

faiblesse théologique, contrairement à ce que certains pensent, mais il s'est montré un théologien fidèle à ses positions tout en cherchant à favoriser les réformes de manière irénique. Cette étude soignée et complète rend compte du passé de manière éclairante, et fournit de surcroît un cadre interprétatif utile à la compréhension du dialogue œcuménique actuel.

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In *Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification: Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irenicism*, Brian Lugioyo, Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Spring Arbor University, seeks to show that Bucer was not a weak *Vermittlungstheologe* but a diplomat of the Reformation with strong and consistent theological convictions. Over against those who charge Bucer with lacking theological steadfastness, Lugioyo introduces Bucer as an irenic ambassador for unity who did not downplay the importance of the doctrine of justification for the sake of ecclesiastical unity. To illustrate his point, Lugioyo looks at Bucer's position on the doctrine of justification during his dialogue with Roman Catholic theologians from 1539 to 1541, trying to show that it remained consistent with his earlier outline of the doctrine in his *Romans Commentary* of 1536. The author unfolds Bucer's understanding of the doctrine of justification, while at the same time painting a comprehensive picture of Bucer's general soteriological outlook. To bring Bucer in dialogue with his Roman Catholic contemporaries, Lugioyo introduces Johannes Gropper's concept of justification, as penned in the *Enchiridion* (1538), and in a final step traces Bucer's concrete involvement in different Catholic-Protestant debates, culminating in the Diet of Regensburg (1541) where he negotiated as one of the Protestant representatives the Worms Book.

Lugioyo argues that the final version of its fifth article, praised by both Catholics and Protestants at the Diet, was not weak *Vermittlungstheologie*, but is strongly 'expressive of Bucer's theology of justification from 1536' (191). This is obviously debatable, then and now. Whereas Calvin was happy with the final version of the article, Luther was not. Lugioyo points out that 'article 5 is not a patchwork of compromise' (204). However, one could add, it still remains a compromise, and the inevitable problem of a compromise is its openness for the involved parties to read their own interpretation into it. Significant differences might still hide behind the curtain of a sophisticated diplomatic language. Whether one agrees with the picture that Lugioyo paints of the reformer Bucer at Regensburg ('Bucer did not accommodate the evangelical doctrine of justification; he evangelized,' 208), one has to commend the clearly structured manner in which Lugioyo, with close attention to detail, unfolds his line of argument. This is undoubtedly one of the strengths of his work. One could have wished for an illustration of parallels between Bucer and contemporary protestant theologians involved in the ecumenical debate, but that might have been a step too far for

a study that explicitly focuses on 'historical theology.' For those who want to dig deeper, the book comes with helpful features, such as the extensive original German and Latin quotations in the footnotes as well as four appendices, consisting in English translations of relevant chapters of Bucer's *Romans Commentary* and a translation of Article 5 of the *Worms Book*.

As Lugioyo combines historical study with a solid dogmatic treatment of Bucer's soteriological approach, both scholars and students with a special interest in church history and systematic theology alike will profit from the book. Furthermore, Lugioyo's study is a valuable resource in that it not only provides material for the interpretation of recent ecumenical conversations, such as 'Evangelicals and Catholics together,' or the 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,' but also works as a signpost for further dialogue. May the debate continue – and not without listening to Bucer's voice from the past, which undoubtedly has something to say to us today.

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Tight Fists or Open Hands? Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law

David L. Baker

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SUMMARY

David L. Baker's book is an excellent exploration of Old Testament wealth and poverty laws read within the Ancient Near Eastern context that attempts to highlight the Old Testament's underlying compassion towards the poor and dispossessed. The book offers the author's own translations of biblical texts, in-depth research, a topical organisation and careful comparison with Ancient Near Eastern law codes. While other attempts to tackle the topics of wealth and poverty in the Old Testament often lead to liberation theology or health and wealth gospel, Baker offers his audience an accessible and engaging reading of Old Testament law that demonstrates God's desire for justice for all.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

David L. Bakers Buch ist ein ausgezeichnete Forschungsbeitrag über alttestamentliche Gesetze zu Reichtum und Armut auf dem Hintergrund des Nahen Ostens der Antike. Das Werk zielt darauf ab, die dem Alten Testament zugrunde liegende Empathie mit den Armen und Besitzlosen hervorzuheben. Der Autor bringt seine eigene Übersetzung der biblischen Texte, das Werk bietet eine gründliche Studie sowie eine thematische Anordnung und einen sorgfältigen Vergleich mit den Gesetzeskodices des Nahen Ostens der Antike. Während andere Ansätze zum Thema von Reichtum und Armut im Alten Testament oftmals in eine Befreiungstheologie münden oder in ein

„Gesundheits- und Wohlstandsevangelium“, bietet Baker seinen Lesern eine zugängliche und engagierte Lesart des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes, welche Gottes Wunsch nach Gerechtigkeit für alle aufzeigt..

RÉSUMÉ

Voilà une excellente étude des lois de l'Ancien Testament sur la richesse et la pauvreté, replacées dans le contexte proche-oriental ancien. L'auteur souligne le principe de compassion envers les démunis qui les sous-tend. Il propose sa propre traduction des textes bibliques et offre le résultat de recherches approfondies. L'ouvrage est organisé par sujets et effectue des comparaisons attentives avec les codes de loi du Proche-Orient ancien. Alors que d'autres traitements du sujet débouchent souvent sur une théologie de la libération ou sur un évangile de la prospérité, Baker apporte ici une lecture des lois de l'Ancien Testament accessible et convaincante qui démontre que Dieu désire la justice pour tout homme.

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David L. Baker's book is an excellent exploration of Old Testament wealth and poverty laws read within the ANE context that attempts to highlight the Old Testament's underlying compassion towards the poor and dispossessed. Though the topic is ancient, the book is driven by the desire to find biblical responses to contemporary problems like global poverty, human trafficking, political corruption and theft of natural resources. While other attempts to tackle the topics of wealth and poverty in the Old Testament often lead to liberation theology or health and wealth gospel, Baker purposefully avoids these extremes and instead offers his audience an accessible and engaging reading of Old Testament law that demonstrates God's desire for justice for all.

Baker is no stranger to the topic of Old Testament wealth and poverty law, and his experience as both a capable Old Testament scholar and a long-term theological educator in Indonesia is on display throughout. In fact, those familiar with Baker's work will recognise this book as an outgrowth of his former writings. Indeed, some sections rely heavily on his previously published materials.

While Baker covers a wide range of topics, the book's systematic organisation ensures that the reader possesses a clear sense of direction and purpose for each section. The book begins with a brief introduction of the various Ancient Near Eastern (Sumerian, Babylonian, Hittite and Assyria) and Old Testament (Decalogue, Book of the Covenant, Holiness Code and Deuteronomic Laws) law codes that are compared throughout the work. The chapters that follow are built around a topical approach to Old Testament wealth and poverty laws and as a result do not progress in a linear, commentary fashion through Pentateuchal law. Instead, the book is organised around three main sections: Property and Land (chs 2-4: Property Rights, Property Responsibilities, Ancestral Land), Marginal People (chs 5-7: Slaves, Semi-Slaves, Other Vulnerable Groups) and Justice and Generosity (chs 8-11: Just

Lawsuits, Shared Harvests, Generous Loans, Fair Trade). Each chapter is broken down into multiple sub-topics too numerous to list here, but when taken together offer a comprehensive review of Old Testament wealth and poverty laws. For example, under chapter 2 Property Rights, Baker examines the Old Testament laws on theft (Exod 20:15; 22:1-4; Lev 19:11a, 13a; Deut 5:19), coveting (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21), and lost property (Exod 23:4-5; Deut 22:1-4). In chapter 3 Property Responsibilities, he discusses owner liability (Exod 21:28-36; Deut 22:8), negligent damage (Exod 22:5-6), and care of property (Exod 22:7-5). Each sub-section progresses in a uniform manner by first offering the author's own translation of the Old Testament passages, followed by a discussion on the parallel Ancient Near Eastern laws, an examination of the Old Testament law codes and a conclusion. Occasionally Baker's interpretation and discussion of an individual law may hinge on certain translation issues, but the translation of every verse is defended and explained in detailed footnotes. These fresh readings are one of the book's important contributions.

There is little here to criticise, although one may get the overall impression that Baker has moved quickly over some complicated material and is perhaps overly generous when dealing with some of the OT/ANE comparisons. Additionally, a stronger conclusion detailing the most important modern implications of these ancient laws would be welcome. This is not to say that application is ignored, as Baker demonstrates many links between Old Testament law and modern situations within the individual chapters. These references are often insightful, for example, when he notes the connection between ancient laws on weights and measures and the modern problem of monetary inflation. All the pieces are here for readers to build specific applications for many of the problems of poverty and oppression faced by society today.

The author's expertise is apparent as Baker moves seamlessly between the different ANE/OT law codes, the translation issues of the various languages, and enters into discussions with a wide range of OT/ANE scholars. The level of research in the book is deep and obvious, with a large number of footnotes on tangential topics and a 52-page bibliography of up-to-date resources. One of the book's most important strengths is how well written and easy it is to read; and despite the use of Hebrew and technical footnote discussions, it would make an excellent text for advanced undergraduate students as well as ministers looking to make the Old Testament law accessible and applicable to their congregations. Overall, *Tight Fists or Open Hands* is an exceptional resource on the topic of Old Testament wealth and poverty laws that has interesting information woven into every chapter. Baker has opened an oft-neglected section of the Old Testament and offered its timely message to a wide range of readers.

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