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Reformation
& **REVIVAL**
JOURNAL

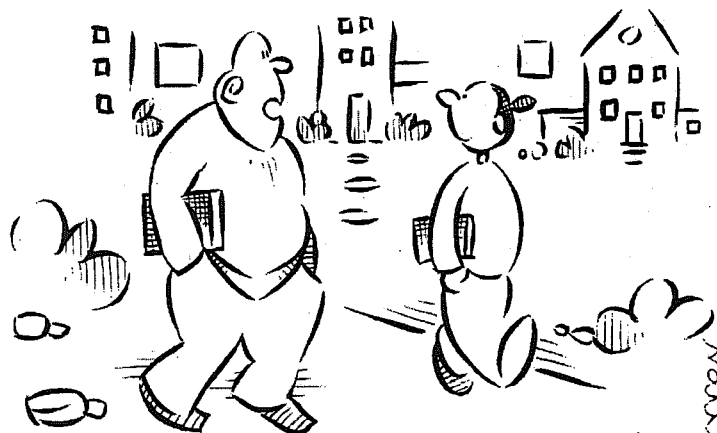
SPIRITUAL
FORMATION

A Quarterly for Church Renewal

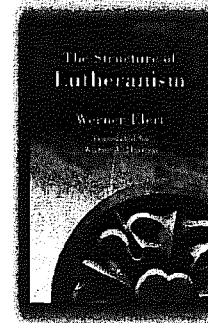
VOLUME 13 · NUMBER 3 · SUMMER 2004

BOOK BRIEFS

John H. Armstrong



I STRUGGLE A BIT WITH THE DOCTRINE OF UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION - I'M CONVINCED THAT GOD HAS PICKED UP ON MY ENDEARING QUALITIES.



THE STRUCTURE OF LUTHERANISM

Werner Elert

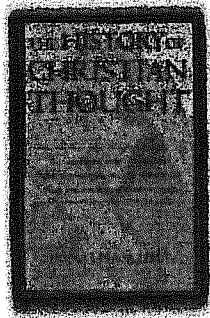
Walter A. Hansen, translator

St. Louis: Concordia (1962)

547 pages, cloth, \$29.95

This is, by all accounts, the best single comprehensive volume on Lutheran theology written in the twentieth century. The subtitle tells the reader exactly what Elert attempts to explain: "The Theology and Philosophy of Life of Lutheranism, Especially in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." He explains his subject admirably and cogently. Lutherans *must* have this volume while non-Lutherans will profit immensely by it.

The foreword to this edition is written by Professor Jaroslav Pelikan, retired professor of ecclesiastical history at the Divinity School of Yale University. Pelikan notes that Elert was a superb historian but he did not write "history for history's sake." Rather, "Elert wrote as a confessional theologian and a Lutheran churchman." For this reason you will get the polemics of confessional Lutheranism here but never without concern for the whole church. Concludes Pelikan: "Elert was a committed and ecumenical Christian, a confessional and loyal Lutheran, and a modern and enlightened man; in the present work he showed that, despite the spirit of the age, one could be all of these at the same time."



THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Jonathan Hill

Downers Grove, Illinois:

InterVarsity Press (2003)

352 pages, cloth, \$21.00

Jonathan Hill tells the story of Christian thought by means of portraits, wonderfully written, informative and accessible portraits! He superbly explains the thought of each subject, explaining the critical ideas in their system of thought. He provides good quotations from each thinker. Furthermore, he introduces and explains significant events, councils, movements and terms in the history of Christian thought. The format is reader-friendly and the content is accessible and non-technical. A comprehensive glossary, a useful index and suggestions for further reading, are also included, making the volume extremely useful for personal reading and classroom use. This is a comprehensive work that makes an important contribution to the present recovery of interest in historic classical Christian thought. I recommend this work highly.



FOR ALL THE SAINTS: EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Timothy George and Alister McGrath,
editors

Louisville: Westminster John Knox (2003)

231 pages, paper, \$24.95

Evangelicals are only recently beginning to reflect on how the theme of spirituality relates to their theological commitments and essential distinctives. Editor Timothy

George, writing in the Introduction tells the reader that this volume of essays intends to answer the question: "How do Evangelicals express the coherence of intellect and piety?" Asked another way, how do Evangelicals bring together head, heart and hands in a way that honors their best instincts while appropriating the deep treasures of the wider Christian tradition? No two theologians are better able to guide such a project than George and McGrath.

The essays are divided into five major sections: foundations, sources, critique, applications and disciplines. Writers include James M. Houston, Dallas Willard, Gerald Bray and Calvin Miller, among others. Subjects include "Loving God with Heart and Mind," "Christian Spirituality," "Spiritual Formation in Christ Is for the Whole Life," "Outward Faith, Inward Piety: The Dependence of Spirituality on Worship and Doctrine," and "What Have Evangelicals to Do with Athens and Jerusalem?" to name a few. This helpful collection meets a real need by providing a distinctly evangelical voice in a time when generic spirituality pervades the marketplace of Western religious ideas.



***IN THE END—THE BEGINNING:
THE LIFE OF HOPE***

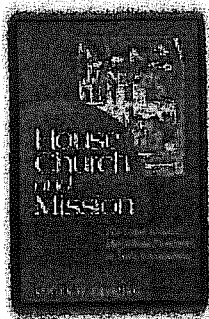
Jürgen Moltmann

Minneapolis: Fortress Press (2004)

180 pages, paper, \$17.00

Professor Moltmann is a world-renowned theologian who is best known for his emphasis on a theology of hope. In this clear, engaging and provocative work he argues against the popular images of the apocalyptic that prevail in conservative circles in North America. In so doing Moltmann forces the reader back to the biblical trajectory of hope centered in the work of Christ who has already overcome the world.

Here the reader is met face-to-face with a truly Christ-centered eschatology that will provoke serious reflection upon "the restitution of all things" as Scripture argues. If you have never read Moltmann this is a marvelous place to begin. The work is short and readable, with arguments that are easy to follow.



HOUSE CHURCH AND MISSION

Roger W. Gehring
Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson
(2004)
408 pages, cloth, \$29.95

Early Christianity was rooted in the structures of the household for its first three hundred years. This simple fact is often left out of most basic books on the church and seems increasingly important to the renewal of the church in our own time. If church and household were intimately related, and if church and household were thus central for church and mission then what role did they have in the early church? Gehring, adjunct professor at George Fox University in Portland, Oregon, has served on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ and thus retains a profound interest in both scholarship and the health of the church.

Gehring's writing style is engaging without being overly technical. This is a truly comprehensive treatment of a major issue in renewal. I highly recommend serious practitioners read and discuss this worthwhile volume.

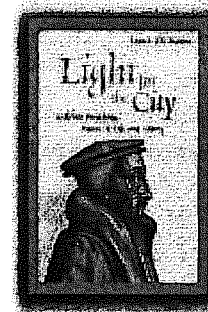


DIETRICH BONHOEFFER: A BRIEF LIFE

Renate Bethge
Minneapolis: Fortress (2004)
88 pages, cloth, \$12.00

The life of martyrs has always held fascination and power for the lives of Christian believers. Perhaps no 20th-century martyr has had more influence among Westerners than the German pastor-theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, killed by the Nazis just days before the liberation of Germany. He wrote of "worldly Christianity" and struggled to live and teach the gospel in the face of tyranny and evil.

Renate Bethge is a niece of Bonhoeffer and the widow of Bonhoeffer's close friend, Eberhard Bethge (who wrote the full definitive biography of Bonhoeffer). It was Bethge who initiated the widespread publication of Bonhoeffer's corpus of written work in the latter part of the 20th century. Renate Bethge sketches Bonhoeffer's life in this fine little book and includes some wonderful pictures. This makes for a very good, easy-to-read introduction to Bonhoeffer that will serve ordinary readers well. This will make a wonderful gift book.



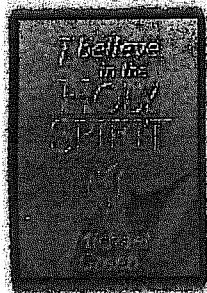
**LIGHT FOR THE CITY: CALVIN'S
PREACHING, SOURCE OF LIFE AND
LIBERTY**

Lester De Koster
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2004)
139 pages, paper, \$20.00

De Koster, professor emeritus of speech at Calvin College and the former editor of the Christian Reformed Church

periodical, *The Banner*, believes that John Calvin's doctrine of predestination made building the kingdom of God, not evangelism, the highest calling of Christians. In this view daily work for the kingdom is the *central act* of Christian worship. No one is left out in this view of every member ministry.

DeKoster's thesis is that Calvin's preaching ministry was actually directed toward building the kingdom of God. Contrary to some kinds of Calvinism DeKoster believes that people matter to God as much as principles and that Calvin's theology can be preached and lived with compassion for all. The style of this little book is engaging and lively. John R. de Witt suggests that this book could become "an enduring monument" in the field of Calvin studies. The publisher somehow overpriced this book based upon the page count.



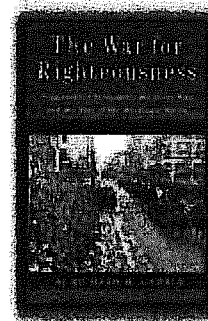
***I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT
(REVISED EDITION)***

Michael Green
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2004)
350 pages, paper, \$20.00

Originally published in 1975 this classic has become one of Michael Green's most important works over the course of an illustrious publishing ministry. Green, now senior research fellow at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, England, traces the doctrine of the Holy Spirit through the Bible and relates his exegetical observations to the ongoing ministry of the Spirit in the church today.

The changes made in the revisions (1984 and 2004) reflect Green's growing appreciation for the charismatic renewal (he is positive, but properly cautious) and his concern to relate this material to the world which followed the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the growth of Christianity in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Southeast Asia. Green's

contribution places one foot firmly in the world of scholarship while the other rests in the contemporary scene of the church in the world. Since this emphasis is identical to that of this quarterly I warmly commend this helpful treatment of the Advocate.

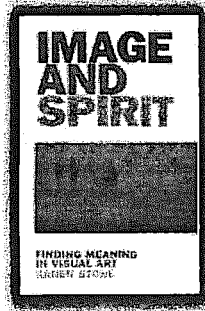


THE WAR FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Richard M. Gamble
Wilmington, Delaware: Intercollegiate
Studies Institute (2003)
306 pages, cloth, \$25.00

Progressive Christianity and the role of the United States in the world, thus its involvement in war, are clearly related. The desire for international crusading, which is alive and well today, is part of a long history and Richard Gamble tells us the story and shows the connection. This is required reading for those who want to understand, and challenge, the moralistic calls for American empire which drive both Neo-Conservatives and the Religious Right.

Gamble is an esteemed Reformed Christian and serves as assistant professor of history at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida. Conservative Christians might see this as an arcane history of ideas but it is a work of great importance at this time in our national history. If you are going to understand the larger issues of war in our republic this is a great place to begin your study.



**IMAGE AND SPIRIT: FINDING MEANING
IN VISUAL ART**

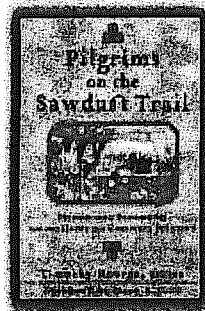
Karen Stone

Minneapolis: Fortress (2004)

171 pages, paper, \$16.99

God's creativity, and the power of imagination, should be related in thoughtful theology. Sadly, most Christians never bother to make this connection on their own. Karen Stone is a wonderful guide for the Christian who wants to consider visual art as the visible Word, or as the embodiment of the transcendent.

What is the communal role of art, how does it challenge us as prophetic Word, and how can it sensitize the Christian community to worship more fully? The subject baffles many, enrages some, but deserves the kind of reflection Stone gives it in this spiritually and theologically rich book. Stone is an artist and art educator at the University of Texas in Arlington.



**PILGRIMS ON THE SAWDUST TRAIL:
EVANGELICAL ECUMENISM AND THE
QUEST FOR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY**

Timothy George, editor.

Grand Rapids: Baker (2004)

237 pages, paper, \$19.99

Over the past forty years American Evangelicals have moved from margins of society ("The Sawdust Trail") to the mainstream of religious life. In so doing they have become a more powerful force in both politics and culture, bringing with them a definite challenge to their identity in mission. Moving from separatism to conversation and the

desire for unity presents both pitfalls and opportunities. This book looks honestly at both.

Scholars and church leaders, from evangelical and non-evangelical traditions, came together in a Beeson Divinity School conference that resulted in the chapters that make up this volume. It is the first of a series of Beeson Divinity Studies devoted to the pastoral and theological renewal of the church. If this is indicative of what is to come then other volumes in the series should be greeted with joy by those who labor and pray for church renewal.



**OLD TESTAMENT ETHICS FOR THE PEOPLE
OF GOD**

Christopher J. H. Wright

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press

(2004)

520 pages, cloth, \$30.00

Perhaps nothing is more challenging to a proper biblical consideration of ethics than how to use the Old Testament. Should we opt to obey only the moral laws and forego the civil and ceremonial ones? Can we even make such a distinction biblically? Or should we abandon the Old Testament completely, choosing only to go to the New Testament for our ethical decision making. Wright argues against both options. His approach may not satisfy you but it will stretch you and help you see how complex the issue really is and why the answer matters.

This edition is a thorough revision of the earlier volume, *An Eye for An Eye* (1983). Wright, formerly principal of All Nations Christian College in Ware, England, is now the director of International Ministries for the Langham Partnership International (known in the U.S. as John Stott Ministries). The author of several useful commentaries on Old Testament books he also wrote the helpful book, *Exploring Jesus Through the Old Testament* (InterVarsity Press).



**EVANGELICAL ETHICS: ISSUES FACING
THE CHURCH TODAY (THIRD EDITION)**

John Jefferson Davis
Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian &
Reformed (2004)
359 pages, paper, \$17.99

For two decades Davis' *Evangelical Ethics* has been a standard for evangelical and Reformed Christians in dealing with contemporary issues forthrightly and carefully. Now it has been revised, and greatly improved in the process. It remains scripturally faithful and solidly anchored in Reformed thought while it adds to its value by new chapters on the environment and genetics. Also included are chapters dealing with homosexuality, abortion, contraception, euthanasia, war and peace, capital punishment, civil disobedience, revolution, and divorce and remarriage. An index of Scripture, persons and subjects is included. This is the best such book available and will serve both individuals and class discussions well.



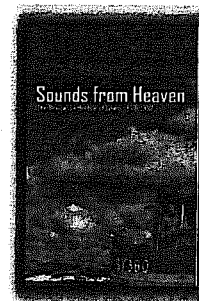
**TESTIMONY: TALKING OURSELVES INTO
BEING CHRISTIAN**

Thomas G. Long
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (2004)
179 pages, cloth, \$21.95

The term "groundbreaking" is overworked by publishers in promoting new titles. In this case it is not. Thomas C. Long, professor of preaching at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, sets out to do something rarely done—to show how what we say and the way we use language shapes our experience, practice and communal life. By this he shows that the way we speak, or communicate, with those outside

the faith is profoundly important.

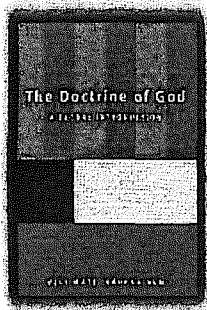
Evangelicals have too narrowly thought of Christian testimony as something special. Long makes the case that everyday speech is a profound practice of, and witness to, Christian faith. Long accomplishes this by looking at the way biblical stories work and how the insights we gain from them make faith-speech more truly meaningful. If speech is central to divine revelation, and to Christian witness, then Long's immensely useful book is an important wake-up call to many of us.



**SOUNDS FROM HEAVEN: THE REVIVAL
ON THE ISLE OF LEWIS, 1949-1952**

Colin and Mary Peckham
Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian
Focus Publications (2004)
282 pages, paper, \$14.99

For nearly fifty years I have listened to advocates and critics talk about the revival on the Isle of Lewis, mostly with a great deal of heat and very little light. Finally, we have a book that includes Duncan Campbell's own reports, along with useful eyewitness accounts. The Peckhams blend history, biography and anecdote into a very readable book that all students of revival should read. Pastors and ordinary believers alike will be riveted by this story. It might well spark a new movement of the Spirit among those who prayerfully read it.



*THE DOCTRINE OF GOD: A GLOBAL
INTRODUCTION*

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

Grand Rapids: Baker (2004)

315 pages, paper, \$21.99

This is one of several similar volumes in an already excellent series. The author provides a global perspective that takes seriously the whole church. Theologians around the world are writing and thinking about God, and for the first time we have an important introduction that will serve both serious students and scholars.

The material is well-organized and takes into consideration all the major movements in thought on the doctrine of God from every continent and context. As an example, a helpful overview of the North American and European debate about the "openness of God" is fairly represented by Kärkkäinen. The clarity and objective fairness of the author make this a book most thoughtful pastors should possess.