

and especially the work of Rudolf Bultmann. J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (1968, 1979, 2003) was a watershed for a number of scholars, as his two-level approach to the Gospel offered glimpses of the situation behind the text. Another defining moment was Alan Culpepper's *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (1983). His narrative approach to John's Gospel was an inspiration for numerous narrative studies in the following decades.

Although many of these seasoned Johannine scholars moved from the historical-critical to the narrative approaches, they do not want to see historical inquiry abandoned. Francis Moloney, who wrote a three volume narrative study of the Gospel, sums up this sentiment well: 'I do have difficulty with a future that loses touch with the world behind the text, the world of the text, and the two thousand years of tradition that have given us the Fourth Gospel as a major book within the Christian Scriptures' (210; see also Ashton, Fortna, Van Belle, von Wahlde).

But not all of the contributors had journeys that ended with narrative criticism. Some have travelled on to postmodern or postcolonial approaches. Robert Kysar now promotes a postmodern, almost deconstructionist, approach to the Gospel. Fernando Segovia challenges readers to think geopolitically about the Johannine Literature, by which he means moving beyond 'the assumptions of modern Western ideology' that he sees as being the main academic approach to the interpretation of John (283).

Whether postmodernism, postcolonialism etc. will be or already are the next pivotal movements in Johannine Studies is unclear, but the testimony of the 'Johannine Community' writing in this book is to not to abandon the historical questions. They call for a blending of approaches, especially since after all of these years of study, there is no consensus on the authorship, date, provenance or unity of the Gospel. Alan Culpepper states, 'In the quest to understand the Gospel of John, there is no room for methodological exclusivism' (114).

Intentionally or not, this book charts another trend in Johannine Studies. Of the eighteen senior contributors, only one is a woman (Schneiders). Among the younger scholars there are six women (Sproston-North, Williams, Reinhartz, Coloe, Lee and Conway). The geographical representation of senior contributors is decent, although a bit heavy on the North American contribution. Thatcher does stress that only 'some of the living legends' participated (xvii). Still, contributions from Jörg Frey, Martin Hengel, Andrew Lincoln, Udo Schnelle and Hartwig Thyen, among others, are missed.

For any Johannine scholar, *What we have heard from the beginning* is an extremely interesting and insightful read. For anyone interested in a primer on the thought and research of some of the major players in Johannine studies during the last half of the twentieth century, this is the book.

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Re-inventing English Evangelicalism 1966-2001. A Theological and Sociological Study

Rob Warner

Bletchley: Paternoster, 2007, £19.99; 284 pp., h/b,
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SUMMARY

In this book Rob Warner, one of the key Baptist players in British evangelicalism during the 1990s, analyses the movement in which he played a significant part. In doing so he brings his considerable knowledge of contemporary evangelical history and evangelical leaders into conversation with both theology and sociology. The insights that emerge are both helpful and fascinating – especially for those of us for whom all of this is also living history.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch analysiert Rob Warner, einer der baptistischen Schlüsselfiguren im britischen Evangelikalismus der 1990er Jahre, die Bewegung, in der er eine wichtige Rolle spielte. Dabei bringt er sein beachtliches Wissen der zeitgenössischen evangelikalen Geschichte und von evangelikalen Leitern sowohl mit der Theologie als auch mit der Soziologie ins Gespräch. Die Einsichten, die dabei zutage treten, sind sowohl hilfreich als auch faszinierend – besonders für diejenigen von uns, für die all dies auch lebendige Geschichte ist.

RÉSUMÉ

Rob Warner est l'un des baptistes qui ont joué un rôle influent au sein du mouvement évangélique britannique dans les années 1990. Il propose ici son analyse de ce mouvement, en s'appuyant sur son immense connaissance de l'histoire contemporaine du mouvement évangélique et de ses responsables, en portant attention aux considérations théologiques et sociologiques. Ses réflexions sont à la fois utiles et fascinantes, en particulier pour ceux qui ont été les acteurs ou les témoins de cette histoire.

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In the first part of his book, Warner explores what he terms the conversionist-activist axis of evangelicalism. The expansion of the Evangelical Alliance in the UK under the dynamic leadership of Clive Calver, the exciting growth of Spring Harvest, the 'blip' of the Toronto blessing, the decline in the sale of Christian magazines and indicators of the decline in practice of daily Bible reading and the Quiet Time are all considered. Very helpfully too, in chapter four, Warner takes a hindsight look at the lasting impact of some of the evangelistic programmes that peppered the Decade of Evangelism: Jesus in Me, Minus to Plus, On Fire and – perhaps saddest of all – DAWN with its vision to plant 20000 new churches in the UK in time for the new millennium. Warner's overall conclusions – as both a participant observer and activist – are disturbing ones: 'a zealous stoking of vision inflation' coupled with 'evidence of delusional tendencies' (113-114) led to boom and bust.

There was, he argues, a cognitive dissonance between what was actually happening in Britain during the 1990s and the hype and rhetoric of some leading evangelicals. This may, he also suggests, have contributed to the overall trend of evangelical decline in post-modern Britain.

The overall trends Warner discerns do not make encouraging reading: '...the massive levels of indifference to organised religion among young adults suggests that evangelicals may have enjoyed a brief flurry of prominence in the residual remains of the churches in England before the entire edifice of organised and institutional Christianity sinks into an accelerating or even terminal decline.' (4) More positively the expansion of the Alpha courses across the UK and world is also analysed; Warner concludes that its '... all-round strengths vindicate its position as the market leader among evangelistic programmes.' (122) Here, too, however, a salutary note is struck as indications of Alpha's (later) lower take-up are considered alongside the perennial problem of how institutionalisation weakens impact. The exciting growth of TEAR Fund is also traced in this section – as an example of what can happen when the best of evangelicalism's social ethic learns to engage constructively with the values of a post-modern society.

In the second part Warner examines what he suggests is the second main axis of evangelicalism during these four decades: the biblicist-crucicentric axis. This is not an easy read as the strap-line for this section demonstrates: 'From pre-critical inclusivity to the self-attenuated Calvinistic hegemony, and the subsequent emergence of post- and neo-conservatism, with bifurcatory prospects.' This book is not for deck-chair reading! Warner examines, with his characteristic evangelical-theological accuracy, many of the key doctrinal statements of faith which emerged over the period in question. These include Keele 1967, Lausanne 1974, Nottingham 1977, LBC 1998 and IVCF 2000. His conclusions are that the tensions in the 1960s between Martyn Lloyd Jones and John Stott over the future direction of evangelicalism have, in fact, been replayed over much of the period. Issues such as revelation, soteriology, social justice and the role of women in leadership, alongside continuing tensions about what exactly biblical inerrancy may or may not mean, threaten to bring about a divorce within pan-evangelicalism. There is, Warner concludes, 'a deepening polarisation' in evidence over the period.

Warner ends his study by outlining two possible scenarios for British evangelicalism in the 21st century: 'If European secularization should prove terminal... evangelicals can now be expected to face late-onset decline, followed by full participation in the death of Christian Europe. However, if European secularization proves to be self-limiting... the futures of evangelicalism depend on which sectors of the evangelical tradition survive and prosper through the internecine battles of reconstruction currently in ferment.' (242-243)

Warner's stated aim is that his work will build on the classic study by David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*

in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s. The style of this book is far from Bebbingtonian. But he succeeds.

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Barth's Theology of Interpretation

Donald Wood

Barth Studies Series. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, xiv + 189 pp., £55, hb, ISBN 978-0-7546-5457-5

SUMMARY

In this fine book Donald Wood argues that for Barth the interpretation of Scripture depends on a *doctrinal* account of the reader's location (the church) and of the reader's own relationship to both the Lord of the church and to the biblical text. In this way, hermeneutics comes to be understood in soteriological terms rather than in epistemological or technical terms. For Barth, the decisive interpretative issues are the forgiveness of sins and the obedience of faith.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage bien fait, Donald Wood montre que, pour Barth, l'interprétation de l'Écriture dépend à la fois de la manière dont le lecteur se situe doctrinalement (de la tradition de son Église) et de sa propre relation au Seigneur de l'Église et au texte biblique. De la sorte, il comprend l'herméneutique en termes sotériologiques plutôt qu'en termes épistémologiques ou techniques. À ses yeux, les interprétations décisives sont celles qui sont relatives au pardon des péchés et à l'obéissance de la foi.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem ausgezeichneten Buch vertritt Donald Wood folgendes Argument: Für Barth hängt die Auslegung der Schrift von dem *lehrmäßigen* Kontext des „Sitzes im Leben“ des Lesers ab (in Kirche und Gemeinde) sowie von der ureigenen Beziehung des Lesers sowohl zum Herrn der Gemeinde als auch zum biblischen Text. Auf diese Weise wird Hermeneutik eher in sotériologischem Zusammenhang verstanden als in epistemologischer oder technischer Hinsicht. Für Barth liegt der entscheidende Punkt für die Auslegung bei Sündenvergebung und Glaubensgehorsam.

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This book is a slightly revised version of Donald Wood's doctoral thesis (Oxford, 2004), carried out under the supervision of John Webster. It is a self-effacing work, more modest than it needs to be about its central contentions and its method of mining what Barth thinks is happening when the church opens the pages of Holy Scripture.

Elegantly written throughout, the greatest strengths of this work are located precisely in the simplicity of its claims because Wood has written in the genre of commentary. This kind of writing is all too rare in much academic discourse which presumes to tell us what a great thinker thought (often in conceptually abstract