihre Kraft definiert, etwas zu erzeugen und ins Leben zu rufen, eine aktive Definition, die auf einer entwickelten Pneumatologie beruht. Die Autorität der Schrift wird als Phänomen zwischen der Schrift und ihren Lesern definiert. Wenn die Gemeinschaft die Kraft der biblischen Bücher an-erkennt, die sie als Schrift liest, dann schreibt sie ihr die Kraft zu, dem Leben der Gemeinschaft auf genau die

Weise Gestalt zu geben, auf die sie in den Texten portraitiert wird. Das Zusammenziehen dieser pneumatologisch organisierten Darstellung der Autorität der Schrift und der Rolle der Gemeinschaft der Heiligen in ihr erzeugt eine scharfe Kritik beliebter Konzeptionen von Geschichte als einer Abfolge von Epochen, die heutige Gläubige von den Heiligen distanziert, die ihnen vorausgegangen sind. Diese Kritik ruft auch eine Bereitschaft hervor, über der Schrift zu „meditieren“, ihr Zeit zu geben. Dies wirft die Frage auf, ob der wahre Grund für die moderne Suche nach objektiven exegetischen Methoden, nach sicheren und stabilen Interpretationsabläufen, auf der Befürchtung beruht, dass wir keine Zeit für die geduldige Auslegung der Schrift haben. Diese Schachzüge sind dazu gedacht, die Fremdheit der Schrift zu bewahren, also den Tendenzen des Menschen entgegenzuwirken, der Fremdheit des Wortes zu entkommen. Ohne die Herausforderung und mögliche Korrektur durch Christen aus anderen Generationen bleiben heutige Exegeten Gefangene der Schemata ihrer eigenen Zeit, in ihren interpretativen Gewohnheiten genau so wie bei jeder anderen

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ABSTRACT

Responding to the second part of *Singing the Ethos of God*, this paper analyses several aspects of the concept of a 'theological tradition'. In a tradition agreement is more exciting and fundamental than disagreement, is something that we can become part of, and can introduce others into. The concept of the *sanctorum communio* recovers the ethical reach of Christian exegesis. This is to be distinguished from the 'turn to community' that has become popular in the scripture and ethics debate since the mid-1980s. It suggests an understanding of the church as *creatura verbi*, a creature of the Word. Scriptural authority is defined in terms of its power to author and bring to life, an active definition resting on a developed pneumatology. The authority of Scripture is described as a phenomenon in between Scripture and its readers. When the community re-cognises the power of the biblical books which they read as Scripture, they acknowledge it as having the power to give shape to their own lives in the very way it is portrayed in the texts. Drawing together this pneumatologically organised account of scriptural authority and the role of the communion of saints within it generates a sharp critique of popular conceptions of history as a sequence of epochs distancing contemporary believers from the saints who have gone before. It also calls forth a willingness to 'meditate' on Scripture, to give it time. This raises the ques-

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1. Tradition as agreement enacted

What can be expected of a paper commenting on a book² in which one does not find much to disagree with? If, after all, we assume that it is *criti-*

intellektuellen oder praktischen Aktivität. Heutige Exegeten müssen nicht nur die Exegese der Heiligen lesen, sondern – um göttliche Transformation willkommen zu heißen – sie müssen auch lernen, ihre unverwechselbaren Stimmen als Zeitgenossen und Führer beim Lesen der Schrift zu hören. Wenn es irgendeine Leitidee für so eine Leseweise gibt, dann lautet sie: Versuche niemals ein moralisches Urteil, baue niemals eine Argumentation auf oder verwende niemals die Bibel für die Zwecke dieser Argumentation auf eine Weise, die dem Heiligen Geist keinen Raum lässt.

Der Artikel schlägt vor, dass folgender methodologisch entscheidender Schachzug diese Betonungen trägt: Brock beginnt mit den Psalmen, aber er tut das nicht, indem er seine eigene interpretative Sicht anbietet, sondern indem er sie quasi „in Aktion“ studiert: Er beobachtet die Wege, auf denen die Väter die Psalmen im Gebet lasen, als Gelegenheit, die Psalmen in Aktion zu beobachten, wie sie den intellektuellen, emotionalen und willensmäßigen Horizont derjenigen formten, die im Singen des Ethos Gottes geübt waren.

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tion of whether the real reason for the modern quest for objective exegetical methods, for safe and stable procedures of interpretation, rests on a worry that we do not have time for patient exposure to Scripture. These moves are intended to preserve the strangeness of Scripture, to thwart human tendencies to escape the strangeness of the Word. Without the challenge and possible correction by Christians through the generations, contemporary exegetes remain prisoners of the schemata of their age, in their interpretative habits as much as in any other intellectual or practical activity. Contemporary Christian exegetes must not only read the exegesis of the saints, but in order to invite divine transformation, must learn to hear their distinctive voices as contemporaries and guides in reading Scripture. If there is any guiding idea for such reading, it is: never attempt a moral judgement, mount an argument, or use the Bible for the purpose of the former, in a way that does not leave space for the Holy Spirit.

The paper suggests that a methodologically decisive move sustains these emphases. Brock begins with the Psalms, yet does so not by offering his own interpretative take but rather studies them, as it were, 'in operation': watching the way in which the fathers prayerfully read them as an opportunity to watch the Psalms in operation, as they shaped the intellectual, emotional and volitional horizon of those who became adept in singing the ethos of God.

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cism that delights and entertains, should we not also assume that an exercise such as this would be tedious at best? This assumption would, however, miss a crucial insight that Brian Brock offers us in

his *Singing the Ethos of God*: the whole project is, after all, driven by the conviction that what really is exciting is not disagreement but agreement. More demanding and more interesting than dwelling on disagreement is to find out how it can be that individuals, people and generations, for all their differences, find themselves in agreement on things that really matter. To believe agreement is more exciting and fundamental than disagreement is just another way of saying that there is such a thing as tradition, a form of agreement we wish to be part of.

Singing the Ethos of God defines 'tradition' precisely in such terms: 'I understand tradition as an enacted form of agreement' (100). As such enacted agreement sustained over time, Brock hastens to add, tradition is also what makes those moments of disagreement that occur within its stream both possible and productive. But the emphasis remains on agreement: 'Tradition is a form of agreement into which we introduce people' (100) – and ourselves, as I think we should hasten to add, since we can only issue an invitation to enter a tradition from within.

I shall inquire into the nature of this agreement that we call 'tradition' below and content myself at this point with the preliminary conclusion that whatever the reader may find wanting in my response to Brock's book will have to be my fault, not a result of the predictable boredom that allegedly comes with too much agreement. Given my stated points of agreement with Brock and the complexity of his text, I will do little more than comment upon what I find particularly exciting in the text and those insights that strike me as particularly productive for further development. I will do so mainly by focusing on the book's sections on Augustine and Luther, which certainly constitute the heart of the book – not only in terms of the respective weight and length of the material, but also in terms of where they direct the reader's awareness and interest. The chapters on the exegetical praxis of Augustine and Luther are framed by chapters that analyse the relative poverty of our contemporary 'Bible-and-ethics' debate and the corresponding praxis it ensues, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by a concluding chapter that attempts some first steps in applying the lessons learnt from the richer praxis of the fathers. But the lessons themselves are mainly found in the chapters under the heading 'Listening to the saints encountering the ethos of Scripture'.

2. Journeying into the strange new world of the Bible

A first observation that impresses itself on the reader about the way the chapters work together as a whole – and rather successfully in my opinion – is this: The first part not only gives a useful survey of various attempts to come to terms with the 'Bible-and-ethics' problem, including pointers as to where precisely the shortcomings of each individual approach are; its particular value lies in going beyond the common 'survey' standard by revealing the hidden commonalities of these approaches. Central to the mainstream approaches that Brock reviews is not this or that individual shortcoming, but a shared sense of estrangement from Scripture that these approaches in various ways all try to 'fix'.

Brock's own suggestion, however – the lesson he thinks we need to learn from the two church fathers he interrogates – is precisely that we *must abstain from flying from the strangeness of the Word*. According to Brock, we must abstain from any attempt to overcome this strangeness, whether by building hermeneutical bridges, by reducing the scope of the Bible's authority (as liberal accounts tend to) or by simply ignoring the estrangement altogether (as biblicist accounts tend to). Rather, as the fathers and Luther in particular understood so well, we need to accept the 'foreignness' of Scripture as the genuine working space of the Holy Spirit to eventually lure us into its strange new world. This strange new world is a scriptural cosmos where those addressed are saved through and transformed by a *verbum alienum* – a word that reaches them from outside of themselves, a message that they could not have invented or told themselves: 'From their [the fathers'] Psalm exegesis we learn that the foreignness of the Bible, properly understood, is the foreignness of life in the Spirit within which faith awakens to discover itself' (xix).

Central to the problem of the estrangement of our moral discourses from Scripture is, as I understand Brock, that it is essentially an estrangement of the heart. We may liken the problem to a marriage in emotionally barren times. While there still exist forms of co-existence, of communication and intercourse, with the connection of souls being lost, all such other forms are bound to become brittle eventually. The problem of the estrangement of the souls cannot remain and be kept external to these other spheres of engagement – at least not for very long.

One instructive case in point regarding the 'relationship' between the Scriptures and their readers is presented in Augustine's *Confessions*, in which the great African narrates, as Brock puts it, his 'journey into Scripture' (x): in it, the famous auto-biographer tells the tale of his conversion as one fundamentally of moral rather than intellectual estrangement. Although Augustine describes his personal discovery with a strong prerogative on the moral aspect, we should not too quickly assume that the intellectual and moral dimensions are necessarily in competition here. Estrangement is always as complex as the relationship itself. Although it might well make itself felt in a particularly painful way in one peculiar respect (such as the moral one), we should not infer from this that, in principle, we can understand (intellectually) another person without positioning ourselves properly (morally) towards the other.

Losing soul connection means to become estranged in all other respects also: intellectual, emotional, moral. In characterising what happened in and through Augustine's conversion, Brock perceptively puts this same intrinsic connection in positive terms: 'This God-given delight in God led him [Augustine] with ever-increased joy to Scripture, especially the Psalms, and his praying of the Psalms kindled a genuine love for God that put to flight his untruth, deceit, and vanity' (x).

In other words, what Augustine found himself gifted with in his newly-found delight in Scripture was at the same time the overcoming of his intellectual, volitional and moral estrangement from it. To have put one's heart aright needs to come first, but this is not a prioritising of the emotional over other human faculties. In biblical terms, the 'heart' is not itself a human faculty (as represented by a single organ), but rather represents the 'positioned-ness', the orientation of all human faculties as it is given in any human being.³

3. Authority 'in between': beyond the communitarian turn

The prominence of the example of Augustine's biographical 'journeying into Scripture' in Brock's book indicates that *Singing the Ethos of God* is not advocating a 'communitarian' model of Scripture and ethics in which the mode of reading is determined mainly or exclusively by the habits of the readers' community. As Brock reminds us, in becoming a Christian, Augustine had to learn to rid himself of the habits of reading the Bible which

he had learnt in his Manichean community, such as contempt for the Old Testament and other modes of highly selective and idiosyncratic reading. 'He now saw how communities can blind us to Scripture, making it inaccessible' (x).

We can comfortably put this insight in the language of Reformation theology: To understand the church as *creatura verbi*, a creature of the Word, and not the other way round – the word as a creature of the church – marks a profound difference from the 'turn to community' that has become popular in the 'Scripture and Ethics' debate since the mid 1980s, when the insight was hailed that the authority of the Bible cannot be one 'in and of the book itself', that is in abstraction from the believing community. While this was certainly a valid point to make, the movement that Brock labels 'communitarian ethics' often lacked theological resources to distance itself from more far-reaching claims as they were associated with post-modern aesthetics of perception. To the degree in which the perspective of the latter was adopted, the turn to community appeared to suggest that the believing community itself was to 'bestow' authority on the book which it took to be normative. The language of 'bestowal' or 'ascription' in regards to the peculiar authority of Scripture nourished the mistaken assumption that it could ever be the church's resolution or decision to accept the Bible as authority and thereby establish it in the first place.

However, even the process of so-called 'canonisation' was, in fact, not a decision made by any ecclesiastical authority as regards which individual books should go into the canon, but merely a process of public recognition of the number of scriptural writings that had long proven authoritative for the congregations of the ecumenical Church.

A communitarian model (at least when not chastened pneumatologically), on the other hand, would not only underestimate the degree to which communities are susceptible to corruption in their habits of interpreting,⁴ but also profoundly misunderstand the nature of scriptural authority. While certainly not independent of the respective communities of believers, the authority of Holy Scripture cannot be said to be a mere function of the collective will of those communities; and while scriptural authority is not immediately given with any inert qualities of the text (its inerrancy or lack of inner contradictions, or any other such *affectio scripturae*), it is not separable from the text either. The authority of Scripture is best described as a phenomenon *in between* – between the book and

its readers. Not belonging to either of them exclusively, scriptural authority is what *happens* within the engagement of one with the other: when the community re-cognizes the power of the biblical books which they read as Scripture, as the power to give shape to their own lives in the very way it is portrayed in the texts.

'Authority', a word derived from the Latin *authoritas*, literally means authorship, the power to originate and bring to life. And it is wholly appropriate to understand the authority of Scripture accordingly: as the power to 'author' the life-stories of those who read it perceptively and obediently, so as to enable them eventually to live their lives individually and communally as a 'Performing the Scriptures'.⁵

4. Doxologies and anti-doxologies

But what, then, does it mean to read Scripture appropriately? That is, how are we to read Scripture in a way which does not undermine but rather reflects a proper understanding of its authority? The answer that *Singing the Ethos of God* suggests is this: to read Scripture in a congenial fashion means to do so as a form of praise or 'doxological exegesis' which is archetypically demonstrated in the communal chanting of the Psalter. Praise is in itself already morally qualified, as Brock draws from reading Luther in particular, in that praising God inevitably implies the acknowledgement of our sinfulness and neediness, as well as a repenting of and abstaining from the anti-doxologies that abound at any given time in history and constantly tempt us into singing another sort of song: either denouncing God's bountiful creation as the worst of all possible worlds and making our praise dependent on a give-and-take-rationale, or perverting the thanks owed to the Creator by saying *ego feci*: world, history, human excellence – all my own work (210-232).⁶

Since the Psalms are prime amongst divine offers to assist human beings to abstain from enforced anti-doxologies and their fatal moral consequences, *Singing the Ethos of God*, along with the fathers, identifies the Psalter as the best possible place to begin. In a methodologically decisive move, Brock begins with the Psalms, yet does so not by offering his own interpretative take, but rather studies them, as it were, 'in operation': watching the way in which the fathers prayerfully read them as an opportunity to watch the psalms in operation, as they shaped the intellectual, emotional and voli-

tional horizon of those who became adept in singing the ethos of God:

It is a study in Christian moral theology that I have undertaken by way of an analysis of the practices of the Christian exegetical tradition.... The contemporary academic Bible-and-ethics discussion remains largely determined by the question of *how* Scripture might be understood as a moral guide, preparing for exegesis rather than engaging in it. In so doing, such treatments rarely glimpse the possibility that exegesis might be a form of praise (xix-xv).

Spiritual instruction inevitably means learning by unlearning – adopting new things by renouncing old ones. What then, according to Brock, are the attitudes, opinions and prejudices that need to be overcome and unlearned? Prime amongst them is what he calls the 'modern obsession with method' (xiii), as it is characterised by a belief in summarising, objectivity and control. Since the Scriptures refuse to be summarised, objectified and put under interpretative control, the challenge at hand is to 'to give up the attempt to fit the Bible into a pre-conceived moral universe' (xii).

As remedy for the impoverishment that has come to be associated with the reign of modern exegesis and its new canon that has been organised around a number of historical critical methods, Brock suggests the following:

To combat the modern obsession with method, I approach this exegetical tradition as an ineradicably social 'acoustic space', within which one learns practical skills of handling and appropriating Scripture (xiii).

And he suggests entering this space by 'watching the saints interpret Scripture. This approach is appropriate, as it proves to be in keeping with the tradition itself:

For millennia Israel and the church have not gathered around methodological agreement, of even a definitive translation or canon. They have translated, read, argued, and gathered for worship around a group of texts they called Scripture, which functioned to orient their praise of God and God's works (xiii).

Since by now the critical force of Brock's approach should have become obvious, it would seem useful to take a closer look at a number of familiar yet problematic attitudes, assumptions and prejudices that Brock's account challenges – explicitly or implicitly.

5. Which exegesis? Whose naïveté?

A first such prejudice would be to assume that pre-modern exegesis was naïve or even simplistic. Watching Brock as he is watching the fathers do their theological expositions of the Psalms is therapeutic in this regard, as it guides the reader into a world of bold and exciting theological discoveries that amply demonstrate how subtle and sophisticated pre-modern exegesis could be. Confronted with a surplus of theological insights on every page that draws on Augustine's and Luther's scriptural expositions, we are actually provoked into asking whether it is not our contemporary exegesis that represents a notable reduction of complexity: could it be that the striving for straightforward methods and safe methodological grounds reflects not only the desire for more objective, but also for less complex ways of reading?

Brock quotes Luther in a revealing and convicting statement (convicting us, that is, not Luther). Commenting on Psalm 1:2, 'Blessed is the man who meditates on the law day and night', Luther remarks:

We must take the utmost care that we do not quickly believe our own idea and that we must expound Scripture in all humility and reverence, because Scripture is the stone of offence and rock of scandal for those who are in a hurry. But Scripture turns that rock into pools of water for those who meditate on the law of the Lord (184).

The Hebrew term that is translated here by 'meditating' suggests a constant chewing, chanting and murmuring of what is read; hence Luther associates this practice with patience, which is further endorsed by the addition of 'night and day'. The problem for modern readers of this statement is, of course, that it would be hard to deny that if there was ever a generation of readers in a hurry, it must be ours. Would it, therefore, be wholly inappropriate to speculate that the real reason for our quest for objective methods, for safe and stable procedures of interpretation, is that we are notoriously in a hurry? That we (think we) do not have time for the sort of patient exposure to Scripture and its world that Luther and Augustine thought to be the condition *sine qua non* for our discovering and tapping the richness of Scriptural instruction?

6. Fathers or precursors? Against the belief in 'epochs'

A second belief to be abrogated when singing the ethos of God in the way Brock commends, is, I suggest, the belief in the idea of the *epoch*. This idea reckons with a sequence of 'ages' that we can explain by reference to their respective typical characteristics. Knowledge of such characteristics will, in turn, permit us to explain to ourselves individual authors or movements within any particular one such age on the basis of what we (think we) know of the respective epoch in general.

The difficulty with this idea is that it defies theological convention. To enter in a conversation with the saints, as Brock suggests and practices in *Singing the Ethos of God*, means to take seriously the notion of *communio sanctorum* as a communion that 'works' not only synchronically but also diachronically – not only contemporaneously within a given period but also across different periods of time. The creedal belief in the community of saints thus undermines the idea of history as a sequential series of 'ages' (antiquity, early, high and late middle ages, modernity, etc.). It undermines belief in epochs that are complete and rounded as each gives way to the respective next, thus allowing the previous epochs to be defined, explained and superseded by the respective next.

We can only believe *either* in epochs *or* in tradition, and those who confess the *communio sanctorum* certainly do the latter. Within a framework of history as an unfolding sequence of epochs, fathers such as Augustine or Luther could only be of interest as *precursors* – historical figures that can and need to be explained in order for us to better understand how we have come to be who we are. Under the auspices of an epochalist understanding of history, we may well study such figures of the past with respect or even affection, but such homage is effectively motivated by our desire to explain in order to understand, or more precisely, to explain *them* in order to understand *ourselves*. We think that if we can decipher the patterns, reasons and contexts, according to which they thought the way they thought, acted the way they acted, and read the Scripture the way they read it (applying their 'pre-modern hermeneutics'), we will be better placed to say who we are – as those who inherited, adopted or abandoned their ways in particular configurations.

In contrast to this attitude, what must confessing the *communio sanctorum* entail for our engage-

ment with those who lived and thought before us? Perceived as saints amongst saints, these 'figures of the past' are understood to form 'the cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1) – eminent brothers and sisters who can be interrogated with the expectation that they have something to tell us today. Fathers (and mothers) of the church do not have a past to be explained, but a voice to be listened to. Instead of being separated from us by a wide and ugly ditch of history, fathers and mothers in faith assume a moral, intellectual and affective equidistance to us which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Together with us, they form what Paul conceived as a communion of discernment (Romans 12:2) that spans all times. As Brock puts it: 'In this sense, [even] the disciples have no advantage: we are all contemporaries with Christ' (xix).

7. Reading against the schemata of our age

Speaking of the modern belief in 'ages' that defies a theological understanding and practice of 'conversing amongst the saints', it is ironic to note how Paul, in the same context of Romans 12, speaks of our being entrapped in the 'schemata' of 'this *aion*'. By 'this *aion*' Paul does not refer to the particular 'historical context' in which he and his readers lived and which might be obsolete today, but to *any* (past, present, and future) experience of contemporaneity and the short-sightedness and lack of critical distance that comes with our immersion in it.

Do not be conformed to this world time but be transformed by the renewing of your perception, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to every one among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think... because we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another (Rom 12:1-5, translation mine).

In this passage, Paul summons the community to a transformation which entails the abdication of the schemata of this world as a result of the renewal of the mind. This renewal of the mind is necessary, given the schematising power of the *aion*. The Greek is *mē syshēmatizesthe* – literally, 'do not be made one with the schemata of this *aion*'. Here the passive voice is no less in place than it is in the subsequent call to be transformed: let yourselves

be transformed.⁷ The latter case is certainly a grammatical 'divine passive' – the transformation cannot be a mere 're-thinking' of things as resulting from an intensified effort by the human mind itself. A new mind can only be a gift, part and parcel of the *kainē ktisis*, God's creation of a new humanity, so that the imperative can only mean that it is necessary to watch out for God's activity of renewing. Yet, the initial call *mē syshēmatizesthe* has a passive voice too, which indicates, as James Dunn put it, the 'recognition of a power or force which moulds character and conduct and which "this age" exercises'.⁸ Mainstream patterns of thought are so ubiquitous and powerful that we don't even recognize their influence; they have become a sort of second skin to us.

How, then, does the Spirit break through this second skin and help us un-learn the schemata of the age? The example that Paul himself gives in this context is related to the church as body of Christ. What the envisioned transformation is meant to overcome is 'disordered' thinking about the relationship of members to each other and to the whole body, and in particular *hyperphronein*, 'to think more highly of oneself'.

In terms of our relating to 'pre-modern' exegesis, we can now see how the need for transformation and liberation from the otherwise irresistible 'schemata' of our age, of which Paul speaks, is intrinsically linked with the affirmation and appreciation of previous generations and their reading of Scripture.

Luther seems to have been acutely aware of the hermeneutical implications that a Pauline ecclesiology would have that reckons with the church as a community of discernment which lives by the liberation that the gospel affords from the schemata of the *aion*:

I see some things that blessed Augustine did not see; on the other hand, I know that others will see many things that I do not see. What recourse do we have but to be of mutual help to one another and to forgive those who fall, since we ourselves have already fallen or are about to fall.⁹

We notice that Luther understands the communion of interpreters not only as mutually enriching but also as in need of mutual forgiving, even in an interpretative context, and that he perceives the situation of himself and his time as interpreters of Scripture as one of those who 'are about to fall'. Without the challenge and possible correc-

tion through the fathers and other generations, we remain prisoners of the schemata of our age – in our interpretative habits as much as in any other intellectual or practical aspect. This is why it is precisely the perceived ‘strangeness’ of Scripture and of past generations which is the key to help us distance ourselves from our own biases or epistemological and moral short-sightedness. If we ‘honour’ the saints by interrogating their witness with an open mind, exploring their different views and arguments, we are invited to take their oddness as an invitation to learn to see our own oddness – perhaps as for the first time. Conversing with them, then, means listening to their voices as addressing us today, instead of explaining away the potential challenge they might represent to us. To mark the contrast once again: the logic of epochs and precursors eradicates the otherness of the fathers. Their strangeness is not permitted to challenge us, as we only allow it to reveal the degree in which *they* were, as it were, challenged by pre-enlightened patterns of perception, superstition, christological supersessionism and other such instances of anachronistic pathology. In such a perspective, even when their difference from us is acknowledge and stressed, they remain eventually and essentially ‘us’, insofar as their being different is just another means of explaining us to ourselves in reassuring us of what we managed to leave behind.

8. Room for the Spirit: against pneumatological deism

To understand oneself, in contrast, as part of a living tradition which is conceived and kept alive as a coherent conversation across generations through the ages, is, of course, a bold claim that we need to understand as resting on a specific and quite demanding conviction. Tradition as a lively trans-generational conversation is only intelligible when based on the pneumatological conviction that it is the same Spirit who has driven their exegesis and life witness, who is calling us today. It is only this same Spirit who makes this conversation possible, meaningful and even imperative.

At this point, I would even suggest that it is such a pneumatological imperative that drives the whole Brock project. As the book amply demonstrates, we can learn many things from the fathers and their biblical witness. But if there is a sort of ‘methodological’ master rule that we can adopt from our engaging them, it will have to be this: never attempt a moral judgement, a mounting of

an argument, or, indeed, the use of the Bible for the purpose of the former, which does not leave space for the Holy Spirit. Any mode of reading the Bible or of coming to a conclusion or judgement in the context of Christian moral reasoning should therefore test itself as to whether it confronts or rather conforms with the motto *etsi spiritus sanctus non daretur* (‘as if the Holy Spirit was not given’).

The idea of leaving space for the Spirit may sound like a nice and pious suggestion, but it is actually rather critical if not polemical with respect to a number of (apparently) pious attitudes and dispositions. Biblicist modes of using the Bible, for example, do very well without the Spirit. While the Spirit is usually accounted for in such approaches, in that he is presumed to have been influential for the coming into being of the sacred text, such approaches nevertheless tend to assume that the divinely inspired and infallible text is now fully given into human hands, where it only needs to be accurately quoted, properly applied and obeyed. At this point, the Spirit may be invoked for a second time, as a sort of guarantor in the background that all goes well in the process; but – again – the process of application itself is easily assumed to be so waterproof, self-explanatory and mechanical that there is hardly any real breathing space left for the Spirit. However, this ‘pneumatological deism’, as I would call it, is rather widespread and by no means exclusive to biblicist accounts.

Other attempts to use the Bible – even from a rather opposite ideological quarter – are often no less deist in pneumatological respect. They seek to follow their own waterproof procedure of, say, deducing moral conclusions from a series of syllogistic operations based on moral maxims such as the categorical imperative. God’s living Spirit will, however, never be (caught up and domesticated) *in* the letter that we quote or *in* the procedure we follow. He remains forever external and free, quite in the way in which and in accordance with which the doctrinal tradition has spoken of the Spirit’s personal qualities: his freedom to address us via the external word, his own will in opposition to our will, his ways beyond our imagination, and so forth.

Any pneumatological deism that assumes the Spirit to be ‘part’ of an operation we perform, as a guarantee in the background or an invisible stable basis, is eventually rooted in a triumphalist understanding of our situation: the spirit with us, inside us¹⁰ – a presumption that fuelled pious spiritualist movements over the centuries as well as versions

of liberal cultural Protestantism. Is it perhaps this (unrecognized) triumphalist misunderstanding of the Spirit that we think we 'have within us', always with us and behind us, that makes us believe in procedures – *ex opere operato* – and which is ultimately accountable for the 'obsession with method' that Brock takes as characteristic of our time?

9. The 'voices' of the saints and the 'voice' of Scripture

Brock's way of resisting such a triumphalist pneumatological deism is to reckon with the 'voice' of Scripture, just as he reckons with the voices of the saints. A living voice hits our ears and addresses us, instead of being addressed by us in the first place; its sense of direction and communicative prowess cannot be domesticated into the idea of a 'content' that we can mine, manage and master.¹¹ To reckon with the voice of Scripture is, of course, to reckon with the voice of God himself through the Spirit, the author of the Scriptures. The Hebrew Scriptures are paradigmatic for this understanding, as for Israel God and the Torah were inseparable. The Torah was not understood as a sort of propositional deposit that God left behind on a visit to the earth, but rather as the presence of God, as God-self in the actual turning to and addressing of his people. This is why the Psalms show the same unrestricted passion and love for the Torah as was due to God himself.¹²

In the process of his own exegesis of select psalms in the third part of the book ('Singing the Ethos of God'), Brock draws on insights that he gleaned from Augustine and Luther in the second part of the book ('Listening to the Saints Encountering the Ethos of Scripture'), but only in a rather *ad hoc* fashion – just as it suits him in any given moment. In the chapters that analyse the two fathers' exegesis of the Psalter, Brock made the attempt to highlight their characteristic moves in conceptual regard and identify certain 'methodological ground rules' (184). But he resists 'applying' these insights and rules in a methodically straightforward fashion when it comes to his own exegesis in the final part of the book. Rather than directly emulating the fathers' exegesis, Brock engages them in his own conversation with the biblical witness. He engages their conversing with Scripture in his own conversing with Scripture. This approach is, I take it, intended to make their voices heard in a way that is not guided by the interest to compare, judge, explain or otherwise accommodate their contribu-

tions, but rather to chime in with the larger conversation that is the Christian theological tradition.

Augustine, Luther and other representatives of the tradition, with whom we are familiar, are then invited to feed, as it were, our thoughts, insights and questions in a way that allows the exegete today to go on with her own work. The *ad hoc* character of our engaging their voices is, then, precisely a way of methodologically accounting for the freedom of the Spirit. Engaging the voices of the fathers *ad hoc* for our own exposition of Scripture has nothing to do with interpretative liberty or arbitrariness but with what Brock calls positioning ourselves within the acoustic realm of Scripture – a realm which is more than the text, as it is the text sung – a song that encompasses the voices and readings of previous generations together with our own.

But *what* needs to be heard in any given moment and historical circumstance – which insight of which author within the acoustic realm of Scripture is to be given prominence in our hearing – cannot be predetermined. It must be left to the very dynamic of the procedure: the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our final observation is closely connected with these pneumatological considerations. There seems to be a strange inconsistency in Brock's use of metaphors in his describing of the nature of his project. On the one hand, he speaks of '*Listening to the Saints Encountering the Ethos of Scripture*' (Part II) and describes the exegetical tradition as a social acoustic space; on the other hand he suggests what he is doing is '*watching* the saints interpret Scripture'.¹³ Although the difference between what we may say respectively by employing *either* aural *or* visual metaphors can be rather significant, I suspect this variance of language in describing the nature of his project is deliberate.

Whether intended or not by the author, I would like to offer the following constructive interpretation of the apparent inconsistency. What I think Brock is actually doing in this book is *watching* the saints interpret Scripture – and what he intends by doing the former is to *listen* to their voices as they address us today. *Watching* the saints in operation is a work that can and needs to be done in its own operative rigour and transparency: by way of analysing their typical or surprising moves and manoeuvres and by naming the interpretative principles that we can make out as underlying their exegetical practice. Like an apprentice who looks over the shoulder of his or her master, we may wish to try ourselves by emulating these moves, develop

the skills we observe with them, and so forth.

The master-apprentice model of learning by emulating is, however, not sufficient. 'Watching' the saints interpret Scripture – describing their moves – can only be a preparing the way for the task of actually 'listening' to the voices of the saints as they sing the ethos of God. And listening to the voices of the saints as they sing the ethos of God is, in turn, only a way of preparing us to listen to the voice of God himself in our own reading of the Bible as Scripture.

Characterising these multiple operative 'layers' in the trans-generational conversation that is the Christian tradition of Scriptural exposition may sound complicated, but part of the complication is owed to the distinctive purposes of practical and theoretical engagement. It is usually easier to engage in good practice than it is to describe it on a theoretical level. But more important than the practical – theoretical divide is the standard of mediation (as opposed to immediacy) that is pneumatologically required in our reading of Scripture, so that we (to use Luther's expression) always remain pupils of the Spirit.

The Spirit reserves much for Himself, so that we may always remain His pupils. There is much that He reveals only to lure us on, much the He gives only to stir us up. And, as Augustine has put it so clearly, if no human being has ever spoken in such a way that every one understood him in all particulars, how much more is it true that the Holy Spirit alone has an understanding of all His own words!... Our life is one of beginning and of growth, not one of consummation.¹⁴

In the light of this pneumatological qualification, what higher praise could be sung of a book than to praise its character as a genuine new beginning? *Singing the Ethos of God* is just such a book that marks a hopeful new beginning in the 'Bible-and-ethics' discourse which it describes; and it does so in a fashion that helps prepare the way for the new beginning which is promised those who join the journey of the fathers and the whole Christian tradition of learning to listen to God's living voice as it addresses us in our reading of Scripture.

Dr. Bernd Wannenwetsch is University Lecturer in Ethics at Oxford University and Fellow of Harris Manchester College. Recent publications include *Political Worship* (Oxford University Press, paperback 2009) and *Who Am I? Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theology Through His Poetry* (T&T Clark, 2009).

Notes

- 1 This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Annual Book Colloquium of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics (KLICE), Tyndale House, Cambridge, 3-4 September 2008.
- 2 Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God. On the place of Christian Ethics in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Page references in the text refer to this publication.
- 3 'The "heart" in the biblical sense is not the inner life, but the whole man in relation to God.' Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Enlarged edition, ed. by Eberhard Bethge (London: SCM, 1971) 346.
- 4 For an instructive example, see the analysis by Stephen Fowl and Gregory Jones of the exegetical justification of the apartheid system through the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Stephen E. Fowl and L. Gregory Jones, *Reading in Communion. Scripture and Ethics in Christian Life* (Biblical Foundations in Theology; London: SPCK, 1991) 96-109.
- 5 Nicholas Lash, 'Performing the Scriptures', in his *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London: SCM, 1986) 37-46.
- 6 On Luther's critical application of Aristotle's scheme of the four causes in the context of which the reformer characterizes sinful self-deception in terms of human usurpation of the original cause and final cause (*ego feci*), see Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology. A Contemporary Interpretation*, transl. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 158-162.
- 7 For a fuller account of this see Bernd Wannenwetsch, 'Members of one another. Charis, ministry and representation. A politico-ecclesial reading of Romans 12' in *A royal priesthood. The use of the Bible ethically and politically*, ed. by Craig Bartholomew, Jonathan Chaplin a.o. (Carlisle & Grand Rapids: Paternoster & Zondervan, 2002) 196-220.
- 8 James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*. Word Biblical Commentary vol. 38B (Dallas: Word, 1988) 712, who opts for the passive rather than the middle voice.
- 9 Martin Luther, 'Psalm 1 and 2, from Works on the first twenty-two Psalms, 1519 to 1521: A composite translation', in *Luther's Works* vol. 14, *Selected Psalms III*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958) 285, quoted in Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God*, 170.
- 10 This notion is reminiscent of Luther's mistaken translation of *entos hymōn* in Lk 17: 21 ('the kingdom is inside of you – *inwendig in euch* – instead of 'in our midst' – in Jesus) which stimulated influential cultural Protestant programmes like the one of Ernst Troeltsch. On this see Bernd Wannenwetsch, 'Kritik der Innerlichkeit. Evangelische praxis pieta-

tis als gottesdienstliche Frömmigkeit', in *Management und Spiritualität*. EPD Dokumentation 44/45 (2008) 54-68.

- 11 See Bernd Wannenwetsch, "Take heed what ye hear": Listening as a moral, transcendental and transformative act', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 2009 (in press).
- 12 See Bernd Wannenwetsch, "Walking the torah":

explorer le champ moral a la lumière des commandements de Dieu' in *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 82 (2008) 371-387.

- 13 Emphases mine.

- 14 Martin Luther, cf. note 9, 283-284, quoted and commented on in Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God*, 169.

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On Finding Our Place: Christian Ethics in God's reality¹

Hans G. Ulrich

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Erwiderung auf *Singing the Ethos of God* hebt auf die Annahmen ab, die dem Buch als Ganzem unterliegen. Sie beginnt mit der Beobachtung, dass die Art des Kommentars, den Brock vorschlägt und modellhaft vorführt, mehr jüdischem Midrasch als traditionellem christlichem Kommentar ähnelt. Wie beim Midrasch ist das Ziel nicht eine endgültige Analyse oder Erklärung, sondern ein wachsendes Bewusstsein dafür, was einen angemessenen Kommentar zu einem biblischen Text konstituiert und was außerhalb der Grammatik steht, die er in seinen Lesern hervorruft.

Der Artikel untersucht danach, in welchem Sinne Brocks Projekt ein realistisches ist und kommt zu einem positiven Schluss, der auf Brocks Ansicht beruht, dass die göttliche Heilsordnung das passende Umfeld für menschliches Leben ist. Diese Beobachtung erklärt, dass der Buchtitel – insbesondere die Sprache vom „Ethos Gottes“ – als Benennung derjenigen Praxis interpretiert wird, die mit dem wachsenden Bewusstsein dafür assoziiert wird, dass man sich innerhalb des Lebensraumes der Werke Gottes bewegt. Dieses *aethos* ist die einzige Sphäre, in der man sich wahres Leben aneignen kann. Singen ist dann eine bestimmte Praxis einer Ethik nach dem *aethos* Gottes. Durch den begriff *aethos* positioniert, wird der Begriff „Ethik“ als diejenige Praxis definiert, die die Bedeutung des Lebens innerhalb dieses Kontextes explizit macht. Die Disziplin einer christlichen Ethik verweist auf die Verortung dieses Raumes und versucht anzudeuten, was es bedeuten könnte, sich im Einklang mit ihm

zu bewegen. Der Titel artikuliert daher eine Umkehrung der üblichen Weisen, über „den Gebrauch der Schrift in der Ethik“ oder „den Platz der Schrift in der Ethik“ zu sprechen, eine umgedrehte Formulierung, die genau auf das hinweist, was „Ethos“ bedeutet. Nach der Verortung von „Ethik“ innerhalb der „Schrift“ zu fragen heißt, die übliche Annahme umzudrehen, dass der angemessene Ort der Schrift innerhalb unserer ethischen Praktiken ist. Christliche Ethik wird neu verortet in der Ausrichtung auf die Frage, wie man mit Gott lebt, was wiederum ein Reflex des Bekenntnisses ist, dass Gott mit den Menschen leben will. Innerhalb dieser Darstellung wird die Schrift im Sinne des Konzeptes der Tora verstanden, der „zweiten Schöpfung“, in der zu leben und zu atmen die Menschen berufen sind. Auch dem Glauben wird eine zentrale Rolle eingeräumt, und er wird als Vertrauen in Gottes Wort und Verheißungen definiert, die daher ein *verbum externum* bleiben müssen, ein Objekt für das Vertrauen und die Hoffnung, das sich der Gläubige niemals als eigenen Besitz einverleiben kann.

Eine abschließende Diskussion betont, dass die zentrale Stellung der Anbetung und Doxologie im Buch *Singing* eine Form von politischer Koexistenz und Interaktion von Menschen benennt, die von Gottes Werk angestoßen wird. Weil der theologische Ort von Gebet und Lob der Ort der betenden Gemeinschaft vor Gott ist, wird das Zusammensein durch eine facettenreiche Praxis erzeugt, die als erlösender Prozess beschrieben werden kann, ein eschatologisch offener und daher dynamischer Zustand des Wandels mit Gott. Eine Ethik der Doxologie ist daher von Anfang an sowohl politisch als auch dynamisch.

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article met en évidence certains présupposés qui sous-tendent l'ouvrage de Brock dans son ensemble. L'auteur note d'abord que le genre du commentaire proposé par Brock se rapproche davantage du midrash juif que du commentaire chrétien traditionnel. Son but n'est en effet pas l'analyse et l'explication du sens, mais une meilleure appréhension de ce qui constitue un commentaire approprié d'un texte biblique et de ce qui se situe en dehors de la grammaire à laquelle le texte invite ses lecteurs.

L'auteur cherche à déterminer dans quelle mesure le projet de Brock est réaliste et il conclut par l'affirmative, en s'appuyant sur l'idée selon laquelle l'économie divine est l'environnement approprié pour la vie humaine. Ainsi, la référence à l'éthos de Dieu dans le titre du livre est comprise comme se référant à la pratique qui découle d'une conscience grandissante de se mouvoir dans le monde où Dieu agit. C'est là le seul lieu où l'on peut recevoir la vie véritable. Le chant est la pratique particulière d'une éthique conforme à l'éthos de Dieu. Le terme d'éthique est ici défini comme la pratique de rendre explicite ce que vivre dans ce contexte signifie. L'éthique

chrétienne doit indiquer où se trouve ce lieu et ce que signifie se mouvoir selon ce lieu. Il ne s'agit donc plus de parler du rôle de l'Écriture dans l'éthique, mais de celui de l'éthique dans l'Écriture. L'éthique chrétienne est ainsi réorientée vers la question de savoir comment vivre avec Dieu, ce qui découle de la confession de la volonté de Dieu de vivre avec les humains. L'Écriture est alors comprise en terme de Torah et de seconde création au sein de laquelle les humains sont invités à vivre et à respirer. La foi joue là un rôle central : elle se définit comme la confiance en la parole et la promesse de Dieu qui doit demeurer une parole extérieure à l'homme, objet de foi

et d'espérance qui ne peut jamais devenir la possession du croyant.

L'auteur conclut en soulignant que le caractère central du culte et de la doxologie dans le livre conduit à une forme de coexistence politique humaine et à une interaction suscitée par l'œuvre divine. Puisque le lieu de la prière et de la louange se situe devant Dieu et au sein de la communauté de prière, une unité se crée par la pratique variée qui peut se décrire comme le processus rédempteur, eschatologiquement ouvert et donc dynamique, qu'est la marche avec Dieu.

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SUMMARY

This response to *Singing the Ethos of God* draws out some of the assumptions that underlie the book as a whole. It begins by noting that the form of commentary Brock proposes and models functions more like Jewish midrash than traditional Christian commentary. Like midrash, the aim is not final analysis or explanation, but a growing awareness of what constitutes an appropriate comment on a biblical text, and what stands outside the grammar it calls forth from its readers.

The paper then examines the sense in which Brock's project is realist, concluding in the affirmative, based on Brock's affirmation that the proper environment of human life is the divine economy. This observation explicates that the book's title, specifically the language of the 'ethos of God', is interpreted as naming the praxis associated with becoming more explicitly aware of moving within the habitat of God's works. This *aethos* is the only sphere in which true life is appropriated. Singing then is the particular praxis of an ethics according to the *aethos* of God. As situated by the term *aethos*, the term 'ethics' is defined as the praxis of making what it means to live within that context explicit. The discipline of Christian ethics indicates the location of this place and space, and attempts to indicate what it might mean to move according to it. The title thus articulates an inversion of

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the usual ways of talking about 'the use of Scripture in ethics' or 'the place of Scripture in ethics', an inverse formulation that points exactly to what 'ethos' means. To ask about the location of 'ethics' within 'Scripture' is to invert the common assumption that the proper location for Scripture is within our ethical practices. Christian ethics is resituated as directed to the question of how to live with God, a reflex of the confession that God wants to live with humans. Within this account, Scripture is understood in terms of the concept of torah, the 'second creation' in which human beings are called to live and breathe. Faith is also granted a central role, defined as trust in God's Word and promise which must therefore remain a *verbum externum*, an object of trust and hope that can never be incorporated as a possession of the believer.

A concluding discussion emphasises that the centrality of worship and doxology in *Singing* names a form of human political coexistence and interaction initiated by God's work. Because the theological location of prayer and praise is before God with the community of prayer, togetherness is created through a multifaceted practice that can be described as the redemptive process, an eschatologically open and thus dynamic state of walking with God. An ethic of doxology is therefore both political and dynamic from its inception.

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The following considerations deal with a book² with which my own work is very much connected. As a result, it is tempting not to press forward from it into new questions, but to assess the extent to which its details are more or less well done. To do so, however, would be contrary to the explicit programme of the book. One of the leading proposals of the book is that the task of ethics and theology is *explorative*. Its task is an ongoing exploration of the 'given' reality offered and opened to us by the Word of God. This Word must be tested, in order

to grasp how to live with this Word and how this Word can be articulated in our human words, and therefore also be in a written book. Exploration implies also a critical task, because as soon as new insights or perspectives are formulated they wipe out and rewrite existing texts. Both Brock's work and my own may be seen as variations of midrash,³ in which interpretation shows something new or even contradictory to the text in question. When taken together, both interpretations, including the contradictions between them, give fresh meaning

to the original text. This does not imply that every issue that is raised is integrated in the end. On the contrary, the profile of the midrash is also generated by the decisions taken about what is understood to be legitimately part of the discourse and what adjudged to be beyond its logic or grammar. All this stands in stark, but not absolute distinction from the praxis of *commentary* that characterises our common tradition of Christian biblical exegesis. It is an exegesis that includes quite diverse operations, and does not move toward a final analysis or explanation, while daring to articulate the state of affairs that calls for the next urgent comment.

The title 'Singing the Ethos of God' immediately raises a question about the meaning of the phrase 'ethos of God'. The question is whether God has an ethos or God offers an Ethos – or both, or even something different. What could this phrase mean? Of course, 'ethos' is not a literal biblical term and an equivalent term is not easily found, although it is tempting to take 'law' (Torah⁴) for that purpose. My surprise turned into full agreement on reading the subtitle 'On the *Place* of Christian Ethics in Scripture'. This title articulates an inversion of the usual ways of talking about 'the use of Scripture in ethics' or 'the place of Scripture in ethics', an inverse formulation that points exactly to what 'ethos' means. To ask about the location of 'ethics' within 'Scripture' is to invert the common assumption that the proper location for Scripture is within our ethical practices.

Ethos – the place and space of living

We can take the title, then, as articulating precisely what the term 'ethos' indicates. It designates that 'ethos' will be theologically defined. The Greek term 'ethos' has *two different meanings* (neither of which, by the way, are found in biblical texts, and there are only a few occurrences in some apocryphal scriptures). One term (*ethos*) stands for 'what is undoubtedly obligatory for everybody' and the other one (*aethos*) stands for 'the context associated with us, or to which we belong'.⁵ The latter meaning suggests that *ethos* designates the 'context' within which people can live, the familiar and nurturing *place* of living, the *habitat* – not simply the context of customs, but the necessary environment in which people belong. Martin Heidegger has preserved the Greek grammar of the term, translating *ethos* as 'the place of dwelling', the place where people are at home.⁶ This reflection about the term *ethos* should not be seen as a linguistic sophism, but

as a hint about the emphasis of Brock's descriptions and explorations of the biblical *ethos*. They are focused on this 'place' in which people and their (Christian) ethics truly belong. We, human beings, are called to live not anywhere, but there, in God's 'place', in God's *ethos*. Brock has characterised this *ethos* as 'the *tonality* of faith depicted in the psalms',⁷ a usage of 'tonality' that is close to the term 'atmosphere', the air in which we can breathe and live.

As situated by the term *aethos* the term *ethics* means then the praxis of making what it means to live within that context explicit, so facilitating the praxis of becoming more explicit about moving within that habitat. Whatever we do in ethics has to be situated in this place and space, and it has to move according to it. This *aethos* is the only sphere in which true life is appropriated. Singing then is the particular praxis of an ethics according to the *aethos* of God.

Brock follows out this logic in complex variations and at different levels of reflection. In view of its differentiated explorations and given that it is already punctuated with clear summaries of its content, the book – and its stimulating title – may provoke several important questions: What is the 'ethos of God' about? What is the focus of this endeavour, what is its theological focus, and in what sense is it indicated by that title? Is its problematic focused on our human homelessness, an *existential* point, as it was for Martin Heidegger, and for Friedrich Nietzsche who put this point succinctly: 'Happy is he who yet – has a home!... Woe betide he who has no home!'⁸ Is its focus this existential question about the human condition, or is it perhaps about what Charles Taylor's has suggested is the paradigmatic ethical question of the Platonic and Augustinian ethical tradition: 'What is my substantial moral identity and how will I inhabit that moral existence?'⁹

I take it that the title of Brock's book does indeed indicate the focus of the book, yet in a *different direction* and logic from this Platonic and Augustinian tradition. It does so by describing in general what ethics is about, and what has to be seen as the focus of ethics: Ethics is concerned with the question about *the place we, human beings, belong to*, what is our place to live, the habitat, the place where we find conditions for a 'human' life, which *constitute* the form of our life according to what we are promised to be, and according to what we are called to be, what God wants our human existence to be. But this is not a theological 'humanism'

because it points to God himself; it indicates the primacy of God's will. Ethics is about God's will, about what and who he wants to exist. Ethics is about God's creation, it is about God's reality and presence, and in this sense it is about God, about the ethos of God.¹⁰ Ethics is about how to live with God, because God wants to live with us human beings. The end-point of these considerations is that Christian ethics finds its central praxis (as we see particularly in the last chapter of the book) in *doxology*: the praise of God in his identity. 'Let God be God' is the appropriate formula for that logic, particularly as understood in Luther's theology.¹¹

This perspective induces an inversion of any theory of morality that suggests that moral theories are about the constitution of a 'moral' realm¹² be it the universal realm of an 'ethos' or the context of an 'aethos'. Ethics according to this (theological) inversion is about our living with God, his work on us and address to us, his story with us and with his creation as the external context in which we can find the conditions of living. In this sense we are talking about the 'place' of living, the external context of all human life.

Using the term 'context,' we are close to saying that this context is the 'Word' of God, the *verbum externum*. This place of living is the Word of God as it is present in Scripture. Where Christian 'ethics' then finds its context is the ethos (*aethos*) as it is depicted in Scripture. To do ethics then means to reflect, to talk and think according to that context, and to sing according to that context, in the same way that we 'live' in a certain language, an articulated talk, a 'grammar'. This term is not only a comparison or a metaphor, but refers to a language which is articulated ethos (*aethos*). This is the reality as it is present to us, in which God's will is realised. Brock shows the sense in which Luther is going beyond Wittgenstein and the communarians in referring to praise and prayer as a specific form of talk within a language:

If God is a speaking God, then we are always in the midst of learning from him what our grammar is about. Language is not simply 'there', but we are learning what it means, and thus what it is, by listening in the form of prayer. Language is the place God has given so that he can use it to claim us. In prayer and praise we take up God's words to expose our language and lives to divine remaking. Thus prayer is the dialogical relationship with God in which the regeneration of human life originates and is sustained. Because

the theological location of prayer and praise is before God with the community of prayer, a togetherness is created through a multifaceted practice that we can describe (as Luther himself does not explicitly do) as the redemptive process. In Luther's final analysis, these verses' main function is to give access to an eschatologically open and thus dynamic state of walking with God. Luther calls this state of openness the 'art of forgetting the self'.¹³

This 'model' is not a further version of a moral theory reflecting the moral constitution of our Christian existence; rather, it is the contradiction of moral theories that aim to assure our human existence as 'good life'. The search for the 'good life' as it forms the human 'self' is the core of the Greek version of moral theories and their reception in modern times as displayed in Charles Taylor's definition of ethics.

The word as context of living

We can and should pursue this thought more deeply by linking it with a theology of language lying behind the concept of the *verbum externum*. Brock encourages this further exploration with his reference to George Lindbeck's groundbreaking work.¹⁴ But we must concentrate here on the meaning of 'ethics' within this context. 'The place of Christian ethics within Scripture' must – for the reasons we have indicated – be considered the formula for the basic logic of doing theological ethics that is being proposed, of practicing ethics *within* an *aethos*, attuned to the context of human life, and so shaping all our particular practices, thoughts, habits. This account is not concerned with specifying human existence in terms of a moral form, in whatever terms it is proposed, but is sharply focused on the will of God, to be fulfilled in its particular logic and richness, and which cannot be confined by a substantial morality or 'ethos' defined in human terms.

In terms of the technical theories of ethics that Brock draws on here, we are closest to an Aristotelian tradition insofar as this tradition asks after the 'good life' conceived in terms of the life of human beings lived in accordance with a commonly lived 'reality' constitutive of the human condition. This reality is not equivalent to a moral realm, but it is realised by political practices, practices of coexistence and interaction.

Ethos of consoling doxology (Luther)

From here the link to biblical ethics is that the Scriptures are taken as the *presentation* (not 'representation') of that 'reality', which we can call our 'ethos' (*aethos*). The scripture appears to be the 'Torah', the spoken word addressed to its listeners as the Word of God. The Torah is, according to Psalm 19 and the tradition of its interpretation, the 'second creation', the 'reality' in which we human beings are called to live.

This concept is to be found within Scripture itself, as in Psalms 1, 19, 119 and elsewhere. Brock deals with Psalm 1 in the chapter on 'Luther's ethos of consoling doxology'. This chapter is particularly central for the whole project as it sets out Luther's account of the Psalms as *consoling* doxologies, that is, as the praxis of praise as presenting God's work, in which we human beings can trust. The English word 'trust' (German *Vertrauen*) is close to the German word *Trost*, i.e. 'consolation', 'comfort'. This is – as Brock shows – the core issue of Luther's reading of the Psalms as it is the core of his theology. The link to that meaning can be found in Psalm 23: 'He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake'. 'He restores' in Hebrew is literally 'He brings back'. In a similar way says Psalm 19:8: 'the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart' – literally 'the return of the soul' – to that place in which it can live. As it is the core of moral reflection, *consolation*, understood as God's own work, stands in contrast to the self-confidence, self-assurance and fulfilling of one's own life. In this sense 'consolation' is again a practice constitutive of that ethos. Ethics then is not concerned with the avoidance of the morally wrong (and leaving everything else open to free choice), nor is it about seeking 'the good', but is about exploring the *work* of God, which sustains and forms human lives, and *living with this work*. This is what it means that ethics is rooted in the praise of God's work. Ethics is not about our human moral identity, but about God's identity, God's *aethos*.

The discipline of Christian ethics is devoted to presenting this ethos. In this pursuit, Brock suggests, Luther goes beyond the formal (functional) description of language-practices by stressing the particular praxis of praising God and prayer. This is to characterise the specific 'location' of our God-talk: it is addressed to God and it is about God, praising God's work. This type of talk marks the very centre of the Christian ethos called the 'for-

getting of the self'. It is characterised by a proper forgetfulness of the question of our own moral existence as humans confess they are 'dwelling in another place, dwelling in God's work' – in God's saving work in Jesus Christ.

Singing about God's power is thus the proper creaturely response to the experience of God's salvation and thus the salvation itself, the earthly form of eternal life. This means that prayer begins with the acknowledgment that we are unprepared to pray. Faith must flee to Christ's prayer and allow Christ to pray through it as it clings to God, as he has given himself in the content of the church's prayers. We can and must prepare to pray by learning how to begin, but this beginning is not by way of method, but by way of this particular performative clinging. We learn the grammar of life with God by taking these poems on our lips before God; that is, we learn this language by using it.¹⁵

This describes also the meaning of 'faith' and its central role in Luther's theology. Faith, from this perspective, is trust in God's Word and promise. Faith is trust in that 'external Word' (*verbum externum*) which is the 'place' where God's creatures find their context and grounding of living – their *aethos*. With respect to ethical theory we can say that this trust in God's Word is the Christian way of being incorporated into an *aethos*, so again paralleling Aristotle's ethics, which is centrally concerned with the incorporation of individuals into the *polis*. This is to indicate the political meaning of *aethos*. God's Word is concerned with the realisation of God's will, what he wants to be for us *and* what he wants to be our living *with him*. The difference from Aristotle, however, is that incorporation into God's *aethos* means salvation and receiving a new form of life. Again Brock follows this logic very clearly throughout the book. Ethics is – according to this logic – about that dramatic and eschatological metamorphosis (Romans 12:2) in its encounter with this specific set of insights from the Greek tradition of ethical theory.

The ethos of God, our new form of life

This again is what we find particularly articulated in the Psalms. Luther's central theological discovery happened concurrently with his exegesis of the Psalms (1519-1521). Because in the Psalms we find this praxis of forgetting the self, they serve as a particular context for our ethical (moral) exist-

ence. The ethical existence implied in this praxis not grounded in a 'self' nurtured by its (religious) 'sources',¹⁶ but is the home where the 'soul' can stay, this soul which God wants to remain with him. The concern of Christian ethics is this fulfilment of God's will, this particular fulfilment of God's *aethos*. Through this fulfilment the soul will be brought back to this living with God, when it has lost its awareness of its proper context. This is the definition of salvation in biblical terms and in Luther's theology. It is a definition oriented to God's justice, that is, his loyalty to judging his creatures.

We see how this practiced *aethos* differs from theories of morality, at least from those that try to solidify a moral self in its 'given' form, and also from those which aim at the nurturing of the moral self (in the way that Charles Taylor has, drawing on Augustine). Ethics following the language of the Psalms is not concerned with the genesis and grounding of morality, which sets the contours and limits of life, but with the form of life as it is incorporated in that living with God and the explicit practices associated with it. This *form of life* replaces morality and its interest in its genesis. Morality cannot be replaced by any form of life but only by this living with God, because this form allows and provides that salutary forgetting of the self and the pursuit of fulfilment of one's own moral existence. Brian Brock draws clear attention to the question of the genesis of our moral existence – the question of 'transformation' into that existence.

Here we note the distinction between different logics indicated in Brock's analysis and descriptions: the difference between 'transformation' and discovering a 'form of life', which is external, which becomes 'our' form by being 'transfigured' (Romans 12:2). Whereas theories of morality are about the forming of our own moral existence or the fulfilment of our moral lives, what is being indicated here is a practiced *aethos* of trusting the works of God that have been provided for us to live in, so that God's *work* will be *fulfilled*, that his will reaches its end (*telos*).

Ethos of worship – its pneumatological reality

Theological ethics then is about God's very own work, where God's creatures find their place and form of living and where they experience God's *sanctifying* work. Brock doggedly elaborates the implications of this claim, drawing it into critical

dialogue with other concepts. This is marked by his continual insistence on recalling the *pneumatological* context for ethics. This insistence indicates the inner core of his theological reflection of ethics, as long as we understand 'pneumatological' to relate to God's present work on us, human beings, that is, to relate to us as his creatures. In his critique of the 'liberal' presuppositions of the work of Birch and Rasmussen for example, what draws his comment is their lack of pneumatological explanation. The same deficit is detected in several other representatives of the contemporary Bible-and-ethics discussion.

This emphasis is a necessary theological framework indicating what 'context' or 'scriptural context' means. This basic context is God's work on us human beings, his work of liberation, justification and sanctification. This makes the *aethos* of God the place of *pathos*, the place of 'suffering divine things'.¹⁷ It is only within this logic that scripture becomes the Word of God, with which God works on us. The quest here is not for a 'spirit' in us, which enables us to read and understand, but to know God's Spirit as we encounter it within the scriptural word. To talk about pneumatology in this way is to talk about God's present work as it is addressed to us human beings.

There are, Brock suggests, *practices* which correspond to this work: our listening, singing, praying and so on. This gives precise definition to the 'place' of our living: we live in this worship. Therefore worship is the place of that ethos, where we encounter God's Word, and vice versa. It is neither an ethos of communion nor an ethos of character nor an ethos of a common story nor an ethos of any 'reality' other than this reality of worship.

God's work – and political worship

This worship is – given the meaning of ethos – a political worship.¹⁸ Christian ethics is concerned with being brought back home to this worship. Ethics finds its place in Scripture and Scripture has its proper place only in that worship. This is not a question about what comes first, but a question about different paradigms. One is the paradigm of an ethos and *aethos*, which is per se political, because it stands for a living and acting together, for coexistence and interaction initiated by God's work. Here the *work* of God itself appears in its political meaning. God's work on us human beings is the paradigmatic political relation, because of the form of coexistence it includes within it: God's

forgiveness¹⁹ (Psalm 130), God's judgment, God's fulfilling justice and God's Word, with which He rules human hearts. *Worship* – as Brock unfolds it in the last chapter – stands for the ethos of God. This is the paradigmatic place where human beings find their form of life. They find there also, not least, the form of their political existence in singing and praise.

The psalms are divine words given to facilitate our finding our place in the divine-human economy. The foreignness of Scripture is thus a marker of our alienation from the social existence it indicates. The divine gift is the realization that I am part of a 'communion', not an 'assembly': communion is not just 'assembled' but is an ongoing and often painful process of being ordered. In the communion of praise I am born in an action (singing) in which I seek to get into rhythm – to find my place in the harmony. Singing praise thus reveals the notes we are singing to the tune of other gods, whose liturgies create friction in the body of Christ. Such singing makes us the instruments of God.²⁰

'The psalms are divine words given to facilitate our finding our place in the divine-human economy.' We may read this as the summary of the book. It is important that the logic of the whole endeavour is given with the *psalms* not as texts or pieces of a tradition etc., but because of their *liturgical* meaning and setting. They are configured from this place to open up into all of God's works, his economy, so that it becomes present in our world in that worship and by that worship. Ethics is about finding our place in that worship, the reality of that worship.

Ethics of God's reality – a different paradigm

One might say that the crucial problem of ethics is about the question of reality as Dietrich Bonhoeffer has articulated it (in accord with Martin Luther).²¹ Ethics has to do with reality as it appears in God's work. Reality is only there where God's will is fulfilled as it is – eschatologically – fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Brock always focuses God's work christologically²² – and this is the very theological reason for reading the Psalms christologically, as in Psalm 8. In Psalm 8 – according to Martin Luther – God's reality appears within the political existence of the church:

The church is that community unified in faith

and hope because it is gathered around Scripture as God's word guiding them in the present. It is a community that lives only in verbalised praise.²³

Here we might open up a whole round of new and highly critical dialogues with contemporary moral theories and ethics, which on the one hand try to determine what has to be considered the 'real' fundament of our human existence, or the realisation of our human condition (also in terms of a political realisation), and which on the other hand refer to an 'ethos' (or *aethos*) focused on our human existence and reflect therefore our 'homeless' human situation. In these accounts the 'moral self' appears in its naked character, its isolation and loneliness. From this perspective ethics is concerned with the grounding of our human way of life. However, neither the attempt to affirm the context of our living nor this focusing on our 'humanity', on our 'human nature' (which causes the question about its obsolete standing) and its (moral) fulfilment, neither that kind of 'realism' nor this 'humanism' (also in its political form), can escape that quest for grounding our existence which characterises the moral paradigm.

Theological ethics as we find it in Brock's highly theologically-reflective interpretations and descriptions follows a different paradigm. It is neither about the grounding reality of our human existence nor about its fulfilment, but is concerned with that 'other' reality, God's reality addressed to us, given to us, in order that we may live it, sing it and explore it. This ethics will prove its power in all spheres of our human life, as Brock sometimes indicates by reference to its concrete implications.²⁴ Worship is the place where the form of life in all spheres is to be found, the form of a political citizen, the form of economic life, and the form of living with the word of God. This 'external reality' as it is articulated in the Psalms is what is disclosed in Brock's book. It discloses it in its very manner of articulating and writing in accordance with that task of disclosure: singing the Psalms, and also by writing this book.

Hans Ulrich is Professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics at the University of Erlangen. His most recent book is *Wie Geschöpfe leben: Konturen evangelischer Ethik* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2007).

Notes

- 1 This is an edited version of a paper presented at the

- Annual Book Colloquium of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics (KLICE), Tyndale House, Cambridge, 3-4 September 2008.
- 2 Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God: On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).
 - 3 See for the method of midrash, William G. Braude, 'Introduction', in William G. Braude (ed.), *The Midrash on Psalms* (New Haven [u.a.], 1959) xi-xxxvi, especially xv-xvii. Brian Brock refers to this edition of the midrash tehillum.
 - 4 See the discussion below.
 - 5 See for that meaning particularly Charles Taylor's interpretation of the Greek tradition: *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984, 2002).
 - 6 Martin Heidegger, *Brief über den Humanismus* (Brief an Jean Beaufret, Paris) (1946) = Martin Heidegger, *Letter on 'Humanism'* (1946), in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 239-276: 'Aethos means whereabouts, where one lives. The word designates the exposed sphere in which man lives.'
 - 7 Brock points most directly to this environment with the language of "external constitution", see *Singing* 66-67, 142-143, 300-301.
 - 8 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Poems. The Free Spirit* (German text: Kritische Studienausgabe 11, Fall 1884, 28[64]; English text online: <http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/npem.htm>).
 - 9 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*.
 - 10 Here we could discuss the distinction between a 'theological ethics' and an 'ethical theology'; the latter, however, points to a transformation of all theology into ethics.
 - 11 Philip S. Watson, *Let God be God! An interpretation of the theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949).
 - 12 See Brock's discussion of Taylor in *Singing the Ethos of God*, 125-132.
 - 13 Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God*, 177.
 - 14 George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1984).
 - 15 Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God*, 178.
 - 16 See Brock's discussion of Taylor in *Singing the Ethos of God*, 125-132. His critique of Taylor's connection of his moral theory to the phenomenon of 'desire' is at 131.
 - 17 See e.g. the interpretation of Hannah's song in *Singing the Ethos of God*, 119-120. For further implications see Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things. Theology as Church Practice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).
 - 18 For an intensive exploration, see Bernd Wannenwetsch, *Political worship. Ethics for Christian Citizens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
 - 19 *Singing the Ethos of God*, 291-293 (on Psalm 130).
 - 20 *Singing the Ethos of God*, 328-329.
 - 21 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (London: SCM, 1960).
 - 22 See index: Psalms 'christological and ecclesiological hermeneutics'; referring to Psalm 8 (197-210).
 - 23 *Singing the Ethos of God*, 202. Note the contrast being drawn with Augustine.
 - 24 See e.g. Brock's remarks on ecology (334) and political power (288).

NEW FROM PATERNOSTER

Chaos or Control?

Authority in Crisis in Church and State

Timothy Bradshaw

Western society is in the process of undergoing profound changes in moral ethos and in the structure of relationships as more and more areas of life are commodified. The Church is now having to grapple with the challenges to its authority-patterns posed by contemporary individualism, reductionism, consumerism and moral relativism.

This book seeks to address theologically the question of authority in terms of the poles of *freedom* and *form*. The tendency of each pole is to dominate. When 'freedom' dominates we have chaos but when 'form' dominates we have control (as exemplified in Islamic societies). Thus the choice facing the West *looks like* one between chaos and control. Bradshaw argues that this is a false choice. He suggests that Christ is the form for human freedom and diversity, and that the Church has sufficient apostolic guides and practices to chart its way ahead in faith. The book maintains that Western, liberal, capitalist democracy needs to recover a Christian ethical basis to avoid the dangers of both chaos and of control.

Timothy Bradshaw is Tutor in Christian Doctrine, Regent's Park College, Oxford.

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Some Comments on Moral Realism and Scriptural Authority¹

Donald Wood

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article considère deux thèmes de la troisième et dernière partie de l'ouvrage de Brock : sa défense d'une forme particulière de réalisme moral et sa vision de l'interprétation biblique comme d'un art.

On parle ici de réalisme pour signaler cette idée que la responsabilité morale humaine est principalement de répondre plutôt que de simplement construire : nous ne créons pas notre situation morale à neuf, mais nous la percevons ou la découvrons en portant continuellement notre attention sur les moments concrets de l'histoire de l'œuvre créatrice de Dieu qui est en cours. Brock décrit les processus par lesquels nous entrons en harmonie avec cette activité divine et fait ainsi un usage suggestif des textes bibliques, en particulier des Psaumes. Cette approche immédiate de l'Écriture s'accompagne de la volonté d'éviter les affirmations hautement métaphysiques concernant Dieu et le monde. Ceci soulève la question suivante : le développement d'une sensibilité dans la prière aux particularités exégétiques et situationnelles des textes conduisent-elles nécessairement à des préoccupations de métaphysique théologique ? Autrement dit, prêter son attention aux doctrines chrétiennes classi-

ques dont Brock se préoccupe peu ne pourrait-il pas au contraire aider à caractériser adéquatement les moyens de notre transformation morale ?

Puisque l'Écriture est le principal texte susceptible de produire cette transformation, Brock pense à juste titre que l'argumentation morale chrétienne doit être exégétique. C'est une activité engageant toute la personne et qui ne peut être apprise que par la participation active à la vie d'une communauté interprétative traversant l'histoire, dans une tradition exégétique. Mais cet accent sur l'importance de la prise en compte des particularités de la tradition exégétique chrétienne est tempéré par l'idée que cela devrait se faire de façon exploratoire plutôt qu'en termes positifs. Ceci soulève une autre question : présenter la tradition exégétique chrétienne comme un espace acoustique rend-il justice au rôle spécifique joué historiquement par les confessions de foi par rapport aux textes prophétiques et apostoliques de l'Écriture ? Brock a-t-il prêté suffisamment attention à l'exercice et à la communication de l'autorité au sein de la tradition ? On pourrait prolonger cette réflexion en s'interrogeant sur la christologie de son livre, qui parle relativement peu de l'ascension et de l'office royal de Christ.

* * * *

ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on two aspects of the argument developed in the third and concluding part of *Singing the Ethos of God*: its commitment to a particular form of moral realism and its understanding of scriptural interpretation as a 'craft'.

To speak of the 'realism' of *Singing* is to draw attention to its sense that human moral agency primarily is responsive rather than sheerly constructive, its awareness that we do not create our moral situation *de novo* but 'perceive' or 'discover' it by continually attending to concrete moments in the ongoing history of God's creative work. In its depiction of the processes by which we become attuned to this divine activity, Brock makes fresh and suggestive use of scriptural texts, particularly the Psalms. But this (wholly salutary) scriptural immediacy stands alongside a considered avoidance of highly developed meta-

physical claims about God and the world. And the first question raised by this reading of *Singing* is whether the development of prayerful sensitivity to exegetical and situational particulars necessarily entails a cultivated worry about the development of a theological metaphysics. Put otherwise, the question is whether renewed attention to some tracts of classical Christian teaching not well represented in *Singing* – talk of the free grounds of God's economic activity in his eternal triune life, for example – would not so much displace nuanced discussion of the means of our moral transformation as help properly to characterise it.

Brock rightly argues that Scripture's role as the primary textual means of this transformation means that Christian moral reasoning fundamentally is exegetical reasoning. This is a wholly self-involving activity that can be learned only by active participation in a historically extended interpretative community – i.e., in an exegetical tradition.

But this (again, wholly salutary) emphasis on the need to attend to the particularities of the Christian exegetical tradition stands alongside a strong sense that it should be understood in explorative rather than positive terms. And the second question put to the book is whether – whatever we might say of the dynamics of learning a traditional ‘craft’ elsewhere – talk of the Christian exegetical tradition as an ‘acoustic space’ adequately attends to the

specific roles historically played by creeds and confessions vis-à-vis the prophetic-apostolic scriptural texts. In short, does Brock say enough about the exercise and so the communication of authority within the tradition? A fuller treatment of this question invites reflection on the Christology of his book, which speaks relatively little of the ascension of Christ and of his royal office.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Artikel reflektiert über zwei Aspekte der These, die im dritten und abschließenden Teil von *Singing the Ethos of God* entwickelt wird: die Bindung des Buches an eine bestimmte Form des moralischen Realismus und sein Verständnis von Schriftinterpretation als einem „Handwerk“.

Vom „Realismus“ des Buches *Singing the Ethos of God* zu sprechen heißt, die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Haltung des Buches zu lenken, dass die menschliche moralische Handlungskompetenz in erster Linie eine reagierende ist, im Gegensatz zu einer rein konstruktiven; heißt also, die Aufmerksamkeit auf das Bewusstsein des Buches zu lenken, dass wir unsere moralische Situation nicht *de novo* erzeugen, sondern dass wir sie „wahrnehmen“ oder „entdecken“, indem wir uns beständig mit konkreten Momenten in der laufenden Geschichte des kreativen Werkes Gottes befassen. In der Beschreibung der Prozesse, durch die wir auf diese göttliche Aktivität eingestimmt werden, benutzt Brock Texte der Schrift auf frische und anregende Weise, besonders Psalmtexte. Aber diese (völlig heilsame) Unmittelbarkeit zur Schrift steht neben einer wohl überlegten Vermeidung von hochentwickelten metaphysischen Behauptungen über Gott und die Welt. Und die erste Frage, die diese Leseweise des Buches *Singing the Ethos of God* aufwirft, lautet, ob die vom Gebet getragene Sensibilität für exegetische und situative Besonderheiten notwendigerweise eine gepflegte Angst vor der Entwicklung einer theologischen Metaphysik beinhaltet. Anders ausgedrückt: Es ist die Frage, ob erneute Aufmerksamkeit gegenüber einigen Bereichen der klassischen christlichen Lehre, die

in *Singing the Ethos of God* nicht gut vertreten sind – z. B. die Rede von den Ursachen der heilsgeschichtlichen Aktivität Gottes in seinem ewigen dreieinigen Leben –, die nuancierte Diskussion der Mittel unserer moralischen Transformation weniger verdrängen als vielmehr dieselben angemessen zu charakterisieren helfen würde.

Brock argumentiert zu Recht, dass die Rolle der Schrift als primärem textlichen Mittel dieser Transformation bedeutet, dass christliches moralisches Argumentieren grundlegend exegetisches Argumentieren ist. Das ist eine Aktivität, die jemanden völlig einbezieht und die nur durch aktive Teilnahme an einer historisch gewachsenen interpretativen Gemeinschaft gelernt werden kann – also in einer exegetischen Tradition. Aber diese (wiederum völlig heilsame) Betonung der Notwendigkeit, sich mit den Besonderheiten der christlichen exegetischen Tradition zu befassen, steht neben einem starken Eindruck, dass die Tradition forschend, nicht positiv verstanden werden sollte. Und die zweite Frage, die an das Buch gestellt wird, lautet, ob die Rede von der christlichen exegetischen Tradition als einem „akustischen Raum“ die spezifischen Rollen angemessen beachtet, die historisch von Glaubensbekenntnissen im Gegenüber zu den prophetisch-apostolischen Texten gespielt wurden – unabhängig davon, was wir zu den Dynamiken des Erlernens eines traditionellen „Handwerks“ andernorts sagen könnten. Kurzum: Sagt Brock genug zur Ausübung und damit zur Kommunikation von Autorität innerhalb der Tradition? Eine ausführlichere Auseinandersetzung mit dieser Frage lädt zu Überlegungen über die Christologie dieses Buches ein, die relativ wenig von der Himmelfahrt Christi und seinem königlichen Amt spricht.

‘Everything’, the English Christian author Chesterton once wrote, ‘has in fact another side to it.’²² His point was not the relativist’s platitude that things always can be seen and said otherwise; he was, rather, expressing a conviction, deep-seated in his thought, that we can be *surprised* by the world, and that – if we see the world rightly – we continually should be. It befits us as human beings to be astonished that things are as they are. And it is our singular duty to reflect on the ways in which we habitually lose touch with the world precisely by

taking it for granted. ‘So long as we regard a tree as an obvious thing, naturally and reasonably created for a giraffe to eat, we cannot properly wonder at it. It is when we consider it as a prodigious wave of the living soil sprawling up to the skies for no reason in particular that we take off our hats, to the astonishment of the park-keeper.’²³

This basic insight into the moral primacy of perception can be elaborated in terms, at once more formal and more personal, that bring us close to the heart of the vision of the Christian life and of

Christian ethics that animates the third, final part of Brian Brock's *Singing the Ethos of God*.⁴ To act well in the world, we might say, I must perceive the world as it truly is. And habitually, to my shame and sorrow, I fail to do so. In other words, the decisive ethical question – 'Where am I?' – is always bound up with another – 'How do I become one who perceives my situation rightly?' Christian moral theology names the attempt to put these questions to God by putting them to Scripture. And it remains in this life always unfinished business: we never are done enquiring after God, never done prayerfully regarding his Word. But this is not to say our prayer goes unanswered; indeed, it is itself already always an answer – a response in faith to the divine address that calls us into being and from which alone we can live: 'We are created by the Word of God, our human life is the answer to his Word'.⁵

This response to the divine address in the form of a prayerful scriptural exploration of our moral situation is not a solitary, purely intellectual exercise. It takes shape in communities of resounding praise: Christians read Scripture ethically when they sing together. And if this is an act in which some lead and others follow (if exegetical and moral judgments take shape in a tradition), it is still a task given to every Christian. So the question finally is not how to speak of the relationship between 'Scripture' and 'ethics' as an academic concern calling for a methodological response; the question is how to find ourselves in Scripture, and so learn gladly to inhabit the new world of God's working into which Scripture leads us.

So far, a rough preliminary sketch of the matter. The task before us is to reflect on this account of the relationship of Scripture and Christian ethics more fully and carefully, and to put some doctrinal questions to it. To anticipate: I think Brock is importantly right in his twofold claim that the proper perception of moral space is ethically basic and that Christians learn to know their situation – insofar as they do – by reading Scripture well. Scriptural reading, we might say, is internal to moral reasoning, and vice versa. For, on the one hand, learning to read Scripture Christianly – to read this biblical passage in this way and not that – involves learning to perceive my situation as one that calls for me to act in just this way rather than in any other. And, conversely, appropriately discerning my location always is a matter of attending to Scripture's specific instruction – you are *here*, so you must and may act *thus*. In words drawn directly from *Singing*: 'willingness and facility in venturing exegeti-

cal judgments is a precise correlative of willingness and facility in making individual ethical judgments in real time' (259).

But I also think we would do well to raise some questions both about how Brock construes our moral situation and about the way in which he depicts the role of Scripture in shaping our vision of reality. More closely, we need to consider at least these two interlocking questions: 1) In its commitment to a directly exegetical mode of contextual description, is *Singing* unduly anxious about doctrinal summary and metaphysical restatement of the scriptural texts, and does it thereby fail to attend to some tracts of traditional doctrine that retain important exegetical and moral force? 2) In its account of scriptural reading as a craft learned in an irreducibly complex and wholly specific exegetical tradition, does the book say enough about the concrete ways in which Scripture exerts and communicates its moral authority?

In restricting ourselves to these lines of reflection, we will of course pass by much of interest. *Singing* is an exceptionally stimulating book and it rewards reading from multiple angles. In our consideration of its final section, two defects in particular need to be noted. First, I have said very little by way of comment on the decisive intellectual influences on *Singing*, though echoes of these voices will be heard clearly enough. Second, and more culpably, I have chosen not to engage at length the scriptural exegesis that forms the constructive heart of the book. A reading of this material informs the entire presentation here, and it occasionally emerges into clear view. But it does not take centre stage, and so I have not taken up directly the difficult and fruitful question of what it might teach us of the practice of ethical exegesis. In these omissions as in its positive explication, what follows should be read as an extended gloss on the *tolle, lege* ('take and read') – a recommendation that readers return to the book for themselves, precisely in order to be directed once again with renewed attention and love to the scriptural texts it so admirably serves.

I.

For all the complexity and nuance of *Singing*, the broad outlines of its argument can be traced in fairly straightforward terms. Simply put, the book takes up the familiar question: what is the place of Scripture in Christian ethics?; sets it alongside another: what is the place of Christian ethics in Scripture?; and suggests that this second ques-

tion, rightly understood, comprehends in itself the proper answer to the first. This threefold movement corresponds, roughly, to the three main parts of the book. So in the five chapters that constitute Part I, Brock develops a typology of recent, (mostly) English-language, accounts of the role of the Bible in Christian ethics (the chapter on Bonhoeffer is exceptional in several senses). Part II offers a reading of Augustine and Luther on the Psalms, introducing readers to an older tradition that presumes the truth and relevance of Scripture's moral landscape, and which understands continually renewed engagement with the scriptural texts as a divinely appointed means by which we may learn rightly to praise the Creator and so gladly to inhabit our rightful place in his world. Part III recapitulates this movement from hermeneutics to exegesis in a constructive mode: chapter 8 sketches a vision of scriptural interpretation as a never-ending exploration of the divine ethos, a transformative process of 'discovering our way into life with God' (244) and chapter 9 exhibits the theological richness of the craft of ethical exegesis through its extended and creative readings of Psalms 130 and 104.

The overarching concern of the book is to ask after the role of Scripture, and especially the Psalms, in our moral transformation. In summary form: the subject of this transformation is the triune God, its textual instrument is Scripture, 'God's chosen form of self-mediation' (249), and its end is perfected creaturely fellowship – a human community that lives in the unity of the Creator's praise. The ultimate *telos* of this divine working lies beyond the boundaries of history in the *visio Dei* (362); but about the eschatological transcendence of Scripture's mediatorial role Brock has little directly to say. The book rather focuses all its efforts on describing and exhibiting the ways in which Scripture functions in the divine economy to generate 'a community that has its own ethos, distinct and distinctly Christian' (281).

In its depiction of this transformation of human life, the book regularly deploys two complementary sets of images: transformation as a *movement into a new culture* and as a *movement into wholeness*. The role of Scripture is construed somewhat differently in each connection.

Consider first the image of the Christian life as a process of cultural discovery or exploration. The recurring example is of a person who undertakes a journey to a foreign country:

She wants to stay for a long time and desires

to know the culture, to fit in as best she can, to become a participant in the flow of life and thus to learn from the inside what the culture has to teach. The first hurdle she faces is learning the language, and in the process [of learning it] she slowly discovers that she is learning not merely a language but a new way of life (244).

Three things are worth noting. First, the image of the Christian life as cultural discovery bespeaks a commitment to some form of *moral realism*. The relevant verbs make the point clearly enough: desiring, fitting in, becoming a participant, learning, facing a hurdle, discovering. The Christian life is not an exercise in self-invention; Christian identity is 'external constituted' (70; cf. esp. 300–301), ordered by and towards an antecedent reality. Just so, we must conceive of Christian ethics 'not as "creating" a better world but as the discovery of the world of God's working' (243). Second, the process of learning a new culture is irreducibly *linguistic*: 'we enter cultures by learning their languages' (*ibid*). Conversely, one can only learn a language by immersing oneself in the forms of life that ground and sustain it (245). This deep intersection of language and praxis is named 'grammar' and its defining character in any given culture is called 'ethos'. Each is an embracing term: a grammar may comprehend many discourses; an ethos many behaviours. A traveller may fairly quickly learn a new discourse; the exploration of a grammar never ends.⁶ Third, the process of learning a new culture – and so a new grammar or ethos – begins with *desire*. And that is to say a Christian moral theology must always also be a theology of the Christian affections.

At this point we can begin to understand what is meant by the claim that Christian ethics is 'the task of making the grammar of our lives explicit by bringing it into contact with Scripture' (242). Christian ethics has not primarily to do with the modification of Christian behaviours, perhaps by the application of moral precepts culled from the more overtly 'ethical' passages of Scripture. Rather, it is a process of self-discovery enabled by immersion in Scripture's moral world. By exposing ourselves to Scripture's grammar – to the forms of life from which by God's design Scripture proceeds and to which it tends – we come to recognize that 'we are all strangers to the moral world of Scripture' (ix). The task of Christian ethics is not to overcome this estrangement conceptually, but to know and name the ways in which Scripture's

world remains foreign to us, and so to facilitate our movement into it.

Like the anthropologist, the ethicist engages in a descriptive task of exposing contemporary social grammars to view. But unlike anthropology, Christian ethics does so to facilitate their assessment, critique and possible reformulation in the light of the work of Christ. In short, Christian ethics describes and evaluates the grammar of human behaviour as a joyous participation in the transformation of the Christian mind and action (247).

This '*Leitmotiv* of foreignness' (xiv; cf. 328) is complemented by another controlling image: that of the Christian life as a movement into wholeness. Whereas before the human condition is conceived as a state of alienation or estrangement,⁷ here it is perceived as fragmented and threatened by dissolution. Correspondingly, God's renewal of human life is understood as its reordering and reintegration. In the most severely formal terms, the problematic is the relation of the one and the many: how is it that we can discern and embrace the unity of our lives in the multiplicity of our experiences and proximate commitments? Conversely, how can we learn truthfully to celebrate the world's abundance, neither seeking to master it nor failing rightly to acknowledge it? And, alongside these questions: how do we discern and describe Scripture's function in God's ordering of this diverse world?

Brock considers and responds to these questions – and herein lies his main provocation – primarily exegetically, by offering extended readings of Psalm 130 and 104. At the risk of slightly over-schematising his book, we might say that the two images of transformation as a movement into a new culture and as a movement into wholeness (or: as the discovery of a new world and as the discovery of the world's manifold unity) map directly onto the themes of these two psalms. So Psalm 130 is read as 'portray[ing] the birth of Christian faith' (242) in prayer and Psalm 104 its growth in praise. By taking up Psalm 130 as our own song, we discover that Scripture introduces us to a radically new world, the world of God's present working, and that prayer is 'the practice in which a new world of faith appears' (282). In prayer, we learn with Israel actively to hope in the advent of God's renewing presence by calling upon his name. The Psalm itself is the enablement of our invocation precisely as the textual reflex of Israel's prayer. From Psalm 104, we learn that the one God continually orders creation

as a harmonious whole, an inwardly differentiated unity which we come to know and to celebrate by taking our own part with all the saints in Israel's praise (cf. 304).

In the course of his reading of these Psalms, Brock occasionally makes passing reference to specific contemporary ethical issues – questions currently arising in environmental and medical ethics, for example – as well as classical moral puzzles (when, if ever, is it permissible to lie?). But the tenor of the book is reflective rather than deliberative; it does not undertake extensive analysis of particular ethical issues so much as ask how scriptural reading provokes reconsideration of the terms in which we undertake to describe the realities that call for moral engagement.⁸ The primary ethical question is, again, contextual: Where are we? And, again, the continual putting of this question to Scripture is itself the primary task of Christian ethics, the recurring original step in our active collaboration in our own transformation (cf. xviii). When Brock puts this question to the Psalms, the basic answer is: we are in God's world, in God's story.

II.

'God does not need the world for his own perfection.'⁹ So Herman Bavinck, representing a broad consensus in the tradition. Against all forms of monism, the creedal tradition insists that reality is ontologically complex. And while this conviction is, finally, grounded in a christological affirmation – in the doctrine of the two natures – it finds clear expression in the doctrine of creation. The terms 'Creator' and 'creature', we can say, are metaphysically basic. And their proper use involves at least three affirmations. First, God and creation are not equivalent realities. They remain in every instance entirely distinct. God is not creation or some instance of it; creation is not God nor some part or aspect of God. Second, God and creation are conjointly exhaustive of reality. There is God and there is the world, and there is nothing else. Third, the relationship between God and the world is neither necessary nor accidental but contingent. God creates out of no inward compulsion or external constraint, he realises no potential in himself or in some external factor, but effortlessly brings his will to pass in a wholly fitting act of sovereign freedom. Just so, creation introduces no essential change in God. And, for its part, creation is free simply to be itself. For the ultimate whence of creation lies

in the utterly gratuitous resolve of the triune God whose eternal greatness and goodness enjoys no increase and suffers no diminution from creation's coming-to-be.¹⁰

In the language taken up in the older Reformed dogmatics, creation is the first of the *operationes Dei externae*, and like all such works it rests on the *operationes internae*. And here a distinction is to be made between the personal inward works of God and his essential works *ad intra* (the manifold decrees of the one eternal divine counsel). These works belong together, but in just this order. First, the Father's eternal knowing and loving the Son, the Son's perfect response to the Father (Matthew 11:27; John 17:24) and the Spirit's eternal searching of the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10).¹¹ Then God's eternal decree to create the world and to keep faith with it. And then, but only then, the works *ad extra* – those creative and redemptive actions which God freely undertakes towards and in the world.¹² To speak thus of the radical non-necessity of creation's existence is not to undermine its genuine reality, and so to corrode the sense that our actions in the world finally matter. It is, rather, to secure the sort of reality which the world and our actions in it possess, an attempt to specify precisely what it means to say we act, if at all, in *creation*. As creatures, we exercise real moral initiative and so we may genuinely respond in freedom to a God who freely has granted us life – not the divine life which is uniquely and incommunicably his, but the life which properly is ours according to his good pleasure.

This, in rough outline, is one traditional way to specify what it means to begin speaking theologically of creation as the place in which human beings may intend and enact the good. For its part, *Singing* clearly knows and straightforwardly registers the scripturally and theologically basic distinction between Creator and creation: 'Creation is not God' (254).¹³ But it remains throughout uninterested in and indeed deeply nervous about the sorts of doctrinal distinctions just invoked. Brock offers us, in short, a deeply non-metaphysical account of the human situation. He knows that to speak of our moral context in scriptural terms is to speak of the world as God's creation, and so to speak of the infrangible distinction between God and the world. But he wishes us to mark this difference not, in the first instance, by deploying a doctrine of the anterior perfection of the divine life, an account of the divine counsel and decrees, the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, and so on, but by taking up the language

of Israel's prayer and praise as it comes to us in the Psalter.

Could we say that this pervasive resistance to metaphysics in *Singing* trades on a basic sense that talk of enduring natures and accomplished intentions, creaturely or divine, tends to harden our gaze, preventing us from perceiving God's new and unanticipated historically generative acts and so distorting our understanding of the possibilities and responsibilities for action which we encounter along the way? The book is clear, in any case, that '[t]he use and inhabitation of Christian descriptions of reality happens in irreducibly particular circumstances and thus depends not only on a grasp of the systematic connections of theology but also on having been shaped into a people who know how to ask for and discern the Spirit's appearance' (259). And this statement, appropriately balanced in itself, stands against the backdrop of a whole series of statements that express an overarching worry that modern moral and systematic theologies habitually abstract from the concrete urgencies of the life of faith, tempted to believe that once we have 'mapped' our moral space or developed a mature theological ontology the work essentially is done.

Of course, systematic moral theologies in particular need to be alert to the force of this critique; we have every reason to accept the point that 'over-confidence in the explanatory and orientational power of moral ontology can radically mischaracterise how the Christian faith conceives of life with God in time, and so can resist the judgement, conversion and hope which can arise only in the specific episodes of the economy of God's speech and action towards us'.¹⁴ But we should not be too quickly forced into deciding between scriptural transparency and systematic cogency, between taking direct moral instruction from an intra-textually ramified reading of the Psalter and allowing dogmatically ordered articulations of scriptural teaching to direct us to implications of the gospel to which we might otherwise remain inattentive. And we should not adopt too rigid a posture towards the long, catholic tradition of trinitarian moral theology in which rigorous, carefully modulated metaphysical statement is understood as a natural extension and confirmation of the close, continual, direct engagement with discrete scriptural texts and moments of active moral commitment that is the primary business of the Christian life.

III.

This metaphysically deflationary posture in the account of Scripture's moral world in Brock's book finds important correspondences in its treatment of scriptural interpretation, which takes an active interest in counteracting what it takes to be an intellectually unsatisfying and spiritually troubling investment in hermeneutical method. In transitioning to this aspect of the book's argument, we are, note, not leaving behind the question of how we are to understand its talk of our moral transformation as a movement into the wholeness God intends for his people. The question here simply takes on a different form: granted that Scripture is, precisely in its variegated canonical form, the divinely appointed means by which God embraces, judges and unifies the many discourses of the world into a single grammar, how is this soteriological function to find fitting recognition in our reading practices?

We begin with the simple observation that Scripture is not formless. It is by God's design neither a single, monolithic text nor a conglomerate of texts only incidentally related. It is the unified collection of entirely distinctive writings we call the canon of the Old and New Testaments. And precisely in this form it is the means by which God embraces and heals the various competing discourses of our world. The task of Christian ethics, then, is not to abstract some moral content from Scripture out of a felt duty conceptually to improve upon its given form, but simply 'to expose the Bible's function in the divine reclamation of the diverse rationalities partitioning and fragmenting our lives' (253). More specifically, in reading the Psalms we are led to ask: 'How do we allow the scriptural form and content to shape both our exegetical and ethical methodologies? How do we perceive their inner unity?' (242) Again, the question bespeaks a realist commitment: The moral power of Scripture as an integrated whole, in the unity of its form and content, is a factor of its employment in the divine service, not of our reading practices. Scripture's moral relevance does not depend upon our ability to identify the text's overarching 'subject-matter', for example, or a set of unifying focal images. The search for a hermeneutical 'centre' of Scripture or a master-concept must always prove a failure and a distraction, for Scripture is a grammar, and a grammar has no 'centre' (252).¹⁵ Again, the unity of Scripture is not a characteristic accruing to it *qua* text. Its unity is a function solely of its relation

to 'the unified grammar of the divine life that faith seeks in the diverse moments and strands of the biblical witness and in our lives' (253). Scripture is, we might say, both a formal and a material witness to the manifold wisdom of the one God – a textual reflex and just so a fitting servant of God's work of integrating many voices into a single song of praise.

Thus Scripture can be called an 'acoustic realm' (262). And as with Scripture, so it is – *mutatis mutandis* – with the exegetical tradition. This tradition is to be understood 'not as a repository of settled ontological truths but as a broad, multifaceted, and somehow unified and unbroken wrestling with specific texts' (103) – an acoustic space in which each voice has its own place alongside and in complex interaction with others.

Brock is precisely right, I think, to insist that Scripture needs no improvement, and that theology must continually resist the temptation to translate Scripture's historically complicated and conceptually mobile language wholesale into some more apparently purified, extensible and so generally relevant idiom. Modern accounts of scriptural reading and of Christian ethics have too often traded on abstractions of Scripture's content from its given form (cf. 241). It is at this point that the analysis of contemporary Scripture-and-ethics discussions in *Singing* is most penetrating and forceful, for it is able to diagnose the contemporary commitment to method as a *spiritual* problem – a failure of theological nerve, a lack of confidence in God's decision to rule his Church precisely through these texts, in all their evident diversity and even their apparent disarray.

The point becomes clearer in light of the book's positive proposal that we think of scriptural reading as a 'craft'. Learning to read the Bible well is a far more complex and self-involving process than mastering and deploying a method. 'This kind of biblical interpretation cannot be learned from an instruction manual'; 'it demands apprenticeship to those who can teach us the forms of judging' how rightly to perceive our place in our social and cultural context ('the logic of our lives') and how to perceive our immediate context in Scripture's terms (262). To learn scriptural interpretation as a craft, that is, is to become a different sort of person – to be transformed by our immersion in a long tradition of churchly reading.

Thus active engagement in the church's living exegetical tradition is primary, requiring and allowing no prior justification in terms of some general

hermeneutical theory – even a theory of the irreducibly communal quality of understanding. One simply begins by beginning.¹⁶ If anything precedes the initial act of reading in this tradition it is simply the desire to do so, where desire is the quality of a personal *act*, and so can be described only in biographical terms. (This is, I take it, one of the functions of the reading of Augustine's hermeneutical conversion in the book's introduction.) Above all, we cannot think that we can secure our position *vis-à-vis* Scripture and ensure a proper reading of it in advance of our actually engaging it – certainly not by the cultivation and deployment of an exegetical methodology. Scriptural reading always is an act of self-exposure, demanding complete commitment. Better, scriptural reading is an activity that takes shape within the *church*. And if we seek to name its original moment, we simply confess: *credo ecclesiam*. And as scriptural reading takes place as a dynamic in the common life of the saints, so a theology of scriptural interpretation must always be a theology of the third article.

All of this – if it is in fact a tolerably accurate representation of the dynamics Brock seeks to indicate – is much to be welcomed. But again we would do well to ask whether there are not losses as well as gains in the way *Singing* makes its case, and whether attending to the particularities of Scripture and of the exegetical tradition may not take a somewhat different form.

May we not in fact be led to a more comprehensive and ordered vision of the manifold unity of the tradition, for example, if we view it not simply as a space of spiritual exploration or as an 'inter-generational dialogue of a community of faith as it learns anew what it means to walk with God' (281) but also and even primarily as the history of the church's divine service as stewards of the apostolic gospel, the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints?¹⁷ Put more sharply, is it possible to speak not simply of the corrigibility of the creeds (and confessions) but also of their abiding *authority*? Unremitting stress on particularities can have a curiously flattening effect on history. And against an impression that some readers may take from the silences of *Singing*, we need to remind ourselves that the Christian exegetical tradition also is in large measure a creedal and confessional tradition. In doing so, we also need clearly to assert that the intention and effect of appeals to the authority of the creeds and confessions is not simply to close down the church's interpretative options but also to liberate the church from merely parochial read-

ings of Scripture – including those readings which, undertaken in a post-metaphysical era, no longer even aspire to catholicity. In this sense, active deference to creedal and confessional documents as authorities – secondary, derivative authorities, subject to Scripture's absolute judgment, but authorities nonetheless – opens up theological discourse rather than closing it down. And so it serves contemporary moral and exegetical reflection in much the same way as appeals to the Scripture principle or the construction of theological systems – both of which are ways in which theology serves the contemporary church by reminding it that its range of sympathies and interests is not self-justifying. We may well continue to allow concerns about premature closure and theological abstraction to inspire doubts about ancient creeds and modern systems of doctrine, but it is never a foregone conclusion that our worries are uniformly well-placed.

A useful contrast may be drawn at this point with the recent essay by Oliver O'Donovan on 'The Moral Authority of Scripture'.¹⁸ Reflecting on the exclusivity of the *hypo theou* ['from / by God'] of Romans 13.1, O'Donovan explores the ways in which the authority of the one God meets us through many media. While all authority comes 'from God', it does not encounter us *directly* from God, but is mediated to us through created structures. Where this mediation is distorted, creaturely freedom is separated from its true source and end in God, and human agents become enslaved by the world's 'rulers and authorities'. To perceive our moral situation, then, is to be instructed by the gospel that Christ has triumphed over these worldly powers and sits enthroned as 'the sovereign Lord of creaturely authorities, appointed to bring them to their goal in the purposes of God'.¹⁹ Talk of Christian obedience, then, which arises at the intersection of divine authority and creaturely freedom, requires us to speak of the ascension and heavenly session of Christ. And so we are led (Ephesians 1) to speak of Christ's communication of his kingly authority to the church that is built on the apostles and prophets – which is to say, upon the authors of the New and Old Testaments. Thus the moral authority of Scripture is grounded in a christologically focused account of the economy of salvation. And because all genuine authority is self-communicating, Scripture engenders in the reading church dogmatic statements that themselves enjoy a derivative, limited, but just so proper authority of their own.²⁰

The differences in this construal of the shape

of the divine economy with those in *Singing* is instructive – talk of Christ’s ascension and session, for example, enjoys a low profile in Brock, who speaks more fluently of the relationship between Christ and the church using the Pauline metaphor of the ‘body of Christ’ read through Augustine’s doctrine of the *totus Christus* while making free and somewhat opaque use of the *communicatio idiomatum*. The question is whether, given its own doctrinal commitments, *Singing* can carry through its analysis of the relationship between Scripture and Christian ethics towards a fuller account of authority in the tradition. Only so, perhaps, can we speak of scriptural interpretation as a ‘craft’ learned by immersion in the exegetical tradition and mean the tradition of Augustine and Luther.

Dr. Donald Wood is lecturer in systematic theology at the University of Aberdeen. He is author of *Barth’s Theology of Interpretation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

Notes

- 1 This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Annual Book Colloquium of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics (KLICE), Tyndale House, Cambridge, 3-4 September 2008.
- 2 G.K. Chesterton, ‘A Defence of Nonsense’, in *Stories, Essays and Poems* (London: Dent and Sons, 1935) 127 [123-127].
- 3 Chesterton, ‘Defence’, 126-127.
- 4 Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God. On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Page references in the text are to this work.
- 5 Hans G. Ulrich, *Wie Geschöpfe leben. Konturen evangelischer Ethik* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005) 19.
- 6 At one point in the book (248), this emphasis on the linguistic dimension of all human experience appears to complicate the realist impulse. Nominalism at least threatens in the claim that ‘[o]ne metaphor reveals (creates) one reality, and draws out a different set of features of experience’. Other affirmations in the book (e.g., 272) are less ambiguous.
- 7 Cf. 328: ‘Foreignness is, ultimately, the political, epistemic, and practical alienation of a world trying to save itself.’
- 8 ‘A true Christian ethical statement ventures in faith to propose a specific action in specific circumstances, and it does not take the form of a general claim about the good.... We discover our being in Christ when we give up our moral detachment and say, “Biblical text X and ethical consideration Y meet here in this situation, and demand a response”’ (260-261). In

failing to develop any extensive, direct ethical statements of this sort, is *Singing* (ironically) guilty of leaving undone what it asks its readers to do (cf. 68)? The charge, here as elsewhere, probably does not stick; a charitable reading will, at least, carefully factor in questions of tactics and genre before making much of such a claim. A more serious question is whether the book’s proper stress on moral descriptions involves a *de facto* material limitation in its understanding of the task of Christian ethics – a failure to consider with sufficient care ‘the transitions of thought between “descriptive” and “prescriptive”’ of which any form of moral realism must take account; see Oliver O’Donovan, ‘The Object of Theological Ethics’, *Studies in Christian Ethics* 20.2 (2007) 210 [203-214], which puts this question to H. Ulrich, *Wie Geschöpfe leben*. In reflecting on this question, it is worth remembering that the text of *Singing* cannot simply be dissolved into its influences; whatever the interpretative gains of locating *Singing* alongside the work of Hans Ulrich, Bernd Wannenwetsch and others in a putative ‘Erlangen school’, or indeed, in a longer tradition of broadly Lutheran ethics, the text has a distinctive integrity of its own that needs always to be recognised.

- 9 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics. Volume 2: God and Creation* (trans. J. Vriend; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 342.
- 10 See the lucid reflections on this theme in Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995).
- 11 See Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:342.
- 12 On the conceptual transition between God’s eternal will and its realisation in time as it was handled by the Reformed Orthodox, see the concise review of the sources in Heinrich Heppe, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche* (Elberfeld: Friedrichs, 1861) 137-145. The basic movement might be summarised thus: All the works of God are deliberate; God is never unwillingly or unwittingly the God he eternally is. Thus the will of God, like the knowledge of God, is said to be identical with his essence. But this does not exclude the possibility that God could will the existence of another outside himself without detriment to his own blessedness. God can eternally and immutably decree freely to create and so to be the creator. In that the object of the decree is a reality external to God, it is not constitutive of the divine life; God would be the one he is even if he never decreed the world’s existence. Having so decreed, creation follows *ex necessitate consequentiae*; but its necessity is consequent *only* upon the free decree. So, in Voetius’ formula: ‘Creatio is an *actio ad extra*, and therefore free, and so accords with the decree. In addition it is outward and emanative, and so is distinguished from the decree’ (141).
- 13 Cf. the final line of 351, which almost certainly

- should read 'the Bible allows no blurring of the line between creator [not 'creature'] and creation'.
- 14 John Webster, 'Wie Geschöpfe Leben: Some dogmatic reflections', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 20.2 (2007) 280 [273-285].
 - 15 Or, with Psalm 130, the name of God is to be considered 'the anchoring centre of the textual space created by Scripture's many literary forms' (286).
 - 16 'The port of entry into the Christian tradition is a reading of Scripture, not a theory of reading' (265).
 - 17 Cf. 286: 'Theology that begins [by calling on the name of the Lord] is not best described as the explanation or updating of a deposit of historical faith claims. It is more properly understood as joining a collective probing of God's unseen purposes for his people.' But why should the ongoing be so played off the given?
 - 18 Oliver O'Donovan, 'The Moral Authority of Scripture', in Markus Bockmuehl and Alan J. Torrance (eds.), *Scripture's Doctrine and Theology's Bible. How the New Testament Shapes Christian Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008) 165-175.
 - 19 O'Donovan, 'Moral Authority', 166.
 - 20 O'Donovan, 'Moral Authority', 174.

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Attunement to Saints Past and Present: Clarifications and Convergences¹

Brian Brock

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the responses to *Singing the Ethos of God* in the present volume by Gordon Wenham, Don Wood, Bernd Wannenwetsch and Hans Ulrich. The conversation with Wenham begins with the question of whether, in Christian theological exegesis, ecclesial interpretation or exegetical fidelity should be more fundamental. It argues that neither the location of biblical interpretation in the Church nor an interest in exegetical fidelity is primary in defining the role of Scripture in the moral formation of the Church. Discussion then turns to the related question of what happens when Christian ethics becomes wedded to the idea of 'ethical principles'. The paper suggests that the extreme difficulty of deriving such principles alerts us to fatal theological flaws in the concept of 'Christian moral principles'.

The response to Wood takes up his worry that the moral realism of *Singing* is in jeopardy without a more careful account of the transitions between descriptive and prescriptive moral language. The paper suggests that this criticism is a more sophisticated repetition of the assumption that Christian ethics cannot do without principles and rests on the bifurcation of theoretical and practical reason that has plagued modern theology. Here judgments about developments in western theology are crucial. The paper contends that the most pressing question for contemporary Christian ethics is how best to respond to contemporary tendencies to marry creedal orthodoxy with either ethical heterodoxy or the focusing

of Christian morality on a very narrow band of litmus test issues.

The final section moves from clarification to constructive theology, drawing together convergences between *Singing the Ethos of God* and the articles by Wannenwetsch and Ulrich. It develops the position that Christian ethics is most appropriately understood as a discipline serving the orientation of Christians in reality, reality being defined in terms that are thoroughly Trinitarian, ecclesial and scriptural. Doxology is seen as the ongoing human acknowledgement of reliance on and gratitude for God's presence and care. Theology and ethics within the orbit of doxology affirm the situation of human thought 'in the middle' of God's creation and salvation of the world. God must break in on humans to make them aware of his presence and care amidst the countervailing tendencies that characterize fallen psyches and the social formations within which they are wholly embedded. Christian theology can therefore never transcend the patient 'chewing' meditation demands (Psalm 1:1) and in doing so must avoid as a temptation the desire to come to rest in a reading that is so complete that reading can cease. Reading Scripture with the saints resists this closure in affirming that human sanctification is found in joining in unity with them in our age rather than in innovation or progress beyond them. Such Christian ethical exegesis is depicted as being best supported by the biblical language of 'transformation of the schemas of this age', 'meditation' and 'torah'.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Artikel diskutiert die Reaktionen auf *Singing the Ethos of God* von Gordon Wenham, Don Wood, Bernd Wannenwetsch und Hans Ulrich in der vorliegenden Ausgabe. Das Gespräch mit Wenham beginnt mit der Frage, ob in der christlichen theologischen Exegese die kirchliche Interpretation oder die exegetische Redlichkeit grundlegender sein sollte. Es wird argumentiert, dass weder der Ort der Bibelinterpretation in der Kirche noch ein Interesse an exegetischer Redlichkeit bei der Definierung der Rolle der Schrift in der moralischen For-

mung der Kirche vorrangig ist. Die Diskussion wendet sich dann der verwandten Frage zu, was passiert, wenn christliche Ethik mit der Vorstellung von „ethischen Prinzipien“ verbunden wird. Der Artikel schlägt vor, dass uns die extreme Schwierigkeit der Ableitung solcher Prinzipien auf verhängnisvolle theologische Schwächen des Konzeptes von „christlichen moralischen Prinzipien“ aufmerksam macht.

Die Reaktion auf Wood greift seine Angst auf, dass der moralische Realismus von *Singing* ohne eine sorgfältigere Darstellung der Übergänge zwischen deskriptiver und präskriptiver moralischer Sprache gefährdet ist. Der

Artikel schlägt vor, dass diese Kritik eine anspruchsvollere Wiederholung der Annahme ist, dass die christliche Ethik nicht ohne Prinzipien auskommt, und dass diese Kritik auf der Unterscheidung zwischen theoretischer und praktischer Vernunft beruht, die die moderne Theologie geplagt hat. An dieser Stelle sind Urteile über die Entwicklung in der westlichen Theologie entscheidend. Der Artikel vertritt die Auffassung, dass die dringlichste Frage für die heutige christliche Ethik lautet, wie man am besten auf gegenwärtige Tendenzen antwortet, bekenntnismäßige Orthodoxie entweder mit ethischer Heterodoxie oder mit der Fokussierung von christlicher Moral auf eine sehr schmale Bandbreite von Lackmustestfragen zu verheiraten.

Der letzte Abschnitt wechselt von Klärungen zu konstruktiver Theologie und zieht Konvergenzen zwischen *Singing the Ethos of God* und den Artikeln von Wannenwetsch und Ulrich zusammen. Hier wird die Position entwickelt, dass christliche Ethik ganz angemessen als eine Disziplin verstanden wird, die der Orientierung von Christen in der Wirklichkeit dient, wobei Wirklichkeit durch und durch trinitarisch, kirchlich und biblisch definiert wird. Doxologie wird als die fortlaufende menschliche Anerkennung der Abhängigkeit von und Dankbarkeit

für Gottes Gegenwart und Fürsorge verstanden. Theologie und Ethik bestätigen innerhalb der Umlaufbahn der Doxologie die Situation des menschlichen Denkens „in der Mitte“ von Gottes Schöpfung und Erlösung der Welt. Gott muss in das Leben der Menschen eindringen, um ihnen seine Gegenwart und Fürsorge inmitten der entgegen gesetzten Tendenzen bewusst zu machen, die die gefallenen Psychen und die sozialen Gebilde charakterisieren, in die die Menschen vollständig eingebettet sind. Christliche Theologie kann daher niemals das geduldige „Kauen“ transzendieren, das die Meditation verlangt (Psalm 1,1). Indem sie das tut, muss sie als eine Versuchung das Verlangen vermeiden, sich in einer Leseweise auszuruhen, die so vollständig ist, dass das Lesen aufhören kann. Das Lesen der Schrift mit den Heiligen widersteht diesem Aufhören in der Behauptung, dass menschliche Heiligung im Anschließen an die Einheit mit den Heiligen in unserer Zeit gefunden wird, nicht in Innovation oder Fortschritt über jene hinaus. Eine solche christliche ethische Exegese wird als eine dargestellt, die von der biblischen Sprache von der „Transformation der Muster dieses Zeitalters“, von „Meditation“ und „Tora“ bestens unterstützt wird.

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article vient en réponse à ceux de Gordon Wenham, Don Wood, Bernd Wannenwetsch et Hans Ulrich. En réponse à Wenham, Brock demande si, dans l'exégèse théologique chrétienne, c'est l'interprétation ecclésiale ou la fidélité exégétique qui est la plus fondamentale. Il considère que ni la localisation de l'interprétation biblique dans l'Église, ni l'intérêt pour la fidélité exégétique ne sont primordiales pour déterminer le rôle de l'Écriture dans la formation morale de l'Église. Il considère ensuite ce qui advient lorsqu'on lie l'éthique à l'idée de principes éthiques et suggère que la difficulté extrême à élaborer de tels principes devrait nous alerter quant à la présence de failles théologiques fatales dans l'idée de principes moraux chrétiens.

Il répond ensuite à la préoccupation exprimée par Wood selon qui le réalisme moral est en péril si l'on n'accorde pas plus d'attention à la question de savoir comment on passe du langage moral descriptif au langage prescriptif. Cette critique est à ses yeux une reprise plus sophistiquée du présupposé selon lequel l'éthique chrétienne ne peut pas se passer de principes et repose sur la distinction entre raison pratique et théorique qui a vicié la théologie moderne. Les jugements portés sur les développements de la théologie occidentale sont ici cruciaux. Brock considère que le point névralgique pour l'éthique chrétienne contemporaine concerne la

manière de répondre aux tendances modernes de mêler l'orthodoxie doctrinale et une éthique hétérodoxe ou une éthique qui réduit la moralité chrétienne à l'attitude à adopter quant à quelques problèmes tests.

Enfin, Brock signale les convergences entre son livre et les articles de Wannenwetsch et Ulrich. Il développe l'idée que l'éthique chrétienne doit se concevoir comme une discipline au service de l'orientation des chrétiens dans la réalité, une réalité qui se définit en termes trinitaires, ecclésiaux et scripturaires. Dans l'orbite de la doxologie, la théologie et l'éthique assurent la situation de la pensée humaine au milieu de l'œuvre divine de création et de rédemption du monde. Dieu doit se manifester aux hommes pour les rendre conscients de sa présence et de son intérêt pour eux au milieu des tendances contraires de leur psyché déchu et des groupes sociaux dans lesquels ils sont pleinement immergés. La théologie chrétienne ne peut donc jamais se dispenser de la patiente mastication que demande la méditation (Ps 1.2). Elle doit éviter la tentation de désirer s'arrêter à une lecture tellement définitive que la lecture peut cesser. Lire l'Écriture avec les saints permet d'éviter cela si l'on considère que la sanctification humaine s'atteint lorsqu'on se joint à eux dans l'unité en notre temps, plutôt que de chercher à innover et à les dépasser. Une telle exégèse éthique chrétienne trouve sa confirmation dans le langage biblique de « la transformation de l'ordre de ce monde », de la « méditation » et de la « Torah ».

* * * * *

I.

I am deeply appreciative of such penetrating and constructive engagements by my five interlocutors, each of whom in his own way models sympathy without sycophancy. Many thanks to Hans Ulrich (how often does he get to be first in an alphabetical list?), Bernd Wannenwetsch, Gordon Wenham, Don Wood and Simon Woodman for drawing such rich reflections from *Singing the Ethos of God*. I am also especially grateful to Jonathan Chaplin, director of the Kirby Laing Institute of Christian Ethics, for proposing this dialogue, hosting the Cambridge symposium where these papers were first presented, and for editing them for publication.

I will respond to the papers in this volume in two movements. In the first I will attempt to clarify the argument of *Singing* and its positioning in the contemporary landscape by responding to some of the concerns of Wenham and Wood. I will then echo the approaches of Wannenwetsch and Ulrich by extending a conversation with them that both predates *Singing* and points beyond it.

Had I more space, I would have liked to have discussed the theological implications of the many illuminating historical points Wenham discusses in the latter part of his paper regarding the role of the Psalms in the transmission of the law in Israel. Here I will confine myself to two clarifications that I hope might alleviate Wenham's worries that I do not consider the Bible the 'Church's book', linking it with another about my unease with the derivation of moral principles or rules from Scripture.

Wenham detects in my account a suggestion that any claim that Scripture is properly interpreted only in the Church risks illegitimate anthropocentrism. My concern in chapter two of *Singing*, rather, is *how* the communarians² understand this interpretation to take place. I press the question of whether there are any substantive differences between the Church singing, praying and preaching Scripture, and, for instance, a nation debating the interpretation of the constitution in parliament. As I put it in chapter two, it is theologically crucial to distinguish the concept of 'Church' from a more general concept of 'community', not least because doing so ensures that we accord God's work a special role in defining the Church. I suggest that the communarians don't do this clearly enough, even though they rightly insist that the proper place for biblical interpretation is in the ecclesia.

My proposal assumes that the Church is that

community called into existence by God's speaking; it is a creature of God's Word, a *creatura verbi*, as Wannenwetsch notes. As a result, it understands the witness to that speaking, the Bible, not just as another book but as Scripture, that is a divinely designated medium through which God has chosen to shape human hearing and action. This leads to a second claim. The question of *how* the Church understands God to shape it through Scripture must *itself* be submitted to Scripture. My criticism of the communarians on this point is that their insistence that the Church is the proper context for biblical interpretation is not matched with a thoroughly theological account of the *role* Scripture plays in the moral formation of the Church. Though Wenham suggests I deny the first claim, that the Church is the rightful location of biblical interpretation, it is in fact the communarians' definitions of 'community' and 'moral deliberation' that I find theologically insufficient.

To put things this way allows me to agree with Wenham that the communarian insistence on the properly ecclesial location of biblical interpretation is conceptually more fundamental than the insistence of the biblical ethics school on close attention to the differences between the biblical books (discussed in *Singing* chapter three). Biblical ethics helpfully insists on the differences in *content* between different biblical books, attempting to define the ethic of each unit (however delineated) before any synthesis of the Bible's ethical teaching as a whole. What I am not able to follow is Wenham's suggestion that such fine-grained attention to Scripture should be understood as *supplementing* the communarian insistence on ecclesial interpretation. Doing so repeats the mistake of the communarians who are too assured that the simple self-designation 'Church' is one that can be made whether Scripture is taken seriously or not.

In *Singing* I assume that there are close readers of Scripture both inside and out of the Church, a fact readily apparent in any biblical studies department. Close reading, from whichever quarter it arises, is always a welcome challenge to the Church to better attend to its own Scriptures. There is an appropriate humility in allowing oneself to be forced back to Scripture rather than relying on the contention that the Bible is the Church's book to defend a lack of attention to the actual text of Scripture. The Bible is God's book, through which he forms a Church, and through which he disciplines and may even finally reject some who call themselves Church. It is God's chosen implement for

drawing humanity to himself, which means into the Church. No warrant is thereby implied for the Church to claim that it 'possesses' the book in an ontological sense. Of course the reasons why different communities and individuals read the Bible do differ, but the Church is that community that reads the whole Christian Bible as *Scripture*, that is, as a divine provision for the rule of its collective life. To restate my reservation about the communitarians, they are so sure that they are the Church that close reading of Scripture seems to fade in importance. It is this sense of *possessing* Scripture that is anthropocentric in that it insulates our certainties from challenge, whether by humans or God. This insulation, and the conceptual moves on which it rests, suggest a trajectory of domestication of Scripture and the God to whom it witnesses.

Wenham is also not persuaded by my insistence that we ought not to think of biblical ethics as the project of deriving principles, rules, models and virtues from Scripture. I make this claim for two reasons. The first expresses agreement with one implication of Lessing's observation of the 'ugly ditch' between the facts of history and the eternal truths of reason, an insight deeply etched into the structure of both modern theology and biblical studies. Though this dictum rests on problematic polarisations of time and eternity, and history and reason, it nevertheless has brought the attention of our age to the deeply historical nature of the biblical documents. Neither the Ten Commandments, nor the Sermon on the Mount, nor the epistles of Paul were written to us. They were, respectively, delivered to Israel, the disciples and crowds, and to various first-century churches. Whether or how they are *binding* on us is a theological, not a textual or archaeological question.

Fortified by these observations, biblical scholars have tirelessly reminded us that every single line of Scripture, not just the passages that hit our modern ears like the 'women be silent' passages, is bound by the strictures of local culture and thought. One of the major tasks of Part I of *Singing* is simply to show how difficult it is to begin with this historical awareness and end with a definitive culture-transcendent list of moral principles, virtues, rules or models derived from this large and complex book. The task becomes doubly difficult because our modern ethical sensibilities have been deeply shaped by a counter-productive ethical presupposition: that there is a single set of moral rules, like a Kantian categorical imperative, that is operative in every sphere of every kind of life. Such an undif-

ferentiated picture of moral rules, which assumes there must be *one* methodologically homogeneous way to be moral and a Christian, is very hard to mesh with the diversity of the Bible's stories and injunctions. To make such an ethic work demands reducing Scripture's complexity with what turn out to be woodenly reductionist ethical summaries or highly abstract principles. The interest of the third part of the book in the question of the diversity of the Church and in the concept of a grammar unifying activities that look, on the surface, very different, are both attempts to think more theologically about this question.

All this allows me to agree with Wenham that in many cases it is canonical interpreters of Scripture who are most sensitive to the conscious development of theological meanings by the writers of Scripture (cf. *Singing*, 277), as marked by their awareness, for instance, that the Psalter's animal imagery is metaphorically and theologically loaded (308). Not only have I learned much from them, but I deploy canonical interpretative moves in my own biblical interpretation (309-310). Nevertheless, canonical interpretation has singularly failed to generate what it seeks, a distillation of the moral principles that sum up the moral teaching of the Bible as a whole. My treatment of Childs in chapter four of *Singing* is rather brief not because his treatment is facile, but because it is very good and therefore displays the futility of this particular method of generating a comprehensive account of biblical ethics. I suggest along the way that one methodological barrier that still hampers the canonical interpreters becomes more clear when we read Augustine and Luther, who locate their readings of Scripture *within* the orbit of the one God's action to which the Scriptures attest. In contrast, even the theologically sophisticated canonical interpreter is constrained to speak of canonical development in more coolly descriptive terms of the ideas that 'those people' once held (cf. 189 n. 52).

This distancing gaze is constitutive of the modern discipline of biblical studies. Here I can hardly put my alternative proposal better than Wannenwetsch has done in his discussion of my rejection of epoch thinking. Whatever Christian ethics must be, it can only emerge within the conversation with the cloud of witnesses, conceived as valid, contemporary voices, that Scripture makes possible. The reason that Christians ought not seek eternal moral principles is that such a quest rests on the assumption that once we have these prin-

ciples in hand, we no longer need to listen to the saints, which simultaneously devalues the unending tutelage of the Spirit. Here I develop a position most forcefully articulated by Barth, and for this reason: if Christian ethics is a matter of applying or choosing to obey a set of principles that we have in hand, we become like Hercules at the crossroads, reinstated as judges of our own destiny, which is to sever ourselves from God's leading.³ To have the definitive set of moral principles is not yet to know which one we ought to apply, which of many 'in principle' good actions we ought to enact, or, as many biblical examples attest, which apparently morally problematic actions God might draw us into by binding us to specific neighbours (Rahab's hiding Israel's spies in her brothel, to take one of many examples that appear counter-intuitive to modern ethical principle-think).

In the final analysis, I suggest that my refusal of principles is linked to a specific doctrine of God. When we assert that we have the list of eternal terms by which humans may be moral (which necessarily stand above Scripture, being derived from it), we assert that we understand all that God wants of humans. This is tantamount to claiming to know God as he knows us. The Spirit no longer needs to be our continual guide and tutor. We have in effect become binitarian.

II.

I would like to continue with these themes as I turn to Don Wood's extremely generous and insightful response. I do so at the risk of discussing a minor point in Wood's argument in the interest of a larger point in this response, for which I must apologize. I will, however, move from a rather allusive criticism in a footnote, to try to deal with what I take to be the major question raised by Wood, whether my account undervalues accounts of the immanent works of God. Quoting O'Donovan, Wood suggests in a pithy footnote that my commitment to moral realism is in jeopardy without a more careful account of the transitions between descriptive and prescriptive moral language. On my reading, this criticism represents a more sophisticated approach to the worry that Christian ethics cannot do without principles that rests on the bifurcation of theoretical and practical reason that, in my judgement, has bedevilled modern theology.

The boundaries of the modern academic discipline of Christian ethics, and its uncomfortable relation with systematic theology, is arguably a

late flowering of the high medieval embrace of a firm distinction between theoretical and practical reason. The modern construal of the difference between theology and ethics as devoted respectively to the explication of theoretical and practical reason illustrates how difficult such a division makes moving between the two domains of knowledge. It is also linked to a tendency of western academic theological culture to fall into line with the culture of the (early) modern university in which theoretical knowledge (philosophy) was seen as more basic than the practical arts (including ethics). The result of these developments, especially in English-speaking Protestant theology, has been a sense that systematic (or fundamental) theology constitutes basic Christian knowledge, with ethics understood as the application of this knowledge to particular circumstances. The success of systematics in relation to ethics in the British academy after 1945, and the methodological disarray and fragmentation of ethics and practical theology during the same period, can be understood as a result of the splitting of practical and theoretical knowledge and the privileging of the theoretical.

In light of this reading of contemporary theological history, I am less directly concerned than Wood with the task of maintaining creedal orthodoxy, especially if this is defined purely in the register of theoretical knowledge (which Wood, I believe, would not like it to be). It is my perception (considered and reconsidered) that the only interesting question for contemporary theology is how creedal orthodoxy can be so easily wedded to either ethical heterodoxy (insofar as theologians are any longer capable of defining it) or to a Christian morality confined to a very narrow domain of litmus test issues. How should the faithful theologian respond when Christians have come to think that the certainty of their faith is a matter of holding the right eternally valid beliefs while blissfully unaware of how these very beliefs are sanctioning the most destructive of behaviours? This is George Lindbeck's famous problem of the marauding crusader's orthodox confession. Creedal orthodoxy, it seems to me, is by definition intrinsic to the Church. I do not set myself the task of refuting pseudo-churches that have lost interest in being part of the confessing Church through the ages. My interest is in supporting those churches that sense the gap I am indicating between avowed historical Christian belief and the contemporary church's moral life, and desire for it to be overcome.

From this perspective, and fully aware of the

various roles such appeals have played in earlier traditions, I read many of the recent reminders of the importance of the ascension in Christian ethics as attempts to shore up the priority of theoretical over practical knowledge. It is this bifurcation that makes possible the distinction of descriptive as opposed to prescriptive moral language. My contention, however, is that this is an unbiblical distinction. Take for instance Wood's reading of 1 Corinthians 2:10. The passage 'the Spirit searches the eternal things of God' is cited to assert the priority of God's works *ad intra* over his works *ad extra*. Wood's concern is to safeguard the logical priority of God's action in himself over his actions toward the world. Here Wood does not get me quite right in his assessment that I am nervous about this assertion and the metaphysical claims it entails. What I *am* nervous about is the foreshortening of the passage Wood's citation suggests, and which, perhaps unwittingly, appears to me to run parallel to that of the defenders of theology as fundamentally theoretical knowledge.

1 Corinthians 2 is written to believers who Paul suggests have turned Christ into an object of knowledge to be possessed as a secret (a gnosis) that can then be cashed out as political authority construed in an anti-ecclesial fashion. To refute their Christology and its anchoring in theoretical knowledge alone, Paul does not avoid talk of God *in se*. His approach, rather, is to redirect their attention to the crucial importance of spiritual judgment of the Church's contemporary affairs. The certainty Paul demands of the Corinthians is precisely *not* knowledge of the inner life and decrees of God, though he refers to it in the course of his argument. The crucial knowledge he wants them to recognise and to become certain about is "of the gifts bestowed on us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:13), the gifts that God gives to *this* community in *this* place.

For Paul, a quest for knowledge for its own sake is profoundly antisocial. When theological claims are severed from their role in the up-building in the body of Christ, they may be held as the solitary knowledge of those who think themselves as 'mature' individuals, a problem in itself that Paul thinks worthy of rebuking. More relevant for our purposes, such theological knowledge may well lend itself to moral applications, but the very fact that these come in different if not mutually exclusive proposals reveals the total inability of this approach to foster *oikodome*, the upbuilding of the community.

Christianity as solitary gnosis can have no sense

of *communal* direction, nor can it have any certainty in its concrete moral discernment. The Corinthian Christian gnosis, with its assumption that the 'real subject' of faith is spiritual matters, promotes, for instance, an indifference to the body that can be acted out in radical libertarian directions (the promiscuity of chapter 6) as easily as radical asceticism (the disparaging of sexuality as confronted in chapter 7). Paul's response is not to dispute the Corinthian claim that Christ is Lord and Saviour, but to indicate the ways in which, if their confession of Christ is to be true and accurate, it must be tied to the community and the real time working of the Spirit to reveal what God has for this particular community. I would frame my own nervousness about 'metaphysics' as that of Paul: that the language game of ontology and essence severed from this ecclesial matrix allows and even encourages the idea that there can be knowledge of Christ apart from the practical discernment of the living body of Christ as taught by the Spirit in power (1 Corinthians 4:20).

I hope that by noting these trajectories it has become clear why I agree with Wood's reminder of the importance and role of creedal affirmations as authoritative (cf. *Singing*, 276) while being actively nervous about the ways creedal orthodoxy becomes a gnosis. 1 Corinthians suggests that the indicator that faith has become a gnosis is when Christian talk about ethics does not assume it is an immediate entailment of creedal claims, and when our certainty about creedal claims is paired with confusion and uncertainty about the living power of God's Spirit.

These perspectives arise from my interest in what it means to *live* Christian faith. Thinking, including theologising, is one aspect of faithful human living. But before thinking or acting must come hearing, the condition for obedience. As Luther puts it:

True obedience is not to do what you yourself choose or what you impose upon yourself, but what the Lord has commanded you through His Word... Therefore when God is not speaking but is keeping silence, there can be no obedience. Moreover, it is not enough that God speaks; but it is necessary that he speaks *to you*... 'The Lord has said' – whoever keeps this phrase in mind in all his actions will always live happily and be full of hope.⁴

My starting presupposition is that perfectly orthodox claims and beliefs can be affirmed by those who refuse to be obedient, and my sole interest

in *Singing* is how to understand and invite the Church into obedience.

These considerations also illumine, I hope, my complaints about the expansion of hermeneutics, which at best is talk about the conditions under which God might be known. My interest is in rediscovering how God *has and is* claiming human lives as his own. To know *that* God claims lives or to know the *conditions* for any claim to emerge is not yet to have learned what it might mean to *recognise* Christ's claim in the present. Recognition is an *action*, a *response*, a *skill* and not an idea. Christian ethics is the set of ideas oriented to facilitating this sort of action, directing attention to it in its full concreteness and materiality. To begin with these starting presuppositions inevitably generates a difference of positioning from much modern theology, a repositioning with which Wood no doubt has great sympathy.

III.

While I am glad not to be labelled 'Erlangen School' by Wood, I do share much with the final two respondents, Wannenwetsch and Ulrich. This makes responding to them in the mode of clarification impossible, as they also acknowledge. Rather than reacting to *Singing* critically, they have given me the immense gift of making what is implicit in it explicit. In so doing have pushed our conversation another step forward. In many ways *Singing* represents my own similar reflections on their work, and so any response to them can only take the form of again extending the conversation, the communion in unity befitting 'fellow workers of God' (1 Corinthians 3:8-9). Not only is it more exiting to agree than to criticise, as Wannenwetsch puts it, but it is more real, more human, theologically understood. I propose to conclude this paper by drawing together what I see as our points of agreement in hope of deepening and clarifying it. Only in passing will I note the origin of any given observation in the responses of Wannenwetsch and Ulrich.

1) Christian ethics is best understood as a discipline serving the orientation of Christians in reality. This reality, however, is not perceivable without faith, but is a thoroughly Trinitarian, ecclesial and scriptural reality. It is not directly concerned with establishing or grounding its claims about reality (an apologetic task) nor primarily with ensuring internal conceptual balance (a second-order systematic task), but in facilitating the Church's

becoming aware of this reality in real time, so that humans can be oriented in their daily lives. The term 'reality' is thus indexed to the doctrine of God.

2) The economy of God's works *ad extra* is further explicated in a Christological and robustly pneumatological manner. Doing so renders doxology the primary form of human response to the reality that sustains human life. Doxology is the ongoing human acknowledgement of reliance on and gratitude for God's presence and care. Because God has revealed in the life of Jesus Christ that he desires to live with us, humans can affirm that he has prepared a way so that they can live with him. Humanity is not left to invent praises on its own, which would be tantamount to reinventing faith. What we trust we praise; the form of our faith is detectable in our praises. Some praises are authoritative because they genuinely 'author' us, genuinely open up communication with the one life giver, so keeping us alive. Doxology is ordered vertically as coming from and returning to God, and given shape, horizontally, by its emplacement in the praises of the saints. Such an approach reconfigures the academic discipline of ethics as doxology critique, with far reaching implications for concrete ethical discussions only alluded to in *Singing*.

3) These two opening points betray not only a comfort with, but an insistence that theology and ethics admit their location 'in the middle' of God's creation and salvation of the world. God must break in on humans to make us aware of his presence and care *amidst* the countervailing tendencies that characterise our fallen psyches and the social formations within which they are wholly embedded. Sanctification is thus, irreducibly, a process of unlearning and displacement of what we think we know by what comes to us, by that which we cannot yet perceive or comprehend.

4) The foregoing also positions theology as a discipline wholly comfortable with the admission that we Christians do not yet know Scripture. Once I learned the order of the biblical books, and I thought I knew Scripture. But then I learned the content of the books, and realized that only *then* did I know Scripture. Yet later I learned the biblical languages and realized, by learning more, how little I had previously understood. We are always tempted to think that we know once we have grasped the theologies of the biblical books or their ethical content, grasped the appropriate hermeneutic method, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

But if Christian theology can do no more than attend to the letter of Scripture rather than arbitrarily putting aside this attention on the grounds that we now know it, it is left with a never-ending movement into Scripture. Christian faith can never transcend the patient 'chewing' which meditation demands and which is constitutive of human blessedness (Psalm 1:1). The human condition is one of continual temptation to claim arrival, to seek to rest in a reading that is so complete that reading can cease. These considerations fund the suspicion of 'closed' theoretical accounts evident in *Singing* and the responses of Wannenwetsch and Ulrich. But notice: being comfortable with being perpetually 'in the middle' of both life and scriptural meditation can only continue in the ongoing and sustaining presence of the community of worship by the work of God.

5) When Christians lose this sense of being embedded in the faith of the community of praise, the Spirit-sustained body of Christ, they inevitably clutch for alternative mechanisms for generating certainty and stability. This clutching becomes visible when attending to the shifting inflections of praise. There is a symbiosis between a church enamoured with method, whether theological or ethical, and as Wood also picks up, a church that has lost its confidence in the power of the Spirit. Wannenwetsch nicely names this syndrome 'methodological deism'. Such analysis takes seriously the creedal claim that there is a 'pneumatological context for ethics' (Ulrich). The whole project of *Singing* is theologically to explicate what it might mean to court the Spirit in the realms of life and biblical exegesis. Formed activities of listening, praying, communal praise and so on are exposed as basic forums in which human life is given a form that befits it, that enlivens it.

6) Wannenwetsch, Ulrich and I assume a symmetrical relationship between the irreducibility of the *text* of Scripture and the irreducibility of the *persons* who make up the communion of saints. Every generation of Christians must read Scripture with the saints because our sanctification is found in *joining* them, in being made one with *them*. Because the Christian ethos is fundamentally doxological, it is irreducibly political. Individual praise is only knowable as real praise as it harmonises with the body of Christ. On this point I think Wannenwetsch and Ulrich both draw out my own sensibilities more explicitly and succinctly than I was able to do in *Singing*. The sympathy towards the saints that this account engenders is fundamentally

at odds with the academic culture in which success is won through criticism. I will consider *Singing* a success if it does nothing more than show how vital it is that contemporary theologians, especially theological students, become aware of the ways they are being cut off from the body of Christ by the habits of disdain, objectification and debunking that come so easily in the academy and offer such glittering short term gains.

7) This last observation about the influence of academic culture on theological habits is an example of how such a theology places prime importance on the heightening of sensitivity to the denuding 'schemata of this age' (Romans 12:2). For Wannenwetsch, Ulrich and me, salvation is closely tied to the divine overcoming of such schemas. Scripture and the *communio sanctorum* are understood as God's chosen modalities serving this overcoming, a wholly divine act which humans can either embrace or reject. Scripture must remain outside us, truly *other* in order to preserve the space for the Spirit to liberate it from our self-justifying projections. So too must the saints' exegesis stand against us in all its glorious depth and bewildering contradictions. To allow them to do so is to conceive biblical commentary as closer to midrash, as Ulrich points out. To immerse ourselves willingly in this turbulent but unified stream is a venture of reliance on the illuminating power of the Spirit which Ulrich succinctly labels 'a dramatic and eschatological metamorphosis'. Wannenwetsch, Ulrich and I agree that the tenor of Christian ethics is therefore appropriately focused on changes, on surprising appearances, in short, on advent. It is so because humans are lost, and doubly lost if they have not learned how to detect and respond to divine invitations to repentance.

This emphasis comprehends the emphasis of virtue ethics on the gradual building up of new ways of living, new habits. But in doing so it insists that new habits are an accumulation of human responses to divine invitations calling believers in directions their current habits resist. The important question becomes not, 'What is the basic set of Christian habits or virtues?' but a prior one: 'What does it mean to be prepared to hear when God *challenges* our current habits and schemas of perception?' In following out this question, not only is the emphasis of a Christian virtue ethic decisively shifted away from a focus on human subjectivity, but we also come to the theological source of the rejection of any hard distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge. Romans 12:1-5 suggests that

our practical and theoretical knowledge are inextricably intertwined, and therefore that our attempt to keep them separated can only yield resistance to the reformulation of the schemas that simultaneously entangle our lived life and thoughts.

8) Finally, there is agreement that the concept of faith as 'exploring the Torah' is superior to bifurcated accounts of theology and ethics, or ethics and exegesis. Christian ethics is conceived as a conversation between contemporaries gathered around and anchored to God by this text, these *words*, with their tangible and concrete materiality. This surface, in its sheer givenness, opens the space in which God has chosen to gather a Church. It is the anchoring mode of God's presence as he has chosen to offer it to us. Scripture can be loved and inhabited because it can be touched and 'eaten' because it invites us into itself. In so doing it opens our eyes to our embedding in God's works, works that encompass not only us but the whole cosmos, evoking concrete worship and love. If the Torah is God's revelation of himself and all his works, we can never encompass or summarise it, but can only be *inside* it, to be *exploring* it with all our beings (cf. *Singing*, 75-77). In it the communion of saints discovers that it is a little band in a vast universe of words, each of which indicates God's ways of being with humans. In this universe biblical exegesis is the discussion about the way forward together.

That discussion is defined by waiting for God to reveal how we can advance without breaking communion even when we disagree or are confused amongst ourselves. Christian ethics is concerned with indicating how humans can learn to trust the words of Scripture as this city, this people, and so to be made one with them, Christ's body.

Dr. Brian Brock is Lecturer in Moral and Practical Theology at the University of Aberdeen. *Singing the Ethos of God* is his first book. He has been a member of the KLICE Advisory Council since 2005.

Notes

- 1 This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Annual Book Colloquium of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics (KLICE), Tyndale House, Cambridge, 3-4 September 2008.
- 2 I use the label 'communitarians' for the discourse represented by the otherwise excellent *The Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life* by Birch and Rasmussen and *Reading in Communion* by Fowl and Jones.
- 3 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*. Edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-1961) volumes II/2, 517; III/1, 264-265 and IV/1, 615-616.
- 4 Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis* vol 2. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960) 271, 273.

NEW FROM PATERNOSTER

Spirituality Without God A Christian Response to Buddhism

Harold A. Netland & Keith E. Yandell

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Harold A. Netland is Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Intercultural Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, USA; **Keith E. Yandell** is Julius R. Wienberg Professor of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin, USA

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Graeme Finlay lectures in the department of Molecular Medicine and Pathology at the University of Auckland; **Stephen Lloyd** is pastor of Hope Baptist Church in Gravesend, UK; **Stephen Pattemore** works for the United Bible Society in New Zealand; **David Swift** lectures on environmental issues and works for the Christian Medical Fellowship in Scotland.

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William A. Dembski, senior fellow with Seattle's Discovery Institute, author of *The Design Inference* (Cambridge).

Peter S. Williams is a Christian apologist working for Damaris International in Southampton, UK.

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Book Reviews – Recensions – Buchbesprechungen

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A Reader's Hebrew Bible

A. Philip Brown II and Bryan W. Smith

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008, xxviii + 1652 pp.,

£25.99, pb; ISBN 978-0-310-26974-8

SUMMARY

The *Reader's Hebrew Bible* fills an immense gap for those hoping to maintain and improve their Hebrew reading skills. All Hebrew words occurring less than 100 times are footnoted (less than 25 for Aramaic) and those that occur 100 times or more are listed in a glossary in the back. With Hebrew vocabulary being so much more difficult than Greek, this volume is invaluable for the time it saves the reader.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die *Reader's Hebrew Bible* füllt eine riesige Lücke für diejenigen, die hoffen, ihre hebräischen Lesefähigkeiten zu behalten und zu verbessern. Alle hebräischen Wörter, die weniger als 100 Mal vorkommen, werden in Fußnoten vermerkt (weniger als 25 Mal beim Aramäischen), und Wörter, die 100 Mal oder öfter vorkommen, werden am Ende in einem Glossar aufgelistet. Weil das hebräische Vokabular viel schwieriger als das griechische ist, ist dieser Band im Hinblick auf die Zeit, die er den Lesern erspart, unschätzbar.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage vient combler une grande lacune pour ceux qui souhaitent maintenir et améliorer leur aptitude à lire la Bible en hébreu. Tous les mots hébreux apparaissant moins de cent fois (et les mots araméens dont le nombre d'occurrences est inférieur à vingt-cinq) sont traités en notes de bas de page et un glossaire en fin de volume donne la liste des autres. Le vocabulaire de l'hébreu est bien plus difficile à maîtriser que celui du grec et cet ouvrage permet au lecteur de gagner du temps dans sa lecture du texte biblique.

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As one who has benefited immensely from my *Reader's Greek New Testament* (RGNT), I was pleased to see the release of Zondervan's *Reader's Hebrew Bible* (RHB). Though I have only used this edition for a short time, I have been just as pleased with it as with the RGNT. With the advent of Bible software, readers can find more detailed help with parsing and the like, but this volume is especially helpful for reading larger quantities without having to spend time looking at a computer screen or in a lexicon.

Unlike the critical edition of the Greek New Testament, which is a composite text based on the best selected reading of each variant, most current Hebrew texts (e.g.,

BHS and BHQ) are based on one text, the Leningrad Codex with text critical variants footnoted. RHB follows this model (without any text critical notes), using the Westminster Leningrad Codex 4.4 (WLC) version, which is provided in BibleWorks 7.0. There are a limited amount of variations between this text and BHS, and the editors list the 27 differences they know exist between WLC and BHS in an appendix. There are neither a critical apparatus nor Masora notes, which follows the editors' goal to make this text easy for reading rather than a tool for detailed exegesis. Important to the Masoretic Text is the distinction between *Kethib* (written) and *Qere* (spoken) forms. Rather than using marginal notes as other editions, both forms are included in the text but are marked with a superscripted K and Q, respectively.

With regard to the Hebrew parts of the Bible, all words occurring less than 100 times are footnoted, and those that occur 100 times or more are listed in a glossary in the back. For Aramaic, words occurring less than 25 times are footnoted, but none of the more frequent words are included in the glossary. For the sake of space, proper names occurring less than 100 (Hebrew) or 25 (Aramaic) times are not footnoted but rather coloured grey in the text. For the footnotes, the root of the word and the homonym number along with context- and stem-specific glosses are given from HALOT and BDB. If glosses from these two sources were not deemed adequate, others sources were used such as Holladay and *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, and are marked accordingly. For verbs, the stem/binyan (Qal, Niphal, etc.) is also noted, which along with the root makes parsing much easier, especially with weak verbs.

The RHB does not suffer from the problems of the first edition of its cousin the RGNT. In particular, the font is very readable, as it is the one used in BibleWorks. Although the footnotes are not laid out in columns, the Hebrew word and footnote number are a much darker font than the rest of the footnote, making the correct one relatively easy to find.

The editors' conservative backgrounds have bothered some who automatically assume that this means their work will be biased. I have seen no evidence of a bias that has affected the work (In general, is it certain that those with different [non]confessional backgrounds could not be any less biased in other directions?) In fact, the format of following HALOT and BDB by the editors would seem to preclude the issue of bias. For instance, with Isaiah 7.14 the gloss for *almah* is only 'young woman' and does not include 'virgin' as an option.

The Duo-Tone leather is comfortable, but the cover does not seem sturdy enough for long term use, as I have already noticed some creasing. This is a larger issue

than with the *RGNT* because of the larger size of this volume, which is about the same as a study Bible. At the same time, this issue would not at all give me pause from purchasing the work.

On the whole, this work fills an immense gap for those hoping to maintain and improve their Hebrew reading skills. With Hebrew vocabulary being so much more difficult than Greek, this volume is invaluable for the time it saves. I could not recommend it more highly.

Ben C. Blackwell
Durham, England

*Joseph Wise and Otherwise: The Intersection of
Wisdom and Covenant in Genesis 37–50*

Lindsay Wilson

Paternoster Biblical Monographs

Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004, xvi + 339pp.,
£24.99, pb; ISBN-10: 1-84227-140-7

SUMMARY

This revised doctoral thesis addresses the question of the genre of the Joseph narrative. The Joseph story has been variously categorised, but with considerable debate on whether or not it is a wisdom text. Wilson argues persuasively that it includes 'wisdom like elements', but that a synchronic reading must also attend to its integration into the rest of Genesis where it develops the covenant themes from the Abraham story while also preparing for the events of Exodus. Joseph acts wisely, but this wisdom enables God's purposes to be worked out.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese überarbeitete Dissertation widmet sich der Frage des Genres der Josephserzählung. Die Story über Joseph ist unterschiedlich kategorisiert worden, inklusive einer beachtlichen Debatte darüber, ob es sich um einen Weisheitstext handelt oder nicht. Wilson argumentiert überzeugend, dass die Story „weisheitsähnliche Elemente“ beinhaltet, dass sich eine synchrone Leseweise aber auch der Integration der Story in den Rest der Genesis widmen. In diesem Gesamtkontext entwickelt die Story die Bundesthemen der Story über Abraham weiter und sie bereitet gleichzeitig auf die Exodusergebnisse vor. Joseph handelt weise, aber seine Weisheit macht es möglich, dass Gottes Absichten Gestalt gewinnen.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette monographie est la révision d'une thèse de doctorat sur le genre littéraire de l'histoire de Joseph. Ce récit a été rangé dans diverses catégories et la question de savoir si c'est un texte sapientiel a été largement débattue. Wilson montre de manière convaincante qu'il inclut des éléments sapientiaux, mais qu'une lecture synchrone du texte doit prendre en compte la manière dont il s'intègre au reste du livre de la Genèse en prolongeant le thème de l'alliance qui domine le récit consacré à Abraham et en

préparant le récit de l'exode. Joseph agit avec sagesse, mais cela contribue à la réalisation des projets de Dieu.

* * * *

Originally prepared as a doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Melbourne, Wilson here tackles the question of the genre and purpose of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37-50). Ever since von Rad argued that it was a wisdom text, the genre of the narrative has been vigorously debated, with a variety of criteria developed and rejected by scholars in seeking to assess this proposal. Wilson wades into this discussion, seeking to develop a model for understanding the finished text. He criticises previous research on wisdom in the Joseph narrative for failing to develop a proper method for identifying (or rejecting) wisdom in this narrative, though in fact the debates about how to identify wisdom go much wider than just this narrative. Rather than depending on particular terminology, social setting, form or content, Wilson argues for the presence of 'wisdom like' material which points to the role wisdom plays in the narrative. Although this is heuristically helpful, identifying these elements still seems a trifle impressionistic.

With his method established, Wilson then provides a close reading of the whole narrative, though because the wisdom like elements play a lesser role in chapters 46-50, this section is treated more briefly. Wilson focuses then on Genesis 37-45, analysing the way Joseph is presented, and in particular his characterisation. Against those who have suggested that Joseph is presented negatively, Wilson argues that the presentation of the dreams in chapter 37 and the encounters with his brothers leading to the point where he reveals himself offer a neutral interpretation of him because we are never given any indication of his motivation. This is not as convincing as the rest of his reading, principally because arguments from silence are difficult to substantiate. More impressively, he also shows how the Judah – Tamar narrative of Genesis 38 functions as a macrocosm of the whole of the Joseph narrative. Both the narrative as a whole and Genesis 38 in particular demonstrate the importance of acting wisely though the wisdom like elements do not have to include elements such as dream interpretation since Joseph does not employ wisdom techniques in their interpretation.

From the close reading, Wilson then explores the function of the wisdom like elements in view of the covenant context in which the narrative is now placed. Wilson is able to demonstrate that Joseph acts wisely but that through this God is actually achieving his own purposes. God's kingly reign is thus demonstrated through the actions of the wise, so wisdom and covenant interact with one another. The Joseph narrative therefore demonstrates the value of acting wisely while also showing how God's rule is worked out through those who do so. Covenant themes are evident throughout, but God's sovereignty is not expressed apart from the faithfulness

and wisdom of God's people. This wisdom seeks to promote life and family because such wisdom is also consistent with God's covenant purposes.

The value of this study lies primarily in Wilson's synthesis of the wisdom and covenant themes, demonstrating that wisdom can function more closely with covenant in the theology of the Old Testament than is often thought. These conclusions could be applied more widely than the Joseph Narrative alone, and we can look forward to further contributions from Wilson in this area.

*David G. Firth
Cliff College, England*

***God, Pharaoh and Moses: Explaining the Lord's
Actions in the Exodus Plagues Narrative***

William A. Ford

Paternoster Biblical Monographs

Milton Keynes / Waynesboro: Paternoster, 2006, xix
+ 248 pp., £19.99 / \$36.99, pb; ISBN 978-1-94227-
420-0

SUMMARY

Ford helpfully examines the theological problem posed by the plagues narrative. In short, why does Yahweh not immediately release Israel? He argues from a canonical perspective that attention to who says what and to who means that Exodus 9:13-19 and 10:1-2 can be taken together to suggest that Yahweh is responsive to the differing needs of Pharaoh and Israel to know God. This is then refined through a reading of the story of the Ark in 1 Samuel 4-7. The approach adopted offers a helpful model for reading other potentially 'problematic' texts.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Ford untersucht auf hilfreiche Weise das theologische Problem, das die Erzählungen über die Plagen aufwerfen. Kurz: Warum befreit Gott Israel nicht sofort? Er argumentiert aus einer kanonischen Perspektive heraus, dass Aufmerksamkeit darauf, wer was sagt, und Aufmerksamkeit darauf, das Exodus 9,13-19 und 10,1-2 als zusammengehörig verstanden werden können, nahe legt, dass Jahwe auf die unterschiedlichen Bedürfnisse des Pharaos und Israels reagiert, Gott zu kennen. Dieser Ansatz wird dann durch eine Untersuchung der Geschichte von der Bundeslade in 1. Samuel 4-7 verfeinert. Der in dem Buch übernommene Ansatz bietet ein hilfreiches Modell auch für andere potentiell „problematische“ Texte an.

RÉSUMÉ

Ford se penche sur le problème théologique posé par le récit des plaies infligées à l'Égypte. Pourquoi Yahvé ne délivre-t-il pas immédiatement Israël ? Adoptant une approche canonique, et considérant qui dit quoi et à qui, il s'efforce de montrer que les récits d'Exode 9.13-19 et 10.1-2 forment un ensemble indiquant que Yahvé vise à se faire

connaître au pharaon et à Israël selon les besoins différents de chacun. Ceci est complété par une lecture de l'histoire de l'arche de l'alliance en 1 Samuel 4-7. L'approche constitue un modèle utile pour la lecture d'autres textes potentiellement problématiques.

* * * *

Although many readers happily follow the account of the plagues in Exodus, others are struck by an important theological problem. Given that God clearly has the power to remove Israel from Egypt, why does he do so in the way that he does? In particular, why is there the pattern of hardening Pharaoh's heart and why does it take so many plagues before Israel is led out? Beyond this lies the additional question of exactly what Moses is instructed to ask. Is the 'three days' simply a ploy that is ultimately shown to be untrue? In this lightly revised PhD thesis from Durham (completed under Walter Moberly), Ford addresses these questions and in the process demonstrates the theological potential of a literary reading of the text.

Given the book's origins, it is no surprise that Ford first surveys existing approaches to these problems, finding them deficient in that they tend to privilege some texts over others or fail to attend to the narrative as we now have it. Hence, Ford offers a literary reading of the canonical text which pays particular attention to the development of the narrative and the specific question of who says what and to who. From this, he identifies 9:13-19 and 10:1-2 as crucial texts for consideration since both make some claim as to why the plagues narrative takes the form it does.

The heart of the book then lies in a close reading of these two passages, though especially in the case of 10:1-2 this is done in dialogue with the rest of the plagues narrative. Where 9:13-19 emphasises the need for Pharaoh to know who Yahweh is, 10:1-2 makes the same point for Israel. Where some have seen these as contradictory, Ford argues that these statements reveal that Yahweh is has multiple purposes where he responds differently to different needs. This then enables him to read the plagues narrative as a whole, noting the use of ambiguity in the matter of what it means for Israel to go, an ambiguity that is gradually unravelled as the plagues narrative proceeds. From this emerges a picture of God as one who is responsive to different situations, and who has multiple purposes through them.

Since Ford also aims to model a more widely applicable approach to 'problematic' texts which neither rejects nor naively accepts them, he then offers a reading of the story of the Ark in 1 Samuel 4-7. This text is chosen not so much for its own problems but because of the way it consciously reflects on the plagues narrative. Although the reading of these chapters offered here works well enough on its own, it did not seem as well integrated into the overall project as it might. On the one hand, Ford wants to explore it to examine its own use of the

plagues narrative, and on the other to use it as a further example of a problematic text. Yet these two goals do not really mesh because it means that an intertext effectively controls the problems of this text rather than allowing the literary method employed elsewhere to address its own theological problems. Resolution of this dichotomy would have allowed this chapter to work better within the overall argument, though the potential of Ford's approach is still evident. In all, this is a solid contribution that effectively demonstrates the importance of the combination of theological awareness and literary sensitivity.

David G. Firth
Cliff College

Deuteronomistic Theology and the Significance of Torah

Peter T. Vogt

Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006, xi + 242 pp.,
\$39.50 / £33.00, hb; ISBN 978-1-57506-107-8

SUMMARY

Vogt challenges the dominant interpretations of centralisation in Deuteronomy, arguing that although it has a radical programme, it is neither demythologising nor secularising. Rather, it is a radical case for making Torah central to Israel's life. Vogt offers a fair critique of alternative interpretations and makes a good case for his own by his careful reading of the text. This is a stimulating reading of Deuteronomy which is worthy of serious consideration by future interpreters of the book.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Vogt fordert die herrschenden Interpretationen über die Zentralisierung im Deuteronomium heraus und argumentiert, dass das Buch zwar ein radikales Programm enthält, aber weder demythologisierend noch säkularisierend ist. Deuteronomium liefert vielmehr eine radikale Argumentation für das Anliegen, die Torah zum zentralen Element des Lebens Israels zu machen. Vogt bietet eine faire Kritik an den alternativen Interpretationen und liefert durch eine sorgfältige Behandlung des Textes gute Argumente für seinen eigenen Ansatz. Dies ist eine stimulierende Lese-weise des Deuteronomiums, die es wert ist, von zukünftigen Auslegern des Buches ernsthaft in Betracht gezogen zu werden.

RÉSUMÉ

Vogt remet en cause les interprétations dominantes du thème de la centralisation dans le Deutéronome et soutient que, bien que ce livre propose un programme radical, il ne s'agit ni de démythologisation ni de sécularisation. C'est plutôt un plaidoyer pour donner à la Torah la place centrale dans la vie d'Israël. Vogt fait une critique pertinente des autres interprétations du livre et défend la sienne sur la base d'une étude soignée du texte. Son travail est stimulant

et mérite d'être pris en considération dans l'interprétation du Deutéronome.

* * * *

It is surprisingly easy for certain interpretations to become entrenched in biblical scholarship so that alternative approaches might not be recognised. An example of this might be the interpretation of the theme of centralisation in Deuteronomy which has often been interpreted as a radical attempt at creating a social structure centred on the sanctuary. In this revision of a doctoral thesis completed under Gordon McConville at Gloucester, Vogt places this interpretation under the microscope to argue that centralisation in Deuteronomy is about sacrifice and not social structure. Associated with the dominant approach to centralisation, many interpreters have seen Deuteronomy as both secularising and demythologising earlier texts dealing with worship. Although these latter issues do not depend upon the dominant interpretation of centralisation, they are closely bound up with it, which is why Vogt treats them together.

Demonstrating the book's origin as a doctoral thesis, Vogt begins by providing an overview of his methodology before taking the interpretation of Deuteronomy 16:18 – 18:22 as a case study in which to explore the way different scholars have interpreted the motif of centralisation and their relationship to the central ideology of the text. Vogt is able to show that there is considerable diversity in the interpretation of the text, even though all agree that centralisation is important, and that this pattern can be traced back through a century of Deuteronomy scholarship. This diversity does not stop the themes of secularisation and demythologisation from being important, though again there is diversity. It is this diversity in interpretation rather than fresh data that impacts the text that justifies this fresh reading of the text.

Following this, successive chapters are devoted to Deuteronomy 1:9-18, 4:1 – 6:9, 12 and 16:18 – 18:22 to explore the issue of centralisation and its relationship to secularisation and demythologisation. Vogt is aware that he has not covered all the possible texts on his themes and so presents these as a set of sample readings which demonstrate the possibility of his alternative. That alternative is still radical, but rather than demythologising or secularising earlier texts, Vogt argues that Deuteronomy seeks to put *Torah* at the centre of the community's life. Thus, the social structures of 1:9-18 and 16:18-22 are concerned with elevating *Torah*, so that *Torah* is effectively what replaces Moses. This is why *Torah* needs to be passed on. Vogt also argues that Deuteronomy 12 does not require a social centralisation but only a centralisation of sacrifice, though he is open to the possibility that there might be more than one shrine, the key issue being that worship happens only at the place that Yahweh chooses.

Overall, Vogt's reading is persuasive, though some

issues remain. If sacrifice is centralised, and comes to be associated with the ruling social structures, would it not result in social centralisation, at least in terms of power structures? This, however, might be an issue which could result from the text's application rather than something inherent in its ideology. It would also have been useful to recognise that not all interpreters have argued for the associated ideas of demythologisation and secularisation. They are certainly prominent themes amongst some interpreters (albeit understood differently), but some have accepted the general theme of centralisation without also adopting these associated themes. Vogt's use of Wright and McConville indicates his awareness of this, so the point could have been made more clearly, but his contribution lies in the detail with which he has been able to establish his point. Vogt has thus provided a stimulating work that will need to be taken seriously by future interpreters of Deuteronomy.

*David G. Firth
Cliff College*

Joshua

Jerome E. D. Creach

Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching

Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003, xiv + 135 pp.,
£13.99, hb; ISBN10: 0-8042-3106-0

SUMMARY

Creach offers a reading of the book of Joshua that is particularly sensitive to the issue of violence presented in the text. Following the normal format of the Interpretation series, he shows considerable depth in wrestling with the narratives where this is particularly important, but the treatment of chapters 13-22 is unfortunately slight in comparison. Preachers looking for help with the narratives in the other chapters will find this an excellent resource, but the imbalance in treatment limits the work's value.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Creach bietet eine Leseweise des Josuabuches an, die der Gewalt, die im Text präsentiert wird, besondere Aufmerksamkeit widmet. In Aufnahme des üblichen Formats der Reihe zeigt er beachtlichen Tiefgang im Ringen mit den Erzählungen, in denen dieses Thema besonders wichtig ist, doch die Behandlung der Kapitel 13-22 ist vergleichsweise dünn. Prediger, die Hilfe in Bezug auf die Erzählungen in den anderen Kapiteln suchen, werden das Buch als exzellentes Hilfsmittel empfinden, doch die unausgewogene Behandlung schränkt den Wert des Gesamtwerkes ein.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce commentaire du livre de Josué, Creach s'intéresse particulièrement à la question de la violence et consacre un traitement approfondi aux récits où ce thème est important. Le traitement accordé aux chapitres 13-22 reste

en revanche bien succinct. Les prédicateurs trouveront d'excellentes idées dans le commentaire des récits, mais le déséquilibre réduit la valeur de l'ouvrage.

* * * *

The book of Joshua is problematic for many Christians. The level of violence it records, especially as this is manifested in the application of the ban where captured people were devoted to destruction, means it is not necessarily one that receives a great deal of attention in preaching today. Facing up to these issues, Creach attempts to read this text in a way that is sensitive to the concerns of contemporary readers, but also from the conviction that the community of faith is impoverished by its non-attendance to Joshua because of the way it shows a portrait of God and God's demands on his people that the modern church needs to hear. As one expects in a series concerned with assisting preachers, this is a theologically committed reading of the text, one that is particularly concerned with bridging the gap between text and world.

In a brief introduction, Creach sets out his guiding assumptions about the book. He largely follows the dominant critical position that sees Joshua as part of the Deuteronomistic History and which therefore is particularly concerned to address the needs of the exile, though he does not follow this through in a reductionist fashion. Rather, the position of the exiles is often the way in which contemporary readers are able to approach the text. He is also careful to explain that he does not treat Joshua as a work of history in the modern sense of the word, arguing that our role as readers is to enter Joshua's world and have our history and world shaped by it. Doing this inevitably means wrestling with the issue of violence as it is presented in the text, and Creach signals his intent to do this by devoting a considerable portion of his introduction to it, arguing that Joshua's authors do not treat violence in a simplistic way, and that their own wrestling with this issue can guide us as contemporary readers.

The body of the commentary then works this out in the traditional manner for this series, offering exegetical essays on each passage rather than offering detailed comment on particular points, though of course where necessary to support a particular conclusion Creach does not hesitate to provide detail. The reading offered is clear and preachers will find much that is helpful, though there are always points on which one might differ. As is flagged by the introduction, Creach takes time to explore the issue of violence as it occurs in various passages, often pausing for extended theological reflections. Yet there is also something rather curious in this because it means that the issue of the occupation of the land is largely passed over. I suspect that the allocation of the land in chapters 13-22 will be difficult for most preachers simply because it seems rather dull or irrelevant (though in fact these chapters stress Yahweh's faithfulness in giving the land), but those looking for assistance here will be largely disap-

pointed. Indeed, chapters 14-19 receive barely two pages of comment. What we have therefore, is more properly a commentary on chapters 1-12 and 23-24 with short notes on the rest. This is an unfortunate imbalance and lets down an otherwise excellent resource.

David G. Firth
Cliff College

Bloodguilt, Atonement and Mercy: An Exegetical and Theological Study of 2 Samuel 21:1-14

Jin-Soo Kim

EUS 845

Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007, xvi + 302 pp.,
£38.30, pb; ISBN 978-3-631-56637-4

SUMMARY

Kim's study of 2 Samuel 21:1-14 provides an extended treatment of a passage which is largely ignored within the wider studies of Samuel. Kim provides a theologically committed reading of the text which integrates synchronic and diachronic exegesis. Originating as a doctoral dissertation, it shows a sound awareness of the main literature and key questions surrounding the passage. Kim shows that the text portrays God as holy, just and loving whilst also integrating it into the larger movement of the books of Samuel.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Kims Studie zu 2. Samuel 21,1-14 bietet eine ausführliche Behandlung einer Passage, die in umfassenderen Studien zum Samuelbuch weithin ignoriert wird. Kim bietet eine theologisch engagierte Leseweise des Textes, die synchrone und diachrone Exegese integriert. Ursprünglich eine Dissertation, das Buch zeigt eine solide Kenntnis der wichtigen Literatur und der Schlüsselfragen zum Abschnitt. Kim zeigt, dass der Text Gott als heilig, gerecht und liebend portraitiert, und er integriert den Text auch in die größeren Zusammenhänge der Samuelbücher.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici une étude détaillée et approfondie de 2 Samuel 21.1-14. Kim en fait une lecture théologique fondée sur une exégèse synchronique et diachronique, qui reprend sa thèse de doctorat. Il se montre très bien informé des travaux académiques et des questions importantes soulevées par ce texte. Il montre que Dieu y est présenté comme saint, juste et aimant, et intègre le texte au mouvement de l'ensemble des deux livres de Samuel.

* * * *

This study of an otherwise enigmatic passage in the books of Samuel originated as a doctoral dissertation completed under Eric Peels at the Theological University of Apeldoorn in the Netherlands. Even if only as a text that has seldom been studied on its own, 2 Samuel 21:1-14 was ripe for such an investigation, but it also

bristles with a range of exegetical and theological issues which pose questions for those committed to a Christian reading of the Old Testament. Kim's subtitle is thus of considerable importance in establishing the purpose of this study which wants to ensure that exegetical study also addresses theological questions generated by the text within the context of faithful reading.

The book's origin as a dissertation is apparent from the opening two chapters. The first of these sets out the leading questions addressed and how it will proceed, while the second demonstrates the validity of these questions through a review of the principal literature. Kim here shows a wide grasp of the literature in English and German, though it is unfortunate that he did not include L. T. Simon's *Identity and Identification: An Exegetical and Theological Study of 2 Sam 21-24* (Gregorian University Press, 2000) since he shares many of Kim's concerns. Kim might have strengthened this section by noting that few have studied this passage outside of larger concerns about Samuel, but he demonstrates that the key issues within the text are the death of the Saulides and Rizpah's enigmatic action in response. But he is also attentive to the theological issues being raised and notes that the image of God portrayed here is viewed by many as problematic.

With these issues noted, Kim provides his reading of the text over the next five chapters. Each investigates a different aspect of the text, starting with text critical questions (largely supporting MT) and concluding with an investigation of the leading theological issue. The others are devoted to the specifically exegetical questions, and Kim here draws on the insights of E. Talstra (Amsterdam) in integrating synchronic and diachronic models of reading, though it is generally the case that his synchronic conclusions make him unwilling to accept a number of diachronic suggestions. This enables him to consider the relationship of this passage to the rest of Samuel, operating on a synchronic reading of the whole of Samuel, and arguing that the most important connections are with 1 Sam.8 – 2 Sam.8 and also 2 Sam.24. Read this way, Kim argues that the passage's genre is a form of prophetic history which stresses the importance of kingship which exercises justice under Yahweh. These exegetical conclusions allow Kim to address the theological issues, arguing that the passage points to the holiness, justice and love of Yahweh. A closing chapter claims to offer Kim's summary and conclusions, though the fact that the Dutch abstract (*Samenvatting*) is essentially a translation of this makes clear that it is much more of a summary of each chapter than a conclusion as such.

Although there are points at which Kim's argument could be strengthened, especially in the case of his chapters on genre and the theological issues where he sometimes seems to be laying out his presuppositions rather than developing his argument, this is an intriguing and stimulating work that will hopefully generate discussion of this passage. There are a few misprints, but it

is overall a well-produced and stimulating work which adequately demonstrates the possibilities of combining detailed exegesis with a theologically committed reading of Scripture.

David G. Firth
Cliff College

Psalmen 51 – 100

Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger

Freiburg: Herder, 2008, 727 pp., € 100,-, hb; ISBN
978-3-451-26826-7

Psalmen 101-150

Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger

Freiburg: Herder, 2000, 912 pp., € 125,- hb; ISBN
978-3-451-26827-4

SUMMARY

The commentary on Psalms 51-100 by Hossfeld and Zenger offers a poetological analysis of the individual psalms presenting them each in the context of the fractional collections of the Psalter. In the second volume on Psalms 101-150, this promising approach has been continued and further improved.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Kommentar von Hossfeld und Zenger zu Ps.51-100 bietet eine poetologische Kommentierung der Einzelsalmen und stellt diese jeweils in den Kontext der Teilsammlungen des Psalters. Im zweiten Band 101-150 wurde dieser vielversprechende Weg fortgesetzt und weiter verbessert.

RÉSUMÉ

Le commentaire des Psaumes 51-100 par Hossfeld et Zenger analyse la poésie de chaque psaume en le situant dans le contexte de la collection à laquelle il appartient au sein du psautier. Dans le deuxième volume consacré aux Psaumes 101 à 150, les auteurs poursuivent cette approche prometteuse en l'améliorant.

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After the first part had appeared in the year 2000, eight years later it is followed by the volume on Psalms 101-150. Already in the first commentary (51-100), Hossfeld and Zenger (HZ) declared that the volume on Psalms 1-50 will appear last. The introduction can be written only when each individual psalm will have been commented and, thus, the total arrangement of the Psalter will have been included.

In the volume on 51-100 HZ specified the line of approach for the comments (10): On the one hand, the analysis of the "individual shape of the text" is being dealt; on the other hand, the arrangement of the individual psalms within the context of "each partial com-

position" is considered. The general approach of HZ is illustrated in detail in the comments on Ps 51 by Zenger (38ff.). Each interpretation is preceded by *bibliographical notes* on the psalm. With regard to Ps 51, the list comprising 25 titles is extensive, as one would expect. As for the other psalms, three or four references may suffice (e.g. Ps 77). The broad horizon which includes literature in various languages (German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Dutch) is remarkable. A special *translation* into German is provided for each psalm, which clearly observes the poetry of the Hebrew text without sounding clumsy. In a few instances, additional explanations are given in brackets; e.g. 51:5:

Surely I was sinful (i.e. embroiled in sin) at birth,
Sinful (i.e. as sinner) from the time my mother
conceived me.

The presentation of the text already incorporates the arrangement of verses which is referred to in the subsequent analysis. Questions concerning *text and translation* follow in minor typeface. Here, a detailed assessment of the Hebrew syntax is provided. In addition to text-critical aspects, controversial topics are debated if necessary. For example, with regard to Ps 51, the syntactic function of v.6cd is clearly discussed and evaluated.

The ensuing *analysis* consists, first of all, of the *analysis of genre*. As for Ps 51, Zenger examines in detail Würthwein's thesis that this is a so-called sickness psalm. Zenger presents Würthwein's view fairly, but clearly disagrees with his perspective. Zenger's main counterargument is influenced by the overall structure of the Psalm, which is symptomatic of the commentary's approach. He argues that especially the statements in the centre of both main parts vv.3-11 (v.6cd about "justification") and vv.12-19 (v.16 about "righteousness") speak against a "sickness doctrine" imported into the psalm" (44).

In the second step of the "analysis", HZ elucidate questions on the agenda as concerns *literary criticism*. Zenger classifies Ps 51:20-21 as a secondary appendix (from the perspective of poetry and syntax), acknowledging a tension with regard to a theology of sacrifice in v.18f. At the same time, however, he recognizes a valuable continuity of this perspective in vv.20-21.

A *classification of the structure* of the psalm comes next. Here, Zenger contests eliminations in Ps 51 (v.16) and, by and large, identifies a basic dual structure in vv.3-11 and vv.12-19. After *questions of date*, HZ deal with the *interpretation per se* of each psalm. Zenger selects the heading of Ps 51 as guideline for its reading, placing the psalm in the context of the second Davidic Psalter. Detailed comments follow the arrangement of verses. The comments accentuate aspects of poetry and theology of each psalm. Key verses are explained and lines of history of tradition are traced. The verse-by-verse interpretation precedes the section on *context, reception and implication*. In particular in this section on context, the ways of recent research on psalms become evident. Zenger considers Ps 51 "a programmatic introduction of

this Davidic Psalter" (56). Furthermore, he goes into Ps 50 as a preparation of Ps 51 (viz. theology of sacrifice as well as God's judging and saving righteousness). Having explained the reception history (Septuagint, Targum, NT), HZ finally address under the heading of "Implication" the current relevance of the psalm. The extent of this last part varies considerably per psalm. In Ps 51, Zenger stresses at length the radical way of penitence (more detailed also in Ps 84). In Ps 59, however, one sentence must do. Hossfeld at times completely omits this section on the implication of each psalm (e.g. in Psalms 54, 55, 58).

In the second volume (101-150), HZ carried out several improvements. For each psalm a pattern of structure is provided in terms of a summary. Thus the reader gets a very helpful overview before coming to the detailed interpretation. Besides, the "Septuagint version of the psalms has become much more comprehensive" (4). More extensive digressions on various groups of psalms have been added (Psalms 113-118; 120-134 etc.). Here, HZ put into practice even more consistently their original intention as to the interpretation of the Psalter. At this point, however, one may wonder as to why they make use of the tripartite structure Psalms 1-50; 51-100; 101-150. It is true that the two previous volumes that were already published never lost touch with a 'Psalter dimension', but precisely for that reason one should enquire as to whether a partition of the volumes according to the exegesis of the Psalter would not have been more adequate (e.g. corresponding to the five part structure). In my opinion the grounds for a break between Psalms 100 and 101, because Psalms 2-100 as "JHWH-king-Psalter" were already complete in the 5th century, have been provided afterwards. Although a tripartite structure may be "useful for the book and pleasant for the reader" (2008, p.18), it is more of a hindrance for the exegesis of the Psalter than of a help for this kind of commentary.

Finally, I would like to mention that (almost) all the Hebrew terms have been translated in the ongoing comments. Thus, readers who are less erudite in Hebrew are still able to benefit from all the explanations without being put off – which, for example, may have happened with the reviews by Kraus.

Both authors succeed in presenting a beneficial blend of exegesis of psalms and Psalter. The valuable results of the first volume have been further improved in the second one. Given this progress, the reader is waiting with anticipation for the next volumes. Both scholars and students of theology will study these two volumes with benefit. Both are worth their money!

*Gunnar Begerau
Drolshagen, Germany*

Like Fire in the Bones: Listening for the Prophetic Word in Jeremiah

Walter Brueggemann
Patrick D. Miller (ed.)

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006, xiii + 254 pp., h/b;
ISBN 9780800635619

SUMMARY

This book is a collection of fifteen essays by Walter Brueggemann, all of which have been published elsewhere. Broadly speaking, the first five articles focus on the scholarship of the book of Jeremiah, the next five concentrate on specific passages in Jeremiah, and the final set of essays considers the impact of the book of Jeremiah on the religious community. Throughout the volume the author repeatedly emphasizes that scholars have neglected to answer how the book of Jeremiah still speaks to us today. The book is a partial answer to that call.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch ist eine Sammlung von 15 Artikeln aus der Feder von Walter Brueggemann, die alle bereits andernorts erschienen sind. Grob gesagt konzentrieren sich die ersten fünf Artikel auf wissenschaftliche Beiträge zu Jeremia, die nächsten fünf auf bestimmte Abschnitte bei Jeremia und die letzten fünf bedenken den Einfluss des Jeremiabuches auf die religiöse Gemeinschaft. Der Autor betont wiederholt und durchgängig, dass die Gelehrten die Antwort auf die Frage vernachlässigt haben, wie das Jeremiabuch heute noch zu uns spricht. Das Buch ist eine teilweise Antwort auf diese Aufgabe.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage reprend quinze articles de Walter Brueggemann déjà publiés par le passé. Les cinq premiers sont consacrés aux travaux académiques sur le livre de Jérémie, les cinq suivants étudient des textes spécifiques de ce livre, et les cinq derniers traitent de l'influence du livre sur la communauté religieuse. Tout au long de l'ouvrage, l'auteur insiste sur le fait que les spécialistes ont négligé de chercher en quoi ce livre est pertinent pour nous aujourd'hui. Il répond partiellement à cette carence.

* * * *

This book is a collection of fifteen essays written by Walter Brueggemann, all of which have been published elsewhere. The order of the essays (edited by Patrick Miller) is intentional and the volume moves from an examination of the interpretive trends of the book, to a closer look at specific texts in Jeremiah and finally to a consideration of the relevance of Jeremiah to contemporary communities of faith (i.e. church and synagogue).

The three sections of the book are comprised of five chapters (short essays) each. In part one Brueggemann examines the prophet, the book, the scholarship, the theology and finally the future of Jeremiah studies. Here he highlights how Jeremiah studies have taken a turn over

the past several decades and have moved from focusing on the person of Jeremiah to the book of Jeremiah. He is critical of scholars who approach the text from a historical point of view. In the mind of Brueggemann, commentators such as Holladay or McKane, both of whom are particularly concerned with the history behind the text, have embarked on a task which, in the end, is not very rewarding. He argues that scholarship which focuses on historical questions diminishes the pertinence of the context to the contemporary writer or reader. Thus, studies with a historical bent are thick on criticism but thin on interpretation and theology. Brueggemann contends that more attention should be paid to the literary landscape of the text; when this is done properly, the theological dimension of the passage is rightly brought into focus. Commentaries should devote more space to the "continued say" of the text and should address questions such as, "How could it be that the text of Jeremiah might redescribe our human life to permit new perceptions, new actions, new compassions, new obedience, new hopes?" (37). In the final essay of the first section, Brueggemann suggests some avenues which might be fruitfully explored in future studies of Jeremiah. The path ahead lies with a synchronic interpretation of the book and should have a greater emphasis on how the book of Jeremiah can help us to rethink and reshape our lived reality.

Part two is more text-based and apparently gives the reader a taste of some of the questions Brueggemann would like to see future studies address. In chapter six he considers the place of prophetic speech and history. The synagogue and church are similar to prophets in that they have the task of proclaiming the purposes of God to a humanity that is often riddled with hurt and despair. The focus shifts to the tension between destruction and deliverance in Jeremiah in chapter seven. Simply deleting as a gloss the repeated assertion that Yahweh will not make a complete end of Judah (4:27; 5:10, 18; 30:11) does not do justice to the theological difficulties which the post-586 community was wrestling with, namely the vacillation between believing that the exile was "the end", and the refusal to believe that this is the end. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are many places in the book of Jeremiah which have a "sense of ending" (i.e. chapters 25, 45, or 52). The entire book attests to "an ending that does not end". In chapter eight Brueggemann considers the role and function of chapter 24 and argues that it is pivotal in the development of the "two-stage" trajectory of Jeremiah (i.e. tearing down and building up). In chapter nine he reflects upon the impact which the exile had on the Israelite community and examines three (what he assumes to be post-exilic) texts (Deut 4:23-31; Isa 54:7-10; Jer 31:35-37) which "explore different dimensions of the way in which God is voiced" (121). In the final chapter of this section, Brueggemann focuses on Jer 36 and outlines six points which emerge from the story of the production of the biblical scroll. He closes by saying that Christians, like Jehoiakim who burned the scroll, are also "haunted" by

the biblical text, and by the life that it fashions with the Holy One.

The essays in the third section focus on the impact of the prophetic task on the religious community. In chapter eleven Brueggemann considers the prophetic faith by focusing on the person, tradition, and the book of Jeremiah as an exemplar. He asserts that the contemporary community of faith is in a situation similar to that of Jeremiah and therefore it would do well to learn from and emulate his prophetic ministry. Various images of hope from Jeremiah and Isaiah are considered in chapter twelve and here Brueggemann reflects on the church and her commitment to the pursuit of peace. In chapter thirteen he looks at Jer 32:1-15 and 8:18-9:3 and submits that holding these two texts together "may be the most important agenda in our societal context" because they show us how a griever can be a hoper (186). He argues that Jeremiah was able to remain hopeful in such a hopeless situation because he stayed close to Yahweh by articulating his despair. The articulation of this despair is what allowed him to move beyond this to hope. And the same is true today. Chapter fourteen focuses on history and explores five theses – which the author claims to have either "read out of or into" Jeremiah – about who true history makers are: they have a profound sense of anguish which touches them personally, they believe in the moral coherence of the world, they assert the raw rule of God's sovereignty, they are capable of engaging in serious social analysis and they are relentlessly filled with hope. He concludes that history makers "are not the great public figures who get on the *Tonight Show*" (197) but are hidden and often unnoticed. The book ends with an interview with Brueggemann in which he responds to a number of questions ranging from "What does it mean to be a prophet?" to "Are preachers supposed to be prophets?" to "Can a Christian have a prophetic sense of grief and energy and hope and also have a bit stake within the structure of the predominant culture?"

Brueggemann is very much concerned with how the book of Jeremiah can still speak to us today. While his desire to move beyond a purely academic investigation of the biblical text is commendable, his points of application were often vague and abstract. Additionally, given that the book is a compilation of fifteen different articles, the volume does not hang together as tightly as one would have hoped. I found it hard to find the scarlet thread which binds the chapters together, and in reading through the book I often felt as if texts were pulled off the shelf at random, briefly discussed, and then put back. Since most of the essays do not have a conclusion or summary, the reader is frequently left "hanging" at the end of the essay, and the task of synthesizing the author's purpose and main points is left up to the reader. A large number of the articles read much like a sermon and thus the volume may be suitable for the educated clergy (especially the essays in the third section).

Benjamin Foreman
Aberdeen

From Qumran to the Yahad: A New Paradigm of Textual Development for The Community Rule

Alison Schofield

Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 77

Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009, xvii + 365 pp., €119, hb;
ISBN 978-90-04-17007-0

SUMMARY

In this book Alison Schofield argues two inter-connected theses. First, the group known as the *Yahad* is broader than just those living at Qumran. Second, the surviving *Serekh Ha-Yahad* scrolls originally belonged to different communities of the *Yahad* spread throughout Judea, and over time these scrolls were brought to Qumran, the 'head-quarters' of the *Yahad*. She covers a vast amount of material including the textual relationship of the S scrolls, the classical descriptions of the Essenes and the archaeological relationship between Qumran and other ancient Jewish cities. The volume is well-argued and valuable to research on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch argumentiert Alison Schofield für zwei miteinander verbundene Thesen. Erstens: Die Gruppe, die als *Yahad* bekannt ist, umfasst mehr Personen als nur diejenigen, die in Qumran leben. Zweitens: Die *Serekh Ha-Yahad* (S) Schriftrollen, die überlebt haben, gehörten ursprünglich zu verschiedenen Gemeinschaften der *Yahad*, die sich über ganz Judäa verteilten. Im Verlaufe der Zeit wurden diese Rollen nach Qumran gebracht, dem „Hauptquartier“ der *Yahad*. Sie deckt eine beachtliche Materialfülle ab, inklusive der textlichen Beziehungen zwischen den S Rollen, der klassischen Beschreibung der Essener und der archäologischen Beziehung zwischen Qumran und anderen antiken jüdischen Städten. Der Band bietet eine gute Argumentation und er ist wertvoll für die Erforschung der Schriftrollen vom Toten Meer.

RÉSUMÉ

Alison Schofield avance ici deux thèses liées l'une à l'autre. Tout d'abord, le groupe connu sous le nom de *yahad* ne se limitait pas à ses représentants demeurant à Qoumrân. Ensuite, les manuscrits *Serekh Ha-yahad* (S) qui subsistent appartenaient à l'origine à différentes communautés du *Yahad* éparpillées dans la Judée et ont fini par être apportés à Qoumrân où se tenait le « quartier général » du *Yahad*. L'auteur couvre un large champ d'étude comprenant les relations textuelles du rouleau S, les descriptions classiques des Esséniens et les rapports entre Qoumrân et d'autres cités juives antiques du point de vue archéologique. L'argumentation est solide et l'ouvrage constitue un outil de valeur pour la recherche sur les textes de Qoumrân.

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The study of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been drastically altered in light of the publication of all the scrolls and the revaluation of the archaeological evidence. Older theo-

ries about the scrolls origin, their connection to Qumran and the relationship of their authors to other Jewish groups have all been challenged, and this volume by Alison Schofield addresses these issues by means of the *Serekh Ha-Yahad* (S) material. Schofield argues two inter-connected theses. First, the group known as the *Yahad* is broader than just those living at Qumran. Second, the surviving S scrolls originally belonged to different communities of the *Yahad* spread throughout Judea, and over time these scrolls were brought to Qumran, the 'head-quarters' of the *Yahad*.

In chapter one Schofield reviews the scholarly attempt to define the group that lived at Qumran and their relationship to other Jewish groups and people. The *Yahad* cannot be limited to the Qumran site, but instead was a much larger movement spread throughout Judea. All the scrolls found at Qumran could not have been copied or composed there, and Schofield adopts the view that many of the scrolls originated in communities outside of Qumran. The collection found at Qumran is ideologically connected but not derived from the same author or locale. Most were probably deposited around 68 CE for safe keeping.

Chapter two reviews recent work on the textual transmission and dating of the S scrolls. Schofield questions the attempt to relate the surviving scrolls chronologically. She notes that the later palaeographical 4QS material tends to preserve earlier material than 1QS, but not always. Neither the cave 1 nor the cave 4 scrolls are clearly earlier in their content than the other material. She proposes that S was composed at Jerusalem by the elite who sent it to outlying communities. These communities adapted the content, for example the length of punishments, to their particular needs. These modified versions then made their way to Qumran, the head-quarters of the *Yahad* after the community shifted from Jerusalem. Not all S scrolls, therefore, were composed at Qumran. The palaeographical dates of the preserved scrolls become irrelevant because this interpretation of the S scrolls' origins is not based on chronological sequence.

Schofield turns next to the relationship between the specific terminology and content of the S tradition and other scrolls. She analyzes statements about the residing places of the communities, explains the relationship of the names used for the groups (for example, 'the Many' or 'the Sons of Zadok'), the titles given to S, and addresses how the penal codes relate. She argues that terms like 'camps' or 'residing places' indicate that the group behind the sectarian portion of the scrolls cannot be identified exclusively with those who resided at Qumran. The term *Yahad* is the self-given name for the movement and is not limited to only those at Qumran. The term 'the Many' is used for 'the fully-fellowshipped membership of a given congregation' when it functions 'as a judicial body' (146-47), and there is no indication of a Zadokite takeover at any point during the movement's history. The terminological and penal code differences

between the scrolls arise because the scrolls originally belonged to different locales, while the similarities indicate the linked heritage of the locales.

In chapters four and five, Schofield argues that the classical sources of Josephus, Philo and others do not contradict her proposal that the *Yahad* was larger than just Qumran. In fact, these sources provide support for her thesis when they describe the Essenes as existing in and travelling between multiple locations. The archaeological evidence indicates that Qumran was not as isolated as previous scholars thought, and the connections between Qumran and other sites suggest that these other places may have been residing places for some members of the *Yahad*.

Overall, this is a carefully argued work. It covers much material and the proposed theory for the surviving S material is intriguing and has much to commend it. It resolves some of the difficulty created by the palaeographical dates of the material. One question that lingers, for this reviewer, concerns the unity of the group. If each community could modify the material according to their own needs (for example, the lengths of punishments in the penal code), how much unity was there between different communities? Also, this study does not fully clarify the purpose of S. However one addresses these issues, Schofield's study is valuable for both its contribution to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls generally and specifically its work on the S material.

Jason Maston
Aberdeen

***Qumran Cave 1.III: 1QHodayot^a with
Incorporation of 1QHodayot^b and 4QHodayot^{c-f}*
Hartmut Stegemann with Eileen Schuller,
translation by Carol Newsom**

Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XL

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009, xxi + 402 pp. + 29
plates, £90, hb; ISBN 978-0-19-955005-0

SUMMARY

This volume contains the principle edition of 1QHodayot^a. The order of the scroll is reconstructed on the basis of Stegemann's many years of research. Notes on the readings are provided along with a reproduction of the Hebrew text and an English translation. The volume will be invaluable to anyone working on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Band enthält die maßgebliche Ausgabe von 1QHodayot^a. Die Reihenfolge der Texte wurde auf der Grundlage der langjährigen Forschung Stegemanns rekonstruiert. Es gibt Anmerkungen zu den Lesarten, eine Reproduktion des hebräischen Textes und eine englische Übersetzung. Der Band ist für jeden, der an den Schriftrollen vom Toten Meer arbeitet, von großem Wert.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici l'édition princeps de 1 Q Hodayot^a. L'ordre du manuscrit est reconstitué sur la base des travaux de Stegemann durant de nombreuses années. Elle contient des notes sur les leçons adoptées, une reproduction du texte hébreu et une traduction en anglais. Elle servira la recherche sur les manuscrits de la mer Morte.

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This work contains the principle edition of 1QHodayot^a and is a replacement of Sukenik's edition of the scroll from the 1950s (*The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*, ET 1955). This volume presents the significant work of Stegemann on this scroll, and it was brought to completion by Eileen Schuller, whose own work on the *Hodayot* material is well-known from her editing of the 4QHodayot scrolls (*Qumran Cave 4.XX*; DJD XXIX). Carol Newsom provides a translation of the scroll based on Stegemann's reconstruction. A concordance was prepared by M. Abegg. Plates at the end show how Stegemann reconstructed the scroll and where he placed the fragments.

In the Introduction Schuller recounts Stegemann's work on the scroll and outlines the contents of the volume. Stegemann's 1963 dissertation on the reconstruction of 1QHodayot^a is provided next in an updated and translated form. Attempts to reconstruct the severely damaged remains of the text are surveyed before Stegemann's own attempt is presented. The section detailing how Stegemann reconstructed the scroll is technical but very valuable. Stegemann's original work has been updated based on the 4QH material. Based on the reconstruction, Schuller concludes that 'more than seventy-five percent' of columns IV-XXVI are complete (49). Only sixteen fragments remain unplaced.

The volume then proceeds in a manner similar to the other volumes in the DJD series: the Hebrew text followed by a presentation of the columns, which consists of a description of the reconstruction of the column, division of psalms within a column and notes on the readings. The analysis of each column is concluded with a translation. The notes carefully explain how Stegemann or occasionally Schuller arrived at their transcriptions. Schuller engages with commentaries and other studies that have attempted to establish the readings of the scroll. Occasionally suggestions are made as to how a particular line or thought should be interpreted, but for the most part, the notes on readings section is intended to establish the correct reading of a particular word.

One difficulty that emerges from this volume is the formal introduction of another way to count the lines and columns in the reconstructed scroll. Scholars have since the early 1990s adopted Stegemann's conclusions about the order of the columns, but they continued to use Sukenik's numbering of the lines (see 3n12). This new volume clearly shows where Stegemann thinks Sukenik miscounted the lines in some columns. The

alternative numbering system could lead to confusion over the next few years as scholars continue to work with the older system found in standard works like *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (ed. F. García Martínez and E.J.C. Tigchelaar).

The value of this volume for future research on the *Hodayot* is impossible to define. Scholars will remain in Schuller's debt for many years, since without her work Stegemann's careful reproduction and reconstruction of 1QHodayot^a would have been lost. One can only hope that this volume will reignite research on this important scroll.

Jason Maston
Aberdeen

Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond

Joseph Sievers and Gaia Lembi (eds.)

Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
104

Leiden: Brill, 2005, xiii + 454 pp., hb; ISBN 90 04 141790

SUMMARY

The present collection of twenty-three essays provides a fine summary of current research on the life and works of the Jewish historian Josephus. While Josephus is studied here for his own sake, the essays contain a wealth of material of relevance for understanding early Judaism, the New Testament and early Christianity.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die vorliegende Sammlung von 23 Artikeln bietet eine gute Zusammenfassung der gegenwärtigen Forschung zu Leben und Werk des jüdischen Historikers Josephus. Wenn Josephus hier auch um seiner selbst willen studiert wird, so enthalten die Artikel dennoch reichhaltiges und relevantes Material für das Verständnis des frühen Judentums, des Neuen Testaments und der frühen Christenheit.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage comporte vingt-trois articles et fournit une bonne présentation résumée de l'état de la recherche sur la vie et l'œuvre de l'historien juif Josèphe. Josèphe y est étudié pour lui-même, mais l'ouvrage apporte une mine d'informations pertinentes pour la connaissance du judaïsme antique, du Nouveau Testament et du christianisme primitif.

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The present collection of essays had its origin in an international colloquium on "Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome" held in 2003 which brought together forty specialists from ten different countries.

In the preface the editors briefly sketch the tensions

of Josephus' life consisting of his cultural and religious roots in Jerusalem, his role as a military commander in Galilee and his later career as a writer in Rome: "Certainly his writings cannot be understood without taking into account his precarious role as a person who inhabited these different worlds, sometimes simultaneously. In his work Rome is a central force he needs to reckon with, but also one toward which he maintains a certain ambivalence" (ix). While the essays indicate that there are many areas of intense discussion, they agree that "Josephus needs to be taken seriously as an author and not simply as a quarry that may be used as a source of information about various subject matters he treated" (x), as has often been the case.

Part one, entitled "Historiography", places Josephus the historian in a broader context: D. Mendels, "The Formation of an Historical Canon of the Greco-Roman Period: From the Beginnings to Josephus" (3-19); L. Troiani, "La genèse historique des *Antiquités juives*" (21-28, purpose and techniques); J. M. G. Barclay, "Judean Historiography in Rome: Josephus and History in *Contra Apionem* Book 1" (29-43, applying post-colonial theory to the study of Josephus' strategy to prove the truthfulness of the Judean tradition); F. Parente, "The Impotence of Titus, or Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* as an Example of 'Pathetic' Historiography" (45-69, questioning Josephus' historical reliability using incidents from the *Bellum*); S. Mason, "Of Audience and Meaning: Reading Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* in the Context of a Flavian Audience" (71-100, emphasis on the Roman context in which Josephus wrote and the immediate Roman audience) and J. J. Price, "The Provincial Historian in Rome" (101-18, emphasizing the provincial and Judean character of Josephus and his work).

Part two addresses literary questions, namely "the specific techniques used by Josephus that link him not only to Greek and Hellenistic historiography and rhetoric, but also to poets such as Pindar" (xi): H. Howell Chapman, "By the Waters of Babylon: Josephus and Greek Poetry" (121-46); D. Dormeyer, "The Hellenistic Biographical History of King Saul: Josephus, A.J. 6.45-378 and 1 Samuel 9:1 - 31:13" (147-57); T. Landau, "Power and Pity: The Image of Herod in Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*" (159-81, a narratological analysis) and J. W. van Henten, "Commonplaces in Herod's Commander Speech in Josephus' A.J. 15.127-146" (183-206, comparison with commanders' speeches in other Greek historians).

Part three discusses Josephus' relationship with Judaism: P. Spilsbury, "Reading the Bible in Rome: Josephus and the Constraints of Empire" (209-27, "showing how Josephus' reading and presentation of biblical material was deeply influenced, positively as well as negatively, by the constraints of living at the centre of the Roman empire", xi); T. Jonquière, "Josephus' Use of Prayers: Between Narrative and Theology" (229-43) and N. Förster, "Some Observations on Josephus' Description of the Essenian Morning Prayer" (245-53).

Part four “tackles a variety of historical issues, where it is possible to bring Josephus’ work into fruitful comparison with other contemporary or near contemporary literary, documentary, and archaeological sources” (xi): B. Eberhardt, “Wer dient wem? Die Darstellung des Flavischen Triumphzuges auf dem Titusbogen und bei Josephus (B.J. 7.123-162)” (257-77); J. S. McLaren, “Josephus on Titus: The Vanquished Writing about the Victor” (279-95, a critical analysis of the image of Titus that emerges from literary sources); G. Haarland, “Josephus and the Philosophers of Rome: Does *Contra Apionem* Mirror Domitian’s Crushing of the ‘Stoic Opposition?’” (297-316); G. Schimanowski, “Alexandrien als Drehscheibe zwischen Jerusalem und Rom: Die Bedeutung der Stadt im Werk des Josephus” (317-30); G. Jossa, “Jews, Romans, and Christians: From the *Bellum Judaicum* to the *Antiquitates*” (331-42, analysis of Josephus’ intent in introducing Jesus as a victim of Pilate’s misrule) and B. S. Jackson, “The Divorces of the Herodian Princesses: Jewish Law, Roman Law or Palace Law?” (343-68, discussion of documentary and literary material concerning marriage and divorce in theory and practice).

Part five raises various issues in the translation and transmission of the works of Josephus: G. Lembi, “The Latin Translation of Josephus’ *Antiquitates*” (371-81, discussing cases where the Latin translation provides access to early and important textual traditions); A. J. Forte, “Translating Book 1 of Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum*: Some Critical Observations” (383-403, including discussion of some weaknesses in Thackeray’s valued translation) and F. Siegert, “Josephus und das Alphabet der Römer: Überlegungen zur Schreibung griechischer Eigennamen in lateinischer Schrift” (405-23).

In the “Concluding Remarks” (425-30), F. Siegert attempts a summary of the colloquium and its results. A list of the contributors (431) and an index of ancient sources (433-54) round off a well edited and produced volume. The essays of this volume are of high quality and give evidence of the many angles from which Josephus’ works are studied in current research for their own sake. They also indicate that when Josephus’ volumes (and other writings contemporary to the New Testament!) are not simply quarried for the purposes of New Testament studies as “mere” background but studied for their own purpose, they yield many fresh perspectives not only on the life and letters of Josephus but also for our understanding of early Christianity.

Christoph Stenschke
Pretoria, South Africa

Historischer Atlas der antiken Welt
[*Historical Atlas of the World of Antiquity*]
Anna-Maria Wittke, Eckart Olshausen,
Richard Szydlak

Der Neue Pauly – Supplemente

Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, 2007, xix + 308 pp., cloth, dustjacket and case, € 180,-, ISBN 978-3-476-02031-4

SUMMARY

This recent *Historical Atlas of the World of Antiquity* in large format presents excellent coloured maps including detailed comments. Beside places and events of the Greco-Roman history and world (including all Roman provinces), Oriental Empires from the third millennium until late the Byzantine époque are dealt with in a comprehensive manner. This is precisely where the asset of this approach is to be found with regard to biblical sciences and church history. The atlas acts out consistently and at high level in cartography and word processing the latest developments in various sciences on Antiquity. It offers an abundance of information about the world which gave birth to Judaism, Christendom and Islam.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der großformatige neuerarbeitete *Historische Atlas der Antiken Welt* bietet hervorragende, farbige Karten mit ausführlichen Kommentaren. Neben den Orten und Ereignissen der griechisch-römischen Geschichte und Welt (inkl. aller römischen Provinzen) werden auch die orientalischen Reiche vom 3. Jahrtausend bis in spätbyzantinische Zeit ausführlich behandelt. Hier liegen die Stärken dieses Ansatzes für die Bibelwissenschaften und die Kirchengeschichte. Der Atlas setzt die neueren Entwicklungen in verschiedenen Altertumswissenschaften konsequent und auf hohem Niveau in Kartographie und Textgestaltung um und bietet eine Fülle von Informationen über die Welt in der Judentum, Christentum und Islam entstanden sind.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce récent Atlas du monde de l'Antiquité grand format contient d'excellentes cartes en couleur assorties de commentaires détaillés. Il présente les lieux et les événements de l'histoire gréco-romaine et du monde gréco-romain (y compris des provinces romaines), ainsi que les empires orientaux du troisième millénaire avant J.-C. jusqu'à la fin de la période byzantine. C'est précisément là ce qui fait son intérêt pour l'étude de la Bible et de l'histoire de l'Église. Il a été réalisé avec grand soin et rend compte des dernières avancées de diverses sciences liées à l'étude de l'antiquité. Il apporte une information abondante sur le monde qui a vu naître le judaïsme, la chrétienté et l'islam.

* * * *

Zur Neubearbeitung der renommierten *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1894-1963) und dem *Kleine(n) Pauly: Lexikon der Antike...* (1964-1975; Studienausgabe 1979), nämlich zu *Der*

Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike, hrsg. H. Cancik, H. Schneider (Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, 1996ff, 15 Bände) gehören acht Supplementbände (erschieden oder in Vorbereitung). Zu ihnen gehört der vorliegende *Historische Atlas*. Die Mehrzahl der im großformatigen Band (23 x 35,5 cm) enthaltenen Karten geht auf Karten im *Neuen Pauly* zurück, die anderen sind Neuentwicklungen. „Die meisten *Pauly*-Karten wurden zu Farbkarten umgestaltet, in ein großzügigeres Atlasformat gebracht und, zu einem beträchtlichen Teil, im Zuge neuer Akzentsetzungen überarbeitet“ (Vorwort).

Die 161 farbigen Haupt- und 44 Nebenkarten ermöglichen eine in dieser Breite, Differenzierung und Erschließungsintensität neue kartographische Darstellung der Antike vom 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. bis ins 16. Jh. n. Chr. (byzantinisches Reich). Ein Schwerpunkt sind die Hochkulturen des Alten Orients, da somit „Völker, Reiche und Epochen ins Licht rücken, die wieder stärker in den Fokus der Alten Geschichte gelangt sind. Zugleich soll damit der Blick für die Voraussetzungen der Entstehung der klassischen Antike (als ehemaliger Randkultur der orientalischen Reiche) und die kontinuierlichen Wechselwirkungen zwischen Osten und Westen geschärft werden“ (Vorwort).

Der Atlas will nicht nur eine politisch-militärische Ereignisgeschichte präsentieren, sondern auch Entwicklungen in der Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungsgeschichte sowie in der Religions- und Kulturgeschichte darstellen. Daher gibt es Karten zu antiken Weltvorstellungen und Fernerkundungen in der antiken Welt (2-9; die sog. babylonische Weltkarte, die Welt aus ägyptischer Sicht zur Zeit des Neuen Reiches, die Welt aus der Sicht des neuassyrischen Reiches, die Weltkarte des Hekataios und die Welt in den Augen antiker Autoren). Auch die Entstehung, Veränderung und Verwaltung der römischen Provinzen wird auf mehreren Karten nachgezeichnet (176-189). Andere Karten stellen Handelswege und Wirtschaftsbeziehungen oder die Verbreitung von Sprachen und Kulturen dar (194-205).

Jeder Karte ist auf der gegenüberliegenden Seite ein Kommentar mit Erläuterungen zu den historischen Hintergründen und zur Konzeption der Karte beigegeben. Ferner enthalten die Kommentare Angaben zu den Quellen der historischen Information, durch tabellarische Faktendarstellungen sowie den Nachweis von Quellen und Literatur. Daneben beinhaltet der Atlas auch Stadtpläne.

Dieser Atlas enthält hervorragende Karten zum Alten Vorderen Orient (vgl. auch G. Roux, J. Renger, *Irak in der Antike*; Mainz: Ph. von Zabern, 2005), die man in ähnlicher Qualität sonst nur noch im *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* findet (vgl. S. Mittmann, G. Schmidt, hrsg. *Tübinger Bibelatlas: Auf der Grundlage des Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients (TAVO)*; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 2001). Sie beleuchten den geographischen Horizont einiger alttestamentlicher Erzählungen, zum Beispiel: „Die östliche Mittelmeerwelt in der späten Bronzezeit (ca. 1400-

1200 v. Chr.)“ (28f); „Der östliche Mittelmeerraum und Vorderasien (12. bis Mitte 10. Jh. v. Chr.)“ (32f); „Palästina vom 10. bis zum 6. Jh. v. Chr.“ (44f; die anachronistische Bezeichnung *Palästina* befremdet; was spricht bei dieser Karte gegen *Israel*?); verschiedene Karten zu Mesopotamien und angrenzenden Gebieten (46-453) und „Babylon zur Zeit des neubabylonischen Reiches (7./6. Jh. v. Chr.)“ (56f).

Für den Hintergrund des Neuen Testaments sind die Karten zu den hellenistischen Nachfolgestaaten interessant (114-135) sowie zur römischen Herrschaft im östlichen Mittelmeerraum: „Die Neuordnung des Vorderen Orients durch Pompeius (67-59 v. Chr.)“ (160f); „Die Provinzen des Imperium Romanum von Augustus bis Septimius Severus (27 v. Chr. bis 211 n. Chr.)“ (176); „Die Entwicklung der römischen Provinzen in Ägypten und Arabien (1. Jh. v. Chr. bis 6. Jh., n. Chr.)“ (178); „Die Entwicklung der römischen Provinzen in der Levante (1. Jh. v. Chr. bis 4. Jh. n. Chr.)“ (180f) und „Die Entwicklung der römischen Provinzen in Kleinasien (2. Jh. v. Chr. bis 5. Jh. n. Chr.)“ (183). Auf dieser Karte kann man die Diskussion um die Datierung des Galaterbriefes nachvollziehen, bei der die Lokalisierung der Empfänger in der Landschaft Galatien (Nord) oder in der röm. Provinz Galatien (Süd) eine entscheidende Rolle spielt. Die wechselnde Grenzziehung dieser Provinz lässt sich schön nachvollziehen (tabellarisch dargestellt auf S. 271 von 25/24 v. Chr. bis 381 n. Chr.). Die kleine Karte „Die drei großen Missionsreisen des Paulus“ auf S. 228 verzeichnet bei der dritten Missionsreise korrekterweise nicht die auf anderen Karten üblichen vagen Linien in den Norden Galatiens.

Für das Neue Testament, aber auch für die Geschichte der Ausbreitung des Christentums sind die Karten zu „Straßen und Wege im Imperium Romanum“ (194-199) von Bedeutung sowie die Darstellungen der „Wichtigen Anbaugelände im Mittelmeerraum (1. und 2. Jh. n. Chr.)“ (200f), der „Handelswege in der römischen Kaiserzeit (1. bis 3. Jh. n. Chr.)“ (202f); ferner „Vom Mittelmeer nach Indien: Land- und Seerouten im 1./2. Jh. n. Chr.“ (204f); „Das Imperium zur Zeit des Septimius Severus (193-211 n. Chr.)“ (206f) und die Karten zur „Ausbreitung christlicher Gemeinden vom 1. bis 4. Jh.“ (226f) sowie zur „Organisation der christlichen Kirche nach der Synode von Chalkedon 451 / Routen christlicher Pilger (4. -6. Jh.)“ (228f). Spannend wäre freilich auch eine Darstellung der Pilgerströme im Rahmen verschiedener hellenistisch-römischer Religionen. Weitere neun Karten gelten der Entstehung, Ausbreitung und Bedeutung des Byzantinischen Reiches (5.-15. Jh. n. Chr.) sowie den ersten drei Kreuzzügen (1096-1192, S. 248f).

Während Nordafrika auf einer ganzen Reihe von Karten erscheint und mehrere Karten Ägypten in verschiedenen Epochen abbilden, habe ich eine Karte zu den Reichen südlich des antiken Ägypten, z. B. Nubien und Meroë, vermisst. Hilfreich wäre ferner eine kartographische Darstellung der jüdischen Diaspora gewesen

und eine Karte, die die Bewegungen des ersten jüdischen Krieges (66-70 n. Chr.) darstellt. Für die christlichen „Klassiker“ wie Judaea zur Zeit Jesu oder die Gegend um den See Genezaret bleibt man nach wie vor auf den Bibelatlas angewiesen.

Die Karten und Kommentarseiten sind durchweg von hoher inhaltlicher und drucktechnischer Qualität und übersichtlich angeordnet. Der Band beinhaltet ein geographisch angeordnetes, systematisches Kartenverzeichnis, Abkürzungsverzeichnisse, Ergänzungen zu den Kommentaren (Quellen, Literatur, Tabellen, S. 255-273) und ein ausführliches Register. Papierqualität und Verarbeitung sind bestens. Fazit: Ein Atlas, der zumindest für visuell orientierte Theologen eine Augenweide und eine wahre Fundgrube an Informationen bietet und die Orte und Gebiete biblischer Offenbarung und ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte in den größeren Zusammenhang und die vielfachen Verflechtungen der antiken Welt stellt. Eine Studienausgabe wäre wünschenswert.

*Christoph Stenschke,
Bergneustadt, Germany*

Sing and Learn New Testament Greek: The Easiest Way to Learn Greek Grammar

Kenneth Berding

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008, £9.99, Compact Disc
+ 28 pp. booklet; ISBN 978-0-310-28463-5

SUMMARY

This CD is a tool for learning NT Greek that will aid in the language-acquisition process. The audio CD contains eleven songs written to the melodies of popular nursery rhymes. The booklet, which contains all of the song lyrics, grammatical forms, charts and related rules, is absolutely necessary when learning the songs, as several songs will be much too fast to be learned without it. Certain songs are arranged more difficultly than others. While each is sung through at least twice, the collection would have been enhanced had the songs been sung slower and run through at graded, incremental speeds. Nevertheless, the beginner Greek student will find this resource beneficial.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese CD ist ein Werkzeug zum Erlernen des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, dass den Sprachlernprozess hilfreich begleiten wird. Die Audio-CD enthält elf Lieder, die zu den Melodien beliebter Kinderlieder geschrieben wurden. Das Heft, das alle Liedtexte, grammatischen Formen, Schaubilder und Regeln enthält, ist zum Lernen der Lieder absolut notwendig, da mehrere Lieder viel zu schnell sind, um ohne das Heft erlernbar zu sein. Bestimmte Lieder sind schwieriger arrangiert als andere. Obwohl jedes Lied mindestens zweimal gesungen wird, hätte man die Sammlung verbessern können, wenn die Lieder langsamer gesungen und in verschiedenen Geschwindigkeiten aufgenommen worden wären. Nichtsdestotrotz wird jemand, der beginnt

Griechisch zu lernen, die CD hilfreich finden.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce CD d'apprentissage du grec du Nouveau Testament est un bon outil pour aider au processus d'acquisition de la langue. Il contient onze chants écrits sur des mélodies de chants d'enfant populaires. Le livret contient les paroles des chants, l'analyse des formes grammaticales, des tableaux et les règles appropriées et il est indispensable pour apprendre les chants, car certains d'entre eux sont bien trop rapides pour être appris sans cette aide. Certains sont plus difficiles que d'autres. Chacun est chanté deux fois, mais l'album aurait beaucoup gagné si les chants avaient été chantés plus lentement, puis progressivement plus vite. Le débutant trouvera tout de même ce CD utile.

* * * *

I never imagined that I would review an audio CD for an academic journal. But when I noticed that Dr. Ken Berding (Talbot School of Theology, Biola University) had produced an audio resource which promised to help biblical language students more easily learn NT Greek, I had to enquire further. Even though the idea of singing Greek still sounds a bit silly to me, I must admit that I found much of this project useful.

Sing and Learn New Testament Greek employs a pedagogical principle for learning biblical Greek that language theorists have endorsed for years: music can improve one's ability to learn foreign languages (see Carmen Fonseca Mora, 'Foreign Language Acquisition and Melody Singing', *ELT Journal* 54.2 [2000]: 146-152). This CD (along with the 28-page booklet), then, should not be mistaken for the lazy student's guide to avoiding paradigm memorization. It is rather a supplemental tool that will aid in the language-acquisition process by helping students recall lexical patterns that have been stored in their minds through assimilation with easy to remember music. Understood in this way, Berding's approach is a step forward in biblical language instruction. As Berding himself explains in the accompanying booklet, 'You can't learn Greek without some memorization of forms. But it is always easier to learn through music' (4).

The audio CD contains eleven songs written to the instrumental melodies of some of the most widely recognizable tunes in the English-speaking world. Their titles (here followed in brackets by the names of their popular melodies) indicate the grammatical lessons to be learned: [Greek] Alphabet Song ('The [English] Alphabet Song'), Article Song ('Three Blind Mice'), Noun Endings Song ('The Farmer in the Dell' or 'A Hunting We Will Go'), Indicative Verb Endings Song ('Yankee Doodle'), General Verb Forms Song ('I've Been Workin' on the Railroad'), Participles Song ('Old McDonald Had a Farm'), Infinitives Song ('For He's a Jolly Good Fellow'), Imperatives Song ('Row, Row, Row Your Boat'), Contract Forms Song ('Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'), Ei0mi/ Song ('Mexican Hat Dance'), and Prepo-

sitions Song ('Joshua Fit' the Battle of Jericho'). While some language purists and music connoisseurs may scoff at the idea of learning Greek through nursery rhymes, Berding contends that these 'familiar songs have the psychological advantage of already being known and of making you feel that what you are doing is easier' (Booklet, 6). Berding admits that his method is not for the 'linguistically particular', but believes it to be beneficial 'for those who are simply trying to learn to read the Greek New Testament and use it in ministry' (5).

Several other features also make this resource rather attractive. While the longest recording on the album is 1 minute, 46 seconds and the shortest song a mere 35 seconds, Berding boasts that each can be sung as quickly as 15 seconds, making for fast and easy review. The booklet (also available in PDF format on the CD), moreover, contains all of the song lyrics, grammatical forms, charts and related rules. The booklet, then, is *absolutely necessary* when learning the songs, as several songs will be much too fast to be learned without it (e.g., indicatives and participles). One can with some effort memorize all of the lyrics, but it is very important to pay close attention to how the verses are arranged in relation to the various paradigms.

Certain songs, to be sure, are arranged more difficultly than others. The verses for the noun endings, for instance, introduce each case sequentially in all three declensions (e.g., α/η , $\omicron\varsigma$, $\omicron\nu$) rather than by running directly through the individual declensions case-by-case (e.g., α , $\alpha\varsigma$, $\acute{\alpha}$, $\alpha\nu$). Moreover, although the noun endings are learned with final stem vowels (e.g., $\omicron\varsigma$ rather than ς), verbs are presented without connecting vowels (e.g., $\mu\epsilon\nu$, $\tau\epsilon$, $\sigma\iota$, rather than $\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu$, $\epsilon\tau\epsilon$, $\omicron\sigma\iota$) – presumably to correspond with Mounce's *Basics of Biblical Greek*, 2nd ed (Zondervan, 2003). Still, Berding departs from Mounce's model by presenting first declension nouns prior to the second declension, which will create difficulty for Mounce users and should be corrected in future editions. The Indicative Song would also be more user-friendly had it been divided into multiple parts. Finally, while each song is sung through at least twice, the entire collection would have been enhanced significantly had the songs been sung slower and run through at graded, incremental speeds.

Despite these shortcomings, the typical first-year Greek student will find this resource beneficial. In fact, when I enquired a local NT Greek instructor about which recordings he surmised would be most valuable to his learners, he indicated that the Alphabet Song and Preposition Song would be immediately useful to his beginning students. The technique will admittedly take some getting used to, but this approach should not deter students – as long as they have open minds.

John K. Goodrich
Durham, England

On the Road Encounters in Luke-Acts. Hellenistic Mimesis and Luke's Theology of the Way

Octavian D. Baban

Paternoster Biblical Monographs

Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006, xviii + 332 pp.,

£24.99, pb; ISBN 978-1-84227-253-4

SUMMARY

This rewritten dissertation deals with journey motifs and on the road encounters with their 'recognition and discovery' moments, particularly those in Acts 8-9. Baban argues that Luke was heavily influenced by Aristotle's literary theory and by Hellenistic conventions. In particular Luke offers a selective and interpretative representation of reality called *mimesis*. The author plays down Jewish influences on Luke. His book offers much information about classical sources and about previous scholarship.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese überarbeitete Dissertation beschäftigt sich mit Reise-motiven und Begegnungen auf dem Wege mit ihren Momenten des „Erkennens und Entdeckens“, besonders jene in Apostelgeschichte 8-9. Baban argumentiert, dass Lukas stark von der literarischen Theorie des Aristoteles und von hellenistischen Konventionen beeinflusst war. Lukas bietet insbesondere eine selektive und interpretative Repräsentation der Wirklichkeit namens *Mimesis* an. Der Autor spielt jüdische Einflüsse auf Lukas herunter. Sein Buch bietet viele Informationen über klassische Quellen und über frühere gelehrte Beiträge zum Thema.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette révision d'une thèse de doctorat traite du thème du voyage et des rencontres sur la route en prêtant attention aux moments de reconnaissance et de découverte, notamment en Actes 8-9. Baban soutient que Luc était très influencé par la théorie littéraire d'Aristote et par les conventions hellénistiques. En particulier, Luc offre une représentation interprétative sélective de la réalité, la *mimesis*. L'auteur minimise les influences juives sur Luc. Il apporte beaucoup d'informations sur les sources classiques et la recherche antérieure.

* * * *

Octavian Baban is a Romanian who is New Testament lecturer at the Baptist Theological Institute, Bucharest, and the Bucharest State University. He gained his PhD from London Bible College (now the London School of Theology) in 1999. The present book is a thoroughly rewritten version of that study. Baban thinks that Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9-19) is by no means the only important journey in Luke-Acts. He rather sets up the Emmaus story (Luke 24) as the model for several other stories in the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles which describe 'on the road' encounters, in particular for the stories about post-Easter encounters with Jesus in Acts 8-9. He argues that Aristotle's *Poetics* with its rec-

ommendation of *mimesis* as a form of good-story telling is the background to what Luke does with the materials available to him. *Mimesis*, which can be defined as a selective and interpretative representation of reality, occurs in many forms of Classic art including architecture, painting, drama, novels and historiography. Finding it in Luke leads Baban to state that Luke's art is 'a mixture of drama, novel, Hellenistic historiography and comedy' (277).

After an introduction, chapter 1 offers a very full review of scholarship so far. Chapter 2 discusses *mimesis* and its use in Hellenistic and Jewish literature, arguing that – despite the presence of affinities with the LXX and the Dead Sea Scrolls – the background to Luke's writing is Greek rather than Jewish. Chapter 3 examines the motif of the way in the Synoptics, suggesting that Luke may not only have used Mark but also Matthew. The fourth and final chapter applies what has been learned to an analysis of Luke 24 and passages from Acts. Here we find very detailed discussions of the relevant passages and their 'recognition and discovery' moments. A key conclusion may be quoted in full: 'In Acts 8:26 – 9:31, Philip's ministry and Saul's journey are presented by Luke as thematic unit focused on the challenges and opportunities of the Way, evidence that the hodos motif inspires Luke to literary innovation' (269). Baban also proposes an overall structure for Luke-Acts based on the alternation of 'Revelation' and journey throughout the two-part work (226). At the end the book contains a brief conclusion which summarizes the author's findings in ten points.

Whereas contemporary scholarship for the most part emphasizes Luke's closeness to the Jewish Scriptures – and even thinks he may have been a Jew –, Baban draws him near to pagan texts such as the ancient novels. The author acknowledges that Aristotle's *Poetics* was not well-known in the first century AD but nonetheless suggests that its influence was felt. This reviewer misses a discussion of how Luke's stories relate to actual history. The impression is created that Luke was not too concerned about the actual facts.

One of the book's strength is the wealth of information it contains about classical sources and about previous scholarship, much of it stored in the numerous footnotes. Baban also suggestively discusses many Lukan motifs. The reader should be open to finding untranslated French, German, Greek and even some Latin. There is a long bibliography but – regrettably – no index of authors and passages. The presentation of the material could have been better; a proof reader might have eliminated the typos and the problems with the English. Nonetheless, the publication of this book by a scholar from Eastern Europe in the series Paternoster Biblical Monographs is to be welcomed.

Pieter J. Lalleman
London

Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu [Compendium of the Parables of Jesus]

Ruben Zimmermann et al. (eds.)

Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007, 1101 pp.,
€78,-, cloth; ISBN 978-3-579-08020-8

SUMMARY

This extensive compendium deals in one volume with all the parables of Jesus in the canonical gospels and the apocryphal gospels (in selection). Each parable is given a new heading. This is followed by translation and linguistic-narrative as well as social-historical analyses, investigations of the context of meaning, concluding exegesis, aspects of parallel traditions and history of effect. Recent methodological approaches of international scholarship in the domain of parables are consistently being picked up. The present volume is a valid reference book and represents, at the same time through the initial remarks of the editor as well as the specific interpretations, an excellent introduction into the contemporary exegesis of parables

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das vorliegende, umfangreiche Kompendium behandelt alle Gleichnisse Jesu in den kanonischen Evangelien und den apokryphen Evangelien (in Auswahl) in einem Band. Jedes Gleichnis erhält eine neue Überschrift, dem folgen Übersetzung, sprachlich-narrative sowie sozialgeschichtliche Analyse, Analysen des Bedeutungshintergrundes, die zusammenfassende Auslegung, Aspekte der Parallelüberlieferung und der Wirkungsgeschichte. Durchweg werden neuere methodische Ansätze in der internationalen Gleichnisforschung aufgegriffen. Der Band ist ein gutes Nachschlagewerk und zugleich in der Einleitung des Herausgebers und in den Einzelauslegungen eine hervorragende Einführung in die gegenwärtige Gleichnisauslegung.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage volumineux traite de l'ensemble des paraboles de Jésus dans les évangiles canoniques et une sélection des évangiles apocryphes. Chaque parabole reçoit un nouveau titre. Puis l'auteur en donne une traduction et en fait une analyse linguistique et narrative ainsi que socio-historique. Il en donne le sens dans son contexte, en présente une exégèse, explore divers aspects des traditions parallèles et de l'histoire de la réception de ces textes. Les approches méthodologiques récentes des paraboles dans le monde académique international sont méticuleusement signalées. Il en résulte un ouvrage de référence qui constitue une excellente introduction à l'exégèse actuelle des paraboles, à la fois grâce aux remarques préliminaires de l'éditeur et aux traitements spécifiques des textes.

* * * *

Das von R. Zimmermann, D. Dormeyer, G. Kern, A. Merz, C. Münch und E. E. Popkes herausgegebene großformatige und umfangreiche *Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu* bietet die erste umfassende Auslegung aller

Gleichnisse Jesu aus der kanonischen und apokryphen Evangelienliteratur in einem Band. Zudem zeichnet es sich dadurch aus, dass verschiedene neuere Perspektiven der Gleichnisauslegung aufgegriffen und berücksichtigt werden. Ziel der Autoren war es „hinsichtlich Methodik und Hermeneutik, Textumfang sowie Anordnung der Texte Wege zu beschreiten, die zum Teil Einsichten der Gleichnisforschung der letzten Jahrzehnte bündeln, zum Teil auch Neuland erschließen wollen. Im Ergebnis wurde eine Zugangsweise gefunden, die mit vielen Ansätzen der Jülicher-Tradition brechen musste“ (1).

Das *Kompendium* beginnt mit Zimmermans „Leseanleitung“. Im Abschnitt „Die Gleichnisse Jesu – eine Einführung“ (3-45) geht es um ihre Überlieferung (Jesus als der „erinnerte Gleichniserzähler“), um Tradition und Umfeld (Maschal, Beispiel oder Fabel?), knapp auch um die Theologie der Gleichnisse („Von Gott reden mit Bildern der Welt“) und um Grundfragen des Verstehens („Die Leser(innen-)Orientierung der Gleichnisse“). Abschließend bietet Zimmermann einen Forschungsüberblick und plädiert für ein integratives Modell, das historisch-diachrone, literarische sowie hermeneutische / leserorientierte Zugänge zu kombinieren anstrebt (15f). Der nächste Abschnitt beleuchtet die Form bzw. Gattung der Gleichnisse (zur Jülicher-Klassifikation und deren Kritik, die Frage nach dem Wesen einer literarischen Gattung sowie Beschreibung des „Merkmalsbündel der Gattung Parabel“, 17-28).

Zimmermann beschreibt detailliert das Vorgehen, auf das sich die Autoren geeinigt haben (28-45). Die Gleichnisse werden jeweils nach dem gleichen Schema behandelt (33-45), nämlich Festlegung einer Überschrift, Übersetzung, sprachlich-narrative Analyse (Bildlichkeit), sozialgeschichtliche Analyse (bildspendender Bereich), Analyse des Bedeutungshintergrundes (Bildfeldtradition), die zusammenfassende Auslegung (Deutungshorizonte), Aspekte der Parallelüberlieferung und der Wirkungsgeschichte („Vom Beginn der synoptischen Tradition an, konkret mit der Logienquelle bzw. Markus beginnend, bis zu den literarischen Zeugnissen im Thomasev und der apokryphen Gleichnisüberlieferung“, 43). Innerhalb der Mehrfachbezeugung zeige sich ein Interpretations- und Applikationsvorgang, der durch die kontextuelle Anordnung in der jeweiligen Schrift, durch Einleitungen und Kommentare, aber auch durch Eingriffe in den Text erzeugt wurde (43). Daher werden mehrfach überlieferte Gleichnisse bis auf wenige Ausnahmen nur einmal ausführlich besprochen. Ziel ist es, „kontextuelle Bedeutungsverschiebungen zu benennen, die als Ausdruck eines urchristlichen *Relecture*- bzw. Applikationsprozesses zu würdigen sind“ (44). Für jedes Gleichnis gibt es abschließend Literaturhinweise. Die von den Autoren gewählten Überschriften sind so erfrischend, wie sie teilweise verwirrend sind. Das Gleichnis von den blinden Blindenführern erscheint z. B. unter „Absturzgefahr“ (61-67, G. Kern); das Gleichnis vom Sauerteig unter „Gott knetet nicht“ (185-91, K.-H. Ostermeyer), der Hinweis auf das Aas und die Geier unter

„Schnell und unausweichlich“ (235-39; P. Müller). Die Einführung endet mit allgemeinen Literaturhinweisen.

Es folgt die Auslegung sämtlicher frühchristlicher Jesusgleichnisse der Logienquelle, der kanonischen Evangelien, des Thomasevangelium und verschiedener Gleichnisse unter den Agrapha (insgesamt 104 Texte). Am Anfang der „Parabeln in der Logienquelle Q“ (49-254) gibt es eine Einführung von G. Kern (49-60, jeweils mit einer Tabelle der behandelten Texte mit Stellenangabe, Titel, Parallelstellen und Fundort der ausführlichen Behandlung im *Kompendium*). D. Dormeyer leitet die Parabeln im MkEv (257-263) ein; C. Münch die Parabeln im MtEv (385-394); A. Merz die Parabeln im LkEv (513-521); Zimmermann die Parabeln im JohEv (699-709), E. E. Popkes die Parabeln im Thomasev (851-861) und Zimmermann die Parabeln in den Agrapha (935-939; Auswahl von neun Gleichnissen). Der Band endet mit einer alphabetischen Gesamttabelle der Gleichnisse, einer vollständigen Liste der Parabeln nach Quellenbereichen, einem Motivfeld-Register, Vorstellung der Autoren, Bibliographie (1015-1084) sowie einem Stellenregister.

Der Umfang und die Vollständigkeit der Sammlung, die einheitliche Vorgehensweise, die Abstimmung aufeinander, die zu einer bemerkenswerten Geschlossenheit führt und dabei Eintönigkeit vermeidet sowie der Einbezug der Rezeptionsgeschichte sprechen für sich. Freilich kommt der Umfang auch dadurch zustande, dass auch kürzere Bildworte mitbehandelt werden (wo ist die Grenze zu einzelnen Metaphern zu ziehen?). Zu fragen wäre, wie sinnvoll es ist, die Gleichnisse, die in der hypothetischen Quelle Q erscheinen, separat zu behandeln. Die Aufnahme der Gleichnisse des Thomasev und aus den Agrapha ist hilfreich und bietet interessante Vergleichsmöglichkeiten. Hier leistet das *Kompendium* gute Dienste.

Das *Kompendium* ist durchweg auf dem aktuellen Stand der Forschung und berücksichtigt viele ältere und neue Perspektiven. Gerade die Einführung dient als guter Überblick über die Themen der Gleichnisforschung und den aktuellen Stand. Eine abschließende Zusammenfassung der Botschaft der Gleichnisse Jesu und ihrer theologischen Aussage (weit über die eher theoretischen Ansätze auf S. 9-12 hinaus) wäre so wünschenswert, wie sie – auch bzw. gerade nach diesem umfassenden Überblick schwierig zu schreiben ist. Nach Zimmermann wäre es grundsätzlich verfehlt, begrifflich resümieren zu wollen, was Jesus bewusst der bildlichen Rede der Gleichnisse vorbehält. Zu fragen wäre, ob und welche Alternativen es zu einem begrifflichen Resümee gibt. Wünschenswert wäre ferner im Rahmen der Einführung eine knappe Verortung der Gleichnisse Jesu in der antiken Literaturgeschichte, die die Gleichnisse des Alten Testaments, des Frühjudentums, aber auch des rabbinischen Judentums sowie in anderen ntl. Schriften berücksichtigt, aber auch knapp auf griech.-röm. Parallelen verweist. Dies würde dem besonderen Charakter der Gleichnisse Jesu keinen Abbruch tun.

In Kombination haben die beiden vorgestellten Bände das Potential, die Gleichnisforschung des 21. Jahrhunderts mitzubestimmen – zumindest dort, wo deutschsprachige Forschung noch rezipiert wird. Eine ausgeprägte Wirkungsgeschichte ähnlich der Bände von Adolf Jülicher im 20. Jahrhundert ist schon wegen der Internationalisierung und Pluralisierung der ntl. Wissenschaft seit der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts nicht mehr möglich und wohl auch nicht wünschenswert. Als Werk eines Einzelnen wäre ein solches Kompendium sowieso kaum mehr denkbar.

Forscher, Studierende und Verkündiger sind den Herausgebern zu Dank verpflichtet. Hinzuweisen ist weiter auf den von R. Zimmermann und G. Kern herausgegebenen Band *Hermeneutik der Gleichnisse Jesu: Methodische Neuansätze zum Verstehen urchristlicher Parabeltexte* (WUNT 231; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, 688 S.) der sich den hermeneutischen Fragen der Gleichnisse widmet. Dabei geht es um „das Nachdenken über das Verstehen, oder genauer: um die Reflexion über die Bedingungen und Möglichkeiten des Verstehens. Gleichnisse erfordern Dialog, Gleichnisse erfordern Hermeneutik“ (vii). Ziel ist es, die historischen, traditionsgeschichtlichen, sprachwissenschaftlichen und rezeptionsästhetisch-theologischen Perspektiven des Gleichnisverstehens in umfassender Weise zu beleuchten und divergente hermeneutische Ansätze zur Disposition zu stellen. Beide Bände ergänzen einander in hervorragender Weise.

Christoph Stenschke,
Bergneustadt, Germany

Die vier Evangelien und das eine Evangelium von Jesus Christus: Studien zu ihrer Sammlung und Entstehung

[The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ: Studies on their Collection and Origin]

Martin Hengel

WUNT 224

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, xi + 420 pp.; ISBN 978-3-16-149663-9

SUMMARY

This extensive monograph enquires as to how the one Gospel of Jesus Christ relates to the four canonical gospels. The author, one of the grand scholars of German New Testament scholarship, depicts the commencement and circulation of the new genre gospel, its origin and history of effect (perspective and discussion in the Ancient Church). Furthermore, he deals with the authors of the gospels and the period of their writing. In sum, a carefully investigated study which, with good reason and valid arguments, casts doubt on the numerous hypotheses of recent research on the gospels. One may to some extent have reservations about the author's own theories. H., for example, maintains the common late dating of the gospels and supports

their literary interdependence. Besides, he overestimates the discrepancies between the individual gospels and their divergence from the gospel as proclaimed by Paul.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese umfangreiche Monographie fragt, wie sich die eine Heilsbotschaft von Jesus Christus zu den vier kanonischen Evangelien verhält. Der Autor, einer der Altmeister deutscher ntl. Wissenschaft, beschreibt die Entstehung und Verbreitung der neuen Gattung Evangelium, die vier Evangelien, ihre Entstehung und Wirkungsgeschichte (Wahrnehmung und Diskussion in der Alten Kirche). Ferner geht es um die Autoren der Evangelien und die Zeit ihrer Abfassung. Insgesamt eine gründlich recherchierte Untersuchung, die viele Thesen der neueren Evangelienforschung zu Recht und mit guten Argumenten in Frage stellt. Die eigenen Thesen des Verfassers sind teilweise fraglich. So hält H. an der üblichen Spätdatierung der Evangelien fest und geht von deren literarischen Abhängigkeit aus. Ferner werden die Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Evangelien sowie zwischen ihnen und dem von Paulus verkündigten Evangelium überbewertet.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cette monographie, Hengel, vénérable spécialiste du Nouveau Testament en Allemagne, cherche à établir quel rapport existe entre l'Évangile unique de Jésus-Christ et les quatre évangiles canoniques. Il retrace les débuts et la diffusion du nouveau genre qu'est celui de l'évangile, traite des quatre évangiles, de leur origine, de leur influence et de la façon dont ils ont été reçus et étudiés dans l'Église ancienne. Il aborde en outre la question de leur auteur et de leur date de rédaction. Il livre ainsi une étude soignée et fouillée qui remet en cause, avec de bonnes raisons et de solides arguments, les nombreuses hypothèses de la recherche récente sur les évangiles. On peut avoir certaines réserves sur les théories de l'auteur. Par exemple, Hengel se rallie à la thèse courante d'une date de rédaction tardive pour les évangiles et présuppose une dépendance littéraire entre eux. En outre, il surestime les différences entre les évangiles et leurs divergences par rapport à l'Évangile proclamé par Paul.

* * * *

Nachdem in den letzten Jahren fünf Bände der *Kleinen Schriften* Martin Hengels erschienen sind, legt er nun zwei Monographien vor. Zum einen, zusammen mit A. M. Schwemer, den ersten Band einer *Geschichte des frühen Christentums: Jesus und das Judentum* (2007). Zum anderen den vorliegenden Band, die deutsche Übersetzung und Erweiterung von H.s englischer Studie *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM, 2006).

Ausgangspunkt ist die Grundfrage:

„Wie kommt es, dass es für Paulus nur *ein* Ev. als Heilsbotschaft gibt, das er verkündigt, und wir gleichzeitig vier zum Teil recht verschiedene erzählende schriftliche Berichte über Jesus besitzen, die als Evv. bezeichnet

werden?“ (Vorwort). H.s Rückfrage geht über die altkirchlichen Nachrichten zu den Evangelisten, über die frühchristliche Buchproduktion und die Entstehung von „Gemeindebibliotheken“ in die Abfassungszeit der vier Evv. selbst zurück. Die Bezeichnung Ev. für eine „kerygmatische Jesusbiographie“ geht auf den Evangelisten Markus zurück, „der damit eine neue Gattung schuf und rasch Nachfolger fand, und dass sein Ev. gar nicht so weit vom paulinischen entfernt ist“ (Vorwort).

Zunächst beschreibt H. die Versuche der Harmonisierung und radikalen Reduktion der vier Evv. (12-63): Geschichtserzählung als Gattung im NT, die Verteidigung der Vierzahl der Evv. bei Irenäus und anderen, ferner die Kritik an den Evv. und ihren Widersprüchen sowie deren Harmonisierung (Tatian), die Textüberlieferung der Evv. („Der Evv.text ist der am besten überlieferte Text aus der Antike überhaupt“, 54) und die radikale Reduktion bei Marcion.

Der nächste Teil schildert „Die vier Evv., ihre Autoren und das eine Ev.“ (64-95). H. untersucht darin das Zeugnis des Irenäus und der röm. Gemeinde, die historische Reihenfolge der Evv. und die Entstehung der Vierevangeliensammlung sowie die Evv.überschriften. Er argumentiert, dass die Sammlung der vier Evv. nicht auf einer offiziellen Entscheidung der Kirche beruht, sondern auf dem tatsächlichen Gebrauch in den Gottesdiensten (95-103). Er bespricht die Bedeutung von Evv.kommentaren und die „apokryphen“ Evv. sowie die Papiasnotizen. Dann geht es um das MkEv. als ältestem Ev. und um die Bezeichnung Ev. überhaupt (141-84) sowie um das Ev. als Heilsbotschaft für die ganze Kirche (184-96). In diesem Abschnitt stellt H. zurecht mehrere Grundaxiome heutiger Evv.forschung in Frage: „Entgegen einer weitverbreiteten Meinung sind alle vier Evv. nicht nur für eine bestimmte Gruppe oder Schule bzw. für eine kleine Gruppe von Gemeinden geschrieben und geben erst recht nicht einfach deren kollektive Meinung wieder, sondern zunächst einmal die des Autors.... Die vier Evv. haben nichts mit ‚Briefen‘ zu tun, die von einer Gemeinde verfasst wurden“ (184); „Ihre Botschaft richtet sich an alle Christen.... Die Evangelisten verbindet ein Bestreben: man will über ein reales, vergangenes Geschehen berichten, das das universal verstandene gegenwärtige (und zukünftige) Heil begründet hat, und man tut es, in dem man ‚Geschichten‘ erzählt, die *zusammen auf die einzigartige ‚Geschichte‘ hinweisen*“ (190). H. schließt daß die Kirche des 2. Jh. keine bessere Auswahl hatte treffen können (196).

Diese Verteidigung der kanonischen vier Evv. ist von Bedeutung angesichts ihrer systematischen Abwertung im letzten Jahrzehnt zugunsten apokrypher Evv. in Teilen der (nordamerikanischen) Forschung und vor allem in populärwissenschaftlichen Veröffentlichungen, die oft mit einer massiven Polemik gegen die ntl. Schriften und das „orthodoxe“ großkirchliche Christentum einhergehen und dabei diese Schriften, altkirchliche Häresien und andere Fehlentwicklungen als das „authentische“ Christentum ausgeben wollen, das es wiederzuentdecken

gilt. Dabei schrecken sie vor einer Umdeutung und Neuschreibung der Geschichte der Alten Kirche nicht zurück; vgl. D. L. Bock, *Die verschwiegenen Evangelien: Gnosis oder apostolisches Christentum* (Gießen, Basel: Brunnen, 2007). Diesen Tendenzen setzt H.s instruktive Studie die Fakten entgegen.

Im nächsten Teil (197-237) beschreibt H. die Rolle der Schriftlesung im Gottesdienst, Verbreitung und Bedeutung des Kodex, die heiligen Schriften und die Bücherschränke in den Gemeinden, die schriftliche und mündliche Tradition bei Clemens Romanus, die Entwicklung vor Justin im Barnabasbrief und 2. Clemensbrief und die spezielle Bedeutung der römischen Schriften-sammlung. Weiter bespricht er das Verhältnis vom Ev. als Kerygma und als Erzählung (238-261): die Geschichte Jesu und die Augenzeugen, das Ev. als Kerygma: 1 Kor 15.1-11 und die Notwendigkeit der „Jesuserzählung“ bei Paulus und die Beziehung zwischen Petrus und dem erzählten Ev.. Abschließend bezieht er Tora und Ev. als Erzählung des Heilsgeschehens aufeinander (262-73; Mose und das Exodusgeschehen im MkEv., der Vorrang der Ev.-lesung vor der Prophetenlesung bei Justin und in der Alten Kirche sowie die durch die gemeinsamen Evv. gestiftete Einheit der Kirche in der Vielfalt: „... neben der kontinuierlichen Verwendung atl. Texte im Gottesdienst war es vor allem die Sammlung der vier Evv. als gottesdienstliche Leseschriften, die durch ihr Jesuszeugnis dem Zerfall der Kirche entgegenwirkten“, 272).

In einem Postskript präsentiert H. seine „Überlegungen zur Logienquelle, zum Lk- und zum MtEv.“ (274-353). Er meldet Zweifel an der „rätselhaften“ Quelle Q und der Logientradition an, plädiert für eine Abhängigkeit des MtEv. vom LkEv. und diskutiert die sog. „Minor Agreements“ zwischen Lk und Mt. Nicht überzeugend ist seine Annahme von Kenntnis der Evangelisten der Zerstörung Jerusalems im Jahr 70 n. Chr. (und somit einer Datierung nach diesen Ereignissen). Auch andere Argumente für eine frühere Datierung der Evv. werden von H. nicht genügend berücksichtigt, so z. B. neuere Studien, die das MkEv. bereits in die späten 40er Jahre des ersten Jh. datieren. Nach H. entstand das MkEv. um 69/70 in Rom, das lukanische Doppelwerk um 75-85 und das MtEv. ca. 90-100 in Syrien/Palästina. Die Edition des *Corpus Johanneum* fand ca. 100-105 statt. Der Evangelist Markus war – wie bei Papias bezeugt – sehr wahrscheinlich der Begleiter und Dolmetscher des Petrus: „Dies legt nahe, in dem in der Apostelgeschichte mehrfach erwähnten Jerusalemer Graecopalästinier Johannes Markus, dem Träger eines (zweiten) lateinischen Namens und Neffen des Barnabas, den Autor des Ev. zu sehen“ (144).

Eine chronologische Übersicht (354-56) und verschiedene Register (357-420) beenden den inspirierenden Band. In gewohnt kenntnisreicher Weise präsentiert H. eine Fülle von Material mit frischer Perspektive und in anschaulicher Weise. Für die ntl. Wissenschaft, die Rezeption der Evv. in der Alten Kirche und die Geschichte des Kanons bietet diese Studie eine wahre Fundgrube. An

vielen Stellen hinterfragt H. sowohl die Grundaxiome als auch die Detaillergebnisse kritischer Evv.forschung. Auch wenn man manche seiner Grundannahmen, Thesen und Details nicht teilen mag, findet man hier überzeugende Quellenstudien und viele Anregungen.

Manche Einsichten, die hier erstmals in dieser Gründlichkeit im deutschen Kontext diskutiert werden, werden schon seit längerem in der englischsprachigen Forschung diskutiert. Manche Thesen ergaben sich aus den selbstgemachten Aporien der deutschsprachigen Evv.forschung des 20. Jh.. Zu fragen wäre, ob die hier dargestellte „Lösung“ für das sog. Synoptische Problem nicht auch in diese Kategorie fällt. Wird sie nötig, weil H. – mit vielen anderen – am Postulat einer direkten literarischen Abhängigkeit der Evv. voneinander festhält? Die Argumente gegen dieses Postulat und mögliche Alternativen (Traditionshypothese, frühe, feste, mündliche griechische Überlieferungstradition des Lebens Jesu, die die Evangelisten in unterschiedlicher Weise aufgreifen und wiedergeben) erscheinen in H.s Studie kaum. Vgl. R. Bauckham *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses – The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2006) und A. D. Baum, *Der mündliche Faktor und seine Bedeutung für die synoptische Frage* (Tübingen, Basel: Francke, 2008).

H. überbetont die Unterschiedlichkeit (und lt. H. „widersprüchliche Gestalt“) der Evv. und ihrer Autoren. Auch dies liegt im Trend der älteren und neueren ntl. Forschung. Angesichts vergleichbarer antiker Biographien einzelner Personen erscheinen die Unterschiede zwischen den Evv. viel geringer. Der von H. vorausgesetzte Gegensatz zwischen dem pln. Ev. und den Evv. ist ebenfalls überzeichnet und im Wesentlichen ein Konstrukt der ntl. Wissenschaft. In seinen Briefen kann der Apostel die Erstverkündigung der Jesusbiographie voraussetzen, die im wesentlichen dem Aufbau und Umfang des Ev.stoffes entsprochen haben wird; vgl. die Hinweise in Apg 17.18, 14.8-10; auch J. M. G. Barclay, „Jesus and Paul“, DPL, 492-503 und D. Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). Und ist, was H. für das MkEv zugesteht (Mk habe das von Petrus verkündigte Ev. niedergeschrieben) nicht auch für das LkEv denkbar? Könnte nicht auch der Paulusbegleiter Lukas das von Paulus verkündigte Ev. (ergänzt um eigene Recherchen, Lk 1.3) niedergeschrieben haben?

Genug der Kritik. Dem zweiundachtzigjährigen Autor wünscht man Kraft und Lebenszeit, um seine *Geschichte des frühen Christentums* zu vollenden. Mit dem vorliegenden Band und seinen früheren Studien zum Thema hat er wesentlich zum Verständnis der Entstehung und Überlieferung der Evv. beigetragen. Seine Studien und Ergebnisse wird die evangelikale Wissenschaft gerne aufgreifen, modifizieren und weiterentwickeln.

Christoph Stenschke, Bergneustadt, Germany

Ed.: Martin Hengel died between the writing of this review and its publication.

Who Do My Opponents Say I Am?: An Investigation of the Accusations Against the Historical Jesus

S. McKnight and J. Modica (eds.)

Library of New Testament Studies

Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2008, 192 pp., £65.00, hb; ISBN 9780567031266

SUMMARY

This collection of essays approaches the topic of the Christology of the gospels from the perspective of Jesus' opponents and their accusations against him. Filtered through the literary lenses of the gospel writers, labels such as 'demon-possessed' and 'blasphemer' are analyzed by the contributors in hope of shedding new light on this central topic of Christian theology. Though only a few essays manage to bring new insights into the discussion, the overall method is commendable and worthy of attention.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Artikelsammlung nähert sich dem Gebiet der Christologie der Evangelien aus der Perspektive der Gegner Jesu und deren Anschuldigungen gegen ihn an. Durch die literarischen Linsen der Evangelienautoren gefiltert werden Kennzeichnungen wie „von Dämonen besessen“ und „Gotteslästerer“ von den Beitragenden in der Hoffnung analysiert, neues Licht auf diesen zentralen Gegenstand christlicher Theologie zu werfen. Obwohl es nur einige Artikel schaffen, neue Einsichten in die Diskussion einzubringen, ist die übergreifende Methode zu empfehlen und verdient Aufmerksamkeit.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage collectif traite de la christologie des évangiles du point de vue des adversaires de Jésus et des accusations qu'ils ont portées contre lui. Les auteurs analysent la présentation littéraire qu'ont fait les évangélistes de l'attitude des adversaires de Jésus, par exemple lorsqu'ils l'accusent d'avoir un démon ou de blasphémer. Ils tentent ainsi d'apporter un nouvel éclairage sur ce sujet central de la théologie chrétienne. L'approche est en général recommandable et digne d'intérêt, mais seuls quelques articles aboutissent à un apport neuf et éclairant.

* * * *

Christology is a much studied topic and the subject has been scrutinized from just about every angle in terms of biblical theology, the perspective of individual authors of the New Testament, looking backwards to Jewish conceptions of Messiahship, and looking forwards to the decisions and disputes of early church counsels and creeds. The contributors of this interesting work offer a unique approach to the question of Jesus' identity by asking what his enemies thought of him.

Drawing from the work of Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey (*Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew* [Polebridge Press, 1988]), this sociologi-

cal approach considers the significance of the social values attributed to Jesus as they present 'the human perspective and social arrangement marked by the relation of inside and outside, center and periphery' (p. x of Malina and Neyrey). Thus *Who Do My Opponents Say I Am* provides an analysis of seven ostensible accusations against Jesus: 'Jesus as Law-breaker' (Michael F. Bird), 'Jesus as Demon-Possessed' (Dwight D. Sheets), 'Jesus as Glutton and Drunkard' (Joseph B. Modica), 'Jesus as Blasphemer' (Darrell L. Bock), 'Jesus as False Prophet' (James F. McGrath), 'Jesus as King of the Jews' (Lynn H. Cohick), and 'Jesus as *Mamzer* ("Illegitimate Son")' (Scot McKnight).

Space does not permit discussion of each essay, but certainly some of them are rich and worthy of commendation. Dwight Sheets explores the claim that Jesus was in league with Beelzebul (i.e., 'demon-possessed'; Matt. 12.22-24). Sheets argues that certain traits or activities of Jesus may have led some Jews to believe that he was some kind of proto-Antichrist figure, a 'religious deceiver' or 'godless tyrant' (p. 36). Jesus' critique of the temple may have been interpreted by some as evidence that he is an eschatological antagonistic figure and a false prophet. Sheets' argument makes sense of the sort of name-calling that so easily happens against Jesus and why certain actions (like healing) are associated with deception or trickery.

Darrell Bock's essay on the accusation of blasphemy is also rewarding. He notes that just considering oneself to be the messiah was not 'inherently blasphemous' (p. 90). Rather, Jesus' expressions of self-exaltation and his self-perceived role in judgment and rulership (as messiah) seem to push him over the line: 'To claim to be able to share God's glory in Jewish context would mean pointing to an exalted status that is even more than a prophet or any typical view of the Jewish Messiah' (p. 92).

Though many of the essays shed new light on how to understand Christology, there are a few concerns worthy of note. In the first place, methodologically, we do not have direct statements from texts written by opponents of Jesus under investigation. Rather, we have statements made within narratives (the Gospels) that have been compiled and re-expressed through the Evangelists. Each scholar attempts to deal with the 'authenticity' of the saying/pericope, but I think the problem is more complex than a confirmation of genuineness. How did the Evangelists understand and cast these accusations rhetorically and theologically within the Gospels? Secondly, there is quite a variety in how the accusations are phrased and from where they come. Some are direct accusations (e.g. 'glutton and drunkard'), others are inferred from a number of smaller accusations (e.g., 'Jesus as law-breaker'), and still others are assumed but not stated in the gospels directly (e.g., 'Jesus as false prophet'). This is not a faulty approach, but appears a bit uneven. Finally, there is no chapter dedicated to the issue of Jesus supposedly opposing the temple – both the temple cleansing and the temple-logion play an impor-

tant role in the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion and I presumed the issue deserved a place in a study of the opposition against Jesus.

Collections of essays are always challenging to assess as the contributions differ in originality, cogency, perspicuity, and detail. Nevertheless, the unique approach itself will generate discussion and offer those interested in Christology a new avenue of investigation.

Nijay K. Gupta
Durham, England

Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God

J.R. Daniel Kirk

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xiv + 245 pp.,
£19.99, pb; ISBN 978 0 8028 6290 7

SUMMARY

Reading Romans as Paul's theodicy project in response to the rejection of the gospel by ethnic Israel, Kirk argues that by using resurrection as an interpretative key one is able to trace the argument of Paul's letter to Rome as it recasts the stories of Israel around the resurrection of Jesus. In this way, Paul is able to demonstrate that God has been faithful to his covenant promises contained in Israel's Scripture by acting to vindicate himself and his people in the crucified and resurrected Messiah.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Kirk liest den Römerbrief als Theodizeeprojekt, das Paulus als Reaktion auf die Abweisung des Evangeliums durch das ethnische Israel verfasst hat. Dabei argumentiert er, dass man durch die Verwendung der Auferstehung als interpretativem Schlüssel in der Lage ist, Paulus' Argumentation durch den Römerbrief hindurch zu verfolgen, da diese Argumentation Israels Storys um die Auferstehung Jesu herum in neues Licht rückt. Auf diese Weise ist Paulus in der Lage zu zeigen, dass Gott seinen in Israels Schriften enthaltenen Bundesverheißungen treu gewesen ist, indem er gehandelt hat, um sich selbst und sein Volk im gekreuzigten und auferstandenen Messias zu rehabilitieren.

RÉSUMÉ

Kirk lit l'épître aux Romains comme une théodicée visant à répondre au problème posé par le rejet de l'Évangile par l'Israël ethnique. Le thème de la résurrection lui apparaît comme une clé de lecture qui oriente toute l'argumentation de la lettre en reformulant les histoires d'Israël en lien avec la résurrection de Jésus. Paul montre ainsi que Dieu a été fidèle aux promesses de l'alliance contenues dans les Écritures d'Israël en agissant pour manifester sa justice et justifier son peuple par la mort et la résurrection de Jésus.

* * * *

Not since N.T. Wright's Oxford thesis has a scholar attempted such an ambitious synthetic reading of

Romans. For Kirk, as for Wright before him, the location of an 'interpretative key' provides the hermeneutical leverage to navigate the letter. For Wright, this 'key' was Jesus' messiahship; for Kirk the key is the resurrection of that Messiah.

Following Richard Hays, Kirk argues that Romans is Paul's theodicy project. The general rejection of Paul's gospel by ethnic Israel generated questions about God's faithfulness to his covenant promises. Romans addresses this crisis by demonstrating that the promises in Israel's Scripture find their fulfilment in the crucified and resurrected Messiah. This christological conviction requires Paul to recast the stories of Israel 'in order to show that the righteousness of God is on display in the dead and risen Messiah' (49).

Before turning to Romans, chapter two surveys the "functions" (as opposed to "nature") of resurrection in early Judaism. (14). Four functions are proposed: 1) eschatological act of justice which vindicates God and the righteous, 2) support paraenesis, 3) restoration of creation, and 4) restoration of Israel.

Chapter three examines the letter opening and closing and employs rhetorical and epistolary evidence to argue that the presence of resurrection in both these sections indicates the significance of this theme within the letter. The appearance of resurrection in connection with the scriptures of Israel in Paul's expansion of the letter opening is significant. However, the logic employed to read 'the one who will arise' in 15:12 as a reference to Jesus' resurrection feels a bit circular. Kirk argues that the centrality of resurrection in the letter is indicated by its presence in the letter opening and closing but then proceeds to argue for its presence in the letter closing by arguing from its centrality in the letter (51).

Turning to Romans 4, Kirk argues that Paul's answer to the question of Romans 3:31 ('do we nullify the law') is a 'revisionist definition of the people of God' and the contours of that God's faithfulness (59). Paul re-narrates the story of Abraham to highlight the resurrection character of his justifying faith and the resurrection personality of God. Abraham's paternity is not defined 'according to the flesh', but by God's resurrection power. This recasting of Abraham through the lens of resurrection addresses the twin-concerns of Paul's theodicy project: it demonstrates that God's action in the resurrected Messiah is continuous with Israel's scripture and it expands the boundaries of Abraham's paternity, thereby making theological space for non-Jews without closing the door on ethnic Israel.

Kirk's reading of Romans 5:9-10 (chapter five) and 8:12-39 (chapter seven) argues that Paul has rethought Israel's eschatological expectations around the resurrected Jesus. Paul retools the details of final judgment such that believers both have and will participate in a judgment presided over by their resurrected Lord. Additionally, a Jewish tradition of a (super)restored creation is reworked around Jesus as the image of God who thereby recreates those united to him and commissions them to

rule over a recreated world.

Chapters six and eight both address the question of the Mosaic Law. Paul's claim is that 'the purported goals of the law have been attained in the resurrection of Christ' (131). Kirk argues that this realization necessitated an *ex post facto* reading of the role of the law within Israel's story. Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30 demonstrates his retrospective conviction that the law was intended to witness beyond itself to the gospel of the resurrected Christ who, unlike the law, has the power to enable righteous living (108) and finally answer the theodicy question (131).

To say that the theodicy question has been answered, however, means that the question of the future of ethnic Israel has been addressed. Chapter nine argues that Romans 11 casts Israel's rejection and hoped for restoration in parallel to the christological pattern of death and resurrection.

Chapter ten examines Romans 13:8-14 and 14:1-9 and notes that in Paul's re-employment of resurrection to support paraenesis, the resurrection of Jesus provides more than motivation; provides power to live obediently (204). This is followed by a final chapter in which some of the findings about Paul's hermeneutic, ethnic unity and theodicy are translated into the current life of the church.

This work's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. Synthetic readings have a power of persuasion by virtue of their scope and volume of evidence; but they make detailed engagement with the text difficult. There are a few passages where this author needed a bit more convincing that Jesus' resurrection was in view (e.g. 1:17; 15:12). Nonetheless, by highlighting and employing the interpretative significance of resurrection, Kirk has offered a sweeping reading of Romans which navigates old debates finding fresh solution, which (*ex post facto*) seem almost self-evident. It is a valuable contribution that will be hard to ignore.

Jonathan A. Linebaugh
Durham, England

First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary

Joseph A. Fitzmyer

The Anchor Yale Bible 32

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008,
xxv + 660 pp., £30.00, hb; ISBN 978-0-300-14044-6

SUMMARY

This commentary is a welcome addition to the scholarly literature available on 1 Corinthians and is the most detailed treatment of it since Anthony Thiselton's NIGTC volume in 2000. The commentary begins with the author's original translation of the letter, followed by an introduction with several essays on preliminary issues. Fitzmyer's interpreta-

tions can be eclectic, with moments of originality and conventionalism. Unfortunately, he routinely mirror-reads the text, so that he interprets Paul's assertions as direct reflections of the situation in Corinth. In its entirety, the commentary remains a very fine contribution, with the introductory essays and section summaries being especially strong. This volume is recommended for any interested student, pastor, or scholar.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Kommentar ist eine willkommene Ergänzung der wissenschaftlichen Literatur zum 1. Korintherbrief und stellt die detaillierteste Behandlung des Briefes seit Anthony Thiseltons Band im NIGTC aus dem Jahre 2000 dar. Der Kommentar beginnt mit der eigenen Übersetzung des Briefes durch den Autor, gefolgt von einer Einleitung mit mehreren Artikeln zu vorbereitenden Fragen. Fitzmyers Interpretationen können eklektisch sein, mit Momenten der Originalität und des Konventionalismus. Leider liest er den Text üblicherweise als Spiegel, so dass er die paulinischen Aussagen als direkte Widerspiegelungen der Situation in Korinth interpretiert. Insgesamt bleibt der Kommentar ein ausgezeichneter Beitrag, wobei die einleitenden Essays und die Zusammenfassungen der einzelnen Abschnitte besonders stark sind. Der Band kann allen interessierten Studenten, Pastoren oder Gelehrten empfohlen werden.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce commentaire vient s'ajouter à l'ensemble des travaux académiques sur la première épître aux Corinthiens. C'est le commentaire le plus détaillé depuis la parution de celui de Anthony Thiselton en 2000. L'auteur nous livre d'abord sa propre traduction de l'épître, puis aborde les questions d'introduction avec plusieurs sections traitant de questions préliminaires. Les interprétations de Fitzmyer peuvent être éclectiques, tantôt originales, tantôt plutôt conventionnelles. Malheureusement, il voit le texte comme reflétant systématiquement la situation corinthienne et l'interprète en fonction. Dans l'ensemble, ce commentaire a un excellent apport, l'introduction et les résumés de section étant particulièrement remarquables.

* * * *

The appearance of Joseph Fitzmyer's commentary on the first Letter to the Corinthians is a welcome addition to the scholarly literature available on this most challenging of Pauline letters and is the most detailed treatment of it since the publication of Anthony Thiselton's NIGTC volume in 2000. Fitzmyer, of course, is no stranger to the Anchor Yale Bible Commentary series (formerly known as the Anchor Bible Commentary), this being his fifth contribution to the collection after the volumes on Luke (2), Acts, Romans and Philemon. In fact, Fitzmyer is now responsible for the comments in this series on over one third of the words in the Greek NT!

The commentary contains many of the normal preliminary features one will have come to expect in the Anchor Yale series. The volume begins with the author's

original translation of the entire text, followed by an informative, yet not overly detailed introduction to the letter. In the introduction Fitzmyer offers several short essays on such topics as the history of Corinth and its population, the events in Paul's ministry that led up to his writing of 1 Corinthians, the transmission of the text, language and style, a form-critical evaluation of the letter, and a synthesis of its many theological themes. Here the reader observes Fitzmyer's expertise in both NT history and Pauline Theology. These essays will be helpful to anybody interested in the cultural milieu of Roman Corinth and the place of 1 Corinthians in Paul's theological framework.

Fitzmyer's treatment of the text itself, again, follows the standard approach of this series. Each section contains the author's translation of the text, 'comments' summarizing the content and meaning of the relevant passage, 'notes' treating smaller units of the passage and a substantive bibliography for those interested in further reading. Fitzmyer's interpretations can be a bit eclectic, with moments of originality and others of sheer conventionalism. The reader, for instance, will probably be surprised to find that Fitzmyer departs from reading 1 Corinthians entirely as a specimen of deliberative rhetoric (55), which has become fairly commonplace since the appearance of Margaret Mitchell's *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (1991). Fitzmyer, rather, considers 1 Corinthians to be a Hellenistic letter of admonition (*typos nouthetikos*, 56), a more generic categorization which allows for more structural and topical leniency. He notices the presence of some rhetoric in Paul's writing, but instead of regarding these instances as covert allusions to Paul's underlying agenda (especially early in the letter, as have so many other scholars), he routinely prefers to mirror-read the text, so that he interprets Paul's assertions as direct reflections of the situation in Corinth. This leads him to detect three or possibly four factions in the church, parties attached to the leaders mentioned in 1:12 and 3:22, real opposition to Paul, and elaborate defences of Paul's apostolic authority in chapters 1-4 and 9, with the latter simultaneously functioning as an *exemplum* (353-54).

Fitzmyer's outline of the first four chapters is also unusual (1:10-17; 1:18-31; 2:1-3:4; 3:5-17; 3:18-23; 4:1-21) and probably not to be preferred. While admittedly a difficult passage with very little scholarly agreement, one would expect, for instance, that both 2:1-5 and 3:1-4 would *not* belong to the same unit, but should function either as the opening or closing remarks of separate sections. His method of bracketing causes some coherency problems early on and would have probably benefited had he followed the pattern suggested by Joop Smit in *Novum Testamentum* 44 (2002) 231-51.

Fitzmyer's treatment of 1 Corinthians 9 is a bit thin. While acknowledging that by waiving his right to financial support Paul was propping himself up as an example of one who had not used his right so that others might benefit, nowhere does Fitzmyer explain how receiving

support would have hindered some in the church (364). Moreover, he draws very little upon recent studies on the possible influence of sophists and rhetorical opponents in Corinth and takes no firm position on the precise meaning of the phrase *sophia logou* in 1:17 and 2:4.

In the end one cannot fault Fitzmyer for not interacting more closely the abundance of secondary literature; such would have required several 600-plus-page volumes. In its entirety, the commentary remains a very fine contribution, with the introductory essays and 'comments' sections being especially strong. This volume will make a great companion to Thiselton and is warmly recommended for any student, pastor, or scholar interested in this important NT letter.

John K. Goodrich
Durham, England

**Religious Experience of the Pneuma.
Communication with the Spirit World in
1 Corinthians 12 and 14**

Clint Tibbs

WUNT II 230

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007, xxii + 368 pp., pb.,
EUR 69,- ; ISBN 978-3-16-149357-7

SUMMARY

Tibbs investigates the statements of the apostle Paul on the Spirit of God in 1Cor 12 and 14 against the background of contemporary Jewish and pagan sources. His thesis "in the NT, 'the holy spirit' is a collective noun" as well as his perspective of a "world of holy spirits", presented by Tibbs as Pauline, are not persuasive in the end. However, the passages in which he explains the empirical relevance of Paul's statements on the Spirit prove to be stimulating: the New Testament testifies to a manifold, powerful, at times overwhelming activity of the Holy Spirit.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Tibbs untersucht die Aussagen des Apostels Paulus über den Geist Gottes in 1. Kor. 12 und 14 vor dem Hintergrund zeitgenössischer jüdischer und paganer Quellen. Seine These „In the NT, 'the holy spirit' is a collective noun" und die von ihm als pln. vorgestellte Anschauung einer „Welt heiliger Geister" überzeugen letztlich nicht. Als anregend erweisen sich aber die Passagen, in denen Tibbs den Erfahrungsbezug der pln. Aussagen über den Geist herausarbeitet: Das NT bezeugt ein vielfältiges, machtvoll, zuweilen überwältigendes Wirken des Heiligen Geistes.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur étudie ici les affirmations de Paul sur l'Esprit de Dieu en 1 Corinthiens 12 et 14, à la lumière des sources juives et païennes de l'époque. Il soutient que dans le Nouveau Testament, le vocable « le Saint-Esprit » est un nom collectif et que Paul croyait à un « monde de saints-esprits », mais cette thèse n'est pas convaincante.

Cependant, les passages où Tibbs montre la pertinence empirique de l'enseignement paulinien sur l'Esprit sont stimulants : le Nouveau Testament témoigne d'une activité diversifiée, puissante, et parfois très forte, du Saint-Esprit.

* * * *

Paul, an advocate of "Christian spiritism"? The person of the "Holy Spirit" unknown to the New Testament? The discovery and experience of an archipelago of a "(holy) world of spirits" instead? The author of the present volume does not shrink back from provocation. With this study Clint Tibbs received a doctorate from the Catholic University of America, Washington. He purports to interpret 1Cor 12 and 14 in view of the religious experience of the original church (vii). Whereas these chapters are normally dealt with under the heading "gifts of the Spirit", the unconventional thesis of the author (T. himself writes „this somewhat maverick interpretation", 23) is about Paul dealing here with "Christian spiritism" perceived by T. as „communication with the spirit world" (22).

After the introduction, T. offers an overview of research (chapters 1 and 2). He considers the observation of a variety of functions of the Spirit through which the usually invisible world of spirits becomes a real experience to be the most important result of some enquiries (108f). Affirming similar activities of demons and good spirits (109), he evokes the subject matter: "If there were many good spirits, i.e., holy spirits, in the NT world, the question arises, what does 'the Holy Spirit' mean?" (110).

In chapter 3 (113-145) T. examines texts from the Greco-Roman (Plutarch) and early Jewish (Josephus, Philo and Pseudo-Philo) literature in terms of their description of a "communication with the world of spirits": spirits would speak to individuals by media perceived as "passive human agents" (144). These may also be good spirits (*daimonion*, "godship", *theion pneuma*, "divine spirit", "*spiritus sanctus*", "holy spirit"), who may reveal the will of god. [The absence of capitals for God and Spirit follows T.]

Therefore, T. intends to carry out his detailed exegesis of 1Cor 12 and 14 (chapters 4-6) with a sensitivity which he finds lacking in general; likewise, he proposes to interpret *pneuma* within the frame of an early Jewish pneumatology (15) and not in the light of the Trinitarian definitions of the 4th century. Because he presupposes an unbroken agreement between the ideas of the former authors and those of Paul, T. does not render the opening phrase in 12:1 in the usual way (Luther: "About the gifts of the Spirit..."), but in terms of "about spiritual things". Then T. expands on Paul's descriptions of various experiences of spirits – as he classifies them – in the verses to follow: speaking by the same spirit 12:1; presents and gifts 12:4; works and activities, energies 12:6; manifestations of the spirit 14:15; spirits of the prophets 14:32; spiritual persons 14:32. T. explains this

variety as evidence of a world of the spirits which, during the foundation period of the church, communicated with Christians (151) and he translates: “now concerning spiritism”. In the following, T. decides on the exegetical agenda: already in chapter 1 in case of a missing definite article in front of *pneuma hagion*, or *pneuma theou* (as in 12:3), he defends the translation “a holy spirit” or “a spirit of god” (49f.). T. perceives the plural forms in 12:10 (*diakriseis pneumatōn*), 14:12 (*zelotai este pneumatōn*) and 14:32 (*pneumata profeton*) to be indicators pointing to a “spirit communication” with “holy spirits” (50-53, 207-213, 262-266), although T. himself has to admit that “Paul never qualifies the plural ‘spirits’ with the adjective ‘holy’” (271). How does the alleged plural “holy spirits” match Paul’s insisting on the “same Spirit” (12:4) and the “one Spirit” (12:9, 11) as the origin of the various gifts? T. is determined to find here a generic singular to denote spirits (271). He assumes the notion “one” in Israel’s confession “the Lord, our God, is one” is best understood in terms of “supreme” or “number one”, not that there is literally only one god” (189, cf. also 1Cor 8:4-6). T’s comparison of the “one spirit” in 12:9, 11 with the image of the “one body” in 1:10-11 and 3:3-4 is full of twists and turns. As the many members (mentioned by Paul) would form one body, so the many spirits (introduced here by T.) would make one world of spirits (193). By doing so, T. is smoothing the last uneven patches in the text which through this reading unanimously testifies to a spiritual world of good and evil, unholy and holy spirits. Therefore, T. continually translates “there are different distributions of gifts, but the same spirit [world distributes them all]” (12:4 cf. 12:11; 279).

At the end of his survey, T. articulates pithily “in the NT, ‘the holy spirit’ is a collective noun” (272). Is this really true? T. seems to have succumbed to the same mistake against which he warns in view of projecting a later pneumatology into the statements of the apostle Paul: he cancels out Paul’s statements on the Spirit by subjecting them to his perspective of a “world of the spirits” from other sources of Antiquity. Paul is not allowed to have said anything else. Is it really unimaginable that Paul should echo the ancient worldview when he speaks of spirits in the plural, but that he would place his own theological accents carefully (i.e. “one Spirit” in 12.11 may in fact well mean “one Spirit” and not “one world of spirits”)? T., following the history of religion school, arrives at an artificial contrast between an original experience and a dogma which seems to eclipse the former. Thus, not only the text of Scripture, but also other sources are at times interpreted in a peculiar way.

Annex 1 (279-283) comprises the Greek text and that eccentric translation of 1Cor 12 and 14; annex 2 (285-305) includes a parenthesis with regard to the meaning and use of the term ‘spiritism’ in the Old Testament; and annex 3 (307-319) presents a statistical analysis of the different grammatical forms of *pneuma* in the NT. Various indices conclude the volume.

Someone who, like the author of this review, is unable to follow T. in his exaggerated thesis, may still benefit from this stimulating and at times irritating book: first of all from the background material on contemporary Jewish and pagan sources. Likewise, the repeated and thus tedious warning against a dogmatically prejudiced interpretation is legitimate, especially when it encourages perceiving the texts with their tensions. The passages in which T. demonstrates the empirical relevance of Paul’s statements on the Spirit prove to be thought-provoking: it makes a difference whether we envisage the experience of God’s Spirit in terms of a romantic-artistic inspiration in which the individual person always keeps in control of the Spirit, or whether we expect to be overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit and enthused by the witnesses of the New Testament (166).

Christian Hundt
Siegen, Germany

Pauline Persuasion: A Sounding in 2 Corinthians 8-9

Kieran J. O’Mahony

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, 203 pp., £65
hb; ISBN 978-184127-149-1

SUMMARY

O’Mahony uses 2 Corinthians 8-9 as a test case to investigate the value of Hellenistic rhetoric for understanding Pauline persuasion. He seeks to show that Paul had an extensive Hellenistic education and that, for this reason, one should use classical rhetorical theory to help interpret Paul’s letters. The major contribution of this work is the demonstration of how 2 Corinthians 8-9 fits together as one unit rather than as two letters (as Betz argues). The overall conclusion of the work – that Paul must be understood in light of both Judaism and Hellenism – pushes at an open door.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

O’Mahony verwendet 2. Korinther 8-9 als Testfall um den Wert hellenistischer Rhetorik für das Verständnis der paulinischen Überzeugungsstrategien zu untersuchen. Er versucht zu zeigen, dass Paulus eine ausführliche hellenistische Bildung genossen hat und dass man aus diesem Grund die klassische rhetorische Theorie als Hilfe bei der Interpretation paulinischer Briefe benutzen sollte. Der Hauptbeitrag dieses Werkes besteht darin, dass es zeigt, wie 2. Korinther 8-9 als Einheit zusammenpasst und nicht zwei Briefe darstellt (wofür Betz argumentiert). Die übergreifende Schlussfolgerung des Werkes – dass Paulus sowohl im jüdischen als auch im hellenistischen Lichte verstanden werden muss – rennt offene Türen ein.

RÉSUMÉ

À partir de l’étude de 2 Corinthiens 8-9, cet ouvrage cherche dans quelle mesure la rhétorique hellénistique permet

de comprendre les procédés de persuasion pauliniens. L'auteur tente de montrer que Paul avait été exposé à une éducation très hellénistique et, par conséquent, que la théorie rhétorique classique doit être sollicitée pour l'interprétation de ses lettres. L'apport majeur de cet ouvrage réside dans la démonstration de l'unité de ces deux chapitres (contre Betz qui y voit deux lettres). La conclusion générale, selon laquelle les écrits de Paul doivent être interprétés en tenant compte à la fois du judaïsme et de l'hellénisme, enfonce une porte ouverte.

* * * *

In this monograph, Kieran J. O'Mahony uses 2 Corinthians 8-9 as a test case in his investigation of the potential value of utilizing Hellenistic rhetoric to understand Pauline persuasion. Rather than focusing on 'what' Paul says, O'Mahony examines 'how' Paul says it. He seeks to show that Paul had an extensive Hellenistic education and that, for this reason, one should use classical rhetorical theory to help interpret Paul's letters. As an example, the author investigates 2 Corinthians 8-9 in light of classical rhetorical handbooks.

The use of such handbooks, however, presents a challenge for O'Mahony since these handbooks provide techniques for the construction of speeches rather than guidelines for the analysis of epistles. To get around this challenge, the author draws two primary arguments from the works of Abraham Malherbe, Stanley Stowers, and David Aune. Firstly, Paul's letters should be considered as speeches in the sense that they served as a substitute for Paul's presence; secondly, despite the lack of any explicit theoretical connection between the instruction of rhetoric and of letter-writing, these two must have influenced one another.

O'Mahony then goes on to assert that some passages, such as 2 Corinthians 8-9, were most likely former sermons which the apostle later worked into his epistles. Nevertheless, the author must now confront another problem: Paul seemingly rejects using rhetoric in his preaching and considers himself untrained in speech (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:17; 2 Cor. 10:10). Here, O'Mahony agrees with Margaret Mitchell's conclusion that Paul does not reject rhetoric *per se*; rather, Paul rejects the abuse of rhetoric, the "unprincipled manipulation by words".

For the rest of the work, O'Mahony deals with 2 Corinthians 8-9. He begins with a sketch of the exegetical analyses of this passage from John Chrysostom to Ben Witherington III. Since Hans Dieter Betz has written most extensively on these two chapters, he postpones the detailed comparison of his research with that of Betz until the end of the book. In order to "lay bare the persuasive strategies" of 2 Corinthians 8-9, O'Mahony points out Paul's use of *elocutio*, *dispositio*, *inventio* and *genus* within these chapters. With this done, the author offers an exposition of 2 Corinthians 8-9 in the light of his rhetorical observations. In the final chapter, the author demonstrates the fundamental differences of his

findings with those of Betz. The most obvious and significant observation is that Betz considers 2 Corinthians 8-9 as two distinct letters whereas O'Mahony argues that the two chapters should be seen as one letter in light of the following *chiasm*:

A. Quaestio infinita

8:8-15: Give generously; example of Christ; citation from Scripture.

B. Quaestio finite

8:16-24: Paul's integrity is at stake: he sends others; the churches as witnesses.

B.' Quaestio finite

9:1-5: Paul's integrity is at stake; he distances himself from the administration; possible witnesses to the shame of the Corinthians.

A.' Quaestio infinita

9:6-10: Give generously; relationship with God; citations from Scripture.

Finally, O'Mahony concludes that his interpretation of 2 Corinthians 8-9 demonstrates that, rather than valorising Paul's Jewish background or situating the apostle too firmly with the Greek milieu, Paul must be understood in terms of his "hybrid cultural background" and the interpenetration of Judaism and Hellenism.

This monograph serves as another example of the value of using classical rhetorical theory as one of the tools in interpreting the letters of Paul. Although this method has its limitations and challenges, O'Mahony has shown that it can continue to assist scholars in their pursuit to understand Paul's writings. However, the scholar should also include modern rhetorical theory in the investigation rather than stopping short at classical rhetorical theory as O'Mahony has done here. The major contribution of this work is the demonstration of how 2 Corinthians 8-9 fits together as one unit rather than as two letters (as Betz argues). The overall conclusion of the work – that Paul must be understood in light of both Judaism and Hellenism – merely pushes at an open door. Furthermore, the final assertion that O'Mahony's research demonstrates that Paul *could have* received an extensive Hellenistic education raises at least two questions – how does one define "extensive" and how does one determine it? In passing, O'Mahony suggests that Paul's rhetorical education must go beyond the *progymnasmata* but not to the extent of Philo. This assertion, as well as the monograph, would have been significantly strengthened had the author compared Paul's use of rhetoric in 2 Corinthians 8-9 with the *progymnasmata* and the works of Philo in order to show (if O'Mahony's assessment stands) how these chapters exceed the expectations of the former and pale in the light of the latter. Nevertheless, those familiar with the discussion of classical rhetorical theory and Paul will most likely find this monograph a welcomed addition to the dialogue as it is both thorough and clear.

J.R. Dodson

Ouachita Baptist University

Paul and His Theology

Stanley E. Porter (ed.)

Pauline Studies 3

Leiden: Brill, 2006, xiii + 454 pp., € 129, hb; ISBN-10: 90 04 15408 6

SUMMARY

This collection of fifteen essays addresses a number of crucial issues in the study of Paul's theology. All are in English. They are written by specialists in the field and cover themes such as Paul's Gentile mission, Paul's understanding of faith, of electing grace, of the law and the Spirit and of reconciliation. Others focus on theological issues in individual Pauline letters (Cor, Phil, Rom). There is also a detailed discussion of Paul's understanding of gender roles by C. L. Blomberg. The editor provides a helpful introduction to the study of Pauline theology.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Sammlung von 15 Artikeln spricht eine Anzahl von entscheidenden Fragen in der Erforschung der paulinischen Theologie an. Sie wurden von Spezialisten dieses Gebietes geschrieben und decken Themen wie die folgenden ab: die Heidenmission des Paulus, Paulus' Verständnis des Glaubens, der erwählenden Gnade, des Gesetzes sowie des Geistes und der Versöhnung. Andere Artikel konzentrieren sich auf theologische Fragen einzelner Paulusbriefe (Korinther, Philipper, Römer). Es gibt auch eine detaillierte Diskussion der Rollen der Geschlechter von C. L. Blomberg. Der Herausgeber bietet eine hilfreiche Einführung in die Erforschung der paulinischen Theologie.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage contient quinze contributions de spécialistes de la théologie paulinienne abordant des questions clé comme la mission auprès des non Juifs, la conception de la foi, celle de l'élection par grâce, le thème de la loi et de l'Esprit et celui de la réconciliation. D'autres traitent de questions théologiques dans certaines épîtres (Corinthiens, Philippiens, Romains). Craig Blomberg aborde aussi la question des rôles de l'homme et de la femme. Stanley Porter livre une introduction utile à l'étude de la théologie de Paul.

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The present book is volume three in a series of five volumes devoted to *Pauline Studies*. Stanley E. Porter serves as editor for all volumes. Volume one is devoted to the Pauline canon, and the second volume to Paul and his opponents. For Porter "the balance of this volume is generally reflective of the tenor of current discussion of the topic of Paul and his theology" (Preface), though he notes that there is – other than his own – no contribution on the centre of Paul's theology, only one on the question of Paul and the law, and two that address Trinitarian issues.

Porter opens the volume with an introduction to the

study of Paul and his theology (1-19). He describes the crucial issues in the study of Paul's theology (types of Pauline theology, what is Pauline theology, what constitutes a centre of Paul's thought?, contingency and timelessness, the Pauline corpus) and then introduces the contributions of this study. A. J. Hultgren describes "The Scriptural Foundations for Paul's Mission to the Gentiles" (21-44). He "looks at Paul's call in terms of Jeremiah 1:5 and its implications for Paul's mission. Then he turns to the guiding principle of Paul's apostleship, before considering Paul's eschatological expectations concerning the nations. D. M. Hay examines "Paul's Understanding of Faith as Participation" (45-76), the significance of faith for Pauline theology and of faith as participation in Christ, believing and trusting, faithfulness and the faith of Christ. J. R. Harrison writes on "Paul, Theologian of Electing Grace" (77-108). He surveys the understanding of grace in systematic theology and then delineates the understanding of grace in various studies of NT theology and of Paul's theology. Then Harrison examines grace in early Judaism and in Romans 9 as well as electing grace in its imperial context in Romans 9-11. C. G. Kruse turns to "Paul, the Law and the Spirit" (109-30) and concludes that "whereas the demands of the Mosaic law are no longer the regulatory norm for believers, the OT is nevertheless their Scripture that when illuminated by the Spirit is seen to be a witness to Christ and a source of instruction for godly living when read paradigmatically in the light of the gospel" (130). Porter writes on "Paul's Concept of Reconciliation, Twice More" (131-52, presenting and assessing essays by S. Kim on 2 Cor 5:18-20 and by R. P. Martin on Rom 5:10f). In "Color Outside the Lines: Rethinking How to Interpret Paul's Letters" (153-87), R. K. J. Tan offers several suggestions for a renewed focus on the text and language of the biblical text. He argues for "new pathways into computer-assisted discourse analyses of Paul's letters" and provides several examples from Romans. J. R. Levison comments on "The Spirit and the Temple in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians" (189-215): faulty Corinthian assumptions prompted Paul, despite what he had learned about their schisms and sexual proclivities, to remind a fractured and frayed community in Corinth that they remain a temple filled with the Holy Spirit (215). H. Giesen examines "Eschatology in Philippians" (217-82). In this lengthy contribution he demonstrates persuasively that Paul awaits the completion of his salvation in the hour of death which is clearly testified in Philippians 1:23. In "Neither Hierarchalist nor Egalitarian: Gender Roles in Paul" (283-326), C. L. Blomberg sets off with a succinct description of the historical background and distinguishes and examines Paul's descriptive material, foundational theological principles and didactic material on gender roles. R. C. Fay asks "Was Paul a Trinitarian?" (327-45) and concludes that "there can be little doubt that, through reading Romans 8, Paul was indeed a Trinitarian" (345). A. K. Gabriel examines "Pauline Pneumatology and the Question of

Trinitarian Presuppositions" (347-62). C. A. Evans studies "Paul the Exorcist and Healer" (363-79) according to Paul's letters (2 Cor 12:12 and Rom 15:18f) and the Book of Acts, arguing for example that Paul's credentials were consistent with those of the original apostles, in particular Peter. Finally R. Kieffer addresses "The Interpretation of the Letter to the Romans in Melancthon's *Loci Communes* from 1521" (381-92) and J. de Villiers "Adolf Deissmann: A Reappraisal of his Work, especially his Views on the Mysticism of Paul" (393-420). The well produced volume closes with indices of ancient sources and of modern authors (423-44, 445-54).

The volume contains valuable contributions to the scholarly understanding of Paul's theology which deserve to be noted. It does not offer a systematic treatment of all aspects or the main aspects of Pauline theology (there is e. g. little directly on Christology, anthropology, ecclesiology or in Paul's understanding of Israel).

Volume 4 of *Pauline Studies* addresses Paul's world, and volume five Paul as Jew, Greek and Roman. Two further sets of five volumes each are under consideration. Porter's first three volumes have brought together scholars from various persuasions, traditions and countries and have given evangelical scholars the opportunity to present their views to an international audience. The quality of their contributions is impressive.

Christoph Stenschke
Pretoria, South Africa

Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament

G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (eds.)

Nottingham: Apollos, 2007, xxviii + 1239 pp.,
£29.99, cloth; ISBN 978-1-84474-196-0

SUMMARY

Especially in the field of New Testament studies, the publication of another commentary must find a special niche in the market if it is to be welcomed and utilized. Beale and Carson offer such a reference resource that fills the need for a pan-corpus (New Testament) treatment of how each 'NT book or writer habitually uses the OT' (vii). Though certain methodological constraints were laid out, the commentaries on various NT books are handled with great variety even within these boundaries. These sixteen contributors have produced an invaluable aid to scholars, students and ministers.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Besonders auf dem Gebiet der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft muss die Veröffentlichung eines weiteren Kommentars eine Marktlücke finden, wenn sie willkommen heißen und benutzt werden will. Die Herausgeber Beale und Carson haben so ein Referenzwerk bereitgestellt, das das Bedürfnis nach einer gesamthaften (das ganze NT) Behandlung der Frage stillt, wie jedes „NT-Buch oder jeder

NT-Autor das AT gewöhnlich gebraucht" (vii). Obwohl bestimmte methodologische Grenzen gesetzt wurden, spiegeln die Kommentare zu den verschiedenen NT-Büchern eine große Vielfalt selbst innerhalb dieser Grenzen wider. Die sechzehn Autoren haben eine unschätzbare Hilfe für Gelehrte, Studenten und Prediger produziert.

RÉSUMÉ

Un nouveau commentaire sur les livres du Nouveau Testament doit trouver un nouveau créneau pour avoir une chance d'être jugé utile. Beale et Carson ont supervisé la production d'un ouvrage de référence couvrant tout le Nouveau Testament et qui répond au besoin d'une étude de l'usage de l'Ancien Testament par les auteurs du Nouveau. Tout en respectant certaines directives méthodologiques, les commentaires des divers livres du Nouveau Testament sont abordés avec une grande variété. Les seize auteurs ont produit un outil qui sera très utile aux spécialistes, aux étudiants et aux prédicateurs.

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Especially in the field of New Testament studies, it is no exaggeration to say that there are so many commentaries for any given book that the student or researcher is virtually in need of a guidebook for navigating through the dense forest of literature available – and such guidebooks are already beginning to enumerate! This being the case, the emergence of a new commentary needs justification; it must find a special niche in the market if it is to be welcomed and utilized. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (the editors) offer such a reference resource that fills the need for a pan-corpus (New Testament) treatment of how each 'NT book or writer habitually uses the OT' (vii).

The question of how the NT uses or reflects on the OT has long been a topic of debate and a major crux in discussion of New Testament and Biblical theology. The editors have done a fine job of commissioning the following expert scholars to contribute to this tome: Craig Blomberg (Matthew), Rikki Watts (Mark), David Pao and Eckhard Schnabel (Luke), Andreas Köstenberger (John), I. H. Marshall (Acts), Mark Seifrid (Romans), Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner (1 Corinthians), Peter Balla (2 Corinthians), Moisés Silva (Galatians, Philippians), Frank S. Thielman (Ephesians), Jeffrey Weima (1-2 Thessalonians), Philip Towner (1-2 Timothy, Titus), George Guthrie (Hebrews). Of the editors, Beale took Revelation (along with Sean McDonough) and Carson the General Epistles.

In order to make the project more manageable for a single-volume commentary, the editors chose to limit the scope of investigation to all the explicit OT citations and only the most probable allusions. Each writer was given a significant amount of flexibility but basic guidelines encouraged a consideration of (1) the NT literary context of the citation/allusion, (2) the original OT context, (3) uses of the same OT text in early Jewish literature, (4) textual issues (e.g., what kind of *Vorlage*, textual emenda-

tions, etc.), (5) the interpretive hermeneutic of the NT author, and (6) the theological purpose of the usage.

Some particularly useful features of the commentary are noteworthy. Several contributors include extensive prolegomena to the study of the use of the OT in their respective NT book under consideration. Thus, Howard Marshall (on Acts) attends to such matters as Lukan sources, redaction, *Vorlage* texts, the possible influence of *testimonia*, the classification of types of citation, Jewish exegesis and biblical theology (covering 12 pages; contrast this with the introduction to Luke which extends only 2 1/2 pages). Another massively helpful element are end-of-chapter bibliographies, some enumerating more than 600 entries (Watts on Mark, 237-249).

Perhaps the only major concern I have with this largely impressive volume is the fact that the methodological constraints led to a very inhibited treatment of Philippians (totalling less than five pages). Though it is certainly true that Paul does not quote Scripture explicitly and only rarely alludes to it in an obvious sense, the significance of the absence of such intertextual discourse necessitates, I think, a lengthier discussion of why this is the case. Also, the five allusions that Silva did decide to explore could have been investigated more thoroughly.

The above minor criticism aside, this commentary deserves a place on the shelf of pastors and scholars who will benefit from quick and easy access to a wealth of research and wisdom regarding how the NT authors understood and interpreted the OT.

Nijay K. Gupta
Durham, England

Surprised by hope

Tom Wright

London: SPCK, 2007, xiv + 338 pp., £ 12.99, pb;
ISBN 978-0-281-05617-0

SUMMARY

In this important book the bishop of Durham describes Christian eschatology from the perspective of Easter. He defends (again) the historicity of the resurrection and shows how it is relevant for the entire Christian life, not least for eschatology. The key thesis is that Christian hope is not about going to heaven when we die but about living in the power of the resurrection now and expecting new heavens and a new earth which will have much continuity with the present world.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem wertvollen Buch behandelt der Bischof von Durham die christliche Eschatologie aus dem Blickpunkt des Ostergeschehens. Er verteidigt (wieder einmal) die Historizität der Auferstehung Jesu und zeigt ihre Bedeutung für das ganze christliche Leben und speziell für die Eschatologie auf. Zentrale These des Buches ist, dass die christliche Hoffnung nicht darin besteht, dass man nach

dem Tod in den Himmel kommt, sondern dass sie sich auf das gegenwärtige Leben in der Kraft der Auferstehung und auf die Erwartung eines neuen Himmels und einer neuen Erde bezieht, die in einer nicht unerheblichen Kontinuität zur gegenwärtigen Welt stehen.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage important aborde le sujet de l'eschatologie chrétienne à partir de la perspective de Pâques. Il défend l'historicité de la résurrection et montre la pertinence de cet événement, non seulement pour l'eschatologie, mais pour la totalité de la vie chrétienne. Il soutient pour thèse principale que l'espérance chrétienne n'est pas d'aller au ciel au moment de la mort, mais de vivre dès à présent dans la puissance de la résurrection et dans l'attente de nouveaux cieux et d'une nouvelle terre qui présenteront une grande continuité avec l'univers actuel.

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Whether as N.T. Wright or as Tom Wright, the Anglican bishop of Durham in the North of England is a very prolific writer. It is thus hard to say that this review discusses his *latest* book as he will already have produced more by the time the review is printed. (And he produces not only books. Have a look at www.ntwrightpage.com to find a wealth of articles, recordings etc.) Anyway, the present book is more or less a full-blown eschatology. At the outset Wright sets the scene for his discussion. This first part of the book is very English, and international readers may not appreciate all of it. Wright sharply criticises current misconceptions about the resurrection of Jesus and the future, quoting from hymns, songs and popular culture. In the next two chapters he presents a popular summary of his *The Resurrection of the Son of God* as foundation for his discussion.

The second part of the book begins with the author contradicting the shallow optimism of evolutionism. He says that only God can bring about decisive changes and argues convincingly that the Christian hope is not for 'going to heaven' but for being granted access to the new heavens and a new earth. The expectation of 'going to heaven' and leaving the earth behind he bluntly calls Gnostic. He spends some time, but not much, to contradict the belief in a rapture of the faithful; little time too is spent contradicting those who on the basis of 2 Peter 3 expect the total destruction of the present world. (More on that in his essay 'New heavens and a new earth', in John Colwell (ed.), *Called to one hope* [Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000] 31-51.)

Wright argues, again briefly, that in the period before the resurrection the dead are not unconscious but in a state of bliss and that this is what Jesus calls paradise in Luke 23:43 and 'the many mansions in the house of his Father' in John 14:2. He makes short shrift with the doctrine of purgatory and with the idea that the dead would pray or work for the benefit of the living. He fails to also do away fully with praying for the dead, an

Anglican practice which has spilt out to other denominations in England. The author defends the personal and physical return of Jesus as well as the reality and the importance of the coming judgement as God's setting things right. Yet for him the final judgment is not followed by eternal conscious torment. Rejecting universalism and conditionalism he opts for a theory about dehumanisation, speculating that those who reject God will become ex-humans, but he does not develop this at any length (195).

The third part of the book focuses on the meaning and significance of salvation and the resurrection. Wright argues that what we believe about 'life after death' directly affects what we believe about life before death, about the mission of the church, what we do in this world. The resurrection of Jesus and the Christian hope confirm the value of the present life. The author helpfully explains the implications of saying that salvation is more than having a relationship with Jesus and going to heaven when we die. One chapter contains specific but brief suggestions for the celebration of Easter and for worship and spirituality in general.

Throughout bishop Wright is a severe and convincing critic of our times and culture. He also shows why 'other gospels' such as Thomas and Judas should be rejected. He defends his own orthodoxy against those who disagree with him over issues such as the New Perspective on Paul. In this respect the book is quite personal, more so than one would perhaps expect. To some this will increase its accessibility. Yet it is an accessible book anyway, lively in style and full of brief illustrations. It has a mere 20 pages of endnotes and helpful indexes at the end. Church groups could use it to good effect.

Although I am enthusiastic about this book and want to recommend it warmly, some critical comments must be made. In the first place one might do so about the fact that Wright maintains his view that Jesus himself never spoke about his return, a view he expressed in previous publications. He argues that Jesus' words about the coming of the Son of Man were fulfilled in his glorification at the end of his life on earth. I remain unconvinced that this exegesis is tenable, but it hardly affects the rest of the book.

A second point of disagreement is the person of the resurrected Jesus. Much as Wright speaks out against Docetism in all its – often hidden – forms, and much as I agree, it seems that in this respect he is not radical enough. Although he believes in the Jewishness of Jesus, he never mentions that in his risen and glorified state he is still a Jew. I would argue that Jesus is not only 'in heaven' in his thoroughly embodied risen state' (122) but that he is there as a Jew. For me this point is linked with a positive expectation regarding God's faithfulness to the Jews and the future of the Jewish people, whereas Wright virtually ignores this aspect of Christian eschatology.

Finally, there is no discussion of the millennium. Given Wright's astute and just criticism of Dispensation-

alism we can guess what he would have said, but the omission takes away from the character of the book as a complete treatment of eschatology.

Pieter J. Lalleman
London

*The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical
Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*

G. K. Beale

New Studies in Biblical Theology 17

Leicester / Downer's Grove: Apollos / IVP Academic,
2004, 458 pp., \$29.00 / £14.99, pb; ISBN-10: 1-
84474-022-6

SUMMARY

Beale offers a synthetic reading of the theme of the temple across the whole of the Bible, demonstrating its importance for the continuing mission of the Church. His methodology does not always help so readers need to exercise discernment about the strength of some of his arguments, but his central thesis still works. God's dwelling place in creation thus emerges as an important theme across the whole Bible which has important implications for how we consider mission and worship in contemporary practice.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In Erweiterung eines kurzen Exkurses in seinem Offenbarungskommentar bietet Beale hier eine synthetische Lese-weise der Tempelthematik in der gesamten Bibel und zeigt die Wichtigkeit des Themas für die laufende Mission der Kirche. Beals Methodologie ist nicht immer hilfreich, so dass die Leser die Stärke einiger seiner Argumente kritisch prüfen müssen, aber seine Hauptthese funktioniert dennoch. Gottes Wohnstätte in der Schöpfung taucht als ein wichtiges Thema in der gesamten Bibel auf, das wichtige Implikationen im Hinblick darauf enthält, wie wir über Mission und Anbetung in der gegenwärtigen Praxis denken.

RÉSUMÉ

Développant un bref excursus de son commentaire sur l'Apocalypse, Beale présente ici une étude synthétique du thème du temple à travers toute la Bible et démontre son importance pour la mission permanente de l'Église. Sa méthodologie ne facilite pas toujours les choses et les lecteurs doivent exercer leur discernement pour évaluer la force de certains de ses arguments, mais sa thèse centrale est bien établie. La demeure de Dieu dans la création apparaît comme un thème important tout au long de la Bible, avec des implications considérables pour notre conception de la pratique contemporaine de la mission et du culte.

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Greg Beale's study of the theology of the temple across the whole of the Bible emerges out of a brief excursus

in his commentary on the book of Revelation in the *NIGTC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). A note of three pages there has expanded into a major study of this theme, demonstrating the richness of many themes in scripture, and that our explorations of a theme at one point open up new possibilities of interpretation at others. However, although Beale's initial impetus for writing was the study of Revelation, and he introduces his study by acknowledging this, he is careful here to defer consideration of it until he has examined the theme across the whole of the Bible.

Beale's survey of texts thus begins with the Old Testament, noting the close links between the creation texts and the presentation of the sanctuary in the Tabernacle, and then more specifically in the temple itself. The survey of texts shows that creation itself in Genesis 1 is a temple to the worship of God and that the tabernacle and temple were constructed so as to represent the whole of creation. The implications of the Old Testament material are significant for the whole of Beale's argument, since he believes that the intention in creation was for Adam to bring the whole of it to worship, though this was something he failed to achieve. Israel likewise, although she established her temple, did not bring about universal worship through the Old Testament, but does anticipate a point where this will happen, especially in Ezekiel 40-48. However, because of his eschatological reading of these chapters in Ezekiel, Beale defers consideration of them until he has examined the theme of the temple in the New Testament. Here, he demonstrates that Jesus is the fulfilment of the hope of the temple, insisting that this is not a spiritualisation of the Old Testament but a literal fulfilment, arguing that a literal fulfilment does not have to be a physical one and that the nature of what is promised can continue to be literally the same even though the form might differ. From this survey of texts, Beale argues that God is bringing the whole of creation

back to the point where it is a temple to him, as seen in Revelation 21-22. Two closing chapters offer theological reflections on the whole and then some practical considerations of what this might mean for Christians today.

Although the general lines of Beale's argument seem well-founded, his approach of presenting multiple lines of argument where some can be seen as persuasive only from the perspective of the whole case does not always help. Also, although his exegesis is generally careful and thought through, some points appear forced, pushing texts in directions which are not really central to them. In a work like this it is almost inevitable that one will disagree with some points of interpretation, and I was not always convinced that Beale's eschatological reading of some texts was most appropriate, but Beale's main case could have been established without drawing in texts which by his own acknowledgement do not have any obvious point of support for his thesis. I would also like to have seen the function of the temple assessed more from the perspective of the mission of God, but of course Beale was writing before Chris Wright's seminal work on this theme. It is not that the overall thesis fails, but rather that Beale's case could have been strengthened by drawing only on those passages with a more obvious connection to his theme and then by subsequently pointing to other texts which might extend the case. As it stands, the reader cannot be sure when Beale is offering something he considers central or not. He thus runs the risk of readers rejecting the central thesis unnecessarily. Readers will thus need to exercise discernment as they read, critically weighing the texts Beale considers, but as they do so they will find themselves challenged to consider the importance of a theme which has not always received the attention that it merits.

David G. Firth
Cliff College

NEW FROM PATERNOSTER

Faith Lacking Understanding

Theology 'Through a Glass, Darkly'

Randal Rauser

In an attempt to put *mystery* back at the heart of Christian theology, Randal Rauser leads the reader on a riveting and, at times, unsettling journey through the major doctrines encapsulated in the Apostles' Creed. In each case he illustrates how a *theoretical* understanding of the doctrine as yet eludes us. We simply do not know, for example, what it *means* for God to be Trinity, or how Christ can be both human and divine, or how the atonement works. However, Rauser shows that the journey of *thinking theologically* – which arises out of a love for, and worship of God – is as important as the end result of achieving doctrines that approximate reality. This is a gripping, clearly written and unique introduction to honest and humble Christian theology for an emerging culture.

Randal Rauser is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Taylor Seminary, Edmonton, Canada.

978-184227-547-4 / 216 x 140mm / 208pp / £9.99

Paternoster, 9 Holdom Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1QR, UK