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## REVIEWS

### **Edward Irving: The Trinitarian Face of God**

Graham W.P. McFarlane

Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1996; vi+89pp., £5.99;  
ISBN 0 7152 0719 9

Graham McFarlane is a lecturer in Systematic Theology at the London Bible College. He is something of an expert on Irving and his doctoral thesis has recently been published by Paternoster as *Christ and the Spirit: The Doctrine of the Incarnation according to Edward Irving*.

This little book is in 'The Devotional Library' series which has previously included short volumes containing the devotional writings of John Knox, John McLeod Campbell, Thomas Erskine and others. The editors, in their general introduction, give the rationale for the series: 'In a time when shops are crowded with books on spirituality and mysticism that sometimes fail to live up to their advertisements, we think it is valuable to return to deeper and richer well-springs of Christian devotional thought, to thinkers renowned for loving God with their minds.'

This volume, like the others in the series, begins with a short (13pp.) introduction by the author to the subject's life and thought. In this introduction, McFarlane seeks to show not only Irving's relationship to such contemporaries as McLeod Campbell, but also to argue that the significance of some of his theological insights has only recently (in the work of Barth and others) been recognised. This introductory section is completed by the inclusion of a bibliography of Irving's writings.

Part two of the book contains McFarlane's choice from Irving's own writings. The first selection consists of three short expositions of Ephesians 1:2 under the title, 'The God who makes himself known'. This is followed by the second selection, entitled, 'The Act of God in Christ' which includes expositions of Psalm 15:6-8, John 8:31 and Luke 1:35. It is in the third of these expositions that Irving broaches the controversial subject of Christ taking 'fallen' human nature.

The third selection, entitled 'The Human Creation and Condition', is a short extract from *Morning Watch* sub-titled 'On the prophetic aspect of all God's works and ways'. In it Irving explores his view that the end of all creation was the coming of the Son of God. He considers the first Adam in comparison to the last Adam and seeks to understand the purposes of God.

The fourth and final selection is entitled 'The Human Spirit'. This explores some Trinitarian themes but focuses particularly on the Holy

Spirit, not least on the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost'. Irving's views on this subject are well known and to some extent prefigure the later charismatic resurgence – although this extract is more devotional than polemical.

A.T.B. McGowan, *Highland Theological Institute, Elgin*

## **By Faith Alone: The Doctrine that Divides**

R.C. Sproul

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1996; 193pp., £6.99; ISBN 0 340 63063 9

The sixteenth century is an irrelevance, we are told. Who is interested in the fevered battles of monks, cloisters and frock-coats? What has Wittenberg to do with the World Wide Web? Sproul's careful work illustrates an astonishing millennium-end fact: the argument about justification through faith alone, the one that shook the medieval church's foundations, still has plenty of light and heat left in it. From the heavyweight bout amongst North American Evangelicals (John F. McArthur and friends v. Zane Hodges and Charles Ryrie: *The Lordship of Christ v. True Freedom?*) to the consultation called *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (ECT) which received qualified positive comment from J.I. Packer, no less. R.C. Sproul is pleased at the resurgence of interest in the Reformation doctrine, but mainly troubled at the sanguine (his word) approach of Evangelicals.

Sproul's main point is that Evangelicals are in danger of betraying not just the Reformation but the very gospel itself. Indeed most of the book is making just this point. Justification *sola fide* (justification by faith alone) is of the very essence of the gospel. A gospel not clear on this is not the gospel at all. More precisely, it is faith *alone* that is essential. Sproul has little difficulty in showing that this was the heart of the Reformation plea. Equally, he shows that it was at the heart of the Counter-Reformation decrees at the Council of Trent. But does this show enough to support his main thrust, which is concerned with *Evangelicals* and their alleged failure?

Certainly the biblical and logical case is strong if one starts with Paul (though there is no awareness in this book of the recent suggested shifts in New Testament scholarship). Sproul is reasonably successful in harmonising the New Testament book of James with what he sees as the centre of the New Testament gospel. He also demonstrates well the significance of the '*sola*'. The book is well worth reading for such a spirited defence of Reformed / Evangelical traditional teaching. But some

loose ends trailing leave doubt as to the complete conclusiveness of the case.

For instance, what do we *mean* when we say justification by faith alone is of the essence of the gospel? Do we mean that the gospel is not preached unless this teaching is clearly expounded? If so, why do so few (if any) New Testament evangelistic sermons refer to it? What do we make of people who seem genuinely to have come to Christ without understanding even a simple form of it? Or do we mean only that a pure faith, free of all other props, can alone save? The problem then is that the faith of all believers is not always so strong and pure even at conversion. Neither was Calvin confident about the consistent quality of faith even of true believers, and observation shows just how prone believers are to smuggle in confidence in 'works'. Does this mean suddenly we are not saved, or is it rather just a question of a weak or mixed faith? Is there any place in Sproul's scheme for such a faith?

Towards the end of the book, the author denies that he is saying that the *doctrine* of justification is of the essence of the gospel for no-one is saved by faith in a doctrine. True on the second point. But to say that justification by faith alone is of the essence of the gospel must be to say that the *doctrine*, however simply expressed, is of the essence of the gospel. Sproul's anxiety to avoid being pushed into this speaks volumes. In fact, he unwittingly illustrates how difficult it is to express the doctrine simply. For in explaining and vindicating it he adopts the most scholastic and complex of methodologies classically represented in Turretin. In other words, the main claim of the book falls to its knees under the weight of a thousand qualifications.

Moreover, there are historical problems. We search the writings of the fathers and intervening theologians in vain to find the author's claim vindicated, though it is fair to say that much may not be emphasised there because it is already assumed. Even in the best of writers, including Augustine himself, justification by faith hardly sticks out like a sore thumb. Did they all preach 'another', 'apostasised' gospel? Inadequate, devalued, reduced, yes – but *another* gospel? There are other concerns too. We all know that some Catholic theologians, and even bishops, are deeply sympathetic to salvation through faith *alone*. They are searching for a way back across the bridge. Some want to historicise and marginalise the Tridentine decrees as time-bound and overtaken. Does it really help them in their cautious pilgrimage towards Evangelicals to cast up in their path, remorselessly and legalistically, decrees which do not really embody *their*

vision? In other words do we demand that they renounce decrees and dogmatic constitutions before we recognise them as non-apostate teachers?

In conclusion, Sproul has helped the discussion considerably by insisting, I believe rightly, on that tiny word *sola*. Whether his main thesis is proven is an open question, but I suggest that Evangelicals could start to respond appropriately to his challenge by re-affirming that 'justification by faith *alone*' is certainly of the essence of the gospel's *purity, fullness and power*.

*Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow*

## **Theology through the Theologians**

Colin E. Gunton

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; xi+248pp., £22.50; ISBN 0 5670 8527 9

This book is a collection of essays which seeks to explore the various doctrines of the Christian faith through study of, and interaction with, the work of various significant theologians. The essays were written over a considerable period (1972-1995) and although some of them have been published before, others have not.

Clearly it is difficult to summarise or assess a volume of this nature because the chapters were each prepared for a specific purpose (conference, journal article, public lecture, *etc.*) and do not 'flow' in the way that Gunton's other books do. It must be said, however, that this is a valuable book for gaining a deeper understanding of Gunton's thought, particularly for the way in which it allows us to share the insights which he has gleaned from various theologians.

Several of the chapters concern theological method, not least an essay focusing on Anselm and Coleridge which explores the question as to whether such a thing as an 'English Systematic Theology' is possible. His answer is that it is possible, that some attempts are already being made to achieve this. He is encouraged by the fact that scientists, artists and philosophers are asking theological questions. His word of caution is that this task must not be undertaken in isolation from the wider theological constituency, nor must the work and tradition of past centuries (Puritans *etc.*) be ignored.

Also on theological method, and continuing the study of English theology, is a chapter discussing 'The Nature of Dogmatic Theology' focusing on Newman. Gunton recognises the contribution of Newman but believes that there were serious weaknesses, particularly in his battle

against enlightenment thinking. By dismissing the Reformation as an aspect of modernity, and failing to learn from the best elements of modernity, Newman proves to be less helpful than Coleridge and others.

Several of the chapters in the book are devoted to Karl Barth's theology. Interestingly, Gunton explains that he has 'over the years attained a measure of distance from Barth's theology' arguing that 'certain aspects of the content and structure of his *Church Dogmatics* have come to appear problematic'. To this end he has re-written a couple of the chapters and added a most illuminating final section to chapter 6: 'Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election as part of his Doctrine of God'. Gunton believes that Barth's doctrine of election needs to be re-assessed, partly because of his unhappiness at Barth's use of 'event' language in describing the ontology of God, and partly because he detects a residual existentialism in Barth which, Gunton believes, raises a number of problems, not least Barth's understanding of God's freedom.

Gunton follows this chapter by going straight into a chapter on the Holy Spirit. This chapter is not linked to the thought of one particular theologian but ranges through the tradition. One key element in the chapter is the way in which Gunton seeks to relate Christology and Pneumatology, a theme which appears at several points in the book, not least in the chapter on Edward Irving's Christology. It is not insignificant, then, that Gunton suggests in his introduction that he sees the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as something of a unifying factor through the book.

Readers of this volume may well find themselves drawn to particular chapters because of their interest either in the doctrine being discussed or in the theologian who is the focus for discussion. This reviewer was particularly fascinated by the chapter on the doctrine of the church, looking at the work of John Owen and John Zizioulas. This is a most stimulating chapter despite being, on the surface at least, a slightly unlikely combination! Gunton's section on Owen's doctrine of the transcendence of the Spirit was particularly helpful.

All in all, a challenging and thought-provoking book, providing insight into the development of one of Britain's most distinguished systematic theologians. It is to be commended.

*A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin*

## **Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation**

Alan J. Torrance

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; xii+388pp., £24.95; ISBN 0 567 09740 4

This volume, Alan Torrance's doctoral dissertation, explores the meaning of the word 'person' as used in Trinitarian theology. This is a wide ranging study, examining not only the legitimacy of 'person' language, but also seeking to demonstrate the implications and results of such usage. Although the sub-title of the volume is 'with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*', Torrance does not confine his examination to one scholar, indeed one of the strengths of the book is his interaction with Rahner, Zizioulas and others.

Dr Torrance does not merely engage in a survey, however, rather he seeks to challenge certain existing models for theological reflection and replace them with a new one. More specifically, he believes that there are serious weaknesses in Barth's 'revelational model' and argues that a doxological or worship centred model is the most appropriate for theology. He develops this critique of Barth by demonstrating that Barth's use of the word 'Seinsweise' rather than 'person' helped to establish a theology of communication rather than a more dynamic theology of communion.

It should not be thought, however, that Torrance is arguing against the mainstream of Barth's theology. The very fact that this volume is based on the *Church Dogmatics* is tribute to the regard in which Torrance holds the great Swiss theologian. Rather, this is an attempt to balance one emphasis with another, revelation with communion. It is in essence an attempt to critique and correct one element within the Barthian theology, albeit a crucial one.

More than this, however, Torrance is arguing that the very understanding of who we are as human beings can only properly be grasped when we understand the triunity of 'persons' who is God. More particularly, both our understanding of the divine triunity and our understanding of human being must be contextualised by the Christ-event, which provides the focus and content of all theology.

Even apart from the central thesis, that a proper understanding of 'person' language in Trinitarian theology leads to the replacement of a revelational model with a doxological one, there are other significant areas of interest in this book. Like much Trinitarian theology written in the past few years, particularly from the Barthian school, there are lines of thought

which impact upon the dialogue between Reformed and Orthodox scholars, and there is also engagement with Catholic and feminist theology.

This is not a book for the faint hearted! It is an erudite and scholarly work of considerable depth and density which requires (but repays) careful and sustained study.

*A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin*

## **Moral Leadership in a Post-Modern Age**

Robin Gill

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1997; 167pp., £12.95; ISBN 0567 08550 3

This book contains a collection of papers written since 1992 by the present holder of the Michael Ramsay chair in the University of Kent. Its primary purpose is to examine the challenging role of moral leadership at a time when paradoxically, an increasingly pluralist society appears to be searching for greater moral certitude. Some essays emphasise more the role of a distinctive Christian ethic in a post-modern context. Others focus in turn on moral exponents and church structures, underlining the paramount need for Christian leaders to be concerned about a structural and moral leadership that connects with the real world. Christian ethics, according to Gill, should always engage distinctively with secular thought while at the same time remaining as inclusive as possible.

This thesis is articulated in three ways. In part one, entitled 'Morality and Post-modernity', Gill addresses the question of what it is that makes Christian ethics valid and distinctive in our post-modern society. Earlier he states in his introduction his conviction that Christian ethics should question illogical moral positions, strengthen theistic or Christian perspectives and encourage future moral vision. Here the author argues positively for certain bridging principles such as beneficence, autonomy and justice which might be agreed upon by otherwise divergent groups. Also religious communities are different from their secular counterparts by virtue of a tradition that is rightly suspicious of changing fashions, and communities of worship that point to a reality beyond themselves. In addition, Christians have much stronger grounds for believing in a moral order than other secular visions that emphasise merely chance or evolutionary frameworks.

Subsequently, the author argues that self-regarding interest is an inadequate basis for moral behaviour and in some cases even negates the very notion of moral action. Secularists who argue for autonomy need,

according to Gill, to look again at worshipping communities which sustain and express a mutuality and morality that is rarely found as extensively or qualitatively elsewhere. Of course, it is all too easy to make claims for churches as moral communities. The great challenge, says Gill, is to find a way of expressing Christian moral distinctives without exaggerating the actual theological or sociological differences. Within the Christian church itself, Gill is convinced that unified positions can be reached on a whole variety of issues but in most cases, they are unlikely to represent the whole of Christianity. Gill suggests that the best way of resolving difficult moral issues is often to recognise frankly the divisions that do exist between Christians and then look for some unity in diversity for what he calls 'the values-in-tension' of the church. When we recognise the tension between biblical values such as grace and law, or peace and justice, or rights and responsibilities, maturity and real growth are possible.

Finally, commenting on the Christian realism of Reinhold Niebuhr, Gill argues that when we take seriously the claims of globalisation, Christian ethics can still be distinctive because there are some moral 'planks', ethical common ground, that actually apply across all cultures.

In part two, faith and family issues are considered in relation to post-modernity. The papal encyclicals *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae* are also analysed as is John Sacks' *Faith in the Future*. The latter, an orthodox Jew, argues cogently for the dependency of morality on faith. Three particular responses to the major challenges of sexuality and the family are expressed here. First, Gill argues we must not baptise every dominant but passing secular fantasy. Some, such as promiscuity, be it heterosexual or homosexual, child pornography or adultery are clearly sinful on the basis of biblical virtues. Secondly, other forms of behaviour such as faithful co-habitation, the author contends, are not so inherently sinful, but are still less than ideal. Here the author believes we need to be much more discerning and compassionate as some forms of less moral behaviour have nonetheless certain aspects in common with biblical values. Thirdly, there is, of course, the biblical norm which Gill seems reticent about calling a better way, though the implication is obvious.

In part three, the author looks in greater detail at certain contentious moral issues from euthanasia to genetics, values and management to religious education. A broad ethical map is sketched out as the general theory of the opening two sections is thus earthed in helpful and specific applications to controversial areas. The tendency of many Christians to reject certain management theories is turned on its head by Gill who

argues, in my view convincingly, that most management theories can be treated as technique rather than theology. More than that, some of the new management concepts far from being inappropriate secular ideas are, in reality, theological borrowings. Mission statements and accountability are two such concepts. The two chapters on euthanasia and genetics are largely briefing papers dealing with specific events, such as the Cox and Bland cases and the whole issue of germ line therapy.

This book will undoubtedly be of special interest to Christians who are determined to think through their faith and live within the market place of society without abandoning the firm foundations of historic Christianity. It rightly eschews easy answers in the midst of post-modernist complexity and honestly engages with the twin role of Christian leadership to be biblically distinctive without being morally exclusive.

At times, the disparate nature of these collected essays is unsatisfactory and militates against a more integrated understanding of the issues. Occasionally too, comments about the inadequacy of 'slippery slope' arguments or the denial of 'the sacredness of life' (passed off as a merely Hindu notion) jarred with this reviewer. The importance of biblical revelation as a basis for morality is also understated while the lack of any serious empirical study of moral communities, spiritual or secular, is a serious omission which the author himself rightly acknowledges.

This book's great merit, however, is its challenge to all Christian leaders to really understand the times we are living in and seek to make a distinctive Christian response which will commend itself to those who do not share our presuppositions or convictions.

*David J.B. Anderson, Glasgow*

## **Healing Through the Centuries: Models for Understanding**

Ronald A.N. Kydd

Hendricksen Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1998; 235pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 913573 60 4

The author of this book teaches in the Eastern Pentecostal Bible College in the USA. Healing has been part of his academic agenda since 1974 when he began teaching it as part of a course on Pentecostal distinctives.

His book is an historical account of miraculous or divine healing. The author defines divine healing as 'restoration of health through the direct intervention of God'. He goes on to say that 'the products of such

intervention are miracles' and that 'this kind of healing is divine because of God's direct intervention'.

The Introduction is in two parts. The first part provides an overview of the study which covers the whole history of the church from the ministry of Jesus to the healing practice of Oral Roberts. The author maintains that divine healing has continued throughout the history of the church, but at no time has it been so evident as it is today. However, claims for divine healing have often been overstated, especially in the United States. The second part deals with the problem of verification of divine healing and discusses the question of how such weight should be placed on scientific observation as a means of validating the miraculous.

The first chapter considers the healing miracles of Jesus which form part of the divine response to illness. These miracles were not isolated events, but were part of 'the big picture' of the conflict between the force of evil and the kingdom of God; a conflict which has continued throughout the history of the church and been reflected in its ministry of healing.

The thirteen chapters which form the rest of the book are taken up with a presentation of 'models for understanding' healing. These models of healing activity in the church are classified into six different types and examples of each type are provided. These models are presented in a more or less historical sequence and described as confrontational, intercessory, reliquial, incubational, revelational and soteriological. The confrontational model corresponds closely to the biblical picture of the ministry of Jesus. However, there is no space in a short review to give details of these categories or to name all the examples provided. The modern examples of the confrontational model are given as Johann Christoph Blumhardt and John Wimber; those of the incubational model include Dorothea Trudel, and the soteriological model is illustrated by Oral Roberts.

The author's classification of healing ministries in the history of the church is an attempt to impose some sort of order on very diverse phenomena. He admits that, in fact, the reality is not nearly so neat as his classification might suggest.

The book ends with a select bibliography which occupies fifteen pages, followed by brief subject and Scripture indexes. The book is warmly recommended, not least because of the biographical detail it includes and the numerous references to relevant literature (both English and German) which it provides as footnotes.

*John Wilkinson, Edinburgh*

## **Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History**

Joachim Gnilka

Hendricksen Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1998; xiii+346pp., n.p.; ISBN 1 56563 164 1

English-speaking readers are indebted to Dr Siegfried Schatzmann for his translations of a number of German works of scholarship into English. His present offering is a full-length study of Jesus by a Roman Catholic scholar, Joachim Gnilka, who is well known for his critical commentaries on several books of the New Testament and a theology of the New Testament. As the title and preface make clear, this is not a biography of Jesus, and indeed no attempt is made to reconstruct the historical outline of his life and career; in justification the author cites the work of K.L. Schmidt, but he was obviously not to know that simultaneously D.R. Hall (*The Gospel Framework: Fiction or Fact?* [Carlisle, Paternoster, 1998]) has sharply questioned the validity of Schmidt's hypothesis.

Nevertheless, this book represents yet another step in the march away from Wrede and Bultmann to a more positive appraisal of the Synoptic Gospels (John is scarcely used) as a record of the message and impact of Jesus, although the author assigns rather more material to the early church and the Evangelists than conservative scholars may find it necessary to do.

There is a freshness and originality throughout the presentation, largely due to the author's wide learning and ability to present familiar material from a different angle. He places Jesus in his historical background, and then discusses in fair detail the major issues – the Kingdom of God, discipleship, conflict, death and Jesus' authority in mission (*i.e.* the question of Jesus' own role and status). Only at the end of the story, however, in Passion week, does he think that the gospels give something more like a biography of Jesus, and at this point he himself shifts from simply describing the teaching of Jesus to an exploration of the history. Surprisingly, the resurrection material merits no more than a two-page epilogue, even though the author clearly believes in the resurrection.

What Gnilka has given us in total is a very positive picture of the work and words of Jesus as they appear to contemporary German scholarship, and in this respect he stands closest to J. Jeremias, L. Goppelt and P. Stuhlmacher among his contemporaries. (There is some, but not a lot of reference to English works; English-speaking scholarship on the Son of man, for example, is scarcely mentioned.)

However, the result is a rather static account of Jesus and his work, organised by themes treated in a systematic kind of way. Any sense of

movement and development in the ministry of Jesus is missing. There are no surprises and no excitement, which is perhaps not altogether strange when one considers how difficult it is to be original when so much has already been written by others about Jesus. This is a book that students will undoubtedly find to be a useful textbook about Jesus with much significant detail that they will not pick up so easily elsewhere, but they will find Tom Wright rather more stimulating.

*I. Howard Marshall, Aberdeen*

## **The Trinity in Asian Perspective**

Jung Young Lee

Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1996; 225pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 687 42637 5

By the author's own admission, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* seeks to 'present an alternative view of the Trinity from an Asian perspective' which complements rather than supplements the traditional Western doctrine. Lee considers there is a need for non-Western Christians to create their own theology based on their indigenous worldview, rather than through the surface contextualization of Western doctrine. As an Asian (albeit living in a Western context) he is aware of the intrinsic philosophical, moral and religious value of the yin-yang symbolism which undergirds much of Asian life and thinking. It is, therefore, with this symbol that he begins his quest to resymbolise the doctrine of the Trinity from an Asian perspective.

*The Trinity in Asian Perspective* is a detailed and technical work. The book begins by giving an overview of the history, development and influence of the concept of yin-yang, followed by a brief description of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Lee then begins the development and defence of his main argument which is that the East Asian symbol of yin-yang may be understood as Trinitarian, therefore yin-yang symbolism can express the doctrine of the Trinity in a way that is accessible and relevant to the East Asian worldview. He then devotes separate chapters to each person of the Trinity, followed by two concluding chapters which offer a practical application of his thinking.

Lee's resymbolising of the Trinity is very challenging, with several controversial suggestions such as the understanding of the Son as both male and female; or that the Trinity should be understood more like the family unit with the Father as the male member, the Spirit as the female, and the Son as the 'product' of the two. These ideas are consistent with the

thought of other Asian theologians, as well as with the philosophical understanding of yin-yang, but are not always supported by reference to biblical texts. Nonetheless they challenge much of traditional theology and highlight issues which need to be addressed, such as the relevance of the person of Christ to women and to people of a non-Western culture. The chapter on the Spirit particularly draws attention to the 'forgotten' member of the Trinity with attributes and a purpose within the Trinity.

Lee's greatest contribution in this book is arguably in his emphasis on relationality and in his cyclic understanding of time and life and even God himself which he identifies as 'change'. This is not a uniquely Asian idea, but it is a predominant theme in such thinking. This emphasis on relationship is important in all areas of Christian life all over the world, and by focusing on the mutability of the Trinity he highlights the immanence of the Godhead in the changeable and uncertain world.

The book is systematically structured with clear sections and themes in each chapter. Lee makes good use of secondary sources, particularly other Asian writers, especially when he is referring to the philosophical thinking of yin-yang. All the footnotes are grouped together at the back of the book, which can often be awkward, as is the bibliography and index. The index is detailed which is helpful in such a technical work, and the bibliography is extensive. A good mixture of modern as well as older scholarship is used by Lee, and he helpfully directs the reader to a variety of works should they wish to explore certain topics further.

Regardless of theological background or nationality, no-one could deny that Lee presents an interesting and challenging 're-symbolising' of the doctrine of the Trinity. He is often controversial, and sometimes more of a philosopher than a theologian, but there is no doubt that in this world of religious pluralism, where not only Asians are looking towards Eastern religion and philosophy, he offers an intellectually relevant presentation of the Triune God.

*Julie Green, St Michael's Church, Linlithgow*

## **Mission in Bold Humility: David Bosch's Work Considered**

Edited by Willem Saayman and Klippies Kritzinger

Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1996; 184pp., \$20.00; ISBN 1 57075 087 4

The title of this book is based on a moving quotation from David Bosch's great book *Transforming Mission* in which he calls for witness in 'bold

humility'. This is required of us, he says, because, while we believe that 'the faith we profess is both true and just', we proclaim it 'not as judges or lawyers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high pressure sales-persons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Lord'.

The essays which make up this volume are stimulating and helpful in a number of ways. First, they provide interesting biographical references to Bosch and, in so doing, confirm that the man who wrote the words quoted above exemplified in his own life the 'bold humility' which he urged on others. The African theologian John Pobee observes that mission of the kind advocated by Bosch is costly and will often involve passing through 'the valley of persecution'. Pobee refers to his South African brother's sense of loneliness and 'the attacks on his integrity' by people he tried to help. Pobee suggests that, while seeking to bear faithful witness to Christ and to the gospel message of reconciliation and justice in a situation riven by ethnic and racial tensions, David Bosch found himself misunderstood from both sides of the great divide created by *apartheid*. By its very nature this book allows us only brief glimpses of Bosch's life but these are sufficient to give rise to the hope that it will not be too long before a full biography of this remarkable man is available.

Second, the essays in this *Festschrift* provide an excellent critical survey of Bosch's work. The wide impact of his huge book *Transforming Mission* is reflected in the international and inter-denominational nature of the contributions to this volume. Without exception these writers praise the book, many seeing it as a truly seminal work. At the same time, critical comment is not absent. Frans Verstraelen argues that, despite writing in South Africa, Bosch's perspective was largely that of a Western theologian, and consequently 'the African context is virtually absent in Bosch's major works'. Willem Saayman notes other significant omissions from Bosch's survey of mission: he says little about women's contribution to mission and is almost totally silent on the Pentecostal contribution to mission. From an evangelical perspective, Chris Sugden claims that, because he largely ignored the momentous changes which the Lausanne Congress set in motion among Evangelicals, Bosch's treatment of this tradition was dated and one-sided. According to Sugden, Bosch misunderstood contemporary Evangelicalism and failed to dialogue properly with the mission concerns of those 'who now make up the majority and the center of gravity of the world church'. In Sugden's view this significantly lessened the value of *Transforming Mission*.

Criticism of this kind is surely healthy and it is a considerable achievement of this *Festschrift* that it avoids becoming mere hagiography.

At the same time, I believe that such responses in fact confirm the real greatness of David Bosch's work. Having just spent two terms working through *Transforming Mission* with a group of students, I can recognise the validity of the critical comments made in this *Festschrift* but am equally certain that the book is of enormous importance. It will never be possible to produce a definitive missionary theology, but it is unlikely that anyone will come closer to doing so before the end of this century than the late David Bosch. For that reason we can be profoundly grateful to him while also expressing thanks to the writers of these essays for increasing our understanding of his life and work.

*David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford*

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Edited by Willem Saayman and Klippiess Kritzingler

Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1996; 184pp., \$20.00; ISBN 1 57075 087 4

To any Christian with a serious interest in missiology the work of David Bosch will have become familiar. This volume presents us with a valuable list of his writings and a number of contributions from scholars of differing theological persuasions and contexts. The editors have gathered together some most helpful appraisals of Bosch's work, with particular reference to *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* 1991, and, in Chapter 1, some fascinating insights into his background and development in South Africa. In Chapter 2 F.J. Verstraelen describes in some detail the influence of Africa upon Bosch and touches on his place within the apartheid system and also on his methodology. He describes this as 'theology from above' where content is more important than context, or theory more important than practice. Bosch is seen as producing principles and leaving others to make appropriate application. Interestingly, E. Castro in the last chapter identifies Calvinism as the presuppositional framework for Bosch and also argues that this is a basis for ecumenicalism which would embrace liberation theology. He views Bosch as a genuine ecumenist though most of the other contributors prefer to link ecclesiology rather than ecumenism with mission. J.S. Pobeie makes much of the humanity of Bosch and talks of 'mission in bold humanity' and 'mission in bold humility' with an emphasis on the missiological quality of his life as exhibited through loneliness and suffering. There is much on mission context in this

volume. C. Cadorette tries to apply Bosch to the Latin America of today with its severe social problems and history of liberation theology. An appeal is made for an ongoing incarnational approach – love-in-action – contextualization in the context of poverty. J. Kavunkal also refers to poverty from an Indian perspective in Chapter 6. He also writes of the multi-religious culture of India and suggests that deeds are of more worth than words. He places mission in an eschatological framework. Other religions is a theme of G.H. Anderson in Chapter 9 where he argues that the problem peculiar to our present epoch is that of witness to those of other faiths. The importance of the theology of religion is clearly on his agenda. If Anderson emphasises context, Chapter 7 by W.R. Shenk emphasises content. This is a lucid argument for the essential place of mission within theology. W.R. Burrows is concerned to apply Bosch to Roman Catholic mission situations and adds a seventh paradigm to the six of Bosch, which he calls an ‘Inculturation Paradigm’. An informative history of the work of the Jesuits is given and the writings of Ross, Pieris and Pannikar are also discussed. W. Saayman gives some highlights of the life and work of Bosch in Chapter 3. He does not see the role of the church as either incarnational or totally foreign but adds a ‘colonizing’ role and has something to say about the effect of the Protestant Reformation with regard to fragmented and introverted Christianity as well as the effect of the emphasis on preaching rather than social action. He criticises Bosch for not mentioning Pentecostalism and feminist theology but clearly regards *Transforming Mission* as essential reading. Chris Sugden in a very useful contribution also takes up the importance of Bosch and his failure to deal with Pentecostalism. Sugden gives three tools with which to critique Bosch’s work and also applauds his emphasis on the urgent need to examine thoroughly the relationship between theology, especially ecclesiology, and mission. The feminist issue is taken up with a delightful article by D.L. Robert on the influence of Mount Holyoke and certain American women upon Afrikaner women. With all this writing on mission it is refreshing to find a stimulating contribution from M.E. Guider on what kind of missionaries are required for this post-modern era. Bosch does not concentrate on this issue. Guider, basing her ideas on Kegan’s five orders of consciousness, reminds us that paradigms do not produce perfect missionaries but gives some useful categories for our consideration. Reading this book along with *Transforming Mission* gives maximum benefit, but this book alone should certainly provoke prayerful study and is, for the main part, a readable collection.

Ralph W. Martin, Glasgow

## **The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith**

Andrew F. Walls

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; 266pp., £13.95; ISBN 0 567 08515 5

In 1983, having returned from my missionary service in Nigeria with a host of questions concerning the interface between African culture and the gospel, I entered the University of Aberdeen to pursue a degree in Religious Studies. Within weeks I became aware that I was privileged to be studying under a man of quite exceptional knowledge and insight. Professor Andrew Walls combined the gifts of a first-rate historian, an acute theological thinker with a remarkable awareness of the real issues facing Christianity at the close of the twentieth century, and the self-effacing humility that, in an earlier age, would have been associated with a 'Christian gentleman'. I treasure the notes taken during those Aberdeen lectures like no others since they not only pointed me in the direction of the answers I sought in entering the University, but opened up new and wonderfully stimulating lines of enquiry and thought. Not surprisingly then, for me (and I suspect for hundreds of AFW's former students around the world) the appearance of this volume was a very special event.

All the major themes that have distinguished Andrew Walls' academic work are dealt with here: the unique relationship between Christianity and culture, the structure of Christian history as a series of cross-cultural transmissions of faith, the challenge of the 'third Church' (especially in his beloved Africa), the continuing importance of primal religions, and the historical significance of the modern missionary movement. These are big subjects on which Andrew Walls makes vitally important (and often highly original) contributions. But he can also offer surprising insights on lesser topics – for example, a chapter on 'The Western Discovery of Non-Western Christian Art'. He can also disturb comfortable assumptions, especially when arguing (in what is one of the most important sections of this volume) that the missionary movement is now 'in its old age' and that quite new ways and means are needed in order to fulfil the call of Christian mission today.

It is impossible to overstate the value of this book. No one who has sat under Andrew Walls' teaching will need convincing of the significance of its publication, while other readers can now discover here for themselves a rich source of information and a stimulus to radical biblical reflection.

This volume is warmly welcome, yet I am tempted to paraphrase Oliver Twist and to say, 'Please Sir, we want some more!'

*David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford*

## **Readings in Modern Theology: Britain and America**

Edited by Robin Gill

London, SPCK, 1995; 399pp., n.p., ISBN 0 2810 48193

It can be a rather confusing time for young theologians. While most of us are trying to get a grip on 2,000 years of the theological past, along comes *modern* theology, a whole new challenge to attempt to understand. Thus, while trying to understand and appreciate Moses, Jesus, Paul, Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther and Barth, the young student is faced with the task of wrestling with the likes of David Tracy, George Lindbeck and David Burrell.

In light of this predicament, it is helpful when someone puts together a compendium to help the rest of us catch up. *Readings in Modern Theology: Britain and America*, is just that kind of book. Gill has culled together 36 essays from 35 writers, covering a broad range of contemporary theological issues. Well-known theologians who contribute to this volume include Rosemary Radford Ruether, Gordon Kaufman, David Tracy, Sallie McFague, Colin Gunton, George A. Lindbeck, David H. Kelsey, Edward Farley, Ronald Thiemann, Stanley Hauerwas, and others. Gill included only works written between 1984 and 1994, making the volume's contents current. Contributions consist largely of previously published journal articles, one notable exception being excerpts from George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine*. Gill divides up the book into three parts. Part 1, 'God and Creation', features three sections: 'God as Creator', 'God as Mother', and 'God as Trinity' (no, there is no section on God as Father). Part 2, 'Christ and Plurality', features three sections: 'Christ and Other Faiths', 'Christ and Postmodernism', 'Christ and the Academy'. Part 3, 'Spirit and Community', features sections on 'The Christian Life' and 'Christian Communities'. A very helpful ten-page introduction summarises the book's contents and is an excellent place for the novice to begin. Each section begins with bibliographical information on the contributors. Gill closes the work with a brief epilogue which offers his perspective on the issues which have been raised (and this epilogue is itself a helpful taste of the book's contents), as well as an author index.

In short, the book is an excellent resource for many current trends in contemporary theology. Perhaps most helpful for many readers will be the section, 'Christ and Postmodernism'. George Lindbeck and David Tracy, two of North America's most significant theologians, who both work in the area of contemporary theology (although moving in different directions), are featured in this section. Segments from Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine* are included, and three other contributors offer reviews of Lindbeck. Tracy contributes his article, 'Theology and the Many Faces of Postmodernity', which offers his vision of the future of Christian theology.

While Gill has attempted to draw from a variety of theologians, it is clear that he has chosen contributors who generally fit in the liberal / postliberal / postmodern theological camp. It may be that the term 'liberal' is becoming outmoded. Whereas it once referred to a fairly distinct theological movement, current trends, whether postliberalism, postmodernism, or whatever, seem at times somewhat difficult to include under the one term, 'liberal'. At the same time, some Evangelicals are interested in embracing postmodernism at least to some degree (e.g. Stanley Grenz, Brian Walsh, and Richard Middleton). Nonetheless, probably most contributors to Gill's volume would generally not consider themselves Evangelicals in any meaningful sense (Colin Gunton and perhaps a few others might possibly be exceptions). Thomas Oden in North America would have been a worthy contributor, while someone like Alister McGrath in Europe would have likewise been appropriate. Interaction with evangelical scholars would make this volume a more comprehensive reader in modern theology. While Gill would surely concede that the volume makes no effort to include Evangelicals, the volume is still worthy of study. Read the introduction and epilogue, and then begin to work through those sections which may help one to understand better an aspect of contemporary theology which is of interest, paying particular attention to the section on postmodernism.

*Bradley Green, Waco, Texas*

## **A Primer on Postmodernism**

Stanley J. Grenz

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996; 199pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8028 0864 6

The evangelical bogey buzzword is postmodernism (post-Evangelicalism being trivial by comparison). You will pace a few miles of bookshelves

before you find a primer as good as this one on the contemporary state of Western intellectual culture. The book lives up to its title and has the merit of knowing, and explaining, the difference between postmodernism and postmodernity, and making cautious commentary on the relationship between them. It is also up-to-date, fair and perceptive.

Grenz's analysis of the trail to modernity, and to postmodern-ism/ity (its rebellious stepchild), is first class. This almost makes it required reading for all who are concerned about 'winning the West' and have time to read only one book as a primer. Grenz has carefully formulated 'bookends' as he calls them – the first and final chapters respectively of the book. The first chapter brilliantly lays out the symptoms in our culture of the postmodern mind. The final chapter assesses the implications for the communication of the gospel. In between is a series of highly skilled cameos of some key figures in the odyssey of Western thought, tracking especially landmarks in the journey towards postmodernism. Grenz is never better than when unpicking slippery minds and concepts. He makes difficult writers, and the key notions in postmodernism, as available as they are ever likely to be, to a wide audience.

It has to be admitted that the book is disappointing in its second bookend. This final chapter, entitled 'The Gospel and the Postmodern Context', is only 13 pages long. The story that Grenz has told raises all kinds of questions for Christian faith. He is right to point out the conspiracy sometimes present between rationalism and Christian apologetics. But the author's comments on the dangers and promise inherent in the new postmodern view of the world are very thin, and raise as many questions as answers. We might especially be pleased to learn that the Christian story survives the modern abolition of the 'metanarrative', the large 'wrap-around' explanation of all things. But we will also want to know by what method this claim is made. Equally, we look in vain for a solid extended critique of postmodernism, though it is plain that Grenz has his reservations.

The great torch-bearers of the age of reason and the rationalist enterprise are suitably savaged (Descartes, Locke, Kant especially). The pioneers and exponents today of the postmodern backlash get off lightly by comparison, though they must surely be capable of mistakes too! One should particularly like to see a critical assessment of the absolute claims for an orthodoxy of relativity and for the privatisation of all ideologies. This dilemma is caught splendidly in the quotation Grenz deploys from Richard Rorty: 'The postmodern philosopher can only "decry the notion of having a view while avoiding having a view about having views".' In the same

way the contradiction of the very word postmodernism invites a much more sustained scrutiny than is given in this book.

But perhaps this is only saying that the author has set himself up very nicely for the sequel. The final, surely introductory, stab at evaluation could be the second part in embryo. It would be an excellent partner to an outstanding and skilled primer. This book is not just of value to practitioners – it is actually designed for them and deserves their attention.

*Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow*

### **The Road From Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought and Ministry**

Edited by R.N. Longenecker

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, 1997; 253pp., £16.99; ISBN 0 8028 4191 0

The second volume in the McMaster New Testament Studies series, sponsored by McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, this book contains eleven essays which investigate the significance of Paul's conversion on various aspects of the apostle's thinking. The headings are well chosen, and the book as a whole provides a good overview of present scholarly opinion. The quality of writing and scholarship is, on the whole, very high, and the collection should be a valuable tool for preachers as well as students of Paul who want to think further about the impact of belief in Christ Jesus on practical as well as strictly 'theological' matters.

Bruce Corley begins the collection with an interesting history of interpretation of Paul's conversion which not only covers scholarly thought on the matter but contains enjoyable snippets of information about treatment of the topic in popular art, literature, plays and sermons from the patristic age until the present day. R.N. Longenecker provides a very sensible essay in which the centrality of Christology in Paul's thought (so often lost sight of in scholarly debate) is rightly emphasised. What took place, he reminds us, was 'an overwhelming realisation that God's salvific purposes for both creation in general and humanity in particular are now to be understood as focused in the work and person of Jesus of Nazareth'. Seyoon Kim bears this in mind in an analysis of 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 which traces Paul's idea of reconciliation back to his conversion experience, as does Howard Marshall on the origin of the apostle's Gentile mission. Bruce Longenecker and Stephen Westerholm provide excellent essays on the relationship between Paul's conversion and

his thinking on covenant theology and Mosaic Law respectively. Both have important things to say in the debate on the relationship between the church and Judaism.

Gordon Fee's essay on 'Paul's Conversion as the Key to Understanding of the Spirit' is appropriately cautious but stimulating in a time of renewed interest in the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. J.G.D. Dunn gives a summary of his views on justification by faith and the Law, and describes Paul's conversion as a fresh discovery of the roots of his ancestral faith, while Terence Donaldson tackles the question of the origin of Paul's Gentile mission. K. Hansen writes on ethics, and Judith Gundry Volf gives a fascinating picture of Paul's thinking on women both against his Hellenistic Jewish background and in the light of his understanding of freedom in Christ.

According to its editor, the book is intended to make first-class biblical scholarship available but 'in a manner capable of capturing the interest of intelligent lay people, theological students, and ministers'. With this broad readership in mind, the book eschews footnotes, and each contributor is limited to sixteen items of bibliography. Generally, although more suggestions for pastoral application might have been helpful, it succeeds in its aims.

*Marion L.S. Carson, Glasgow*

## **Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World**

Terence L. Donaldson

Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1997; 409pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8006 2993 0

This book takes up the familiar question why Paul became the apostle to the gentiles. Since the 'new perspective' has shown that Israel is much more important to Paul than had previously been thought, Donaldson wants to know why Paul should have felt so strongly about a mission to the gentiles. Finding previous explanations unsatisfactory (*e.g.* the failure of the Jewish mission), he maintains that Paul, a 'covenantal nomist', underwent a 'paradigm shift' in his thinking at conversion, 'a transfer of allegiance from one set of world structuring convictions to another'. The book consists of an account of this shift, and attempts to describe Paul's thought about the gentiles before and after the Damascus-road experience.

The thesis is as follows. Prior to his Damascus experience Paul wanted to attract proselytes to Judaism, believing that salvation was to be found

through Israel. Post-Damascus, Paul accepts that which he had previously rejected – that Christ died and is risen and becomes the new ‘boundary marker’ for Israel rather than Torah. However, ‘not Torah’ does not mean ‘not Israel’. Paul still believes Israel is a channel of salvation for the gentiles, but Torah has only a preparatory role. At the parousia, Israel will accept the gospel (Rom. 11:25ff.). In the meantime the gentiles can and must be given the chance to become part of Israel.

This is a well-researched book, which shows a good grasp of both modern views and ancient texts. Although Donaldson tends to think in terms of Paul’s cognitive shift rather than apocalyptic (J.L. Martyn is strangely absent from the bibliography), this is an honest attempt to find a balance between the *Heilsgeschichte* and eschatological approaches to Paul. The idea that Paul thinks the time before the parousia is the time of the gentile mission is interesting, as is the use of Thomas Kuhn’s book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and its notion of the paradigm shift as the basis for scientific development. However, I should have liked some critique of Kuhn rather than wholesale acceptance of his thesis.

The principal problem with the book’s argument is the belief that we can deduce Paul’s pre-conversion beliefs from his letters. For example, readers will have to determine for themselves whether Donaldson’s exegesis supports his view that, prior to conversion, Paul preached circumcision (Gal. 5:11). So too, we have to ask if the suggestion that unconverted Paul had some sense of a Torah-Christ antithesis is legitimate.

Donaldson’s method is rather problematic. It examines what Paul says about the gentiles in relation to certain important aspects of his thought (*i.e.* God; generic humanity; Torah; Christ; Israel; the apostolic call), and thus tries to separate out components of Paul’s thought which are in fact closely inter-related. The result is a good deal of repetition and the book is overlong.

Diagrams illustrating the ‘remapping’ of Paul’s thought served only to confuse this reader. Otherwise, the book is attractively and clearly laid out with useful indexes of primary texts and modern authors.

*Marion L.S. Carson, Glasgow*

## **For Such a Time as This**

Edited by Steve Brady and Harold Rowdon

Evangelical Alliance and Scripture Union, London, 1996;  
304pp., £7.95; ISBN 1 85999 034 7

This collection of theological, historical, pastoral and personal perspectives, from 34 contributors, was brought together to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Evangelical Alliance and the work of the evangelical elder statesman Gilbert Kirby.

Kirby has held a number of significant positions within British Evangelicalism, including Principal of London Bible College and General Secretary of EA. Steve Brady offers a generous tribute to him, and hints at an unpublished autobiography, whose publication is awaited with interest. Don Carson offers a section on 'The Biblical Gospel', and Howard Marshall writes on 'Paul's Idea of Community'. Some of the most interesting and illuminating material deals with the history of the Evangelical Alliance, and this points up the need for further treatment of this important field.

The work has its prophetic notes. John Stott calls for the 'recovery of biblical preaching'. Don Carson urgently calls for a return to Christian basics – 'in all our efforts to address painful and complex societal problems, we must do so from the centre, out of a profound passion for the gospel'.

The range of contributions is wide, but there are frustrations. Where is the chapter celebrating the role of women in Evangelicalism? Why no analysis of how it took EA until 1983 to realise that it was mainly white and based in south-east England? David Bebbington, whose definition of Evangelicalism has proved so helpful, wrestles with its diverse nature, and debates whether there is such a thing as evangelical unity. At times the book itself, whilst celebrating Evangelicalism, illustrates this problem. Don Carson offers a robust footnote defending the reality of hell against Evangelicals subscribing to annihilationism. Alan Gibson sounds an alarm about a weakening amongst Evangelicals on justification and other issues. The Evangelical Alliance rightfully focuses on primary issues, and sets aside the secondary. But what issues are secondary? What happens when a secondary issue is treated as primary? What happens if primary matters are undermined, even if only gently, by professing Evangelicals?

The later chapters direct attention towards the future, and address the issue of maintaining unity. Problem areas are highlighted, but solutions are less clear. Perhaps the voice of Thomas Chalmers, an early supporter

of EA, is helpful. Writing in 1846 he stressed the unifying power of gospel work itself: 'Let us be one in well doing; and this wherever there is real sincerity and right good earnest, will prove the high-road to being one in sentiment.' Echoes of this are found in the contributions of Michael Baughen and Donald English. For too long Evangelicalism has been defined, and has found its unity, in what it opposes. It has been in the modern parlance reactive, rather than proactive and attractive. The continuing challenge for Evangelicals is to express their unity meaningfully in coherent structures, yet not be diverted from the positive proclamation of the gospel. Without this, Evangelicalism is not being true to itself. History suggests that such activity promotes the unity so desired.

*Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow*

### **Belief, Ritual and the Securing of Life: Reflexive Essays on a Bantu Religion**

Malcolm Ruel

E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1997; 270pp., £56.25; ISBN 9004 106 405

The author of this book was a lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge and an acknowledged expert on the Kuria people of East Africa. The volume consists of a series of ethnographic essays dealing with the religion, ritual and cosmology of the Kuria. The studies are clearly based on careful research extending over many years and they evidence both meticulous attention to detail and (as the subtitle suggests) a willingness to engage in critical, cross-cultural reflection in the light of the author's findings.

The book provides a particularly interesting example of the way in which the ethnographic work of anthropologists can offer assistance and challenge to those engaged in mission among primal peoples. Not only does Ruel provide a valuable introduction to the social structure, culture and religion of the Kuria, he raises quite specific questions with regard to the contrasts between Christian and Kuria understandings of reality. For example, chapter 2 consists of a long and fascinating discussion of the place of 'belief' in religion in which it is argued that most traditional peoples (and certainly the Kuria) have no concept of 'belief' in the sense of 'self-conscious credal or doctrinal' affirmations. It is a fallacy, Ruel argues, to imagine that 'belief' of this kind is central to all religions. If this is true it clearly has implications with regard to mission in primal contexts.

Missiologists and theologians might also benefit from reading Ruel's discussion of conversion in Africa and his comments on the cross-cultural

tension on the issue of individualism and collectivism. It comes as something of a surprise toward the end of this volume of ethnographic essays on an African people to discover a discussion of the painter Lucian Freud! However, this illustrates the range of the author's thought and his determination to break down the artificial walls between cultures in a process of cross-cultural comparison and genuine reflection.

While this book is certainly not an easy read, it is warmly recommended to anyone with a serious interest in African culture and religions. It offers important insights and challenges for all who are concerned with the effective prosecution of the missionary task in a multi-cultural world today.

*David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford*

### **'Just As I Am': An Autobiography**

Billy Graham

Harper Collins, London, & Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1997; 760pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 5510 3144 1

The first thing which came to mind when I lifted up this book was what was there left to say about Billy Graham. A glance at my bookshelves reveals approximately fifteen volumes about or by Billy Graham? William Martin's book, *A Prophet Without Honour*, which was released seven years ago was a thoroughly-researched, well-written, quite outstanding, critical at times, reflection on the life and ministry of the world's best known evangelist. So what else was still to be written?

*'Just As I Am'*, however, is an autobiography. For the first time we are able to read Graham's own views, and it is this which sets this book apart and may explain its popularity, as it has remained high on the list of Christian best-sellers since its initial publication.

The book begins by looking at the early life of Billy Graham, growing up in the 1920s and 1930s in the rural south of America. He rapidly moves on to meeting his wife Ruth and the beginning of his ministry. Chapter 9 reflects on the 1949 Los Angeles crusade and the turning point that these meetings were to be for him. It seemed that at this point Graham's ministry took a quantum leap from relative obscurity to conducting missions in the major cities of North America and abroad.

The sections which deal with Graham's friendships with American presidents (Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton) and other world leaders were for me very revealing and are well worth a read in themselves. Yet, there does at times seem to be a naivety

about Graham's grasp of human nature. This is especially the case in his relationship with Richard Nixon, who as far as I know never publicly expressed any kind of remorse, not to mention repentance, for his more obvious misdemeanours while in office. This issue raised its head again when on a recent breakfast television programme in the USA, Graham seemed to be soft on Bill Clinton's alleged sexual activity. This caused such a furore in America that later the same day the Graham Organisation contacted the *New York Times* and arranged for Graham to write an editorial entitled 'The Weight of Moral Leadership'. This piece was considerably more balanced and biblical than his sound bites of the live interview.

Graham's international ministry I found at times breathtaking in its scope, especially his visits to the former Soviet-bloc countries and more recently his contact with President Kim II Sung of North Korea. Such a ministry of course is never problem-free and Graham touches on some of the problems he has faced, including his seemingly influential friendships with American presidents, his innocence in accepting invitations to minister in Communist Russia, his apparent public support for the war in Vietnam, his perceived laissez-faire approach to civil rights issues in the 1960s, and criticism by Christian groups who felt that the broad-based support which he engenders for his missions was too inclusive. Since writing the book Graham has again been at the centre of controversy, when, during a television interview with Robert Schuller, his emphasis on the sovereign call of God seemed to suggest that salvation was possible without belief in Christ.

For the British reader Graham's meetings in London and Glasgow of the 1950s will be especially moving, yet I was sorry not to read of his own reflections on Mission Scotland in 1991. This of course highlights one of Graham's own frustrations in writing the book, namely, how to condense four decades of ministry into a single volume. He goes to some length in the Acknowledgements to explain his regrets in being unable to do so.

Reflecting back on the book, I suspect there is more to be told. Has the Graham team run as smoothly as it seems for over forty years, have there never been moments of personal crisis, does the Graham Association simply go from one successful mission to another? For many the one question which remains unanswered is why Billy Graham has been so successful. If you are seeking an answer in '*Just As I Am*' you will be disappointed. Perhaps Graham himself is not the one we should turn to for the answer, and perhaps only eternity will fully answer such a question.

I have met Billy Graham on several occasions and although these meetings were brief I was struck by the fact that he is simply a man like many others. He chats about the weather, his grandchildren, his most recent mission, yet when he speaks about spiritual things, there seems to me to be an intimacy with God that I have found in no other. Could it be that God has quite simply called, set apart and anointed Billy Graham for the ministry of evangelism, or is this too simple an explanation for this high-tech, mobile, complex, information age in which we live?

As I came to the end of the book, my final conclusion was that Graham's relationship with Christ, his obvious humility, his passion for the proclamation of the Gospel, his belief and confidence in the effectual calling of the gospel message and his prayerful dependence upon God are clearly his greatest strengths. It is such qualities that, when all the analysing and evaluating are complete, the contemporary church needs to relearn and apply today.

For me *'Just As I Am'* has been late night reading over several months. At times I lay awake to the early hours wondering if we would ever see the likes of Billy Graham again. I warmly commend *'Just As I Am'* to as wide a readership as possible and prayerfully hope that, in terms of the proclamation of the gospel, Graham's final chapter, 'The Best is Yet To Be', will become a reality in our own generation.

*Richard Gibbons, Advisor in Mission and Evangelism, Church of Scotland*

## **Making Christ Known: Historic Documents from the Lausanne Movement, 1974-1989**

Edited by John Stott

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996; 288pp., \$30.00; ISBN 08028 4315 8

This volume brings together the major statements issued under the auspices of the Lausanne Movement, from the Covenant drawn up at the Congress itself in 1974, to the elaboration issued following the Manila Congress fifteen years later. In between these reports are found such ground-breaking documents as the Willowbank statement on 'Gospel and Culture' (1978) and the 'Report on Evangelical and Social Responsibility' issued in 1982. Those who have lived through the period covered by these reports will need no convincing with regard to their immense significance; others may here discover for themselves the evidence of the development and maturity of Evangelicalism within the last quarter of the twentieth century. The publishers are to be thanked for bringing together in one

volume these key documents – and it is surely appropriate to acknowledge with gratitude the role of the editor, not simply in gathering this material for publication, but for his role as leader, writer and courageous Christian thinker at the heart of the Lausanne movement throughout this period.

*David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford*

### **The Theology of John Calvin**

Karl Barth (transl. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley)

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1995; 424pp., \$25.00; ISBN 0 8028 0696 1

Geoffrey Bromiley has made a unique and fascinating work available to the reading public. Karl Barth gave his lectures on John Calvin more than seventy years ago, but the publisher's double claim that it offers brilliant insights into Calvin and sheds light on Barth's own development holds so very good. It is a strange sensation, if not chronologically disorientating, to read Barth of 1922 making right up-to-date interpretations of sixteenth-century Calvin's right up-to-date theology! And there is an additional bonus. Although we are hearing the authentic Barth, he seems more accessible, more vital and more relevant than the one often encountered in the *Church Dogmatics*. The distinguished translator of Barth's works has triumphed both in his choice of text and smooth rendering of language. I have heard of German theology students reading Bromiley's English translation of the *Church Dogmatics* in order to better understand the master. The same high standard is present here.

Of course, the decades have taken their toll. You sometimes read Barth lamenting preoccupations 'today' and then wake up to realise that he is chastising the liberalism of many years ago. But it rarely matters. As often as not it fits today just as well. More important, in spite of the exciting explosion of interest in Calvin in the last few decades, Barth can still come up with insights which seem to stand on the shoulders of more recent commentators. But what would you expect from someone who claims that the Reformers speak to every age, not just pre-Reformation or contemporary Reformation? In his view they are a challenge 'to all churches in all times'. Sometimes the value of a comment from Barth is just its sheer timeliness, such as the casual reminder that the Reformers did not always consider themselves epoch-making. Just to remember *that* can make a difference to the whole hermeneutic study on the Reformers' writings.

The value of Barth's lectures is not just in the field of theology either. He puts Calvin himself, and the turbulent history of his work, under the microscope too. Although some of his primary sources may be considered inferior today, they are still formidable and his use of them more formidable still. With great carefulness and balance he grapples with the Genevan saga – still very sharp and worth reading, even though one cannot always feel convinced.

The bad news is that Barth never finished the project, falling short of fully covering the fruitful second Genevan period. But in some ways the first half was more interesting, like a thriller with the hero in his tightest spot. It is a loss that the reader will be able to bear bravely because of the riches to be found here.

*Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow*

## **The Christian Story. A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrine, Volume 1**

Gabriel Fackre

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996; 271pp., \$18.00; ISBN 0 8028 4107 4

Theologians ought to be good storytellers – so long as they still believe in story, especially the big one. Unfortunately most of us are quite poor at it and so are many of the preachers that we turn out. Gabriel Fackre has no illusions about the difficulties of telling the Christian message purely as story, for he also recognises the place of discourse and truth claims alongside storytelling in conveying the Christian faith. This does not stop him from returning to the book that made him so well known – to reaffirm and fill out the points first made in the original edition of this book in 1978. He has kept abreast of a number of developments but the substance of the original text remains mainly intact.

Not surprisingly, the further the author heads into theological territory the more difficult it becomes to maintain a purely narrative form. Still, it is especially helpful to read again of his three keys to communicating the Christian faith: source (Scripture), resource (Christian tradition, in the broadest sense) and setting (the receptor culture). But drawing our attention to such things methodologically is a falling back on discourse to help us with telling a story. That said, Fackre does us a service in re-issuing this Volume 1 because the story today languishes in philosophy and critical studies just as it thrives in popular media.

Fackre's book still impresses with the vividness and power of the Christian story and calls us to know that narrative. Fackre interprets Christian belief as 'chapters in the biography of God'. He illustrates this by tracing the biblical message as a story of creation, covenant, renewal, church and salvation through to consummation. Fackre's is not just a story flatly told but imaginative, interpretative, exciting and pastoral, bringing out many insights. He integrates the Christian history also into his narrative and makes some powerful apologetic points as he does so. There are many merits: the extensive use of the motif of light, reminiscent of Athanasius; a beautifully balanced and clear statement on the issues relating to the unity of Christ; fresh thinking on the marks of the church, distinguishing helpfully between marks of *validity* and marks of *faithfulness*. And much, much more.

The main shortcoming which strikes a reader today is the fairly light treatment of postmodernism, the phenomenon which not only imperils the 'big story' but the whole concept of story. Fackre's review of the 'revival of systematics' since 1978 is a useful survey. But it seems to ignore the deep peril in which the sanctity of story stands today under the crushing blows of deconstructionism and localisation. He may feel that merely exemplifying the qualities of imagination and narrative provides adequate defence of them. But the story method perhaps deserves more of a robust defence – even if it turns out that this involves a journey into less narrative language to achieve the end in view.

*Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow*

### **Early Anabaptist Spirituality. Selected Writings**

Transl. and edited by Daniel Liechty

Paulist Press, New York, 1994; 304pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8091 3475 6

Capturing the spirit of the Anabaptists is much more difficult than a similar exercise with the 'magisterial' Reformers. The Anabaptists were a variegated lot and could include leaders who wanted continuity with the tradition and others who did not disguise their contempt for formal established religion and their passion for novelty. Selection is key, therefore, and Daniel Liechty has chosen with care here. He presents us with the most sincere and serious face of Anabaptist spirituality. What is striking about what is supposed to be a 'radical' Reformation is the reactionary nature of much of the thinking on, for instance, justification by faith. Works get a better innings here than at Luther's hands. The

lesson is that 'being radical' can result in reimposing burdens, negativity and law when this is not really intended. What breathes through these writings is an authenticity of Christian discipleship, a love of credible Christian living and a willingness to suffer. Persecution has left its mark on the piety expressed here and if the result is a narrow form of faith, the fault is as much with those who caused that oppressed concentration of mind as with the Anabaptists themselves.

This said, one cannot escape the distance between Anabaptist preachers and the Reformers in some important areas: election, revelation, the nature of faith, the security of believers. These writings focus on spirituality, but doctrinal influences are felt. So what is needed now is a fuller selection of the serious theological thinking that underlay the spirituality – not easy to find when so much paper-burning went on. But perhaps the translator of this volume can oblige. Someone looking for originality in this collection will not find it. Someone looking for authenticity will find what they seek.

*Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow*

## **Great Souls: Six Who Changed The World**

David Aikman

Word Publishing, Nashville, TN, 1998; 400pp., £14.99;  
ISBN 08499 09651

The author is a former senior correspondent with *Time* magazine, a fact that is reflected in the clarity and ease of style found on every page of the book. Aikman defines a 'Great Soul' as someone 'of preeminent attainment characterized by one or more character qualities of greatness'. He acknowledges that his selection of people fulfilling this description is personal, subjective and to a degree arbitrary, but it is shaped by the fact that he has personally met the people he describes and by the enormous influence each of them has had on the modern world.

Readers will be anxious to know who makes Aikman's list: his six 'Great Souls' are Billy Graham, Nelson Mandela, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II and Elie Wiesel. Each is described sympathetically and the biographical sketches are informative and challenging. For example, I was moved by Graham's comment: 'My greatest fear is that I'll do something or say something that will bring disrepute on the Gospel of Christ before I go.' That surely is the sentiment of a 'great soul'. There are similar gems in every chapter and Aikman

succeeds in conveying to his readers an intimate miniature portrait of each of his chosen subjects.

It may seem churlish to raise a question about John Paul II, but the phrase 'Great Soul' does not seem to fit well with a pontiff who continues to place a theologian of the stature of Hans Küng under an official ban. One wonders too whether history will not in fact view the work of John XXIII as having had a much greater impact on the world in the twentieth century and whether his claims to the description 'Great Soul' are not far more impressive than those of his conservative successor. Aikman's book has other peculiarities: C.S. Lewis would be very surprised to discover himself described as a 'cultural anthropologist' and we hardly need to be told that 'there is a disproportionately greater moral impact from the life and work of Elie Wiesel than from the life and ideas of Michael Jackson [and] Madonna...'. Still, the book is an excellent read and (if the word is not too antiquated) has a truly uplifting quality. It would make an excellent Christmas present.

*David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford.*

## **Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism: The Battle for Gospel Preaching**

Iain H. Murray

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1995; 164pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 85151 692 0

The remarkable ministry of C.H. Spurgeon continues to attract interest. It was marked by a series of controversies, of which the Downgrade is the best known. In *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism* Iain Murray turns his attention to one far less well-known, and largely confined to a small group of Strict Baptist churches. In addressing this issue Murray sees no current revival in Hyper-Calvinism, but as his subtitle suggests, fears a loss of belief in evangelism amongst Calvinists: concern for purity of doctrine has overridden the 'biblical priority of zeal for Christ and the souls of men'. With this in mind he includes a chapter of lessons to be derived from the conflict.

In the controversy itself, James Wells, the revered and highly successful pastor of the Surrey Tabernacle, publicly criticised the youthful Spurgeon who had quickly become a pulpit sensation on his arrival at the New Park Street Chapel (John Gill's former church). Murray deals with this largely by way of quotations from the *Earthen Vessel Magazine*. Spurgeon's response is illustrated largely by quotations from his sermons

(although a reader of the *Earthen Vessel*, he did not correspond with the magazine). Wells was maintaining the fight of William Gadsby and others against Andrew Fuller's 'duty-faith' teaching, which he saw continued in the preaching of Spurgeon. He viewed the loss of Gill's pulpit to such teaching with alarm, and even went so far as to express his 'doubts as to the Divine reality' of Spurgeon's conversion (which Murray graciously omits to mention). The role of C.W. Banks, the editor of the *Earthen Vessel*, who was drawn to Spurgeon personally but largely upheld the theological perspective of Wells, is intriguing.

Spurgeon continued to hold Wells in high regard, a feeling Wells seemingly reciprocated later in his life; the controversy was no mere personality clash as some have assumed. However, Murray suggests that the division in the ranks of Calvinistic Baptists over the issue of duty-faith made them less able to respond to the doctrinal indifference amongst Baptists that Spurgeon highlighted in the later Downgrade controversy.

More could have been said in the book about the enigmatic James Wells. He was undoubtedly a pulpit genius who, like Spurgeon, could preach to 10,000 in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall. Iain Murray's perplexity why Wells was nicknamed 'Wheelbarrow' Wells is probably resolved by his printed sermon 'A Wheelbarrow Spiritualised' of 1831, in which he refuted suggestions that a labourer was fitted to preach the gospel, and humourously illustrated his message from the components of a wheelbarrow.

Generally, this is perhaps not vintage Iain Murray: the collection of supporting chapters has a somewhat patchwork feel. Nonetheless, it is an interesting volume into another aspect of the increasingly less 'forgotten Spurgeon'. As would be expected from one who has done much to publish works by, and about, Spurgeon, he is ably defended. And a warning note is clearly sounded: 'When Calvinism ceases to be evangelistic... when acceptance of doctrines seems to become more important than acceptance of Christ, then it is a system going to seed and it will inevitably lose its attractive power.'

*Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow*

**BOOKNOTES****Luther**

Hans-Peter Grosshans

Fount, London, 1997; 102pp., £4.99; ISBN 0 00 628027 7

This contribution to the Fount Christian Thinkers series is an accessible introduction to the life, and especially the thought, of Martin Luther. It is written by Hans-Peter Grosshans of the University of Tübingen, in a clear, succinct style. A minimum of technical apparatus is used, but brief and relevant quotations from Luther's writings are included, with two pages of suggestions for further reading. Luther's life is dealt with only very briefly, before the core of the book which deals with Luther's thought. This is divided into themes – the Word of God, Faith, Jesus Christ and Salvation, the Priesthood of Believers, the Christian Life, and The Concept of Theology. The writer closes with a call to mirror Luther's unconditional commitment to the truth of the Word of God. This commitment to truth, Grosshans argues, caused the Reformation, and 'should be at the centre of the life of all Christian churches'.

*Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow*

**The Cambuslang Revival: The Scottish Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century**

Arthur Fawcett

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1996; 256pp., £6.95; ISBN 0 85151 702 1

It is most welcome to see the late Arthur Fawcett's *Cambuslang Revival* in print again, this time in paperback. Well known to an earlier generation, it still merits a wide readership. The work contains analysis of the background of the revival, the revival itself, and its wider impact. Not only is this a work of thorough scholarship, it also reflects the writer's pastoral heart. Spiritual developments are assessed sympathetically, and realistically. Fawcett's book has been widely acclaimed. Donald Meek describes it as 'a landmark of sober, evangelical scholarship in this underworked field'. The reader now enjoys the benefit of T.C. Smout's further analysis in 'Born Again at Cambuslang', *Past and Present* 97 (1982).

*Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow*

**A History of the Christian Tradition, Volume 2**

Thomas D. McGonigle and James F. Quigley

Paulist Press, New York, 1996; 286pp., \$17.95; ISBN 0 8091 3648 1

This volume covers the period from the Reformation to the present. Written as a basic textbook, the emphasis is on overview rather than detail. The style is simple and uncomplicated. Some chapters contain suggestions for further reading, although these usually refer only to other general historical works and encyclopaedias. The scope of the work is comprehensive, but the weighting towards the American scene, and Roman Catholicism, is clear. This is both a weakness and a strength. Some events in Protestant history are treated in sketchy fashion, although not unsympathetically. At times there is a lack of precision – the impression is given that George Whitefield visited America only once, and his Anglicanism goes unmentioned. The later chapters increasingly focus on Catholicism in the modern era. Herein lies a strength, offering introductory insights missing in some textbooks from the Protestant stable. In spite of its limitations, the book has value as a complement to other works at a basic level in general use.

*Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow*

**Paul and the Historical Jesus**

David Wenham

Grove Books, Cambridge, 1998; 24pp., £2.25; ISBN 1 85174 369 3

This booklet summarises Wenham's more detailed research into the relationship between Paul and the 'historical Jesus'. The short chapters affirm that Paul built on Jesus' teaching; that Paul's writings confirm the Gospel narratives; and that Paul was interested in the traditions about Jesus. This clearly written work will whet the reader's appetite for Wenham's excellent monograph.

*Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin*

## **Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland**

Edited by Duncan Forrester and Douglas Murray

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; 208pp., £12.50; ISBN 0 567 08504 X

The first edition of this invaluable guide was published in 1984. This partial revision still focuses largely on liturgical styles, with little attention to Highland and Gaelic traditions (except in the chapter on Roman Catholic worship by Mark Dilworth) and none to the charismatic movement. *Songs of God's People* rates a mention but not *Mission Praise*. But worship (however we define it; not surprisingly there is no trace here of recent evangelical debate on this question) is not an area of evangelical strength (ministerial energies have tended to be spent chiefly on the sermon), and historical surveys like this one should contribute to review and renewal, so long as we do not allow them to trap us in the past, whether remote or recent.

*D.F. Wright, New College, University of Edinburgh*

## **As You and the Abused Person Journey Together**

Sharon E. Cheston

Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1994; 64pp., \$3.95; ISBN 0 8091 3513 2

This short book tells of the nature and effects of sexual abuse through the story of a woman named Jessica. Sharon Cheston, a Professor in Pastoral Counselling, reveals this most sensitive subject for what it is: a private, often hidden nightmare of painful memories and necessary survival reactions. Having introduced Jessica, she goes on to show how people in the different roles of husband, friend, pastor and counsellor can best help and accompany the victim on the long painful journey to wholeness. The effects that such trauma can have on faith and a relationship with God are also considered. Simple and thoughtful, this booklet can be read in one sitting, and offers considerable insight into sexual abuse, but also encouragement that healing and wholeness are possible. It gives information and understanding for any who know an abused person. A bibliography offers further reading, though the publishers are American.

*Fiona Barnard, St Andrews*

**Their Blood Cries Out. The Untold Story of Persecution Against Christians in the Modern World**

Paul Marshall with Lela Gilbert

Word Publishing, Dallas, TX, 1997; 233pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8499 4020 6

The introductory chapter by M. Horowitz draws parallels between the persecution of the Jews and the present persecution of Christians. In the face of this the silence of the West (America) is labelled as ignorance. In Part One, Marshall and Gilbert have gathered shocking facts from Near and Far Eastern countries, Africa and Europe to dispel this ignorance. It is not comfortable reading but neither is it sensationalist. Part Two describes American apathy and Western secularism with specific examples and some possible reasons for the seeming indifference. There is no discussion of the 'inevitability' of persecution or of the place of prayer for those in positions of authority, but the final chapter gives sensible suggestions for action. This publication is of more value for American readers but the facts and the challenges are not easily avoided by us. Useful appendices are included.

*Ralph W. Martin, Glasgow*