



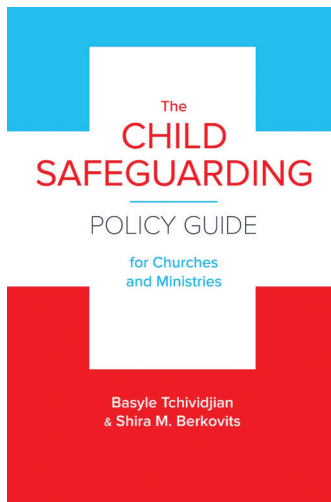
# Book Reviews

## July 2018

Section Editors: Craig Nesson, Ralph Klein, Troy Troftgruben

### Review a book!

*Currents in Theology and Mission* is seeking to expand its number of regular book reviewers. If you have interest, please send name, contact information, and areas of primary interest to [currents@lstc.edu](mailto:currents@lstc.edu).



*The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries.* By Basyle Tchividjian and Shira M. Berkovits. Greensboro, N.C.: New Growth Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-9452-7005-5. 310 pages. Paper. \$29.99.

This book serves as the state of the art comprehensive guide for congregations in designing and implementing effective child protection policies. The authors bring impeccable credentials to this project. Tchividjian is a former child-abuse prosecutor who currently teaches Child Abuse and the Law among other courses at Liberty University School of Law, while Berkovits is founder and CEO of Sacred Spaces, a cross-denominational initiative to create systemic solutions to abuse in communal institutions. Together they have crafted a book that articulates both the reasons why such policies are imperative and specific directions for congregations to develop and enforce policies that are proven in protecting children from victimization.

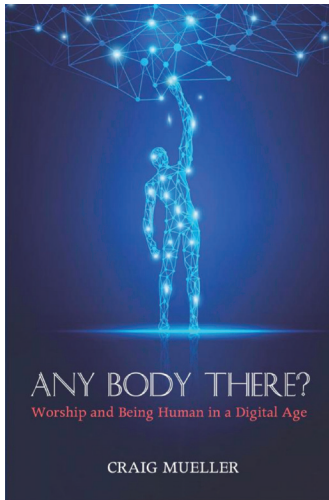
The authors define abuse in the first chapter to include: sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and spiritual abuse. Regarding sexual abuse, they delineate both contact behavior and non-contact behavior. They offer the following staggering statistics: 1) “Sixty-seven percent of all sexual abuse reported to law enforcement in the United States each year is perpetrated against children.” 2) “However, the ACE [Adverse Childhood Experiences] study estimated that approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men were sexually abused before the age of eighteen” (12). The reality of child spiritual abuse is often overlooked, which “under the guise of religion” involves harassment or humiliation and possibly results in psychological trauma or spiritual injuries” (16).

The chapters of the book provide both rationale for and practical guidance on the following topics: indicators of abuse, impact of abuse, people who sexually abuse children, screening, safe behaviors, routine protective measures, policy violations, limited access agreements, reporting, independent reviews, abuse disclosures, ongoing survivor support, training/dissemination, and evaluating/updating the policy. The authors insist on policies that are thoroughgoing and enforceable, in contrast to many existing policies that may be on the books but are not followed consequentially. Not only does the book instruct on best protective practices but on how to respond to policy violations and support survivors.

Most important is not just “having” but actually “living” the policy. For this reason, each chapter includes a “Policy Worksheet” to guide and direct congregational leaders step by step in designing a comprehensive policy that addresses its own circumstances. The book concludes with three appendices, also for practical use: 1) Forming a Committee, 2) Sample Forms (Teen Application for a Staff or Volunteer Position, Sample Adult Application, Policy Exception Request Form, Notification Form: Necessary Deviation from Policy, Sample Child Safety Incident Report, Sample Summary of Incident Reports, Sample Parent Evaluation of Child Safety in the Church, Sample Cover Letter for Child’s Safety Evaluation Form, Sample Child’s Evaluation of Child Safety in the Church, Sample Youth Leader Evaluation Form, Quarterly Review: Limited Access Agreements, Sample Committee’s Evaluation of Child Safety in the Church) and 3) Empowering Children. By listing these topics, one can see how vital it is to implement policies that are specific regarding the issues that congregations need to consider to be effective.

The consequences for individuals violated through abuse as children last a lifetime. These include physical, emotional, psychological, communal, and spiritual effects. Congregations have for too long been vulnerable by providing ready access to people who sexually abuse children. Congregational leaders need to take seriously the instruction provided by this book to safeguard each child of God from abuse.

Craig L. Nesson  
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***Any Body There? Worship and Being Human in a Digital Age.*** By Craig Mueller. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-5326-1916-8. vii & 136 pages. Paper. \$19.98.

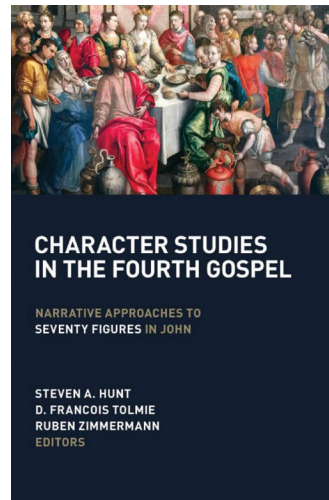
**I**s anybody there? Is any *body* there? The first question points to the contemporary landscape of organized reli-

gious practice, the second to a pernicious aspect of digital culture. Pastor Mueller notes two societal trends: a steady decline in church participation, and a simultaneous increase in the use of digital technologies that promote disembodiment and individualism. He proposes that participation in an incarnational, sacramental spirituality grounded in corporate worship enhances our being in the present moment, reconnects us with our bodies and the earth, and gives us a clear sense of mission in our everyday lives.

Mueller organizes each of the ten chapters around a theme from technology that defines our lives. By interweaving biblical and theological insights with personal stories and examples of technology's impact on daily life, he helpfully clarifies what is at stake when God's people gather for worship; the way we worship fundamentally frames our experience of ourselves, other people, and the earth. Readers should note that Mueller is not prescribing a *style* of worship (in the sense of the tired "traditional/contemporary" dichotomy); rather, he is advocating that Christian faith is experienced most fully through worship that emphasizes the theological significance of the body (both individual and corporate) by intentionally engaging all five senses. When the gospel of Christ's crucified and resurrected body is proclaimed and the sacraments of baptism and eucharist are celebrated in all their bodily dimensions, we are *there*, and even more significantly, *God* is there. We are present to the God who is in, with, and under the joys and sorrows of our own bodies, and we are sent by God to tend to the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors through our vocations.

I am grateful for Mueller's wisdom on the inextricable link between worship and mission, and I suspect that many pastors and lay people will feel the same. At a time when many congregations are wondering what their mission should be, Mueller reminds us that we can answer this question only by returning to the source of our faith: an embodied encounter with the living God, who took on human form and gave his body for ours.

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Redeemer Lutheran Church  
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***Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John.*** Edited by Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7392-7. xxii & 724 pages. Paper. \$60.00.

**W**ith the help of an international team of over forty contributors, Hunt, Tolmie, and Zimmermann have done an exceptional job of fulfilling the stated purpose of this volume—namely, “to offer a comprehensive narrative-critical study of nearly every character Jesus (or, in some cases, only the reader) encounters in the narrative world of the Fourth Gospel [emphasizing] a literary approach to the matter, in particular from the viewpoint of characterization as it is generally understood” (xi). Addressing approximately seventy characters and character groups from a range of methodological perspectives, the contributors have produced a book that far exceeds the sum of its parts. Moreover, in addition to the essays themselves, readers will find an immensely helpful Table of Characters that extends for twelve pages, and three indices covering references, modern authors, and subjects. There is no way to do justice to the sixty-two chapters that make up the volume in the space allotted to this review, so I will limit my remarks to two editorial decisions that pertain to the book's framing and content.

The extensive review of the literature on characterization that functions as the book's Introduction offers a treasure trove of material for contextualizing the essays that follow. Nevertheless, at points it feels somewhat arbitrary. It is not always clear why a particular study warrants inclusion. Some reflect substantive shifts in perspective, while others are little more than a rehashing of longstanding ideas and approaches. Furthermore, studies are only briefly summarized rather than critiqued or assessed. Moreover, they are categorized generally by topic and then treated chronologically. This is helpful as far as it goes, but I think readers would have benefited from some identification and analysis of key trends in the scholarship. For example, among the studies that the editors chose to survey, there seems to be a tendency toward increasingly emphasizing minor characters, a heightened awareness of ambiguity and complexity, and recurring questions concerning the relationship both of narrative to history and of characters to persons.

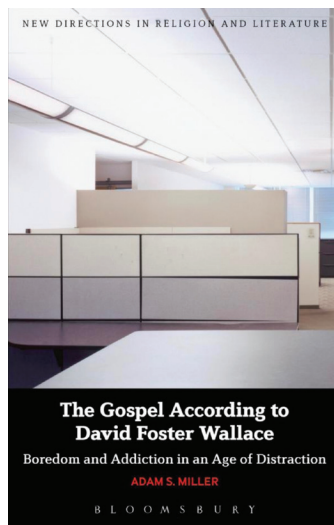
The editors' rationale for methodological variety in relation to the characteristic “openness” of John's gospel, coupled with



their rationale for excluding the figure of Jesus (along with “God/Father,” “the Holy Spirit/Paraclete,” non-human “characters,” “Scripture,” and some others), is intriguing. Although convincing, I would have been very interested, nonetheless, to read a concluding essay written precisely from the standpoint that the character of John’s Jesus, like the Fourth Gospel itself, resists efforts to circumscribe and name precisely. Such an essay may have incorporated one or more of the theoretical perspectives that are not well represented in the volume (e.g., poststructuralism). Despite the plethora of descriptors attached to him, there is a fundamental elusiveness to the character of Jesus in John. The play of denotations and connotations throughout the gospel, and the manner in which the characterization of Jesus takes shape in and through the intersections of other characters in the story, seem to create a sort of absented character that exists in a negative space. A chapter attempting to decipher precisely what *kind* of character John’s Jesus is, especially in relation to the characterological analyses of the other essays, might have illustrated some of the potential this volume as a whole has to advance New Testament narrative criticism beyond where it is presently.

*Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel* is unlike any other resource presently available to those interested in narrative analysis of characters and characterization. Given its breadth, the accessibility of the individual essays, and the wealth of footnotes, it will prove equally valuable to scholars, students, and serious readers alike.

Scott S. Elliott  
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***The Gospel According to David Foster Wallace: Boredom and Addiction in an Age of Distraction.*** By Adam S. Miller. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4742-3697-3. xiv & 119 pages. Paper. \$29.95.

This is a smart book about the theological implications of a brilliant literary figure,

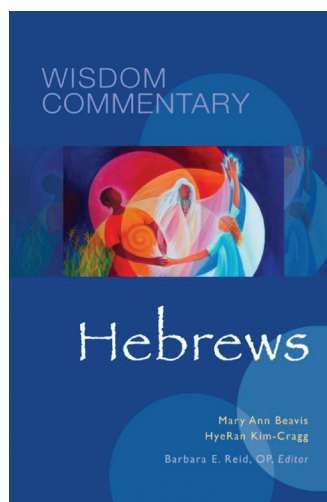
David Foster Wallace. Organized into thirty concise chapters with an Afterword, this treatment could serve either as an introduction to the fiction and essays of Foster Wallace or, for those already initiated, an incisive analysis of his central themes freighted with theological import. Each chapter dissects a slice of Foster Wallace’s output: Books, Heads, Maps, Addiction, Desire, Watching, Masks, Boredom, Bodies, Prayer, Clichés, Epiphany, etc. For those desiring an exposure to the person whose thought

is here mined, I suggest viewing the YouTube of his Kenyon College commencement address, “This is Water”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CrOL-ydFMI>. A better analysis of the human condition in contemporary parlance would be hard to find.

The fundamental human problem is the kind of mind that belongs to us and the alienation of this mind from the human body grounded in this physical, material world. In this regard Foster Wallace hearkens back to the novels and essays of Walker Percy, who is his forebear in analyzing what is amiss in the contemporary world. Miller comments: “Even if you disavow religion . . . altogether, you can’t avoid worship. The impulse to worship is a human problem, not a religious problem” (xi). Especially in his masterwork, *Infinite Jest*, and the novel unfinished at his suicide, *The Pale King*, Foster Wallace portrays the estrangement of human beings from embodied creatureliness through archetypal characters who each portray the struggle to be, or not to be, with their heads embattled by addiction, ambition, distraction, tedium, and, especially in our era, irony.

Taking umbrage with interpretations of Foster Wallace that disparage his work as nihilistic (Dreyfus and Kelly, *All Things Shining*), Miller contends that the central insight is that of surrender—surrender that involves a “saturating intuition” and leads to the gift of “paying attention” to the world other-wise. “This moment when it looks like your worship has failed is the religious moment. This is the revelation. This moment allows the aiming itself to appear. And it is in the aiming *itself*, not in the object aimed at, that God is most clearly manifest. This is the epiphany” (xii–xiii). Not a book for the faint of heart but for those who choose to enter into the contemporary abyss in the hope of enlightenment.

Craig L. Nesson  
Wartburg Theological Seminary



***Hebrews.*** By Mary Ann Beavis and HyeRan Kim-Cragg. Wisdom Commentary Series 54. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8146-8204-3. xciii & 238 pages. Paper. \$39.95.

The Wisdom commentary series is like no other. Seeking to provide the first full-scale feminist commentary on every book of the Bible, it unites diverse voices to elucidate the history of the text and its impact through the lens of Wisdom, which aims at “justice and well-being for everyone and everything” (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Forward,” xiii)—or,



in other words, “a deepening of faith, with the Bible serving as an aid to bring the flourishing of life” (Barbara E. Reid, O.P., “Editor’s Introduction,” xxxii). The Hebrews volume is the first New Testament book to appear in the series. Co-authored by a Canadian New Testament professor (Beavis) and a Korean-Canadian Pastoral Studies professor (Kim-Cragg), it notices the connections between Hebrews and Jewish wisdom literature in order to “excavate the sophialogy of Hebrews” (xxxix). Two Filapina scholars (Ibita), a Jewish rabbi (Lewis), a Presbyterian New Testament scholar (Calvert-Koyzis), and a First Nations poet (Annharte) also join in to comment on the text itself or the topics it raises.

After an extensive introduction of the contributors and their methodologies, Calvert-Koyzis traces the typical background questions and possible answers for the anonymous “Epistle to the Hebrews.” It provides an adequate introduction to the various options even as it occasionally offers unique suggestions, such as a preference for a “collective authorship” based on the practice of multiple writers that contributed to ancient writings. The introduction also briefly introduces the major interrelated themes of the book joined to the central theme (in their opinion) of faith. It closes with a few examples of proto-feminist readings of Hebrews in the history of interpretations. Few exist, but it is Hebrews’ quality as a marginalized text that makes it an ideal candidate for consideration by feminist and post-colonial interpreters.

Expositions of several particular texts provide a window into the nature of this unique commentary. Concerning the prologue of Heb 1:1–4, the authors focus upon the homiletical nature and possible impact of these poetic words, a fresh approach often ignored or marginalized in a textually focused discipline. Readers should be aware, however, that the authors are willing to be critical about the text. For example, they see Hebrews’ statement of Christ’s comprehensive inheritance as problematic and colonial which “justifies the imposition of a single perspective on other nations and other religions” (4).

In the treatment of chapters 8–10, an essay on blood, sacrifice, atonement, and ritual, Kim-Cragg draws out implications for these central themes for ecology and women, focusing upon the work of theologians and a German-Indian poet. Finally, the diversity of voices, even their disagreement, is on display in the analysis of *paideia*—education. Beavis highlights the place of women in the field of education, even if it was dominated by men, whereas Kim-Cragg, following the teaching of Jesus who “would teach us to transgress unjust legal systems,” urges interpreters to use the hermeneutic of suspicion to challenge Hebrews’ calls to submit to God’s fatherly discipline.

Students of Hebrews would do well to have this book on their shelves. It listens to the sermon in diverse and fresh ways. Its breadth leaves the reader longing for more depth in many places, but a groundbreaking text like this perhaps serves only as an invitation to the dialogue. Readers are called to the interpretive circle to build upon and even disagree with these interpretations in a common effort to gain Wisdom—defined by these volumes

as practical insight and relationship with the divine—from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Amy L. Peeler  
Wheaton College



***Kierkegaard: A Single Life.*** By Stephen Backhouse. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-3105-2088-7. 310 pages. Cloth. \$24.99.

Kierkegaard (SK) haunts contemporary theology. “Kierkegaard is hardly a household name, yet his fingerprints are everywhere” (206). Even as SK intensified

the turn to existentialist reflection beginning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries among authors including Ibsen, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Kafka, and Arendt, so also he transformed the nature of theological discourse among Christian writers such as Barth, Bonhoeffer, Tillich, and Merton. Martin Luther King Jr. reflected the influence of SK’s concern in his Nobel lecture when he said: “Our problem today is that we have allowed the internal to become lost in the external. We have allowed the means by which we live to outdistance the ends for which we live” (202). Chapter 10, “A Life Continued,” sketches the reach and influence of SK’s thought from the time of his own life (1813–1855) to the present.

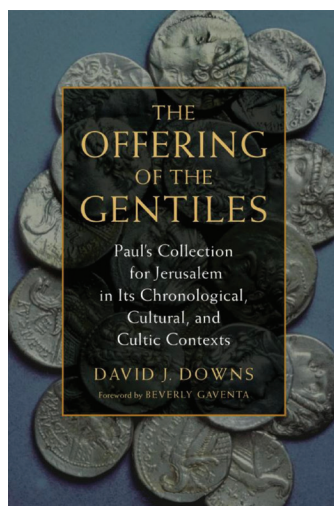
This book is a concise, reliable, and thoughtful introduction to the milieu of things SK. The narrative of this biography weaves together his complex, lifelong commitment to the beloved woman, Regine, whom out of devotion and respect he chose not to marry; the looming influence of his father and disjointed relationships with family and friends; his writings, which include many pseudonymous works, with insights into his authorial strategies; and his prophetic critique of the institutional church in Denmark toward the end of his life, the so-called “Attack on Christendom.” Although an impossible task, Backhouse devotes more than fifty pages to concise summaries of all SK’s books. This is a particular gift to those either new to his corpus or overwhelmed with the bulk of his works, in order to discover entry points for reading SK’s own writings.

Scholars of SK in the U.S., like Walter Lowrie, David Swenson, and Edna and Howard Hong, have contributed to the knowledge, translation, and collection of the SK literary legacy that has made a comprehensive collection of his works available to grateful English readers. At the heart of SK’s concern is that each of us stands in the presence of the living God and each one



is called to attend to the voice of the living Jesus Christ. Where the church has obscured the existential urgency of heeding the ultimate in deference to penultimate matters, SK raises an alarm. “Kierkegaard’s thoughts need to be encountered, one by one, person by person, or they are not encountered at all. His insistence on authentic existence is simply stated.... As long as people continue to live and move and have their being in habitual ideas of their own creation, Kierkegaard will continue to upbuild and provoke wherever he is encountered by the Single One” (207). SK remains a seminal figure now for our time.

Craig L. Nesson  
Wartburg Theological Seminary



***The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts.*** By David J. Downs. Foreword by Beverly Roberts Gaventa. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7313-2. xviii & 204 pages. Paper. \$35.00.

While for years at a time the collection Paul took among his Gentile congregations for the Jewish-Christian mother church in Jerusalem has sat barely simmering on the back-burner of Pauline theological stoves, every so often a scholar turns up the heat and discovers new and unexpected insights. David Downs' 2007 Princeton dissertation, originally printed in 2008 and republished in 2016, does just that. Provocative, well-researched, and clearly written, the book argues that the collection was much more than a practical aside. Rather, it was an important theological statement in and of itself, a perspective that could be very helpful in parish settings today.

Downs moves away from two long-term explanations of the collection. First, he argues that the fund mentioned in Galatians 2:10 is different from and earlier than the collection known from 1-2 Corinthians and Romans. Part of Downs' reasoning is that he does not identify the later collection as based on the kind of obligation found in Galatians 2:10, and Paul's concern that the collection might be rejected (Rom 15:31) makes no sense if, in fact, the collection was the result of an agreement between Paul and the Jerusalem leaders. Second, he denies that the collection is properly viewed as the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem.

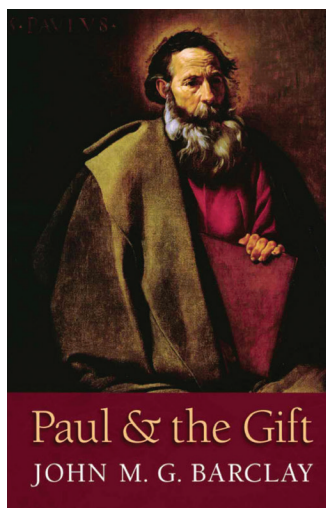
In developing his positions Downs adds many ingredients to the recipe needed to comprehend the collection. One addi-

tion is a chapter that relates the collection to research done on Graeco-Roman associations and Jewish synagogues. A second ingredient Downs adds to the Pauline pot is a chapter that views the collection as a cultic act of worship within which material relief was given.

There are four points where, I think, the seasoning in Downs' recipe could be more precise. First, by failing to look at the understanding of reciprocity within the context of the fictive family of the Pauline churches, Downs understands obligation as more of an external "must" than an internal attitude of giving that does not keep score. Second, he could well investigate how the cultic framework he suggests might fit with the eschatological pilgrimage interpretation, which he rejects. Third, to make his point that Paul was involved in two collections Downs ironically, given his dismissal of Acts as a source for Paul, relies on Acts 11:27-30 for evidence of the first collection. It is not possible to keep salt out of the recipe and put it in at the same time! Fourth, he argues that Paul's anxiety about how the Jerusalem leaders would accept the offering makes no sense if they had asked for it. Response: the Jerusalem leaders had, in fact, not lived up to the agreement outlined in Galatians 2:1-10 (see Galatians 2:11-14 and the Judaizers in Galatia). The collection was a challenge to them to live according to the agreement, a challenge they may not have welcomed.

I learned from Downs many new ways to flavor my understanding of Paul's collection/s. The work merits a revised edition that would dialogue with his reviewers and deepen his application of cultural anthropology to a topic on which his work is now the benchmark study.

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Trinity Lutheran Seminary



***Paul and the Gift.*** By John M. G. Barclay. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6889-3. xvi & 656 pages. Cloth. \$70.00.

The last two generations of scholarship in Pauline theology have demonstrated that Paul's preoccupation with divine grace was not a Christian innovation. Second Temple Judaism understood itself and Jewish election as rooted in a gracious God. Paul's Christ-centered theology thus had much more in common with ancient Jewish beliefs than the Christian church has recognized through-



out most of its history. *Paul and the Gift*, a masterful book, now sharpens our vision, providing invaluable nuance to our understanding of Paul's context and where he fit within ancient Jewish discourse about grace. John Barclay demonstrates that during Paul's era there were a variety of Jewish perspectives on grace and on whether divine benevolence toward people should be viewed as an appropriate reward or as a benefit that was "incongruous" in light of its recipients' worthlessness or sinfulness. When Barclay considers Paul's writings in light of those ancient debates, he directs readers to the apostle's distinctive ways of understanding God's incongruous grace in Christ as the impetus for newfound "obedience" among the Christian communities Paul founded. This obedience corresponds to believers' "new allegiance" (492) to God. Such obedience includes conduct that expresses new norms and thus "subverts pre-constituted systems of worth" (6).

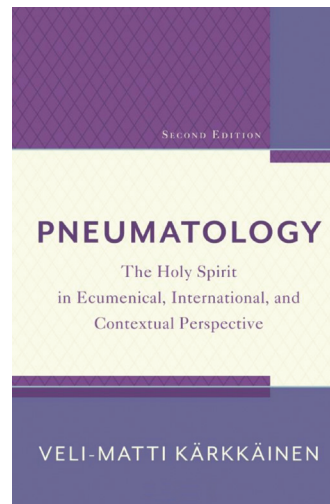
Barclay's arguments demand close attention, but his engaging prose makes that work easier. The book examines gift-giving from anthropological, theological, and historical perspectives; more than half of the pages explore how grace has been understood according to anthropological methodologies, by major Christian thinkers, and in selected Jewish writings from the Second Temple period. Once Barclay has established that Paul's teachings on grace must be evaluated in connection to ancient Jewish conversations that involved a variety of opinions, the book turns to examine the depiction of Christ as God's gracious gift in Galatians and Romans. As Barclay sees it, Paul's interest does not gravitate around a general idea of God's characteristic benevolence but around the particular event of Christ's death and resurrection. Paul describes God's grace in Christ as utterly incongruous—meaning that it operates according to a "shocking lack of match with the worth of its beneficiaries, in ethnic, cognitive, moral, or other terms" (446). But the incongruity does not mean that Paul and his letters' audiences understood the divine gift as one that lacked any expectation for recipients to provide some kind of offering in return (for the idea of an *entirely* unreciprocated "gift" was unfamiliar to Paul and his ancient contemporaries). The gift of Christ transforms reality and thus creates communities that live out, as a kind of obligatory response, their "newness of life" (Rom 6:4) as a new culture informed by new norms.

The greatest strength of *Paul and the Gift* is its survey of ancient attitudes about gifts and divine grace. The treatment of Galatians and Romans whets without fully satisfying the appetite. But that is due to the complexity of those epistles and their interpretive history. Barclay has written a book that will be prominent in conversations about Paul and his writings for generations to come. Fortunately, he promises more publications devoted to fuller discussions of these topics—additional sustenance is on its way.

Barclay's target audience is mostly scholars, but a wider audience will find his insights and erudition a welcome and rewarding gift. This book is no esoteric tour through ancient notions of gifts, divine graciousness, and reciprocity. Barclay knows well

that a sharper understanding of Pauline theology has vital implications for the gospel articulated in congregational ministry. He notes in his conclusion that in our current contexts "churches now find themselves needing to rediscover their social, political and cultural identity" (573). A deeper and nuanced appreciation of Paul's theology of grace can help with that task, for it will give churches paralyzed by their cultural trappings "resources for the dissolution of pre-formed assumptions and for the constructing of boundary-erasing communities" (573). Pauline theology is hardly done with us yet.

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***Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective.***

By Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9946-5. viii & 199 pages. Paper. \$26.00.

As the title suggests, this book is a survey of various perspective and approaches to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and, as such, it is more descriptive rather than constructive in nature. This does not mean that the author does not offer his own views, but that, when he does, it is mostly in passing.

The first chapter gives a helpful survey of the place of the Holy Spirit in contemporary theology, which sets the stage for the remainder of the book. The second chapter explores biblical perspectives on the Holy Spirit, treating imagery connected with the Spirit in biblical literature, the Spirit in the Old and New Testaments, offering, in turn, some theological implications of the biblical data. The third chapter surveys in some detail developments regarding the Holy Spirit in the patristic era. The chapter of greatest length, the fourth, covers a vast terrain, moving from the medieval period to the modern, touching on Western and Eastern articulations of the Holy Spirit, the filioque debate, the views of John Calvin and Martin Luther, as well as the Holy Spirit in modern liberalism and Neo-Calvinism, to name a few.

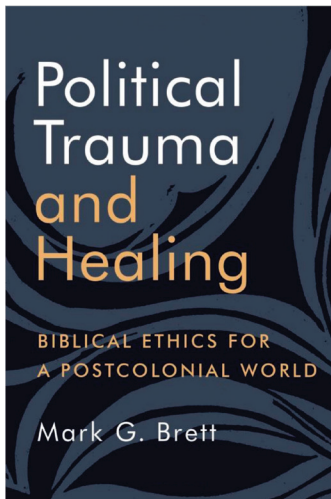
The two subsequent chapters move from historical survey to a survey of the contemporary theological landscape. The first of these gives attention to twentieth and twenty-first century engagements with pneumatology, which includes a decisive turn toward the same. The second of these is a fascinating look at approaches to the Holy Spirit from contextual (e.g., feminist,



liberation) and global perspectives (Africa, Asia). The global perspective, along with the seventh chapter of the book, which details pneumatology in other religions (this is perhaps the most unique contribution of the volume), is what sets this edition apart from the first edition. Kärkkäinen then ends his survey with an epilogue that amounts to a call to fresh engagement of the Holy Spirit.

It is without question that the author is very widely read in theological literature, which his survey so clearly demonstrates; and, with this, he has the remarkable ability to clearly summarize differing and complex periods and perspectives of study. Yet, as with any survey, there are limitations. A pastor or Christian educator should not approach this text hoping to have an in-depth understanding of the Bible's teaching on the Holy Spirit or that of the Fathers or modern theologians. Rather, even with its relative depth and complexity at points, further depth in any of the areas covered would require this book to be supplemented by others that treat the area or period under question. To conclude, this book would be most helpful for the pastor or Christian educator who needs the breadth it provides to bring balance or perspective to works of more depth in the study of pneumatology.

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***Political Trauma and Healing.*** By Mark G. Brett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7307-1. xviii & 248 pages. Paper. \$28.00.

**P***olitical Trauma and Healing: Biblical Ethics for a Postcolonial World* is Mark Brett's masterful contribution to ways biblical scholars, activists, pastors, and others

can learn from sophisticated political theory and sound biblical scholarship, can engage contemporary political and ethical topics (immigrant rights, land ownership and heritage, indigenous rights, ecology), and can bring forth to the public square religious arguments (biblical imaginaries in the politics) and practices of restorative and redemptive justice (for instance, how Christian communities can circumvent the nation-state boundaries and the one-directional flow of wealth imposed by Western Capitalism by participating in and creating alternative models such as fair trade).

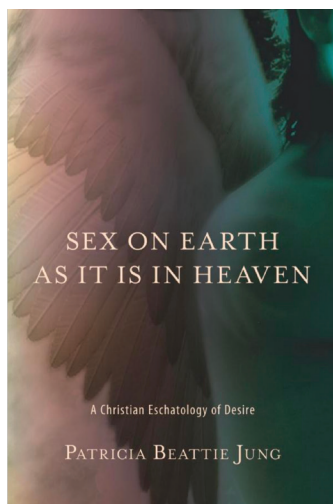
Brett's starting point is the historical entanglement of bibli-

cal doctrine (broadly understood) and colonialism, not to undo the imperialist heritage but to account for the resistant strategies that biblical theology has repeatedly posed against imperialism. Of particular interest for pastors, congregations, activists and organizers, is the book's understanding of biblical imaginaries, that is a conception of Scripture as embodied argumentation, as an ethos, a way of being that constitutes us in our subjectivity and our communal living. Ultimately, the Bible holds political meaning today in the public sphere not because of its authors' intentions or because it is divinely inspired but because its narratives have shaped our political histories and religious stories. Accordingly, the book models an approach for churches to engage with public issues.

With the overall concern of foregrounding Christian discourse in the public arena, Brett explores the legitimacy and advantages of the Christian message for contemporary public discourse—that is, the desirability of a public secular theology. The author's hermeneutical strategies are rich and varied: for instance, Joshua and its supposedly nationalistic discourse does not map onto contemporary patriotic discourse unless we take into consideration how those narratives worked as resistant accounts of the Israelite religion in the context of the Assyrian empire. This “ideological” understanding of the text, Brett sensitively adds, is one that Maoris adopted to drive out Imperial Britain. A similar approach undergirds Brett's argument about the hospitality that Christians are to show toward undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers, especially in light of a certain internationalism that, in the Hebrew Bible, stretches the boundaries of the covenantal community.

The book also offers, in its concluding chapter, an educational—although somewhat insufficient—introductory view of the contributions that biblical imaginaries could offer to reform the current capitalist system that, it bears repeating, benefits Christian communities. This is informative because it hints at how biblical normative views on the economy might correct an unchallenged capitalist economy today. It is insufficient because it remains at the abstract level without identifying (unlike the biblical books) the specific practices and institutions that keep such systems in place. Such naming, I submit, is a pressing task for communities across the globe, and Brett's book offers a magisterial starting point for those communities to elaborate a secular theology that is philosophically informed, historically faithful, and theologically inspirational.

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***Sex on Earth as It Is in Heaven: A Christian Eschatology of Desire.***

By Patricia Beattie Jung. New York: SUNY Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-4384-6381-0. xxv & 271 pages. Paper. \$23.95.

Patricia Beattie Jung argues that there is sexual desire and bodily sexual pleasure in heaven (Part 1). Furthermore,

this gloriously transformed eschatological vision of sex in heaven should serve as a foundation for sexual ethics and sexual practices here on earth (Part 2).

Jung recognizes that while the resurrection of the whole person, consistent with our embodied existence, is an article of faith, there are differences among Christians as to how we understand the resurrected life. This includes some Christians who doubt the physical resurrection. Contemporary interpretations of Paul's reference to the "spiritual body" (1 Cor 15) of the resurrected life as lacking in physicality illustrate the problematic.

A further challenge to her proposal is Christianity's history of ambiguity about sex and pleasure in sex. The conflation of sex with lust (Augustine) has helped to make all sex suspect. Given this outlook, sex in heaven is unthinkable and has been for generations of Christian thought. Another mark against sex in heaven is the related and ongoing Roman Catholic insistence on openness to procreation in all sexual intercourse. Traditional visions of heaven do not include procreation. She admits that there has been little support in the tradition for sex in heaven.

Despite the views about the bodily nature of the resurrected life and the prospect of sex in heaven that are at odds with her convictions, Jung makes a compelling case for sexual pleasure in heaven, drawing from scripture and tradition with the help of some key contemporary interpreters. She is careful to say that this is a transformed sexual life that we cannot fully envision, but a resurrected life of sexual pleasure nonetheless.

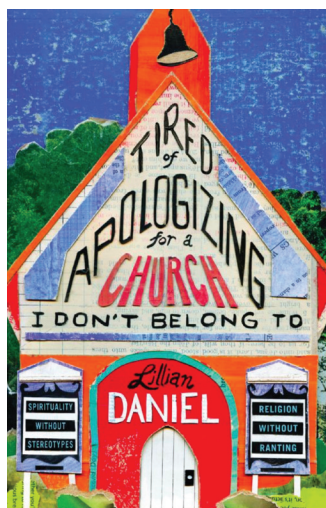
The consequence of this eschatological perspective for sexual ethics is something a bit different. Many have an impression of Christian sexual ethics that the "should-nots" are more explicit than the "shoulds." For Jung what we should be doing is the emphasis here. If heavenly sex is transformed sex that is truly love-making, sex on earth should be as well. Therefore, we have a moral obligation to nurture the sexual pleasure of love-making in all its visceral, genital reality. We need to treasure the intimacy of touch. Moreover, when sexual desire and engagement in love-making wanes, it is a problem to be dealt with and not simply accepted. However, as the final chapter makes clear, pornography is not a suitable way to nurture our sexual lives because it fosters

a desire to take pleasure rather than share pleasure and thereby reinforces a tendency to turn away from each other.

This book makes an important contribution to our thinking about sexual ethics. It is bold in its explicit affirmation of bodily existence and the real experience of sexual sharing with all its imperfections as nonetheless a sanctified reality. She gives expression not simply to a view of sexuality but grounds her perspective theologically as could only come from a person of deep faith.

*James M. Childs Jr.*

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***Tired of Apologizing for a Church I Don't Belong To.***

By Lillian Daniel. New York/Nashville: FaithWords, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-4555-9588-4. vii & 208 pages. Paper. \$14.99.

Lillian Daniel has passion for a faith that is deeply rooted in things that make a difference. Therefore, she is keen on taking readers to the

heart of the matter, challenging us not to get distracted by widespread stereotypes about what it means to be a Christian. While it has become commonplace to refer to many as "spiritual but not religious," Daniel pushes back with the claim that religion means community. And people in our time certainly are searching for community, exactly what Christianity has to offer. She develops an astute and extremely insightful heuristic for distinguishing among four types of "nones": 1) no way, 2) no longer, 3) never have, and 4) not yet. Church leaders would do well to heed these distinctions as we seek to develop life-giving relationships with those beyond the church community, especially by engaging those who are "not yet", who "may be curious about the church and may choose to show up" (39).

Among those things that matter to Daniel are worship and talking about the faith. She places worship at the center of the church's life and would have us offer there a substantial encounter with God and the Christian treasures. People are longing for a more rigorous faith and efforts to take them into the depths of the Christian tradition will not be wasted: "There is an alternative to make-it-up-yourself spirituality. It is called a mature faith, practiced in community over time, grounded in God, centered in worship, called to serve and free to dream" (192). The Christian journey is an adventure that we can hang onto for life. Daniel also gives much encouragement for Christians to talk about their faith. She provides much colorful description of how such con-





versations open paths for the Spirit to work.

Pastor Daniel writes: “I want to be grounded in God, centered in worship, called to serve, and free to dream. I think other people may want that, too” (180). This book can serve as a compass to help the church regain her bearings in topsy-turvy times.

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## BRIEFLY NOTED

In *The Exodus from Egypt: How it Happened and Why it Matters* (HarperOne, \$27.99), Richard Elliott Friedman puts forth his own historical reconstruction of the Exodus. Scholars acknowledge that despite the widespread attestation of the Exodus in the Old Testament, evidence from Egyptian records and archaeology is non-existent, and the number of Israelites involved, 2 million, is highly unlikely. Friedman thinks that the Exodus involved only the Levites, who later joined up with Israelites who were already in the land. There was no conquest. Yahweh, the God of the Levites, was merged with El, the God of the Israelites, a merger that eventually led to Israelite monotheism. Friedman notes that the eight Egyptian names in the Bible (e.g., Moses and Aaron) are all Levites. He thinks that three of the Pentateuchal sources are also Levitical, including E, D, and P. But the evidence for E being written by a Levite is weak in my opinion, and the author of P was a priest who reduced the Levites to a lower level of the clergy. Friedman assigns very early dates to the poems in Exodus 15 and Judges 5, as in the work of Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, but many scholars now contest this dating. Friedman writes with a flair and his book is a page-turner, but his proposals will not convince many.

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