Book Reviews

Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church rather than the State. By Daniel M. Bell, Jr. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009, 267 pp., $21.99 paper.

Back in the 1990s, Notre Dame philosophy professor Tom Morris wrote *If Aristotle Ran General Motors: The New Soul of Business*. Now, Methodist elder and Lutheran seminary professor Daniel Bell has given us what amounts to *If Jesus Ran the Pentagon: The New Soul of War.* And the results are surprising. We're conditioned to think that Jesus would counsel non-violent love for all, but Bell will have none of that. Following Augustine, he is persuaded that true love entails some "harsh kindness" in the form of war making. And he has no patience for those who would deem all combat the "lesser of two evils."

After reviewing the development of just war thinking, he draws a line between the secular/secularized approach, which he labels the Public Policy Checklist (PPC), and his own position, that of Christian Discipleship (CD). He argues that his take on the matter is truer to the classic thought of Augustine and Aquinas and that modernity has drained just-war thinking of its wisdom and virtue. In this connection, he turns conventional judgment on its head, claiming that the Thirty-Years' War (1618-1648) was not a war of religion but a war of incipient irreligion as the old, consecrated thinking evaporated.

The book has much to commend it. It's a fascinating thought experiment, and it's clearly written. I may well use it as one of my texts in a future course on war and peace. It starts with a helpful survey of just war thought through the centuries and then, chapter by chapter, treats the seven main criteria common to the literature—legitimate authority, just cause, right intent, last resort, reasonable chance of success, discrimination, and proportionality.

In each instance, he takes pains to distinguish CD from PPC thinking, and his standards are generally gratifying and bracing, e.g., scrupulous attention to the well being of non-combatants. He is merciless toward those who pay mere lip service to the rules, but he stands against those who are so finicky that no war could ever qualify. He teaches a self-forgetful, sacrificial approach to military service and lifts up such virtues as hope, courage, temperance, and patience, showing that the character of the rule-follower is as crucial as the framing of the rules.

Yet, for all that, his application and execution are wanting. First, it would have been a better book had Bell spent less time denigrating the "Public Policy Checklist," beginning with this snide label. He could well have given it due honor as a basic

statement of principles, uniting the lost and the saved in essential, common tasks of war. Romans 2:14-15 says that even the pagans, who lack the Torah, have its work written on their hearts, with their consciences testifying to what is right and wrong. (Thus, for example, it is not surprising that ancient Greeks, in Book V of Plato's *Republic,* insist that "barbarian" non-combatants not be harmed, their lands not ravaged.) If Bell had spent some time in Romans 2, he might have been less inclined to repeatedly (and tediously) typify the noblest wartime efforts of non-Christians as simply a matter of rule-memorization and will power. Surely, many "heathens" work from heartfelt conviction, thanks to their innate, God-given conscience, not to mention some discernment of the creation order pictured in Romans 1.

I think Bell would have been better served by an Aquila-Priscilla-Apollos approach (Acts 18:24-28), whereby he could show his readers "a more excellent way." On this model, he could counsel the believer serving alongside the agnostic and Jew in a just cause to fight with love for the enemy, a Spirit-filled love beyond the capability of his unbelieving comrades. Perhaps the Christian infantryman would be more inclined to throw himself on a grenade to save his buddies and more fastidious (or at least heartfelt) in his regard for the safety of civilians, but acts of conspicuous virtue in war are well-distributed among believers and non-believers alike.

By severing PPC from God-ordained natural law, and showing scant appreciation for natural law itself, Bell says that PPC "suits the kind of people and politics that believe there is nothing but the force of their arms, the numbers of their chariots, and the speed of their horses that stand between them and oblivion." This is like saying that freedom of speech is unsavory because it "suits the kind of people who publish pornography" and freedom of assembly is toxic because it "lets anarchists and Marxists caucus."

Throughout the book, a kind of false dichotomy is in play—choose either the horrors of PPC or the high-country of CD. Unfortunately, this sort of this thinking would encourage believers to say that only Christian marriage is worthy of the name. Jewish neighbors may call their 40-years-and-counting of monogamous fidelity and mutual care "marriage," but they've just learned some rules and stuck to them by force of will. Why not, instead, give thanks for the marriage they have nurtured and pray that they will come to a fuller understanding of its role in the Kingdom, even as a picture of Christ and his bride, the church?

Another problem is reader whiplash. Though he is good at nuance, it seems that Bell justifies crusades but then renounces them, justifies war-as-punishment but then insists on far-reaching leniency, denounces unconditional surrender but then allows for comprehensive reordering of the defeated state. To put it otherwise, he has a tendency to have it both ways at a number of points.

As the treatments of detail proliferate, so do the questions: When you say the voice of the church should be heard loud and clear in public policy, do you mean the voice of combat-ready Southern Baptists or that of combat-averse Mennonites? How are small Christian minorities in India and Indonesia to pick up on the public policy implications of CD warfare? Why should war be so limited as to refrain from attacking ideologies? Wasn't it a good thing that the Allies essentially and intentionally erased the cultures of "Aryan" Nazism and Japanese emperor worship? Is killing really "the business of armies," or might it equally be the force of intimidation, which largely won the Cold War? Must the enemy currently be using a bridge to attack you before you may take it out to protect your flank? Do you have any historical examples of enemies, who on the eve of war, "repented, turned, and sought justice and reconciliation"? (Alas, the book is virtually devoid of instructive examples.)

So yes, there are problems and puzzles, but, again, Bell's work is a fascinating read, well worth

the purchase for those wondering, "How does just war mesh with the Christian life?"

—Mark T. Coppenger
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Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain. By William M. Struthers. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009, 196pp., $16.00 paper.

William Struthers, an associate professor of psychology at Wheaton College, draws from his research in the area of the neurosciences and neuroethics to contribute to the understanding of the long-term impact of exposure to pornographic materials. Citing current evidence in the fields of neuroanatomy and neurotransmitters, he develops the contention that viewing pornography causes actual physical and physiological changes to the pathways within the brain. These difficult-to-reverse changes in the "hard wiring" of the brain result in significant impairment to the pursuit of holiness.

After outlining the grim statistics regarding the availability and accessibility of pornographic material, Struthers argues for a disordered view of masculinity with the objectification of females in general and the female form in particular. By using an analogy of consuming food to illustrate taking in pornography—eating a meal which is then digested, metabolized and distributed throughout the body, causing alterations in the physiology and anatomy of the consumer—Struthers points out that "consuming" porn changes the brain anatomy by stimulating new neural pathways to form. Another effective analogy is that of comparing a new walking path in the woods, widened and deepened by frequent use, leading ultimately to a "super highway" or Grand Canyon. Repetitive intake of pornography similarly creates a widening path, easily traversed such that every visual stimulus moves rapidly in the direction of arousal, lust, and pressure to act out sexually. For this "consumer," sex is not an intimate marital expression as God intended, but rather an escape—not unlike addictive drug use.

The distinctive chapters on neuroanatomy and neurotransmitters are surrounded by a biblical theology of marriage, with a focus on masculinity and progressive sanctification. Struthers argues that our sexuality, a good gift from God, should be part of the process of sanctification. The book suggests that sanctification and biblical thinking leads to the development of different pathways, a "superhighway" that leads to Christlikeness and community rather than self indulgence, shame, and despair.

This volume contributes significantly to the counselor's deeper understanding when dealing with sexual sin issues in their clients and the gravity and impact of visual stimulation. Thus, treatment and recovery are neither easy nor quick. Confession of the problem, safeguards, and accountability are all helpful but not sufficient. A biblical understanding of masculinity and femininity, of sexuality and community, can begin to build the right pathway to Christ—and ultimately put a "road closed" sign in the brain, to hinder any further mental traffic.

Contrary to the book's title, the author's training in Christian psychology yields a perspective that emphasizes thought, reason, and emotion over empiric research. However, the unique sections of this volume, describing the physical and functional brain changes resulting from sensory stimuli, make this book a valuable resource for those who counsel.

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Manifold Witness: The Plurality of Truth. By John R. Franke. Nashville: Abingdon, 2009, xvi + 152 pp., $18.00 paper.

This book represents an attempt by the "emerging village" movement to provide a theological framework for its ministry. Since the death of Stanley Grenz, to whom this book is dedicated, John Franke has emerged as the movement's principal professional theologian.

Early in the book Franke states his thesis: "the expression of biblical and orthodox Christian faith is inherently and irreducibly pluralistic. The diversity of the Christian faith is not, as some approaches to church and theology might seem to suggest, a problem that needs to be overcome." Franke goes on to offer a theological rationale for this thesis: "Instead, this diversity is part of the divine design and intention for the church as the image of God and the body of Christ in the world."

Franke offers several types of evidence for this thesis: the fact that there are four different Gospels, each with a different perspective and emphasis; the variety of forms that "the historic Christian faith" has taken during the centuries of the church; the different cultures in which Christianity is expressed and practiced at the present time; and even the fact that the Trinity is a plurality of persons. He also cites the familiar postmodern emphasis on perspectivalism, in view of the historically and socially conditioned settings that influence how we perceive and judge. Yet he is emphatic that this does not lead to the kind of relativism in which "anything goes." What preserves Christianity from such a relativism is that there is a God for whom there is Truth. For all other persons, however, there is only truth.

There is much to commend in this book from a conservative evangelical perspective. Its tone is irenic and courteous, which is conducive to dialogue with more traditional Christians. Those accustomed to the emotive and pejorative language found in some postmodern thinkers will appreciate this. The book does contain some samples of such language, but from other authors: "freezing if not fossilizing in a kind of theological retrenchment" (Brian McLaren, xii) and "a spectrum that runs from mildly allergic to wildly apoplectic" (Merold Westphal, 14). Franke properly points out that third world Christians may have a different perspective on some beliefs and practices, and their approach may be just as valid for them as others are for Western Christians. He cautions against too quickly identifying our interpretations with "what the Bible teaches." He rightly emphasizes that there should be agreement on the cardinal matters of Christian faith, but that there should be room for differences on secondary and tertiary matters.

Having said this, however, a number of features of this book will trouble many evangelicals. Just a few of these problems can be mentioned here. One is the lack of criteria for how we identify the nonnegotiable essentials. This in turn is part of a larger problem found in a number of other postmodern or postconservative evangelicals. There is vagueness and at times even ambiguity on a number of issues. Some postmodernists exploit this ambiguity, using the more radical interpretation to gain rhetorical leverage, but shifting to a softer interpretation to deflect criticism. Franke seems impatient with those who want him to be more specific, but those insistences should serve as clues to him that he is unclear. It would be helpful to know, for example, what Franke means by "the one faith." While he says that not all expressions of the faith are appropriate (129), he offers no concrete criteria of appropriateness. His description of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit (77) and the dynamic nature of revelation sound strongly reminiscent of neo-orthodoxy's view. The truth is a person, Jesus Christ (9), but there have been widely varying conceptions of who Jesus was and is. In short, while insisting that his view does not mean that "anything goes," he seems reluctant to tell us what does not go, and why. He cites with approval James Cone's critique of white religion,

but fails to note that Cone's version of black theology is not typical of the faith of the vast majority of African-American Christians, and has even been criticized by his brother, Cecil Cone.

Further, at some points (such as the discussion of foundationalism), the discourse seems seriously out of date. Franke tends, as do many postmodernists, to identify objectivism with the Enlightenment, whereas what he is opposing is a whole Western tradition going back into premodern times. And, although this is intended to be a popular, rather than a technical theological treatise, there are issues and other perspectives that are touched on but not adequately dealt with. For example, when discussing the historic Christian faith, it would not be unreasonable to expect Franke to interact with the study done jointly by Thomas Oden and J. I. Packer. Although Franke insists that all thought is conditioned, and there is no neutral point from which to think, he does not raise the question of how those of different cultures and paradigms can communicate with one another, or what paradigm he is employing in the discussion of paradigms. He gives no indication of awareness of the issues. While he cites with approval John Caputo's view of deconstruction, he fails to note that Caputo ruled out the deconstruction of deconstruction itself. Why should not Franke's emergent village and its contentions be deconstructed?

Terminologically, Franke uses "plurality" and "pluralism" indiscriminately. He cites the same types of phenomena that pluralists like John Hick do, but without giving an adequate rationale for rejecting that more extreme form. In light of the topic Franke has adopted, it is surprising that he makes no mention of one of the Church's most pressing issues: what is the relationship between the God of Islam and that of Christianity? Are the Christian and the Muslim simply worshipping the same God, but under different names?

Sometimes Franke offers a paraphrase that actually adds to the original statement without argumentation. The reader should be watchful of expressions such as, "in other words." Regarding style, both the writer of the foreword and the series editor's introduction commend the lack of technical theological jargon, but emergent village jargon—such as "God gives, receives, and shares love from all eternity in self-differentiated unity and unified self-differentiation" (56)—is liberally sprinkled throughout the book.

Readers should note that this is a very Western book, and rather upper middle class, educated, and suburban in orientation. Franke makes much of the diversity of perspectives from non-North Americans (or those whose first language is not English). I agree that Christians in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia are indeed conscious of Christian doctrinal provincialism and even imperialism. I have found, however, that many of them have little sympathy for the kind of "generous orthodoxy" that Franke and others of the emergent village espouse. Their vision of Christianity is more conservative, more sharply defined, and more conscious of antithesis to the prevailing culture than the type of approach Franke follows.

Evangelicals can benefit from considering the issues Franke raises in this book, but need to read it with a critical and discerning approach.

—Millard J. Erickson
Author, *Christian Theology*

Puritan Papers, Volume 4: 1965–1967. Edited by J. I. Packer. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004, viii + 305 pp., $16.99 paper.

One the key stimuli behind the resurgence of interest in the Puritans and their theology has to have been the Puritan Studies Conference, co-founded by Martyn Lloyd-Jones and J. I. Packer in the 1950s. Under God, it has introduced a number of generations to the riches of Puritanism and those Puritan-style movements and communities that are the Puritans' theological heirs.

The organization of the conference was fairly simple. Six papers would be given, the last of which was normally by Lloyd-Jones, and each would be followed by extensive and edifying discussion. This pattern is still continued in the December Westminster Conference, which originated in 1970 after significant disagreements between Lloyd-Jones and Packer.

This is the fourth volume in a series of reprints of the papers given at Puritan Studies Conference. In this case, it contains the papers given between 1965 and 1967, momentous years in the history of Western culture. Here we find timeless studies of the Reformers—the subject of the 1965 conference—and papers from the 1966 conference that range from reflections on Henry Jacob (by Lloyd-Jones)—a relatively obscure figure, but one with great importance for the emergence of the Calvinistic Baptists—to a study of Charles Finney by Paul Cook.

The final set of papers, from 1967, has a similar breadth: from the Puritans to Abraham Kuyper. Of importance is the topic of Lloyd-Jones's 1967 paper, which was "Sandemanianism," in which he analyzed what some might have considered an esoteric topic, namely, the teachings of Sandemanianism. Ever the one to apply church history, Lloyd-Jones argued that the errors of this eighteenth-century movement had much to teach his hearers, for he felt that there were far too many in contemporary evangelical circles who were replicating the central Sandemanian error, namely that true faith can be held without deeply-felt affection. Now, in the course of his lecture Lloyd-Jones gave a brief historical overview of the early years of this movement. He noted especially that it was in the late 1780s and 1790s that Sandemanian teaching truly became something of a menace to English and Welsh Evangelicalism. Moreover, he stated that the key theologian who was raised up to refute the errors of this movement was "the famous Andrew Fuller" who "more or less demolished Sandemanianism" in his 1812 work, *Strictures on Sandemanianism* (272-73).

In brief, Lloyd-Jones's paper—though this is true of all the papers in the volume—demonstrates an important reason for the study of church history: the edification of the church. While those studying the history of God's people must do so with academic rigor, the academy is not the final justification for such study. Rather, it is that the people of God, through recollection of their identity from the past, might better understand their calling in the present and for the future.

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This Mortal Flesh: Incarnation and Bioethics. By Brent Waters. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009, 205 pp., $21.99 paper.

I rarely have been challenged to think so deeply as by Brent Waters in this work. Waters is associate professor of Christian Social Ethics at Garrett-Evangelical (not used as in referring to evangelical Christians) Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, where Rosemary Radford Ruther served 22 years; and Waters has two graduate degrees from Claremont where Ruther was taught to think Christians should become pagan. Because of these associations, it is both welcome and quite unexpected to find this author developing a level of moral analysis truly helpful to biblically faithful Christians.

Though one finds points in this book worth disputing, I will not do so here because none discomfits the book's thesis, which is that postmodern thought turns biomedical research and healthcare into a false religion inimical to humanity and essential Christianity, and that this false religious ethic can be exposed and resisted only by explicating the biblical doctrine of the Word made flesh in order to vindicate and redeem the lives of human beings made to bear the divine image in mortal

bodies. After analyzing the way postmodernism is affecting a range of bioethical issues, Waters offers a Christological response that relies heavily on the work of Oliver O'Donovan, professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at the University of Edinburgh, and John Kilner, professor of Bioethics and Contemporary Culture and director of Bioethics Programs at Trinity International University.

Chapter 1 describes how the convergence of biotechnology, nanotechnology, robotics, and medicine extends the promise of ever longer, healthier, and happier lives, but in a way that now bypasses healing and curing to favor loathing of natural human finitude and even mortality. Chapters 2-5 go on to analyze how postmodernism has affected moral thinking on a range of issues and in ways that treat advances in biotechnology and healthcare as a proxy for salvation—one promising self-perfection and hope of eternal life at the cost of devaluing and ultimately destroying essential human nature. And chapters 6-9 suggest how Christians should respond.

Chapter 2 shows how advances in reproductive technology are affecting the way people think about parents and children, transforming parents into commissioners and children into artifacts. Chapter 3 examines how developments in human genetics are changing moral attitudes toward human finitude, now aiming not only to cure wounds and diseases but also relegating any human finitude to the category of evil to be challenged and overcome. Chapter 4 addresses embryonic stem cell research and therapeutic cloning and the way advances in these fields are changing regard for the moral status of human embryos. Chapter 5 looks at developments in regenerative medicine, which are beginning to treat aging more as a disease than a common denominator of humanity. On this Waters observes that research in this field is becoming tantamount to a war on mortality—one hoping ultimately to escape human mortality by reaching a "posthuman" state.

Chapters 6 and 7 criticize the posthuman lure of postmodern biotechnology, and argues that the only hope for addressing the ultimate human condition comes not from trying to immortalize our bodies through science but through the Creator's offer of redemption and resurrection achieved by the Word made flesh in order to free humanity from death both mortal and moral.

Chapter 8 analyzes the core fallacies of postmodern bioethics by explaining how it resurrects ancient heresies combining a will to self-deifying power with a will for self-achieved immortal perfection. The way to address human finitude without devaluing or destroying humanity in the process is by receiving the promise of eternal life as a gift of grace from God, not by trying to make ourselves posthuman. Finally, in chapter 9, Waters widens analysis beyond biotechnology and healthcare to warn against the morally destructive trend of postmodernism to rely on information processes over the spoken word. Christians, he insists, must defend the centrality of words (not processes) to assess the moral value of human lives, and so also to conform life in the flesh to the Word made flesh.

That is indeed a worthy project.

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A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures. By Alvin Dueck and Kevin Reimer. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009, 288 pp., $24.99 paper.

Christ blessed peacemaking (Matt 5:9), and with the obvious need for peace in the world, in the church, and even in the Christian counseling world, any book that sees peacemaking as one of the highest priorities of the Christian counselor is intriguing. This well-written and thought-provoking book, however, is even more

distinctive in the Christian counseling literature on two counts: first, because of its faithful adherence to a specific Christian tradition—the pacifist, Anabaptist orientation (13, 166-68)—and second, because of its significantly postmodern and multicultural sensibilities. Consequently, there is unusual interest in and understanding of cultural differences and tradition distinctives. Perhaps its most important positive contribution is a thorough rejection of the modern secular values that currently dominate mainstream psychotherapy. Dueck and Reimer argue that the requirement in the field today that all therapists speak in "secularese" constitutes an unjust, totalizing, and universalizing imposition by modernists on people of faith. They argue instead for a pluralist mental health field where the voices of particular religious and ethnic traditions are allowed to be heard. I thoroughly agree.

However, secular postmodernists could make the same point. What makes the therapy developed in this book particularly *Christian*? This is reflected in its use of aspects of contemporary Anabaptist thought. Suffering would seem to be the primary concern of this therapy—so, social-cultural sin is often discussed, while personal sin is rarely addressed. Preference is also shown to the *Christus Victor*, exemplary, and suffering God models of the atonement over satisfaction theories. The use of explicit Christian content in counseling is not promoted; the focus is instead on the life of Christ, particularly its self-sacrificial nature, so that the Christian influence is largely limited to the ethical sphere—demonstrated in how the Christian therapist treats the counselee. Postmodern and pacifist frameworks unite in the authors' advocacy of therapy that accepts and works within the faith perspective of one's counselees. The Christian therapist, for example, "draws on the counselee's tradition and holds the client accountable to his or her professed convictions" (167). There is an admirable consistency in this model, but it resembles postmodernism more than historic Christianity (including the Anabaptist tradition!), for in such an approach, the self is ultimate, rather than the Creator, who Christians believe has established a specific way of healing the soul, through Christ—a universalizing claim, to be sure, but issued by the Lord of the universe for the good of all humanity.

The peace of Christ, both objective and subjective, is not like the world's (John 14:27), for it was purchased by his blood (Eph 2:14-18; Col 1:20)—a death necessary because of personal sin and social-cultural sin, both of which flow from our original universal alienation from God—and it spreads through the verbalized gospel that offers peace with God to all through repentance from sin and faith in Christ who died on behalf of a world that is tragically, but deeply opposed to this kind of particularity. Yet this has been at the heart of the tradition of genuine Christian therapy since Pentecost.

The authors rightly object to counsel that would "force" others to believe as the counselor does, but one can avoid this error without resorting to its near opposite. Christians, for example, may work towards a genuinely pluralistic mental health system that would recognize that all therapies have their own goals and means for realizing them and that therapists ought to be full participants in the therapeutic dialogue, along with counselees, and therefore all therapists, including Christians, ought to be free to share fully (and Christians could add lovingly, patiently, and gently [Gal 5:22, 23]) their way of healing the soul.

By so embracing the postmodern ethicism of Levinas and others, Dueck and Reimer have made a case for a Christian therapy that should not offend postmoderns nearly as much as the Father's demand that we find peace in the love of his Son. But as a result, this book is less peaceable than the authors suppose, since it unwittingly does a kind of violence to God. For by encouraging Christian therapists to "recognize God's presence in religious confessions other than one's own" (185) in

their therapy, it formally trivializes the blood of Christ and the gospel of his peace (Eph 6:15).

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Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar. By William D. Mounce. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 419 pp., $49.99.
Basics of Biblical Greek Workbook. By William D. Mounce. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 223 pp., $22.99 paper.

Introduced seventeen years ago, William D. Mounce's *Basics of Biblical Greek* is now is in its third edition. The primary distinctive of *BBG* is to "reduce the essentials to a minimum so the language can be learned and retained as easily as possible, so that the Word of God can be preached in all its power and conviction" (x). This practical approach has helped to make *BBG* popular among different kinds of students.

The first thing one notices about the new edition of *BBG* is its appearance. The new edition's increased space surrounding the text provides needed space for taking notes, and the binding is such that this edition will now lay open on a desk. Layout, design, and color have been improved, and the effect is pleasing to the eye. An exception might be the entrance of "The Professor," a cartoonish figure who appears in the margins, sharing helpful information at times, while at other times providing information that ranges from the funny to the bizarre (e.g., 133, 135, 138, 161).

Concerning the book's substance, minor changes have been made. There are now 36 chapters instead of 35; the increase is due to splitting the old chapter 35 into two chapters. The old chapter 35 attempted to cover too much material, so this is a welcomed change. The grammar is still broken down into six sections, yet now each section begins with an overview so students will know what to expect. Missing from the new edition is the lecture summary CD, the content of which has been moved to the improved Teknia website.

Two other changes are worth noting. First is the "halftime review" within each chapter, which is designed to distill the key points of the lesson up to that point. Second is the addition of an exegesis section at the end of many chapters (e.g., 52-54, 138, 255-56) which shows the student how a particular chapter's topic is important in the ultimate goal of exegesis. This latter addition will encourage some beginning students while overwhelming others.

The *BBG Workbook* is very helpful for putting into practice what is learned in the grammar, and changes to this edition are minimal. There are six sections for each chapter that include parsing practice and extensive translation exercises. Added are two concluding chapters designed to show the student how much he has learned by translating 2 John and a significant portion of Mark 2-3.

Mounce's approach has much to commend it, blending vocabulary, morphology, phonology, inductive vs. deductive learning, and paradigm memorization. The morphology recalls the earlier approach of Goetchius's *Language of the New Testament*, while the practical nature of *BBG* brings to mind S. M. Baugh's *New Testament Greek Primer* and D. A. Black's *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*—though both of these mix the verb and noun systems whereas *BBG* provides an option to keep them separate.

This new edition gives every indication that the book's popularity will not wane in the near future. Its practical approach and innovative learning methods will continue to make it a good choice for self-learners, homeschoolers, Bible college, and seminary students.

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The War of the Lamb: The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking. By John Howard Yoder. Edited by Glen Stassen, Mark Thiessen Nation, and Matt Hamsher. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009, 230 pp., $24.99 paper.

John Howard Yoder was one of the most influential theological critics of war, and coercive force in general, in the twentieth century, both through his writing and teaching—including two decades at the University of Notre Dame—and through his impact on scholars such as Stanley Hauerwas and Glen Stassen. *The War of the Lamb*, therefore, is worthy of serious engagement, especially by those who will resist Yoder's critique of war. According to Stassen, in his introduction, Yoder planned the book before his death in 1997. Thanks to the work of the editors, and Yoder's own memos, this collection of lectures and articles is now available.

Readers familiar with Yoder may not find anything principally new in this collection, yet he considered it necessary to publish in order to emphasize aspects of his work that he thought had not been taken seriously enough by his critics. He seeks to present a robust Christian pacifism that does not merely condemn war and violence and resist corrupt power and authority, but also seeks to effect change through *nonviolent direct action*. Yoder also challenges those who would marginalize Christian pacifism by portraying it simply as a minority, sectarian tradition in church history that embraces passive suffering in order to avoid violence.

After an introduction from Stassen, which highlights Yoder's concerns and the themes that will follow, the book consists of three sections. The first seeks to establish the case for nonviolence, a perspective which, Yoder asserts, is not simply an alternative system of ethics to those that defend war, but a way of envisioning the world, grounded in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The second section interacts with Just War thinking. Yoder argues that if it is strictly applied, Just War doctrine has certain common commitments with pacifism, such as a presumption against violence in its principle of last resort that should lead Just War advocates to stand with pacifists in seeking alternatives to violence, which will actively oppose evil. Such alternatives, and the principles that sustain them, make up the third section of the book, which may be the area with which casual readers of Yoder will be least familiar, and for that reason it deserves a bit more attention.

Yoder is ambitious in the third section, not only seeking to defend pacifism against what he sees as fundamentally utilitarian arguments for war, but also arguing that in the big picture nonviolent direct action is more effective, "because it goes with the grain of the universe, and that is why *in the long run* nothing else will work" (62). Suffering love is not merely passive, for followers of Jesus must resist violence in the double sense of being willing to suffer rather than resorting to violence and of being actively opposed to violence. When harmed, our instinct, which is defended with rational arguments, is to respond with force. Yoder seeks to cultivate a different instinct, which resists violence when wronged. Against those who argue that his view is passive and ineffective in the face of evil, he suggests that the problem is not that nonviolent action has been tried and found wanting, but that it has not been attempted with a seriousness that approaches the effort put into war. To be effective, it requires discipline, training, and fortitude, just as force does (162). He points out that in war, loss of life is considered an unfortunate but expected cost, and yet in considering nonviolence, the predictable losses are seen as evidence of failure and reason enough to reject the strategy from the outset (163).

I am grateful to the editors for bringing Yoder's work together in this volume. There is much here to challenge a thoughtful reader. While I am not persuaded by some key points, I do agree with much of Yoder's critique of war and violence. He is right to insist that Just War doctrine is presump-

tive against war, placing the burden of proof on those who seek to justify war; that Christians should—but too often do not—speak prophetically and hold their political leaders accountable for the decision to wage war; and that it is easy for Christians to adopt a sense of nationalism that overshadows deep Christian convictions, using Just War criteria to defend whatever war one's nation happens to be waging. Yoder offers an important reminder that for Christians, a priority should be placed on peacemaking, and rather than seeing reasoned pacifists simply as antagonists, Just War advocates ought to join them in pressing for peaceful resolutions to conflict wherever possible. The third section of the book, on nonviolent direct action, draws attention to the need for more careful thinking and greater effort on peacemaking initiatives, though, in my view, it is not strong in terms of concrete strategies of nonviolence. Stassen's work on *Just Peacemaking* is a more concrete extension of what Yoder is pressing here, the specifics of which ought to be seriously discussed and evaluated.

I do have significant differences with Yoder. Space does not allow a defense of Just War doctrine here, so I will simply indicate a point or two of contention. First, while Yoder seeks to summarize Just War thinking fairly, he doesn't engage significantly with particular advocates and arguments. Further, while Yoder does differentiate in places between Just War doctrine and other views on war, in the end he tends to conflate all positions that allow for the use of lethal force, presenting all war as utilitarian, and a Constantianian compromise with worldly authority (47). Just War doctrine can be defended against such charges. To be sure, Just War principles are sometimes—perhaps often—misapplied or ignored in order to defend an unjust aggression. Yet Just War thinking at its best is principled rather than utilitarian, driven by a mandate for justice against tyranny and oppression. Further, it lays claim to one of Yoder's themes, that Jesus is Lord over all. Yoder argues that God can defend justice without our help (47), which has a pietistic appeal, but what does that mean? It could be argued that God can feed the poor or defend the oppressed without our help, but God has chosen to use people, through appointed "offices," to serve His purposes. Similarly, Just War advocates argue that God defends justice through his appointment of human agents, and that may include the just use of force.

Yoder and others rightly insist on reading Romans 13, with its description of government and its power to punish wrongdoing, in light of Romans 12, with its insistence on not repaying evil for evil but leaving vengeance to the Lord. However, often government is thus depicted merely as a secular power that makes use of ungodly means that cannot be affirmed by Christians. For Christians to advocate using the sword for a just cause is understood to be a Constantinian compromise. In response, Just War advocates agree that Romans 12 teaches that Christians are not to repay evil for evil but are to leave vengeance to God. But it is precisely in that context that Romans 13 teaches that in this age God has made provision to restrain evil in part by appointing government to avenge wrongdoers. To be sure, the power of the sword is easily abused, and it is right to challenge abuses, to seek to restrain the power of government and direct its efforts in the service of justice, and to remind magistrates that they do not possess power for their own interests, for they too will be judged for wrongdoing.

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James. By Dan G. McCartney. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009, xxi + 335 pp., $39.99.

Dan G. McCartney, professor of New Testament interpretation at Redeemer Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas, was previously professor of New

Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary for over 25 years. The thesis of this latest addition to the BECNT series is that the book of James is "about true faith as opposed to a false one" (2; cf. xi, 1, 56–57, 63, 267–71). Contra Peter H. Davids, the book's controlling theme is not the problem of suffering (56–57). "James is interested primarily in practical Christianity. He assumes the content and saving power of the Christian gospel ... but his interest is on how that is worked out in life, and he denounces a kind of faith that does not act accordingly" (3).

James focuses on works, argues McCartney, because faith is so important. The most well known section of the letter, James 2:14–26 (esp. v. 24), superficially appears to contradict Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone in passages like Rom 3:28 (154–75; 272–79). But Paul and James use "justification" in different ways because they have "different concerns, different backgrounds, and different audiences with different problems" (154). Paul means "to declare righteous" in a forensic sense, and James refers "either to the eschatological confirmation of righteousness at the last judgment (as in Matt 12:37; Rom 2:13) or to the effectual proving of righteousness." Douglas J. Moo argues that James means the former, while McCartney argues for the latter, though noting, "It also may be that James implicitly includes both meanings." For James, to justify means to *vindicate* in the same way that Jesus uses the verb in Luke 7:35: "wisdom is justified by all her children" (276–77). Nevertheless, the main point of James 2:14–26 is clear: "that which distinguishes living faith from dead faith is works of faith" (172).

McCartney's main conversation partners include commentators Joseph B. Mayor (1897 commentary), James Hardy Ropes (1916, ICC), Martin Dibelius (1975, Hermeneia), Peter H. Davids (1982, NICNT), Luke Timothy Johnson (1995, Anchor Bible), Richard Bauckham (1999), Douglas J. Moo (2000, Pillar NT Commentary), and Patrick J. Hartin (2003, Sacra Pagina). The format is like other BECNT volumes. James is not conducive to a linear outline, but since it has many logically organized units, the shaded-box-feature—my favorite distinctive of the BECNT series—at the beginning of each passage of Scripture could be extraordinarily useful. The shaded boxes in this volume, however, are disappointing because they do not trace the argument logically and grammatically with the care that other BECNT volumes do (e.g., Thomas R. Schreiner on Romans). McCartney concludes the book with four valuable excurses: "Faith as the Central Concern of James"; "Faith, Works, and Justification in James and Paul"; "James and Wisdom"; and "James and Suffering" (267–300).

McCartney evidences a firm handling of the text as well as the secondary literature, and he writes clearly and thoughtfully. His book joins Moo, Bauckham, George H. Guthrie (2006, revised EBC), and Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell (2008, ZECNT) as one of the volumes that preachers, teachers, and students will consult first and with most profit when studying the book of James.

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Reforming or Conforming? Post-Conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church. Edited by Gary L. W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008, 300 pp., $20.00 paper.

In *Reforming or Conforming? Post-Conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church*, editors Gary L. W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason have assembled a cadre of scholars and pastors tasked with defining, assessing, and critiquing various aspects of the post-conservative and emergent church movements within evangelicalism. Johnson, senior pastor of Church of the Redeemer in Mesa, Arizona, and Gleason, senior pastor of

Grace Presbyterian Church in Yorba Linda, California, each contribute chapters, as do others such as Paul Helm, R. Scott Clark, Guy Prentiss Waters, and Phil Johnson. They cover topics as diverse as Cornelius Van Til's epistemology to cultural engagement to an examination of Brian McLaren's doctrine (or lack thereof) of hell.

Each of the contributors to the volume comes at the task from a confessionally Reformed perspective. As David Wells asserts in his foreword to the book, "The Reformed have always been uneasy about the post-World War II evangelical alliance that brought together so many ministries and viewpoints into a working relationship around a small core of commonly held beliefs" (11). What's needed in today's evangelical climate, according to Wells, is a reaffirmation of the supremacy of the truthful Scriptures—and a proper Christian engagement of the culture will follow.

Gary L. W. Johnson sounds the doctrinal warning bell in his introduction to the book, paralleling Friedrich Schleiermacher's theological project with the proposals put forth by post-conservatives and emergent church adherents in the contemporary era—proposals that, if followed, will likely lead these evangelicals to accommodate their theology to today's "cultured despisers of religion." In his chapter on the doctrine of Scripture, Paul Wells assesses contemporary proposals on the humanity of the Bible from Donald Bloesch, Clark Pinnock, and Peter Enns—proposals he finds lacking, ultimately—and instead argues for four axes for "reimagineering" the humanity of the Bible.

John Bolt pens a chapter on evangelical theological method in which he argues that the best theology today will not only be characterized by the content of the biblical data, but also by "an explicit metaphysic that though it cannot arise directly from the biblical data—the Bible is not a book of metaphysics—is nonetheless consistent with Scripture and perhaps even coinheres with it" (62). Such a proposal is, according to Bolt, in the "great tradition" of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Turretin, and even Herman Bavinck, and will counter post-conservatives and those within the emergent church who "are extremely nervous about truth claims in general" (89).

Helm's essay provides an in-depth examination of the work of post-conservative theologian John R. Franke. Helm maintains that Franke ultimately argues merely for "a seriously deficient form of foundational theology" that "concedes too much to the culture and downplays the importance of truth" (93). Franke's overemphasis on the role of culture in the theological task leaves him with sociology triumphing over theology, Helm asserts, and a kind of epistemological uncertainty that makes the theological task much more difficult than it ought to be.

Clark argues that, contrary to assertions made by some within the emergent church—and most especially Brian McLaren—"there are objective, divinely revealed theological boundaries inherent and essential to Christianity" (112). Paul Kjoss Helseth argues that post-conservative evangelicals have misunderstood those in the Old Princeton tradition. He asserts "that the Princetonians were neither naïve theological realists nor rigid, uncompromising dogmatists, but that they weren't rigid, uncompromising dogmatists precisely because they weren't naïve theological realists" (129-30). Jeffrey C. Waddington argues that Cornelius Van Til was *not* a foundationalist, at least not in terms of the way that foundationalism is typically defined.

In his chapter, "Church and Community or Community and Church?", Gleason finds commonality between the emergent church and the Federal Vision and the New Perspective on Paul, for all three movements have shifted away from an emphasis on soteriology and toward a greater focus on ecclesiology. More specifically, he contends that the emergent church is focused on community at the expense of doctrine, and "is rushing headlong down the path of classic liberalism and/or the Social Gospel" (181). Gleason's lumping of Dan Kimball in with such emergent church adher-

ents as Doug Pagitt and Brian McLaren (172) may strike some readers as imprecise.

Waters compares New Testament theologian N. T. Wright with Brian McLaren, arguing that McLaren is dependent on Wright—especially when it comes to his views on Jesus and the Gospel accounts—though not always explicitly so. Phil Johnson argues that while the emergent church movement seeks theological diversity, Christians are instead to seek theological unity. He also argues that the emergent church movement is drifting toward disaster due to its participants' embrace of postmodernism, their doctrinal indifference, and their unwillingness to receive criticism. Martin Downes contends that several leaders in the emergent church, like Protestant liberals before them, have become entrapped doctrinally within the culture.

Greg D. Gilbert writes an incisive essay examining Brian McLaren's doctrine of hell. He roots McLaren's deficient doctrine of hell in his deficient view of the gospel. Gilbert examines also, somewhat tangentially, McLaren's view of the atonement of Christ and his approach to non-Christian religions. And Gary Gilley's concluding chapter examines postmodernism and how it is applied within the context of the emergent church movement, providing essentially his own survey of the entire movement. Gilley's description of medieval Catholicism as an "apostate religion" may distract some readers.

Anyone concerned about the doctrinal aberrations within post-conservative evangelicalism and the emergent church will benefit from this book. The essays are thoroughly footnoted, and positive proposals are often given in addition to negative critiques. As may be evident even from this brief survey, many of the essays in *Reforming or Conforming?* only loosely hold together, as the topics with which they deal are somewhat eclectic. Though the emergent church movement is itself quite diverse and varied, Brian McLaren is a common recipient of critique in many of the essays. Perhaps a clearer delineation of the various wings of the emerging church movement could have been helpful in several of the chapters, lest the reader receive the impression that someone like McLaren represents all.

In the months since these essays were first published, the emergent church movement has been in sharp decline—perhaps reflecting the vacuous nature of some of what came along with it. As the essays in *Reforming or Conforming?* point out, the theological foundations upon which much of post-conservatism and the emergent church are built are precarious. Given the movement's decline, then, perhaps the challenge going forward for conservative evangelicals is whether they will hear discerningly the good and right critiques of contemporary evangelicalism that the emergent church has had to offer.

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God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades. By Rodney Stark. New York: HarperOne, 2009, 276 pp., $24.99.

Baylor University sociologist Rodney Stark's books on religion are usually interesting and provocative, and *God's Battalions* is no exception. Stark argues that modern historians typically misconstrue the crusades. They commonly portray the crusades as a decadent Western imperialist assault on a morally and intellectually superior Islamic culture—an effort to despoil Muslims of land and wealth aided by religious bigotry, fanaticism, and superstition. Stark persuasively refutes this interpretation, and at the same time provides a compelling, attractive, and readable history of the crusades.

Stark's account of the violent Arab conquest of predominantly Christian lands beginning in the seventh century—Syria, Persia, Palestine, Egypt,

North Africa, Spain, Sicily, and southern Italy—is gripping. The claim that Islamic culture was superior, Stark demonstrates, is deeply flawed. He also refutes claims of Muslim tolerance. Muslim rulers in fact imposed severe religious, social, and civil restrictions, as well as onerous taxation, upon Christians and Jews, and massacres of Christians and Jews were not uncommon. Stark acknowledges that so-called Christian rulers often acted no less reprehensibly. He argues only that historians are mistaken to portray Muslim rule as tolerant and enlightened. Efforts to valorize medieval Muslim culture at the expense of Christian Europe are driven by politics, not by historical evidence.

Stark documents well the destruction of churches and the attacks on Christian pilgrims that prompted the Byzantine emperor to invite the Latin nations to come to his aid to free Jerusalem and make it safe for Christian pilgrims. Pope Urban II enlisted the nobility of Europe and urged upon them their duty before God to free Jerusalem, and he promised release from penance to all who fought from spiritual motives. Stark rightly concludes that the popes and other Europeans supported the crusades because Muslims had invaded lands that once belonged to Christians, and because they abused Christians under their rule and raided neighboring Christian lands. His account of the course of the crusades is helpful and interesting.

Starke's specialty is not the crusades or the medieval era, but he makes excellent use of the best scholarship available, and quotes frequently from medieval Christian and Muslim sources. More detailed volumes by medievalists are available—see the fine books by Jonathan Riley-Smith for example—but for a clear understanding of the crusades, this is a superb book.

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An Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism. By John D. Hannah. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 399 pp., $24.99.

Accomplished church historian John Hannah tells the story of Dallas Theological Seminary, an institution that has stood for evangelical conservatism, dispensational theology, and expository preaching. Along the way Hannah provides rich insights in American fundamentalism, evangelicalism, and the challenges of theological education. Hannah has taught at Dallas Seminary for many years and has an insider's sensitivities. He also made good use of the manuscript collections necessary for telling much of the story. Lewis Sperry Chafer established the seminary in 1924 at the height of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and was its president until 1952. Chafer was an evangelical's evangelical. An itinerant evangelist who lived in Northfield, Massachusetts, the site of D. L. Moody's summer conferences, Chafer became friends with the leaders the early twentieth century fundamentalism. Cyrus I. Scofield especially impressed him. Scofield mentored Chafer, and in 1911 put Chafer in charge of Scofield's expanding Bible teaching ministry. Chafer ran Scofield's itinerant Bible conferences, correspondence courses, and night schools in New York and Philadelphia. When Scofield died in 1921, Chafer took up his mantle and established Dallas Theological Seminary to advance Scofield's vision of effective Bible teaching.

Chafer designed the curriculum around Calvinism, Keswick holiness teaching, and dispensational premillennialism, which, due in part to Scofield's own interpretive notes in his popular reference Bible, had become the main features of the era's evangelicalism. Dispensationalism's recognition of Scripture's "right divisions" was the key to correct interpretation of the Bible. Chafer wanted to produce men who were skilled especially in expository preaching. Chafer wanted a premillennial Princeton.

From the beginning Dallas's relationship with

other fundamentalists was difficult. Chafer was disgusted by the aggressive, sensationalist, and dictatorial methods of fellow fundamentalists J. Frank Norris and William B. Riley. Fundamentalist Baptist leader John R. Rice attacked Chafer's views of evangelism, apparently because they were too Calvinistic. Harry Ironside and Moody Press defended Chafer's views. Bob Jones privately supported Rice but refused to criticize Chafer publicly. Westminster Seminary protested strongly Dallas's dispensationalism. Wheaton College president J. Oliver Buswell and Biola president John MacInnis criticized the seminary's exclusive insistence on dispensationalist interpretation.

Hannah's narrative illuminates Dallas's late twentieth century movement toward a broader evangelical identity. The school eschewed both strict Calvinism and strict dispensationalism. In 1977 the seminary released S. Lewis Johnson because of "his agreement with Dordtian Calvinism." The Board of Regents objected to his belief that Christ died for the elect alone and that regeneration preceded faith. President John Walvoord initially held that Johnson's views were compatible with the seminary's creed, but changed his mind, perhaps because he believed that Johnson had become strident and critical of the seminary's official position.

In the "Lordship salvation" controversy of the 1980s, New Testament professor Zane Hodges felt that there was still too much Calvinism, since many professors taught that acceptance of Jesus' Lordship was a necessary element of saving faith. John MacArthur and John Gerstner published refutations of Hodges's position, and some faculty sympathized more with MacArthur than with Hodges. The administration maintained that there was room for both views on the faculty.

This tolerance represented a trend in which some faculty in the 1980s and 1990s developed revisions of dispensational theology known as "progressive dispensationalism." John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, and others felt that progressive dispensationalism was erroneous and destructive, but the administration believed that it was acceptably within the bounds of the school's creed and tradition. Dallas was still located on the most conservative wing of evangelicalism (three faculty had to leave in 1987 for affirming John Wimber's views on the charismatic gifts), but now identified more with broad evangelicalism.

Hannah has made a fine contribution to the history of American evangelicalism.

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