

eral Christianity and the Jews [Grand Rapids, 2011]), R. Kendall Soulen (e.g. *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* [Minneapolis, 1996]), David Novak, David Fox Sandmel (e.g. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, David Novak, Peter Ochs, David Fox Sandmel, Michael A. Signer [eds.], *Christianity in Jewish Terms* [Boulder, 2000]), and Mark S. Kinzer.

Symbolic of these fresh negotiations is the Jewish Statement *Dabruemet*, issued by the National Jewish Scholars Project on the 10th of September 2000 and signed by over 220 rabbis and intellectuals from all branches of Judaism. While affirming important theological differences between Christianity and Judaism, the purpose of *Dabruemet* is to point out common ground, and even the very legitimacy of Christianity for non-Jews.

Very perceptive in this field of Jewish-Christian relations are the pioneering books of the Messianic Jew Mark S. Kinzer. In his renowned book *Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (2005), Kinzer reflects on the role of Jews, Israel, Jesus and Christians in biblical texts. Most of the exegesis and interpretation here is to be highly recommended. For example, Kinzer discusses the possibility of the apostle Paul understanding Israel's temporary unbelief in Jesus itself as a paradox (according to Romans 9-11), that is: as participation in Jesus' vicarious suffering. Kinzer also contends that according to the New Testament the Church did not replace Israel but contains at its core a portion of Israel (a remnant), which must truly live as Israel, pure in its observation of traditional Jewish practices, and as such sanctifying Israel as a whole. For this reason Kinzer thinks that Jesus is still present among the Jewish people, albeit 'in a hidden and obscure fashion', because the church is called to live as a bilateral body in close solidarity with Israel (one *ekklesia* consisting of two corporate sub-communities).

Therefore, Messianic Jews should not un-Jew themselves. On the contrary, Messianic Judaism should be defined throughout as Judaism, practised in the light of Jesus the Messiah. This is the main line of thought in Kinzer's present book, which was edited by Jennifer Rosner: *Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity*. It is all about covenant fidelity of Jews and Messianic Jews together, which makes the Church of Jews and gentiles into a body with two orientations. One is its affinity with and loyalty to the Jewish people and their covenant with God; the other is its connection with the gentile world. Messianic Jews have the obligation to emphasize the first orientation, Kinzer asserts, whereas gentile Christians do not have to. Hence, Jesus is for Kinzer the essential link between Judaism and Christianity rather than the distinguishing factor that separates them. The church becomes an extension of Israel, rather than a replacement.

For Kinzer this is true catholicity, if the Church rediscovered its connection with Israel through Jesus, because

the Messiah is Israel's corporate personality, the one-man Israel, the Jew 'par excellence', who reconciles and unites. The cross, too, shows Jesus' fidelity to the covenant of Israel and God, by which the body of Israel was re-opened to Israel, and for the first time really opened to all of the nations.

Kinzer's book is divided into three parts: (I) Vision for Messianic Judaism, (II) Judaism from a Messianic Perspective and (III) Yeshua-Faith from a Jewish Perspective, with altogether seven chapters. In the first chapter Kinzer tells the story of his conversion to Jesus Christ, and his search for bringing this faith and the faith of Israel together. His major discovery was that Jewish people never had to lose their Jewish identity in order to become part of the fellowship of the redeemed. After centuries of mutual suspicion and hostility, Christianity should be described in a new way from a Jewish perspective, resulting into a Jewish theology of Christianity as well as into a Christian theology of Judaism. Exactly this turned out to become the agenda of Kinzer himself.

I warmly recommend *Israel's Messiah and the People of God* and hope that it will critically stimulate discussion and dialogue between the many fractions of the people of God.

Henk Bakker
Ede / Amsterdam

Dementia. Living in the Memories of God

John Swinton

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012; vii + 298pp, £23.75, pb, ISBN 978-0-8028-6716-2

RÉSUMÉ

Que serais-je si j'oubliais totalement qui je suis, en quel Dieu je crois et à qui je rends un culte ? L'auteur affirme que rien ne peut annuler le fait que Dieu nous reconnaît comme des personnes. Il nous invite à une réflexion théologique sur la démence et considère les problèmes complexes que suscite l'expérience de la démence pour la théologie. Sans jamais perdre de vue la foi chrétienne, l'auteur élabore une perspective théologique spécifique en prenant en compte les travaux effectués au sein de disciplines diverses comme la philosophie, la psychiatrie, la neurologie et la psychologie.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Welch ein Mensch wäre ich, wenn ich überhaupt nicht mehr wüsste, wer ich bin und an welchen Gott ich glaube und wen ich anbe? Der Autor ist der Ansicht, dass nichts das Erkennen und Anerkennen, das von Gott herkommt, zerstören kann. Dieses Buch ermutigt uns, theologisch über die Erfahrung der Demenz zu reflektieren, und ringt mit komplizierten Sachverhalten, die auftauchen, wenn wir die theologische Dynamik der Erfahrung von Demenz ins Auge fassen. Während dieses Buch nicht den christlichen Glauben aus dem Blick verliert, entwickelt es eine

ausgesprochen theologische Perspektive, die sich mit einer breitgefächerten Vielfalt von Disziplinen in den Bereichen von Philosophie, Psychiatrie, Neurologie und Psychologie befasst.

SUMMARY

What would I be like if I became completely forgetful about who I am and which God I believe and worship? The author suggests that nothing can destroy divine recognition. This book encourages us to reflect theologically on the experience of dementia and wrestles with the complicated issues that emerge as we consider the theological dynamics of the experience of dementia. While this book is not losing sight of Christian faith, it develops a specifically theological perspective engaging with a wide range of disciplines in the fields of philosophy, psychiatry, neurology and psychology.

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In *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*, John Swinton, a professor in Aberdeen, gives an insightful practical theological perspective and challenges our view of dementia. He addresses the deeply seated assumption that dementia is a neurobiological disease that determines forms of care. If we look at the experiences of people with dementia and their families, there are important dimensions that are different from the standard medical description of dementia which so far have been overlooked: the relational and social dimensions. The author refuses to accept that dementia is defined only in the medical paradigm and argues that dementia is as much relational and social as it is neurobiological. Furthermore, he particularly challenges pastoral and practical theologians to rethink dementia and urges us to go beyond what we see of dementia from the perspective of a Christian counter-story that recognises the contingent nature of being a human and God's providence.

Although Swinton is not entirely against psychiatry and neurobiology per se as he attempts to re-describe what dementia is, he is critical of pastoral theologians and ministers who 'naturally' adopt the neurobiological explanation of dementia as the starting point for their theological reflection. Rather, the experience of severe forgetfulness might be told from a radically different counter-story emerging from the big story of God and the living experience of dementia. This would be like entering into a strange and new world of the Bible for those living with deep forgetfulness. This understanding of people with dementia and their families can be held within both the medical and theological descriptions of dementia, and it offers hope for those who suffer from it.

The author's argument is centred on the concept of personhood that is assumed in the current person-centred approaches, which make people with dementia non-persons. He argues that this concept actually shapes the way in which we respond to offer care. While he acknowledges the significance of person-centred models

like Tom Kitwood's relational model of care and Steven Shabbat's recognition of the self in understanding dementia, according to Swinton, they omit the transcendent dimension from their approaches. Precisely at this point, he is convinced that re-considering dementia from a theological context (using the doctrines of creation and the Trinity) could make a difference. A new understanding of personhood might overcome the shortcomings in the cognitive-functional and the horizontal-relational understandings of persons. People with dementia should be understood in the context of their humanness; his thesis is that God's memory ensures divine action which holds our creaturely identity within his memory. We are dependent, contingent, embodied, deeply lost, yet profoundly loved and purposeful human beings held in the memory of God. Even if we forget whom we think we are and if others merely remember our past, it is God's memory that holds our true identity. Nothing will be forgotten by God unless he chooses to forget.

Regarding the implications for Christian practice, the author reminds us that the church is called to become a community of the memory of God and to remain faithful to the memory of those who have forgotten whose they are. Even if people with dementia do not remember their past, the communal and faithful action of the church holds them and remembers them by valuing their dignity in the present, for God is in the present moment. The church is also called to create a hospitable place of belonging where people with dementia and their families can find support and express their affliction and lament as well as their joys and possibilities.

The theological framework laid out in this book makes the attempt to re-describe dementia compelling. At the same time it explores a unique way of offering care for dementia sufferers in the Christian practice. The book challenges the discipline of practical theology in terms of its unique methodological position. It is very useful for pastoral workers, health professionals and family carers who are involved with people with dementia. It may help us all to re-consider how we make a difference in offering hospitable care to people with dementia and their families in an alternative way.

Priscilla Oh
Aberdeen, Scotland