

BOOK REVIEWS

J. Ayodeji Adewuya

Holiness and Community in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1: Paul's Communal Holiness in the Corinthian Correspondence

Studies in Biblical Literature, 40 (New York: Peter Lang, 2003)

Adewuya's study of 2 Corinthian 5:14-7:1 is a meticulous and judicious study of a controverted Pauline text (so controverted that some think it to be a non-Pauline, or even an anti-Pauline, interpolation). Adewuya's critical judgments about the passage are conservative – he argues that it is written by Paul and that, contrary to the opinion of many, he argues that it fits into the context in which it is found in 2 Corinthians. But the most important contributions Adewuya makes to our understanding of the passage stem from the angle of vision which he brings to his study.

First, Adewuya makes clear early on that a neglected aspect of this passage among scholars is the emphasis the text gives to the theme of holiness: “the holiness message embedded in that passage has neither been sufficiently taken into account nor adequately articulated by exegetes.” (p. 1) His antidote to that exegetical lapse is to study the text against the background of biblical holiness ideas from the Old Testament, especially from the Holiness Code in Leviticus, and in light of other uses of holiness language in Paul's writings. What he finds are verbal links to Leviticus which suggest that Paul had OT holiness ideas in mind when composing his passage, and that the passage is consistent with Paul's overall understanding of holiness/purity ideas. Most interesting, perhaps, is the tactic suggestion made by Adewuya, that his own background as a part of the holiness tradition (he is a member of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry), stemming from Wesleyanism is a factor which led him to notice this lacuna in Pauline scholarship.

On the other hand, Adewuya's holiness background does not prevent him from some gentle criticism of his ecclesial tradition. In fact a major finding of his study is that, in contrast with holiness scholarship on this text, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 speaks of holiness in communal rather than individualistic terms. It is here that Adewuya's African background has been an aid to interpretation. In other words, his holiness background and his African background have proved to be aids to reading the text, and one background has actually been balance to the other.

There are several places in the book where Adewuya mentions that he is an African. These mentions are brief and always in footnotes and so easily missed. In fact, I was rather surprised at how understated his African perspective was, since one of the 'blurbs' on the back cover (by Dr. Scott Bartchy of UCLA) had proclaimed that the study was "informed quite positively by his unique blending of African communal experiences and traditions with his thorough education in historical methods of Euro-American exegesis." In spite of the blurb I could find no section of the book devoted to Africa. Sadly the book contains no subject index and so references to Africa were not readily searchable. Neither the Introduction nor the Conclusion mentioned Africa. However, a careful reading uncovered some clues – and led to another mystery. I did manage to unearth a few mentions of Africa. For example, the bibliography contains several references to works written by and about Africa – but (mysteriously) none of the writers of these works appears in the author index. A few footnotes also mention contributions to understanding the biblical text which stem from an African perspective. In one place Adewuya mentions that the Yoruba language contains two word groups which could be translated "unbeliever" and, for him, suggests that Paul may use the term in more than one sense depending on the context (p. 103, fn 49). In another place Adewuya uses a Yoruba proverb ("a sheep that keeps company of a dog will inevitably feed on excreta") to illustrate Paul's contention that believers should not but unequally yoked with unbelievers (p. 119, fn 102). In a further place he asserts that "as an African" he finds the Pauline phrase "let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit" in 2 Corinthians 7:1 to be meaningful. For an African the whole person, both body and soul, would be involved in a person's sanctification since Africans do not see a separation between the sacred and the secular. (p.126, fn 125). These passages certainly pointed to Adewuya's African background as playing a role in his work as an exegete. There are a few other similar statement peppered throughout the book. These references did not, however, fulfill the role for his African understanding which seemed to have been promised by the back cover blurb.

The final clue (and mystery) was found at the end of one of these footnotes: "For more of African related concepts that may shed light on the understanding of 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, see Appendix" (p.104, fn 49). Here the plot thickens – for there is no Appendix. The critic in me had a traditional-historical theory for this conundrum. It is clear that Adewuya's book started life as a doctoral dissertation. He also mentions that the scholar who wrote the blurb on the back had helped him and had read his thesis. Could it be that the original dissertation contained an Appendix which somehow did not find its way into the published version? This hypothesis also seems a plausible explanation as to why several important works on Africa and by Africans are in the bibliography, but are not referenced in the book or found in the index. The further mystery is the question of why the Appendix was removed. Was it simply that a shorter volume would require less money to publish or (a more sinister explanation) did an editor or some scholar suggest that the Appendix was extraneous to the argument of the book? Sadly, many Africans have been told to "leave Africa out" of their scholarly investigation, as if being an African would be a hindrance to so-called objective investigation. Could this have been the case with Adewuya as well? Thankfully, contrary to the work of historical critics working on ancient texts, I have access to the original source – I emailed the author. In a gracious email Dr. Adewuya dispelled my more sinister explain and assured me that an attempt to keep the cost of publishing down was the reason for dropping the Appendix. Thankfully Adewuya intends to make the information in that Appendix available through further publication in scholarly journals. Unfortunately, the book itself is a bit poorer for not having that information included.

In spite of the lack of the Appendix and a few other minor issues (there are some typographical errors which should have been cleaned up and some stylistic items which are not kept consistent) Adewuya's published dissertation is a model of good scholarship, modestly informed by the scholar's ecclesial, cultural and theological background. Adewuya does not allow his background to overwhelm and misread the text – this is no exercise in 'eisegesis' – rather he allows his social and theological location to ask some fruitful questions which may have been missed by readers without his background. Readers must hope for more from this careful and sensitive scholar.

Grant LeMarquand

Eddie Gibbs

***Leadership Next: Changing Leaders
in a Changing Culture***

Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005

ISBN 978144740925. £8.99

Leadership Next offers a highly contextualised treatment of leadership dynamics from amongst a rapidly changing North American context. The author is a Professor of Church Growth from the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Seminary, USA. On the surface, the topic would appear of little help to African church leaders; for, although we live within an era highlighted by profound globalisation, it would be naïve if not downright arrogant to assume that Africa's encounter with global constructs would be the same as those experienced in the West. Words such as 'modernity', 'post-modernity', or movements such as the 'emerging church' may find similar points of reference in Africa, but conditioned and re-interpreted in different ways. However, these prefaced remarks should not dismiss the relevance of this book for modern, African leaders, who, may need to skim through some of the colourful North American illustrations in order to understand the author's argument, and follow a similar methodology for evaluating leadership effectiveness in twenty-first century Africa.

Gibbs begins by redefining leadership for an era marked by rapid change, multiculturalism, globalisation, telecommunication and other characteristics of contemporary societies. He challenges the status quo, even arguing that many leaders need to 'unlearn' what they have always presumed, in order to adapt to a new, modern order. Leadership should migrate, he argues, from singular, charismatic personalities to collective responsibilities; it is about relationships that interconnect persons into communities, and which rapidly adapts to changing social conditions. Missional leaders are needed: those with a focus 'on ministry *by* the church in the world rather than ministry *in* the church that is largely confined to the existing members' (p. 26); leaders who see the viability of influencing lives through character transformation; and where the application relates to spiritual and material points of interest.

The remainder of the book largely builds upon this foundation, but with flesh given to these incipient ideas. He devotes considerable time to

exploring different values and styles associated with leadership in order to contribute to this more expansive, collective, and society-impacting understanding. Pluralism demarcates modern societies (highlighted, as well, as a feature within our churches) and thus requiring a leadership response that takes seriously differences of worldviews. Multiculturalism, global perspectives, flexibility, innovativeness and adaptability are all characteristics, he contends, of future missional leaders.

The greatest benefit of this book for African leaders pertains to his methodological approach. Leaders need to be students of their surroundings. The diversity and complexity of socio-cultural contexts further demands team approaches to leadership, where differences of style, personality and ideas are embraced for what they contribute to the whole. My primary concern, however, relates to Gibbs' tendency to offer rather simplistic dichotomies between cultural elements (modernity vs. post-modernity) or leadership styles (controlling vs. non-controlling). It may be helpful, at times, to differentiate between these elements as caricatures – in order to highlight contrasting values or leadership styles – but future leaders in Africa will need to avoid similar polarities and work for more integrative between these elements. For example, he says, “Many younger leaders with new styles of leadership appear to be at the forefront because they are not weighed down by traditional structures and expectations” (p. 83). This statement, and many others, gives the impression that traditions, hierarchies, and other vestiges of by-gone years need to be sacrificed in order to embrace newer methods. American culture has a historic tendency of swinging along a pendulum: acting and reacting against itself. African leaders should guard themselves from the same, and work for more integration.

Some of these dichotomising concerns are mitigated by the pastoral, fatherly approach he adopts through the book, where he sees his role as that of an older leader giving pieces of advice to younger leaders (under 30 years old). Gibbs' highly contextualised, deeply imaginative, and intensely passionate approach to pastoral leadership within the church, and for the world, is an impressive element of this book. It should be read from within the context from which it was written, and re-interpreted into twenty-first century Africa by leaders committed to impacting their world for Christ.

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Thomas R. Schreiner

***New Testament Theology: Magnifying
God in Christ***

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In this book, Thomas R. Schreiner who is a veteran New Testament scholar serving at the Southern Baptist Seminary, describes the New Testament theology in a thematic way. The author's qualification for writing on this topic includes over twelve years as New Testament professor. He holds a doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary. As a Pauline scholar, Schreiner is also the author and editor of several books including *Romans; Interpreting the Pauline Epistles; The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law; The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance; Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives of Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, co-edited with Bruce A. Ware; *Women in the Church: A fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15; Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*.

Schreiner's approach of the book is thematic and this he makes clear in the preface. He looks at the New Testament from two perspectives. The first one is that "God's purpose in all that he does is to bring honor to himself and to Jesus Christ" (p.13). This concerns the unity of redemptive history and the Kingdom of God. The New Testament takes up Old Testament descriptions and establishes that the kingdom has come although it remains unfulfilled in Jesus Christ. The second key point of view is put thus, "The centrality of God in Christ leads to abstraction if not closely related to the history of salvation, to the fulfillment of God's promises" (p.14). The focal point here is the goal of the kingdom which is the glory of God through the work of Christ and the empowering presence of the spirit. This outlook takes shape and infuses the book.

The book is divided into four chief parts which consists of 19 chapters, an epilogue, and an appendix. Part one deals with the fulfillment of God's saving promises which is already-not yet. This part is further broken down into three chapters which focus on the following themes: 'Kingdom of God

in the synoptic gospels,' 'eternal life and eschatology in John's theology,' and 'inaugurate eschatology outside the gospels.'

Part two comprises the promise of God through the saving work of the Father, Son, and Spirit. This is broken down to another ten chapters. The ten chapters covers the following ten topics respectively: 'the centrality of God in the New Testament theology,' 'the centrality of Christ in the synoptic gospels,' 'the messiah and the son of man in the gospels,' 'son of God,' 'Jesus' saving work in the Gospel,' 'Jesus' saving work in Acts,' 'the Christology of Paul,' 'the saving work of God and Christ according to Paul,' 'the Christology of Hebrews-Revelation,' and 'the Holy Spirit.'

Part three discusses ways of experiencing the promise through believing and obeying. This part is broken down into three chapters which are 'The problem of sin,' 'faith and obedience,' and 'the law and salvation history.'

Part four covers the people of the promise and the future of the promise. Their detail is broken down in three chapters, 'the people of the promise,' 'the social world of God's people,' and the last chapter covers 'the consummation of God's promises.'

It is an easy book to read due to its lucid exposition of the New Testament theology. Therefore this book can be of great value to scholars, pastors and students. In expounding the centrality of God in the New Testament theology as well as the role of the Law in salvation history – which the author does very well – the book provides a very good summary of the Old Testament theology.

The book is well informed in terms of scholarship; making it a must-have for theological libraries. The issues discussed are very relevant to pastoral concerns in the African context and the world at large where Christians live. The author's examination of the New Testament promotes a livable theology in the sense that it shows us how the redeemed are to dwell in God's world. The nature and structure of the book makes it useful for guiding bible study groups. Theologically, the book is evangelical and/or conservative as evidenced by his traditional stand on the treatment of women in the church and the home.

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