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## BOOK NOTICES

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*John H. Armstrong*

### *LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT OF THE TEXT*

Gordon D. Fee

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2000)

180 pages, paper, \$12.00

Gordon Fee, a highly respected professor of New Testament studies at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, always seems to write of things that truly matter. In this extremely helpful exploration of New Testament themes he excels in showing the reader how the text of the Scripture is to be consistently linked with the life of both the Spirit and the Church. The idea he advances in these particular essays is that exegesis must never be severed, as discipline and practice, from life in the Holy Spirit.

Of the twelve essays in this volume only one appears in print for the first time—"The Holy Spirit and Worship in the Pauline Churches" (Chapter 8). The other essays are reprinted from various journals. The titles cover various areas of specific New Testament thought, such as: "Exegesis and Spirituality: Completing the Circle," "On Being a Trinitarian Christian," "The New Testament View of Wealth and Possessions," "Gender Issues: Reflections on the Perspective of the Apostle Paul," "Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia," and "The Kingdom of God and the Church's Global Mission." Gordon Fee is concerned not just with the academic. He loves the Church and believes in the Spir-

it's role in forming and giving life to the Church. His work is brilliant, but simple. Thoughtful pastors should read this helpful collection, even if they do not agree with everything Fee writes.

***THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A CELEBRATION OF GRACE***

Gordon J. Keddie

Darlington, England: Evangelical Press (2000)

96 pages, paper, \$8.99

Gordon Keddie, an American pastor in State College, Pennsylvania, is a clear and practical writer. I have often found his commentaries helpful for preaching work. This book is equally clear and helpful. The contents of this little book first appeared in the *Evangelical Times*, a British monthly. Far too many American evangelicals treat the Lord's Supper as an "add on" to the regular services of the Church. It is a "necessity" of some sort, but we are not quite sure why. If you are a Gospel minister, Keddie will help you to think about making the sacred celebration of Christ's death vital to the life of your congregation.

***SEEKING GOD: THE PATHWAY OF TRUE SPIRITUALITY***

Richard Mayhue

Inverness, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications (2000)

317 pages, cloth, \$19.99

Richard Mayhue, Dean of The Master's Seminary in Sun Valley, California, and the author of several previous books, has in this present volume given us what may well be his best book yet! He shows the reader how to make definite spiritual progress by calling us to renewed intimacy with God. He helpfully connects true progress

with spiritual power. Spiritual power flows from understanding our spiritual priorities; e.g., talking to God, worshipping God, praising God and embracing him in personal relationship.

Mayhue provides us with a "tool" which can be used to disciple new believers or to present Christ to those yet unconverted. It can also be used in private devotions or as a group resource. The book is practical, simple and deeply rooted in the character of God.

***THE POWER OF EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER***

Robert O. Bakke

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)

191 pages, paper, \$10.99

This book is one I will highly recommend to pastors and prayer group leaders as follow up for my own preaching on prayer. Bob Bakke tells the stories of America's historic awakenings with care and shows that behind each of them was the human instrumentality of passionate, earnest intercession. Throughout he shows how revival could happen again if God's people collectively sought his face in extraordinary prayer.

Bakke wants the leaders of churches across America to sense the burden of extraordinary prayer. He writes:

From the reports of the Scriptures to those of pastors and missionaries, and historical figures down through the centuries, we are told of those times when ordinary praying is not enough. Crises, periods of danger, or times of great sin compel God's people to seek God for the glory of his name. Sometimes the prayers are answered swiftly. Sometimes the answers come after years of praying (31).

From this call to extraordinary prayer Bakke turns the reader to America's greatest revival theologian, Jonathan Edwards. He connects the role of extraordinary prayer to the sovereign movements of God's Spirit that should properly be called revival. He gives a marvelous account of the work of the Spirit in Cambuslang, Scotland, in the early 1740s. The call of Jonathan Edwards to concerts of prayer was the clearly the means used to spark this powerful move of God.

Three appendices are included which make this book even more useful for the minister or lay leader who wants to stir up prayer in the local church and community. This is an immensely useful and wise book. Get it and encourage other leaders to read it and consider it with you.

***RAISING SONS AND LOVING IT! HELPING YOUR BOYS  
BECOME GODLY MEN***

Gary and Carrie Oliver  
Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2000)  
301 pages, paper, \$12.99

**T**he Olivers, counselors and the parents of three sons, believe the shocking incident of Columbine is just the tip of a proverbial iceberg in our society. This iceberg has been compounded by the failure of most parents to raise boys who can become healthy, godly men. Their work is rooted in careful developmental research, popular marriage and family literature, sound biblical thought, and good old fashioned practical wisdom.

Some of the questions asked are: How are boys really *different* from girls? How do you raise "emotionally intelligent" sons? What do sons, in particular, need from the marriage of their parents, and from mom and dad individually? How can you help a son to cultivate a godly heart? How do you prepare sons to deal with failure, loss and grief? How

can sons be moved from adolescence to adulthood in the face of teen culture and its particular problems?

The book is an integrative resource that includes many practical tools for application and general testing. It is dedicated to a college classmate and dear friend of mine, the late Dr. Clyde McDowell. It is highly recommended for serious parenting.

***FIVE VIEWS ON APOLOGETICS***

Steven B. Cowan  
Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2000)  
398 pages, paper, \$17.99

**T**hough sometimes criticized as wrongly conceived, "The Counterpoint Series" (now numbering ten books in all) is generally quite helpful. This newest addition to the series is no exception. In fact, it might be one of the best yet. The five views, and the proponents of each are:

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| 1. The Classical Method                | William Lane Craig |
| 2. The Evidential Method               | Gary R. Habermas   |
| 3. The Cumulative Case Method          | Paul D. Feinberg   |
| 4. The Presuppositional Method         | John M. Frame      |
| 5. The Reformed Epistemological Method | Kelly James Clark  |

The "how-to" of each apologetic method is examined along with the philosophical foundation of the method. Proponents are allowed to express their position and interact with the other advocates. The reader can compare and contrast each position fairly.

Steven B. Cowan, the general editor, is a pastor and the adjunct professor of philosophy at Ouachita Baptist University in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He has arranged and edited the material very well.

***SOULCRAFT: HOW GOD SHAPES US THROUGH  
RELATIONSHIPS***

Douglas D. Webster

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2000)

228 pages, paper, \$12.99

Douglas D. Webster, who is the author of a half-dozen other books, several of which are among my favorite contemporary volumes, has done it again. This book hits a grand slam in the ninth inning! Pastors should make this a "must read." It would even be better if they took a day of quiet reflection and read the book away from the fast pace of their usual routines.

Webster shows us how God makes us into the people we need to be through relationships. But how does God use others to form my spiritual life? Can't I do it by my own hard work and private effort? *Soulcraft* is defined on the back of the book as "the art of discerning, applying and enjoying the wisdom of God in every aspect of life." Pastoral theologian Eugene Peterson notes that Webster "brings a biblically-disciplined mind and a reverent Christ-attentiveness to the details of what matters most to all of us, our very souls." Gnosticism is alive and well. Webster understands this and writes one of the best practical correctives available.

***THE DAY AFTER: A RETROSPECTIVE ON RELIGIOUS  
DISSENT IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CRISIS***

Gabriel Fackre

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2000)

78 pages, paper, \$10.00

Fackre, the emeritus professor of theology at Andover-Newton, follows his widely-discussed book, *Judgment*

*Day at the White House*, with an equally valuable sequel. He is concerned that theology clearly has a public side. Christians must be engaged in their society, addressing the issues of ethics, religion, sociology and political science with integrity and care. Too many of us think our obligation ends with voting and then speaking out when we are upset with the compromised ethical standards of those who exercise power (i.e., Bill Clinton).

Fackre goes further in helping Christians think responsibly about the impeachment of President Clinton than any other serious theologian. His earlier book included sober reflection offered from within the impeachment process. This new one provides a sober analysis of the ironies and lessons we should learn from the historical events themselves. This book could provide a serious starting point for discussion among thoughtful Christians, who probably should do more reflecting upon these momentous days in recent American history.

***THE CHALLENGE OF JESUS' PARABLES***

Richard N. Longenecker, editor

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2000)

324 pages, paper, \$28.00

Here the reader is given some solid essays on a subject notoriously conflicted and necessarily difficult to sort out for most pastors. Far too much simplistic exegesis has been done on the interpretation of the parables. And even more simplistic has been the preaching undertaken by many ministers, at least in North America. A number of valuable modern treatments could become the tools we need to change this sad situation. This is surely one.

Longenecker, distinguished professor of New Testament at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario,

serves as the general editor of the series known as the McMaster New Testament Studies, of which this is the newest volume. Contributors to this work include: Stephen C. Barton, Craig A. Evans, Richard T. France, Donald A. Hagner, Morna D. Hooker, Sylvia C. Keesmaat, Michael P. Knowles, Walter L. Liefeld, Allan W. Martens, Klyne R. Snodgrass, Robert H. Stein, Stephen I. Wright, and the editor. Some of the chapters here are of immense profit to the serious pastor. There will be little excuse for bad preaching from the parables again if the reader takes a work such as this seriously. The essays also include helpful selected bibliographies. Personally I wish the authors had interacted with the work of N. T. Wright much more. His extremely important work is only mentioned twice in the entire book!

**HEAVENLY FIRE: THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF WILLIAM GRIMSHAW OF HAWORTH**

Esther Bennett

Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press (2000)

24 pages, paper, \$6.49

Certainly less well known than George Whitefield, or John and Charles Wesley, William Grimshaw was nonetheless one of the most powerful preachers of the Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth century. He served a parish church in Haworth, in the north of England, and from there he was used to touch the lives of multitudes. This small overview of Grimshaw's storied life is well written and allows the reader to place him in the proper context of his relationships with Whitefield, Newton and John Wesley, among others. All who love revival, and long for the real thing to come again, should read and distribute this little work.

**ENGAGING UNBELIEF: A CAPTIVATING STRATEGY FROM AUGUSTINE & AQUINAS**

Curtis Chang

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2000)

187 pages, paper, \$11.99

The author, who serves on campus staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard and Tufts, seeks to demonstrate how both Augustine and Aquinas can help modern believers present the truth of Jesus Christ to a world that rejects truth as arbitrary. Can we engage postmodern people in a way that does not seem arrogant? Can we dialogue without falling into the "culture wars" that stereotypically arise when we talk to unbelievers? Chang believes we can and uses these two ancient theologians as a means for showing the reader how.

Chang interacts meaningfully with important modern writers as well, including Alasdair MacIntyre, James Davison Hunter, the late missionary theologian Lesslie Newbigin and Stanley Hauerwas. Drawing upon *The City of God* and *Summa contra Gentiles* he makes a case for modern Christians in the marketplace of worldviews that is compelling. This book might put off some who think evangelism is *only* frontal assault on the dogmas of others but I found it immensely helpful.

**100 CHRISTIAN BOOKS THAT CHANGED THE CENTURY**

William J. Petersen and Randy Petersen

Grand Rapids: Revell (2000)

222 pages, paper, \$12.99

This interesting father-son work exceeded my initial expectations. By including some unusual and surpris-

ing choices the Petersen's have made this a fascinating read. No one will be totally satisfied with the choices they have made since it is profoundly subjective, at least in some cases, to answer the question: What are the most *influential* Christian books of the last century? Who really knows for sure, but the authors will not leave you bored by what they write. The comments made on each selection are generally judicious and always brief. There can be little doubt that the books chosen did have a major influence, sometimes for ill, upon the past one hundred years of Christian history.

Here you meet such twentieth-century classics as: *Orthodoxy* (G. K. Chesterton), *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours* (Roland Allen), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (James Orr, general editor), *Church Dogmatics* (Karl Barth), *Prayer* (Ole Hallesby), *The Mind of the Maker* (Dorothy L. Sayers), *The Screwtape Letters* (C. S. Lewis), *The Pursuit of God* (A. W. Tozer), *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Roland H. Bainton), *Christ and Culture* (H. Richard Niebuhr), *The Household of God* (Lesslie Newbigin), *Through Gates of Splendor* (Elizabeth Elliot), *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures* (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones), and *Knowing God* (J. I. Packer).

You will also meet some *Christian* books that the century could have surely done without, including: *The Total Woman* (Marabel Morgan), *This Present Darkness* (Frank Peretti), *Left Behind* (Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins), *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Hal Lindsey with Carole C. Carlson), and *Move Ahead with Possibility Thinking* (Robert H. Schuller). One certainly can't doubt that the latter titles had a great impact upon Christians but they certainly did not change the century, or the Church, for the better!