

theological-philosophical thinking and exegesis. But I cannot say that I was convinced by his exegesis. Maybe it is not that easy to draw the line from Scripture to Western democracy.

*Asger Chr. Højlund
Aarhus, Denmark*

***The Four Gospels on Sunday: The New Testament
and the Reform of Christian Worship***

Gordon W. Lathrop

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch „Die Vier Evangelien am Sonntag“ umfasst acht Kapitel in zwei Teilen. Es erforscht die Rolle, welche die urchristlichen Gemeinden bei der Bildung der Evangelien gespielt haben und welche Auswirkungen dieser Bezug für die christlichen Gottesdienste heute hat. Gordon Lathrop vertritt die Auffassung, dass, weil die Evangelien im ‚Einklang‘ mit den urchristlichen Versammlungen geschrieben wurden, liturgische Theologen den fortwährenden Einfluss ernst nehmen müssen, den die Evangelien auf Versammlungsrituale und –praktiken ausüben. Lathrop behauptet, dass die Evangelien mehr als eine geschichtliche Rolle spielen, sondern auch als ein stets reformierender Katalysator dienen, der die Gemeinde in die Geheimnisse der lebendigen Gegenwart Christi hinein führt durch Symbole, Metaphern und verbale Bezüge.

SUMMARY

Comprised of eight chapters divided into two parts, *The Four Gospels on Sunday* explores the role ancient Christian assemblies played in the formation of the Gospels and the implications of this relationship for today's Christian assemblies. Gordon Lathrop contends that because the Gospels were written to 'cohere' with Christian assemblies, liturgical theologians must take seriously the Gospels' ongoing role in the gathering's rituals and practices. More than mere history, Lathrop claims the Gospels serve as an ever-reforming catalyst leading the community into the mystery of Christ's living presence through symbol, metaphor and verbal juxtapositions.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage se divise en deux parties et comporte en tout huit chapitres. Il cherche à déterminer quel rôle ont joué les communautés chrétiennes primitives dans l'élaboration des Évangiles et quelles implications on peut en tirer pour les communautés chrétiennes d'aujourd'hui. L'auteur soutient que, puisque les Évangiles ont été rédigés en fonction des communautés chrétiennes, les théologiens de la liturgie doivent considérer avec attention quel rôle les Évangiles continuent à jouer dans le rituel et les pratiques des réunions chrétiennes. L'auteur considère que les Évangiles, plus qu'une simple présentation de l'histoire,

ont pour but de servir de catalyseur d'une réforme permanente des communautés, en conduisant celles-ci dans le mystère de la présence vivante de Christ à l'aide de symboles, de métaphores et de juxtapositions verbales.

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Veteran liturgical theologian Gordon Lathrop's *The Four Gospels on Sunday* takes up the relationship of the Gospels to their ancient Christian assemblies in order to address the place of worship in today's Christian gatherings. Lathrop contends that the Gospels were written specifically for the ancient communities in which they were originally read. Thus, he contends that today's Christian worship must take seriously the Gospels' ongoing roles in shaping rituals and practices. Even more, Lathrop argues the Gospels provide an irreplaceable bridge to worshipping the risen Christ.

The first chapter, 'Beginnings', frames the discussion by exploring the origin of the Gospels in light of the assemblies in which they were read. Drawing on John Dominic Crossan's claim that the Gospels demonstrate a dialectic between the 'Jesus-then' and 'Jesus-now', Lathrop argues that the assembly is the context for both: 'Jesus-then is indeed Jesus-now, in the assembly' (27). Similarly, he draws from F.W. Danker and G.H.R. Horsley's work on the origins of the word 'gospel' to argue that Paul adopted imperial good-news announcements that included both invitations to festivals and the festival sacrifices themselves. Lathrop proposes that Mark took up Paul's (i.e. Danker and Horsley's) understanding of the Gospel and, therefore, also wrote with fledgling Christian communities in mind. Specifically, Lathrop claims that Mark's 'house' motif carried special associations for the house-church assemblies of the first century. In turn, Mark's example inspired the other three Gospel writers; Matthew, Luke, and John all concluded their Gospels with the risen Lord appearing to a gathering.

The second chapter focuses on the relationship between the Gospels and the 'meal meetings' of the early Christian movement. Following the work of Paul Bradshaw, Lathrop posits an irreducible diversity of patterns present in meal practices of ancient Christian assemblies. At the same time, this diversity and unfolding development of practice was carried out alongside the implications for meal-keeping found in the Gospels: Luke's Emmaus story (Lk 24:13-35), Mark's Passover meal (Mk 14:12-20) and (more covertly) Matthew's Wedding Banquet parable (Mt 22:1-14). As Lathrop summarizes, 'The growing similarities in Eucharistic practice, then, would be due not only to the fourth-century imperial interest in a unified church but also and more profoundly to the common orthodox Christian heritage of the reforming word of the apostle and Gospels' (57).

Chapters three, four and five examine the four gospels in detail (Mark and John get their own chapter while Matthew and Luke share a chapter). This section is the

exegetical heart of Lathrop's volume, relating the focus and structure of each Gospel to the Christian assemblies to which they were addressed. The fruit of this research is summarized succinctly at the end of the volume:

Mark wants the communities of Christians to be ready for persecution, (...) Matthew wishes them to have their lamps ready for the return of the Lord. Luke argues for the constant repetition of the meal at Emmaus. And John gives the assemblies resources to resist incipient Gnosticism. (199)

Whereas the previous chapters discussed the roles of the Gospels in ancient Christian assemblies, chapters six, seven and eight transition into a discussion of the Gospels' roles in assemblies today. Lathrop urges that his readers need not unearth 'original' practices; instead, they should assess whether their current practices 'join the witness' of the Gospels (157). This is supported by examples of what such 'Gospel reform' of worship entails for preaching, Eucharist, baptism and (in chapter seven) leadership. Lathrop concludes his book (chapter eight) with a call to a new kind of biblical-theology movement. Rather than romanticism regarding early church practices or a modernist dogmatism regarding the biblical text, the Gospels call assemblies to make the presence of the crucified Christ their 'central mystery' (199).

There is much to appreciate in Lathrop's call for a renewal of liturgical theology via biblical theology. As he acknowledges, liturgical theology can no longer operate under the romantic notion of clearly delineated rituals and practices handed down from the apostles. In light of this, his impulse to appeal to Scripture is welcome. However, Lathrop's structuralist hermeneutic (the word 'juxtapositions' occurring some eighteen times in the volume) raises semantic issues of its own. Additionally, his volume fails to clearly state where the Gospel begins and the assembly ends. Do both find their nexus in an archetypal 'juxtaposition' in the presence of the risen Christ? To the degree the Gospel gives birth to the Church (and not visa versa), a mutual 'coherence' appears to be undermined. These questions notwithstanding, Lathrop's delightfully worded volume has placed the Bible and liturgy in fresh conversation. As such, *The Four Gospels on Sunday* evinces emerging vistas sure to fund future work with in both biblical and liturgical theology.

Robert S. Covolo
Pasadena, California

Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity

Mark S. Kinzer

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\$22.40; ISBN 978-1-60608-883-8

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Sammlung von Aufsätzen des messianisch-jüdischen Autors Kinzer bringt die zentrale These zum Ausdruck, dass messianische Juden sich nicht 'entjudaisieren' sollen. Sie sollen vielmehr als Juden angesehen werden, die im Licht von Jesus, dem Messias, leben. Kinzer vertritt das Argument, das die Loyalität der Kirche als ganze ebenso der jüdischen wie auch der heidnischen Welt gilt. Jesus muss als Jude gesehen werden, anstatt dass er von seinen Wurzeln abgeschnitten wird.

SUMMARY

This collection of essays by the Messianic Jew Kinzer has as its central thesis that Messianic Jews should not un-Jew themselves. They are rather to be defined as Jews who live in the light of Jesus the Messiah. Kinzer argues that the loyalty of the Church as a whole is as much towards the Jews as it is towards the gentile world. Jesus has to be seen as a Jew rather than separated from his roots.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage rassemble une série de textes du Juif messianique Mark Kinzer dont la thèse centrale est que les Juifs messianiques ne devraient pas abandonner leur judaïcité. Ils devraient plutôt se considérer comme des Juifs vivant à la lumière de Jésus le Messie. Kinzer soutient que l'Église dans son ensemble a un devoir de loyauté autant envers les Juifs qu'envers le monde non juif. Jésus doit être vu comme un Juif et non pas être coupé de ses racines.

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Mark S. Kinzer, President emeritus of the Messianic Jewish Theological Institute in Los Angeles (CFA), is one of the leading voices in the post liberal dialogue between Christianity and Judaism in the last decades. This book offers a broad introduction to Kinzer's thinking and presents a compilation of articles and lectures previously stated.

The book needs a short introduction into the issues that are at stake here. Much of western theological reflection is still hampered by implicit (or even explicit) supersessionist perspectives. Accordingly, the proverbial 'parting of the ways' of Jews, Messianic Jews and non-Jewish Christians is easily maintained and fuelled. Only recently the tide has started to turn. Over the past few decades, there has been a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish-Christian relations, including signs of a new, improved Christian attitude towards Jews. Some of the distinguished names involved in the new conversations are Michael Wyschogrod (e.g. *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations* [Grand Rapids, 2004]), Peter Ochs (e.g. *Another Reformation: Postlib-*