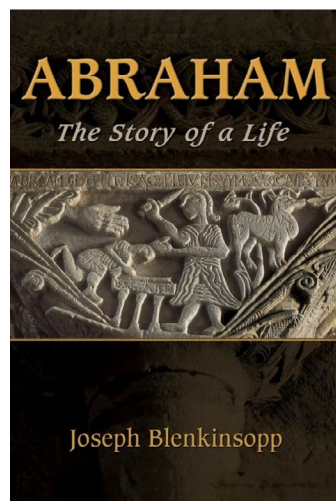




Book Reviews

July 2016

Section Editors: Craig Nesson, Ralph Klein, Troy Troftgruben



Abraham. *The Story of a Life.* By Joseph Blenkinsopp. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7287-6. xv and 240 pages. Paper. \$29.00.

Blenkinsopp has written a “discursive commentary” on the Abraham traditions in Genesis, with some attention to his minor appearance elsewhere in the Bible. In his

judgment Abraham first achieved prominence as an ancestral figure about the same time as Second Isaiah. The trek from Mesopotamia to the Holy Land seems to him like a response to the exilic situations of Jews and Samaritans in the sixth century rather than a historical trip taken in the early Second Millennium BCE.

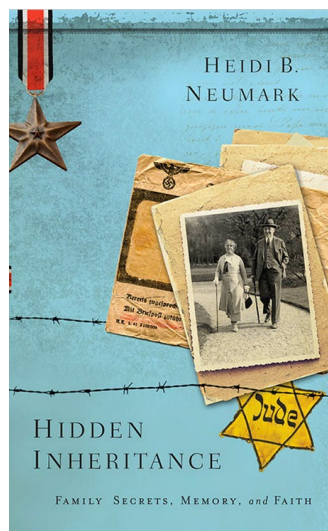
Blenkinsopp reads from a historical critical perspective with little or no attention to methods like feminism or to describing the theology of the final form of the Hebrew Bible. I believe his reading of Gen 12:10–20 would have been enhanced by noting the chauvinistic role Abraham played in the endangering of Sarah, and I had similar misgivings about his reconstruction of the events surrounding Hagar. The author denies that Gen 15:7–21 has the deity invoking upon himself a curse if he does not fulfill his promises. Blenkinsopp does not really follow the documentary hypothesis, but he often identifies major paragraphs in the text as secondary.

Along the way, however, the author demonstrates time and again what a close and creative reader of ancient texts he is. New ideas abound and readers have to decide what their own conclusions should be. Iscah, Gen 11:29, emerges as an alternate name for Sarah, an idea I find plausible. The link between covenant and circumcision, Genesis 17, is dated by him to the first or second century of Persian rule. He makes occasional reference to Judean-Benjaminite hostility in the Bible, which he has developed more fully in a previous publication. He notes the parallel between the drunkenness of Noah after the flood and Lot after the destruction of Sodom. Lot’s daughter’s statement that there was no man alive on earth is taken at face value, which made me cringe at this conclusion: “There is no justification for us today to interpret the [incestuous sexual] proposal of the two young women as grossly

improper.” He often notes how the arrangement of stories sheds light on their significance. In Genesis 21 Ishmael faces a near death experience in the presence of his mother (Hagar) and the absence of his father (Abraham), while in Genesis 22 Isaac faces a near death experience in the presence of his father (Abraham) and the absence of his mother (Sarah). A section at the end of the chapters called “Filling the Gaps” explains how post biblical writers often comment on puzzles in the biblical texts (e.g., why did Sarah die in Genesis 23 after the near death of Isaac in Genesis 22).

Blenkinsopp is a wise and seasoned scholar who makes telling comments on every page. As a long-time admirer of him, my occasional disagreements with his assertions, some of them noted above, are signs of my respect.

Ralph W. Klein
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



Hidden Inheritance: *Family Secrets, Memory, and Faith.* By Heidi B. Neumark. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-6308-8124-5. xv and 219 pages. Paper. \$16.99.

As one struck by lightning in the middle of the night, Heidi Neumark was awakened to the revelation of her hidden inheritance: a family of Jewish ancestors tracing

back centuries in Germany, many of whom were murdered in the Shoah during the Nazi reign of terror. Processing the shock of this discovery, Neumark, who serves as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, embarked on the inward and outward journey narrated in this book. The story is adorned with pathos and piercing theological inquiry, told by an author who is both poet and prophet.

How was it possible for this discovery to occur without any prior awareness? Her father emigrated to the U.S. in 1938, a son to the prominent industrialist family of Moritz Neumark in Lübeck and who had been baptized as a Lutheran Christian, following a pattern of assimilation assumed by many Jewish people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although most of her family members as Jews faced racial discrimination, deportation, and death in concentration camps (in spite of many past military and economic achievements or even baptism), Neumark’s father, Hans, survived as one sent by his family as an immigrant to the U.S., a secret he chose never to divulge even to his



wife and daughter. The author ponders the whys of this decision by her father and makes pilgrimage to the stations of the cross experienced by her family: Wittmund (a German village), Lübeck, Berlin, and finally the concentration camp at Theresienstadt.

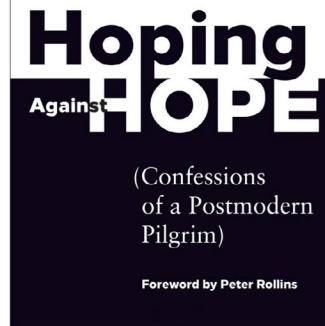
Along the way, Neumark relates not only her Jewish family tree, which includes rabbis and devout Jews dating back to the time of the Reformation, but a history of the Jewish people who have faced generations of trials and discrimination at the hands of Christians. The anti-Semitic writings of Luther, which we still too little acknowledge or repudiate, contributed decisively to this history. The reader discovers how great was the collaboration of German Christians, including Lutheran pastors and professors, to the catastrophe of Jewish people under Hitler. The author draws parallels at several junctures to our own complicity in persecuting outsiders today, especially LGBT individuals, immigrants, and people of color.

Neumark wrestles both with acute tensions and remarkable continuities between Jewish and Christian faith. Reflecting back on the history of pogroms and killing, she writes: “The torture and murder of Jews on charges of desecrating the host is the worst desecration of Holy Communion imaginable. Martin Luther himself contributed to this community dismemberment, negating his own eucharistic theology. What about our fellowship with ‘all neighbors, especially those who suffer?’ ... “On the Jews and Their Lies” should be required reading in Lutheran seminaries, but it isn’t” (30). Throughout the story, the author retrieves poignant texts from the Psalms to punctuate the narrative, grounding us in our common Jewish inheritance.

The book weaves together family story, historical analysis, and theological questioning with pastoral concern and prophetic power. I highly recommend this book for how compellingly it links a very personal story to universal themes, including the family secrets that affect each one. At the end of the book, the author relates how she sang the *Dayenu* (“it would have been enough”) at the reunion with her previously unknown Jewish relatives in California when observing Sabbath and celebrating Passover with them. Hereby we are reminded of the faithfulness of God, who may not give us what we expect but does give us enough. As a grateful reader, I affirm that it would have been enough—*Dayenu*—for God to have given us even one such story.

Craig L. Nesson
Wartburg Theological Seminary

John D. Caputo



Hoping Against Hope: Confessions of a Postmodern Pilgrim. By John D. Caputo. Foreword by Peter Rollins. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4514-9915-5. x and 214 pages. Paper. \$14.99.

If you have not yet had occasion to read radical theology by John Caputo, this book provides a splendid opportunity.

Caputo, who devoted much of his career to (post)modern philosophy with particular attention to Derrida, has in recent years written a series of books worthy of serious reflection not only by theologians but by church leaders looking for challenging thought. Those titles include *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, *The Insistence of God: A Theology of Perhaps*, *The Folly of God: A Theology of the Unconditional*, and *What Would Jesus Deconstruct? The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church*.

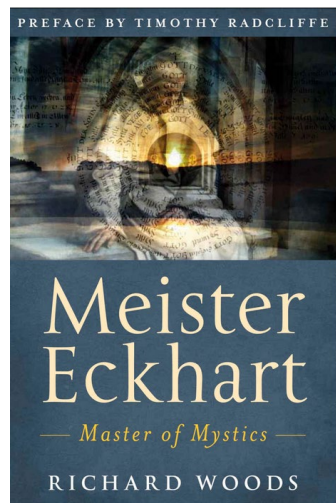
What makes this book a fine entree is its autobiographical cast. It is staged as a conversation among Caputo’s childhood self, his young adult self as member of a religious order, and his philosopher self. These characters engage one another, as well as Jacques (as in Derrida), in dialogue that is both playful and provocative. What Caputo is after is nothing less than a dramatic paradigm shift in the construal of religious thought in general and Christian thought in particular. He provides an imagination for what Bonhoeffer might well have meant by “religionless Christianity.” This begins with the prophetic deconstruction once and for all of conceptualizing God as the Supreme Being in a three-storied universe, a habit we perpetuate in the church despite all the consensus of physics to the contrary. This captivity contributes to the incredulity of thinking people about the tenability of Christian faith.

What is more, Caputo is after the deconstruction of God as an existent Being. If perhaps there is a God, God cannot “exist” in the way other beings exist. Rather, God needs to be re-conceptualized as something like a call to us from beyond in the midst of life, an event that occurs to stir us toward acting for justice, or the solicitation of a hospitality that welcomes without exceptions. Caputo appeals to the apophatic tradition of the mystics, such as Meister Eckhardt and Marguerite Porete, for a notion of what he is after, although they too have their limitations based on their assumption of transcendent (Platonic) categories. “God needs us to be provided with existence. I am slowly building up the nerve to blurt out what I really think: that the world is the place where God gets to be God” (82). This is a consistently imminent theological construal, however, one that makes radical sense.



God is maintained in every regard as “the unconditional.” God calls (really!) but the evidence involves how this call is regarded (or not) by us. This means turning the church upside down from an institution of power to “the Little Church,” a “working church,” in the manner of Martha, who both listened to Jesus and engaged in serving. “We are asked to pick up where God leaves off. How? By making the kingdom of God come true by works of love, the works of mercy, by acts of unconditional hospitality and forgiveness” (121). Caputo is not giving up on the reality of God (ala Feuerbach), not at all. Nor is he surrendering faith to mere works righteousness, although the proof may truly be in the pudding. This book inspires to genuine “dreaming, hoping, praying, smiling” that what we are doing in the name of God makes all the difference in the world. Take and read!

Craig L. Nessan
Wartburg Theological Seminary



Meister Eckhart: Master of Mystics. By Richard Woods. New York: Continuum, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-4411-3442-4. xv and 204 pages. Paper. \$29.95.

Any serious student of theology or the history of religion will eventually trip over the figure of Meister Eckhart. Yet it is entirely possible to recognize his name and his

influence without encountering his work directly. Contributions like Richard Wood’s *Meister Eckhart: Master of Mystics*, provide a welcome and important introduction that will suit both scholars and general readers alike.

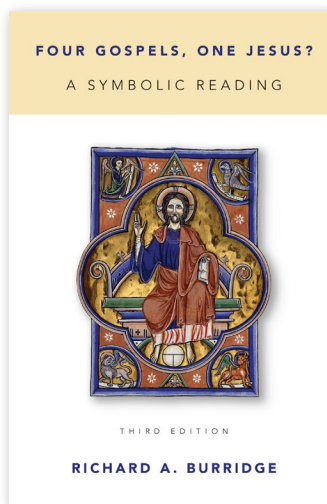
After a brief exploration of the impact of Eckhart on the church and theology, and the problematic reception he had in his later years that led to his eventual condemnation, Woods considers the ways in which Eckhart’s mystical theology provides a link between the medieval and contemporary church.

He begins by examining the ways, “Eckhart was indebted to the women mystics of the preceding generation” (11), as he chronicles the relationship, and reliance of the Meister on such figures as Hildegard of Bingen, Hadewijch of Antwerp, Mechthild of Magdeburg and Marguerite Porete. He also argues that Eckhart “reduced the erotic aspects ... of union with God,” and thus helped to “degender” the image of God (23). In the fourth chapter he asks, “Did Eckhart Love the World?” in an attempt to deal with the ways in which Eckhart’s mystical theology could provide insights into the current understanding of ecology (49).

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In addition to these issues, the book explores the place of prayer in everyday life, the connections between art and spirituality, the struggle to survive in a world of pain and suffering, and encounters between people of different faiths. Thus, in relatively few pages Woods attempts to provide the modern reader with justification for examining the teachings of a not-so-modern mystic, and on the whole he succeeds.

Nathan Montover
Augustana College
Wartburg Theological Seminary



Four Gospels, One Jesus?: A Symbolic Reading. By Richard A. Burridge. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-2980-1. 217 pages. \$20.00.

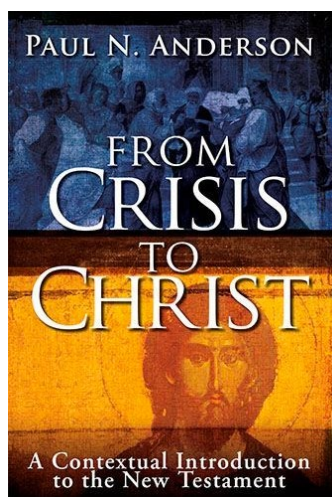
Richard A. Burridge’s engaging study of the New Testament gospels derives much of its vitality from his employment of the four “liv-

ing creature” images traditionally associated with the gospels. In evocative ways, he explains how the lion stands for Mark, the human for Matthew, the ox for Luke, and the eagle for John. By emphasizing the distinctiveness of each gospel, the reader grasps not just the differing depictions of Jesus, but also how these pictures function to convey each gospel-writer’s theological and historical point of view.

An introductory chapter describes the various methods of biblical interpretation in understandable language, and gives a brief history of the four beasts as symbols of the gospels. One chapter is then devoted to each gospel, beginning with Mark, then Matthew, Luke, and John. In these chapters, Burridge lifts up the major themes, stories, and ideas well-known to any New Testament scholar. A last chapter reflects on the meaning of the plurality of images presented in the canonical gospels for people of faith. This third edition retains the same text as the second revision, but features a new Afterward and updated suggestions for further reading.

This book would serve as an excellent text for upper-level undergraduate and seminary courses that focus on the gospels, and perhaps also for interested and well-educated laypeople in congregations.

Annette Bourland Huizenga
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary



From Crisis to Christ: A Contextual Introduction to the New Testament. By Paul N. Anderson. Nashville: Abingdon, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4267-5104-2. xvii and 389 pages. Paper. \$39.99.

The title of Paul N. Anderson's book signals his intent to interpret the New

Testament texts by pointing out the various specific historical and social conditions that influenced their authors. Each chapter explores a Gospel, Acts, letter, group of letters, or Revelation. Each chapter also has the same four-part structure: (1) Crises and Contexts; (2) Features of ____; (3) The Message of ____; and, (4) Engaging ____.

As examples of Anderson's "crises and contexts," he opens his comments on Matthew with a section on "Herod—King of the Jews," and the chapter on Romans highlights "The Expulsion of Jews from Rome." In the "Features" and "Message" sections, Anderson recounts literary and theological topics that are well-known to New Testament scholars. Each "Engaging" section is usually a page in length and expresses ideas for modern readers to "apply" the teachings of the text in personal ways. As might be expected from a scholar committed to Johannine literature, Anderson's knowledge of the Gospel of John is plainly evident in his elucidations: he devotes more pages to the Fourth Gospel than to any one of the Synoptic Gospels.

I am reluctant to recommend this volume as a textbook for a few reasons. First, to my mind, the particular "crises and contexts" could have been more effectively integrated with Anderson's comments on individual texts. For instance, he names "Slavery, Suspicion, and Reconciliation" as the first crisis for interpreting the Pastoral Letters and Philemon. However, the admonitory instructions to slaves (and not masters) in 1 Tim 6:1–2 and Titus 2:9–10 are not even mentioned in the "Message" section of that same chapter.

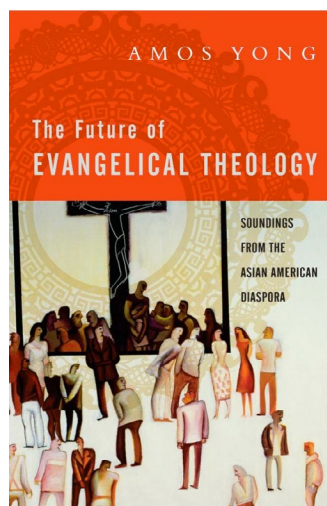
Second, Anderson employs few footnotes and does not include a bibliography or index, making the book not as useful for seminary students or pastors/preachers who want to dig deeper. At the same time, the book's style of composition is rather academic, making it less accessible for undergraduates. A 24-page excursus titled "A Bi-Optic Hypothesis—A Theory of Gospel Relations" is the most striking example of this academic tendency.

A final issue is the lack of visual interest and absence of supplemental resources, both of which are important in a technologically connected world. The book pales in comparison, for

instance, to the attractiveness and resources associated with Mark Allan Powell's *Introducing the New Testament* (which I have been assigning to Masters-level students in my New Testament Introduction course for years).

Criticisms aside, Anderson's informed voice has much to offer. In my opinion his descriptions of these historical events and situations remain crucial for developing more comprehensive understandings of these writings, and I appreciate his attempts to identify topics of particular relevance to individual New Testament texts.

Annette Bourland Huizenga
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary



The Future of Evangelical Theology: Soundings from the Asian American Diaspora. By Amos Yong. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-4060-1. 252 pages. Paper. \$25.00.

Amos Yong, who teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary, says that the time has come for a revisioning of evangelical theology. This effort might not seem relevant to mainline Protestants, but the endeavor of Asians and Asian Americans to find their voice and place in Christian theology and to share their insights provides an opportunity for all Christians to examine mission from a new perspective.

In the past, evangelical theology has been understood methodologically "to be a-historical, a-cultural, and even a-contextual" (114). In fact, in its history, converts were expected to leave their cultural traditions behind. Still, there *has* been a definite cultural and historical bias in Christianity, that of the West. Hermeneutics, theology, and the interpretation of church history have not until recently reflected the viewpoint from the "underside of history." But recently the center of Christianity has been experiencing a shift to the global South.

The goal of Yong's book is to be a bridge to an interpretation of evangelical theology that sees the global context through an Asian American lens. He points out that Jesus Christ, while a product of a particular location, transcends culture, as does evangelical faith in Christ, which he sees as localized yet universal. The Christian message is manifested contextually through the cultures that Asian immigrants and subsequent generations sprang from. How can Asian American evangelicals reconcile universalism in Christian mission with the celebration of local



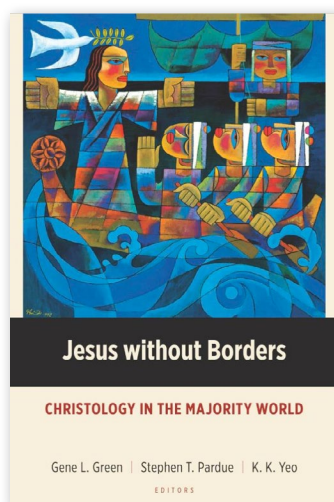
customs, languages, and history?

The answer is found in the Pentecost story, which reflects the multicultural and multilingual character of the reign of God. The theological method that grows out of Pentecost will reflect a three-way conversation interpretation—of Scripture, what the Holy Spirit is doing in the world, and the context in which theology happens. These are emphases that are appropriate for all Christian theology, not just Pentecostal/evangelical.

Yong considers the next steps for evangelicals from the perspectives of immigrants, second and later generations, and women. In evangelicalism at least, there is a divergence of opinions and approaches in these areas. Still, the unifying focus must be, in Yong's words, that "the gospel is good news only within culture, even as the gospel is never captive to culture" (225). This should be a starting point for all Christian theologians, not just evangelicals and not just Asian Americans.

Rev. Janet Blair

*Zion Lutheran Church and Morning Star
Ridgefield, New Jersey*



Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World. Edited by Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K.K. Yeo. Majority World Theology Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7082-7. viii & 193 pages. Paper. \$20.00.

First in the Majority World Theology Series, this book focuses on Christology while the following one examines Pneumatology. This volume addresses the relationship between the traditional Christologies, especially those from the ecumenical councils of the early church, and the contemporary Christologies in the global South.

With eight resourceful chapters, written by ten evangelical theologians, this book is divided into two parts. After a broad but succinct survey of theological tensions between Chalcedonian Christology and modern Christologies in the north-Atlantic world, the first section brings together contemporary Christologies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Each chapter identifies current theological trends within its context and proposes alternative ways of understanding Christ from an "evangelical" perspective. Even while acknowledging the contextual nature of the "ecumenical" creeds from the early church, writers present these statements, especially the Chalcedon creed, as anchors around

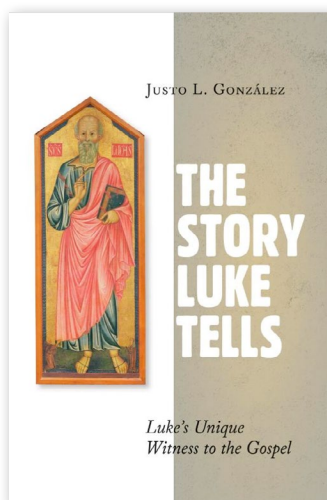
which all Christological conversations should take place.

Titled "Biblical Engagements," the second section examines the interpretative trends in various regions of the world. Proposing that global hermeneutics should be faithful to the tradition and relevant to the context, authors demonstrate how biblical texts can be interpreted. They study three New Testament passages through the eyes of Palestinian, Kenyan, and Latino Christians.

Interdisciplinary in nature, this book intersects with the fields of intercultural theology, biblical hermeneutics, and world Christianity. It recognizes the emergence of Christianity as global religion and identifies the conversation possibilities between Christian communities around the globe. As promised in the Introduction, authors go beyond "mere observation of world Christianity" to "reading the Bible" and "thinking Christianly" with Christians around the globe. Hailing from different regions of the world, they deftly engage theological themes and biblical texts from the perspectives of non-western Christians. This volume is a foretaste of the fruitful conversations that the studies in intercultural theology and world Christianity are capable of producing.

James Taneti

Campbell University



The Story Luke Tells: Luke's Unique Witness to the Gospel. By Justo L. González. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7200-5. xi and 129 pages. Paper. \$14.00.

Justo González is a well-known Cuban American Methodist historian, a significant voice for Latino/Latina theology, and a prolific author in matters of scripture, theology, and especially church history. In this book, González discusses central themes of Luke and Acts in ways that are discerning, perceptive, informed, and accessible. With a voice uniquely aware of larger history yet appreciative of the distinctiveness of Luke's narratives, González explores these writings as a veteran in his own right on these early writings of church history.

Lacking any references to secondary literature, *The Story Luke Tells* reads like a series of lectures more than a commentary. After a brief introduction, the first chapter reflects astutely on the approach of Luke's literary work and introduces González's as well: "In what follows I make no attempt to systematize Luke's thought. ... Rather than posing abstract questions, we will fo-

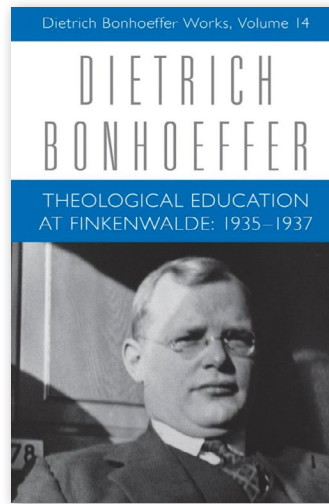


cus our attention on the narrative itself and on how the manner in which Luke tells it illumines both his own history and his understanding of the gospel” (13–14). The next seven chapters (chaps 2–8) each focus on themes important to both Luke and Acts (not just Luke): Israel’s history, social reversal, gender, salvation, food and drink, worship, and the Holy Spirit. The chapter on gender, for instance, highlights women in the birth narrative, male-female pairings in Luke-Acts, women converts (e.g., Acts 17:12), and women in critical but underemphasized roles (e.g., Luke 8:1–3; Acts 16:15); the chapter concludes by observing how these features have been historically—and unfortunately—downplayed. The conclusion to *The Story Luke Tells*, finally, uses the language of “Open Invitation” to connect Luke’s story with that of readers today.

The Story Luke Tells is an excellent introduction to major themes of Luke and Acts that is informed, selective, and readable. Neither an exhaustive study nor a direct engagement with scholarship, each chapter makes a few constructive points and supports them well with biblical texts. Some scholars may find the book too concise (e.g., I would have liked more on Greco-Roman literature in chapter 5); most readers will simply find it judicious. In addition, González’s historical training lets him reflect on broader historical realities that are interesting and relevant (e.g., typology, chapter 2; early Christian worship, chapter 7). On the whole, the book highlights effectively the major points of significance in Luke-Acts within the New Testament, and puts them in conversation with mainstream thinking today. These traits make the book potentially interesting to many audiences, from academic to congregational settings. A drawback is there are no listed resources for further reading, neither for each chapter nor at the book’s end.

The Story Luke Tells is an introduction to Luke’s writings that is both informed by scholars but friendly to non-specialists. González’s insights, historical awareness, and clarity of thought make him a conversation partner with whom it is most enjoyable to engage.

Troy M. Troftgruben
Wartburg Theological Seminary



Theological Education at Finkenwalde: 1935–1937. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Works, Volume 14. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. English edition edited by H. Gaylon Barker and Mark S. Broucker and translated by Douglas W. Stott. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8006-9839-3. xxviii and 1230 pages. Cloth.

\$75.00.

With the appearance of this volume the monumental publishing project of the English language edition of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Works came to a marvelous completion. We are deeply indebted to General Editors Victoria J. Barnett and Barbara Wojhoski, together with the marvelous team of volume editors and translators they assembled, and to Fortress Press for making this collection available as the standard work for Bonhoeffer studies in generations to come. Like the other volumes in the series, this one is enriched by stellar translation (this volume by Douglas W. Stott), an incisive introductory essay (here by H. Gaylon Barker), editor’s afterword (here by Jürgen Henkys as translated from the German edition), appendices as aids for interpretation (here, for example, a survey of the Finkenwalde curriculum), bibliography (here, for example, literature used by Bonhoeffer), and comprehensive indexes.

This particular volume should prove especially fascinating to a wide array of readers, especially those who have been drawn to Bonhoeffer by reading his books, *Discipleship* and *Life Together*, and learning about his path of resistance to Nazi tyranny, insofar as this text locates these writings and the underground seminary activities vividly in their historical moment. Seminary instruction at Finkenwalde was undertaken in five sessions from April 1935 to September 1937, this period concluding with Bonhoeffer’s completion of *Discipleship*, the prohibition of the seminary, and end of the House of Brethren. The sources collected here are organized in chronological order according to three parts: 1) letters and documents related to seminary operations; 2) academic and other lectures, practical exercises, and essays; and 3) sermons, meditations, and Bible studies. Among his lecture topics are: Christ in the Psalms, Homiletics, Catechesis, New Life in Paul, and Power of the Keys and Church Discipline. Several of these materials have been reconstructed from student notes.

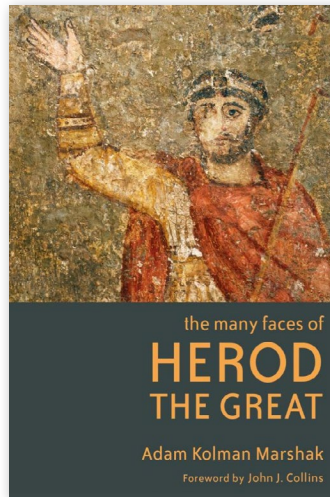
Barker comments: “These documents link Finkenwalde to the larger world, including the Confessing Church communi-



ties in the region surrounding Finkenwalde. Bonhoeffer's letters to family and friends also provide us with a view of his ongoing work in the Confessing Church, which informed life at Finkenwalde; the correspondence also sheds light on his relationships during this period with ecumenical figures such as George Bell" (40). Each document in the book is elucidated by extensive footnotes about historical aspects and commentary about the manuscripts themselves.

The sermon that concludes the book is based on Psalm 58, a psalm of vengeance, and was preached on July 11, 1937, about which the editors assert that it "generated energetic controversy among the candidates..." (963, note 1). That sermon concludes: "And now we pray along with this psalm, in humble gratitude for the cross of Christ, having saved us from wrath, with the ardent petition that God bring all our enemies to the cross of Christ and grant them mercy, with fierce yearning that the day might soon come when Christ visibly triumphs over all his enemies and establishes his kingdom. Thus have we learned to pray the psalm. Amen" (970). This proclamation of God's Word reverberates all the more revelatory in light of what awaited the Finkenwalde seminarians and their teacher himself in the years yet to come.

Craig L. Nesson
Wartburg Theological Seminary



BRIEFLY NOTED

The Many Faces of Herod the Great. By Adam Kolman Marshak (Eerdmans, \$35). Herod, the client king of Judah, succeeded through a combination of political skill and flexibility. Herod was a ruthless and cruel monarch, but also the king who brought Judaea to its greatest economic and political prosperity. His actions against bandits in

Galilee proved he could effectively govern his territory. His patron king at one time was Mark Antony, but after Antony's death Herod managed to ingratiate himself with Octavian/Augustus. Herod was acutely aware of his dubious claim to the throne of Judaea and his potentially problematic Idumaean lineage. Through his defense of Jewish interests abroad as well as his welcoming of the Diaspora into his kingdom, he positioned himself as the king of Jews all over the Roman world. Herod proved that the power of image, and one's political self-presentation, more than physical force and violence, determines a king's fate. The author evaluates carefully both literary evidence and material culture, including Herodian coins.

Ralph W. Klein