

Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews

Boccacini, G (ed) 2005 – *Enoch and Qumran origins: New light on a forgotten connection*

Publisher: Eerdmans. Pages: xviii + 454. Price: US\$40.00

Reviewer: Prof Dr P M Venter (University of Pretoria)

The Enoch Seminar is listed in Wikipedia. The Seminar is a joint venture of the Department of Near Eastern Studies of the University of Michigan, the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, and the Michigan Center for Early Christian Studies, under the directorship of Gabrielle Boccacini, professor of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins at the University of Michigan. This seminar takes the form of biennial workshops restricted to discussions on papers prepared and circulated in advance to the invited members of the Seminar. Since its first meeting in Sesto Fiorentino, Florence, Italy (19-23 June 2001), five international meetings had been held (all in Italy) and two graduate conferences in the United States of America. In all, six volumes have been published on the Seminar's proceedings. The 2005 publication is the result of the second seminar in Venice, Italy (1-4 July 2003).

The subject of the second meeting in Venice was "Enoch and Qumran Origins". Fifty three scholars participated in the seminar. Five workshops were held, each dedicated to the work of a specialist on Enoch. Papers discussed during the five sessions are presented in the five parts of the publication. These parts follow an introduction (pp 1-14) in which the editor of the publication, Gabriele Boccacini, outlines the background to the establishment of the Seminar. Renewed interest in the Old Testament Epigrapha led to an invitation by the University of Michigan to specialists from the United States of America, Europe and Israel to take part in an interdisciplinary series of biennial seminars on this form of literature and its authors. This second seminar focused on the relation between Enoch literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Part one (pp 17-72) on "Dream Visions and Daniel" deals with John Collins' work on the social setting of Enoch and his theory that several different groups were responsible for second temple apocalyptic literature. In the eight contributions constituting this section the problem of the relationship between the traditions associated with Daniel and Enoch is discussed. In his response to these contributions, Collins highlights the problems experienced in identifying groups and reconstructing the apocalyptic milieu during the time of the second temple. This part is concluded with a useful reference to published works – also included at the end of each of the other parts of the publication.

Part two ("Enoch and Jubilees", pp 73-182) consists of 14 contributions broadly discussing the studies of James VanderKam on the relationship between Enoch and Jubilees. Various issues are discussed, e.g. does Jubilees depend on 1 Enoch, or *vice versa*?, how does Jubilees relate to different strands of the Enochic tradition? During the fourth proceeding of the Seminar (8-13 July 2007 at Camaldoli) all papers were dedicated to Jubilees. In his response VanderKam points out that Enoch and Jubilees are related, although hardly in complete agreement. It is concluded that Jubilees "exercized a documentable influence on the sectarian texts found in the Qumran caves" (p 170).

Part three (pp 183-246) deals with the "Apocalypse of the Weeks" (1 Enoch 93:1-17). The issue of the relationship between the Apocalypse of the Weeks, Enochic works and Qumran documents is not discussed in all the contributions in this section. In a ninth chapter George W E Nickelsburg provides a response to these discourses on the Apocalypse of Weeks. He relates this section of Enoch to a reform movement in Judaism during the

Hellenistic period, a period characterized by a proliferation of individuals and groups who shared a feeling that all was not in order in Israel.

The Groningen Hypothesis, advocated and defended by Florentino García Martínez, forms the topic of part four ("The Groningen Hypothesis revisited", pp 247-326). This thesis on the origins of the community that wrote the scrolls found at the Dead Sea, is thoroughly discussed in eight papers, thus testing its validity. In his response, Martínez reacts to each contributor separately. What he finds interesting, is that in general different scholars perceive the Groningen Hypothesis in different ways.

The last part revisits yet another hypothesis ("The Enochic-Esene Hypothesis revisited", pp 327-435). This section deals with Gabriele Boccaccini's theory on mainstream Judaism during the second temple period, known as the Enoch-Essene hypothesis. In response to the fourteen contributions on his thesis, Boccacini acknowledges that one has to guard against oversimplification, but at the same time also has to resist overskepticism. Hypotheses on the social context are needed to understand the contents of Enoch.

In a final chapter ("Summary and Conclusions: The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch Matters: New Paradigms for understanding pre-70 Judaism", pp 436-454), James H Charlesworth indicates the achievements of the Enoch Seminar and the challenges for the future. The meeting advanced the understanding of Judaism before 70 CE. It opened up research in how and in which way Jews, including Jesus, may have been influenced by Enochic Judaism. The study of the book(s) of Enoch as demonstrated in the different contributions stimulates appreciation for the world of thought and the genius of the early Jews during the Second Temple period.

This publication is a reflection of the research and academic debates up to 2003 pertaining to the study of the collection of books referred to as One Enoch. As the leaders in this field were involved in the Venice Seminar the discussions do get rather technical at times. The publication cannot be presented as an introduction to Pseudepigraphical literature, but is rather aimed at those who already have basic knowledge of Enoch and second temple literature.



Craffert, P F 2008 – *The life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in anthropological perspective*

Publisher: Wipf & Stock. 451 pages. Price: US\$52.00

Reviewer: Prof Dr R J Miller (Juniata College – Pennsylvania, USA)

This important, potentially seminal book makes two basic arguments. "The one is that based on developments in historiographical discourse, an alternative interpretive framework can be conceptualized for historical Jesus research, and the other is that within this framework, the historical Jesus of Nazareth can be seen as a Galilean shamanic figure" (p 420). The book comes in three parts. Part One, "A paradigm shift in historical Jesus historiography", argues for an "anthropological historiography" based on ontological pluralism and a recognition of multiple worldviews, grounded in the conviction that reality is socially and culturally constituted. Anthropological historiography aims for a culturally sensitive reading of ancient texts that seeks to make sense of them from the subjects' cultural system, while also interpreting these texts using cross cultural models. Craffert argues that historical Jesus (HJ) research is trapped in positivism, despite earnest efforts to avoid it, because the gospels are "read straight, as if they are talking about events and phenomena in the world of modern

exegetes" (p 63). Craffert aims to redefine the questions that drive HJ research, not to give new answers to the existing ones. Rather than working within the "authenticity paradigm" (reconstructing the HJ by first distinguishing authentic from inauthentic material), Craffert's agenda is to discover what sort of man and career would have elicited the beliefs, communities, and traditions mediated by the gospels. The goal is not to determine whether the words and deeds reported in the gospels' reports are factual, "but whether they plausibly belong to the biography" of Jesus. (p 96)

The gospels are seen neither as "reports about actual supernatural events", nor as "literary or mythological fiction," but rather as "the residue of cultural processes that are connected to the dynamics of the cultural figure they report about" (p 93). The task of cultural historiography is to determine "what essentially happened," but with the awareness that everything that happened with Jesus needs to be interpreted through an understanding of the cultural dynamics that constructed both his social personage and the traditions about him.

Part Two, "A model of shamanic figures", seeks to establish and describe the "shamanic complex," to describe a first-century shamanic worldview, and to identify shamanism in the ancient world in general and in Israel in particular. The shamanic complex is a family of cross cultural features, consisting of specific configurations of ASC (altered state of consciousness) experiences (e.g., visions, spirit possession, spirit journeys) which license certain social functions (e.g., healing, divination, exorcism, and control of spirits). Shamans are "religious entrepreneurs who enter some kind of ASC for the benefit of the community" (p 157). A first-century shamanic worldview was a three-tiered cosmos connected to the spirit world and densely populated by various human and spirit beings linked in a hierarchical great chain of being.

Part Three, "Jesus and the shamanic complex," argues that Jesus can plausibly be seen as a shamanic figure because he (and his group) often experienced ASCs, such as various visions (e.g., Jesus' transfiguration and his walking on the sea) and his experiences at his baptism and temptation. Jesus was thought to be possessed by ancestral spirits and by God's holy spirit – the latter possession explains his *ego eimi* sayings. Further indications of his shamanic status are his sense of divine identity and divine sonship, his celibacy, and his astral prophecy (e.g., his eschatological discourses). Jesus' healings, exorcisms, nature miracles (i.e., control of the spirits of nature), and resurrections (recoveries of the spirits of the dead) can all be understood as shamanic activities and thus suggest that Jesus was a shamanic holy man. His teaching (especially his sayings about the kingdom of God and the Son of Man) were shamanic utterances based on his ASC. The kingdom of God is Jesus' name for his mediations of divine power in everyday settings (healings and exorcisms) enabled by his ASC experiences. His kingdom teachings originate in his personal ASC, not in anti-imperial sentiments "despite the significance of the imperial setting and the economic/political importance of kingdom language" (p 349). Craffert argues that the infancy narratives (including the Infancy Gospel of Thomas) and the resurrection stories fit perfectly as cultural expressions of the birth, youth, and afterlife of a shamanic figure.

The above summary does not do justice to the breadth and richness of this book. Craffert has digested an impressive array of anthropological, philosophical, historiographical, and biblical research and he skillfully presents it with nuance and clarity. His sophisticated discussion of historical method can teach us much about how different ancient peoples were from us and about the need to approach those differences with cultural sensitivity.

The book raises many questions and objections; in this brief review I can summarily mention only five.

1. Craffert argues that the shaman was a familiar social type in the world of Jesus and the early Christians. If so, why did they not have a name for this social type? And it surely counts against Craffert's claim that the only figures from Israelite history he identifies as possible shamanic figures are Moses and Elisha.

2. Craffert would subsume Jesus' parables and aphorisms as shamanic utterances based on Jesus' ASC, but it is doubtful whether this can account for their considerable verbal artistry and their sly subversive wisdom.

3. Craffert surely does a service in exposing the lingering ethnocentrism in HJ research, even in the work of those who earnestly try to avoid it. Yet Craffert's liberal application of the label "ethnocentric" (an unmistakably polemical term) seems overly broad. Is it necessarily ethnocentric to ask what objectively happened or whether Jesus actually said this or that saying? To be sure, these are modern interests, not those of the first century. But is it ethnocentric (in a pernicious sense) to ask and seek answers to questions that interest us – and modern readers, who care greatly about the "facts" of history – even if such questions might have been irrelevant to the ancients? Deriding this desire as "positivism" (another polemic term) is unhelpful.

4. Craffert's project operates outside the "authenticity paradigm" and proceeds without source criticism (his references to Q are often qualified by "if it existed"), tradition history, or redaction criticism. Can HJ scholars be persuaded that such tools of the trade are irrelevant? Should an approach to the HJ be properly called historical if it agrees with Craffert to consider all gospel materials (including John and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas) as equally useful historically?

5. Craffert acknowledges that his method cannot distinguish (and Craffert seems uninterested in making the distinction) between culturally plausible reports of events about Jesus that objectively happened in time and space and culturally plausible stories invented by Christian tradents. The inability to tell historical fact from historical fiction surely reduces the power of any historical method.

I register these objections within the larger context of my admiration and gratitude for Craffert's achievement. This book is required reading for all interested in the HJ. It has the potential to reshape the field.



Dembski, W A 2006 – *Darwin's nemesis: Phillip Johnson and the intelligent design movement*

Publisher: IVP Academic. 357 Pages. Price: Unknown

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

The book is an extensive piece of propaganda for ID (Intelligent Design Theory). The book is dedicated to the "founder" Phillip Johnson and most of the contributors can be considered disciples of the movement. Johnson himself wrote the last chapter (p 19) and among the best-known ID authors whose contributions are included are John Reynolds (Introduction), Stephen C Meyer (ch 1, 12), Michael J Behe, known for his work *Darwin's black box* (see p 46) (ch 2), William A Dembski (ch 5) and Walter L Bradley (ch 18). Part III, entitled *Two Friendly Critics*, contains contributions by David Belinski and Michael Ruse. These two contributions do not really match the tone of the rest of the book.

Johnson, who takes on Darwinism, was a professor of law at Berkeley, not a scientist. The ID initiative can be traced back to the publication of Johnson's book, *Darwin on trial*, in 1991. In 1992 a symposium was held at Southern Methodist University at which Phil Johnson and Michael Ruse (a sympathetic opponent of ID) were the main speakers. "Within a year following that symposium, Phil had gathered a band of ... converts and volunteers, mainly scientists and philosophers. The next step was to organize that band. This Phil did in 1993" (p

14). Johnson is literally seen as a prophet (p 18) and the movement has taken on religious overtones: "This particular battle for the soul of the twenty-first century is his [Johnson's – CWDtJ] battle. Due to his efforts, Darwinism and its concomitant ills are on the way out. To be sure, other evils will vie to take their place" (p 30). This is the conviction of those who believe they are right and the rest of the scientific world is wrong.

Part I (ch 1-4), entitled *Portraits of the man and his work*, is an exaltation of Johnson's qualities and the influence he has had on the various contributors. Part II (ch 5-7) – *The wedge and its despisers* – endorses the tone of the book. The "wedge" is obviously Johnson, who would oust Darwinism from its established position and the "despisers" include everyone who does not agree with Johnson and co. Part III is referred to above. Part IV or *Johnson's revolution in biology* (ch 10-13) deals with the issues of "common ancestry" (ch 11), the issue of "taxonomic categories" (ch 12) and ID's favourite case study, "coordinate flagellar in pathogenic bacteria" (ch 13).

Part V (ch 14-17), entitled *Ever-increasing spheres of influence*, continues in the same vein with references to the movement's gains in popularity. The book is polemic in nature and while the movement's proponents are glorified, its detractors are annihilated throughout.

Mention is made of Judge Jones' verdict against ID – "Judge Jones not only struck down the Dover school board policy advocating intelligent design but also identified intelligent design as nonscientific and fundamentally religious" (p 19) – but instead of exploring it, the author elaborates on what would have happened had the judge's verdict been positive and concludes: "It is therefore naive to think that this case threatens to derail intelligent design" (p 20). The verdict, however, is significant because one of the movement's main goals is to introduce ID as an alternative to Darwinism as a school subject.

The authoritative Stephen J Gould's article in *Scientific American*, which radically criticizes Johnson's book, is also dismissed (Thomas Woodward, pp 66-67). The findings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Society of Neuroscience rejecting ID (p 83), are also mentioned. These too are not taken seriously. Dembski's shocking pronouncement (p 81) confirms the general attitude to the broad scientific community: "It is a measure of the success of our movement that no biology journal would give our books such respectful treatment any longer." Dembski devotes the greater part of his contribution to techniques for disposing of opponents (pp 88-104).

Woodward concedes to Dawkins that "... stars or planets, being relatively simpler objects, do not logically suggest an intelligent-type explanation for their existence", but immediately adds: "... on the other hand, biological entities do suggest such explanation due to their watchlike complexity" (p 69). This makes their position even more vulnerable because this train of thought leaves everything to chance or the laws of nature, and only in some cases does biological complexity suggest an intelligent designer.

Although not directly admitted, strong sentiments about the young earth model emerge in the book: "In Johnson's prototype of ID strategy, the timing of creation is not so much unknown as it is deliberately not discussed" (p 75). These sentiments are also obvious from the suspicion cast on carbon dating, the fossil record (p 68) and Richards's own statement: "I quickly learned that there were better arguments for young-earth creationism than those off-putting stories about Paluxy footprints and moon dust."

Chapter 16 examines the differences between creationist groupings (see diagram p 269). The points of difference with the young earth creationists are described as follows: "ID is based on science, whereas young-earth creationism is based on sacred texts" and "[t]he religious implications of ID are unconnected to ID self" (p 266). Although there is some affinity between the groups, the ID group accepts that the chances of creationists being taken seriously are remote and believe that their own approach stands a better chance. They attempt to justify a literal reading of the Bible on the basis of a highly doubtful hermeneutics.

The flat earth problem, for instance, can be solved by regarding references to it as poetry (pp 270-271)! That it formed part of the broad world view at the time is completely ignored.

ID's strongest argument is the claim to irreducible complexity. Behe describes it as follows: "An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly ... by slight, successive modifications of a precursory system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on" (quoted in Ajala 2006:78).

The following references to irreducible complexity are found in the work: the structure of the vertebrate eye (p 43; refuted by Ajala 2006:79-80), the structure of the protein haemoglobin (p 43; refuted by Ajala 2006:82-83), and flagellum (p 104, refuted by Ajala 2006:80-1). Also see pages 57-59.

In this connection Ajala (2006:78) writes: "But evolutionists have pointed out, again and again, with supporting evidence, that organs and other components of living beings are not irreducibly complex – they do not come about suddenly, or in one fell swoop." The examples given of irreducible complexity are not irreducible at all.

To summarize: ID is an ideology which assumes religious-sectarian traits. It is veiled creationism. It relies on a few examples, most of which have been refuted by authoritative scientists. They try to turn ID into proof of the existence of god – an attempt which like other "god of the gaps models" will eventually result in embarrassment. There is no doubt that ID has its followers, but the same can be said of many of the other pseudo-scientific movements. Ajala (2006: 90) points out "that the theory of evolution is not incompatible with belief in the existence of God and God's presence in the workings of the universe."



Dunn, J D G, 2005 – *The new perspective on Paul: Collected essays*

Publisher: Mohr Siebeck. Hardcover 536 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr Gys Loubser (University of Pretoria)

Since the early eighties Dunn has established himself as the most prolific proponent of the so-called *New Perspective on Paul*. Before him there were scholars such as G F Moore, J Parkes and, of course, the one from whom he profited most, E P Sanders (pp 5-6).

It was Sanders who introduced the concept of *covenantal nomism* to explain Israel's understanding of its relationship with God. Israel could not initiate or create the relationship with God. This, only God could do in his divine grace. They did, however, have the responsibility to live up to their obligations as decreed in Torah. Thus, living according to Torah was not about *getting in*, but about *staying in* the relationship with God. Sanders' aim was to indicate that it was not true that Second Temple Judaism, from which Paul stemmed, was stripped of grace and was wholly a meritorious religion. In fact, it even allowed for imperfection, atonement and forgiveness for repenting sinners.

For Dunn this is a timely correction to too staunch a Lutheran view of Jewish justification. Having said this he, however, still felt that Sanders' Paul does not make sense. "If the Judaism of Paul's day also gave such a place to divine election, atonement and forgiveness, then what was Paul objecting to?" (p 7). His position is basically "that Paul's own teaching on justification focuses largely, if not principally, on the need to overcome the barrier

which the law was seen to interpose between Jew and Gentile, so that the 'all' of 'to all who believe' (Rm 1:17) signifies in the first place 'Gentile as well as Jew'" (p 15). Further: "It suggests that 'works of law' became a key slogan in Paul's exposition of his justification gospel because so many of Paul's fellow Jewish believers were insisting on certain works as indispensable to salvation" (p 15).

The book is a compilation of twenty of Dunn's articles from 1983-2004, dealing with subjects such as the *New Perspective* on Paul, Torah, works of law, covenantal nomism, law in both Galatians and Romans, continuity and discontinuity between Judaism and Early Christianity, Paul and justification, et cetera. As such it is vastly beneficial to New Testament scholarship, making it that much easier for Pauline scholars and students to follow his writings in a (chrono)logical sequence within a single volume.

However, the publication is more than a mere compilation. The book's added value is to be found in its introduction of 88 pages: *The New Perspective: Whence, what and whither?* in which Dunn attempts to give new direction to the debate. He takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the Pauline landscape as he sees it. He indicates to his fellow travelers how different aspects of the landscape relate to and fit into one another.

The first section provides a brief orientation to the reader on how he came to accept and develop the *New Perspective*. This is followed by a section: "Clarifying confusions and misunderstandings," in which he urges critics to "focus on the central thrust of the case and not allow itself to be distracted by phrases which might have been chosen more carefully, or by specifically directed comments taken out of context" (p 16). He deals with the following criticisms: that the *New Perspective* was set up as a repudiation of the traditional Lutheran view of faith and justification (pp 17-22); that he had reduced "works of law" to a few "boundary markers" (pp 22-26); that Paul's objection to law was merely about a certain attitude (pp 26-33); and that he had reduced Paul's view of justification to a pragmatic solution to a relationship problem amongst Christians (pp 33-37).

He should be credited for his thoroughness in dealing with different texts, as well as his willingness to enter into debate with fellow scholars who have challenged – even severely criticized – his thesis, as much as he is willing to take comfort in and acknowledge those who have supported him. He takes pains to acknowledge criticisms that have been aired, especially those of the last decade. He tries to react in a balanced way, also acknowledging that "there is some justification for these critical comments since my early formulations were not sufficiently refined. So at least some restatement is called for" (p 17). In this regard the footnotes in his introduction are extremely important. It is his reactions to these criticisms that really take the debate forward.

It has to be said that although the Dunn who writes this introduction is willing to deal fairly with criticism and to reformulate more carefully, he does make comments that do not fit into this picture. On page 21 he remarks: "I am astonished by and repudiate entirely the charge that 'the new perspective on Paul' constitutes an attack on and denial of that Lutheran fundamental. Anyone who reads that from my writing is reading in what he wants to see, not reading out what is there. The point I am trying to make is simply that there is another dimension (or other dimensions) of the biblical doctrine of God's justice and of Paul's teaching on justification which have been overlooked and neglected, and that it is important to recover these aspects and to think them through afresh in the changing circumstances of today's world" (21). Dunn probably had not intended to attack the Lutheran position, but rereading the relevant articles, such an impression is created. It most definitely is the impression shared by the very elaborate list of "responsible scholars" he refers to (21). It would have been more fitting not to question the intentions of his critics, but simply to use the opportunity to set the record straight.

In the third section of his introduction, Dunn acknowledges that the past decade's scholarly debate has brought him "to a sharper and more nuanced appreciation of what was at stake for Paul" (p 38). In this section he tries to take the debate forward, focusing on

Galatians: 3:10-14 (pp 38-41); Romans 3:19-20, 4:4-8 and 9:11-12 (pp 41-47); on the issue of whether Paul broke with the law (pp 47-50); and the later writings of the Pauline corpus (pp 51-54). He adds a fourth section in which he deals with the question of whether Sanders' point of view is possibly an exaggeration (pp 55-63); whether justification by faith is complimented by some kind of a process (pp 63-72); the role of works in God's judgement upon believers (pp 72-80); and participation in Christ leading to transformation (pp 80-86).

This book should certainly be added to the libraries of all individuals and institutions with an interest in Pauline studies. Not all students across the world have access to the relevant journals and publications in which these articles originally appeared. Whether or not one agrees with Dunn in everything he proposes, or even as far as his main thesis is concerned, is beside the point. His position has become so prominent, articulated and influential, that no Pauline scholar can proceed without taking due cognizance of Dunn's perspective. The publishers and author should be thanked for providing in this need.



Glancy, J A 2006 – *Slavery in Early Christianity*

Publisher: Fortress. Paperback, 230 pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr M Cromhout (Johannesburg)

In her introduction Glancy notes that her study "focuses on the impact of the ubiquitous ancient institution of slavery on the emergence and development of Christianity" (p 3). In this study, Glancy paints a grim picture of ancient slavery as she delves through various ancient sources, and explains what the normal dynamics between slave and slaveholder were like. Above all else, her sympathies and interest lie mainly with the circumstances of the slaves themselves. Taking into consideration that slavery was an established fact of life, Glancy investigates the early Christian texts to analyze their impact on the early church. What emerges is an understanding of the subject which is at the same time illuminating, and to our modern (Christian) sensibilities, quite alarming.

In the first chapter Glancy looks at the ancient rhetoric of slavery, and notes that slaves were often referred to as "the bodies". As mere "bodies", they were subject to being used pretty much according to the personal whims of their owners, something which extended even beyond the slave's manumission. This included physical and verbal abuse, as well as sexual penetration, since slaves had no control over their own bodies. Slaves could also act as surrogate bodies for their owners to accomplish various acts of violence on others. In addition, female slaves acted as wet-nurses and also expanded their owners' wealth if they nursed their own children. Generally, the gender specific liabilities of slaves placed them "outside the game of honor" (p 27). In addition to the realities mentioned above, male slaves endured the permanent status of a boy. Glancy also makes a brief study of spiritual slavery and somatic metaphors in Epictetus and Paul's Letter to the Galatians, which inter alia, are further indications of the physical abuse endured by slaves as well as the somatic liabilities that accompany servile status.

Chapter 2 focuses specifically on slavery in the Pauline churches. Since Pauline Christianity was an urban phenomenon, Paul's contact with slavery would have been mainly with the urban variety. Here Glancy questions the normal public/male and private/female spaces constructed by scholars. Apart from encountering slaves in the homes of those who offered him hospitality, Paul would have encountered slaves, including women, in public places and streets. Slaves were also found in every occupation in Greco-Roman cities. Some managed to organize a family life, although most lived under conditions that did not enable

them to sustain stable family connections. Drawing mainly on the Acts of the Apostles, she comes to the conclusion that slaves in Christian households were “dependent bodies subject to the intellectual and spiritual authority of slaveholders” (p 48). Slaveholders were at the same time the point of entry and enjoyed a higher profile within the church, playing the major role in the baptisms of their households.

Glancy then raises quite an interesting matter with regard to the Pauline communities. It involves the degree of participation of slaves in the church, as well as the meaning of *porneia*. In view of what Paul writes about *porneia* (sexual immorality) in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 5-7, she poses the following interesting questions: “In Paul’s understanding, could the Christian body accommodate the sexually available bodies of slaves? ... Or does the presence of urban, domestic slaves and slaveholders among the congregations of the Pauline orbit require that we revise our estimations of the Pauline definition of *porneia*, sexual impurity?” (p 50). She does indeed argue that we need to revise or modify commonly held positions in Pauline studies.

Firstly, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 instructs (male) Christians to abstain from *porneia* and for each one to “obtain his own vessel”. Most interpretations regard “vessel” as a euphemism for wife and so sexual activity is seen as restricted to marriage. But according to Glancy, this is not what Paul is saying. Since domestic slaves were considered as “morally neutral” outlets for sexual urges in the first century, those who heard Paul’s counsel “would understand it as consistent with reliance on slaves as morally neutral sexual outlets” (p 63). Thus, it cannot be assumed that later Christian rejection of the sexual use of slaves is already implicit in Paul’s letters. Nowhere does Paul issue explicit prohibitions on slaveholders’ sexual use of slaves. True, but taking into consideration the conservative Israelite ethic towards sexuality, is this what Paul *himself* actually *meant* by the instruction? – As far as I can tell, Glancy does not say so. But a similar uncertainty basically confronts us in her analysis of 1 Corinthians 5-7.

In her study of 1 Corinthians 5-7, Glancy suggests that Paul’s teaching on *porneia* and what it exactly means, remains unclear. Would slaves who submitted to the demands of their owners be considered among the *pornoi*? And do sexual relations between slaves and their owners fall in the category of *porneia*? In 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Paul forbids *porneia* (sexual immorality/prostitution) as it taints the Christian body and he rejects the idea that sexual intercourse could be a matter of moral indifference or could be morally neutral. This according to Glancy seems to exclude enslaved prostitutes outside the boundaries of Christianity. In 1 Corinthians 7:1-24, where Paul limits sexual activity to marriage, it implicitly suggests that slaves who oblige their masters engage in *porneia* (and can one add, by implication, Christian “masters” as well, which will complicate her analysis of 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 discussed above?). Glancy concludes: “We simply do not know how Paul responded to the situation of slaves who were used sexually by their owners. Perhaps, however, concern over this vulnerability prompted him to advise slaves to take advantage of opportunities for freedom as they arose [cf 7:1]” (p 69). This leads her to conclude that it is impossible to maintain that the servile status of slaves was no obstacle for full participation in the Christian body *and* that the only sexual relations tolerated were those between husband and wife (p 70).

Glancy’s analysis does leave one with more answers than questions, specifically in terms of how exactly commonly held positions in Pauline studies need to be revised or modified, but she appropriately points out that “a society that represented and treated slaves as bodies, ecclesial incorporation of slaves would have exposed the body of Christ to the somatic vulnerabilities of enslaved members” (p 70).

Chapter 3 investigates the margins, how free bodies were enslaved during the early centuries of Christianity, or how the sale, escape, and manumission of slaves occurred in the Roman slave system. At the same time Glancy looks at the “rhetorical effects of uneasiness” (p 73) thus engendered in early Christian theological discourse. Glancy notes that the sources of slaves were babies born to enslaved women, infants being exposed, and people taken as

booty in war. Alternatively, free persons were abducted and sold as slaves, or people sold themselves into slavery (cf 1 Cor 7:22-24), a practice that went against “all sense of propriety and decency” (p 85). On the whole, the ancient system of slavery operated within early Christianity pretty much as an institution as it did within the rest of society. For example, slaves had to be controlled. Most of the metal slave collars we have are post-Constantinian, and even bear Christian iconography, such as the alpha and omega or the chi-rho figure! She notes variously that “the Torah’s insistence that runaway slaves deserve protection does not seem to have permeated early Christian sensibilities or customs” (p 92), and that “Christians seem to have had neither a special affinity for nor antipathy toward the manumission of slaves” (pp 95-96).

Throughout early theological discourse, metaphors of enslavement, sale, and liberation occur, and thus depended on and reinscribed the ancient social relations of the slave system. The most famous example she discusses is the Christ hymn in Philippians. The impact of the hymn depends on the feared and uncomfortable “boundary crossing” between high/free status and low/slave status, and free persons’ fear of not being in control of their own bodies and the forced reduction to the vulnerable position of slaves (pp 100-101). “The Christ hymn depends on recognition of the shocking humiliation and definitive vindication of one who originally and ultimately bore a God likeness” (p 101).

Chapter 4 looks at the figure of the slave in the sayings of Jesus. So what was Jesus’ attitude towards the institution of slavery? This chapter includes an overview of Mark, Thomas, John, Luke with Matthew in particular receiving extensive treatment. Overall, the figure of the slave features rather prominently in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, which may also imply that it featured prominently in Q. It also implies that Jesus’ audience was familiar with the world of slaveholding and enslavement. Indeed, the distribution of slave sayings and parables throughout the trajectories of the Jesus tradition “leaves no doubt that he [Jesus] routinely deployed the trope of slavery” (p 107). According to Glancy also, “[i]n the parables of Jesus, the bodies of slaves are vulnerable to abuse. Beaten, stoned, and executed, the figure of the parabolic slave is repeatedly the locus of corporal discipline and other bodily violations” (p 103). This is especially true for the Gospel of Matthew. This form of violence to the bodies of slaves, Glancy maintains, Biblical scholars have been reluctant to acknowledge, rather focussing on their wealth and influence exercised by the slave owners. Some even deny that *douloi* in the parables mean “slaves”. She also criticizes the way in which some scholars treat slavery in the Jesus tradition as a subset of patron-client relations (p 115, 122-26), or the attempts they try to make to find a challenge in the “original” Jesus sayings to imperial values (pp 126-28). “What may ultimately be most challenging to New Testament critics is to confront the degree to which the slave parables undergird the horizon of normalcy and reinforce other evidence concerning the practice and ideology of slavery in the early Roman Empire” (p 128). Thus, we may conclude that, based on Glancy’s analysis, we find no challenge to the institution of slavery in Jesus’ parables and sayings. What we rather encounter, is that Jesus used these slave sayings because slavery was ubiquitous in the world he had lived in.

The final chapter looks at slaveholding culture in the early church, taking into consideration that, generally speaking, the slave character was inherently suspect and the management of their conduct always posed a problem. So how did early Christians manage their slaves? Glancy provides an overview of the household codes in Colossians, Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, 1 Peter, the Didache, and Ignatius’ letter to Polycarp. Again, what Glancy finds, is no overt countercultural teaching. In all of these texts slaves are called to obedience and Polycarp also seeks to limit or eliminate the reliance on church funds for the manumission of slaves. According to Glancy the household codes provide an articulation of a theological basis for the submission of slaves (Colossians & Ephesians) and the view that slaveholder morality is compatible, if not synonymous with Christian morality (The Pastorals). Generally, slave owners were not prohibited to inflict corporal punishment, neither to use

slaves as sexual outlets. If this was indeed the case, why did the authors not reinforce this teaching? – so Glancy maintains. 1 Peter is slightly different in that it states that the suffering of abuse (like Jesus suffered) – even from slave owners who act with cruelty – earns the commendation of God (1 Pt 2:18-21). Therefore, 1 Peter is distinct insofar as it “offers ground for condemning the system of slavery by inviting comparisons between the abuse of slaves and the passion of Jesus” (p 150), and Christian identity is associated with the very violation of slave bodies.

This work is highly recommended for anyone who is interested in the subject matter, as it both offers background knowledge of ancient slavery in its interaction with a variety of ancient sources, and provides valuable insight into how it inevitably influenced early Christian communities. Glancy’s study on the Pauline churches needs to be resolved, however, especially in terms of what Paul meant by *porneia*. Nevertheless, her study raises various issues pertaining to the field of New Testament ethics, and from a social-scientific perspective, she clearly demonstrates how the first believers in Jesus lived in a world with cultural sensibilities and value systems very different to our own. This is another reminder of the “culture shock” (to paraphrase Bruce Malina) any reader of the New Testament should experience.



Heither, T & Reemts, C 2007 – *Biblische Gestalten bei den Kirchenvätern: Adam* (Biblische Gestalten bei den Kirchenvätern)

der Verlag: Aschendorff 334 S., 36 €, ISBN 978-3-402-04387-5

der Rezensent: Prof Dr Christoph Stenschke (Missionshaus Bibelschule Wiedenest – Germany and Professor extraordinarius, University of South Africa)

Die vorliegende Studie ist der zweite Band in der neuen Serie *Biblische Gestalten bei den Kirchenvätern*, die sich dem patristischen Verständnis biblischer Gestalten widmet. Der erste Band zu Abraham war 2005 erschienen. Dabei ist es das Ziel, "die Art und Weise, wie die großen Theologen der frühen Christenheit die Bibel lasen, vorzustellen und so zu einer geistlichen Schriftauslegung in unserer Zeit Anregungen zu geben" (6). Den Lohn solcher Beschäftigung beschreiben die Autorinnen wie folgt:

Für die Kirchenväter ist die Bibel Quelle und Ziel jeder Freude, jeder Schönheit, aber auch jeder denkerischen Bemühung. Ihre Werke sprechen von der Faszination, die von der Bibel ausgeht und der man sich, einmal davon gepackt, nicht mehr entziehen kann. Dadurch leiten sie auch ihre Leser an, die Bibel zu lesen, sie neu zu lesen, sie wieder und wieder zu lesen und in ihr die Begegnung mit Gott zu suchen. Die Beschäftigung mit ihrer Theologie zwingt uns, gerade weil sie uns in vielem fremd ist und unsere Plausibilitäten nicht teilt, unser Selbstverständnis und unsere Denkgewohnheiten zu hinterfragen und zu neuen Fragen vorzustoßen (6).

Das Vorwort (11-13) umreißt die altkirchliche Bedeutung Adams: "Adam wird in der patristischen Theologie große Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet, ja man kann sagen, dass er für die Väter eine der ganz zentralen biblischen Gestalten ist. An ihm, dem ersten Menschen, kann man ablesen, was Menschsein bedeutet, er ist Maßstab, Vorbild und zugleich warnendes Beispiel für alle seine Nachfahren, und – das ist für christliche Theologie entscheidend wichtig – Typus des 'zweiten Adam', Jesus Christus" (11). Dabei geht es um Adam als den Menschen am Anfang, nicht aber um Adam als den Menschen überhaupt.

Reemts beginnt mit einem Überblick über die mit Adam verbundenen Themen in der Väterexegese (18-106): Was heißt "Adam"?, die Einheit der Menschheit in Adam, Adam als Geschöpf Gottes, als Bild Gottes, als Wesen aus Leib und Seele sowie Adam als Bewohner des Paradieses (Leben in der Gottesgemeinschaft, der königliche Mensch, der jugendliche Mensch, der keusche Mensch, der ganz freie Mensch). Nach den Vätern kann nur an Adam gezeigt werden, wie das Wesen Mensch gedacht war. Nur an ihm ist abzulesen, wie Gott den Menschen gewollt und in welchen Stand er ihn gesetzt hatte. Und, "Die Väter machen deutlich, dass wir von Adam nicht nur die Sünde geerbt haben, sondern auch die Gottesebenbildlichkeit und damit den verantwortungsvollen Auftrag, Gott in der Welt gegenwärtig darzustellen" (105).

Heither stellt in Teil zwei die wichtigen Auslegungen von Genesis 2.15-5.5 durch die Väter zusammen (107-246, erst ab 2.15 erscheint der Name Adam in der LXX, vorher ist vom Menschen allgemein die Rede, 107): Adam im Paradies, die Hilfe für Adam, die Verführung, der Sündenfall, Gott sucht den Menschen, das Verhör Gottes, der Urteilsspruch (hier auf Behandlung des Verständnisses von Gen 3.15 als Protoevangelium), Adam gibt der Frau den Namen, Gottes Handeln nach der Sünde und die Geschlechterfolge Adams (Zusammenfassung und Auswertung, 246). Dabei greift Heither hauptsächlich auf folgende Väter zurück: Origenes, *Homilien zur Genesis*, Didymus, *In Genesis*; Johannes Chrysostomos, *Homilien zur Genesis*; Theodoret, *Questiones in Octateuchum*; Cyrill von Alexandrien, *Glaphyra in Pentateuchum*; Augustinus, *Zwei Bücher über die Genesis gegen die Manichäer* und *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* und Prokop von Gaza, *Katenenkommentar zum Octateuch* (Zusammenstellung und knappe Einführung auf S. 108f). Nach der Darstellung der Exegese fasst Heither jeweils den theologischen Ertrag ansprechend zusammen.

Teil drei gilt der Sünde Adams im Verständnis der Väter (247-81, Reemts) unter folgenden Überschriften: Wer gab den Anstoß?, das Wesen der Sünde (Ungehorsam, Gier, Stolz), die Folgen der Sünde für Gott und seine Engel, für die Beziehung des Menschen zu Gott, für die Beziehung des Menschen zu sich selbst, für die Beziehung der Menschen untereinander sowie Tod und Grab Adams. Die Sünde Adams ist in sich unverständlich. Auch die Kirchenväter können sie nicht erklären. Aber, "Sehr deutlich wird bei den Vätern, dass die Sünde mehr ist als ein bedauerlicher Unfall, sie ist die radikale Zerstörung der Beziehung von Gott und Mensch und zieht nach sich zerstörte Beziehungen innerhalb der Schöpfung" (281).

Teil vier untersucht die ntl. Aussagen über Adam bei den Kirchenvätern (286-307; Heither), da nur vom neutestamentlichen, weitgehend christologisch geprägten Adamverständnis her die Reflektion der Väter auf Adam zu verstehen ist:

Die Väter lesen und erklären die Schrift des AT von Christus her und erkennen einen durchgehenden Heilsplan Gottes mit dem Menschen. Was in Adam begonnen hat und was dieser in eine falsche Richtung gelenkt hat, das wird in Christus so aufgenommen, dass der Mensch wirklich zu dem von Gott gewiesenen Ziel geführt wird. In Christus wird der Mensch neu geschaffen, er ist der Stammvater der neuen, erlösten Menschheit (283).

Adam und Christus erscheinen im NT als die zwei Stammväter, die unter dem Stichwort der *recapitulatio* zusammengebracht werden. Ferner ist Adam ein Typus des Kommenden. Christus steht im Gegensatz zu Adam. Ein "adamitisches" Menschsein wird der Zugehörigkeit zum Leib Christi gegenübergestellt. Ferner stellt Heither Adam und Eva Christus und die Kirche gegenüber.

Im Epilog zeichnet Reemts "Die Rettung Adams" nach (309-16; Erlösung oder Verwerfung Adams in der patristischen Diskussion - die Erlösung Adams wird bei den Kirchenvätern mit der sog. Höllenfahrt Christi in Verbindung gebracht; ferner die Bezüge zwischen Protologie und Eschatologie). Der Band schließt mit Bibliographie und Register von Bibelstellen und Texten der Kirchenväter.

Der Band gibt einen hervorragenden Einblick in die patristische Exegese und Theologie (vgl. dazu M. Friedrowicz, *Theologie der Kirchenväter: Grundlagen frühchristlicher*

Glaubensreflexion; Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 2007). Durch die Übersetzungen und Einführungen werden die diskutierten Texte gut erschlossen. Der gründlich erarbeitete Band ist für eine theologisch orientierte Exegese der biblischen Adamsstellen inspirierend (durchaus auch für die homiletische Bearbeitung der Genesis), enthält mehrere Perspektiven für eine gesamtbiblische Theologie und für verschiedene Themen der systematischen Theologie. Die Reflektionen der Autorinnen ("Zum Weiterdenken") sind weiterführend. Erarbeitet wurde der schöne Band in der Benediktinerinnen-Abtei Mariendonk am Niederrhein, zu der die Autorinnen gehören, und die sich um die Erschließung und Bewahrung des Vätererbes verdient gemacht hat (vgl. www.mariendonk.de).

In diesem Zusammenhang ist ferner auf die neue Serie *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* hinzuweisen, die die patristische Exegese zu einzelnen ntl. Büchern zusammenfassen und auswerten will (hrsg. A. Merkt, T. Niklas). Als erster Band erschien M. Meiser, *Galater*, NTP 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); vgl. <http://www.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/Theologie/alte-kg/html/ntp.html>). Ferner ist auf die englische Serie *The Church's Bible*, die sich mit gleicher Absicht der ganzen Bibel widmet (hrsg. R. L. Wilken). Bisher erschienen R. A. Norris, *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), J. L. Kovacs, *1 Corinthians* (gleicher Untertitel und Verlag, 2005) und R. L. Wilken, *Isaiah* (2007; vgl. meine Rez. in Religion & Theology, im Druck); zur Serie vgl. www.eerdmans.com.



Marty, M E 2007 – *Lutheran questions, Lutheran answers: Exploring Christian faith*

Publishers: Augsburg Books. 159 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr J A Meylahn (University of Pretoria)

The author, Martin Marty, was professor of religious history for thirty years at the University of Chicago. He wrote the book from the North American context and it thus responds to the questions and challenges of that specific religious context. Many of the questions also find resonance in our own South African context, which shows numerous similarities, but also certain differences to the North American context.

In good protestant tradition, the book is written as a dialogue between questions and answers, like Luther's Small Catechism, which consists of questions and answers. "In faith as in the rest of life, a person grows in knowledge by asking questions" (p 9).

The book is written in an easy style which makes it highly accessible to the lay reader and as such, it is an excellent introduction to the basics of Lutheran faith for believers today.

Professor Marty has formulated 88 questions that seek to capture the religious questions and challenges that believers struggle with in their everyday life. These questions are subsequently divided into thirteen chapters, which follow the main themes of faith (God, Bible, Jesus Christ, church, society, etc). The questions arise from the daily life experiences of believers, for example: Does God answer prayer? Does God heal today? Professor Marty does not answer these questions with references to major theological insights and arguments, but with references to biblical texts and life experiences and thereby communicating the basics of the Lutheran faith. The book is not written as a theological treatise in defence of the Lutheran faith, but as an accompaniment for congregational members seeking clear answers to their questions. At times, one might find his answers too simplistic, thereby losing some of the depth of Lutheran theology, but when it is borne in mind that the book clearly is written for

laity and not for theologians and its intention is to provide concise answers, then one appreciates the simplicity of the answers.

The book can be a valuable asset to the congregational library or resource center as it can be used for group discussions, adult courses on Lutheran faith as well as confirmation classes.



Raheb, M 2004 – *Bethlehem besieged: Stories of hope in times of trouble*

Publisher: Fortress Press, 2004. 157 Pages. Price: US\$15.00

Reviewer: Prof Dr Dorothy Jean Weaver (Eastern Mennonite Seminary – Harrisonburg, USA)

This is a book aptly titled and poignantly written. Bethlehem was in 2004 and is today a city under siege. A large sign at the entrance to Bethlehem proclaims “Peace Be With You” in English, Hebrew, and Arabic, from the “Israel Ministry of Tourism”. But the sign is a visual absurdity, painted as it is right next to a tall and menacing guard tower in the 8-meter-high concrete wall surrounding Bethlehem and imprisoning its residents. Bethlehem is indeed “besieged”; and the residents of Bethlehem clearly live in “times of trouble”.

But Pastor Mitri Raheb of Christmas Lutheran Church is a man of profound Christian hope and deep vision for the future. So while he depicts the “times of trouble” in Bethlehem in vivid detail, he does not stop there. Instead, Raheb’s ultimate goal is to point beyond the ubiquitous and ugly “trouble” of present-day Bethlehem toward emerging signs of “hope”. And it is this word of courageous hope, spoken into a world of bitter despair, which is the ultimate and remarkable gift of Raheb’s book.

In the “Preface” Raheb writes (p vii): “I am not sure if it is my destiny to write books during difficult times. But writing in such a context becomes an act of nonviolent resistance: resisting being silenced, resisting being a spectator, and resisting giving up.” Raheb’s “nonviolent resistance” takes the form of vivid storytelling, as he recounts dramatic events from the Second Intifada and everyday challenges associated with the ongoing Israeli occupation.

In part one (“Under siege”) Raheb draws his readers into the terrifying days of April 2002, as Israeli tanks rolled into Bethlehem and positioned themselves near the Lutheran compound. Raheb recounts the sheer terror of deafening and deadly gun battles waged at close range (chapter 1, “A monk at the compound”). He depicts the kindness of a Franciscan priest in the besieged Church of the Nativity toward a Hamas soldier taking refuge there (chapter 3, “Father Amjad and Muhammad under siege”) and the courage of Lutheran parishioners who defy an Israeli curfew to attend Sunday worship (chapter 5, “Obeying commands or commandments”). And Raheb includes a sermon, preached at Christmas Lutheran shortly after the lifting of the Bethlehem siege, which passionately denounces warfare (chapter 4, “Though war rise up against me”).

But surely most riveting is the extraordinary account of Raheb’s close encounter with Israeli soldiers who invaded the Lutheran compound and held him hostage in his office as they carried out massive destruction on the premises (chapter 2, “Challenging yet transforming the enemy”). Here the depth of Raheb’s eirenic spirit and the courage of his conviction become visible in his persistent and fearless attempts (p 23) to “engage them in a dialogue” that would “penetrate to their humanity” and “challenge them to see my humanity.”

Part two (“Life under occupation”) opens with an account of Raheb’s life in Bethlehem (chapter six, “The land that swallows its children”), a life impacted at every turn by the Israeli

occupation. In succeeding chapters Raheb depicts ongoing challenges created by the Israeli occupation. Chapters seven and eight ("A matter of life and death"; "Adventures in driving") speak of military checkpoints which prohibit the movement of Palestinians from one place to another, sometimes with tragic and deadly consequences. Chapter nine ("What would you do if you were in my shoes?") recounts a litany of travel woes experienced by Raheb and his wife as they sought permits for international travel and attempted unsuccessfully to leave the country. Chapter ten ("Carry on") ponders the multiple causes of the "heavy burden of occupation" which the Palestinian people carry. And Raheb laments (p 86):

How long can we as Palestinians ... handle such a burden of harassment, humiliation, invasions, closures, and confiscations without collapsing and getting crushed underneath it?

In part three Raheb identifies "Glimpses of hope" that instill courage in the midst of challenging and desperate circumstances. Raheb's list comprises activities initiated through the International Center of Bethlehem at Christmas Lutheran Church: A candlelight vigil for peace on a dark and dangerous December night in 2000 (chapter eleven, "The light of right, not the power of might"); an art competition for portrayals of Christ from a Palestinian perspective (chapter 12, "Christ in Palestine"); a children's program focusing on art, music, sports, communication, and the environment (chapter 13, "Bright stars"); the staff, ministries, and partners of the International Center of Bethlehem (chapter 14, "Perplexed but not in despair"); a renovated pipe organ re-installed into Christmas Lutheran Church in December 2000 just in time for the Christmas Eve service (chapter 15, "A Christmas gift to Bethlehem"); and a destitute Lutheran woman who reclaims broken glass from the destruction of the Intifada, transforming it into glass angels for sale around the world (chapter 16, "Samar").

In chapter seventeen ("Christmas and the wall") Raheb recounts the sermon he preached on Christmas Eve 2003 as the wall around Bethlehem was becoming reality. And he reflects as follows (pp 144-145):

Christians have to take Christmas in Bethlehem seriously, because on that holy night and in this very place, God chose to be very concrete, to take flesh, and to take our world very seriously. We Christians are unafraid to face the brutal reality around us because we believe in a power mightier than walls and put our faith in a peace that exceeds all human understanding.

In chapter eighteen ("Building walls or planting olive trees?") Raheb reflects on the true meaning of "hope" within the Palestinian/Israeli context and beyond. And he draws powerful conclusions for his readers (p 156):

As Christians we should no longer be spectators in this world. We are actors on Christ's behalf. Sometimes we feel that that world in which we live has become a hell ... but our faith is in Christ, who is life. Hell is already overcome. Our call is not to transform this hell into a paradise but to transfer this hell into a world in which life is possible again.

Raheb's book is a genuine message of hope in our desperate world and a call to courageous action in our troubled times.



Renkema-Hoffman, M 2007 – *Naar een nieuwe kerkenraad* (Apeldoornse Studies, no 48)

Uitgewer: Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn. 84 Bladsye. Prys: Onbekend

Resensent: Dr B J van Wyk (Pretoria)

Die vraag na die amp in kerke van Reformatoriese oorsprong is nie 'n onlangse probleem nie en derhalwe ook nie beperk tot Nederland nie. Juis daarom word met dankbaarheid geput uit navorsing wat buite die eie kerk gedoen word waaruit terselfdertyd beklemtoon word dat die eenheid van die kerk wyer loop as die grense van die eie kerk.

Die skrywer stel die probleem rondom die amp wat daarin bestaan dat die tradisionele beskouing onder druk gekom wat tot 'n bepaalde funksieverlies aanleiding gegee het. Die vraag kom na vore of bepaalde veranderinge steeds te rym is met die prinsipiële vertrekpunte wat die Bybel as uitgangspunt neem, nader besien in die verlenging lê van Christus wat die oorsprong en daarom Heer en Hoof van die kerk is. Christus regeer die kerk deur sy Woord en maak gebruik van mense wat die volmag ontvang het om die evangelie te verkondig en sakramente te bedien. Ampsdraers was derhalwe persone wat oortuig was van die roeping wat hulle ontvang het om in die kerk diensbaar te wees. Bogenoemde Skriftuurlike uitgangspunt het tot gevolg dat bepaalde Bybelse uitgangspunte nie losgelaat moet word wat werklik essensieel vir die amp is soos dit in die Bybel gevind word nie.

Nadat die tweede hoofstuk gewy is aan 'n Bybelse omlýning van die amp kom die skrywer tot die volgende slotsom: Christus regeer sy gemeente as Heer van die kerk. Hy doen dit deur sy Woord met gebruikmaking van mense wat Hy as dienaars roep. Te midde van vele gawes, dienste en funksies kom die oudste telkens na vore wat opsig oor die kudde moet hou deur woord en leer. Wanneer oudstes die verantwoordelikheid het om te preek en onderrig te gee, vorm hulle nie 'n aparte kring en ontvang nie 'n ander amp nie. Diakens staan naas die oudstes as dienaars van die gemeente. Oudstes vorm 'n vergadering waar gesamentlik verantwoordelikheid aanvaar is vir die opsig oor die gemeente.

In die derde hoofstuk word gekyk na die historiese ontwikkeling van die amp vanaf die vroeë Christelike kerk tot en met die Reformasie, die uitbou van die amp in die Nederlandse gereformeerde kerke gevolg deur resente ontwikkelinge in die funksionering van die amp. Hieruit volg die volgende slotsom: die opkoms van die episkopaat het gelei tot 'n devaluasie van die amp van die ouderling en diaken. In die Reformasie verander die gesag oor gelowiges tot 'n dienswerk (*ministerium*) onder die verkondiging van die evangelie. Die reformatore is oortuig dat die amp ten opsigte van die priesterskap van die gelowiges nie onderskat moet word nie maar daardeur ook nie oorbodig gestel moet word nie. Die een dienswerk (*ministerium*) kom in meer vorme voor, maar bly steeds 'n dienswerk. Die amp van diaken bestaan uit die versorging van armes, maar bly nie daartoe beperk nie. Die reformatore lei hulle opvattinge oor die amp uit die Skrif af wat hulle as Woord van God verstaan het. Die Nederlandse gereformeerde kerke het hoofsaaklik Calvin gevolg wat die bedienaar van die Woord onderskei het in herder en leraar, maar ook ouderling. Aan die diaken word barmhartigheid opgedra met 'n woord en gebed van troos wat beklemtoon dat die diaken se taak nie in geld opgaan nie. Toenemende werkdruk en ongemak met die funksionering van die amp is redes waarom verandering aan die amp noodsaaklik beskou word. Daar is 'n groeiende aandag vir gemeentelêde met hulle geestelike gawes en 'n tendens om die amp te demokratiseer deur ampsdraers te beskou as afgevaardigdes van die gemeente met die opdrag om die wense van die meerderheid uit te voer.

In die vierde hoofstuk word drie modelle voorgehou vir 'n nuwe kerkraadsopset naamlik, van die Christelike Gereformeerde Kerke Groningen en Veenendaal-Bethel, asook van die Gereformeerde Vormings Instituut te Zwolle. Die belangrikste kritiek teen die genoemde modelle is die feit dat die ampswerk uit mekaar gehaal word wat tot gevolg het dat nie alle ouderlinge deel het aan die werk wat eie aan hulle amp is nie. Dit as gevolg van die

klem wat bestuur ontvang naas pastoraat en opsig. In die model wat die skrywer ten slotte aanbied word juis laasgenoemde as kritiek aangedui en voorgestel dat één kerkraadsvergadering behou word wat handel oor die herderlike taak van die gemeente waarin pastoraat en bestuur gesamentlik ter sprake kom. Dit word ook gestel dat die amp van diaken 'n ander amp is en dus apart in 'n diakensvergadering byeen moet kom. Daarnaas kan ook bepaalde gemeentelike taakvelde bestaan wat deur kommissies en werkgroepe beset word vir die uitvoer van vasgestelde beleid.

Bogenoemde publikasie is bruikbare leesstof wat die amp omlyn teen die agtergrond van die Bybelse en historiese ontwikkeling van die amp. Die positiewe waarde van die publikasie is die beklemtoning dat die amp 'n dienswerk is en wesenlik is teenoor bestuur wat hedendaags ook belangrik geag word. Dit is debatteerbaar of die oplossing gesoek moet word in radikaal nuwe strukture eerder as om te aanvaar dat ampsdraers steeds geroepe diensknegte is wat in diens van die Heer van die kerk hul dienswerk uitvoer.



Rottloff, A 2007 – “*Stärker als Männer und tapferer als Ritter*”: *Pilgerinnen in Spätantike und Mittelalter*

der Verlag: Ph. von Zabern: Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt 115, 155 S. gebunden ISBN 978-3-8053-3766-3, 25 €

der Rezensent: Prof Dr C Stenschke (Missionshaus Bibelschule Wiedenest – Germany and Professor extraordinarius, University of South Africa)

In der gegenwärtigen (Neu)Entdeckung der Spiritualität bekommt auch die Idee des Pilgerns wieder Aufwind. Die neuen Titel zu Erfahrungen mit dem Pilgern sind kaum noch zu übersehen. Dabei sind manche Berichte, z. B. über Pilgerschaften auf dem St. Jakobsweg, an Trivialität und Banalität kaum zu überbieten. In dieser Flut von Literatur ist eine solide recherchierte, zugleich verständlich und interessant geschriebene sowie reich bebilderte historische Studie zu einem Aspekt spätantiken und mittelalterlichen Pilgerwesens eine Wohltat. Der vorliegende Band der Archäologin und Historikerin Andrea Rottloff schildert ausgehend von den Voraussetzungen und Zielen des Pilgerwesens, "das Schicksal von Frauen, die die historische Überlieferung, die archäologischen und kunsthistorischen Monumente aus dem Schatten ihrer männlichen Begleiter hervortreten ließen". Leitende Fragen sind dabei: "Waren Frauen nur die Begleitung des Mannes oder konnten sie selbständig auf Pilgerschaft gehen? Was unterschied Pilgerinnen von den Kreuzfahrerinnen?" (Schutzumschlag).

Rottloff beginnt mit einem allgemeinen, einführenden Teil, der auf gute Weise den ganzen Komplex des Pilgerns erschließt, um auf diesem Hintergrund speziell die pilgernden Frauen der Spätantike und des Mittelalters zu untersuchen. Nach der Einleitung (u. a. Entstehung der Wallfahrtsorte, Bedeutung von Reliquien in diesem Prozess) fragt Rottloff nach den verschiedenen Motiven für Pilgerfahrten ("Homo viator oder warum Menschen pilgern", 11-31). Zu den Motiven gehörten Wunder, Heilungen, Bußen und die Aussicht auf Ablass. Freilich gab es auch durchweg Widerstand und Kritik am Pilgerwesen (28-31, mit Texten von Hieronymus, Thomas von Kempen, Evagrius Ponticus, Martin Luther, Gregor von Nyssa und Bonifatius).

Dann beschreibt Rottloff die logistischen Anforderungen in der Vorbereitung und Durchführung einer Pilgerfahrt im ausgewählten Zeitraum (33-57, Aussendung in der Heimat, Reisen in Gruppen, Pilgertracht, die Pilgerstraßen, Landkarten und Pilgerführer,

Verkehrsmittel zu Land und die Reise per Schiff, Unterkünfte und Verpflegung ferner die Gefahren auf der Pilgerschaft) sowie die wichtigsten Pilgerziele (57-81, Entstehung, Namenszuweisung, wichtige Frauenwallfahrtsorte, Jerusalem als Nabel der Welt, Rom als das Hauptpilgerziel im Westen sowie Santiago de Compostela – "Über den Sternenweg zum Heil"). Dieser Teil ist eine hervorragende Zusammenfassung des spätantiken und mittelalterlichen Pilgerwesens. Dabei sind die Besonderheiten für Pilgerinnen durchweg im Blick.

Unter der Überschrift "Getrieben von Evas Sünde – pilgernde Frauen" gibt Rottloff im zweiten Teil des Bandes einen Überblick über 24 bekannte (Fern-)Pilgerinnen. Durch die gelungenen Einzeldarstellungen auf dem Hintergrund des ersten Teils erhalten die pilgernden Frauen dadurch "Gesichter". Nach einführenden Überlegungen zu Frauen als Pilgerinnen und deren Wahrnehmung der damit verbundenen Herausforderungen sowie zum Frauenbild des Mittelalters (87-93) geht es zunächst um die Anfänge in spätantiker Zeit (4.-6. Jh.): die Kaisermutter Helena – von der politischen Pilgerin zur legendären Finderin des Wahren Kreuzes (Jerusalem, etwa 327 n. Chr.), Egeria (Sinai, Heiliges Land, Kleinasien, 383/84 n. Chr.), Paula und ihre Tochter Eustochium (Heiliges Land, Bethlehem, nach 380 n. Chr.), Ursula und die 11.000 Jungfrauen (angeblich Rom, 450 n. Chr.), Maria von Ägypten (Jerusalem, 2. Hälfte des 5. Jh. n. Chr.).

Weitere Abschnitte untersuchen die Pilgerinnen in späteren Epochen: "Die dunklen Jahrhunderte – die persisch-frühislamische Zeit (7.-11. Jh.)" (103-08) und das 11.-13. Jahrhundert unter der Überschrift "'Sie nahmen das Kreuz' – Kreuzfahrerinnen als Pilgerinnen unter Waffen?" (108-30). Nach der Einleitung und Überlegungen zu Frauen als Teilnehmerinnen von Kampfhandlungen", 111-15) geht es um Eleonore von Aquitanien, Sibylle von Anjou, Margarete von Beverley ("Von Frömmigkeit und Reiselust zugleich erfüllt", Jerusalem, 1187, Rom, Santiago, nach 1190), die heilige Bona von Pisa, Uta von Ursin-Ronsberg, Hildegund von Schönau, Eleonore von Kastilien und Ann-Els von Tannenberg. In einem Exkurs fragt Rottloff ferner "'Wir, die wir Abendländer waren, sind nun Orientalen geworden ...' – Die Kreuzfahrerstaaten als 'Multi-Kulti-Gesellschaft'" (120-23). Sie beschreibt das bunte Durcheinander von Völkern und Religionen im Heiligen Land unter der Herrschaft der Kreuzfahrer:

Das Heilige Land war zur Kreuzfahrerzeit erstmals seit der Spätantike wieder ein einziger großer Schmelztiegel, der sich so unter arabischer Herrschaft nicht hatte entwickeln können, unter der Andersgläubige bestenfalls geduldet wurden. Pilger aller Couleur, Neugierige, Abenteurer, Siedler und Kirchenmänner kamen aus allen Ländern der damals bekannten Welt, und das Heilige Land wurde ihnen allen bald zur Heimat ... Auch wurde der Islam nun nicht mehr pauschal als Heidentum ... verstanden, sondern als mehr oder weniger gleichberechtigte Religion neben (nicht unter!) dem Christentum, das im Heiligen Land in so viel verschiedeneren Ausprägungen daher kam als im Westen (123).

Der letzte Abschnitt gilt sieben Pilgerinnen nach Santiago ("Mystik auf dem Sternenweg", 14.-15. Jh.).

Im abschließenden Ausblick setzt Rottloff die hier beschriebenen spätantiken und mittelalterlichen Pilger und Pilgerinnen mit den Pilgern späterer Zeit, vor allem ab dem mittleren 19. Jh. in Beziehung und verweist auf Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede. Sie betont, dass Pilgerreisen vor allem Mittel des Kulturaustausches waren und bis heute geblieben sind. An diesem Austausch waren Frauen maßgeblich beteiligt. Nach Rottloff spüren heute viele Menschen, dass die Segnungen der modernen Zivilisation nicht alles gewesen sein können:

Deshalb machen sie sich auf die Suche nach diesem "Alles", das über alles bekannte, alltägliche hinausgreift und das menschliche Dasein erst rechtfertigt. Ihre ganz subjektiven Motive dürften sich kaum von den ebenso subjektiven Motiven der mittelalterlichen Pilger unterscheiden: Andacht, der Wunsch nach Heilung und Vergebung von Sünden, die Einlösung eines Gelübdes, aber auch Abenteuerlust und Ausstieg aus dem Alltag – so viel hat sich in den letzten 1000 Jahren nicht geändert, auch wenn keiner mehr Ablassbriefe verteilt. Stattdessen sind es Bestätigungen in Form von Pilgerbriefen, die den Daheimgebliebenen, aber auch einem selbst beweisen – ich war wirklich dort, habe es geschafft. Ich bin ein anderer Mensch geworden.

Ein Literaturverzeichnis beendet den hervorragend produzierten Band, der 40 Farb- und 4 Schwarzweißabbildungen enthält. Rundum ein interessanter und attraktiver Band und eine willkommene Abwechslung für Augen, die an die Bleiwüsten akademischer Fachliteratur gewöhnt sind. Rottloff bietet eine gute Einführung in die historischen Wurzeln und Ausgestaltungen eines die Kirche über Jahrhunderte prägenden Aspekts christlicher Spiritualität. Hinzuweisen ist noch auf den schönen Band von Andrea Rottloff zu Frauen in der römischen Antike: *Lebensbilder römischer Frauen*. Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt 104 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006).



Shields, M A 2006 – *The end of wisdom: A reappraisal of the historical and canonical function of Ecclesiastes*

Publisher: Eisenbrauns. Hard cover, 250 pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Dr P M Venter (University of Pretoria)

As the subheading in the title indicates, this publication is a reappraisal of the book of Ecclesiastes with regard to its historical and its canonical function. As can be expected from a reappraisal, it does indeed present a controversial position. The author reworked his PhD. dissertation for this monograph to expound on his thesis that an "epilogist exploits the offense of Qoheleth's words to formulate a compelling critique of the wisdom movement of his day" (p 237). The author differentiates between Ecclesiastes (the final canonical book including the epilogue in Ecclesiastes 12:9-14) and the rest of the book written by one Qoheleth. The writer of the epilogue, acting as an editor of Qoheleth's work, took the latter's comments on the inadequacies of wisdom and turned them into a warning against the wisdom movement. It is this theory that gave rise to the book's title: The end of wisdom.

In the introductory section (pp 1-6), Shields outlines the age old problem of Ecclesiastes' inclusion in the canon. Having summarized a number of existing theories arguing for the book's acceptance in the Hebrew Bible, he presents his theory that the epilogue provides the key to solving the problem. He endeavors to show that the words of Qoheleth "are incompatible with the orthodoxy of the remainder of the Hebrew Bible" (p 6), but the presentation of his words by the epilogist reconciles it with that "orthodoxy". The epilogist "employed Qoheleth's words to discredit the sages" (p 34)

To prove his thesis, Shields reconstructs "an implied or literary history" (p 238, cf also p 37) of the wisdom in Israel. The wisdom movement begins with the wisdom of Proverbs "whose terse nature readily permits a naïve, mechanistic (mis)interpretation of the world"

(p 238). Job and Qoheleth represent the next trajectory showing severe reaction against this application of wisdom. Qoheleth illustrates that the notion “that the world operates via an underlying moral order simply does not reflect reality” (p 239). Qoheleth therefore marks the end of speculative wisdom in ancient Israel. The epilogist in Ecclesiastes exploited this view of Qoheleth and expounded on the idea that “the wisdom movement’s ideas had become incompatible with the ideas and ideals of ancient Israelite orthodoxy” (p 238). He introduced “the turning point in the history of wisdom in Israel” (p 37). The epilogist used Qoheleth’s words to undermine the credibility of the sages and the wisdom movement of his day. In a deconstructive way, he aimed to discredit the wisdom movement and send wisdom into a new direction. His epilogue is an appeal to return to “a theological wisdom grounded in the fear of God and obedience to his commandments” (p 238). The later wisdom books, like Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon, followed this direction.

In chapter 1 on wisdom in the Hebrew Bible (pp 7-20), the author indicates that the enmity towards the sages can be found elsewhere in the canonical books too. In most of the material very negative connotations are attached to wisdom, the main reason being the “wisdom movement’s incompatibility with the belief system of the remainder of the Bible” (p 7). It “is based on human ingenuity without reference to God” (p 17) and therefore “almost universally presented negatively” (p 20).

Chapter 2 (pp 21-46) reconstructs the wise as social group in the Hebrew Bible. In this chapter the author indicates that the provenience and the historical *Sitz im Leben* of Ecclesiastes are uncertain. The only date that can be given is one that is relative to other texts. A literary history of Ecclesiastes, indicating that the book represents one trajectory of a *wisdom movement* (p 46) can, however, be constructed. Sages functioned as an identifiable group within Israelite society. The epilogist reacted strongly to the sages of his time, using “Qoheleth’s honest appraisal of the wisdom movement [of his time] as largely futile and pointless” (p 237).

Chapter 3 (pp 47-109) presents a thorough analysis of the epilogue, for the first time in the publication demarcated as Ecclesiastes 12:9-14.. In Shields’ theory this epilogue “is foundational for understanding the book of Ecclesiastes as a whole” (p 47). In it the editor’s thoughts on Qoheleth and the wisdom movement of his time are formulated. It is through this epilogue that the existing collection of Qoheleth’s words obtains its function and meaning in the canon. Not merely recontextualizing Qoheleth’s criticism of the futility of the wisdom movement of his time, but actually using it against that movement, the author of the epilogue reformed the criticism into one new unit known as Ecclesiastes. Shields divides the epilogue into three subunits: 12:9-10 (a biographical comment about Qoheleth); 12:11-12 (warnings about the teaching of the sages); 12:13-14 (the conclusion of the matter). In his literary-poetic analysis of the Hebrew text, the author reaches the conclusion that Qoheleth did not move beyond the futility of his task to find an alternative form of wisdom, but confined himself to a negative critique of the futility of wisdom’s endeavor to find answers. While Qoheleth feared a distant unknown God, the epilogist feared a God who had revealed his will in his commands to his people (cf p 97). The words of the epilogist reflect “Israelite orthodoxy” (p 100) and are in direct contrast with the heterodox ideas of Qoheleth and the wisdom movement. Qoheleth’s theism is rooted in the transcendence and capriciousness of God standing in opposition to the ideas and beliefs in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. He propagates the futility of the present wisdom endeavor, but offers no knowledge of an alternative way of wisdom, whereas the epilogist points to the alternative of obeying God’s commandments. His advice is to be wary of the sages’ words.

In chapter 4 (pp 110-235) Shields again analyzes the entire book of Ecclesiastes in its Hebrew form according to its literary units. This chapter’s aim is to formulate Ecclesiastes’ own ideas as the basis for the work of the epilogist. In nearly every unit the author reaches the conclusion that Qoheleth’s observations and conclusions “consistently stand at odds with normative doctrine in the remainder of the Hebrew Bible” (p 173). The reader who is familiar

with orthodox teaching in the Bible “would find these honest revelations of this exponent of the wisdom movement deeply troubling and thus be inclined to accept the epilogist’s advice to be wary of the sages’ words” (p 173). At the end of this long study the author comes to the fourfold conclusion that Qoheleth does not denounce wisdom directly, that he nowhere “admits the possibility of divine revelation” (p 235), that the only viable course of action for Qoheleth is to enjoy life, and that Qoheleth’s conclusions are incompatible with the teaching of the remainder of the Bible.

Indices of authors and of scripture referred to, appear on the last pages of the book. The contents of Shields’ thesis will give rise to intense debate. His book is well researched, but one often gets the idea that he is forcing certain arguments in his favor. His idea of a single theology of the whole Old Testament as being “the orthodox” theology of revelation and covenant commands, repetitively used to prove his point of Ecclesiastes’ foreignness vis à vis the rest of the Bible, opens itself to severe criticism. A long history of Old Testament Theology is simply ignored by his idea of “orthodoxy”. Questions that beg answering are for example why Proverbs, with its “naïve” wisdom and Job, with its unorthodox theology, are still part of the canon although they represent a stage of wisdom that has been overtaken and why they are not also recontextualized in the same way that Ecclesiastes is? These questions merely constitute the beginning of the debate.



Van Ruler, A A 2007 – *Verzameld Werk, deel I: De aard van de theologie* (Besorgd door Dr D van Keulen)

Publisher: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum

Reviewer: Dr J P (Kobus) Labuschagne (University of Pretoria)

Arnold Albert van Ruler (1908-1970) is regarded by many as one of the three great Dutch “*Hervormde*” (*Reformed*) theologians of the 20th century – that is together with O Noordmans and KH Miskotte. It is his theological depth and insight, his widely accepted theological influence and his whole-hearted involvement in church-life that earned him this high regard. In spite of contemporary postmodern disinterest in *systematic* theology, many still admire and appreciate Van Ruler for his kind of theology that is deeply rooted in the tradition of the *catholica* – the Christian church through the centuries – and more specifically the *Reformed tradition* with its origin in the 16th century Reformation.

As a result of what can be seen as an ongoing interest in Van Ruler’s work and additionally even as a renewed interest in the works of Van Ruler, a group of concerned scholars in 2005 finally decided that Van Ruler’s work should be recompiled and published. Dr Dirk van Keulen was appointed as editor and he was assisted by a commission, which included the following members: Dr WJ van Asselt, Dr P van den Heuvel and Drs J Stelwagen. *De Aard van de Theologie* is the first of 7 volumes, and was published in July 2007. The others, which are to follow in due course, are:

- Volume 2: *Openbaring en Heilige Skrif*
- Volume 3: *God, schepping, mens, zonde*
- Volume 4: *Christus, de Geest en het heil*
- Volume 5: *Kerk, sacramenten en de laaste dingen*

Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews

Volume 6: *Cultuur, samelewing, onderwys, politiek*

Volume 7: *Reformatie, oecumene en gesprek met anderen*

Volume 1 – *De Aard van de Theologie* – has a lengthy introduction of 54 pages and deals with the “*nature of theology*”. The book of 550 pages comprises 4 parts:

- (i) *University and science* – This part gives an insight into Van Ruler’s understanding of university and science, and focuses on an explanation of truth and on the presuppositions for scientific study.
- (ii) *Theological science* – This part includes his views on the relationship of science and faith, his views on the relationship of philosophy and theology (which clearly shows Karl Barth’s influence), his views on the methodology of dogmatics, his teachings on the importance of a Trinitarian theology (which reflects his connections with the Reformation), his emphasis on Christocentricity, and his explanations concerning science in theology (in which his deviation from Barth comes to the fore).
- (iii) *The study of theology* – This part includes some unknown Van Ruler-texts, which reflect on the place theology takes in the university context, and also explain his understanding of and preference for the *duplex ordo* structure of the theological faculties at the universities of Utrecht, Leiden, Groningen and Amsterdam. The *duplex ordo* system is known for the distinction it makes between scientific disciplines and church subjects in theological studies.
- (iv) *Theology 1930-1970* – In this section the attention is drawn to the status of theological science and theological studies in the Dutch culture from 1930 to 1970, and also to new questions and developments in theology.

The book is important and recommended for the understanding of Dutch *Reformed* theology in the 20th century, and is certainly a valuable contribution. Van Ruler was indeed one of the great Dutch theologians of the 20th century.



Afrikaanse omsetting: Piet Venter, Johann Symington & Amie van Wyk 2007 – *Augustinus – Belydenisse: Getuigenis oor ’n lewe in God*

Uitgewer: Lux Verbi. 475 Bladsye. Prys R139.95.

Resensent: Ds C E C Hertzog (Middelburg)

Augustinus is een van die bekendste kerkvaders en sy *Belydenisse* een van die klassieke werke in die Christelike tradisie. Dit word onder andere duidelik uit die feit dat geen kerkvader so dikwels deur Calvyn aangehaal word as Augustinus nie. En dit bykans 1200 jaar nadat die werk voltooi is! Geen wonder dat Noordmansk gesê het dat elke teologiese student die werk ten minste drie keer behoort te lees nie. Danksy ’n vertaling met die medewerking van Piet Venter, Johann Symington en Amie van Wyk is hierdie geestelike besinning nou in Afrikaans beskikbaar.

Augustinus vertel van sy eg persoonlike soeke na die waarheid sedert sy kinderdae. Alhoewel dit mag lyk of die verhaal ’n outobiografie kan wees bevat dit veel meer as ’n lewenskets. Op die agteromslag van die hardebandboek word Augustinus se soeke soos volg verduidelik:

Augustinus se *Belydenisse* is eintlik 'n reis, 'n soekende hart se ekspidisie tot in die hart van die lewende en genadige God. Dit is meer as 'n lewensverhaal; dit is 'n intieme leesavontuur, een lang gesprek met die God wat na jou uitreik en jou omvorm ... Aangrypend en openhartig vleg hierdie groot kerkvader uit Afrika die vertelling oor sy onstuimige lewensloop meesterlik ineen met kernsake van ons algemene geloof.

Die werk bestaan uit dertien boeke. Die eerste tien boeke begin deur te vertel van Augustinus se stormagtige kinder- en studentedae in Noord-Afrika (361 nC tot 383 nC). In hierdie tyd bestudeer hy Aristoteles en maak hy nader kennis met die Manicheërs wat aanvanklik 'n groot invloed op hom uitoefen, maar van wie hy hom later distansieer. Dit vertel ook van sy ontvlugting van sy moeder, Monica, en sy daaropvolgende omswerwinge in Europa waar hy onder andere as dosent in retoriek in beide Rome en Milaan onderrig gee. Hy vertel op aangrypende wyse van sy bekering in Augustus 386 nC en van sy moeder se sterwe in 387 nC nadat hy met haar versoen is. Kort na hierdie gebeure keer hy terug na Noord-Afrika waar hy as biskop gewy word en die res van sy lewe deurbring tot sy dood in 430 nC.

Die laaste drie boeke bestaan uit 'n allegoriese uitleg van die skeppingsverhaal in Genesis met heelwat minder biografiese gegewens. Hy weerlê dwalings oor wat God vóór die skepping sou gedoen het en ondersoek indringend die raaisel van tyd.

Hierdie Afrikaanse weergawe bied veel meer aan die leser as bloot 'n vertaling van Augustinus se *Confessiones*. Na die inhoudsopgawe volg 'n insiggewende tydlyn van belangrike datums en plekke wat 'n waardevolle hulpmiddel vir die leser is. Amie van Wyk bied daarna in vyf bladsye 'n net so insiggewende voorwoord wat bestaan uit 'n bekendstelling van Augustinus, 'n uiteensetting van sy nalatenskap en 'n kort verduideliking van sy betekenis vir vandag. In die dertien boeke is daar talle voetnote wat die teks verder vir die leser oopbreek deur óf na ander tekste te verwys óf kort verduidelikings oor die inhoud van die gedeelte te verskaf. Na die boeke volg 'n bylae met 'n indeks van Bybelgedeeltes en 'n bronnelys wat bedoel is as wegwysers vir studente en belangstellendes wat meer oor Augustinus wil nalees.

Onder die redakteurskap van Claude Vosloo is daarin geslaag om hierdie greep uit die denke van Augustinus in 'n lesersvriendelike Afrikaans toeganklik te maak vir die leser. Ek beveel graag hierdie publikasie aan vir beide hulle wat 'n ernstige teologiese studie onderneem en hulle wat geïnteresseerd is in die eg persoonlike belydenis van 'n gelowige sondaar wat rus vind in 'n genadige God. Die *Belydenisse* sal elkeen aanspreek wat dit lees.



Vos, Cas & Human, Dirk (reds) 2007 – *Liefde is die grootste: Oor erotiek en seksualiteit*

Uitgewer: Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria. 434 bladsye. Prys: Onbekend.

Resensent: Prof Dr P M Venter (Universiteit van Pretoria)

Menslike seksualiteit is 'n saak waaroor daar nooit klaar gepraat kom nie. Dit is egter die verdingliking van seksualiteit en die aanwending daarvan as verhandelbare kommoditeit wat teenreaksie uitlok. Seksualiteit het met die hele mens te doen. Dit is nie iets wat hy "het" nie, maar iets wat deel is van sy menswees. Om daaroor te praat, is om na te dink oor wat dit beteken om mens binne die totaliteit van die werklikheid te wees. En dit is die deurlopende tema in hierdie publikasie. 'n Totaal van 27 bydraes is hier versamel wat na seksualiteit en erotiek vanuit bykans elke denkbare hoek kyk.

Die bydraers sluit bekende name vanuit veral die teologiese wêreld in, maar dan ook vanuit die Afrikaanse letterkunde, die beeldende kunste, die sielkunde, die regsweese en die biologiese wetenskap. Dit is uit hierdie potpourri – of feesmaal met verskillende kokke, soos die redakteurs dit in hulle voorwoord noem – duidelik dat seksualiteit gesien word as iets wat binne 'n baie breë perspektief en 'n holistiese konteks verstaan moet word. Die bydraes is dan ook in nege kategorië ingedeel: Antieke wêreld(e), Bybelse perspektiewe, Poëtiese stemme en 'n kortverhaal, Kuns, Lewenstyl, Lewe en denke, Geloof en lewe, Reg en erotiek, Liggaam en gene. Alhoewel daar begrip is vir die problematiek om so 'n wye spektrum van bydraes byeen te bring in een bundel, is dit tog 'n vraag of bydraes altyd in die beste kategorie geplaas is. So, byvoorbeeld, sou die bydrae van Daniël Veldsman oor estetiek en erotiek veel beter in die kategorie Kuns gepas het waar dit juis gaan oor die verhouding tussen kuns en erotiek binne die raamwerk van menslike kommunikasie. Jurie le Roux se bydrae wat hoofsaaklik oor die boek Prediker, gaan sou beter inpas by die kategorie Bybelse perspektiewe.

Die meeste bydraes kom uit teologiese kringe, juis omdat die kerk tans gekonfronteer word met sake soos die huwelik en homoseksualiteit – waarvoor daar 'n lang uitstaande rekening teen die kerk se naam staan. In die afdeling Antieke wêreld(e) (bls 15-88) gee die bydraes aandag aan die antieke sosio-kulturele wêreld waaruit die Bybel kom. Dit is die gebiede van die ou Nabye-Ooste en die Mediterreense wêreld. Vanuit literêre, ikonografiese en argeologiese navorsing word aangetoon dat ons hier met 'n antropologie en gevolglik seksuele beskouings te doen het wat sterk verskil van die van die huidige Westerse wêreld.

Die bydraes in die afdeling oor Bybelse perspektiewe (bls 89-204) hanteer materiaal uit beide Ou en Nuwe Testament. Literêre-sosiale studies word hier aangebied oor gedeeltes soos Hooglied en Romeine 1:26-28. Die sosiale aspekte van seksualiteit soos homoseksualiteit, vrouwees in die antieke wêreld en die huwelik, kom ook hier ter sprake. 'n Tema wat hier na vore kom is dat seksualiteit in die antieke wêreld gesien is as inherente deel van menswees wat vanuit 'n etiek van verantwoordlikheid geleef moes word. 'n Ander tema wat by die meeste teologiese bydraes in die hele bundel voorkom, is die dringende behoefte dat die kerk sal moet herbesin oor sy tradisionele standpunte oor seksualiteit vanuit 'n baie meer genuanseerde Skrifondersoek as wat tot hier toe die geval was.

In die afdeling Poëtiese stemme en 'n kortverhaal (bls 205-239) kom bydraes voor van bekende skrywers, digters en letterkundiges soos Joan Hambidge, Daniel Hugo, Cas Vos en H J C Pieterse. Vanuit literêre kritiek skryf Hambidge oor die verkenning van die geslagtelike in die letterkunde, veral op die terrein van die lesbiese en homoseksuele. Hugo skryf oor die gebruik van landskapstonele in die letterkunde as uitbeelding van erotiek. Vos lewer sy poëtiese-georiënteerde hooglied oor die liefde. Pieterse se Afdruk is 'n bondige kortverhaal in die eerste persoon oor liefde en die teleurstellings wat dit bring.

In twee interessante bydraes onder die opskrif Kuns (bls 242-259) word aangetoon hoe erotiek in die kunste gebruik word, veral hoe in die handelswêreld erotiek in die advertensiewese uitgehol word en van sy wesenlike kenmerk van verwagting beroof word. Daaraan verwant is die bydraes onder Lewenstyl (bls 262-328) wat, soos reeds aangedui, bydraes bevat wat eerder onder 'n ander rubriek tuishoort. Een van die twee vertaalde artikels in die bundel wat deur buitelanders geskryf is (Eckart Otto en hier Michael P Haspel), kom in hierdie afdeling voor. Wat veral in die bydraes van hierdie afdeling opval, is die pleidooi dat die Christelike etiek holisties en multi-dissiplinêr sal moet nadink oor seksualiteit en sy verskillende vorms in die maatskappy. Ook in sy nadenke oor die fenomeen homoseksualiteit sal die kerk baie meer pastoraal en omvattend moet dink. Erotiek moet as verlengstuk van spiritualiteit hanteer word en nie as die teenstander daarvan nie. In die artikel van A van Niekerk word die kern van die bundel myns insiens saamgevat wanneer hy pleit vir 'n verandering en 'n "bereidheid van kerklike kant om mense se huidige seksuele behoeftes te begryp, 'n herwaardering van die seksuele realisme van die Bybel, 'n hersiening van ons Godsverstaan en 'n nouer verbinding tussen seksuele en Godservaring" (bl 321).

Die rol van sielkunde in die verstaan van menslike seksualiteit kom ter sprake in die afdeling oor Lewe en denke (bls 329-369). Daar word nie net gewys op die noodsaaklikheid om seksualiteit binne 'n breër humane raamwerk te sien nie, maar ook aandag te gee aan die talle aspekte wat wesenlik deel uitmaak van geslagtelike verhoudings. Die enkele bydrae onder Geloof en lewe (bls 371-381) bepleit 'n narratiewe pastorale benadering tot seksualiteit wat nóg wetties nóg vrysinnig daarmee omgaan, maar eerder klem lê op die kwaliteit daarvan in menslike verhoudings. Die regspektief kom ter sprake in die afdeling Reg en erotiek (bls 383-394). Die probleme wat ondervind word in die regswese onder 'n nuwe grondwet met sake soos pornografie en erotiek word hier in regsterme bespreek.

Die laaste afdeling oor Liggaam en gene (bls 395-434) bevat twee bydraes, die een vanuit die mediese wêreld oor die biologie van menslike seksualiteit en die ander vanuit eko-teologiese perspektief wat oor die rol van gene en menslike gedrag handel.

Die bundel met sy omvattende benadering tot seksualiteit en erotiek bevat artikels wat wissel vanaf populêre benaderings tot redelik ingewikkelde beredenerings. Die teikenlesers sal dus nie 'n homogene groep wees nie, maar persone wat veral teologies in die onderwerp van seksualiteit geïnteresseerd is. Afhangende van die kompetensie van die leser sal sy/haar waardering dus van bydrae tot bydrae wissel. Elke bydrae bevat ook 'n uitvoerige bibliografie. Die bundel is voorsien van 'n lys van skrywers wat hulle affiliasies volledig aangee.

Drukfoute en spelfoute kom uiters selde voor (net sowat vyf in die hele bundel). Die drukwerk is keurig versorg en die slapband omslag kleurryk versier. Die bindwerk is van hoë gehalte.

In die lig van die aktualiteit van die tema van die boek en sy tydigheid, die hoë vlak van die bydraes wat opgeneem is en die keurige openlikheid en omvattendheid waarmee die saak hanteer word, word hierdie publikasie van harte by die breë publiek aanbeveel.

