

Book Reviews

Gary Edward Schnittjer. *Old Testament Use of the Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021. lii + 1052 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310571100. \$74.99

Gary Edward Schnittjer is Professor of Old Testament at the School of Divinity at Cairn University in Langhorne, PA, where he teaches biblical Hebrew and Old Testament. He has published several journal articles on the Torah and intertextuality, as well as the book *The Torah Story*.

Old Testament Use of the Old Testament is intended as an accessible reference work. Schnittjer states, “While anyone is welcome to read this book, it is designed as a reference study for students and ministers of the word.... A commitment to student introduction does not mean brushing aside complexities but attempting to provide a starting point for further investigation” (p. xliv). With this intention in mind, scholars who use this book should be aware that most of the scriptural references are in English, not Hebrew. Hebrew makes an appearance often, but most of the interaction with the words of the text is in English. Additionally, the primary English translation used is the *New International Version*.

The aim of the work is to help guide students and ministers to analyze scriptural exegesis. For Schnittjer, scriptural exegesis is the intentional interpretation of Scripture by Scripture. This includes allusion, quotation, and paraphrase of one Scripture passage by another. But mere allusion is not considered scriptural exegesis. There must be an exegetical component offered alongside the allusion or quotation. For example, Schnittjer notes how a theme develops between Isa 6:9–10 and Deut 29:2–4[1–3]). Isaiah advances the topic of the hardening of Israel’s heart at the time of his call from that at the beginning of the renewed covenant near the end of Deuteronomy. Because the theme develops—it is not a mere allusion—Isa 6:9–10 is considered scriptural exegesis. To determine when scriptural exegesis is present then, Schnittjer proposes three filters to remove what he calls “false positives” (p. xxii).

The first filter is a passage having a broad allusion to another passage, without interpretation. For example, Schnittjer admits there are allusions between the Woman of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9 and 31, and Ruth. However, because these allusions are not “exegetical allusions” they are filtered out (p. 575). The reader should not think a filtered-out item receives no attention though. Everything filtered out is recorded at the end of each

chapter. This makes the book a helpful resource for identifying various allusions, verbal parallels, and themes.

Second, stock phrases and common themes are filtered out. These include single occurrences of verbs like מִוּג “to melt,” used in Exod 15:15 and in Josh 2:9, 24. Finally, such connections within a biblical book are also filtered out if the author provides no interpretation. The easiest example to identify is the use of תּוֹלְדוֹת “generations,” throughout the book of Genesis. While the word serves as a literary marker in the structure of Genesis, one occurrence does not provide an interpretation of another. As with allusions, such stock phrases, common themes, and literary connections within a book are noted but relegated to the “Filters” section of each chapter.

Readers should also be aware of a contrast between Schnittjer’s approach and others. He looks forward in the biblical text. He does not look back onto the Old Testament from the perspective of Second Temple Literature (e.g., Kugel) or from the New Testament (e.g., Hays). He moves through the Old Testament book-by-book, monitoring the development of scriptural exegesis. This, he believes, ties scriptural exegesis to the concept of progressive revelation.

Schnittjer’s intention is thus to guide students and pastors through the waters of scriptural allusion. Academic researchers can still use this work as a jumping off point for their own study of the Old Testament’s use of the Old Testament. One may disagree with him on what constitutes exegetical allusion or whether something is an allusion or not. However, the work is singularly helpful in noting references such as allusions, common themes, and shared vocabulary.

Finally, of significance for pastors is the fact that Schnittjer notes major themes and literary motifs within a biblical book. Pastors beginning a sermon series and hoping to capture a book’s major themes or sub-themes, will find each chapter’s “Filters” section a quick and easy guide to identify them.

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Daniel I. Block. *Covenant: The Framework of God’s Plan of Redemption*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021. 680 pp. Hardback. 978-0801097881. \$54.99.

In this work, Daniel Block explains God’s covenant-redemptive initiative in several acts. Focusing on the Old Testament, he argues that God’s promises to Israel still apply despite that nation’s failures and the New

Testament's relative silence on the subject.

To begin his extensive treatment, Block shows how God ordered the creation into existence and then created human beings for the well-being of the world. This was to have everything he made function as a magnificent symphony, bringing endless glory to God simply by performing as he had intended in the first place. Thus, in Gen 1–2, no formal covenantal action was required to create an interdependent, symbiotic relationship. Human beings functioned as administrative vessels made in God's image by virtue of his acts and purposes in their creation.

Gen 3:1–11:26 then records the divine response to human and cosmic rebellion. Human rebellion disrupted all relationships, between God and the physical universe, God and humankind, and humankind and the rest of the physical universe. However, after the horrendous judgment on humankind and all the earth (Gen 6–8), God enacted the cosmic covenant. Here God laid the foundations for restoring his relationship with the physical world and reinforcing humanity's status as cosmic administrator. God promised never again to destroy the world as he had through the flood. His first step toward achieving that goal was placing the rainbow in the sky as a public declaration of that covenant commitment (9:8–17).

Human beings were still regarded as divinely appointed administrators of the cosmos, but the relationship between humankind and God and humankind and the rest of creation was fractured. An additional covenant was needed to lay the foundations for restoring our standing as deputized and empowered images of God. To restore a semblance of Adam's status in the world, Noah and his descendants were authorized to play the role of the original Adam in an administrative covenant. Yahweh had anticipated this by demonstrating his grace (*hēn*) toward Noah (6:8) and engaging him as an agent of rescue (6:9–8:19). Noah responded with righteous behavior in accord with his status as Yahweh's vassal (6:9, 22; 7:5). The Adamic covenant thus formalized this relationship.

Genesis 12:1–3 launches the next act of this drama. The divine attention zooms in on a segment of humanity specially chosen to serve as the agent and exemplar of a specially designed plan. This plan would lift the curse that still enveloped the world and replace it with divine blessing. Once the next phase of the project was completed, when the land was securely in the Israelites' hands, Yahweh elected David as his chosen royal administrator of the covenant. David's appointment signified the installation of a microcosmic *Adam* (humanity). The point was not simply to honor David as Israel's king and elevate him above the people, but to provide the people with a model of covenantal righteousness (Deut 17:17–20). It was also to keep the covenantal engine efficient, so Israel would successfully fulfill its mission as a “kingdom of priests” and agents

of blessing in the world.

By the time we reach the end of the Old (or “First”) Testament, the nation has fallen under the weight of its own crimes and rebellion against its divine suzerain. God thus responded totally in accord with the warnings in the covenant documents (Lev 26; Deut 28). Although both Yahweh and Moses had anticipated this outcome (Deut 31:14–21, 29), they declared this would not be the end of the story. They knew that Yahweh's covenants are all eternal and irrevocable and so foresaw that in the distant, far-off future, Israel would be fully restored in its own land, enjoying Yahweh's full blessing. As a collective group they would finally experience the circumcision of hearts (Deut 30:1–10) that had been true of only a remnant of individual righteous persons (Jer 31; Ezek 34; 37).

Turning to the New Testament evidence, in Jesus we discover a new and second Adam. Jesus the Christ (Messiah) represents the heart and soul of the divine program of redemption and the goal (*telos*) of everything that had happened to this point. However, Jesus was not only the ultimate David, crucified as the king of the Jews, he would also be lifted high and installed as king of the cosmos (Phil 2:10). He was thus the divine solution to the problem that consumed all creation. Before the world was made, in anticipation of human rebellion, the triune Godhead had devised a plan whereby the divine vision for all creation would ultimately be fully realized. The sinless Son of God would offer himself as a sin offering, taking on the punishment we deserve.

To conclude, drawing on the New Testament's relative silence, some believe that God has permanently suspended the promises made to the patriarchs and to the nation—the Israelite covenant has become irrelevant. By this interpretation, the promises of a physical homeland and physical benefactions are transformed into otherworldly realities involving a spiritual relationship with God. This often leads to a doctrine of supersessionism, according to which God's commitment to the church universal eclipses his interest in the physical descendants of Abraham. I thus close with a question from Block:

Given Yahweh's promises in the First Testament (the Old Testament), is this even conceivable, when he had so emphatically declared his eternal commitment to the physical seed of Abraham? Where then would that leave his unfailing love (*hesed*) and his fidelity (*'emet*, *'emūnā*)? (pp. 512–13)

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Daniel Daley. *God's Will and Testament: Inheritance in the Gospel of Matthew and Jewish Tradition*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2021. ix + 403 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1481315524. \$74.99.

The monograph under review posits the thesis that Matthew's Gospel employs the concept of inheritance to describe reception of and entrance into the Kingdom of God. The Gospel's four instances of inheritance language (the verb *κληρονομέω* in Matt 5:5, 19:29, 25:34 and the noun *κληρονομία* in Matt 21:38) disclose distinct aspects of God's kingdom. As the Father's Son, Jesus receives the kingdom and shares it with his disciples as a gift and reward for their pursuit of greater righteousness. To make the case, Daniel Daley delineates the trajectories of the concept of inheritance from biblical and extra-biblical literature, forming a constellation of ideas that inform Matthew's Gospel. Analyses of these texts serve as the basic structure for the book, with the first chapter introducing and defining the aims, approach, limits, and landscape of the study, while the fifth chapter, on Matthew, provides its climactic bulk.

The second chapter focuses on inheritance and related concepts in the Hebrew Bible. The Hexateuch has a stable concept of inheritance: Israel the heir of Abraham receives the gift of land from God as father, apportioned to the twelve tribes. The concept of inheritance is thus inherently relational: God as father is the initiator of all inheritances. To keep the inheritance, Israel must keep the requirements of the covenant. And yet, not only land and property are given as inheritance since Levites receive a different portion. In the Former Prophets, where Israel undergoes moral and structural turmoil, the concept of inheritance is reframed in terms of monarchy. This structure in effect downplays the distinction between tribes now that God has placed the oversight of inheritance upon the king. Still, the relational nature of inheritance is present, and the land is inalienable. In the Latter Prophets though, the experience of exile reshapes identity, gentiles are now seen as co-heirs, and the inheritance of land becomes more of an eschatological reality. Thus, while the Abrahamic promise of descendants and land possession receives emphasis in the Hexateuch and the Former Prophets, the third aspect of the promise, in which Abraham's descendants become a light to the nations, gains prominence in the Latter Prophets.

The third and fourth chapters discuss the notions of inheritance as reimagined in some Second Temple compositions. These include 1 Enoch, Sirach, Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, the Psalms of Solomon, and Qumran documents such as 4QInstruction, 4QBeatitudes, the Damascus Document (CD), the Community Rule (1QS) and the War Scroll (1QM). In the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic texts, inheritance refers to various

realities such as land, temple, Jerusalem, wisdom, law, and even marriage. When the focus is on the restoration of the people, inheritance is often conceived as corporate, not individualistic, and the stress is on Israel's role as a light to the nations sharing in the inheritance. No matter the iteration, inheritance is still understood as a gift and blessing from God, pointing to his unique relationship with his covenant people. In Qumranic texts, the gift of an inheritance is viewed more in theological than practical terms. Instead of property and land, the emphasis is on identity, social boundaries, the acquisition of wisdom, the pursuit of righteousness, ethical conduct, and ultimate postmortem fate. Inheritance has to do with membership in the heavenly community and a share in a reconstituted earth.

The heart of the book, the final chapter, examines the four references to inheritance in Matthew's Gospel and explores how Matthew adopts the antecedent traditions on inheritance in each. Using a virtue-ethics perspective informed by eschatology, Daley argues that the inheritance Jesus mentions in Matt 5:5 is universalized since all who practice the ethical disposition of humility and reliance on God will inherit the earth—understood not as the land of Israel alone but a new creation. In this way, meekness describes Jesus's ideal followers who are invited to envisage and share in the future heavenly kingdom in the present as they obey God's will. In Matt 19:29, the phrase “inherit eternal life” refers to a future eschatological reward given to Jesus's disciples who live according to kingdom values, thus motivating their active participation with Jesus. The inheritance in the parable of the wicked tenants in Matt 21:38 refers to the stake Jesus as Son has in all God's possessions as landowner. Specifically, the inheritance refers to the whole kingdom the Son shares with those who follow him. In other words, the parable points out that the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (but not all Israel) are at risk of losing their share of the inheritance by rejecting God's own Son. In this way, Israelite identity is re-defined in terms of discipleship to Jesus. Finally, the inheritance in the judgment scene in Matt 25:34 evokes God's role as father who gives a share of the kingdom to all who pursue greater righteousness; it is a gift prepared from the beginning. This underscores not only the permanence of the inheritance but also the recipient's permanent relationship with God.

This work succeeds in showing that inheritance is a vital theological notion for grasping the richness of Matthew's Gospel. It explains the Gospel's fusion of the sapiential and the apocalyptic, its portrait of God as Father, and the dynamics between Jews and gentiles. Reading it yields immense profit and a fuller picture of the inheritance in store for God's children.

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Rebekah Eklund. *The Beatitudes through the Ages*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021. xxi + 346 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0802876508. \$35.00.

Rebekah Eklund is Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Loyola University in Maryland. She employs both areas of her expertise in *The Beatitudes through the Ages*. Here she provides a reception history of the Beatitudes and argues that reviewing interpretations of them over the past two thousand years will display both theological and ethical development (p. 10).

Eklund equates reception history with a history of interpretation and defines it as “an exploration of a text’s ‘effects’ as it has traveled through history” (p. 2). A reception history may seem to merely repeat the thoughts of others, but she claims to retain the status of interpreter since she selects and juxtaposes conflicting past interpretations, without necessarily resolving them (pp. 9–10). She is comfortable with a multiplicity of meanings but at times delineates certain readings as better or worse (or as more or less illuminating, pp. 9–10).

Eklund traces each Beatitude’s reception history, listing differing interpretive viewpoints through the centuries on the meaning of each one. She also displays the differences between the Matthean and Lukan Beatitudes, showing different interpreters’ reconciliations of those differences (e.g., Matthew’s “Blessed are the poor in spirit” versus Luke’s “Blessed are the poor”). Interestingly, she adds examples of people who, in her judgment, embodied the Beatitudes over the years.

One of Eklund’s inherent strengths is her freedom from the repetition that plagues many commentaries of biblical material. Her thorough reception history engages one with varied interpretations and emphases from people outside the reader’s own exegetical tradition. When covering the Beatitude “Blessed are those who mourn” for instance, she notes how interpreters from the early Church Fathers to the Reformation almost uniformly applied the blessing to those who mourn over their own sin (pp. 101–7). However, the Reformers expanded the meaning to those who mourn for other reasons, like over the trials of everyday life (p. 107). She then observes how more recent interpreters, like Hannah Kinoti, teach that the blessing extends to those who mourn over structural sin (p. 112). She refuses to resolve the tension between these different viewpoints though, considering the multiplicity of meanings helpful.

Another strength of Eklund’s lies in her insistence that Jesus did not give the Beatitudes to provoke endless debate on their meanings. He wanted his people to manifest them (p. 287). One can scarcely argue that Jesus had no intention of upholding the Beatitudes’ ethical principles. So, it is perhaps good to lay aside some squabbles over meaning and favor

embodying their ethics instead. And practically, Eklund underlines the importance of living according to the Beatitudes by introducing each chapter with examples of historical figures who have exemplified them.

While Eklund simply presents others’ interpretations for the most part, in places she suggests some are more helpful than others. Unfortunately, on at least one occasion, her sympathies do not seem justified by the Beatitudes themselves. When she discusses the Lukan Beatitude “Blessed are the poor,” she rightly notes interpreters’ over-spiritualization of this passage (pp. 80–85). Indeed, many have harmonized Luke’s Beatitude with Matthew’s by turning the materially poor of Luke into the spiritually poor of Matthew. She notes that many of the ancient fathers surmised the blessing was for the believing poor (p. 82) but neglects to list any exegetical reasons for their conclusions. It is thus surprising when she offers liberation theology’s teaching, that poverty itself is evil, as a correction (pp. 84–85). She makes this point without addressing the exegetical context: Jesus speaks his blessing of the poor *over his disciples*.

One may certainly make the case that poverty is evil because of exploitative systems that cause and perpetuate it. However, inserting that argument to explain Luke’s Beatitude seems to negate Jesus’s blessing. The poor experience blessing because they follow the Messiah into his inbreaking kingdom, whether they were poor before following Jesus or poor because they followed Jesus. Jesus’s blessing extends to them regardless of the larger ethics of poverty, so it seems that such ethics cannot serve as an interpretive correction.

In any event, *The Beatitudes through the Ages* is a helpful contribution to New Testament studies because it identifies changes in interpretation of the Beatitudes over time, holds multiple interpretations in tension, and expands the interpretive options one brings to the Beatitudes. The reader is forced to recognize the helpful (or not so helpful) insights of the Church Fathers, the Reformers, Moderns, Postmoderns, and everyone in between. More than this, Eklund helpfully merges the parenetic nature of the Beatitudes with the need to incorporate them into one’s ethics.

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Anthony Le Donne, ed. *Christology in Mark’s Gospel: Four Views*. CriticalPoints Series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021. 320 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0310538707. \$32.99.

Given the plurality of recent perspectives on Mark’s portrait of Jesus,

a winsome and thoughtful scholarly interaction seems necessary. This volume seeks to illustrate the diversity of interpretations emerging from what is probably the earliest Gospel, especially considering the Evangelist's penchant for ambiguity and unanswered questions. Four views are represented, those of Sandra Huebenthal, J. R. Daniel Kirk, Adam Winn, and Larry Hurtado, whose death in 2019 made this his final scholarly publication. Each scholar writes a lengthy chapter defending her or his position on a spectrum of "low" to "high" Christology in Mark. This is followed by shorter response essays by the other three and a final rejoinder by the chapter author (and in Hurtado's case, by his student Chris Keith).

In her presentation of "suspended Christology," Huebenthal claims that Mark does not intend to portray Jesus as divine or preexistent but depicts him in Isaianic categories as an anointed, human, eschatological messenger with extraordinary abilities. She is known for her work in social memory theory and uses that perspective to argue that Mark's text must be read purely on its own basis. One should not focus on hypothesized historical or theological contexts but on how different levels of the narrative are intended to affect the reading community. She understands Mark's Jesus as having a "unique closeness to God" (p. 13) and as taking part in a cosmic battle between God and Satan, but she ultimately sees his identity as ambiguous and unresolved, hence the idea of "suspended" Christology. In the response essays that follow, Winn and Hurtado criticize her for ignoring questions of context (under the influence of her hermeneutical framework) and for not engaging with texts portraying Jesus as exceptionally exalted.

Hurtado names his perspective "Mark's presentation of Jesus." He contends that while Mark presents Jesus as human, the Evangelist clearly shows him to be uniquely significant: He has a relationship with/to God that cannot be likened to any other figure. Jesus is an agent whose way of fulfilling messianic and eschatological hopes must be considered an unparalleled and novel development when considering categories of anointed figures in Judaism at the time. Hurtado concludes that while authentically human, Jesus "bears and embodies a transcendent status and significance beyond any other figure in the experience of observers in the narrative or in the biblical traditions of individuals who were vehicles of divine power" (p. 93). In the response essays, Huebenthal critiques his idea that interpreters can know anything about what Mark's audience would have believed, while Kirk and Winn argue he does not adequately balance what it means for Jesus to be unique.

Kirk borrows his "narrative Christology of a suffering king" approach from his much-discussed 2016 book, *A Man Attested by God*. He claims that Jesus cannot be understood as more than a human figure. He is best

seen as a king who must, paradoxically, suffer and die to accomplish his royal purpose. For Kirk, Jesus is imbued with power and identified *with* God (not *as* God) as an idealized human figure. He compares rather than contrasts Jesus with ancient characters and with special titles, like "Son of God." In the response essays, he is critiqued primarily for downplaying the extraordinary implications of certain Markan passages, such as the episode where Jesus claims the authority to forgive sins.

Winn's perspective, "Jesus as the YHWH of Israel," represents the "highest" Christology. Although Mark portrays Jesus as human, he also intended to portray him as God, not just in relationship with God. Winn suggests this can be inferred from the emergence of Mark's own convictions in the text, especially from Mark's portrayal of Jesus speaking and acting in theophanic ways that (in the Old Testament) are only attributable to YHWH. His argument relies on the concept of "two-powers" theology in Jewish monotheism, which allows for a commitment to God and to a divine intermediary. It also rests on the idea that Mark's Christology was influenced by the apocalyptic "Son of Man" figure of the Parables of Enoch. The response essays critique Winn for attempting to make explicit what is only implicit in Mark and contend that he brings too many assumptions to the text.

The late Larry Hurtado's contribution is the highlight of the volume. It represents some of his finest work and is probably the most convincing perspective on Mark's Christology. Unfortunately, Chris Keith was not the best choice to represent Hurtado's position. Although he seeks to reflect his mentor, he departs quite markedly from many of Hurtado's views and is probably closer to Huebenthal. Even so, the volume is excellent, and represents some of the best in current Markan scholarship. It would certainly serve pastors, students, and scholars well as they delve into Mark's Gospel.

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Douglas J. Moo, *A Theology of Paul and His Letters: The Gift of the New Realm in Christ*. Biblical Theology of the New Testament 5, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021. xxxii + 749 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310270904. \$37.90

Douglas J. Moo is the Kenneth T. Wessner Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College and serves as the chair of the Committee on Bible Translation (NIV). His most recent monographs include *Galatians* (Baker Academic, 2013) and *James* (IVP Academic, 2015).

In his *A Theology of Paul*, Moo argues that “Paul’s letters reveal a coherent body of thought ... intended to mold behavior. We find so much theology in Paul’s letters because he is convinced that he can only mold his readers’ behavior if he first molds their thinking—their mindset, their worldview” (p. 603). Moo embraces this task by way of a declared methodology (Part 1, “Introductory Issues”), epistemology (Part 2, “The Theology of the Letters”), and organizing rubric (Part 3, “The Theology of Paul”).

Several interpretative values structure this methodology, which Moo explains “as an exegetically based biblical theology informed by some of the values of the ‘theological interpretation of Scripture movement’” (p. 7). First, the issues Paul addresses in each letter dictate the logic of his theology more than the grand narrative of Scripture (pp. 11–13). This distances Moo’s method from the narrative approach pioneered by Richard B. Hays and N.T. Wright. Second, he leans toward a discontinuous link between the OT and the NT (pp. 27–34). Thus, the Mosaic law does not specifically apply to Christians (p. 616). By an internal transformation, believers “‘think’ as Christ ‘thought’” and thereby fulfill “the law of Christ” (p. 622). His idea of Paul’s ethics is thus at odds with those who accept a greater continuity between the Testaments on the law (e.g., John Calvin and Thomas Schreiner). Third, Paul’s view of “participation in [ἐν] Christ” serves as “the web that holds Paul’s theology together” (p. 37). However, “ἐν generally encodes the idea of space or locality” not instrumentality or ontology (p. 39). As noted below, this is a crucial concept for his organizing rubric of Paul’s theology.

Moo’s epistemological foundation is grounded in Paul’s entire corpus. Paul wrote all 13 letters, his “thinking is fundamentally Jewish,” and his Damascus Road experience was both a conversion and a call to preach the gospel to the gentiles (pp. 47–49). Unfortunately, Moo barely mentions (let alone cites or engages) a possible Stoic influence on Paul’s epistemology (p. 16), as suggested by Troels Engberg-Pederson (and others).

The book’s subtitle, *The Gift of the New Realm in Christ*, captures Moo’s organizing rubric, “realm.” This is a spatially oriented idea that synthesizes Paul’s theology. It also reveals Moo’s position in the debate on the Pauline center (p. 36), whether it be justification by faith (pace Rudolf K. Bultmann) or participation in Christ (pace E. P. Sanders). Though he attempts to hold these concepts together, he decides on the former: Christ’s “substitutionary, sacrificial death,” not participation in Christ, remains the “focus” and “inner circle” of Paul’s theology that explains how God took care of the human sin problem (pp. 403–4). It is the “means and mechanism” that inaugurates the new realm (p. 403). Accordingly, the heart of Paul’s gospel is justification by faith, which Paul explains in Rom 1:18–

4:25 (p. 202). The gospel “is finally all about” a “holy, and perfectly just” God “declaring distinctly unholy people as just before him” (p. 398). Those justified in Christ receive a new status and a new relationship with God and enter a new realm (p. 480).

God’s legal act of justification is “the objective/forensic basis for our new-realm life” (p. 507) and “the necessary first step toward transformation” (p. 472). It does not contain a transformative element (pp. 483–85) but represents God’s “forensic approval: the verdict of ‘acquitted’ in the law court” (p. 210). Put differently, it is “God’s judicial decision to consider a sinful human being to be ‘right’ before him” (p. 480). Thus, the terms

“old man” and “new man” are not ontological but relational or positional in orientation. They do not, at least in the first place, speak of a change in nature but of a change in relationship. Our “old man” is not our sin “nature” that is judged and dethroned on the cross, to which is added in the believer another “nature,” “the new man.” (p. 608)

So, to a large degree, Moo’s idea of Paul’s theology stands in continuity with Bultmann rather than Sanders.

Only a mature scholar knows and understands the multitude of Pauline debates. Only a humble one can discuss them fairly and explain and defend his or her position in a kindhearted manner. In *A Theology of Paul*, Moo demonstrates his ability to excel in these areas. Whether or not one affirms his approach to or summary of Pauline theology, this *magnum opus* provides a wonderful resource of most significant discussions on Paul. It also amalgamates and summarizes Moo’s other publications on Paul (although it lacks any significant advancement of his thoughts) and presents the reader with his heretofore unpublished views on Pauline letters such as 1 & 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

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Jarvis J. Williams. *Redemptive Kingdom Diversity: A Biblical Theology of the People of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021. xiii + pp. 207. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1540964625. \$24.99.

This volume offers a foundation for understanding what it means to be the people of God in a world ripe with sin, racism, and division. Jarvis Williams concisely introduces the reader to key ideas on the development of race and ethnicity in the biblical text and provides insights on how cultures then and now have differed in understanding these terms.

Williams structures his survey chronologically, beginning with the Pentateuch. He focuses on Adam and Eve, then Abraham and the line of promise, ending with Moses and the people's journey through the wilderness (Chapter 1). From there, he analyzes the Prophets and Writings, noting how the people of God are set apart and what characterizes them as God's people (Chapter 2). Closing the Old Testament and transitioning to the New, he navigates the various genres of the NT, establishing how Christ is the unifier to develop the redemptive kingdom of diversity that produces the people of God (Chapters 3 to 5). Through faith in Christ, the multiethnic people of God expand beyond the Mosaic Law, allowing gentiles the gift of grafting into the kingdom of God's people. They form a new creation that will celebrate Christ's victorious return and enjoy his eternal kingdom. Williams then provides a synthesis of his arguments from both Testaments (Chapter 6), leading into an extensive but practical treatment of how the people of God should behave in their culture (Chapter 7).

He does not pull his punches as he presents a thorough overview of race, racism, and ethnicity in the United States. For those uncertain of what to do with such matters, Williams offers a solution that requires humility for many, if not all, readers. His heart's desire is to see reconciliation and to extend a plan to help the Church understand how to walk through the evils of racism's divide. All his material is well presented and thoroughly treated, but the final section of his work is profound, powerful, and necessary. Here he responds to many poorly handled problems of racism in America, including the COVID outbreak, treatment of Asians, and politics.

Redemptive Kingdom Diversity is easy to read, aimed at readers from every walk of life, from lay level to academic. Throughout the book, Williams grounds his content (and developing themes) in the redemptive narrative of Scripture. At the beginning and end of each chapter he provides brief summaries, stating what readers can expect to find and alluding to things to come, which contributes to a consistent and helpful structure from cover to cover.

This volume is very valuable but some thoughts merit consideration. Since it is a comprehensive survey of Scripture, one might expect lengthier treatment. Although Williams utilizes his space effectively, he would have strengthened his argument from a more extensive discussion of the biblical text. For instance, giving each genre of biblical literature its own chapter might enhance intertextual and historical engagement with the development of race, racism, and ethnicity. This could facilitate the contrast between the worldviews of God's people and people of the world. Additionally, while the brief summaries format is helpful, Williams tends

to copy the opening sections almost verbatim in his concluding sections. This results in a repetitive pattern that appears redundant.

More significantly, when addressing matters of race, racism, and ethnicity, he focuses almost exclusively on the American context, neglecting the global picture. Expanding his coverage might serve readers abroad better. He alludes to racial sin outside the US several times, but examples are rare, as is engagement with such cases. A work covering this pressing issue should include matters beyond the author's geographical context to address the universal Church's response to race and ethnicity.

In the end, Williams presents a necessary perspective in our current climate, showing how a Spirit-filled, ethnically diverse people should live redemptively in a fallen world. *Redemptive Kingdom Diversity* rightly guides the Church to live on mission, boldly correcting the wrongs of racism through the gospel, that all might cry out to Jesus.

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William M. R. Simpson, Robert C. Koons, and James Orr, eds. *Neo-Aristotelian Metaphysics and the Theology of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 2022. xv + 436 pp. Hardback. ISBN: 978-0367637149. \$160.00.

This edited volume explores ways in which neo-Aristotelian metaphysics can impact our understanding of nature, which then bears on our perception of God, his relation to nature, and the place he has appointed humanity in nature. Its 16 chapters interact, to lesser and greater degrees, with classical and medieval Aristotelian thinkers.

John Marenbon's prologue sets the tone for the book by pointing out that modern philosophers who engage with classical and medieval thinkers cannot help but distort them. However, this is part of the process of philosophical retrieval, and "they should not be criticized for doing what is necessary to their job of being philosophers" (p. xv). Many of the authors draw on and interpret the work of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. As Marenbon points out though, none of them can simply be classified as "Aristotelian" or "Thomist." Instead, they utilize an analytic methodology to retrieve and interpret Aristotelian ideas. Their chapters put these ideas into conversation with quantum physics (William Simpson and Robert Koons), evolution and probability theory (Stephen Boulter and Alexander Pruss), the concept and function of powers (Daniel De Haan, Antonio Ramos-Diaz and Travis Dumsday), contemporary theories of the ontology of law (James Orr), the relation between the creation and God (David Oderberg, Ross Inman, Edward Feser and Simon Kopf), free will

and agency (Timothy O'Connor and Janice Chik), and the hylomorphic view of the human person (Christopher Hauser and Anne Peterson). Each chapter has its own thesis and argument. It is simply unrealistic to summarize or assess each chapter individually though. For this reason, I do two things in the rest of the review. First, I address important general strengths and weaknesses of the book. Second, I give some attention to the chapters I consider most and least useful along with reasons for this evaluation.

Overall, the editors and individual contributors have done a wonderful job of engaging in depth with both philosophical and theological concerns. Each chapter shows a high level of academic rigor and philosophical thought. However, the chapters in this book universally assume the reader is familiar with the Aristotelian tradition, the analytic method, and the specific subjects covered. It is not an introductory volume, and some of the chapters will be simply unapproachable for readers without the requisite background. This is not a flaw in the book, but it does limit the audience that will find it interesting and useful.

In the context of the church and theology, the two most theologically applicable chapters are Oderberg's "Restoring the Hierarchy of Being," and Inman's "Grounding and Participation in God." Of the two, Oderberg's is more accessible. He provides a clear, contemporary articulation of the medieval concept of the hierarchy of being. He lucidly explains this concept (pp. 95–97), why it was eventually rejected (pp. 97–101) and defends its plausible retrieval (pp. 101–19). In short, Oderberg makes a significant contribution to the project of making the hierarchy of being a plausible conceptual framework in a contemporary context. He also gives reasons why we might think about the structure of the world in this way.

Inman's chapter is more technical. His goal is to clarify the necessary propositions that must be included in any participatory ontology. He refers to these as a "minimal participatory ontology" (p. 293). He clearly explains two central concepts of his model, participation (pp. 293–300) and grounding (pp. 300–07). He also explains and defends a specifically neo-Aristotelian approach to understanding the relationship between participation and grounding in a minimal participatory ontology (pp. 307–15). However, he assumes the reader will follow his technical analytic argument, and this may be a step too far for some.

Feser's chapter also deserves special mention. He provides a clearly articulated and accessible defense of the Thomist distinction between nature and supernature. In contrast, I nominate Orr's chapter as the least useful. This is not because of any technical deficiency, but simply because he assumes a high degree of familiarity with various views in the ontology of laws. The chapter is technical and moves quickly. While Orr's argument

is both interesting and important *in its field*, it will be inaccessible to many readers not already invested in the topic. Simpson's chapter suffers from the same problem. Its subject matter is more applicable to contemporary theology, but it assumes familiarity with both Aristotelian metaphysics and quantum mechanics.

In sum, *Neo-Aristotelian Metaphysics and the Theology of Nature* is a collection of excellent chapters from scholars at the top of their respective fields. While it has a high entry-point, the chapters will reward readers with both depth and clarity of thought on a wide variety of important topics lying at the boundary of philosophy and theology.

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Craig A. Carter. *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition: Recovering Trinitarian Classical Theism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021. xviii + 334 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1540963307. \$32.99.

Craig Carter (Ph.D., University of St. Michael's College) is an ordained, evangelical, Baptist minister and professor of theology at Tyndale University. This book is the second of a trilogy (*Interpreting God with the Great Tradition*, 2018, and *Doing Philosophy with the Great Tradition*, forthcoming 2023). The book is a work of theological "resourcement" (pp. 36, 306) that attempts to recover a loss of transcendence in contemporary theology. Carter writes as an evangelical, (primarily) to evangelicals about the metaphysical presuppositions of theological method and the dangers he perceives in current trends toward relational theism ("God changes the world and the world changes God," p. 16).

Carter frames his book as a "response to the charge made by modernist biblical interpretation that the fathers read extrabiblical metaphysical assumptions derived from Greek philosophy into the text of the Bible and thus developed an erroneous doctrine of God as immutable, impassible, and so forth" (p. 45; the "Hellenization Thesis"). He argues that the Hellenization Thesis has it backward. Rather, fourth century theologians carefully and critically engaged, revised, and appropriated philosophical and metaphysical concepts of the philosophers (especially Plato) to communicate the Scriptures and address the issues of their day. Further, he claims that modern theologians (including many unwitting conservative evangelicals) are guilty of importing modern (pagan) metaphysics and participating in the liberal theology project of making the Christian faith and doctrine of God more palatable. While this move comes in stronger and weaker forms, it results in a pantheistic collapsing of transcendence and

immanence (pp. 16–18).

Programmatically, the book is divided into three parts. Part I outlines the move away from classical theism to relational theism (Chapter 1) and sets forth the definition of Carter’s core concept of retrieval, Trinitarian Classical Theism, summarized in 25 theses (Chapter 2). Positively, Carter argues that “the God of the Bible is more than the god of the philosophers but not less” (p. 78, Thesis 20). He identifies five core metaphysical doctrines that the fathers corrected and revised in the light of Scripture: divine simplicity, immutability, eternity, self-existence, and God as the First Cause of the universe. Modern scholarship’s rejection of these revised metaphysical doctrines has left the church susceptible to a range of problematic teachings about the nature of God.

In Part II Carter demonstrates the exegetical faithfulness of “Trinitarian Classical Theism” through a close, theological reading of Isaiah 40–48 (Chapters 3–6). Here he fleshes out his theological-interpretive method (p. 54). Importantly, he argues that biblical authors modeled a “polemical corrective” approach in which they “intended to correct the lies, misunderstandings, and gaps in the religious systems of the cultures surrounding Israel” (p. 145). In sum, Isaiah 40–48 reveals God as the transcendent creator, sovereign over history, who alone among the gods is worthy of worship.

Part III builds on the metaphysical portrait drawn from Isaiah. Carter argues that the pro-Nicene fathers who helped to codify Christian orthodoxy at Constantinople (A.D. 381) were deeply concerned with biblical exegesis and grounded their theological polemics and dogmatics in the textual patterns, doctrines, and metaphysical implications of the Scriptures. Additionally, they faithfully applied the biblical “polemical corrective” model to their own situation (Chapter 7). The result was “Christian Platonism” or Trinitarian Classical Theism. The rest of Part III illustrates this thesis, examining *creatio ex nihilo* (Chapter 8) and offering a sweeping historical narrative of modernity’s rejection of Trinitarian Classical Theism (Chapter 9). Carter then concludes with a call to rethink our metaphysics in the light of Scripture with help from the fathers.

Contemplating God with the Great Tradition is a provocative work that engages the doctrine of God on hermeneutical, historical, philosophical/metaphysical, and confessional levels. It stands with other recent works (e.g., James Dolezal, *All That Is in God*, 2020, and Matthew Barrett, *Simply Trinity*, 2021) in calling for a return to classical theism and its attendant metaphysical doctrines. It offers interesting and substantive interaction on a wide range of issues, especially theological method, theological interpretation, classical theistic doctrines, and the nature of theological language. Evangelical readers will appreciate Carter’s posture

of trust in the biblical text and his affirmation of the classic Protestant attributes of Scripture (e.g., necessity, inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, clarity, and unity of the testaments).

The term “Christian Platonism” has and will continue to draw fire from critics though. Carter provides a clear rationale for the term (p. 127) and carefully delimits what he means and does not mean by it (e.g., in his “Ur-Platonism” discussion, pp. 289–93). Nonetheless, given the amount of revision and expansion Carter claims the early church fathers gave these concepts, why retain it? Could the same point not be made by speaking of “platonic influences?” Some may also object that Carter has elevated the fathers and their metaphysics to an infallible status. However, he rightly rejects the notion of presuppositionless exegesis and challenges readers to use classic, Christian presuppositions as their starting point rather than those of a modernity often rooted in philosophical naturalism (see pp. 31–44).

In sum, *Contemplating God* substantively contributes to the burgeoning conversation on retrieving classical theism. For the uninitiated, the opening chapters (especially Chapter 2) will provide a helpful road map to the core issues and stakes of the debate. Those following Carter’s hermeneutical project will find the book a helpful example of his interpretive method. It is an important volume deserving wide scholarly attention and careful consideration.

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David H. Kelsey. *Human Anguish and God’s Power*. Current Issues in Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xiv + 448 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1108836975. \$39.99.

Who has not struggled for the right words to comfort those who suffer? The author of Proverbs recognizes the value of this skill as he observes, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver” (Prov 25:11 ESV). Yet, in the face of the horrors of this fallen world, can a “fitting word” be found? Facing the challenge to offer sincere consolation to others, the Christian’s primary task is to speak well of God. Job’s three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—failed here, as confirmed by the LORD’s demand for priestly sacrifice and mediation from Job on their behalf, because “you have not spoken of me what is right” (Job 42:7, 8). In *Human Anguish and God’s Power*, David Kelsey, Weigle Professor Emeritus of Theology at Yale Divinity School, believes that Job’s good-intentioned friends are not the only ones guilty of giving theologically

problematic pastoral counsel to those in desperate need.

Kelsey's contribution to the stellar "Current Issues in Theology" series originates from his 2011 Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary and is an extension of groundwork laid in his seminal two-volume project on theological anthropology, *Eccentric Existence* (WJK, 2009). As the title suggests, the book lays bare commonplace ways Christians invoke God's "power" for the sake of pastoral counsel or theological explanation of human "anguish" (p. 1). The heart of the book's argument unfolds in three interrelated movements. Drawing on the core of canonical Christian Scripture, these reconstruct how God relates to his creation in terms of glory, kingdom, and power.

In Part 1, Kelsey contends that "glory" is a divine attribute true of the triune God intrinsically, and thus divine power cannot be referred to as the source of creaturely harm for the sake of gaining glory from human praise (pp. 25, 27, 66). Parts 2 and 3 shift attention to the second and third major themes of "kingdom" and "power." These sections comprise the bulk of his argument as he constructs fresh doctrinal understandings of God's "sovereignty," "providence," and "power."

Integral to Kelsey's thesis is his conception of a threefold strand to the divine economy, describing how God relates to all that is not God in creative, reconciling, and eschatological blessing (pp. 167–203). While Kelsey affirms a single economy, the narrative logic in each of the three strands differs in how the triune God relates to them. In short, Kelsey's proposal centers on the conviction that the "absolute" divine power exercised in the act of *creatio ex nihilo* does not automatically denote the power of God at work in his sovereign reign and providential care of creation (in creative, reconciling, and eschatological blessing). Rather, God's power, operative in sovereignty and providence, is governed by his self-relating, self-regulated commitment to the integrity of creaturely nature, agency, and well-being (p. 95). It should not be assigned causal responsibility for whatever happens to a creature, especially the horrors that harm creaturely good (pp. 102–3).

Much exists within the covers of this book to digest. Though it bears significant implications for reshaped pastoral counsel in response to human suffering, it is an academically demanding monograph, as one would expect from this respected series. It might be seen as moving "towards" a dogmatics of the providence of God; it certainly demonstrates in exemplary fashion the task of dogmatic location.

Some readers unacquainted with Kelsey's style will find his argument overly technical, tedious, and repetitive in places. Nonetheless, his proposal merits serious future engagement in the doctrinal categories of God's providence, sovereignty, and theodicy. In that respect, an initially

perceived weakness is the paucity of scholarly dialogue in these fields. He lacks substantial interaction with contemporary writers such as Mark Elliott, whose multivolume project on providence questions his threefold construal of the economy (e.g., *Providence*, Baker Academic, 2020), and with past figures like Martin Luther. Specifically, Luther's treatise *On Bound Choice* (1525), which deals with divine providence, sovereignty, and power at length and in depth is conspicuously overlooked. Instead, Kelsey cursorily assesses the Reformer's doctrine of God from the *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518) (pp. 327–28).

In sum, Kelsey has submitted a robust "check" to theologically uncritical and unexamined usage of God's power for pastoral counsel in response to human anguish. He still leaves us with something "Christian" to say to suffering and the horrors of the world though: He soberly reminds us that "stammering" and "silence" are fitting modes of praise that honor the triune God's glory while caring well for his human creatures (pp. 415–23).

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Daniel R. Bare. *Black Fundamentalists: Conservative Christianity and Racial Identity in the Segregation Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2021. 261 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1479803279. \$30.00.

Virtually all the standard accounts of the Modernism-Fundamentalism Controversy in America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries portray fundamentalism as a lily-white movement. Daniel Bare seeks to correct the record on this matter in his *Black Fundamentalists* by showing there were indeed black Christians, in addition to those who were white, who actively participated in the fundamentalist crusade. He not only demonstrates this definitively, but in the process of tracing the history of black fundamentalism makes several noteworthy observations about Christianity and race in America.

First, in demonstrating that the fundamentalist movement was not monolithically white, Bare also dispels any notion that black American Protestantism was uniformly modernist or liberal. Second, he shows that although black and white fundamentalists shared the same doctrinal commitments and opinions regarding evolution and inerrancy, they differed significantly when it came to applying their theology to the issue of racial discrimination. While white fundamentalist theology generally accommodated racial segregation, black fundamentalists deemed discrimination to be incompatible with biblical theology. In the process of demonstrating

the latter, Bare makes three noteworthy contributions.

First, in elucidating the scriptural arguments made by black fundamentalists against racial prejudice, he provides the reader with a rare glimpse into the oft-neglected work of black theologians in America. Second, in tracing the arguments of these black pastors and theologians, he shows his readers how and where the Bible subverts the ideas that undergirded the practices and policies of racial discrimination in the United States during the twentieth century. Third, and most intriguingly, he makes the case that culture influences biblical interpretation. Black and white fundamentalists utilized the same hermeneutical approach to biblical interpretation yet reached starkly different conclusions on what the Bible says about racial distinctions and discrimination. This leads him to say: “I argue that the different social and cultural circumstances facing the black and white communities often led to substantially different social actions and applications, even among those who would commonly agree on the most important fundamentalist doctrines” (p. 15).

Bare also shows that this common agreement on important fundamentalist doctrines between black and white Christians provided a basis for limited, yet notable, cooperation between the two groups. The primary example of this is the extraordinary formation of the American Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) by both the National Baptist Convention (black) and the Southern Baptist Convention (white). His chapter on the ABTS is the best existing history of that institution in print today.

The National Baptist Convention (NBC) plays a prominent role in Bare’s quest to prove the existence of black fundamentalists since it was headed by a string of fundamentalist presidents during the first half of the twentieth century. Those presidents increasingly battled liberal elements within the NBC, particularly those on staff at the denomination’s newspaper, but boldly proclaimed their opposition to evolution and their belief in the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures. In addition to those in the NBC, Bare shows that black, Bible-believing, conservative Christians could be found in a variety of denominations. In addition to Baptist figures, he demonstrates that leaders and pastors in Methodism, Congregationalism, the American Methodist Episcopal, and the American Methodist Episcopal Zion churches were outspoken critics of modernism and active in the fundamentalist cause. He provides additional substantiating evidence in the form of black liberal pastors and leaders frequently bemoaning the fact that so many black Christian institutions (and black Christians) in America remained under the sway of fundamentalist doctrines.

Black Fundamentalists is a welcome, much-needed, thoroughly researched, and well-written work that uncovers an important part of the

story of American Christianity that has been ignored and neglected for too long. Bare, an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Texas A&M University, is to be commended for this fine work.

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Noel A. Snyder. *Sermons That Sing: Music and the Practice of Preaching*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021. 177 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0830849338. \$30.00.

Noel Snyder is program manager at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin University. He completed his Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary, writing his dissertation on the intersection of musicology and homiletical theory. *Sermons that Sing* is the product of his doctoral work.

In sum, the monograph provides a “sustained analysis of *the musicality of preaching* by bringing the art of music into deep theoretical and practical conversation with the art of preaching” (p. 3). The author begins his analysis by considering the strengths and weaknesses of four different methods of music in homiletics. He ultimately rejects these methods as extremes on two axes. One axis moves from literal to metaphorical, while the second goes from intrinsic to extramusical. “What is needed, therefore—and what this project attempts to sustain—is a kind of methodological middle ground, an approach to the musical-homiletical conversation that remains as close as possible to the center of both axes on the methodological plane” (p. 29). To find this middle ground, Snyder borrows from Jana Childers’s method of arriving at a middle between literal and metaphorical in *Performing the Word: Preaching Theatre*. He is also significantly influenced by Jeremy Begbie’s work in the interdisciplinary conversation between music and theology.

The main content of Snyder’s work focuses on three characteristics shared between music and preaching: synchrony, repetition, and teleology. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 deal with each of these in turn and are structured similarly. First, the author discusses the musical significance of the characteristic through theory and application. Following this musical investigation, he considers the homiletical importance of the characteristic. The final and shortest section is then devoted to synthesizing and applying the concepts considered through the chapter. In each final section, he works to accomplish the primary purpose of his book: to bring music and homiletics into a conversation in such a way that benefits the preacher.

The concluding chapter shows how sermons might benefit from the

tools and concepts presented in the book. Snyder gives a helpful note on how he conceptualizes this taking place: “Perhaps the simplest way for preachers to think about putting it all together is to relate each of the three characteristics to a specific moment or movement in individual sermons” (p. 162). He then illustrates this by analyzing one of his own sermons.

The first notable strength of Snyder’s work is his ability to develop a working methodology to accomplish his aim. He builds this method through an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of four different musical-homiletical approaches. Then he synthesizes Childers’s middle path between literal and metaphorical interpretation and Begbie’s work in establishing a conversation between music and theology. The methodological result is appropriately summarized as “homiletical theory through musicology” (p. 36).

A second strength is the author’s intentionality in giving examples of the concepts he considers in each chapter. Through footnotes, he guides the reader to see the concepts of synchrony, repetition, and teleology in straightforward, practical ways. This commentary allows the reader to see Snyder’s points in application and reaffirms or clarifies what one might have missed in previous chapters.

Although *Sermons that Sing* is a helpful, practical guide, I would offer one warning to potential readers. A significant portion of the book explores musical concepts which may be unfamiliar. In Chapter 4, for instance, the author considers the power of cadence within musical composition as a way of understanding the power of movement in music. To illustrate different cadences, he gives musical examples of authentic, plagal, deceptive, and half cadences through a brief explanation and notated examples (p. 127). Considering the musicological aspect of his work, I would not recommend it to every preacher but to those who have musical training or the patience to wade through unfamiliar musical concepts.

In the end, Snyder’s work is a fascinating study of musical homiletics that will help preaching practitioners see homiletical method from a fresh perspective. While he identifies preachers as the primary beneficiaries of his work in musical homiletics, I believe a second group might benefit more. Perhaps those who would gain the most are the musicians of the church who preach and teach as they have the opportunity.

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Matt Rhodes. *No Shortcuts to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022. 272 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433577758. \$19.99.

For the last few decades, missionaries and organizations have developed training materials that promote rapid reproduction. Matt Rhodes, a missionary currently serving in North Africa, raises questions about these strategies and offers a program for future missions endeavors in *No Shortcuts to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions*. He argues for a return to the professionalization of missionaries and calls for “the slow acquisition of professional skills” (p. 18). There are no shortcuts. Human effort and skill acquisition are essential, not detrimental, to the missionary task.

Rhodes divides his book into two sections. In Part 1, he introduces three issues which he deems to be a feature of current missions strategies: a denial of the use of human means, the overreliance on and possible manipulation of quantitative results, and their incongruence with Scripture. In Part 2, he offers his own missions manifesto, claiming that the way forward relies on the development of skills and giftings such as gospel proclamation, language fluency, and cultural acquisition. He urges a long-term path for missionaries and challenges them to stay in one location until they see the development of a healthy church.

Rhodes raises crucial questions. His analysis of issues stemming from quantitative strategies highlights a vital discussion not only for missions but for western Protestantism as a whole. Are components of these approaches detrimental to a mission’s enduring health, and if so, how do missionaries and organizations course-correct? Likewise, his attempts to align practical strategies with scriptural truth illustrate a desire for a robust missiological method.

Though he raises good questions, Rhodes’ attempts to answer them create a falsely dire picture and an unfair assessment of some quantitative strategy proponents. First, he presents the current issues as perilously grim when he appeals to William Carey’s classic *Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*. Carey called for the use of means; Rhodes calls for a return to the use of means. However, he omits a crucial element: Carey was persuading British Baptists simply to send missionaries. Christians today do not ask, “Should Christians even send missionaries?” Instead, they ask a very different question: “Do current missiological methods enhance a mission’s long-term health?” Though both Carey and Rhodes appeal to the use of means, Rhodes over-inflates the importance of his questions by linking them to Carey’s historic appeal.

Next, Rhodes fails to nuance the differences between movement missiologies. T4T is not the same as an Insider Movement. David Garrison and David Watson present different methodologies. Though all the authors in Rhodes's critique focus on rapid reproduction, to present them as the same or even similar is an oversimplification. He not only overgeneralizes but misrepresents when he throws quite different authors together. He also critiques past missiological arguments without acknowledging that many missionaries have already taken steps to deal with an original argument's shortcomings. He could have strengthened his position by including a section featuring a nuanced, faithful description of the similarities and differences of the various authors and texts under critique.

Finally, Rhodes's presentation reads like two different books. He critiques issues linked to movement missiology in Part 1, which raises expectations of a second part focusing on a way to correct them. Part 2, however, presents a missions manifesto that deals with a variety of missiological concerns. These include holistic missions methods that do not prioritize gospel proclamation, the de-professionalization of the missionary force, and matters of calling and gifting. He could have strengthened the flow of his argument by broadening the missiological issues he addresses in Part 1. As the book stands though, he unintentionally implies that all the problems he challenges in his missions manifesto are present in movement missiology. He thus unfairly represents movement missiology since such strategies do emphasize boldness in gospel proclamation, for instance.

In sum, Rhodes attempts to shine a light on the dark corners of movement missiology and encourages missionaries to embrace the use of means for the sake of the gospel. His examination is notable because it gives voice to the often-silent struggles of missionaries or missions supporters who wrestle with the same questions. Strategists and leaders need to hear and carefully consider these questions in light of Scripture and missions longevity. However, he overstates the current situation's severity, understates the differences between various movement missiologies, and lacks a coherent argument. These weaknesses threaten to undermine his overall goal of calling for the professionalization of missionaries. One needs to ask about missionary professionalization and what such missionaries think about rapid reproduction methods. But nuanced, well-considered answers need to be given. That is key to indicating there are indeed no shortcuts to success.

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Joshua J. Knabb. *Christian Meditation in Clinical Practice: A Four-Step Model and Workbook for Therapists and Clients*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021. 252 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1514000243. \$40.00.

In *Christian Meditation in Clinical Practice*, Joshua Knabb sets out to provide "a Christian approach to meditation in clinical and counseling practice, building upon a Christian worldview as a starting point, but also translating secular research" as one learns "to respond differently to psychological suffering" (pp. 6–7). His work provides a key model for noticing individuals' suffering and shifting their gaze heavenward, followed by practical application chapters.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide the framework for Knabb's approach. First, he discusses the primacy and necessity of a Christian worldview as it relates to meditative practices, but he also pays significant attention to the helpfulness of God's revealed knowledge through the sciences. He gives the reader an explanation of what he calls "transdiagnostic processes," the integration of science and Scripture, alongside several examples. Chapter 2 then provides a historical overview of meditative practices in both Buddhist and Christian traditions, as well as secular psychology, to articulate the vast resources at the clinician's disposal. Importantly, Knabb argues that the Christian tradition is sufficient for providing helpful meditative practices.

Chapter 3 serves as a pivot point for the text as Knabb expounds on his crucial Notice-Shift-Accept-Act model. Reviewing each step of this model in depth, he uses extensive references and examples from Scripture. He also articulates the necessity of shifting one's thoughts from an earthly present to a heavenly future. This shift, he claims, is essential for one to know God rightly and sense his presence.

Chapters 4–8 provide the practical application of his model, targeting five areas: cognition, affect, behavior, the self, and relationships. The bulk of each chapter, after a brief introduction and explanation, contains a list of exercises that clinicians can use to work through the four-step model. These include meditations on Scripture, historical readings, and other noteworthy phrases/texts. Each is designed to draw the participant towards the prescribed shift from self to God. While the exercises themselves change, the purpose remains consistent.

Knabb's work, including its listed exercises, has many notable strengths and benefits. First, it is easy to treat the words "meditation" and "clinical practice" (for better or worse) with skepticism. Put another way, one typically assumes the author is beginning with psychology and attempting to fit Scripture into it. However, that is not the case here. Knabb

desires to begin and end with Scripture (as he demonstrates with his pyramid on p. 6). Throughout the book, he constantly starts with the biblical text and filters any secular discussion through it. This is refreshing, given the characteristic approach of integrative literature.

Second, this work is very clearly written and easy to understand, a skill that cannot be understated. Terms are defined appropriately, the audience and purpose are stated early (and aligned with the rest of the text), and the entire book is immensely practical. The structure lends itself towards ease of understanding.

Third, the book rightly pushes the reader (quite forcefully, at times!) towards an outward and upward focus. The reality in working with mental health struggles is the enduring tendency to look inward, focusing much more on one's present circumstances than the situations of others or even beyond the present moment. And yet, three of the four steps of Knabb's model intentionally shift one's gaze away from oneself. This is a crucial component for healing and growth.

Finally, and somewhat related to the strengths just noted, Knabb properly defines "success" or "healing" as finding contentment in God. Truly, that is sanctification! Rather than asking the clinician to focus on symptom reduction, Knabb rightly sees "feeling better" as a *byproduct* of first shifting one's gaze outward and upward. Contentment in God is the goal; symptom reduction is an offshoot (albeit helpful and even anticipated). This emphasis marks a major shift from secular psychology. It is a goal firmly rooted in Scripture, further affirming Knabb's primacy of God's revealed word over our observations of his world.

I find very little to critique. Most notable is the lack of explicit conversation about one's heart, or one's desires/motivations/values. His five areas of application hint at but do not explicitly draw out one's desires. This is somewhat disappointing, given Scripture's emphasis on the heart driving human cognition and behavior (see Luke 6:45). It would also have helped to see a bit more conversation about horizontal relationships in Chapter 8 since these are oftentimes a significant source of struggle. Then, as it stands, the ending feels a bit abrupt, lacking a clear conclusion chapter.

All in all, this is a very helpful text, one I will likely include as required reading for future coursework. It has great potential to help Christian clinicians think practically about integrating Scripture and the practice of meditation, a technique supported by observational evidence for some time now.

Kristin Kellen
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Todd Miles. *Cannabis and the Christian: What the Bible Says about Marijuana*. Nashville: B&H, 2021. 166 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1087734965. \$12.99.

Writing from a conviction that "the Christian should be deeply concerned about what Jesus thinks about marijuana," Todd Miles aims to examine Scripture and common arguments for and against using it (p. 8). His first chapter offers a definition of marijuana, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), and cannabidiol (CBD) before explaining, neurologically and physiologically, what happens when one "gets high." The goal of Chapter 2 is to examine the risks associated with marijuana use and "to think like a disciple of Jesus Christ and apply the wisdom of Holy Scripture in a manner that glorifies Christ" (p. 31). Identified risks include addiction, intoxication, lung and heart issues caused by marijuana smoke, impeded brain development, psychosis, and mental illness. One of Miles's key concerns, the impacts of marijuana use on teens, emerges in this chapter.

Chapter 3 cautions Christians not to equate governmental civil law with the moral will of God. After expounding Romans 13, Miles offers the caveat, "what the government commands is not always righteous, and the Christian is not obligated to obey the government by disobeying God" (p. 60). Drawing on such insights, he offers nuanced understandings of various aspects of marijuana use throughout the book. This strengthens his argumentation. After discussing the relationship between human authority and God's authority, he traces the legal history of marijuana in the twentieth century. Beginning with the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act, he charts the government's relationship with recreational and medical marijuana, culminating in discussions of legal marijuana circa 2020. However, he does not elaborate on any specific laws or court cases that have moved the legalization of marijuana forward in recent years.

His fourth chapter, "The Bible and Marijuana," surveys common arguments for and against the use of marijuana. After exploring common responses, Miles admits there are "no biblical references to the cannabis plant" (p. 70). A strength here is his anti-proof text approach. Instead, he appeals to the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and argues that all plants—hemp, *Cannabis sativa*, *Cannabis indica*, and other varieties of cannabis—are part of God's good creation. He thus arrives at the conclusion that "cannabis is the good provision of a kind and benevolent God," but that "cannabis, like any of the Lord's good gifts, can be misused" (pp. 76–77).

Chapter 5 offers questions all Christians should ask before using marijuana recreationally while Chapter 6 aims "to explore the efficacy of medical marijuana" (p. 118). After discussing the perceived benefits of THC for medical treatment, Miles claims "about half of the studies show

hopeful signs, while the other half show no significant benefit at all” (p. 122). However, he argues that certain components of marijuana plants can be extracted and used to supplement other forms of medical treatment. Here he distinguishes between the use of THC, which is mind altering and causes intoxication and addiction, and CBD which does not. He appeals to medical studies that show CBD may be helpful in pain relief and decreasing seizures in certain forms of epilepsy. Furthermore, since the US Department of Agriculture has approved certain drugs for medical use, he concludes, “There is no reason to feel that CBD is off-limits. If it helps you, then use it” (p. 126).

After providing a brief theological anthropology and a “biblical theology” of suffering in Chapter 7, Miles asserts that seeking alleviation from suffering, whether supernaturally from God or by means God provides, is not wrong for Christians. The chapter closes with seven questions about medical marijuana “designed to help the pastor when approached by a congregant seeking counsel” (p. 148). The appendix contains twelve more questions and answers for parents and church leaders, ranging from, “Is it permissible for non-Christians to smoke pot?” to “Are Christians morally obligated to vote against legalization in states that have not yet legalized marijuana?” (pp. 154–66).

Miles’s goal is to contribute to Christian thought about marijuana in this helpful primer. The breadth of research and questions engaged reveal his experience teaching the topic, and his consistent appeal to Scripture provides robust arguments for Christians. Relying on the authority of Scripture where the Bible speaks and his openness to scientific research where it is silent provides a balanced and helpful model for the relationship between Christianity and science.

Finally, while Miles gives significant attention to the use of medical marijuana in this work, a helpful update would include questions about ownership and investment in the medical marijuana industry. As he notes, recreational and medical marijuana use is now legal in many states. Significantly, the sale of, and investment in, dispensaries and CBD and THC companies are also legal in some states. With frequent initial public offerings and low-cost marijuana company stocks now available, Christians are faced with ethical “business” questions surrounding investment and ownership, not just questions of “use.”

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