Reviews

Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture. By R.W.L. Moberly. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013. ISBN 978-0-8010-4885-2. xiv + 333 pp. £17.99.

Looks can be deceiving. At first glance a reader might well imagine that this book is *An* Old Testament Theology. And this is further implied by the accompanying publicity, which claims that 'it discusses most of the major topics of Old Testament theology'. Yet, this is not *An Old Testament Theology*, but rather, as Moberly himself admits, a book that is based upon an 'arbitrary' selection of Old Testament passages, to which the author has been drawn 'by their theological and existential import and by the interpretive challenges they pose' (p. 279). As such, the book is composed of chapters that concentrate chiefly on the following passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 7:1-8; Exodus 16; Isaiah 2:2-22; Jeremiah 18:1-12; Jonah 4:1-3; Psalms 44, 89; Job 1:1-2:10; 28:1-28. Moberly hopes these passages are '*representative*' (p. 1) and so provide an opportunity to explore topics germane to Old Testament theology: God, monotheism, idolatry, election, covenant, torah, prophecy, psalms and wisdom. However, the end result is disappointing for Old Testament theology includes considerably more than this limited list of topics. Nothing of substance is said, for example, on the issues of sacrificial atonement or holiness; only two verses of Leviticus are mentioned briefly (19:17-18). The book appears to be a valiant attempt to bring together essays that were originally composed independently of each other. One suspects that had Moberly created the book *ab initio* the selection of biblical passages would have been somewhat different.

Moberly's approach to the Old Testament is perhaps already well-known in the light of his many publications and this volume does not break the mould. His essays are at times insightful, but at other times, from the perspective of someone who holds to the trustworthiness of Scripture, irksome. His treatment of the theme of 'exaltation and abasement' in Isaiah (pp. 162-179) is both informative and challenging pastorally. Yet, elsewhere his ready acceptance of critical views on the composition of Old Testament books leaves questions unanswered: what is a reader to think when the main text introduces the quotation of Deuteronomy 7:6-8 with the words, 'Moses ... said to Israel,' but a related footnote implies this passage was composed in the seventh or sixth century BC (see p. 43)? Although Moberly argues that the book of Jonah was never intended by its author to be understood as a factual account, he fails to

explain why the testimony of pre-critical scholars unanimously supports a reading of the book that understands it as a record of actual events. Were all of these earlier scholars blind to what Moberly claims is immediately obvious? Perhaps it is Moberly who misreads the text, for his main argument that the story is larger-than-life is not especially compelling; strikingly, the miraculous in the book of Jonah is presented with a minimum of exaggeration.

We should not be surprised by Moberly's willingness to dismiss the longstanding historical-reading of Jonah. As he himself acknowledges, his overall approach to Old Testament theology gives little weight to what he calls 'the world behind the text'; rather he focuses 'primarily upon the world within the text in relation to the world in front of the text (that is, its contemporary message)' (p. 283). Yet, even Moberly recognises that decisions regarding the 'world behind the text' impact how we view the 'world within the text'. Those who interpret the historical setting of the text differently to Moberly are very likely to disagree with his reading of the 'world within the text'. Although Moberly desires to distance Old Testament theology from historical issues, the manner in which the Old Testament portrays God's nature demands that we take seriously the 'world behind the text'.

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Reading the Bible with Martin Luther: An Introductory Guide. By Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4917-0. ix + 134 pp. £10.99.

In this short book Timothy Wengert provides a look at the approach to scripture used by Martin Luther in reading the Bible. Combining academic rigour with pastoral application this makes a very useful guide. The structure of the book looks at Luther's view of authority (chapter one), method (chapter two), interpretation (chapter three), and ethics (chapter four). It closes with an example of how Luther applied these in his commentaries on Galatians 3:6-14.

In chapter one Wengert examines how Luther viewed authority when it came to reading the Bible. He starts with an analysis of Luther's well known views on the book of James, but suggests that the common understanding of this incident does not do justice to what actually happened. Luther moved the book of James to an appendix not because of disagreement over justification by faith, but because the book failed to 'emphasize' or 'push' Christ (p. 5). For Luther what pushes Christ became a key for understanding authority, whatever didn't push Christ was of a lesser authority. Wengert goes on to suggest that Luther didn't hold to a view of

sola scriptura but viewed reason and experience as important factors in deciding authority.

Chapter two explores what Luther's method was like. Wengert focuses on the important Lutheran distinction between law and gospel. Law, for Luther, is that in God's Word which is to remind us that we are sinners who deserve death; gospel is that which offers to us the free gift of God: life. There is not a clear divide between the writings before Christ, and those after Christ. The relationship between the Old and New Testaments is more fluid. Luther did not attach greater significance to the writings he labelled as Gospel, but believed that all of Scripture was to point us to Christ.

In chapter three Wengert focuses on how Luther interpreted Scripture. For Luther, as with Melanchthon, the centre of Scripture is found in weakness. The revelation of God, of which Scripture is a part, appears under opposites; for example, the power of God is made visible in the death of Jesus. So too when interpreting Scripture it is in its weakness that we can see the divine.

In chapter four Wengert offers a look at what ethical principles Luther used and explores the way he used them in different contexts. As a theologian Luther based much of his ethics on biblical principles, which he learned from studying the Scriptures. These ethics centre on fairness, conscience, and faith; they were highly contextualised in application.

In the final chapter Wengert provides a sort of guided tour of how Luther applied these different tools to exegesis by looking at Galatians 3:4-14. Galatians is a particularly good example as Luther left four different sources between his lectures and commentaries. These date from 1516 to 1535, and from them we can trace the development of his thought and application of this passage.

Wengert's work is very helpful in unpacking Luther. Like Luther, he is able to bring his experiences as both a pastor, serving in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and an academic to assist those who study and teach the Bible. He is thereby especially able to help students engage with Luther. Writing from within the Lutheran tradition this guide raises some issues that others from different traditions may disagree with. Regardless it will be of help in understanding Luther's commentaries, lectures, and sermons so that we can learn and remember the important lessons the reformer taught.

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Union with Christ in the New Testament. By Grant Macaskill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-19-968429-8. 353 pp. £75.00.

Grant Macaskill is Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of St Andrews and an expert on the Pseudepigrapha. In the same year in which he provided a critical edition of *The Slavonic Texts of 2 Enoch* (Brill, 2013), he showed his academic breadth (and his evangelical heart) with this biblical and theological treatment of union with Christ. The underlying thesis throughout is that union with Christ is essentially covenantal, to be understood within a covenant framework and enjoyed within a covenant relationship.

This is an exercise in the theological interpretation of Scripture. Much written under that banner has been merely hermeneutical and has had little engagement with actual texts. It is as frustrating as having your restaurant waiter deliver a philosophical lecture on the possibility of eating without giving you any food. Macaskill is a chef who knows his job is to ensure there is rich fare on the table.

The first section, chapters 1-5, offers 'foregrounds and backgrounds'. There are three foregrounding chapters: after reviewing key studies of union with Christ in modern New Testament scholarship, we move to *theosis* as a theme in the Greek Fathers and as a doctrine in modern Orthodox theology, and then to Luther, Calvin (plus later Calvinism) and Barth as readers of the New Testament and theologians of union. The fourth chapter turns to look at backgrounds in the Hebrew Bible and in various Jewish literatures, including mystical texts. Its exploration of covenant, glory/presence, sin and Messiah, and the relationship of these themes to each other, is foundational for the later discussion. Chapter 5 critiques putative Adamic backgrounds in Second Temple Judaism. Attempts at explaining Christology or union through assumptions about Adamic glory misread the Jewish evidence and miss the *divine* glory essential to Jesus and experienced by believers.

The second section, chapters 6-11, is devoted to participation in the New Testament. Chapters 6 and 7 examine the widespread use of the temple image, first in Paul, Peter, Acts and the Synoptics, and then in John's Gospel, Hebrews and Revelation. The discussion includes the pairing of temple and body imagery, the fulfilment of the new covenant promise of the Spirit, the ontology of the incarnation, the high priesthood of Jesus, and the place of faith. Chapter 8 deals with the sacraments, seen as covenantal rites which identify the participants with a covenant representative. They go back to the earliest period and are seen as playing a significant role in shaping the New Testament's theology of union. Chap-

ters 9-11 identify other participatory elements, in the Pauline corpus, the Johannine literature and the rest of the New Testament. These three chapters explore a fascinating range of texts and topics, but the role of the Holy Spirit as the agent of union is a recurring theme and one nuanced by each writer.

The range of issues and debates touched on would be bewildering, were it not that every chapter ends with a clear summary of its findings and its contribution to the overall discussion. Finally, the closely packed twelfth chapter offers a synthesis of the conclusions reached.

There is so much going on here that the book deserves a review article or two from scholars. It is a bold, fresh and creative contribution to the burgeoning literature on union and hopefully will appear in paperback before too long. It sometimes takes us through places we might not have expected to visit, but Macaskill is a sure-footed guide through the varied terrain, the scenic route is always interesting in itself, and the journey is worth it for the view.

Alasdair I. Macleod, Isle of Lewis

Preaching Christ from Daniel: Foundations for Expository Sermons. By Sidney Greidanus. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8028-6787-2. xv + 440 pp. £22.99.

Eight years of pastoral ministry and decades of seminary teaching (p. x) inform this contribution by Greidanus, Professor Emeritus of Preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary. This study builds upon his earlier books, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Eerdmans, 1988) and *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1999). Whereas the present volume applies his methodology to the apocalyptic genre, other genres receive treatment in the sister volumes: *Preaching Christ from Genesis* (Eerdmans, 2007), *Preaching Christ from Ecclesiastes* (Eerdmans, 2010), and *Preaching Christ from Psalms* (forthcoming).

Each literary (preaching) unit in Daniel merits a chapter in Greidanus' book. The subheadings for the chapters progress in a pattern that guides the readers from exegesis to exposition: 'Text and Context,' 'Literary Features,' 'Theocentric Interpretation,' 'Textual Theme and Goal,' 'Ways to Preach Christ,' and a sample 'Sermon Exposition.' He skillfully analyses the narrative structure by scenes and traces the narrative plotlines. Visuals include one map, two timelines, two diagrams of the seventy weeks, a dozen diagrams of the book's narrative plots, and charts that summarize the author's interpretations.

The back materials include four appendices: 'Ten Steps from Text to Sermon'; 'An Expository Sermon Model'; 'Resolved: A Sermon on Daniel 1' by Greidanus' former student, Ryan Faber; and, 'Seventy "Sevens" Are Decreed: A Sermon on Daniel 9' also by Faber. Notably the 'Select Bibliography' omits leading evangelical works by the three *W's*: Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (repr., Baker, 1972); Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Zondervan, 1973); and John Whitcomb, *Daniel* (Everyman's Bible Commentary, Moody, 1985).

Regarding the author's homiletical philosophy, God-honouring exposition happens 'by preaching the message intended by the inspired author as understood in the context of the whole Bible' (p. 24). With fervour Greidanus decries the egregious practice of moralizing, citing manifold examples (pp. 24, 31, 55-56, 84, 113-14, 145-46, 174, 321, 414). Instead he proposes that 'The sermon theme and goal should be based on the textual theme and goal' (p. 129). He lists sixteen succinct tips for effective oral communication (p. 28).

Preachers with Daniel on the docket could deliver a sermon series consisting of either four sermons (chapters. 1, 2, 7, 9) or eleven sermons—six on the narratives and five on the visions (p. 23). A twenty-five minute sermon (p. 203) should encompass a complete narrative unit comprising an entire chapter (pp. 31, 69, 85, 320).

Not every OT text predicts Christ, but 'there are more ways to preach Christ than promise-fulfillment' (p. 27). The author elucidates seven ways to preach Christ from the OT: redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, NT references, and contrast (pp. 27-28).

As for the interpretation of the book of Daniel, Greidanus arrives at reasonable conclusions. A few examples will suffice. Using good argumentation, the author determines that Daniel 2 and 7 depict four sequential pagan world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (pp. 5, 54n1, 79, 216). He treats the little horn of chapter 7 and the king of 11:36 as the Antichrist (pp. 219, 358, 384). The One like a Son of Man in 7:13 refers to the Son of God (p. 221), and the holy ones in verse 18 are saints (p. 224). On target, Greidanus believes that God's prophets could forecast the future in detail (p. 9).

On the other hand, some points of disagreement and areas of weakness come to the fore. Appearing to question the text's accuracy, Greidanus asserts that Daniel's 'narratives should not be read as objective historical reports… but as God's kerygma' (p. 17). Biblical types of Christ include the following persons: Daniel in chapters 1 (pp. 40-41), 2 (p. 66), 6 (pp. 186-87), and 10-12 (p. 365); the stone cut without hands in 2:34

(p. 66); the messenger in the furnace in 3:28 (pp. 95-96); the prince of the hosts in 8:11 (p. 268); and Ezra in 9:25 (p. 303).

Greidanus gravitates toward the symbolic treatment of numbers and time periods. Examples include the seven periods of time in Daniel 4:16 (pp. 135 n. 66, 137 n. 74); the ten kings in 7:7 and 24 (pp. 218, 238, 245-6); the 'time, times, and half a time' in 7:25 and 12:7 (pp. 246, 402); the 2,300 evening-mornings in 8:14 (pp. 263, 278); the weeks or sevens in 9:24-27 (pp. 298, 300, 330-2); the 1,290 days and 1,335 days in 12:11-12 (pp. 346, 406); and, the one-thousand years in Revelation 20:2-3 (pp. 248, 407).

Concerning the character identifications, Greidanus claims that Daniel 8:23-25 pertains to Antiochus IV (pp. 255-6, 267-8, 280). He identifies Darius as Cyrus (p. 169 n. 79) without considering Cyrus' subordinate, Gubaru (John Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede: A Study in Historical Identification*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), p. 64). In 11:40 he takes the king of the north as the Antichrist (p. 360). Certain appellations refer to a created being: the messenger from God in Exodus 14:19 (pp. 95, 109), the messenger in the furnace in Daniel 3:28 (pp. 95, 97, 107), and the messenger in the lions' pit in 6:22 (pp. 175-6).

While connecting Danielic passages to Christ, the book expresses the following viewpoints regarding redemptive history: Abel's murder initiates redemptive history (p. 265, cf. Ephesians 1:4). 'Satan managed to have Jesus killed' (pp. 127, 143, cf. Luke 4:5-7, John 10:18). Since Jesus' resurrection, the devil's chain severally limits his power, until he is released and wreaks havoc on the church (pp. 127, 143, 248). 'Jesus will not restore the earthly city of Jerusalem' (p. 339). The abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15-16) and the great tribulation (vv. 21-22) received a partial fulfilment in AD 70 (pp. 363-4). Jesus brought the first stage of God's kingdom to earth at his first coming (pp. 65, 69, 82, 144, 215, 227, 247, 301). And Jesus assures the church of limited persecution by the antichrist (269; cf. 249, 386-87).

The most controversial chapter of the book is 'Chapter 9: Daniel's Prayer and God's Response of Seventy Weeks' (pp. 285-340). In addition to the symbolic treatment of numbers, the author identifies Messiah the Prince (9:25) as Ezra (pp. 303, 332), the coming prince (vv. 26-27) as Titus Vespasianus (pp. 305, 309, 334, 336), and the most holy one and the one who makes a firm covenant (vv. 24, 27) as Jesus (pp. 307, 311, 337).

Bible expositors can glean much from this volume, regardless of any hermeneutical or exegetical discrepancies. Given the OT's messianic import (Luke 24:25-27; Acts 26:22-23; 1 Peter 1:10-12), we ought to preach and teach Christ from all the Scriptures—including Daniel.

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Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically. By Beth Felker Jones. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. ISBN: 978-0801049330. ix + 244 pp. £17.99.

American evangelical theologian Beth Felker Jones has written one of the most concise, reader-friendly, and innovative introductions to theology in recent scholarship. In *Practicing Christian Doctrine*, Jones seeks to provide a robust and engaging introductory theology text with an emphasis on how doctrine impacts Christian identity and church life. Jones' goal, she writes, is to "rehabilitate" the word *doctrine* in order to demonstrate how Christian theology enables and empowers Christians to grow in the life of faith and bear fruit.

In *Practicing Christian Doctrine*, Jones explores the foundational doctrines of the Triune God, Christology, Scripture, creation, revelation, soteriology, pneumatology, anthropology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Much of the content and structure within the book is what a theological student or scholar would come to expect in any boilerplate introductory theological text. Jones' theological position falls well within the parameters of historic orthodoxy, but operates from a distinct evangelical framework. Throughout the book, Jones describes theological perspectives of the global church, drawing attention to the theological reflection practiced in a myriad of contexts outside of North America and Europe. At two points in the book, she quotes the work of Peruvian liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, and Ghanaian theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye, who relates Christology to the plight of African women—just two of the many references Felker Jones includes that one may not come across in any other evangelical introduction to theology.

The author is attentive to the traditional debates that still exist in contemporary circles, such as atonement theory, free will and predestination, and the Holy Spirit's role in the contemporary church. Jones describes these theological positions quite well, and even takes positions at times (such as on the gender of the Holy Spirit and charismatic gifts). She rarely diverts into speculation and instead directs the reader back to theological issues of primary importance. Additionally, she lays out ancient heresies in a comprehendible way, thoroughly demonstrating the nuances between unorthodox beliefs and orthodox positions. Helpful sidebars reference theologically rich hymns, key passages of Scripture, and brief forays into theological debate. She closes her chapters with a word on how doctrines can be practiced in the life of the church, and ends her book with a benediction.

Jones' book succeeds on numerous levels. She offers the church a well-rounded, engaging, and highly informative introduction to theology.

Among theological introductions on the market today, this is perhaps one of the most slim, engaging, and reader-friendly. Jones establishes herself as a first-rate evangelical theologian who actively incorporates ecumenical and global perspectives into a robust and informative systematic theology.

While the book's title suggests that its content focuses heavily on how theology forms Christian identity and impacts the life of the church, Jones reduces her section on the practice of Christian doctrine to a one- or two-paragraph addendum at the end of each chapter. Her suggestions for Christian practice are vague and explicated in abstract terms, leaving little direction for theological students or pastors searching for serious guidance in the practice of doctrine. This is disappointing, considering the matter of practicing doctrine is of high interest to theologically reflective pastors and church leaders.

Weakness aside, Jones breathes new life into an old genre and this reviewer highly recommends it. This book will be of benefit to students of theology, pastors seeking a theological refresher, laypeople interested in attaining a basic but thorough understanding of Christian doctrine, and professors of theology searching for a new introductory text for their students.

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Embracing Shared Ministry: Power and Status in the Early Church and Why it Matters Today. By Joseph H. Hellerman. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8254-4264-3. 313 pp. £11.99.

Joseph H. Hellerman has written this helpful volume out of pastoral concern regarding 'the regrettable phenomenon of authority abuse in our churches.' (p. 290) Through his interactions with congregants, students, and colleagues, Hellerman encountered a number of stories about such abuse. Troubled, he returned to his past academic research on Paul's epistle to the Philippians, drawing from that work in order to present a solution for a broader audience. The solution is two-fold: (1) to reclaim a robust view of Christ-like servant leadership, and (2) to realise the church's organisation as a 'family' of believers at the local church level.

The book is divided into three parts, each featuring a trio of chapters. The first part deals with the social stratification of ancient Roman society, with special emphasis placed upon the Roman lifelong pursuit of personal *honour* above all else (p. 56). Hellerman argues this honour-driven, divisive culture was particularly prevalent in Philippi, and that Paul's epistle to that city was especially concerned with subverting this culture.

The second part delves into the ways in which Paul accomplished this subversion. One way was via Christology: the Son of God humbled himself and took the form of a slave (Phil. 2:3-11). That famous passage is not primarily about ontology, but rather 'power and status,' argues Hellerman (p. 143). The other way was via ecclesiology: the church is a familial sort of community, made up of 'brothers and sisters.' It was improper in ancient Roman society to compete with one's own family members for honour. Accordingly, such divisive competition is also improper in the church family.

Hellerman suggests that 'none of Paul's congregations had a solitary (or "senior") pastor figure. All were led by a plurality of overseers' (p. 193). This New Testament model of 'shared ministry', grounded in the brotherly relationships of church leaders, helps to create an ecclesial environment in which the temptations of power and competition wither away. The third part of the book explains some practical ways in which this sort of shared ministry works, particularly in the context of Hellerman's own local church. The leaders of that church have invested a great deal of time in cultivating deep relationships within the congregation. 'It is really quite amazing what happens when decision-making arises organically from a relational soil of mutual trust, respect, and admiration' (p. 267). The church is not a business corporation but a community of love.

The decision to include personal accounts of pastoral abuse in the third part is at times a bit disorienting. As the biblical principles of church relationships and leaderships are discussed in the first two parts, this organisation seems to place the solution before the problem.

Hellerman keeps the text flowing, engaging, and focused, but perhaps at times overly limits the scope of the discussion. Is Philippians 2:3-11 really only (or primarily) to be understood in light of ancient Roman honour-seeking culture? Do the theological themes of humiliation and exaltation not reach much further back than this culture? Is the image of the church as family the only New Testament ecclesial image relevant to this particular problem?

These minor points aside, Hellerman is to be commended for this valuable book, which addresses a common problem and is recommended for elders, pastors, and leaders who wish to deepen their understanding of biblical leadership.

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Captive to the Word of God: Engaging the Scriptures for Contemporary Theological Reflection. By Miroslav Volf. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8028-6590-8. 180 pp. £13.99.

In this short book Volf enters into the ongoing discussion of reading Scripture theologically, which he says is 'the most significant theological development in the last two decades' (p. 14). The first chapter was written for this book whereas the other five are a compilation of slightly updated essays written over the last sixteen years. Chapter one is crucial for understanding Volf's approach despite his claim to be 'against "method,"' in the sense that theological readings 'are much more an art requiring wisdom than an exact science' (p. 4). Systematic theology cannot and should not avoid Scripture since it is 'the primary site of God's self-revelation' (p. 6) and 'none can ultimately bypass Scripture in coming to Jesus Christ' (p. 12). The theologian, therefore, should embrace reading Scripture theologically. Guiding Volf's interpretation are six factors: the Bible should be read as 'a narration of happenings' (p. 16); it is a sacred text and 'a book for today' (p. 18); it is 'not merely a witness . . . but also a medium' of God's action (p. 20); readers must honour Scripture's unity and diversity; they must admit a multiplicity of meanings; finally, following his work in *Exclusion and Embrace* (Abingdon Press, 1996), readers should operate with a hermeneutic of respect as opposed to suspicion.

Chapter two looks at Paul's way of doing theology and concludes that although theology is intellectual, it must also provide a persuasive 'way of life.' Beliefs and practices cannot be separated since beliefs ground practices. Chapter three focuses on 1 Peter's metaphor of aliens and sojourners in relation to Christian identity. Christian identity includes eschatological and ecclesiological differences and, instead of rejecting the world because of these differences, we discover a call to transformation rather than separation. In chapter four, dualism and contemporary pluralism become the focal points in relation to John's Gospel. John is not inherently dualistic, but makes use of dualistic tensions (e.g., creation and its Creator). These dualities 'are much more open to inner differentiation, and therefore to plurality' (p. 116), leading Volf to translate John's insights into contemporary debates on pluralism. Chapter five builds on *A Common Word* (Eerdmans, 2009), placing 1 John 4 ('God is love') in conversation with Islam. God's love is '*completely unconditional*,' '*universal*,' and '*indiscriminately forgiving* of every person and for every deed' (pp. 142-43, emphasis in original). He then controversially concludes, with the help of Augustine, that the 'elevation of deeds above beliefs is the consequence of the claim that God is love' (p. 147). Chapter six ends the book by looking

at Ecclesiastes and argues for the vanity of human striving for progress and materialism in relation to the economy.

Volf's work is true to his statement that, 'the most important thing about the Bible . . . [is] that it is the Word of God addressed to people of all times and places' (p. 32 n. 70), and this work is a solid example of this approach. The book lacks sufficient engagement with contemporary theological interpreters, but this is because Volf's priority is to connect Scripture, theology, and culture. The book is an unfortunate mixture of accessible writing and consistent use of German texts along with a number of unpublished and therefore inaccessible manuscripts, making the work also inaccessible for the interested reader (it also lacks an index and bibliography). His interpretation of Augustine in chapter five is highly questionable, and it is arguable that neither Augustine nor Scripture ever elevates Christian acts above beliefs. On the contrary, faith without 'deeds' is dead, but our deeds express our beliefs and are their basis. Readers who have kept up with most of Volf's writings will benefit most from chapter one.

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Reformed Means Missional: Following Jesus into the World. Edited by Samuel T. Logan, Jr. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-938267-75-8. xiii + 274 pp. £12.99.

Samuel Logan is the International Director of the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF) and has assembled this collection of essays from various pastors, theologians and Christian workers. The purpose is to show that mission belongs to the identity of the reformed church. In the foreword, Christopher Wright says the church's mission is God's mission. Therefore the church's view of mission needs addressed, 'It is not so much that God has a mission for his church in the world; rather, God has a church for his mission in the world' (p. ix).

Various Christian audiences will find this book of interest. It provides useful information and instruction for reformed theologians and pastors. It provides a response to any who might view the reformed church as non-missional. Thirdly it will appeal to a wider Christian audience, for there is much insight in these essays concerning the nature of the church's mission in the world today.

Section One, entitled 'Laying the Foundation,' states the theological basis for Christian mission. Martin Allen's essay is especially important to read for those engaged in pastoral ministry. He highlights the christological nature of church mission under the following subheadings: (1) The mission is essentially *the work of Christ*; (2) The mission involves *witness*

to Christ; (3) This mission requires *a warrant from Christ*; and (4) The mission *embraces the world for Christ*.

In the second chapter Samuel Logan draws from the theology of Jonathan Edwards and reminds us that we cannot lose sight of God. Who he is and our attitude towards him is of primary significance. Edwards's concern was for authentic religion—one that Satan is unable to counterfeit. Love for God is crucial for true religion, as Satan can never counterfeit this. Hence the WRF holds as its first theological affirmation, 'The essence of true religion (and of Reformed theology) is adoration and worship of the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (p. 37). This also seems to be the proper setting for understanding the mission of the church in theology, and on the whole is reflected throughout the book.

Thomas Schirrmacher takes up the subject of 'The Book of Romans and the Missional Mandate'. He observes that the opening and closing chapters of this letter are very much concerned with church missions. The theology of the letter must be understood in this context—a good point to remember for all who preach and teach this epistle. He argues that the Great Commission is the fulfilment of the Old Testament (see pp. 52-6) and a diagram on p. 59 highlights 'The Mission of the Church' as motivating and determining factors in theology. But a more prosperous route for theology would be found in Christ's person and work as a whole, rather than singling out one particular aspect of his work. An adjustment in emphasis here would aid the church's motivation for mission, precisely because it is Christ's mission.

Section Two, 'The Church Reaches the World,' shows the breadth of God's mission. These chapters provide an excellent introduction to many of the issues which the church faces today. Flip Buys addresses the subject of poverty and social injustice with reference to his home country, South Africa. He recalls the Christian convictions of F. W. de Klerk, which had a pivotal role in the end of the apartheid. His chapter is an exemplary account of a reformed understanding of church mission with respect to the doctrine of God.

Two essays address the matter of abuse against women and children. The darkness of the world and its need for the light of the gospel is made plain. Diane Langberg says the levels of domestic violence are such that, 'Statistically, it is far more dangerous for women to go home than to walk city streets alone at night' (p. 132). Basyle Tchividjian, a former child-abuse prosecutor, who teaches on the subject at Liberty University law school, identifies the increase in mutilation, murder and abandonment of new-born girls and likens the church's task to that of the first century, 'the first-century church, [travelled] outside the gates to the garbage heaps of those days to rescue baby girls… The missional call that was answered by

our first-century brethren is not unlike the call before us in the twenty-first century church and community' (p. 145).

There are also essays in the second section on urban mission, Christian health care, homosexuality, immigration and secularism. John Leonard and John Nicholls provide helpful accounts regarding the rise of Islam, the recent response of the Insider Movement and highlight some of the difficulties that are found here.

In the book's conclusion Andrew McGowan rightfully points out that in theology we must both be looking back and forward. We must look back to understand our own tradition, and forward as the church seeks to make Christ known to the world (pp. 240-2). A chapter tracing the historical importance of mission in the reformed church would have been useful in this regard. This would help secure the argument that mission belongs to the identity of the reformed church.

Those who are thinking of purchasing this title may wish to consider the e-book version which has an additional third section, and eight further essays. David Zadok's essay regarding Christian mission to the Jews is added to Section Two while the other seven are found in the third section, 'Building the Church'. This consists of essays by Henry Luke Orombi (on the subject of church faithfulness), Matthew Ebenezer (theological education), Ron Scates (denominational structures), Robert M. Norris (leaving a denomination), John H. Armstrong (Christian unity), Mark Johnston (Christ's prayer in John 17) and Craig R. Higgins (word and deed in worship and ministry). The e-book includes a copy of the WRF Statement of Faith in the appendix. This Statement is also available to read on the WRF website.

Paperback or e-book, *Reformed Means Missional* is a thoroughly enjoyable read. It echoes Christ's call to the church to live in step with the gospel and provides inspiration for all in church ministry to 'go therefore and make disciples of all the nations'.

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