

Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews

Heil, J P 2007 – *Ephesians: Empowerment to walk in love for the unity of all in Christ*

Publisher: Society of Biblical Literature. Pages 355. Price: \$21.00

Reviewer: Dr Estelle H Dannhauser (Johannesburg)

John Paul Heil is a professor of New Testament Studies at the Catholic University of America. His previous publications show that the study of rhetoric and an audience-oriented approach to texts hold his interest and these he applied to Luke-Acts, Mark, 1 Corinthians and Matthew 26-28.

The reader reaps the reward of a carefully chosen title as it offers a blueprint of the content. Encapsulated in each word of the title is a part of the message the author believes the Letter to the Ephesians wants to convey to its audience. The introduction motivates the selection of each consecutive word of the title, as well as the inter-relatedness of the words of the title as a whole. It then very briefly touches upon the author's premises concerning authorship (he opts for the historical apostle Paul as author), audience ("the holy ones in Ephesus", in all probability including believers of both Jewish and Gentile origin), and method (literary-rhetorical and audience-oriented).

In Chapter 2 the reader is briefly familiarized with the nature of macro- and micro-chiastic structures. The author suggests nine criteria which should be rigorously applied to all possible chiastic structures within the text, thereby eliminating subjective super-imposing of structures as far as possible. The theory is that the application of these criteria to the text of the Letter to the Ephesians will lead to the detection of precise verbal parallels, allowing a natural division of the text into "15 distinct literary units" (p 16). The methodology and thought processes leading to these conclusions are explained for the benefit of the reader, followed by an illustration of how the 15 units combine to form a macro-chiasm with as unparalleled pivotal unit Ephesians 4:1-16. The author believes to have detected precise verbal parallels (7 pairs of parallel units) that combine to form a macro-chiastic structure through the text as a whole.

As is obvious from the author's choice of title, "love" is central to his thesis. He discovers this theme to be permeating the whole, with explicit terms for love in ostensibly deliberate and functional positions within the rhetoric and most noticeably at the centre of the macro-chiasm.

In the remaining chapters the author seeks to plumb the intended response to the rhetoric strategy by means of the rather intricate chiastic patterning he discovered within the text. He believes that Paul (implied author) presupposes common tradition-ground (Jewish, Christian and Gentile) which he draws upon in order to empower the congregation of believers into participating in the "... central theme of love that pervades the Letter to the Ephesians" (p 10).

To be taken on a guided tour through the text in question by means of the possible mnemonic patterns and persuasive devices within the rhetorical and literary encoding, is rewarding. This approach to a text ostensibly intended as *Rundschreibe* to be performed, heard, comprehended and internalized, offers much to be recommended. Moreover, the overall precision and lucidity of reasoning and presentation ensure that the tour is a pleasant one and most of the front-runners in the field are invited along to further elucidate the particular approach to the text.

However, the fact that other perusals of Ephesians have discovered other chiasms sounds a warning bell indicating how difficult it is to avoid the pitfalls of subjectivity when

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attempting to reconstruct patterns and devices in our quest for a better understanding of ancient texts.

Confusion may sometimes arise as to the author's use of "micro-" and "macro-chiasm". Furthermore, the question why the analysis did not yield other prominent terms such as "peace" alongside "love" could be asked and one might ask for more substance being given to the introductory topics, such as authorship and audience.

On the whole, however, the book is recommended for providing an example of a detailed literary-rhetorical, audience-oriented approach, for contributing to an appreciation for and insight into the Letter to the Ephesians and for highlighting the importance of the theme of "love" within it, shown to be underlined and supported by the careful structuring of this text.



Peters, T 2007 – *The stem cell debate*

Publisher: Fortress. 122 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Cornel du Toit (University of South Africa)

This is a lucid introduction to the stem cell debate, offering ethical guidelines for assessing it. The author, Ted Peters, is a well-known systematic theologian at the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California. He is also prominent in the die science-religion debate. From 1990 to 1994 he was involved in monitoring the human genome project. Since 1996 he has been involved in the stem cell controversy and was appointed consultant to MD West, chief executive of Geron Corporation at that time. In 2004 the state of California approved a grant of \$3 billion in bonds for stem cell research. The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) was established and Peters is a member of the workgroup that advises CIRM on ethical standards (p xiii). Thus, Peters is theoretically not involved in the issue, but directly influences the way in which the research is conducted.

The controversy centres around the status of zygotes, since stem cells mostly develop from these cells, and for this reason the debate encompasses abortion with all its ramifications.

To grasp the ethical problem the book is dealing with, one needs to understand the biological background. Stem cells can potentially trigger a medical revolution in that they create new tissue. Peters explains (p 2): "What scientists are imagining is placing regenerative stem cells into not only the heart but also the brain, pancreas, liver, and spinal nervous system. With tissue renewal, regenerative therapy could reverse deterioration that leads to such diseases as heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes, lower body paralysis, and numerous others. As a by-product, regenerative medicine offers strides forward in the battle against cancer."

Within days after the formation of a zygote mitosis occurs. Every cell (now called a blastomere) is totipotent. At the blastocyst stage the trophectoderm (an external shell/tissue of sorts formed between days four and six, surrounding the inner cell and eventually the connective tissue with the uterine wall) is removed and the inner cell mass is disaggregated. The individual cells are placed on a feeder tray and if all goes well, the cells, now called pluripotent cells, will divide. After fifty cell divisions they will be defined as 'characterized'. "Once characterized, experiments to tease pluripotent cells into integrating with targeted tissue can begin" (p 10). That, in broad outline, is the background.

Peters sees the ethical response to this in terms of interpretive frameworks, within each of which one could argue in favour of or against stem cell research. The three frameworks – the embryo protection framework; nature protection framework and medical benefits framework – are discussed in chapters 3 to 6 respectively. Within the embryo protection framework the question is whether the blastocyst (zygote after a few days) has human dignity “and if so, are we forbidden to dismantle it when pursuing medical research?” (p 30). I find the debate somewhat artificial, since zygotes are derived from fertility program’s redundant frozen cells. . Should the question of whether freezing zygote cells endlessly violates human dignity not have been raised long ago? Zygote cells can be directly obtained from the uterus, but because it is risky for the mother, it is commonly felt that it should not be permitted. The nature protection framework (p 49ff) centres around the question of whether we should so radically intervene in nature and whether it is not ‘trying to act God’. I cannot say that I found this discussion particularly profound – could it be expected in a scenario where the interlocutors are representatives of popular opinion? The medical benefit framework (p 61ff) is focused on the question of whether the ends (inconceivable relief of suffering) justify the means. Again, I find the discussion rather superficial. The issue of economic benefit from the research (p 70) is vitally important, but is dealt with far too cursorily. Chapter 6 (p 75 ff) deals with the research standards framework. It concerns guidelines that secular research sets for itself. “In its most mature form, ethics becomes policy-rules made by society to guide our best attempts to live a good life” (p 76). Peters cites examples of self-imposed limitations set in practice. One is the fourteen-days rule “... that research should not be permitted that involves *in vitro* culture of any intact human embryo, regardless of derivation method, for longer than 14 days or until formation of the primitive streak begins, whichever begins first” (p 77). Another aspect dealt with is the issue of whether women should be paid to donate their ova (81ff).

In chapter 7 (p 89 ff), under the heading “Theological reflections on human nature”, Peters tries to sway public opinion in favour of stem cell research by falling back on the issue of dignity. In this regard it is pointed out that dignity only emerges in relationships. A zygote is not yet in any relationship and therefore the dignity argument does not apply. After lengthy argument Peters concludes that dignity is relational rather than biological (p 104). This finding smacks of a response by a paid official. After all, we know better and can see through such artificial distinctions: the one (social interaction) necessarily entails the other (biology).

Technology appears to have landed us in a pseudo-argument, evidenced by Peters comment (p 107): “An early embryo *ex vivo*, outside a mother’s body, cannot become a person in the biological sense, let alone an autonomous individual.” Hence, the entire debate on frozen zygotes is a virtual one. Virtual ethics is not pointless, provided it results in actual rules for conduct. This is what Peters grapples with in the final chapter. A good conclusion is a stance of humility “since there are only degrees of certainty available regarding the ontological status of the early embryo” (p 112).



Ayala, F J 2006 – *Darwin and intelligent design*

Publisher: Fortress. 116 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Cornel du Toit (University of South Africa)

Ayala is the Donald Bren professor of biological sciences at the University of California and a prominent figure in the science-theology debate.

The book deals with the controversial topic of ID (Intelligent Design) in an intelligible, fascinating way. It explains ID with reference to Paley's work (ch 1), contrasting it with Darwin (ch 2): Darwin's greatest accomplishment was to show that the complex organization and functioning of living beings is the result of a natural process of selection, without any need to postulate a creator or other external agent (p 19). Chapter 3 deals with evolution, explicating the fossil record and radiometric dating (measuring the residual amount of natural radioactive atoms in certain minerals). With reference to the old argument of missing links to account for evolutionary development, Ayala cites links that are constantly being found, confirming and reinforcing the existing model. Thus a recently discovered fossil (announced in April 2006), known as *Tiktaalik*, goes a long way towards bridging the gap between fishes and tetrapods (p 32). Continuing, he describes the *Archaeopteryx* (p 33), which displays a mixture of avian and reptilian traits. Thus, he confidently avers (p 41): "It is now possible to assert that gaps of knowledge in the evolutionary history of living organisms no longer exist."

Ayala mentions the known fact that most species display 'design errors', which suggest natural selection rather than ID: "[I]t is 'imperfect' design, accomplished by natural selection, rather than 'intelligent' design" (p 34). He refers to archaic similarities manifesting mainly at embryonic level, then turns to the universal tree of life: "molecular biology has made it possible to reconstruct the universal tree of life, the continuity of succession from original forms of life (ancestral to all living organisms) to every species now living on earth" (p 41). In chapter 4 he gets down to hominid evolution and the development of the hominid brain and mind. Chapter 5 explains natural selection and how it differs from the ID model. Darwin defined the basic principle of natural selection as follows: "This preservation of favorable variations and the rejection of injurious variations, I call Natural Selection" (p 56). He explores evolution in the form of genetic change and DNA mutations (p 57-60). "At the end of the long process of evolution, we have organisms each exhibiting features 'designed' for their survival in the habitat where they happen to exist" (p 64). The flaw in the ID case is that complex organs originated over a relatively short period. Another fallacy is that some species could not evolve because they were dependent on other species in the food chain. Ayala counters this as follows: "But we can readily understand that the accumulation of millions of small, functionally advantageous changes could yield remarkably complex and adaptive organs, such as the eye" (p 64). He elaborates on the example of the evolution of the eye (p 66-68).

Chapter 6 outlines the ideas underlying ID, citing proponents of this approach such as Dembski, Behe and Johnson. Ayala highlights the court verdict on ID in December 2005, in which judge Jones (quoted on p 77) said: "ID is at bottom premised on a false dichotomy, namely that to the extent evolutionary theory is discredited, ID is confirmed.... The same argument ... was employed by creationists in the 1980s to support 'creation science'." Some of the logical inconsistencies of ID are analysed (p 80ff). The book concludes with a chapter on religious belief (90 ff). Ayala again cites judge Jones in support of his own view: "Many of the leading proponents of ID make a bedrock assumption which is utterly false. Their presupposition is that evolutionary theory is antithetical to a belief in the existence of a supreme being and to religion in general" (p 90-91). Ayala affirms the neutrality of science, then confesses: "Successful as it is, and universally encompassing as its subject is, a scientific view of the world is hopelessly incomplete. Matters of value and meaning are outside its scope" (p 102).

The book highlights the biases of ID, affirms the evolutionary model and developments in this regard and underscores the place and value of faith and religion.



Drobner, H R 2007 – *The fathers of the church: A comprehensive introduction*

Publisher: Hendrickson. 1vi + 632 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof G A Duncan (University of Pretoria)

By compiling this work, Drobner has done Church History a great service. In it he introduces readers to the life and work of the most significant writers of the early church and the early medieval church. In so doing, he offers a fairly comprehensive history of the growth and development of Christianity in the first seven centuries CE. As an overview, it presents the work of the most prominent authors and covers important works and themes. This allows him to locate the early fathers in their political, social, ecclesiastical and cultural contexts, using the latest available scholarship. It also focuses on movements, creeds and councils of the period. This, however, results in rather an incomplete survey of the contexts themselves which are necessary for a full understanding of the history of Christianity.

The prefatory material considers sources and bibliographies in an extensive list of headings. An introductory chapter, which explains the subject matter of Patrology as a theological discipline, follows. He does so by examining the title of Father given to significant churchmen who were the intellectual and spiritual teachers, leaders and philosophers of early Christianity, and he relates it to Church Father and Doctor of the Church which have to be distinguished from Church writer (of a later period) according to the traditional criteria of orthodox doctrine, holy life, recognition by the Church and location in the Early church period. Drobner continues his examination of concepts by discussing the nuances in meaning of patrology, patristics and their relation to literary studies in general, although currently they are used interchangeably. Sections on literature from the apostolic and Post apostolic periods, the period of persecution, of growing imperial power and influence, the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages (fifth to mid-eighth century), and the literature of the Eastern Church then follow.

This work is a substantial revision of an earlier work published in German in 1994. The scholarship has been completely updated, as has the supporting material. Material has been added on Tertullian, Basil the Great, Eusebius of Caesarea and the innovative section of literature from the Eastern Church. These include detailed lists of works on general bibliographies, editions of the primary texts, translations, reference works, introductions and surveys, theology, encyclopaedias, journal articles, studies, collections of essays, biography and cultural contextual material. The book includes a number of helpful timelines to explain the timescales involved and the relationship of the Fathers to one another, a supplementary bibliography and indices of subjects and ancient sources. Although, on first appearance, it appears to be a work for the specialist, it will be of great value to students beginning their studies in early Church History, as well as to theologians and pastors. Although it is a substantial work, it is attractively presented and offers great encouragement to engage in further deeper study of the fathers of the Church.



Roberts, R C 2007 – *Spiritual emotions: A psychology of Christian virtues*

Publisher: Eerdmans. 207 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Naas Ferreira (Johannesburg)

The reader of *Spiritual emotions* quickly realizes that Roberts is steeped in classical theism that confines his arguments to a prerational mythological stage of the evolution of human consciousness. Besides questionable Biblical references, Roberts uses personal anecdotes and often refers to Leo Tolstoy and Feodor Dostoyevsky as support for his arguments about Christian emotions. The book is divided into three sections: I. A Christian psychology of emotions, II. The Christian passion, III. Christian emotion-virtues. He dedicates chapters to contrition, joy, gratitude, hope, peace and compassion to guide his readers through the emotional maze. Roberts refers to the three recent revolutions in psychology and ethics to showcase his understanding of Christian emotions: 1. Ethics has turned psychological. In 1958 the Christian philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe “pointed out that the only legitimate basis for the ought-rules was God.” (p 6) She proposed that ethicists should think about virtues as human traits like justice, generosity, truthfulness and compassion. 2. Psychology has turned ethical. 3. Both psychology and ethics have turned emotional.

Spiritual emotions will help those on the same level to understand emotions, but will have a tough time coping in a rational world. He says: “Christianity does not have the same ideal of autonomy as modern moral outlooks. Christian ethics and psychology affirm that we are fundamentally dependent on God and that maturity is a certain kind of dependence on God, rather than some radical autonomy. So it should not embarrass us that Christian ethics involves, in a very basic way, a sense of being watched by God” (p 102). Developmental psychology and more importantly, integral psychology have shown that humanity and all humans are on a developmental path, from the archaic, the magical, mythical, the rational to the transpersonal levels. Ken Wilber,¹ an integral psychologist, using Claire Graves’ research as expressed in “*Spiral dynamics*” by Cowen and Beck, has developed an integral operating system or integral map that explains the evolution of human consciousness from the prepersonal subconscious to the personal self-conscious to the transpersonal superconscious. Wilber (1996:12) sees the prepersonal conscious evolution from nature, then body to the early mind. At the self-conscious level the advanced mind is rational and self-reflexive, while the superconscious is divided into soul (psychic and subtle) and spirit (causal and ultimate). In the superconscious mind the individual finds the soul and God within. God is acting from within the individual and is not watching from a theistic pantheon the individual’s every sinful move.

Wilber divides this integral map into four quadrants: the right side represents the external reality and the left side the internal reality. He calls the upper left (UL) the Beautiful (art, self) because it represents the subjective individual development, the lower left (LL) is the Goodness (morals, culture) as it is the collective of the subjective interior. Wilber sees the right side (UR, LR), individual and collective, as the objective Truth (science, nature).

The upper left (UL) develops from the instinctual, magic, egocentric, mythic self, and achiever self, sensitive self, holistic, to the integral self. On the lower left (LL) the correlating interior morals are archaic, animistic-magical, power gods, mythic order, scientific-rational, pluralistic and holistic to the integral. The collective exterior lower right (LR) evolves from survival clans, ethnic tribes, feudal empires, early nations, corporate states, value communities, holistic commons and integral meshworks. The upper right (UR) is the physical evolution of the individual. Importantly, all the levels in the upper left correlate with the three

¹ Wilber, K 1996. *Up from Eden: A transpersonal view of human evolution*. First quest edition. Wheaton IL: The Theosophical Publishing House; Wilber, K 2007. *The integral vision*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

other quadrants on the same level. Thus, if the individual (UL) is on the fourth, mythic self level, on the left lower (LL) quadrant, the person would have the ethics of the premodern mythic order that is part of the agrarian horticultural early nation exterior (LR). One would find the correlate in the individual exterior (UR) in the neocortex, the modern human brain. The individual's morality/virtue is governed by the group's ethics. The higher a person evolves, the smaller the group becomes and the greater the freedom and the responsibility that rests on the individual (Wilber, K 2007:51).

Roberts' arguments about spiritual emotions are on level 4, while the West and most westernised countries operate on level 5, a modern scientific-rational level. Imagine the internal conflict. *Spiritual Emotions* will keep the readers stuck on the mythical level without giving Christians either hope or the tools to grow to the transpersonal level where one discovers God within and where the fruits of the Spirit are not something to aspire to, but are actions emanating from the Spirit itself.

Robert C Roberts is Distinguished Professor of Ethics at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA and has written two other books: *Taking the word to heart: Self and others in an age of therapies* and *Intellectual virtues: An essay in regulative epistemology*



Haynes, S R 2006 – *The Bonhoeffer legacy post-holocaust perspective*

Publisher: Fortress. 224 Pages. Price: Unknown;

Bonhoeffer, D 2006 – *Wondrously Sheltered*

Publisher: Fortress. 43 Pages. Price: Unknown;

Bethge, R & Gremmels, C 2006 – *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A life in pictures*

Publisher: Fortress. 160 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr André Groenewald (Scotland)

The Bonhoeffer legacy is divided into 8 chapters, with a preface, acknowledgments, notes, a detailed bibliography and an index. The author manages to hold the reader's attention from the beginning to the end. The key issues the author wants to address are outlined in the preface.. "The premise of this book is that while the Bonhoeffer legacy contains real significance for post-Holocaust Christianity, this has been neither fully explored nor accurately described" (p xi), the reasons being that Bonhoeffer is often read/interpreted without his immediate context and the tradition he represented. In chapter 2 the author provides the reader with a thorough overview of Jewish and Christian perspectives on Bonhoeffer's views on the Jewish people as is evidenced in research undertaken from 1960 to 1990. In the end he concludes that Bonhoeffer's theology cannot be read without the tradition he presented. "For Bonhoeffer the Jew is always the other who is also Christ's brother; the other whom is tied up the fate of the West; the other whose suffering reflects God's providence and whose treatment discloses the moral condition of church and society" (p 142). I agree with Haynes that Bonhoeffer reminded Christian theology of the true meaning of Israel when it reflects on election, covenant and redemption. His theology also serves as a warning to theologians to be aware of the problems of the Christian tradition when theologizing about the Jewish people. This book is recommended for its critical reflection on Bonhoeffer's perspective of the Jewish people.

Wondrously Sheltered is a selection of quotations from Bonhoeffer's major works and letters reflecting on themes of shelter, joy, light, hope, faith, prayer, happiness, love, nearness, darkness, anxiety and fear, evil, resistance, freedom, friendship, peace, strength, consolation

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and trust. All the quotations are accompanied by beautiful photographs which emphasize the impact of Bonhoeffer's words. The last pages contain a brief history of Bonhoeffer's life and provide a detailed list of sources of the referred texts.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A life in pictures is an English translation from the German edition *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Bilder eines Lebens*. It is edited by Renante Bethge and Christian Gremmels. They did an excellent job in portraying the life of a thinker, theologian, pastor and someone who stood for righteousness. They divided his life into several categories, beginning with his family background, his childhood and youth (1906-1923), his studies (1923-1927), his journey to Barcelona, Berlin and New York (1928-1932), the developments in his thinking from 1931 to 1932), his decision to resist Hitler (1933), his trip to London (1933-1934), his own seminary in Finkenwalde (1935-1937), his journey to America and the return to Germany (1938-1939), his active resistance (1942-1944), his imprisonment in Tegel (1943-1945) and finally covers his death in Flossenbürg (1945). The most amazing aspect about this book is the fact that it contains pictures of not only Bonhoeffer, but also of other prominent figures of his time. All the pictures portray a vivid image of the life of a man who died too soon. Every photograph is accompanied by a short paragraph giving details of the particular photo.



Matheson, P (ed) 2007 – *A people's history of Christianity, Vol 5. Reformation Christianity*

Publisher: Fortress. 306 Pages. Price: \$35.00

Reviewer: Dr Kobus Labuschagne (University of Pretoria)

The list of highly esteemed scholars who contributed to this book is impressive: Susan R Boettcher, David Cressy, Keith P Luria, Peter Marshall, Elsie McKee, Raymond A Mentzer, Karen E Spierling, James M Stayer, Margo Todd, Merry E Wiesner-Hanks, and then also Peter Matheson, the editor.

Writing a "people's history of Christianity", and choosing the period of the Reformation, as this book does, signify the intention to offer something decidedly different to what is usually read about the 16th century Church Reformation. This study's aim therefore was to "open up some new ground" (p 3) and to do research on the *effect* of the Reformation on the day-to-day lives of ordinary people. Although the history of doctrine and of theology will always be important, the focus now is on the challenges and successes, the frustrations and struggles of ordinary people – and on how they reacted to the Reformation. The interest is not in the great theologians of the time, or the princes, cardinals, popes and the individuals with power and authority. The vast majority of the population of which many were illiterate or semi-literate, forms the centre of interest. The objective is to see through the eyes of ordinary men, women and children. The anticlericalism of ordinary folk as a result of the injustices and exploitation in society of the time was linked to the Reformation (p 9). Some of the sermons and pamphlets concerned themselves with concrete socio-economic wrongs done to the poor population, and answers were needed from the Holy Scriptures, because the Bible was seen as the book containing God's will. In spite of being a religious transformation in essence, the Reformation somehow changed every dimension of life for everyone – people's hearts, minds, morality, everyday life, and society as a whole changed (p 12).

As far as highly debated issues, such as the contribution of pure political and socio-economical motives in the transformation are concerned, the editor gives a sober answer: "Ultimately, the answer given may be dependant not only on the evidence available but on the historian's understanding of what constitutes human nature and human society" (p 14, 15). In response to the views of cultural historians, pressing for political and socio-economic reasons, Matheson's wise words need to be remembered: "We have to guard against assuming that common folk were only interested in social outcomes and were not passionately engaged with faith in God and love of their neighbour" (p 15, 16). After all, many men and women risked their lives and possessions by standing firm in faith under all kinds of frightening and horrible threats against their faith, and some even lost their lives.

The book is divided into three parts, with each part containing several chapters. Part one is on the "Life of faith" in the towns, villages and rural areas. Part two, under the title, "From cradle to grave", explains the influence of religion in the lives of all people from birth and baptism to, in the end, leaving this world. Part three, with the heading, "Finding their voice", deals with the dreams of a just society, the emergence of lay theologies, the relationship of Christians with what was seen as the "outsiders" (Jews, Muslims, heretics and refugees), and the language of the common folk.

The book reveals in a wonderful way just how significant the Reformation really was in *involving the entire population*, including ordinary people, in religious life and church life, and in giving them respect, responsibility and position. Christian faith and morality were drawn into society as a whole. The poor were cared for and taught the Christian life. The Reformation emphasized the "priesthood of all believers" (p 38). A stable and Christian family life was deemed very important, and with this the father became the spiritual and moral leader of the family. Mothers taught their children the basic prayers and other basic elements of devotion. Men and women, together with their families, lived the Christian life and transmitted it into society as a whole. Mentzer said: "Constructive employment, stable marriages, and secure families were key elements in the maintenance of public order and social peace" (p 39). Ordinary lay people became respected elders and deacons in their congregations. The Genevan Psalter of 1562 was immensely popular. Psalm singing ultimately defined the Protestant identity (p 46).

It was of vital importance to the Reformation that prayers, hymns, Scripture readings, and the liturgy of the sacraments were not be in Latin, but, as all preaching, should have been in the language of the people. The Reformation's Church services in the *vernacular* were immensely popular even in rural areas (p 279). Matheson says:

Language is power. The nineteenth-century philosophers of language used to talk of language as an inexplicable miracle springing from the heart of a nation ... Yet within the body of the Christian church such "miracles" of linguistic energy and creativity have occurred again and again, not least in apostolic and patristic times. The Reformation undoubtedly saw another such outpouring. The lasting contribution of this period may well be the liberation of biblical language ... (p 283).

What the book clearly points out is that ordinary believers in their masses welcomed and embraced the innovations of the Reformation. The vast majority of the common folk passionately identified with the Reformed piety.

The book makes one realize that the Reformation's contributions to the Western world we know today, are vast and incalculable.

Together with many valuable pictures, the book is interesting, easy to read, and is recommended for theologians, students and *ordinary* Christians.

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Stone, H W 2007 – *Defeating depression: Real help for you and those who love you*

Publisher: Augsburg Fortress. 243 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr W J Smith (Benoni)

In the traumatized world we live in, books on depression, anxiety, fear and anger abound. Many of these books are very general and do not offer new insights. What distinguishes Howard Stone's work from these, is the fact that it speaks to the person who is experiencing depression, as well as to the sufferer's network of family members and friends. This book examines depression from what it is to how to deal with it. While it is recommended to the scientific reader, counselor and pastor, it is still accessible and practical enough to be of benefit to anyone who wants to know more about this topic. Even the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS), included as Appendix A (p 235), is accessible enough for everyone to gauge his/her own state of depression.

The author is a psychologist, a family and marriage therapist and professor emeritus at Texas Christian University. He is the author of a number of influential books on pastoral care and counseling. He served on numerous editorial boards of professional journals. As someone who also suffered from depression, many of the methods and coping skills discussed in the book, he used himself.

Throughout the book one is aware of the empowerment brought about by the realization that there is help for depression and there is hope for those suffering from depression. Stone offers a way to manage depression. *Defeating depression* is not an amalgamation of facts to banish the disorderly, but a reframing of the possibilities to embrace depression.

Defeating depression will offer the reader a new perspective on a disease that has been steeped in misconception and contempt for a long time. Reading the sub-title of this book, brings the realization that there is "*Real help for you and those who love you*". It verbalizes the deepest and most intense emotions and feelings associated with depression and is an effective tool in helping the depressed and their loved ones. Pastoral caregivers will benefit from it as an useful source of information.



Nürnberg, K 2005 – *Martin Luther's message for us today*

Publisher: Cluster. 326 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof I W C van Wyk (The Africa Institute for Missiology)

Klaus Nürnberg is professor emeritus and honorary research associate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He also lectured Systematic Theology at the University of South Africa for many years.

The book originated from the lectures and papers he presented to various audiences in Southern Africa over many years. Martin Luther's work reflects his response to the conflicts and predicaments of his time and what Nürnberg does is to present us with a similar approach to theology. This book is a collection of Lutheran responses to the questions, problems and predicaments the South African situation posed over the past three decades. These responses are not only intellectual responses, but are responses of living faith. Although Nürnberg responded to our challenges in a typical Lutheran way, he is ecumenically accommodating, co-operative and inviting. In this sense, I think, his book is a good and typical South African contribution to Christianity.

According to Nürnberg, Luther's theology is the prototype of an existential, experiential, contextual theology. He therefore allows Luther to be heard on a number of South African issues. He explains that the proclaimed Word is God's redemptive response to our actual needs, that social transformation should be the consequence of our acceptance by God and that the fruits of our justification are freedom and responsibility. As people who are justified by grace, we could deal with the demands of African Traditional Religion, the challenges of Modernity and the inhumanness of hedonism.

Although academics will find this book to be fruitful reading, it is actually meant to be a textbook for students. The language is uncomplicated and should be understood by most junior students. Each chapter closes with a few questions that will help students in reading and studying the chapter. The chapters also have recommendations for further reading by senior students, ministers and theologians.

The success of this book as a textbook lies in the fact that Nürnberg has the ability to explain the main Lutheran theologoumena in such a manner that the average South African church member would be able to appreciate the wisdom of these dogmatic decisions. For instance, his explanations of the functions of the law, and the distinction and relationship between law and gospel are illuminative.

I find Nürnberg's approach to our existential problems, such as the HIV crisis, very useful. He gives, for instance, an explication of Luther's *Treatise on the plague* of 1528. He then "contextualizes" the main arguments in such a manner that it makes concerns and duties we have very clear to us.

The book consists of two parts:

Part I: Luther's experiential theology:

- The Word of God – light in the darkness of life
- The gift of faith – a new motivation
- Predestined to be damned – God's open future
- Sources of the Word of God – Scripture and tradition
- The gift of righteousness – law and gospel
- The ordained ministry – empowering God's people
- Baptism – initiation into the body of Christ
- The Lord's supper – celebrating our reunion with God

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Part II: Lutheran contextual theology

- Responsibility for God's world – Luther's political ethics
- Prophecy or confession – a Lutheran response to social injustice
- Acceptance in action – a Lutheran approach to the HIV pandemic
- Conclusion – a theology for our times?

As can be expected from a well-known Lutheran scholar, Nürnberger is well versed in international Luther-research. However, some might criticize him for ignoring certain recent German publications on Luther. What is more important though, is that he brings African theologians into discussion with Lutheran theology. In other words: He gives exposure to African voices in the Lutheran academic world.

The sub-title is important. It is "a perspective from the South". This is a development that should be appreciated by all Christians. Because the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the north to the south, theologians from the south must show more intellectual and academic leadership. This publication by Nürnberger could be appreciated as one of the important contributions in this regard.

Every South African student in Dogmatics, Ethics and Church History should buy this book. Every responsible minister, whether Lutheran or Reformed, should read this book. To foreigners we say: We present you with something proudly South African!



Moltmann, J 2006 – *Jürgen Moltmann Eine Lebensgeschichte, herausgegeben von W Raum*. Publisher: Gütersloher Verlagshaus. 384 Pages. Price: Unknown

2008 – *A broad place: An autobiography, translated by M Kohl*
Publisher: Fortress Press. 406 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof I W C van Wyk (The Africa Institute for Missiology)

It is not often that one receives a book for reviewing that one cannot put down once you have started reading it. The story of the world-famous Jürgen Moltmann's life is one of those books. It is one of the most interesting books I have ever read. Anyonewho is interested in Moltmann as a theologian and as a human being should read this book. Likewise, those with an interest in German history, the German academic world, famous German theologians and the ecumenical world should also read it. This autobiography is not only fascinating, but is inspiring too. It serves as motivation for all lesser theologians to aspire to academic excellence.

Moltmann provides the reader with an amazing account with detailed information on his life and work. It is astonishing that someone could keep so much detail stored in files and on computers for so many years. He recalls the names of his childhood neighbours, the children in his catechesis classes and of the people he met all over the world, including those he met during his visit to South Africa. He deals with what happened to him and his family during the War and with their move from Wuppertal to Bonn in detail. He also provides detail about his colleagues, the subjects they lectured and during which semesters they lectured.

The 57 photographs in the book in itself depict a life-story. The pictures tell the story of Moltmann, the world-famous theologian, the church leader, the family man and the friend of thousands around the globe. The pictures put faces to the works of people like Hans Küng, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Ernst Wolff, Eberhard Jüngel, Dorothee Sölle and Moltmann's wife Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel. From the photos it is apparent that Moltmann was always very

tidy, a well-dressed person who enjoyed the respect of statesmen and church leaders all over the world.

The book is divided into the following divisions: His youth; the first phase of his academic career; the theology of hope; political theology; the Cross and the Trinity as focus areas of his theology; his latter contributions in systematic theology and the new beginning at the end. Each division consists of a few chapters.

People with a variety of interests will find this autobiography of use and very interesting. The two hundred students, who wrote dissertations on his theology, will rue the fact that they did not have access to all these biographical information. Every person who is interested in German theology and the ecumenical world should read this book at least twice. It contains many facts, anecdotes and perspectives that one can share with friends and students. Let me mention a few: Otto Weber played a major role in Moltmann's life as study-leader, theologian and family friend. He regards his *Grundlagen der Dogmatik* as one of the most important books in his library. In moments of uncertainty, he would consult Otto Weber, and not Karl Barth. He personally agitated to get Eberhard Jüngel appointed at Tübingen, whilst other very famous theologians opposed the appointment. Despite many theological and political differences between them, Wolfhart Pannenberg remained a very close friend. Moltmann firmly believed that universities should be left to the academics and maintained that the innovation-mania and ideas about structural improvements of universities by officials from education departments normally do not lead to much. He resisted the "Americanization" of the old German universities and wanted to keep them as places of knowledge, research and publications. At Tübingen his academic duties during the week amounted to lecturing for four hours, two hours of seminars, and two hours of meetings with his twenty doctoral students and of course also included university and faculty meetings.. He is one of the few high-profile theologians who has a working relationship with the medical fraternity.

This book should not only be read by lecturers, but by everyone who has an interest in theology and church life. I can hardly think of a more appropriate way of motivating them to live intellectually and to share in the great tradition of German university theology.



Neyrey, J H 2004 – *Render to God: New Testament understanding of the divine*

Publisher: Fortress. Xviii + 313 Pages. Price: \$19.00

Reviewer: Prof Ernest van Eck (University of Pretoria)

Render to God is about "the neglected factor" in New Testament study, God (see Dahl, N, *The neglected factor in New Testament Studies*, 1975). With Jesus' saying in Mark 12:17 ("render to God the things that are God's") as cue, Neyrey studies the God-talk in Mark, Matthew, Acts of the Apostles, Romans, 1 Corinthians and Galatians (chapters 1-6). In the two final chapters (7-8) the focus is on John and Hebrews, the two books of the New Testament in which Jesus is also called God. In this study Neyrey makes use of certain elements of Judean and Graeco-Roman God-talk (e.g., the rabbinic commonplace of four questions [Mark], the contrast between the covenants of promise [Abraham and David] and the covenant of Moses [Galatians], the "kingdom of God" [Matthew], the two powers of God, creative and executive [Romans and John], and the correlation of the names Jesus and Lord [John]), as well as three social science models (patronage and clientism, purity and holiness and honor and shame, appended at the end of the book for the uninitiated reader).

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In chapter one Neyrey studies the God-talk in Mark. Mark's God is called Father ("Abba") and Lord. As Father, God is the patron of Israel, its client, with Jesus as the mediator or broker of that which God gives: power, commitment, inducement and influence. As the Lord, God is the sovereign vindicator of those being rejected, and will raise them with power and enthrone them in heaven. Finally, God's holiness is not that of the separation of certain classes of unclean people, but rather that of inclusion, with prayer replacing sacrifice. Matthew's God favors the covenants of promise, which means bestowing blessings, mercy and grace upon everybody – with the exclusion of no one. As Provider, God cares and protects Jesus from womb to tomb, inter alia controlling the events surrounding Jesus' death. As patron of his kingdom, God is benevolent, foolish and shameful: He forgives debt, pays workers who did less work than others the same wage, makes the last first, sends his son to rebellious tenants to collect rent, he is slow to anger, gives ample time for repentance, is merciful, and eats with "sinners". Luke's God (ch 3) is the ultraistic benefactor whose pleasure is to give gifts and grant favors of every kind. Moreover, as benefactor, God is impartial and his gifts cover the widest scope of persons and places. He is the benefactor of all peoples, in every way, in all places. Also, as provider, God has a plan, order and purpose for his world. (For a comparison of the God-talk in Mark, Matthew and Acts, Neyrey gives a tabled summary on p 105.)

In Romans (chapter 4) Paul's God-talk is coherent and systematic, following the classical Graeco-Roman presentation of God in terms of epistemology (what do we know about God and how do we know it), physics (what is the nature of the Deity), and ethics (what behavior necessarily follows from the nature of God). Paul's emphasis falls on physics, which he presents in terms of two attributes of God (mercy and just in judgment) and two powers of God (creative and eschatological). God's mercy is freely given through the death of Jesus, and God's eschatological power is seen in his power to raise the dead. God is impartial, be it when showing mercy or exercising just judgment it emphasizes another characteristic of God, his inclusivity. God-talk in 1 Corinthians deals with patronage, honor, order and disorder (chapter 5). In terms of patronage, God is patron who performs acts of power in regard to Jesus, grace and favor to Paul, and gives numerous spiritual gifts to the Corinthians. God enjoys supreme honor, and honors other proportionately: Jesus is raised up to life and to a unique position at God's feet in heaven and as head of the body of God's church, while Paul is honored with the role of apostle and is given wisdom. According to Paul, God is also a God of order. As a former Pharisee, Paul was strongly socialized to perceive the world as an ordered cosmos (as did the Bible and the Jerusalem temple). Therefore, there is a cosmic hierarchy (God – Christ – husband – wife; 1 Cor 11:3), there is a heavenly hierarchy (God – Jesus – Spirit; 1 Cor 12:4-6), and there is a hierarchy in the church (apostles – prophets – teachers; 1 Cor 12:28-30). The God of 1 Corinthians also has a map of things (all food is kosher [1 Cor 10:25-26], gold – silver – precious stone – wood – hay – straw [1 Cor 3:12], wisdom – knowledge – faith – gifts of healing – working of miracles – prophecy – the ability to distinguish between spirits – tongues – the ability to interpret tongues [1 Cor 12:7-20]), a map of times (past as sinful and present as enlightened, childhood as negative versus adulthood as positive), and a map of places (inside and outside). And who stands at the top-of these maps? Paul! He is an apostle, has received wisdom, and has become an adult in the faith. He plants, and Apollos is the one who waters. Moreover, sometimes God turns the world upside down and creates new maps: weakness is strength, foolishness is wisdom, and those of no honor or standing topple those of honor, wisdom and power, and the last becomes the first. Who was the last one to see the risen Jesus, who is the least of all the apostles, and who is weak? Off course, it is Paul! Why does Paul describe God in this way? Obviously for polemical and apologetic reasons. Paul's God-talk in Galatians, as in Romans, also has as its base the classical Graeco-Roman theological system of the Deity in terms of epistemology, physics and ethics (chapter 6). Paul's immediate revelation (received on the Damascus-road) serves as his unique source of knowledge of God, and elevates him above the Galatians who

had received their knowledge of God from mortals. God acts freely in benefaction, of which Paul and the Galatians are examples. One of God's most important benefactions is the Spirit, and the appropriate response to this benefaction is to walk in the Spirit, and not to return to the flesh. God creates new creatures as adopted children and heirs, thus making one free of Judean customs. God is full of mercy, and once received, foregoing this mercy means just judgment.

Neyrey finally turns to John (ch 7) and Hebrews (ch 8), in which Jesus is acclaimed God, Lord and equal to God. In John God makes Jesus equal to Godself (Jn 5:18), and possesses the same two powers God has, which includes God's full creative and eschatological power (raising the dead, judging and having life in himself). In Hebrews, Jesus is God because he possesses the primary characteristics of a true deity (Heb 7:3): he is uncreated and ungenerated in the past, does not have a father or a mother or a genealogy for that matter, and is imperishable and eternal, without end. Jesus is also a divine figure because he shares in God's two basic powers: ruling power (Heb 1:8) and creative power (Heb 1:11).

Render to God is brilliant, a *tour de force* of the new perspectives that open up when social science models are employed to understand Biblical texts. It also makes a contribution to historical Jesus-studies. If Neyrey's interpretation of Paul's understanding of authority in 1 Corinthians, for example, is correct, then Paul's continuity or discontinuity with Jesus in this regard should be re-assessed. Also, if Neyrey is correct in his understanding of Mark's and Matthew's God-talk, then it lends support to many scholars who are of the opinion that Jesus understood God in exactly the same manner: that God's holiness is to be found in his mercy.

