BOOK REVIEWS


The issue of church polity is perhaps one of the most divisive issues in local churches in America. Churches have split over the issue of “elder rule” versus some form of congregational rule. Churches in episcopal systems have seen their congregations locked out of church facilities by denominational leaders who did not like the actions of a particular local congregation. In presbyterian systems, local congregations have had local church-discipline decisions with biblical warrant reversed by synod and general assembly courts.

Congregations and their leaders wonder what is the “biblical” form of church government, how should they be organized, and how should decisions be made. This is a foundational issue for a local church that seeks to conduct its affairs in a manner that pleases God.

Historically, several forms of church polity have developed, and many variations and nuances exist within those forms. A local church struggling with its own organization or a new assembly wondering how to “get off on the right foot” is often left with a “blithering array of competing models, all of which lay claim to biblical authenticity” (22) and are defended by respected evangelical leaders, pastors, and theologians. One work that escapes the “blithering” category is this “five-view” work. Five options of polity are presented clearly, forthrightly, and in a generally irenic manner. Five respected evangelical leaders present their case for local church polity. They and the positions they affirm are as follows:

- Robert L. Reymond, Professor of Theology at Knox Theological Seminary, defends the “Presbytery-Led Church: Presbyterian Church Government,” 87-156).
- James Leo Garrett, Jr., Professor of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, defends the “Congregation-Led Church: Congregational Polity,” 157-208).
- Paul F. M. Zahl, Dean and President of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, defends “The Bishop-Led Church: The Episcopal or Anglican Polity Affirmed, Weighed, and Defended” (209-54).
James R. White, Director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, defends the “Plural Elder-Led Church: Sufficient as Established—The Plurality of Elders as Christ’s Ordained Means of Church Governance” (255-96).

As normal in such a view book, responses by the other contributors appear at the end of each major presentation. The work includes useful indexes (name, subject, and Scripture) and a clear introductory chapter by the editors dealing with key issues and a brief survey of the history of church polity.

The contributors uniformly present clear definitions, biblical defenses, and generally offer detailed research. The publisher opted to use endnotes instead of footnotes, which often interrupts important points that the contributors were making. Each author supports his position from Scripture and with a wide array of material. For instance, Garrett has 318 notations which cover 19 pages of material.

Akin’s contribution is superior to the others. He is current in his scholarship, and while though making an affirmative case for his position, still acknowledging room for flexibility (73). Reymond details Presbyterianism and defends it, in large part, as a means of maintaining church and ministry “balance.” He states, “[I]t provides the most trustworthy, just, and peaceful way for the church to determine its principles, its practices, and its priorities and to resolve its differences” (135). Reymond’s point that a congregational model has “too many ministers and too many churches that are accountable to no one” (ibid.) is well stated; however, he weakens his position considerably by attributing the tragedy of Jonestown and the scandals of Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart and Jesse Jackson directly to a congregational model (136). In doing this, he likewise fails to note that Presbyterianism, as a system, was not able to deal with the liberalism that eventually led to the reorganization of Princeton Seminary in 1929 and the wholesale departure from orthodoxy of several Presbyterian denominations.

Thoroughly noted and detailed, the article by Garrett is more of a laundry list of quotations and people who have supported some form of congregationalism. His criticism of “mega-churches,” the ministry of John MacArthur, and Dallas Theological Seminary, as part of the “crisis” or “major erosion or overt rejection of congregational polity” (190) is a tired old canard. However, his point that individual members need to be more active in the affairs and ministries of their churches (192) is worthwhile.

In presenting the Episcopal model, Zahl centers on the Anglican Church, which is not a major force in American evangelicalism. His presentation is clear and perhaps one of the best affirmative presentations of that system this reviewer has encountered. However, it would have been helpful had he expanded his horizons to include the Methodist, Lutheran, and perhaps even the Roman Catholic schemas.

The final presentation by James White on the plurality of elders is perhaps the most disappointing in terms of presentation. His argument is often pedantic and has an air of “my way or the highway” to it. He utilizes Sola Scriptura in such a manner that he makes it clear that a rejection of his position on polity is a de facto moving away from or rejection of the Sola as well. His notations are weak (he uses only 11 footnotes), and he offers little affirmative support. In fact, his is the only article that fails to cite or quote any supporting source outside Scripture.

Other points of disagreement and issues could be mentioned, but for the most part, the individual authors dispatch these in their responses to one another. A
couple of issues deserve mention, however. In assessing the Congregational model, Akin appears to correct Garrett’s assertion that John MacArthur is Presbyterian (196), but points to a reference that he identifies as “Note 99,” which has no bearing on that point. In fact, in the section discussing MacArthur (whose ministry Garrett views as a major reason Baptist churches have moved toward “elder rule,” [191]), Garrett makes no claim that MacArthur is a Presbyterian.

This book, though covering a large swath of evangelical church polity, is not complete. It has no discussion of a minimalist polity such as in Plymouth Brethren assemblies, and as already mentioned, no discussion of the non-Anglican systems that practice the Episcopal model. Further, it has no discussion of inherent weaknesses in each system and how, on a practical level, those are overcome. Also, it has no discussion of how one might practically implement one system or the other if starting from scratch, how one might move a congregation from one model to another, or under what circumstances such a change might be a good or bad idea.

This is an important work and a valuable contribution to the literature of polity and is recommended highly. That being said, this reviewer agrees with the great Anglican expositor and theologian, Bishop J. C. Ryle, who stated, “There is not a text in the Bible which expressly commands churches to have one special form of government, and expressly forbids any other” (Ryle, Knots Untied [reprint; Moscow, Idaho: Charles Nolan, 2000] 234). The diversity of polity within local churches that God has chosen to bless in history make it clear that outside biblical commands that everything should be done “properly and in an orderly fashion” (1 Cor 14:40), that godly men be given the task of local church leadership (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9), and that those leaders must dispatch their duties with humility before God (1 Pet 5:2-3), the structures of church polity may vary to meet the needs of a local assembly.


Paul and the Jews continues Andrew Das’ critique of and alternative to the “new perspective” on Paul, begun in his Paul, the Law, and the Covenant. The former volume focused on Paul’s view of the Mosaic Law and its relation to Israel’s covenant. The “new perspective,” while of heuristic value for Pauline scholarship, misconstrued Paul’s polemic against the Law as focused one-sidedly on the ethnic particularities of torah observance. This second volume addresses Israel’s continuing role in God’s purposes according to the apostle from Das’ “newer perspective.”

Das treats Paul’s discussion of the Jews and the Law in Galatians in his second chapter. He cogently argues that Paul addressed Gentile Christians (“you”) who were being influenced by Jewish Christians (“they”) to be circumcised and follow the whole of the Mosaic Law. Paul’s apocalyptic worldview informs his conclusion that the arrival of Christ and the Spirit has brought the era of the Law to a close. Das suggests the intriguing thesis that Paul distinguished two Abrahamic covenants in Galatians 4—one connected with the Law and one with the Spirit. Far
more probable, in this reviewer’s estimation, the two covenants in Galatians 4 are the new covenant and the Mosaic covenant. Paul identified Isaac (= Christians) born by the Spirit (under the new covenant) as the true heir of Abraham rather than Ishmael (= Jews) born of the flesh (under the Law).

Chapters four and five address Israel’s role in God’s plan, focusing particularly on Romans 9–11. He connects Paul’s notion of election closely with God’s choice of Israel. In chapter four, three solutions to the question of Israel’s place in God’s purpose are proposed and rejected. Das masterfully dismantles Krister Stendahl’s thesis that two covenants are in view—one saves Jews and the other Gentiles. Likewise rejected are the solutions that “Israel” in Romans 11 is the elect of all ages or the Jewish remnant of all ages. Chapter five comprises Das’ own solution. Eschatological salvation is never apart from Christ (contra Stendahl), nor is it apart from Israel’s mediation (contra replacement theology): “God’s eschatological plan revolves entirely around Israel” (110). Gentiles are blessed with Israel and are united with Israel without the categories of Jew and Gentile losing significance.

Das’ book, *Paul and the Jews*, interacts with materials in which the “new perspective” is argued, but arrives at a different conclusion. “New perspective” interpreters will need to interact with Das’ proposed construction of Pauline theology; “old perspective” interpreters will need to examine whether Das’ thesis has elements they can embrace. Despite the recent proliferation of works on Paul’s view of the Law and Israel, Das’ contribution will remain substantial and noteworthy for some years.

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After only seven years of the volume’s use, Walter Elwell and Robert Yarbrough have updated their basic-level undergraduate NT survey, *Encountering the New Testament* [see TMSJ 10 (1999):291-93]. The authors state that in this second edition of their text, they have sought “to correct vague wording, update bibliography, rewrite outdated sections, and add material where the previous edition was culpably brief” (11). However, no thoroughgoing revamping has occurred because the earlier work seems to have been generally effective in classroom use. Therefore, the second edition follows the same pattern as the previous work.

The text continues with the same divisions as the first edition. After an introductory chapter on “Why Study the New Testament?” (19-35) come four parts: “Encountering Jesus and the Gospels” (37-190), “Encountering Acts and the Earliest Church” (191-250), “Encountering Paul and His Epistles” (251-344), and “Encountering the General Epistles and the Apocalypse” (345-85). An epilogue concludes the main text, and is now entitled “Matters to Ponder” (387-94). An extremely valuable glossary of key terms in NT study is still included (395-406). The main content of each chapter is again supplemented by sidebars that contain primary sources, quotes, and contemporary concerns, and focus boxes that present
practical application of the chapter’s material. For those who have a marked copy of the first edition and/or use it in teaching, an added benefit of this second edition is that it follows with only slight alterations in the pagination of the original edition.

In keeping with the authors’ purpose, the second edition has only a few variations. The majority of the added material in the main text is found in the following new sections: “So Many Translations” (30), critical issues in each chapter concerning a Gospel (84, 95-96, 105, 114-15), “Themes in Acts” (211), and “General Epistle Summary” (373). A new sidebar, “Corruption in the Church” (230), is a further addition. A great amount of the rewriting is found in the focus boxes; twelve of the twenty-five have been changed in the second edition (30, 84, 132, 187, 203, 219, 246, 269, 322, 340, 370, 393). The bibliographies have also been updated and a few new footnotes have been added to reflect works not available in 1998 when the first edition appeared. In the main text, the authors now recommend P. Stuhlmancher’s Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine of Justification as a response to the “new perspective” on Paul instead of T. Schreiner’s The Law and Its Fulfillment (261), although Schreiner’s work is still recommended in the bibliography for further reading on Paul (271). The visual content has not been significantly revised. The chapter summaries and review questions remain unchanged from the original work.

Because this second edition is basically the same as the original, the judgments passed on the original review remain. The textbook continues to be pedagogically sound, visually oriented, with a good introduction to the historical background of the NT and a satisfactory discussion of the purpose, structure, and major themes of each NT book. However, three weaknesses are still present. First, the authors view the church in continuity with the OT people of God; for them, the church is the new Israel (21, 203, 266). Second, the book is weak in warning the beginning student concerning the dangers associated with critical methods used in NT study. Third, the presentation is a little on the “lite” side when compared to the NT surveys of Gundry [see TMSJ 15 (2004):120-21], Lea and Black [see TMSJ 15 (2004):123], and Tenney. But it seems that this second edition of Encountering the New Testament will continue to find a prominent place in the undergraduate study of the NT, so teachers and pastors must be aware of its content and impact.

Graeme Goldsworthy. According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002. 251 pp. $22.00 (paper). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition.

The majority of American evangelicals were first introduced to Graeme Goldsworthy, former lecturer in Old Testament, biblical theology, and hermeneutics at Moore Theological College, Sydney, Australia, through his book, Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture (Eerdmans, 2000). The volume had a great impact, including being named book of the year for 2000 by Preaching magazine. In the words of its author, the book aimed “to provide a handbook for preachers that will help them apply a consistently Christ-centered approach to their sermons” (ix). Goldsworthy bemoaned the fact that very little was said about biblical theology in
books on expository preaching. For him, biblical theology was one implication of the evangelical view of the Bible, and he believed that seeing the big picture of Scripture was necessary for effective biblical preaching. He wrote, “To the evangelical preacher, then, I would address one simple but pointed question, . . . How does this passage of Scripture, and consequently my sermon, testify to Christ?” (29). The answer was for the preacher to know salvation history as the context for the biblical text at hand. The context of salvation history is found through the study of biblical theology. The latter half of the book gave the practical application of biblical theology to preaching (133-256). However, the foundation of effective expository preaching was not only the preacher’s knowledge of biblical theology, but also his hearers’ understanding of the same. Thus, Goldsworthy encouraged expositors to train their congregants in biblical theology as he had done, using a course of study that had subsequently been published in 1991 in Australia and Great Britain as the book, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (132). Because of the impact of *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* among American evangelicals, the earlier work, *According to Plan*, has been published for the American market.

Goldsworthy introduces *According to Plan* as “a biblical theology for ordinary Christians” (7). The work is a beginner’s guide, and the author has kept the terminology simple, with many charts, summaries at the beginning of each chapter, and study guide questions at the conclusion of each chapter. The book divides into four parts. Part One asks why Christians should be concerned with biblical theology (15-25). The writer introduces some of the practical situations and problems in understanding and applying the Bible that are answered by relating them to the one message of the Scripture which is the concern of biblical theology. Part Two is a discussion of how biblical theology is done (27-78). The author shows how God has made Himself known through Christ and Scripture. The proper presuppositions (see list on 45) and methods of interpretation one uses in approaching the Bible as God’s revelation are special concerns addressed in these pages. Part Three is the heart of the book where the what, the content, of biblical theology is described (79-234). Here, Goldsworthy spells out what for him is the major theme of the Bible, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the other significant themes associated with it. These themes are developed progressively as they are in Scripture from creation to the consummation in the eternal state. Part Four is a short introduction to where the content and method of biblical theology can be applied (235-44). The subjects of knowing God’s will and life after death are used as examples of how study of the Bible can be enhanced once the big picture of Scripture has been grasped. The book concludes with a subject index (345-46) and a Scripture index (247-51).

Goldsworthy’s presentation has a number of noteworthy features. First, the importance of and presentation to the ordinary Christian of basic biblical truth must be emphasized. The volume is a model of how to educate the beginner in good theology in a simple way without ‘dumbing down’ the content. Second, the writer’s commitment to the authority of Scripture and the reader’s need to receive it by faith as God’s Word are well stated. Third, the centrality of the gospel to proper biblical understanding and a firm statement of the subject matter of the gospel can be affirmed as foundational for the Christian. Fourth, the reminder of the Christo-centric nature of the scriptural revelation is helpful. Finally, the challenge of
isolating the major themes and their development throughout the Bible is a needed emphasis. The author’s simple, yet profound, statement of his understanding of the content of biblical theology will be helpful to all Christian believers, even those who may disagree with him at points.

Nevertheless, some statements made by Goldsworthy need to be questioned. First, as to the basic method employed in biblical study, the writer states, “In doing biblical theology as Christians, we do not start at Genesis 1 and work our way forward until we discover where it is all leading. Rather we first come to Christ, and he directs us to study the Old Testament in the light of the gospel” (55). The grid of biblical understanding, for this author, is developed from the NT and the OT is then read through this grid. Second, a result of this type of reading of the OT is a denial of literalism in the interpretation of OT prophecies (67-69). This is affirmed because Jesus and the NT writers understood the OT prophecies through the principle of “typology.” Although such terms as land, exodus, and temple have specific correspondence to literal realities in the OT, they are seen in the NT as fulfilled in Jesus Christ, not literally, but typically. In the words of the author, “Literalism involves the very serious error of not listening to what the New Testament says about fulfillment. It assumes that the fulfillment must correspond exactly to the form of the promise” (67). In contrast to Goldsworthy, the present reviewer would affirm that biblical theology should proceed from Genesis 1 and OT prophecies should be understood literally. The resulting content of biblical theology will be premillennial in orientation instead of the amillennial approach that Goldsworthy states. Much in the areas of God’s authority, man’s rebellion, God’s redemption of believing sinners, and the blessings of union with Christ is profitable. Yet along with the agreement, the fundamental difference as to the present spiritual inauguration of kingdom and its consummation in the new Jerusalem being the totality of biblical fulfillment of OT prophecies is inevitable.

Along with Goldsworthy, the affirmation that both expositors and hearers should have a big-picture understanding of the Bible can be made. However, for this reviewer, The Greatness of the Kingdom by Alva J. McClain, which begins at Genesis 1 and works forward and takes the OT prophecies literally, is a better starting point for both expositors and congregants than According to Plan.


In the ever-changing theological landscape, new terms are appearing (and disappearing) at a faster rate than at any time in history. At the same time even terms that seem to be established in the evangelical mind are being altered, either by wholesale or by slight nuance. It is important that the pastor’s library have solid reference works to help him understand accurately the meaning of theological terms. In Essential Theological Terms, the author, a long time professor and prolific writer in church history, has undertaken to provide definitional clarity to
about 300 theological terms and phrases. He acknowledges that “theological language evolves” (xi) and understands that this work will eventually become dated, but hopes that the book will provide “the essential theological vocabulary necessary for a budding theologian to be in dialogue with the theology of centuries past” (xii). In this task the author has largely succeeded.

The work is laid out in a normal dictionary format with a listing of article titles and page numbers in the front. However, it includes no other indexes, which would have been of help to the reader. The articles are generally detailed (some nearly a full page in length) and reflect the author’s refreshingly clear writing style. The strength of the work is the underlying expertise of the author in historical theology. That the same publisher produced the Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms (by Donald K. McKim) only a few years ago is interesting. That work and this one deal with the same type of material (the cover motif for both is similar), and this reviewer could find no entries by Gonzalez that were not also in the earlier work. The articles in this work are often more detailed than McKim, but it has about 200 fewer entries.

Gonzalez is neither conservative in his theology nor seemingly friendly to evangelical theology. His entry on “Fundamentalism” (66), though giving the basics of its origination, makes a link between Christian fundamentalism and Islamic fundamentalism, an egregious misrepresentation of Christian or biblical fundamentalism. The idea that all “fundamentalisms” are “bad” has even become popular with some evangelical leaders. Another entry on “Dispensationalism” is equally misguided. Gonzalez states, “[M]ost biblical scholars dismiss dispensationalism as uninformed and as a misguided interpretation of Scripture” (46). He then goes on to state that dispensationalism does enjoy “adherents among the masses” and uses the popularity of the Left Behind novels to support his assertion about a lack of credibility in dispensational theology.

However, despite obvious lacks, the author gives some definitional clarity to a good number of terms that have arisen in a few decades, as well as those for standard terms and movements. The entries, however, lack any bibliographic notations, a disadvantage for the reader desiring to do more research.

Though the author has produced a worthwhile book that provides a useful reference for students or busy pastors, the intermediate size of the articles is somewhat unsatisfying. It has neither the breadth of terms that the “ready reference” style of the work of McKim affords, nor does it have the depth of information that, for instance, the far superior Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Baker, 2d ed., 2001) offers. The high price of this book is also somewhat unappealing given its relative brevity.

Although slightly different in focus and scope, the second book of this review, the Kregel Dictionary of the Bible and Theology, is a superior investment.

Holloman, longtime professor of systematic theology at the Talbot School of Theology has produced an excellent dictionary of “over 500 key theological words and concepts” (subtitle) that is unique in the recent reference literature. The articles are generally quite detailed with several being over two pages in length. Many but not all have an introductory bibliography. The beginning of the work has a set of abbreviations, which is more important than normal as the author acknowledges that they are not the “designations normal to biblical scholarship” (5). The
articles themselves have the useful feature of offering the biblical terms in separate sections at the end of the articles. The Hebrew and Greek words are given along with transliterations and the word meanings are detailed. All the articles have extensive biblical references.

One might question the title of the book in relation to the content. Though called a *Dictionary of the Bible and Theology*, it is probably more accurately a dictionary of “Biblical Theology.” It has no articles on traditional theological terms such as “Calvinism,” rather the entry points are the biblical terms (e.g., “Election,” “Justification,” and “Predestination”) related to those positions. Little attention is given to historical development of the terms, and allusions to historical theology are often simply illustrative (e.g., “Deism,” 178). This is not to say the work ignores current issues in theology; however, they are developed from within the framework of the biblical terminology (e.g., the issues related to “Open Theism” are developed within the article on “God” [171-78]; the issues related the Christological controversies are examined within the article on “Incarnation” [230-34]; the classic definition of “creationism” as it relates to the origin of the soul occur within the article on “Soul, Spirit” [509-13, one of this work’s excellent articles]; issues related to the creation of the earth and universes is dealt with under “Creation” [88-93]).

Publishers’ space limitations are understandable, but this book would have been greatly enhanced with a subject index, and in light of the massive amount of biblical references contained in the articles, a Scripture index would have been of inestimable value.

Within the articles, Holloman is thoroughly even-handed in presenting the differing interpretations (e.g., millennial and rapture views, classic vs. progressive dispensationalism) and practices (e.g., baptism and communion). The articles are clear and engaging, and have a generous use of “see also” references to point the reader to additional information.

This is one of the best reference works of its kind to be produced in many years. It is a thoroughly refreshing biblical exposition of theological concepts that reflects the author’s breadth and depth of study. It deserves a place at the right hand of every pastor and student of the Bible as a significant and major contribution to the reference literature for biblical studies. It cannot be recommended highly enough.

Wayne Grudem. *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth*. Sisters, Ore: Multnomah, 2004. 858 pp. $29.00 (paper). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Senior Vice-President and Dean, Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Theology.


*EFBT* represents over a decade of Dr. Grudem’s updated research and ongoing dialogue with those who take issue over the “complementarian” understand-
ing of male/female roles in the home and church. An extensive bibliography (books and articles), eight appendixes (especially studies of kefálah and auqénteww), and three indexes (Scripture, name, and subject) make this volume exceptional in its usability and value. Though the contents reflect Grudem’s commendable scholarly research and clear thinking, he also presents the material in an extraordinarily well-organized format and highly readable prose.

The heart of the volume resides in chapters 3-12, which thoroughly answer 118 arguments that evangelical feminists have rendered over the years in denial of “complementarianism” and in favor of “egalitarianism.” Grudem proves masterful in his refutation of the arguments. Yet, he maintains an unusually irenic and charitable spirit in so doing, for which he is to be commended in light of the volatility associated with many materials written on this topic. Grudem unquestionably deserves to be categorized as “comprehensive and fair.”

Chapters 1-2 contain a positive view of men and women in their similarities and differences as created by God. The biblical truths of equality in value (both male and female created in the image of God) and variety in home and church roles (as revealed by the Creator in Scripture) receive a balanced treatment. Chapters 13-14 question evangelical feminists’ real allegiance to the full authority of Scripture and project the unorthodox results if they do not.

EFBT should be read by anyone who wants to understand both Scripture and the current debate on this theme. I highly recommend this new volume by Dr. Grudem as the appropriate follow-up to and extension of the discussion in the earlier volume, Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.


As the author remarks in the introduction to this series of charts, “The value of history has fallen on difficult times in contemporary culture. Postmoderns have demonstrated a tendency to disregard the past as a useless and even debilitating relic, something akin to unwanted dreams and painful experiences” (11). This book is dedicated to helping correct this regrettable situation, even in evangelical churches.

The author is department chairman and distinguished professor of historical theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. The book is actually book three in a three-part series on church history—the previous two dealing with ancient and medieval church history, and the Reformation and Enlightenment church history.

This series of charts is divided into three sections: The National Period of American Church History; The Modern Period of American Church History; and The Postmodern Period of Church History. There are a total of 133 charts, diagrams, maps, and explanatory captions. The book includes, for example, such charts as “Developments Within Nineteenth-Century American Theology”; “The Birth of Modern Missions Movement”; “The Theology of Jehovah’s Witnesses”; “The History of American Evangelicalism”; “Liberal Theology and Evangelical Theology: A Comparison”; “The History of the Charismatic Movements in
America”; “The Church Growth Movement”; and “Postmodernism and Authority.”

Included with the book is a CD-ROM PowerPoint presentation that makes the charts all the more valuable. The teacher is thus enabled to use the book to see the charts at an easy glance, and then choose the particular charts that will help his PowerPoint presentation.

The book is highly recommended as an excellent way to help teachers in Sunday School classes, Bible institutes, colleges, and seminaries communicate more precisely the facts and insights of church history.


Canonicity is the primary focus of the essays in *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture*. Hengel originally presented his essays to an ecumenical group of Protestant and Catholic theologians working on the interconfessional differences with regard to the development of the OT canon. Scholars identify the two developing Old Testaments as the Palestinian (following the Masoretic tradition) and the Alexandrian. Protestant churches adhere to the former while the Roman Catholic Church has followed the latter with its inclusion of apocryphal or deuterocanonical books. Hanhart believes that the Palestinian canon had already been established before being translated into Greek (4-5). He observes that the early Christian community was concerned about the canonicity of LXX portions that were in disagreement with or absent in the Hebrew original (6, 10). Both the Christian and the Jewish communities diverge in their treatment of the Tetragrammaton (אֱלֹהִים) in their respective LXX manuscripts. Jewish LXX manuscripts transmit the Tetragrammaton itself rather than the Greek translation κυρίον followed in LXX manuscripts of Christian origin (7). Hanhart concludes that the Jewish employment of "אֱלֹהִים for the Tetragrammaton preceded the Christian adoption of κυρίον” (8).

Both Hanhart and Hengel agree that the Christian community defended differences between the Greek and Hebrew texts by claiming divine inspiration for the Greek translation (11, 52-53). Though Hanhart appears to assume the existence of a full Palestinian canon of the OT in the pre-LXX community, Hengel argues that some of the books attributed to the Palestinian canon only became part of it
following the Alexandrian canon’s development. Hengel first examines the *Letter of Aristeas* and the accretion of legends around the translation of the LXX (25-41). Next, he establishes the existence of a Christian LXX (41-56). One of the pieces of evidence that he presents for a distinction between Jewish and Christian LXXs is use of the codex for Christian documents as compared to the scroll for Jewish (41).

Hengel’s second major essay (“The Later Consolidation of the Christian ‘Septuagint Canon,’” 57-74) examines the absence of a fixed order of the canonical books of the OT. He argues that the debate over the apocrypha in the Reformation occurred because the dispute had not been resolved in the early church (66). Disputed books included Esther, Canticles, Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes), and Daniel. Unfortunately, Hengel himself raises questions about these books. In his opinion, Canticles is probably a “profane love poem” (92), Qoheleth is “semi-cloaked under a pseudonym” (93), and Daniel was written around 165 B.C. (95; obviously, after the fulfillment of its prophecies in chap. 11). For this reason, the evangelical reader will find Hengel’s seemingly cavalier treatment of Scripture frustrating and disappointing.

Next, Hengel examines the origin and development of the Jewish LXX (75-103). He observes that LXX texts at Qumran demonstrate the existence of a Jewish LXX, since the Essenes were characteristically antagonistic to all influences from Hellenistic culture (82). For this reviewer, one of Hengel’s most fascinating suggestions is that the apostle Paul may have produced his own Greek translation of the OT for some of his citations from Isaiah, Job, and 1 Kings (83, 89).

The final essay deals with the origin of the Christian LXX and its additions (105-27). In it he reveals that he accepts a late date around A.D. 130 for Peter’s second epistle in the NT (108). He also concludes that the “question of why the Old Testament attained in the church precisely the form present—still not completely uniformly—in the great codices of the fourth and fifth centuries is essentially insoluble” (112). As to how the canon for the Christian LXX’s books was finalized for the Christian church, Hengel hypothesizes that the cause was probably the existence of a community archive or library in Rome with connections to Alexandria (122-23). In his final paragraphs he goads the reader by questioning the consistency of closing the OT canon at all, if the biblical canon must remain open for the NT (125-26).


Kent and Barbara Hughes have effectively served the congregation of College Church in Wheaton, Illinois for a number of years. As the parents of four children and the grandparents of nineteen, they draw from a wealth of experience as well as from a lifetime dedicated to the study of God’s Word. This volume originally appeared with the title, *Common Sense Parenting*, and was published by Tyndale House Publishers in 1996. Crossway’s release of this revised edition offers readers a number of simple, practical ideas about how to rear a godly family and
have fun in the process.

The chapters are categorized under three headings: Building a Family (establishing a heritage, promoting family affection, starting family traditions), Spirituality (cultivating the soul, praying with dedication, pursuing family ministry, instilling healthy self-regard [not self-esteem]), and Everyday Living (using appropriate discipline, teaching good manners, fostering life-long enrichments). Each chapter ends with application questions. Almost 90 pages are devoted to an extensive appendix that covers a host of practical issues like aids to Christian education for use in the family, resources for celebrating Advent, and instructions on conducting a Christian Passover. Among other topics, it provides suggestions for making a prayer notebook, offers common-sense tips regarding discipline, suggested reading lists for children, ideas for assembling a home movie library, selected Hughes family recipes, and answers to common questions.

As with any practical book, not all suggestions offered by the Hugheses will fit a given family’s approach to parenting. Regardless, as a parent of eight children, this reviewer found encouragement in the Hughes’ commitment to rearing a godly family and doing it with a joyful heart. For parents who labor under a heavy load of ministry and/or employment, a warm exhortation to devote themselves to this God-given task, as well as the provision of a number of enlightening suggestions, makes this book a potential blessing. For those in the ministry, devotion to the accurate and relevant preaching of God’s Word cannot replace consistent parental involvement in the lives of their children. As the Hughes point out, “the truth is, a pound of parent is worth a hundred pounds of preaching” (62).


Carter Lindberg’s The Pietist Theologians stands as the next volume in Blackwell’s series surveying the major theologians of the Christian church. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are the focus of the current volume. Sixteen chapters by as many authors introduce the reader to the lives and thoughts of selected “pietist theologians” of those centuries.

But who are these “pietist theologians”? Therein lies the book’s fundamental ambivalence. Are these the significant theologians of Pietism? Some certainly are (Spener, Francke, Arnold, Zinzendorf, Bengel). Is there a concrete historical movement that can be labeled “Pietism”? In the introduction, Lindberg notes the lack of scholarly consensus on this question. Are these representative theologians of an era that can appropriately be labeled “pietist”? If so, the omission of some significant theologians (Amyraut, Grotius, Quenstedt)—even some theologians with notable contributions to individual spirituality (Edwards, Law, Owen)—is inexplicable. The inclusion of others (Gerhardt, Guyon) who can only remotely be called “theologians” is also puzzling.

Despite this ambivalence, the book contains a wealth of information and
insight into the variety and connection of theological thought during this era. Wallmann’s chapter delightfully details the significant influence of Johann Arndt’s *True Christianity* on European and American Lutheranism. Lovelace points out the ongoing correspondence that took place in the early eighteenth century between the American Puritan Cotton Mather and the German Pietist August Francke. Durnbaugh cites the influence of the quixotic Jane Leade on the Anglican William Law, continental Theosophists, and Count Zinzendorf. Jung describes Johanna Petersen as a millenarian advocating a future, Jewish-centered millennium more than a century before John Darby’s nascent dispensationalism. Overall, Lindberg’s *The Pietist Theologians* fills in significant gaps in understanding the theology of the period.


McConville is a British scholar who has distinguished himself in Deuteronomy studies. This volume is one of the first two offerings in the new Apollos Old Testament Commentary. The series “takes its name from the Alexandrian Jewish Christian who was able to impart his great learning fervently and powerfully through his teaching (Acts 18:24-25)” (9). The series hopes to work with one foot firmly planted in the universe of the original text as well as communicate the meaning and practical application of Deuteronomy to a modern audience.

In his introduction to the book, McConville proposes that the book consists largely of Moses’ speeches (19), which are surrounded by 3rd person narration. He suggests that in the context of the ancient world, Deuteronomy should be seen “as a radical blueprint for the life of a people, at the same time spiritual and political, and running counter to every other social-political-religious programme” (21). Though McConville critiques the critical consensus about the composition of Deuteronomy, he clearly affirms that his commentary “does not defend Mosaic authorship” (39). On the one hand, he does not discount the evidence cited by numerous conservative evangelical scholars that points to a 2nd millennium background for Deuteronomy. On the other hand, he affirms that this kind of evidence “broadly supports the relatively early date that I advocate” (40). The frustrating part is that McConville has chosen “not to try to date the book exactly” (40) and offers no precise idea what “relatively early date” he refers to.

The commentary on Deuteronomy proceeds section by section through the book. Although McConville provides no over-arching outline of the book (which is a weakness), one can identify the major pericopes he identifies. Each pericope receives treatment under five headings. After McConville’s own translation of the text, he provides a section dealing with textual issues (“Notes on the Text”), sometimes relating to text criticism and others to morphology, syntax, or word meanings. After he deals with “Form and Structure” issues, he devotes the most pages on that pericope to his “Comment” section, generally arranged by smaller verse units. He concludes his treatment of a pericope with an “Explanation” section.
in which he summarizes the message of the verses discussed.

The volume concludes with a thorough bibliography (30 pages, single spaced) that is abreast of recent scholarship on Deuteronomy as well as a helpful set of indexes (Scripture references, authors, and subjects). These concluding features add to the value and potential impact of the volume on those interested in working in Deuteronomy studies.

The primary weakness of the volume, the absence of an analytical outline, does not erase the significance of McConville’s work. Such an outline would help the reader understand or recognize decisions McConville made about the flow of the book’s message. In spite of the few concerns cited above, the commentary deserves a place on the shelf of any student who desires to understand the message of Deuteronomy.


This commentary, as well as others in the same series, seeks to provide its readers with a user-friendly resource that will primarily help lay-people who are teaching the Bible in their local church or in individual and group Bible studies. After an introductory chapter that introduces the reader to the authorship of Deuteronomy (accepting Mosaic authorship and a date of composition of ca. 1406 B.C.), the recipients and the themes of Deuteronomy, McIntosh provides a commentary on each chapter of the book. Each chapter of the commentary has ten components: a stimulating quotation, a summary statement for the chapters under consideration (“in a nutshell”), an introductory illustration to catch the attention of the audience, a verse-by-verse commentary (albeit brief), an overview of principles and applications that arise from the passage at hand, life application, a suggested prayer, a consideration of details not covered by the commentary section (“Deeper Discoveries”), giving attention to certain key words, phrases, and themes of the Bible, a teaching outline or plan, and several issues for discussion. The commentary section has interspersed throughout helpful summary statements at each main point as well as at the end of the chapter (“supporting idea” and “main idea review”). A glossary of key terms and a brief bibliography conclude the volume.

This reviewer has only used a handful of the volumes in this series and with mixed success. The present volume is one of the better volumes in the series. A reader who understands the limitations of space available to the author can read this commentary and gain a better feel for the message of Deuteronomy. For those who are searching for illustrations, appropriate quotes, and summary principles, McIntosh offers potential help to the preacher.

One of the major disadvantages of this commentary on Deuteronomy, a book that gives primary attention to the Mosaic Law, is that it does not offer the reader any suggestions on how the Mosaic Law does or does not apply to the believer of today. The applicational thoughts offered by the author are generally valid, but would have been strengthened by giving some attention to that issue.
The editor of the series and the author of each volume are pursuing a very commendable goal, i.e., providing an understandable treatment of each biblical book for lay-people.


My initial—and favorable—acquaintance with Calvin Roetzel, long-time scholar of Paul, came from his monumental work, *Judgement in the Community* (Brill, 1972). Although written prior to the revolution in Pauline studies set off by E. P. Sanders, Roetzel’s early tome was weighty and persuasive. The present volume is neither. *Paul: A Jew on the Margins* is a collection of four previously published articles. The best of the four (chap. three) reprises the old Bultmann/Käsemann discussion on Paul’s use of apocalyptic. Roetzel takes the chapter to explore Paul’s use and reworking of Jewish apocalyptic categories. All four articles are reworked to emphasize Paul’s status as “marginal Jew.” Two new chapters are appended to these four: “Paul—A Jew on the Margins” (hence the title) and “Paul as Mother: A Metaphor for Jewish-Christian Conversion?” The first introductory chapter portrays Paul as living at the margins of both Judaism and Christianity; the second probes Paul’s use of feminine maternal imagery to embrace the humility of Christ. Neither is persuasive. Roetzel’s volume is, in my estimation, a sad example of what happens when socio-political rhetoric hijacks biblical studies.


Mark Rooker is professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C. His previous books include *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel* (JSOTSup 90, Sheffield, 1990) and *Leviticus* (New American Commentary, Broadman & Holman, 2000—see review in *TMSJ* 12/1 [Spring 2001]:123-24). *Studies in Hebrew Language, Intertextuality, and Theology* is a collection of twelve essays by Rooker. Four essays deal with diachronic linguistics, one (the only essay not previously published) with textual criticism, two with intertextuality, two with the interpretation of Gen 1:1-3, and three on the theology of the Flood, the Law, and the Conquest.

Diachronic linguistics is one of Rooker’s fortes and the subject of his first book on the language of Ezekiel. Therefore, the reader will not be surprised that the first three essays deal with the same topic. “The Diachronic Study of Biblical Hebrew” (3-18) introduces the topic by sketching the history of linguistics and its application to biblical Hebrew. “Ezekiel and the Typology of Biblical Hebrew” (19-44) examines Robert Polzin’s characteristics of Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH).
Rooker demonstrates that most of the characteristics in Polzin’s list are legitimate, though a few are questionable (25) due to misinterpretation of the data (27), failure to normalize text sampling length (28), and deficiencies in the use of ratios (29). Rooker concludes that Ezekiel is a better model for the transition state of Hebrew between Early Biblical Hebrew and LBH than the Priestly (P) document claimed by documentarians (44). “Diachronic Analysis and the Features of Late Biblical Hebrew” (45-57) presents four representative elements of LBH drawn from orthography, morphology, and syntax. Rooker then utilizes these evidences of LBH to argue against the exilic or post-exilic dating of Isaiah 40–66 in one of the volume’s most significant essays (“Dating Isaiah 40–66: What Does the Linguistic Evidence Say?” 59–73).

Making its first appearance in a publication, “Old Testament Textual Criticism” (75-97) offers a conservative approach that every student of the OT should read. Rooker defines textual criticism (75), explains its need (76-77), describes its witnesses (78-85), provides a concise history of the text (86-90), and evaluates local text theory vs. linear development (90-92). After discussing the practice of textual criticism (93-96), he concludes that the Masoretic Text is “the best witness to the original text” (96).

“The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Ezekiel” (101-11) and “The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Hosea” (113-33) deal with intertextuality. For Ezekiel’s citations and allusions to prior biblical materials, Rooker examines connections to Leviticus 26 in Ezekiel 4–5, Zephaniah 3:1-4 in Ezekiel 22, and portions of Numbers 18 in Ezekiel 44. He concludes that Ezekiel’s exegetical methods (promise-fulfillment, use of OT passages as a mode or vehicle of expression, and typological exegesis) are basically the same as those employed by NT writers (110-11). Rooker discusses Hosea’s references to the creation, Abraham, and Jacob narratives in Genesis, as well as the exodus narratives in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (114-22). He also handles references to Joshua, Judges, and the book of Kings (122-24). As one would expect, Hosea’s use of Deuteronomy eclipses his references to the Decalogue and other legal texts from Exodus and Leviticus (124-30). Like other Hebrew prophets, Hosea drew heavily from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 (130-31). Such usage of prior texts demonstrates an accepted canon even in the eighth century B.C. (133).

Two essays focus on Gen 1:1-3 (“Genesis 1:1-3: Creation or Recreation? Part 1,” 137-49 and “Part 2,” 151-71). In these studies Rooker carefully analyzes the gap theory (a.k.a. restitution theory), the initial chaos theory, and the precreation chaos theory. In “Part 1” he correctly rejects the gap theory on grammatical grounds (138-40) and adopts a modified initial chaos theory after careful exegetical analysis (140-49). “Part 2” presents an effective detailed response to Bruce Waltke’s precreation chaos stance (Creation and Chaos [Portland, Ore.: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974]).

“The Genesis Flood” (173-202) defends the universality of Noah’s Flood (178-79). While Rooker presents the basic arguments pro and con for the two most popular views regarding “the sons of God” and “the daughters of men,” it is disappointing that he does not indicate his own preference (179-81). Most of the essay is given over to a careful consideration of the structure of the Flood narrative (183-94). It concludes with brief discussions of six timeless theological truths drawn
from the Flood narrative (196-202).

The next essay, “The Law and the Christian” (203-19), is an excerpt from Rooker’s *Leviticus* commentary (see *TMSJ* 12/1 [Spring 2001]:123-24). The final essay, “The Conquest of Canaan” (221-27) appeared in the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Zondervan, 1997; see the review in *TMSJ* 9/1 [Spring 1998]:120-23). Although he holds to the early date for the exodus, Rooker provides very little in the way of argumentation in this essay, since its emphasis is theological.

Rooker’s essays could be gathered from the various publications in which eleven of the twelve first appeared, but there is a distinct advantage to having them within one cover. The expense of this volume and its limited printing make it prohibitive, if not unavailable, for most students and many teachers. It is already listed as “unavailable” on Amazon.com. Libraries should take pains to obtain it for their collections, so that their patrons might be edified by Rooker’s careful scholarship and sound interpretative stance. Unfortunately, such scholars are all too infrequently published. Seminarians and pastors alike should read Rooker as an encouragement to sound evangelical scholarship and as an antidote to liberal trends that dominate much of OT studies today. This is the type of book that well-known evangelical presses ought to be publishing in their academic lines at more accessible prices. This professor, for one, would make it required reading in an OT introduction course.


Scholars have not subjected the Targums of Psalms (TgPss) to study with the intensity they have investigated Targums of the Torah and the Prophets. Indeed, published studies on TgPss have been sparse. From 1872 until 2004 only about twenty found their way into print. This volume is the first publication of an English translation of TgPss. David M. Stec is research associate for the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* and a lecturer at the University of Sheffield in England. In addition to this volume, he has published *The Text of the Targum of Job: An Introduction and Critical Edition*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

In the “Introduction” (1-24), Stec provides pertinent information regarding the date for TgPss, its character, the themes in its Midrashic and Aggadic additions, its relationship to the Targum of Job, its translation techniques, its relationship to the Masoretic Text (MT), its language, and its manuscripts. This reviewer found the discussions regarding translation techniques (11-14) and comparison to the MT (15-18) particularly interesting. Among the discernible translation techniques are double translation, anthropomorphisms, reverential devices, explanatory additions, and etymological association. Taking into account translation techniques and the theological and exegetical concerns of the targumist, TgPss supports the MT in the
preponderance of occasions in which there are variant textual traditions (15, 18).

For each psalm, Stec first presents his translation of TgPss. Italics indicate Mishnaic and Aggadic additions. Secondly, a modest but informative textual critical apparatus follows the translation. Notes dealing with matters of text and translation comprise the third section. A majority of these notes address the MT reading. The following excerpt from Ps 87:1-3 (165) illustrates the contributions of Stec’s work:

1. A psalm\textquotedblright uttered by the sons of Korah. A song that is founded upon the word of the fathers of old.\textsuperscript{1} 2. The \textsc{Lord} loves the gates of the houses of study\textsuperscript{2} that are fixed in Zion more than all the synagogues\textsuperscript{2} of the house of Jacob.\textsuperscript{3} 3. Words of glory\textsuperscript{4} are spoken concerning you, O city of God.\textsuperscript{5}

\textbf{Apparatus, Psalm 87}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{tw\textsuperscript{110}b̄;} M \textit{im ūb̄;} lacking in B C.
\item \textit{Crn to bty mdr̄y}; with B; \textit{pm mdr̄y}; C \textit{mdr̄ym}; M \textit{mwq̄d̄y}; “of the sanctuary;” \textit{mqd̄y}; “of the sanctuaries.”
\end{enumerate}

\textbf{Notes, Psalm 87}

\begin{enumerate}
\item MT “its [or his] foundation is in the holy mountains.” The translation of TgPss represents an effort to find an antecedent for the pronominal suffix in MT.
\item \textit{bty knȳsy} for MT \textit{mšknwt}, “tents.”
\item Cf. Midr. Teh. 87.4: “The king has a palace in every province, but which palace is best loved by him? The palace which is in his own province. Hence \textsc{The Lord loveth the gates of Zion}. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: I love the synagogues and houses of study. But what do I love even more? Zion, for it is my own palace” (Braude, 2:76).
\item \textit{mlẙ dyqr} for MT \textit{nkbd̄w}, “glorious things.” The TgPss rendering might also be translated “glorious things,” but the translation given above is intended to show that TgPss uses a different construction to represent the sense of MT.
\item MT \textit{selah}.
\end{enumerate}

All abbreviations employed in the apparatus and notes are explained fully in the front material of the volume (xiii-xv). One element is missing that could make this edition even more user friendly and informative: the inclusion of the actual Aramaic text for each psalm. Readers then would be able to immediately evaluate Stec’s translation independent of separate volumes.

Stec’s volume provides for scholars and laymen alike a previously unavailable window on Jewish exegesis of the Psalms. End materials include an “Index of Scriptural and Rabbinic Passages” (245-51), an “Index of Modern Authors” (252), and a “General Index” (253-54). Such indexes supply readers with additional means for accessing information. In fact, a check of the indexes reveals that Stec included only two collations with the New Testament (131; Eph 4:8 at Ps 68:19) and the Qumran manuscripts (76; 1QM 5:7 at Ps 35:3). Given the fact that Psalms was extremely popular with both NT writers and the Qumran community, it is a disappointing omission.

The number of books published in the last forty years on the history of fundamentalism and evangelicalism is amazing. Not too many years ago, about the only book available was written by a theological liberal trying to disparage fundamentalism. But here is another fine, well-informed, well-written historical survey of evangelicalism.

Douglas Sweeney is associate professor of church history and the history of Christian thought, and director of the Center for Theological Understanding at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He begins his study with a survey of definitions of evangelicalism, including the rather well-known definition by David Bebbington that characterizes evangelicalism as a movement based on conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism. Sweeney defines the movement as follows: “Evangelicals comprise a movement that is rooted in classical Christian orthodoxy, shaped by a largely Protestant understanding of the gospel, and distinguished from other such movements by an eighteenth-century twist” (24). Evangelicalism’s uniqueness, Sweeney says, is best defined by its adherence to “(1) beliefs most clearly stated during the Protestant Reformation and (2) practices shaped by the revivals of the so-called Great Awakening” (24).

Chapter two describes the eighteenth-century revivals, with the contributions of the Puritans, Pietists, and Moravians, as well as the key revivalists—John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards. Chapter three surveys the theological developments after the Great Awakening, including a brief look at the major parties (New Lights, Old Lights, Old Calvinists, and the New Divinity), the rise of the denominations, and the Second Great Awakening. Chapter four surveys the rise of evangelical missions.

Perhaps the most unusual chapter in the book describes the racial issues of evangelicalism. Sweeney writes, “The pages that follow offer a brief narrative history of the relationship between black and white evangelicals during the formative years of the evangelical movement, focusing closely on early white outreach to slaves and the subsequent rise of independent black denominations” (109).

Sweeney next surveys the rise of the Holiness, Pentecostals, and Charismatic movements, identifying the contributions of such people and organizations as Phoebe Palmer, Asa Mahan, the Keswick Convention, Charles Parham, the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship, Pat Robertson, the Calvary Chapel movement, and the Vineyard Christian Fellowship. A charismatic (apparently combined with neo-Pentecostals in the author’s understanding) is defined as “those who have taken Pentecostalism into the mainline as well as into the realm of nonaligned congregations” (149). Sweeney points out that the impact of the Charismatic movement on the evangelical movement has been huge. In the author’s words, “[D]ue to the success of Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard (among other, similar groups), Pentecostal worship practices have infiltrated the mainline. Wimber alone published scores of the popular ‘praise songs’ now used in corporate worship on nearly every part of the globe. Moreover, his California-style charismatic liturgy—with its pop music, open collars, and come-as-you-are informality—has effected a massive
change in the way most of us ‘do church’” (151).

Sweeney ends his study with a survey of the fundamentalist and neoevangelical movements. He insightfully says that the story that the rise of dispensationalism ended evangelicals’ interest in social action “is full of hyperbole.” Though kernels of truth in the story as it is usually told are present, and though the kernels heightened the fundamentalists’ differences with liberals, “many dispensationalists showed more love to the poor than social gospel partisans (who sometimes talked a better game than they actually played)” (164).

Of course, the interpretation of historical events can sometimes be debatable. In the split between the fundamentalists and the neoevangelicals in the middle of the twentieth century, for example, Sweeney seems to blame “right-wing fundamentalist leaders” in the South who turned their backs on Billy Graham for the “rift in the evangelical world” (177). One could certainly argue that it would seem to be more accurate to blame Billy Graham himself for this rift because of his decision in the 1950s to include theological liberals in the leadership of his crusades. Sweeney does at least mention that new approach of cooperative evangelism that Graham followed, beginning with the 1957 New York crusade.

Overall, this is fine survey of the history of the evangelical movement. It shows the big picture with clarity, and by its nature invites the reader to learn more about an interesting movement within Christianity.


John Walton and Andrew Hill are both teachers of Old Testament at Wheaton College. They previously collaborated on the well-received A Survey of the Old Testament [see TMSJ 14 (2003):338-40]. Both have contributed to the NIV Application Commentary Series, Walton penning the commentary on Genesis and Hill on 1 & 2 Chronicles. The authors claim that this commentary series has established an approach to the biblical text that has received wide appreciation and acclaim. In the commentaries, the Bible is approached from three perspectives: original meaning, bridging contexts, and contemporary significance. The writers state, “Using these headings, the [biblical] text’s meaning and significance could be traced from the original author and audience to our contemporary setting. This approach allows us to understand the content of the Bible as well as its message, theology, and relevance for today” (xi). Therefore, in this textbook Walton and Hill have decided to use that threefold process as their way to communicate the story of the OT to beginning students. They write, “Our vision for this book is that we would be able to introduce students to the Old Testament by going beyond the basic content to help them know just what they are supposed to do with it and what it is supposed to mean to them” (xiii). The authors have written this book as the foundation of a semester course in OT (xvi-xviii).

The main content of the text begins with a unit on “Fundamentals” (2-23).
The reader is oriented to the storyline (i.e., the content) of the OT from the Garden of Eden to the post-exilic period as the basis of the plot line (i.e., the message to be believed). The Bible is God’s story intended to help people know Him and, as God’s revelation, is to be accepted as authoritative. The reader of the OT must become acquainted with both the historical and cultural background of the texts and the methodical approaches to the study of the texts in order to understand the face value of the text, that is, the way the author wanted to be understood by his audience. The three principle factors in determining face value are literary genre, cultural background, and the exact revelatory focus of the text at hand. The authors make clear that the principles of hermeneutics are to guide the exegetical process in seeking to arrive at a proper interpretation of an OT text (17). However, this seems to be contradicted in the glossary where hermeneutics is defined as “The application of rules and procedures for determining the meaning of written texts” (402). The unit concludes with an overview of how the OT text came to be written, with confidence in the OT text validated by its acceptance and use by Jesus.

The heart of the volume is found in the next five units that are broken down into three chapters each (24-380). Each unit is focused on one of the main sections of OT literature: Pentateuch, Historical Literature, Prophets, Wisdom Literature, and Psalms. The units begin with a summary of basic orientation, the revelation of God given, key verses, unit outline, and key terms. The first chapter of each unit discusses original meaning. The threefold focus of those chapters is the story line, historical background, and literary parallels from the ANE. A unit’s second chapter presents bridging contexts. Here, the focus is the purpose of the individual biblical books, their theological perspectives as seen in their major themes, and the resulting plotline or message. It is here that overarching principles are articulated that will be the basis for contemporary application. The third chapter of each unit interacts with the contemporary significance. The chapters begin with a contemporary scenario that leads into a recapitulation of the timeless principles that can be applied to the case study. Then other principles and their present relevance are presented. Throughout the chapters in each unit, time lines, maps, pictures, sidebars, and callouts have been used. Each unit concludes with study questions and resources for further study.

The final unit of the text is the epilogue (382-97). Here the authors summarize some important issues: how the plot line of the OT is continued in the NT, how the OT and NT relate to and interpret each other, and the salvation of the OT Israelite. Three important resources conclude the volume. First, there is an appendix for reading through the OT (398-99). The authors here present what they believe are 150 of the most significant chapters of the OT. The student is to presume that these are the particular chapters to read if he does not have time to read the whole of the OT in a semester course. Second, a glossary of key terms with their definitions is presented (401-4). Finally, an index provides information on where in the text the discussion of different subjects is found (405-12).

Walton and Hill are to be commended for distilling and summarizing so much information germane to the study and application of the OT. However, it seems that the sheer volume of material makes the textbook impractical for a beginning student not already acquainted with the OT, the very reader for whom the authors have prepared this work. Can a beginning reader really master the content
(i.e., story line) of the OT in 35-40 hours of classroom instruction, along with the historical background, the ANE literature, the purpose and themes of each OT book, and the principles to be applied to the contemporary Christian? This volume seems best suited for the reader who already has a good understanding of the OT and seeks to think through the big picture again as a prelude to personal application and expository ministry of the OT.


In an era where the average tenure for a Protestant pastor is somewhere between two and three years, congregations and their leaders obviously need to have resources for making good pastoral transitions, mainly in hope that fewer of them would occur. The subtitle for this book is “How to Think About and Create a Strategic Succession Plan for Your Church.” The authors apparently bring a significant amount of experience and expertise to the task. Both are executive directors of their respective ministry consulting firms: Weese heads “Multi-Staff Ministries,” and Crabtree, “Holy Cow! Consulting.” Also, Weese lists an administrative position in a large Presbyterian church in her background, and Crabtree indicates that he served as a pastor in “small, medium and large churches” (209) without giving specific information.

The work is part of the *Leadership Network Publication* series from The Leadership Network of Dallas, Texas. The series has centered on works from emerging church authors such as Brian McLaren, James H. Furr, Reggie McNeal, Milfred Minatrea, and others and has become a key series of works from that movement. In a revealing statement, the book states,

The Leadership Network’s focus has been on the practice and application of faith at the local congregational level. Churches and church leaders served by Leadership Network represent a wide variety of primarily Protestant faith traditions that range from mainline to evangelical to independent. All are characterized by innovation, entrepreneurial leadership, and a desire to be on the leading edge of ministry (211).

Their web site, www.leadnet.org, gives more information about the organization and its goals, but not even one biblical reference or any sort of doctrinal position was discovered there. The purpose of Leadership Network is given: “Our mission is to identify, connect and help high-capacity Christian leaders multiply their impact.” It is also somewhat odd that a secular publisher, Jossey-Bass, would pick up a religious or Christian series of books.

The work has an excellent subject index, but no bibliography and no indication that the authors cite significant sources. It has no footnotes, endnotes, or anything other than a few passing references to two authors (Ken Blanchard, 17, and Peter Drucker, 106) and two others (Linda Karlovec, 13, 150, and Ron Rand, 23).
The authors also apparently assume their readers will immediately recognize the latter two, giving only the profession of Karlovec and no information at all about Rand.

The writers take an egalitarian approach to pastoral roles, acknowledging that, “We are ever mindful of the fact that women and men fill the pastoral and lay leadership roles in the church today; therefore we have tried to be inclusive throughout the text” (9). Such “inclusiveness” tends to manifest itself in the book by an annoying shift from masculine to feminine pronouns, sometimes within the same context.

The writers begin with an assumption, without offering support, that most churches do not have a plan for pastoral transitions and that, for the most part, they are unwilling to discuss the issue until it is too late (2). The book begins with the “story” of Meadowbrook Church and its pastor, Pete, who decides after a ten-year ministry to look for a new church and depart. He does, and leaves nothing but chaos in his wake (2-5). The authors present that scenario as “typical” of churches and something that needs to be addressed. They then present their perspective on how pastoral transitions should take place. They state, “Succession planning is the second most important need in every church in the country (well trained and committed pastoral and lay leadership that is culturally relevant being the first), and few if any do it well” (5). That these are the two most important needs in “every church in the country” is dubious and really exposes the most significant weakness in the book.

Another glaring problem with the work is the complete lack of biblical references, discussion of ecclesiology, and theological perspective of any kind. Except for a couple of passing references in Chapter One (“Principles of Transition: Jesus Style”), it has only a single reference in the remainder of the book, a brief quotation from a verse in Proverbs (117). The only other place where Scripture appears is in brief quotations that appear at the top of each chapter heading. Despite the assertion on the dust jacket that the authors are “firmly rooted in Biblical principles,” no evidence of a biblical principle is apparent. If the authors have developed some principles on pastoral transitions, they fail to share them.

Another disturbing problem is the omission of the biblical requirements and qualifications for pastors. The key passages in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 are not referenced. The authors present a model church in the following terms:

When the church configured its staff it chose a staff heavy in lay professionals and light in ordained clergy. It then offered a significant body of training to both staff and ministry leaders. Staff members were trained in total quality management, with skills in teamwork, collaborative decision making, problem solving, customer service, coaching, strategic planning, listening, confrontation, assertiveness, rational emotive self-management, gift assessment, and personality inventory. Ministry leaders were given similar training, with more emphasis on strategic thinking, goal and objective development, prayer and accountability. A churchwide organization of ministry leaders was put in place that met quarterly to set goals, evaluate progress, celebrate victories, learn from mistakes, and receive ongoing training (170-71).

Though replete with management fads and buzzwords, this “model” church contains no mention of training in the Scripture, a theological core, or the ability to preach
and teach the Bible. In another place the authors give what they view as the six most important things to ask pastoral candidates: “discover their knowledge of the best practices in six critical areas: Worship, Adult learning, Youth ministry, Fundraising, Mission, Evangelism” (184).

Likewise the work has no discussion of the biblical role and mandate for the local church. In terms of ecclesiology, the authors seem unaware of denominational differences within Protestantism and even that there is an essential difference between Catholicism and Protestantism in terms of the local church and its actual operation. Though it is true that they are writing a “generic” work designed to have a broad appeal across denominational and associational lines, the overall work is so generic that it has almost no practical value.

This review could enumerate other problem areas, but the above suffice. The book could have been a useful tool for local churches and their leaders to manage and even plan for pastoral transitions. Unfortunately, the lack of core theological and biblical principles related to pastoral ministry and pastoral qualifications renders it useless.


The Bible Speaks Today is a series of expositions committed to presenting readable and accurate exposition of the biblical text and relating it to contemporary life. The series aims at a melding of the commentary with the sermon. With this goal in mind, Michael Wilcock successfully expounds the Psalms in his two volumes. *The Message of Psalms* confronts readers with convicting and challenging expositions. They will not consult these volumes primarily for solution to interpretative problems. Rather, they will read them for personal growth in life and faith. Expositors will find great examples of exposition. In this regard the volumes remind this reviewer of James Montgomery Boice’s excellent three-volume *Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996). Wilcock is the British Boice. Formerly he served as director of pastoral studies at Trinity College, Bristol. He has retired from many years of pastoring in the U.K. In this same series he previously authored the volumes on Luke (1984), Revelation (1984), Chronicles (1987), and Judges (1993).

Throughout *The Message of Psalms,* Wilcock cites the original Hebrew text. His exposition is based on the Hebrew, not isolated from it. While being eminently readable, he manages to link the reader with the Hebrew text and with key commentaries on the text. Wilcock meets interpretative challenges head on, as in his handling of the exposition of Psalm 22 (*Psalms 1–72, 78-85*). One by one, he evaluates the views that David, Hezekiah, and Jeremiah wrote this psalm about their own personal experiences. In the end, he demonstrates the inability of any of the three to embody fully the experiences the psalm describes. As with Psalm 2, Wilcock takes a clear messianic stance regarding Psalm 22, while allowing David to author
it on the basis of some personal experience utilized as a springboard to speak of the greater son of David.

Another difficult topic in expounding the Psalms involves the imprecatory psalms. Wilcock’s treatment of this problem in connection with Psalm 35 (Psalms 1–72, 119-24) is superb, because it deals with the major issues and also makes six specific practical points for the expositor. Where many commentators resort to theories of editing to resolve problems or to deny Davidic authorship to psalms attributed to David in psalm headings, Wilcock sticks by the text. For example, in his discussion of the seemingly disjointed structure of Psalm 55, he declares, “But there is no need either to suppose a complex and sophisticated poetic structure for it, or to assume obtuse editors whose work needs to be cut up and rearranged. David’s frame of mind is quite enough to account for its violent changes of tone” (Psalms 1–72, 200). Thus, Wilcock is more dependable on this issue than Gerald H. Wilson who makes room for Psalm 55 to be post-Davidic or even post-exilic (Psalms Volume 1, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 55-56—for a review of Wilson’s volume, see TMSJ 14/2 [Fall 2003]:356-59).

Most expositors would consider Psalm 119 a great challenge because of its length. Wilcock’s exposition (Psalms 73–150, 193-219) would probably require three or four 40-minute sermons, but it is remarkably concise without sacrificing either interpretative depth or practical application. It is a good example of his expository skills. Consistently he identifies the key Hebrew terms highlighting each stanza (e.g., derek in the Daleth stanza, z̄arkar in the Zayin stanza, h̄eleq and h̄esed in the Heth stanza, and tōb in the Teth stanza; Psalms 73–150, 197, 200, 201, 203).

Throughout the two volumes the reader will find frequent references to great hymns related to individual psalms. Many illustrations are Anglocentric, but the American expositor will still find them applicable to his own cultural setting. Although this review has been very positive, no commentary or exposition is perfect. This reviewer was disappointed with the absence of detailed exposition for an occasional psalm (e.g., Ps 67; Psalms 1–72, 232-34), but that is the exception rather than the rule. Wilcock demonstrates an inadequate understanding of the Hebrew verb system when he speaks of “the perfect tense as a once-for-all event” and the imperfect as “the continuous tense” (Psalms 73–150, 124); see the review of Gary V. Long, Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew (Hendrickson, 2002) in TMSJ 14/1 [Spring 2003]:126-27). References to grammatical elements, however, are relatively infrequent in Wilcock’s expositions.

Too few recommendable commentaries for Psalms exist. Wilcock’s volumes make a considerable contribution for which expositors on both sides of the Atlantic will be grateful. This reviewer highly recommends that expositors have The Message of Psalms in their libraries. Informed laymen and pastors alike will find these volumes stimulating and uplifting.