

BOOK REVIEWS

Jay E. Adams. *From Forgiven to Forgiving*. Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1989. 168 pages. \$14.05 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

From Forgiven to Forgiving "is a practical approach to reconciling relationships and entering into a deeper walk with the Lord" (p. 7), according to James Kennedy's preface to the book. In the words of the author, the book has been written "to provide a simple, easy to read reference volume for the average Christian something he can read, then turn to again and again as the need arises." And "to encounter most of the principal errors currently believed or taught by various persons in the Christian church" (p. 9). It is quickly evident in the opening chapters of the book that Adams' goals have, for the most part, been attained. The book is easy to read, practical, and stimulating. Titles of twenty succinct chapters are descriptive, providing guidance to specific topics with relative ease.

The author begins with a discussion of what forgiveness is as well as what it is not, countering a number of popular notions of the nature of forgiveness. Using Eph 4:32 as his base, he sees forgiveness not as a feeling but rather as a promise, a promise that God will not hold our sins against us. From that point, he moves into the practical areas related to forgiveness and treats matters such as forgiving seven times a day (Luke 17:3-10), forgiveness and unbelievers, keeping the promise, obstacles to forgiveness, and other pertinent topics.

Adams is unafraid to challenge some principal errors and common misconceptions. For example, he concludes that one can truly forgive out of duty (p. 29). On the basis of Matt 18:15-20, he disputes the notions that forgiveness can or should be granted even when not asked for (pp. 31-32) and that we must forgive no matter what response we get from the other person (pp. 37-38), contending that "if we were to grant forgiveness to a brother apart from his repentance and desire for forgiveness, then why bother with the process?" (p. 37). He continues, "God is not interested in forgiveness as an end in itself, or as a therapeutic technique that benefits the one doing the forgiving. He wants reconciliation to take place and that can only be brought about by repentance" (pp. 37-38).

In his vintage style, the author tells it like it is. He frequently interacts with (sometimes complimenting, sometimes contradicting) well-known people who discuss the subject, such as David Augsburger, Lewis Smedes, the Minirth-Meier group, and others. He also enjoys responding to common aphorisms such as "I'm okay, you're okay" or "to err is human, to forgive is divine." He speaks frequently about church discipline and gives practical tips for implementing it.

The author's treatment of Christ's words from the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), is weak, as is his treatment on the Lord's prayer (Matt 6:12-15). Though his definition of "forgiveness" is exact, his use of the term in these passages and elsewhere lacks the same precision. This has led him to confuse confession with granting forgiveness or to read in the idea of confession where only forgiveness is mentioned (e.g., pp. 42 ff.).

In Chapter 10, he overemphasizes the idea that confession is not a benefit for the one confessing, asserting that it is only for God's honor. Yet elsewhere (e.g., pp. 126, 140, *et. al.*) he admits that it brings great benefit to the individual and "it lifts the burden of guilt from his shoulders" (p. 140).

Though the chapter titles are specific and furnish quick access to various aspects of the subject, in light of the stated purpose of the book a Scripture index would be an improvement as a guide to information from the textual perspective. Also, a bibliography is a needed addition.

Adams has an excellent treatise on the contemporary issue of the healing of memories. He debunks the idea of seeking healing by mentally reliving past unpleasant experiences and visualizing Jesus in the experience to make all things go well. He observes that there is nothing biblical about such a process. His treatment of the subject is a welcome oasis in the desert compared to the volumes of false, misleading, and non-biblical strategies advocated today.

Overall, this is an excellent, easy to use tool in counseling. Both pastors and laymen will find the work an often-used part of their library.

Theodore Baehr. *Getting the Word Out: How to Communicate the Gospel to Today's World*. San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986.

337 pp. \$17.95 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Pastors and other Christian workers occasionally sense the need to use the media in some way. Theodore Baehr's breadth of knowledge about and experience with the media and his commitment to use it for Jesus Christ make this work a rich source of practical information.

The book's clear expression and thoughtful organization model the author's commitment to communication. In the first of three sections, he explains the foundation of powerful communication by asking and answering the questions, "How Do I Communicate?," "Why Do I Want to Communicate?," "Who Am I?," "Who is My audience?," "What Am I Communicating?," and "What about Genre?"

With this as a basis for the next section, Baehr shows how to communicate successfully through the media. Again, he asks and then answers several questions: "What Medium Should I Use?," "What About Television?," "What About Radio and Auditory Media?," "What About Public Speaking?," and "What About Print Media?"

The author concludes the book with the question, 'What does God want me to say?' Here he stresses production quality, individual motives, and discusses available resources.

H. D. Beeby. *Hosea: Grace Abounding, International Theological Commentary Series*. Frederick Carlson Holmgren and George A. F. Knight, eds.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 189 pp. \$12.95 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

In the words of the editors, "*The International Theological Commentary* moves beyond the usual critical-historical approach and offers a theological interpretation of the Hebrew text" (p. vii). The publisher views the purpose of the series as developing the theological significance of the OT and emphasizing the relevance of each book for the life of the church. For the most part, this aim has been achieved by H. D. Beeby, long-time professor of OT at Tainan Theological College in Taiwan and more recently lecturer of OT Studies at Selly Oaks

Colleges in England. The book is extremely practical and furnishes many excellent insights on the text.

Yet this work must be used with caution. The author, especially in the introductory sections, gives too much weight to historical criticism and frequently finds it necessary to exclude portions of text, viewing them as the work of a later redactor. For example, he contends that the names of the southern kings, added by the text to the northern tribes, were almost certainly appended at a later time to the text by editors eager to broaden the scope of Hosea's message to include the southern kingdom (p. 12). Beeby endorses some of these "findings," but is quick to express his refusal to be mired down by the historical-critical approach and his preference to rise above it and take the book at its face value.

Fortunately, the author maintains this attitude throughout the commentary. In his discussion of Chapter 1, Beeby gives excellent background and historical information with an insightful analysis of the names of Hosea's children (pp. 15-18). His treatment of Hosea 1-3 is especially rich in devotional thoughts, extracting much of the richness of the text by maximizing practical relevance from Hosea's love for Gomer and Yahweh's love for Israel. He devotes considerable space to Hos 6:1-3. Many have interpreted these verses as depicting a genuine return of Israel to her God, but Beeby explains the people's response as superficial because of the context in 5:8-15 and 6:4 ff. (pp. 69 ff.).

In his remarks on Chapter 11 (pp. 140 ff.), he argues that this is the most significant part of the book and therefore deserves special treatment.

It is the clearest statement of Hosea's central theme and as such provides a clue to the interpretation to the rest of the book. It also gives a convenient summary of the book's message. I am confident that here we penetrate deeper into the heart and mind of God than anywhere else in the O.T. Read aright (a most difficult task) and supplemented perhaps by Isaiah 52:13; 53:12, this chapter takes us as near to the Father as it is possible to get without the direct leading of the incarnate Son (p. 140).

He then provides some excellent thoughts on the sonship of Israel and her adoption by Yahweh. Noticeably absent, however, is any reference to Matthew's use of Hos 11:1 (cf. Matt 2:15) and how to

interpret it.

Although the book is devotionally rich and overflows with invitations to appreciate the greatness of our Redeemer, it offers more than just practical help. It contributes many historical, contextual, and theological insights to understanding the text of Hosea. With the above-mentioned cautions in mind, this book provides much valuable material and would make an excellent addition to one's personal library.

C. Hassell Bullock. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books*. Chicago: Moody, 1986. 391 pp. \$21.95 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

In this volume, C. Hassell Bullock, Professor of OT Studies at Wheaton College, treats both the major and minor prophets (Christian Canon) or latter prophets (Jewish Canon) according to their chronological rather than their historical interrelationships. His primary concern is to establish "the broad picture, with the individual prophets in their historical and theological niches" (p. 11). This approach is particularly important, because each prophet draws upon the writings of others:

Though the prophets were not given to quoting one another by name, they did draw upon each other, some more than others. Once that dependence is recognized, a new view of the prophetic movement emerges. They were not lone individualists who knew nothing and cared nothing for what others who bore the name "prophet" had said. Rather they saw themselves in a line of succession and were aware of the tradition they had received from their predecessors (p. 11).

Organizing the prophets historically can be both difficult and artificial because many of the historical relations must be inferred from scanty data. But if one views prophecy as a movement, the fact that the prophets' messages arose as responses to historical and moral crises requires them to be considered within a historical framework (p. 11). The author, recognizing that his approach "carries an element of risk" (p. 11), endeavors to use all available research to accomplish the task. He locates the literary prophets within the three historical periods: the

Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian.

Bullock introduces his discussion with Jonah instead of Amos for three main reasons:

The early date assigned to Jonah by the writer of Kings (2 Kings 14:25), the book's emphasis on the prophetic career, and the transitional nature of Jonah's prophecy from the preclassical to the classical model (p. 41).

A discussion of each prophet and his literary contribution follows in sequence, furnishing the situation of each book in the overall prophetic movement. A book outline concludes the discussion of each. A bibliography for each book and topics relating to prophecy comes at the end of the volume, along with indices by subject and person, author, and Scripture.

Danna Nolan Fewell and David Miller Gunn. *Compromising Redemption: Relating Characters in the Book of Ruth*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990. 141 pp. \$11.95 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

This is the first of a new series entitled *Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation*, edited by the authors of this book. They hold that "questions about origins`authors, intentions, settings`and stages of composition are giving way to questions about the literary qualities of the Bible, the play of its language, the coherence of its final form, and the relations between text and readers" (p. 8). They desire to initiate among readers a discovery

that the Bible in literary perspective can powerfully engage people's lives. Communities of faith where the Bible is foundational may find that literary criticism can make the Scripture accessible in a way that historical criticism seems unable to do. The goal of the series is to encourage such change and such search, to breach the confines of traditional biblical criticism, and to open channels for new currents of interpretation (p. 8).

Ultimately, Fewell and Gunn focus on what they perceive other readers to have missed and try to account for as many of those

"misses" as possible. In their own words, they "offer a (relatively) subversive reading—a reading that offers no model heroes, no simple messages, no unambiguous examples of how we are to live" (p. 13). From the viewpoint of literary critical analysis, they appear to have been relatively successful. They have certainly filled in gaps of the story with creative and imaginative perspectives.

The book divides into three parts. The first retells the biblical story, with significant imaginative enhancement. The second part treats the main characters, with the discussion centered about an analysis of the text. The third section represents notes to parts 1 and 2. The final section is the most helpful aspect of the work. It gives detailed and sometimes lengthy critical and historical data on the text.

On the other hand, unless one wants to write a Sunday School drama based on the book of Ruth, the book has little value. It is based primarily on imagination and speculation. It is true that the authors have tried to put themselves into the mental framework and milieu of Ruth's day by postulating "what might have been," but much of it is interpreted and framed with a twentieth century perspective. Especially inappropriate is the frequent inclusion of profanity (e.g. "damn" and "god," pp. 24, 26, 28, 32). Though some may view such terminology as common, everyday vernacular/conversational English, it is quite out of taste, certainly in a work of this nature, and should be excluded.

Jack Finegan. *Myth and Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. 335 pp. \$24.95 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel. Associate Professor of Old Testament, The Master's Seminary.

The author emphasizes both the manner of diffusion and the multiplicity of ideas and practices borrowed from their antecedents by early pagan religions contemporary with Israel and early Christianity. Following the order of the chronological beginning for each religion, Finegan covers the following religions: Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Zoroastrian, Canaanite, Greek, Roman, Gnostic, Mandaean, and the Manichaeon. For each one, he discusses history, sources, language, deities, mythology, society, etc. Either at the end of or within each

chapter is an analysis of the extent and manner of interaction between a particular religion and the Bible.

Several examples show how Christianity and paganism, both broadly defined, came to bear upon one another. One such discussion addresses the dating of Jesus' birth on December 25. When the emperor Constantine ascended the throne after defeating Licinius in A.D. 323, he chose not to worship the sun, but its creator (p. 212). Finegan surmises,

It must have been at this time and with the intent to transform the significance of an existing sacred date that the birthday of Jesus, which had been celebrated in the East on January 6 (Epiphanius [c. 315-403], *Panarion* 51.11.4), was placed in Rome on December 25, the date of the birthday celebration of Sol Invictus (p. 212).

In A.D. 392 the emperor Theodosius I (379-395) placed pagan worship on a par with treason. "In the course of time `paganism' disappeared as a religious system and the once living faiths of the Roman Empire became religions of the past" (p. 215).

In the context of religious systems, the author raises several interesting points regarding the interaction between the so-called "Afro-asiatic" and the Greek and Roman classical civilizations. He then argues for an early and symbiotic relationship between the two. First, the Roman Emperor, "Gaius Caligula (A.D. 37-41) . . . was attracted by everything Egyptian and under him, the Isis cult received official recognition" in Rome (p. 196). Other emperors followed suit. Second, when the Egyptians received permission to establish a temple of Isis in Greece (333 B.C.), the Egyptian historian Manetho joined efforts with an Athenian named Timotheos to develop the cult of Sarapis in Egypt (323-285 B.C.). Third, in the course of Greek and Roman contact (in Magna Graecia in South Italy and in Greece proper, conquered by the Romans in 146 B.C.) the Romans adopted Greek gods such as Apollo and Asklepios. Consequently, equivalences between Roman and Greek deities were multiplied (p. 191). Throughout this period, the Romans adopted many mythologies from Greece, although at least a small measure of the ideological similarities is attributable to a common Indo-European heritage (p. 191).

Other interesting discussions include the origin and nature of the Magi who visited Jesus; the identity of Baal, the Asherah, and Asheroth against whom the prophets and others polemicized in the OT;

the inception of the earliest law codes and primitive forms of democracy; and the mysterious religious practices of many foreign peoples recorded in the Bible.

Several of the author's conclusions regarding the religious aspects of Mesopotamian and Israelite cultures need clarification. The evidence for a substrate language prior to Sumerian is more extensive than the author concedes. It is not just settlements that bear pre-Sumerian names (p. 191), but according to B. Landsberger, so do occupations and objects of material culture.

Finegan also argues, "Since all the names (Jericho, Megiddo, Beth-yerah etc.) are certainly Semitic this provides evidence that most, if not all of the inhabitants even in these early periods (pre-Israelite) were Canaanites" (p. 122). But equating ethnic groups with linguistic evidence is suspect methodology since ethnic and linguistic associations cannot be linked with certainty.

Familiar theological and biblical terminology employed by the author invites comparison and enhances understanding, but such terms may skew his discussions: prophet, priest, savior, archangel, sacrifice, righteousness, eternal law, vision, seer, hymns, wisdom, truth, the Holy Spirit, salvation, sinner, etc., are but a few of such terms interspersed throughout the book. The author uses them to describe the activities and character of pagan gods, their devotees, and religious trappings but often to the obfuscation of true correspondences with and differences between these and comparable terms in the Bible.

Several editorial oversights need attention: (1) on p. 126 the word **hBEL** needs a vowel added and a dagesh deleted; (2) on p. 223 the phrase "standing by laughed at them" needs an antecedent; and (3) on p. 227 quotation marks are needed before, (")so Marcion . . . works."

This work is an exceptionally good source of information regarding a select group of ancient religions. In spite of the complex nature of the issues with which it deals, the book is very readable. In addition, discussion of the religions is ordered chronologically, thus helping the reader understand and appreciate extensive borrowing from one religion to the next. Those who desire to study the religious systems that impacted Israel and the early church will find the volume quite helpful.

Wayne Grudem and John Piper, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1991. 576 pp. \$19.95 (paper). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

One of the key goals for the church of the 90's will be to reaffirm women as a special part of God's creation and readdress the biblical role of women in the home and the local church. A significant contribution toward this goal is *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, a collection of essays by scholars representing the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW). CBMW is decidedly conservative, taking a historical view of Scripture that is undergirded by solid exegesis and cogent reasoning.

The position of CBMW has been challenged recently by the newly formed Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE), an organization of "evangelical feminists." Throughout the book, frequent references to literature from the CBE viewpoint permit the reader to trace the recent writings that follow the feminist persuasion.

The editors, John Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, and Wayne Grudem, Associate Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, have assembled contributors who are united in their belief that biblical manhood and womanhood views men as heads of their homes and pastors/elders in local churches. Contributors to *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* teach at such schools as King's College, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary, Western Baptist College, Bethel College, and Knox Theological Seminary. In addition, legal, medical, and scientific professionals contribute as do several well-known women including Elisabeth Elliot, Dee Jepsen, and Dorothy Patterson.

The book has two purposes: first, to lead to a constructive resolving of the controversy over the role of women in the church, and second, to respond to evangelical feminists' writings proposing that gender equality mandates role equality. In their discussions, the authors interact with "evangelical feminists" who support the Bible's authority and truthfulness, but then resort frequently to recent biblical interpretations that differ significantly from generally accepted meanings.

Of particular note are words in the preface that capture the thrust of the book:

If one word must be used to describe our position, we prefer the term complimentary, since it suggests both equality and beneficial differences between men and women. We are uncomfortable with the term 'traditionalist' because it implies an unwillingness to let scripture challenge traditional patterns of behavior and we certainly reject the term 'hierarchicalist' because it overemphasizes structured authority while giving no suggestion to equality or the beauty of mutual interdependence.

The book is in five sections. In Section 1, "Vision and Overview," Piper and Grudem lay out the course of the volume with definitions of manhood and womanhood. They also respond to "feminist objections" to the traditional biblical position espoused by the editors.

Section 2, "Exegetical and Theological Studies," has in-depth studies of such passages as Genesis 1-3, 1 Cor 11:2-16, 1 Corinthians 14, Gal 3:28, Eph 5:21-33, 1 Tim 2:11-15, and 1 Pet 3:1-7. It also examines our Lord's response to women in the gospels.

Section 3 notes the contributions of church history, biology, psychology, sociology, and law to the subject at hand. Section 4 considers appropriate implications and applications.

Section 5, "Conclusion and Prospect," co-written by Piper and Grudem, interacts with the declaration, "Men, Women on Biblical Equality," published by CBE. Their material is a point-by-point commentary on "Men, Women on Biblical Equality." This is followed by irenic biblical responses.

The work has two appendices. The first by Grudem summarizes recent research on *kephalē* (*kephale*, "head"). The second is the "Danver's Statement," the 1987 position paper issued by the CBMW.

As with any anthology, the research level, thinking, and expression varies, but the editors have done a commendable job in gathering an exceptional collection of essays that demonstrate great unity in their conclusions. The essays are well researched, as evidenced by over eighty pages of detailed documentation. For one unfamiliar with the range of literature on the subject, these literary references alone are worth the price of the volume.

In the foreword, Piper recognizes the singles community by noting that much of the volume deals with relationships between husbands and wives and by acknowledging the importance of singles in the body of Christ. He then admits that he is married and thus is not the best person to write the foreword. To compensate for this deficiency, he frequently uses the writings of mature, single Christians as resources.

One may cringe here and there over a point of exegesis, but this volume represents the traditional interpretation of major biblical passages about the roles of men and women. The most controversial part of the book among those sympathetic toward CBMW is the treatment of the gift of prophecy by Grudem and Piper (Chap. 2). It is important to note that this view is not essential to a biblical understanding of manhood and womanhood. It does not represent the thinking of all the authors or of everyone associated with CBMW.

An understanding of the biblical role of women is of crucial importance and must be transmitted to those in the pew. Because of its depth and length, many will look at this volume and conclude it is only for scholars, but anyone can comprehend it by taking just one chapter at a time. Though it is certainly a "heavyweight," it is worth the effort, both for the sake of the home and the church, to understand the issues and their implications. No other book on the subject is as thorough and comprehensive. Because it is written with a sensitive and gracious spirit, it deserves to be read even by those who do not agree with CBMW. This volume should be the standard on the subject for years to come. This reviewer heartily endorses *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* as "must" reading for every Christian in understanding God's view of women and His design for their fulfilling role in the home and in the church.

Warren J. Hartman. *Five Audiences: Identifying Groups in Your Local Church*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1987. 112 pp. \$7.95 (paper).
Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Five Audiences is a book about audience expectations. Out of 1400 people surveyed across the United States, five major audience-

types emerged. The primary purpose of the book is "to introduce the five audience groups, to describe them, and to suggest some of the implications for local church planning and programming" (p. 14).

The first chapter introduces and draws brief sketches of the five audience groups. Each of the next five chapters focuses on one of the five groups. The next two chapters develop implications of audience groups for teachers (Chap. 7) and churches (Chap. 8).

Though they may not realize it, "each audience group has characteristics and expectations that are unique to that group" (p. 21). "While members of each group are . . . apt to be found in every congregation" (p. 23), smaller churches and small groups within churches tend to polarize around a particular group-type. The longer the group is taught or led by one individual or cluster of individuals with the same leadership style and objectives, the greater is the tendency for those who dislike the style to leave and new people who approve of the style to be attracted. "When this self-selective process becomes operative in a majority of classes and groups, the whole congregation may take on characteristics of the dominant audience group or groups" (p. 24).

Ranked from largest to smallest in America, the generalized audience groups are fellowship, traditionalists (and Neo-traditionalists), study, social action, and multiple (or non-specialized) interest groups. Adding a measure of balance to the discussion, Hartman says, "It is highly unlikely that the composite profile of any given class or group will be 100 percent fellowship, tradition, study or social action. . . . Furthermore, we believe that each member of a class or group is a uniquely complex being who cannot be pigeonholed into one of the four [specialized] audience groups" (p. 117).

Throughout the book, the author has helpful suggestions for putting the audience issue into perspective. For example,

Teachers and leaders would do well to remember that many times when members of a class or group express disappointment or dissatisfaction with a teacher, the criticism may not be due as much to the quality of teaching or leadership as it is to the style and manner of teaching and leading that is employed (p. 102).

Hartman recognizes that studies of this type tend toward over-generalization. Descriptions of five audiences are "by no means totally accurate, nor can human behavior be predicated with certainty" (p. 15).

Geographical location, national shifts, and denominational issues all bear on the size and distribution of audience groups (p. 15). Also, he notices that individuals "will pass through several audience groups at different times in their lives and at different stages of their faith journey" (p. 24). Shifts may be caused by "changes in family or vocational status, certain personal or religious experiences, growing older, different responsibilities in the local congregation, or, perhaps, the strong influence of someone—a friend, a relative, a church school teacher, or a pastor" (p. 24).

Five Audiences is a helpful reminder that churches are made up of individuals with individual needs and expectations. How and how much church leaders should respond to each set of needs and expectations are questions that must be addressed.

Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989). 1412 pp. \$19.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Robert L. Thomas, Professor of New Testament.

The complete Bible of the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) was first published in 1952 (with the addition of the Apocrypha in 1957). The revision committee of approximately thirty members continued meeting every two or three years subsequently to consider proposed improvements. The committee's constituency has evolved over the years. In the beginning, its members were mainline Protestant in affiliation, with the exception of a Jewish scholar invited to join the OT section at a late stage. In time, it has come to incorporate more and more Roman Catholic scholars and a scholar of the Greek Orthodox Church. The female constituency of the committee has increased during the same period. The committee and the fruit of its labors is now viewed as thoroughly ecumenical.

In 1971 a new edition appeared which was a revision of the NT but contained only minor changes in the OT. Because of social changes in the decade of the sixties and the early seventies, in 1974 the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC), sponsor of the project, authorized work leading toward a further revision.¹ This

¹Background information for this review is derived in part from essays by two members of the NRSV translation committee: Robert C. Dentan, "The Story of the

revision is now available under the title of the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV).

Typical of some miscellaneous changes is a deference to the Jewish connotation of *Χριστῶν* (*Christos*, "Anointed One") in the NT by rendering it "Messiah" in some passages where it had been "Christ," particularly in the gospels and Acts (e.g. Matt 16:16; Acts 2:36; 17:5; 26:23; Rom 9:5). Sometimes this creates confusion, however, when it is near the name "Jesus Christ" which is always rendered in the conventional manner (e.g. Acts 2:36, 38). Following their new policy, one wonders why the NRSV translators did not use "Messiah" in Hebrews, an epistle whose addressees were of a distinctly Jewish background (for example, see Heb 3:6; 6:1).

Some infelicitous expressions in older editions have been improved. In Ps 50:9 "I will accept no bull from your house" (RSV) has been revised to read, "I will not accept a bull from your house" (NRSV). "Once I was stoned" (RSV) in 2 Cor 11:25 is now "once I received a stoning" (NRSV). Racial sensitivity is reflected in a simple change from "but" to "and" in Song of Solomon 1:5; instead of "very dark, but comely" (RSV), the NRSV reads "black and beautiful."

Apart from miscellaneous changes of this type, the translators concentrated their efforts in three general areas, two of which were socially motivated.

(1) One of the social changes was a movement toward less formality in social relationships, including a less formal style of language in public worship. In response to this trend, the NRSV has eliminated the "thee's" and "thou's" in speech addressed to God that characterized its earlier editions. This usage of pronouns distinguished between language addressed to God and that addressed to human beings, a distinction unsupported in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts of the Bible. Dropping the old-style pronouns has marked most modern versions of the Bible. Besides the RSV, notable exceptions that have not eliminated them are the Modern Language Bible, the New American Standard Bible, and the New English Bible. A recent revision of the NEB, called the Revised English Bible, has now deleted them too.

New Revised Standard Version," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 11/3 (1990) 211-23, and Walter Harrelson, "Inclusive Language in the New Revised Standard Version," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 11/3 (1990) 224-31.

This part of the project was the simplest and, for most, the least controversial, though it did at times force some rather difficult decisions. As an example of difficulty, corrected to modern style, the opening phrase of the Lord's prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matt 6:9), would have become "Our Father who are in heaven," but the committee judged this to have an inferior sound. Following other modern versions, they therefore rendered, "Our Father in heaven," even though it entailed leaving a Greek word untranslated and sounded rather abrupt. They viewed this as the best choice.

(2) The other social change was viewed as more important and has affected the NRSV extensively. This was the widespread movement to eliminate "sex-biased" language. The pressure to adopt inclusive terminology came from leaders of "main-line" churches, most younger women, publishers, and educational organizations. Consequently, the Division of Education and Ministry of the NCCC which commissioned the project directed that "in references to men and women, masculine-oriented language should be eliminated as far as this can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture."² Without question, this aspect of the committee's responsibility was the most difficult.

The NRSV has used various means of incorporating inclusivist language. A few examples illustrate these. "I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4:19, RSV) is now "I will make you fish for people" (NRSV). Often "brother(s)" (RSV) has become "brother(s) and/or sister(s)" (NRSV) (e.g. Matt 5:22-24, 47; 18:35) and in one instance, "members of my family" (Matt. 25:40, NRSV). In at least one section "brother" (RSV) is rendered "another member of the church" (NRSV) (Matt 18:15, 21), and an inclusive linguistic standard is maintained by repetition of "member" (Matt 18:17) and by an awkward passive, "if you are not listened to" (Matt 18:16). "Awkwardness" is also the word for the Son of Man being betrayed "into human hands" (Matt 17:22, NRSV). It is unnatural English compared with his betrayal "into the hands of men" (RSV).

Sometimes the inclusivist term "neighbor" (NRSV) substitutes for the masculine "brother" (RSV) (Matt 7:4-5). "Man" (RSV) is neutralized to "anyone" (NRSV) and "son" (RSV) to "child" (NRSV) in Matt 7:9-10. "Man" (RSV) is labeled "a human being" (NRSV) in Matt

²Bruce M. Metzger, "To the Reader," NRSV xi.

12:12 and a "person" in Matt 12:43. The alleged sexually biased "men" (RSV) in Matt 12:31 has turned into "people" (NRSV).

The above inclusivist revisions are indicated as such by footnotes which indicate that the Greek text supports the RSV rendering, but one where no such note occurs is Matt 15:18: "a man" (RSV) is omitted from the NRSV without explanation. Also without notation is "mortals" (NRSV) substituted for "men" (RSV) in Matt 19:26.

A case could be lodged that the illustrations given so far offer no great cause for concern, but a further device for accomplishing inclusiveness encounters a distinct practical disadvantage. This involves changing a singular to a plural in order to cover up gender differences. Instances of this are numerous and may be illustrated from Christ's series of teachings calling to discipleship: "Those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Matt 10:39), and "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24; see also Luke 17:33; John 12:25, NRSV). In each case, his appeal in the original text is to the individual, not a group. To render plurals as the NRSV does inevitably makes his invitation less personal and compelling. The individual focus of his invitation disappears through a different means in Rev 3:20, that of changing from third person to second: "If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me." In the context of Revelation 3, this is easily construed as a group invitation to the whole Laodicean church rather than to individuals within the church.

The pluralizing device has also obscured the Messianic implications of at least one OT passage, Ps 8:4-6 (cf. Heb 2:6-9).

In 1 Tim 3:2 inclusivist language has forced a return to an earlier rendering, discarded in the 1971 revision because it was too interpretive.³ From "married only once" in 1952, the version changed to the more literal "the husband of one wife" in 1971. The NRSV reverts to "married only once" and limits the phrase's meaning to one of several possible interpretations of the Greek text.

Some aspects of the translation were exempt from inclusivist language, however. Masculine terms for God, such as "Father," "Lord," and "King" have been retained. It was decided that these were

³See Robert L. Thomas, "Bible Translations: The Link between Exegesis and Expository Preaching" *The Master's Seminary Journal* (Spring 1990) 70.

inherent in the biblical text. Also the psalmist in Psalm 109 was left as a male because the committee could find no satisfactory way to make the language inclusive. Possibly to compensate, a way was found to render Psalm 131 as though it were composed by a woman. The masculine flavor of legal language of the Bible in passages such as Exodus 21-23 and Joshua 20 was thought by the committee to have been necessarily retained as well,⁴ but this judgment was apparently overruled by a later review body. To illustrate, the committee approved the use of "his" in Exod 21:15, but the NRSV in its final form omits the pronoun in that verse.

(3) In addition to revisions motivated by desires to comply with social change, the committee sought to incorporate recent discoveries from fields of biblical scholarship. Under this heading of endeavors, the committee felt less constrained by tradition than the original RSV committee and altered some more familiar KJV phrases to bring them into closer alignment with recent scholarly opinion.

For example, "paths of righteousness" in Ps 23:3 has become "right paths" in the NRSV, "the valley of the shadow of death" in Ps 23:4 is now "the darkest valley," and "forever" in Ps 23:6 is changed to "my whole life long."

In surveying the NRSV more broadly, this reviewer must express two disappointments, one theological and the other linguistic. The major obstacle to its use by evangelicals remains: theological bias toward looser views of traditional orthodox doctrine that characterized the RSV⁵ also characterizes the NRSV. Acts 20:28 is still not rendered as an explicit statement of the deity of Christ, as a natural rendering of the Greek requires, though the manner of avoiding the obvious is different from the original RSV.⁶ Another explicit statement of Christ's deity is obscured through the NRSV punctuation of Rom

⁴Harrelson, "Inclusive Language" 225.

⁵See Robert L. Thomas, *An Introductory Guide for Choosing English Bible Translations* (Sun Valley, CA: author, 1988) 63, 66.

⁶The 1952 RSV rendered "church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood." The 1971 RSV and the NRSV have "church of God which [that' in NRSV] he obtained with the blood of his own Son." The normal Greek rendering is "church of God which he obtained through his own blood," the last part referring to the blood of God the Son, not the blood of God's Son.

9:5, not the same as in the RSV but with the same resultant meaning. The theological concept of "propitiation" and its implication regarding God's wrath is still studiously avoided (cf. Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Some theological improvement over the RSV is evident, but the liberal bias remains.

Committee Chairman Metzger alludes to the linguistic issue in the NRSV's "To the Reader" (p. xi) when he hints at the tension that developed between the committee's maxim, "As literal as possible, as free as necessary," and its mandate to incorporate inclusive language. Inclusive language has made the NRSV a less literal translation than the RSV. Metzger says the new work is essentially literal, but this is a matter of questionable judgment. RSV was already close to the upper limit of literal translations.⁷ The added freedom necessitated by efforts to avoid "sexually biased" language may raise the NRSV into the range of what should be called a free translation. In any event, this feature reduces its usefulness as a study tool. This is a shame because the premise regarding "sex-biased" language that generated most of the changes is so weak.

Because of the continuing theological problem and the new linguistic problem, the NRSV will find very limited usefulness among evangelicals.

Robert P. Lightner. *The Last Days Handbook*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990. 223 pp. \$9.95 (paper). Reviewed by George J. Zemek, Professor of Theology.

This book will be of considerable value to a wide variety of readers because of Lightner's writing style and his commitment to provide a basic introduction to various approaches to unfulfilled prophecy. For the evangelical pastor, it is an objective review of major positions on the millennium and rapture with basic observations about the hermeneutics of each. For the Bible college student, it can be a very good eschatological primer, while for the discerning layman, it is an excellent introduction to the study of end times. Furthermore, its uncluttered charts (cf. pp. 31, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 76, 77, 78, 85, 114, 119),

⁷Thomas, "Bible Translations" 62, 65.

sections entitled "For Further Thought" and "Digging Deeper" at the ends of most chapters, and concluding annotated bibliography (pp. 202-11) and glossary (pp. 212-16), raise its potential for use as a Sunday school quarterly or something of this nature.

The volume's brevity leads to some potentially misleading generalizations about various positions and prohibits studies of a more inductive nature (e.g. concerning OT backgrounds of "covenant" and "kingdom"), but its strengths outweigh its inadequacies. Among the strengths are Lightner's emphases on the eschatological essentials held in common by all evangelicals (e.g. Chap. 2), his insistence that "there has always been only one way of salvation . . . by grace through faith . . ." (p. 60), his mentioning and outlining of *some* of the new trends (e.g. the prewrath rapture view, pp. 67-69; "the new postmillennialism-theonomy package," pp. 86-87; new dispensationalism, pp. 111-12; etc.), and his stress on the primacy of the Abrahamic Covenant (p. 133).

However, this work's greatest strength is unquestionably Lightner's godly attitude exemplified in his development of the handbook (e.g. pp. xii, 30-47, 92, 95-109, 168-69, 176-77, 179-86). He is faithful to his own historical challenge to his readership in applying eschatological viewpoints (p. 186):

In essentials unity.
In uncertainties freedom,
In all things love.

Obviously, the impetus for such an attitude is *not* theological ambivalence but his exegetical-theological integrity:

God in His wisdom has not seen fit to present all truth in the same way and to the same extent. He has chosen to give us some things in broad outline, with less emphasis upon the specific details. We need to respect the silence of God as much as we do His spoken word. . . . All the positions that evangelicals hold on unfulfilled prophecy have strengths and weaknesses. No one view is all right and all the others all wrong. As we allow the Holy Spirit to teach us through the Word, we must embrace the view that we feel is taught in Scripture and has the fewest and least bothersome problems (pp. 167, 184).

J. David Pawson. *Leadership is Male: Truth Must Not Be Based On*

Cultural Consensus but on the Revealed Mind of God. Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1990. 128 pp. \$11.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

This brief volume will provoke a definite response since it deals with a hotly debated issue. J. David Pawson, a Cambridge-trained, charismatic, Baptist pastor, courageously offers this primer to stimulate biblical thinking about leadership among God's redeemed people.

The title reflects the book's position immediately. The foreword, written by Elisabeth Elliot, is an appeal to conservatives. Its sensitive tone toward women makes it easy to read objectively.

Those who want thorough coverage of the subject and detailed exegesis will be disappointed (see H. Wayne House, *The Role of Women in Ministry Today* [Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1990] for such a treatment). But those desiring a survey of the significant biblical texts, the basic issues, and crucial questions involved will be delighted with Pawson's clear thinking and crisp style.

The author has a high view of Scripture (pp. 21-22, 111-12, 114-16) and takes the Bible in its normal sense rather than retranslating or reinterpreting it. He does not follow a contextualizing or culturalizing hermeneutic that would "update" Scripture for our times.

The conviction of Pawson is that equality of status does not mean interchangeability of function (pp. 21, 25). He concludes "that the paradox of gender in creation (the vertical equality and horizontal inequality) remains a feature in this present world and is consistently maintained throughout the Old and New Testaments" (p. 99).

Notable contributions include:

- <Discussing society's drift towards "goddess spirituality" and gender confusion in the Godhead (pp. 17, 28-30, 116-19).
- <Differentiating between male and female in Genesis 1-2 (pp. 25-27).
- <Surveying OT leadership patterns (pp. 37-42).
- <Outlining Jesus's response to women and leadership selection (pp. 45-53).
- <Thinking through Gal 3:28 (pp. 67-71, 109).
- <Interpreting 1 Tim 2:11-15 (pp. 82-90).
- <An overview of leadership in the New Jerusalem (pp. 93-94).

Pawson concludes that the church needs to do three things (pp.

100-1). First, it must stop putting women in positions of leadership over men. On the positive side, it needs to find more ministry opportunities for women. Third, it must train men more effectively.

This reviewer agrees wholeheartedly with the author's conclusions. However, readers need to watch for some not-so-minor flaws. Notable, but probably not intentionally, is a "leaking" of Pawson's Pentecostal/charismatic convictions, though they contribute nothing to the resolution of the issue at hand (pp. 21, 57-58, 60, 95, 102). Also, a brief discussion of "image" seems essential, but Pawson has written, "There is not need to discuss the meaning of `image'" (p. 23). He incorrectly states that "'male and female' is never used of fish, animals or birds`only of man" (p. 24; cf. Gen. 6:19, 7:2-3).

Pawson's brief discussions of Genesis 6, Jude 6 (pp. 93-94), and 1 Tim 2:15 (p. 89) lack the balance of most of his expositions. His position on the ordination of women is unclear in his short treatment (p. 97). The book's credibility could be significantly strengthened by correcting these deficiencies.

The author begins his work with a penetrating question: "Is [woman in spiritual leadership over man] a biblical idea whose time is come, like the abolition of slavery? or is it yet another case of Christians being conformed to the world?" (p. 15). He correctly concludes for the latter. This is the major reason the book needed to be written. It will help stop the unscriptural tide of so-called "evangelical" feminism from washing ashore on the church of Jesus Christ.

John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990). 119 pp. \$6.95 (paper). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

John Piper, senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, and author of *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, writes to remind preachers that "People are starving for the greatness of God" (p. 9) and need to hear "God-entranced preaching" (p. 11).

The author reasons that the church's view of inspiration will affect its view of preaching: "Where the Bible is esteemed as the

inspired and inerrant Word of God, preaching can flourish. But where the Bible is treated merely as a record of valuable religious insight, preaching dies" (p. 40).

Once the authority of Scripture is established, the place the church gives preaching is a critical issue.

Gravity in preaching is appropriate because preaching is God's appointed means for the conversion of sinners, the awakening of the church, and the preservation of the saints. If preaching fails in its task, the consequences are infinitely terrible (p. 54).

With the inspiration of Scripture and the relevance of preaching in place, the preacher's commitment to both will be borne out in his preparation. Stressing the importance of personal Bible study, Piper says:

When the pastor is out of seminary and in the church ministry there are no courses, no assignments, no teachers and the vast majority of preachers fall far short of the resolution that Jonathan Edwards made when he was in his twenties—"to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same" (p. 43, from *Jonathan Edwards Memoirs* in S. Dwight, ed., *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*).

Regarding sermon delivery, the author addresses comments on the preacher's demeanor as he preaches: speaking of inappropriate humor in the pulpit, he says, "I have been literally amazed at conferences where preachers mention the need for revival and then proceed to cultivate an atmosphere in which it could never come" (p. 56). With reference to the pastor's tendency to project a different personality when he preaches, he writes, "Don't strive to be a kind of preacher. Strive to be a kind of person" (p. 60).

Challenged early on in his seminary experience to find one great evangelical theologian to immerse himself in (p. 61), Piper selected Jonathan Edwards. Part two of this volume contains some of his gleanings from Edward's writings and biographies about Edwards. After a biography of Edward's life and a brief summary of his theology, comes the book's capstone, the basis of its title: "Make God Supreme: The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards."

Piper's newest book will be an encouragement to those who

preach the Bible faithfully and a challenge to preachers who settle for less than the Bible as their resource. One editorial oversight in a Scripture quotation needs attention: "Far be it from me to glory except *in human cross* Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Gal 6:14) (p. 33).

O. Palmer Robertson. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990. 357 pp. \$28.95 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Many readers may recognize the author's name from his earlier work, *The Christ of the Covenants*. O. Palmer Robertson brings a unique blend of ministry experience to his writing. He not only taught for twenty years at Reformed, Westminster, and Covenant Theological Seminaries, but also currently pastors Wallace Memorial Presbyterian Church in Hyattsville, Maryland.

In his discussion of the Redemptive-Historical framework of the prophets Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, he traces Judah's decline from Hezekiah to Jehoiachin, detailing the period's spiritual high and low points. This background is central to the three prophets' messages.

"Because Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah all ministered essentially to the same constituency and labored within thirty years of one another" (p. 17), Robertson selects theological issues relating to them as a group. Curiously absent from all three books is any trace of Messianism (p. 17), a hiatus perhaps best explained by a common "delusion with the historical experience of kingship in Israel" (p. 17). Kingship had ironically failed because it was built on a false assumption, that according to the land and dynastic promises to Abraham and David, respectively, both Jerusalem and her kings were indestructible. History would correct their misgivings, but rising against a tide of opposition, all three prophets challenged both king and subjects with the impending threat of God's wrath, but not without "full confidence that the redemptive purposes of God would be realized (cf. Nah. 1:14; Hab. 2:4; 3:18-19; Zeph. 3:9-20)" (p. 18).

The centrality of God, a second and broader theological rubric discussed by the author, is the focus in discussions of the doctrines of the Justice, Judgment, Covenant, and Salvation of God. Because

Judah's error was rooted in its wrong thinking about God and the nature of His promises, all three prophets needed to address major doctrinal misconceptions.

In his discussion "Shape of the Prophecies," Robertson underscores the importance of historical referents. Biblical history not only provides the context for appropriate interpretation of prophecy, but also occasionally functions as the prophecy itself, in a manner of speaking. Robinson argues, "But if the genuineness of Yahweh's intentions in history rests on the historical fulfillments of the prophet's word, then of course it matters whether the prophet spoke before or after the event being prophesied" (p. 335). In short, any attempt to do away with a historical frame of reference also tampers with the apologetic credibility of historical space-time fulfillment.

In his comments on the individual books, the author frequently refers to related NT passages as well as timeless theological inferences and current applications to twentieth-century situations.

While maintaining a strong rhetorical/homiletical emphasis, he neglects neither literary aspects of Scripture such as style, structure, and poetic parallelism, nor critical introductory matters such as date and authorship, unity, authenticity, and text. A select bibliography and analysis of contents for each of the three books precedes the author's verse-by-verse commentary. All is nicely indexed by subject, author, Scripture, and Hebrew word.

The Bible student will find in this fine contribution to the *NICOT* series a readable and useful discussion of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. The author is to be commended especially for his sensitivity to those preparing sermons and Bible studies.

Darius Salter. *What Really Matters in Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990. 205 pp. \$9.95 (paper). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Pastoral success is much sought after, frequently claimed, rarely achieved, and vaguely understood. Darius Salter does the pastoral community a grand favor by bringing "success" into biblical focus without ignoring its implications in real life. Salter exposes the "nickels and noses" philosophy of pastoral success as unreasonable,

not to mention, unbiblical.

What Really Matters in Ministry is two books for the price of one. Chapters one through five trace success in the American church, and chapters six and seven examine the subject in the ministry/writings of Jesus and Paul. It combines the best of both theology and reality.

Salter broadly defines a successful pastor as one who under the call of God gives himself wholeheartedly, according to God-given wisdom but limited perception, by the power of the Holy Spirit to the spiritual nurture of people (p. 194). He reflects on the biblical balance of utmost personal effort and total reliance on God for the results.

For those who wonder how other pastors fare in the ministry, prioritize their efforts, and yield fruit from their labor, Salter provides a current profile from his recent survey of "successful" pastors. One hundred eighty forms were circulated to pastors of nineteen denominations. These were chosen because they pastored rapidly growing churches with over 500 in attendance on Sunday mornings. One hundred responded to the survey. A sample of the "Successful Pastors Inventory" can be found on pp 39-41.

According to the survey, prayer and preaching highlighted pastoral priorities (pp. 43-53). Those responding averaged 52 minutes a day in prayer (p. 44) and directly linked their "success" (fruit) in preaching to the accompanying prayer (p. 57).

Chapter three highlights the personal qualities of the men with growing ministries. They include a sense of pastoral accountability to God, personal dynamic, being a self-starter, long-term commitment to present ministry, vision, being people-oriented, effective preaching, and energetic optimism. Salter balances this chapter by commenting that these observations "only tacitly concern the spiritual and theological qualifications of ministry." However, they do provide a practical side of ministry that cannot be ignored, but must be framed by the biblical mandates.

For those who struggle with rejection by their flock, the account of Jonathan Edwards' struggles brings perspective (pp. 145-48). The author's comments on Christ's lack of preoccupation with plaques and other public symbols of recognition will bring encouragement (p. 156). His exegetical discussion of "prosperity" gives clarity to those who are confused (pp. 149-56). Paul's view of success provides both a standard by which it should be measured and a humility which it should bring

(pp. 169-91).

In the Foreword, Robert Coleman notes, "In the effort to be effective, however, let us not confuse measurable statistics with the values of heaven." Salter has sought, and in large measure "succeeded," in keeping kingdom values preeminent while discussing twentieth-century ministries that exhibit the same kind of personal (2 Pet 3:18) and corporate growth (Acts) that Scripture enjoins all shepherds to pursue.

He reflects upon the ultimate of pastoral fruit in this manner: "To whatever extent Christ-likeness is being formed in their flock, they are successful" (p. 193). This work will stimulate and challenge the earnest pastor to a new level of spiritual effort.