

Reviews



DEUTERONOMY, by Jeffrey Tigay. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996. Pp. xlix + 548. \$60.00.

Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of their treasure what is new and what is old. (Matt 13:51-52)

For over 40 years, the Jewish Publication Society has sought to give voice to Rabbinic traditions and the findings of modern biblical research and to present them to English speaking audiences. The results have been impressive. The 1962 translation of *The Torah*, the 1985 translation of the complete Hebrew Scriptures, *The Tanakh*, and now, with the publications of Jeffrey Tigay's *Deuteronomy*, the complete five volume *JPS Torah Commentary*. Each is a scholarly and devotional jewel in its own right, pointing the reader to the Jewish community's centuries-old love for and life with the Book. Parish pastors, students and teachers, and other serious hearers of the Bible would do well to enter into a conversation with these treasures.

Deuteronomy is arranged like the other volumes of the *JPS Torah Commentary*. The Hebrew text is printed at the top of the page parallel to the JPS English Translation. Brief comments clarifying issues of language and historical background follow. The major divisions within the text receive detailed introductions and all this is placed between an excellent general introduction to Deuteronomy and one hundred forty pages of excursuses.

Jeffery Tigay teaches at the University of Pennsylvania where he has done critical research into the compiling, editing, and transmission of ancient near eastern legal texts. He is an excellent source critic who identifies the main strains of Deuteronomy's theology, such as radical monotheism, the centralization of sacrificial worship, humanitarianism, the land, and an emphasis on the covenant between God and Israel. But he does more than simply

trace sources. He asks questions about how Deuteronomy is connected to the rest of the biblical witness and explores how the message of this book functions in God's people's life of faith. The strongest points made in this commentary speak of Deuteronomy's impact on Jewish (and Christian) worship and ethical traditions.

Notwithstanding the fact that Psalms is the Bible's book of prayer, it was Deuteronomy that shaped the very form of Jewish worship. Deuteronomy sought to free religion from excessive attachment to sacrifice and priesthood, and to encourage rituals that teach love and reverence for God. Apart from the liturgy, Deuteronomy is the source of the idea that religious life should be based on a sacred book, and hence the obligation of all Jews, not only an elite class, to learn the Torah and teach it to their children (Deut 6:7).

Deuteronomy and the other volumes of the *JPS Torah Commentary* clearly show how the reading and exposition of scripture is an ongoing community exercise. Tigay places interpretations from medieval rabbis alongside of the findings of modern archaeologists. Both are respected and trusted. He thanks the editors of the series, Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok, a number of his colleagues and many others, including "physicians, veterinarians, scientists, zoo keepers, butchers, culinary specialists, gardeners and others who offered expert advice" (vii). Even little details, like the listing of the patrons and contributors who support the work of the Jewish Publication Society, leave the impression that this volume is an expression of the Jewish community's love and faith.

As is the case with any treasure, the matter of receiving and accepting it can be challenging. The fact is that many—if not most—Christian readers of *Deuteronomy* will find it sometimes difficult and obscure. These problems, however, are not the fault of the *JPS Torah Commentary*, but of our

own limited knowledge of Jewish scholarly traditions.

Many Christians, even those with a seminary education, tend to have a shallow exposure to the first five books of the Bible. For example, the Revised Common Lectionary's three-year cycle contains little more than thirty Torah texts; only nine are from Deuteronomy. Thus, preachers can easily avoid the Torah. We are under little pressure to invest in high-priced commentaries and even less to read them. Often the Torah, with its dietary, legal, and cultic regulations, is viewed as an uncomfortably "Jewish" and foreign resource.

The *JPS Torah Commentary* is thoroughly and proudly Jewish in theology and method. It makes no apologies for what it is. This can be a demanding commentary. It assumes its readers have an elementary Hebrew background and a passing familiarity with folks known by acronyms like Radak, Ramban, Rashbam and Rashi (eleventh- to thirteenth-century French Jewish commentators on the Bible and Talmud). At the very least, it assumes we will have the patience and willingness to listen and learn.

So, what would happen if a parish pastor dusted off that faded purple box of Hebrew vocabulary cards? What would happen if they opened their seldom read *Biblia Hebraica*? What if a student of the Bible would take a couple years to read Tigay's *Deuteronomy* and other volumes of the *JPS Torah Commentary*? (Remember, it took Luther ten years to complete his lectures on Genesis. Any journey through the Torah takes time!) But what if you did it? You would receive a jewel—a thoughtful, beautiful piece of scholarship. Your understanding of God's grace would be challenged, deepened, and changed. You might make this treasure your own...and share it with God's people.

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PAUL: A CRITICAL LIFE, by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor. New York: Oxford University, 1996. Pp. xvi + 416. \$35.00.

Of recent books on Paul, this is one of the most informative—and one of the most provocative. It is exceedingly rich in its attention to detail, illumining many aspects of the apostle's career. It also takes up a large number of contested matters, offering both helpful suggestions and, at times, rather far-fetched speculations.

The author seeks to follow the principle pioneered by John Knox in the use of sources, i.e., to use the letters of Paul as primary sources of information, and Acts as a supplement, but never as a corrective over against the letters (vi). He follows that approach almost always (but on page 133 he favors information in Acts over that of Paul), making use of both sources with considerable confidence.

The opening chapter is decisive for the whole volume. There Murphy-O'Connor sets forth a chronological framework within which to place the events and letters of Paul's career. The chronology proposed is too detailed to be reviewed here. Some distinctive points are that the Jerusalem Conference took place in A.D. 51 (rather than the more usual 48 or 49) after extensive missionary work in Galatia, Macedonia, and Corinth already; that Paul was released from Roman imprisonment in A.D. 64 and made an abortive trip to Spain; that he subsequently carried on a two-year ministry around the Aegean (A.D. 64-66); and that he was martyred in Rome in A.D. 67. In all of this, the author accepts the authenticity of the seven undisputed letters of Paul (Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess, and Philemon), but argues also for the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians (110-14), Colossians (237-39), and 2 Timothy (357-59), but not the other pastorals. He considers Ephesians deuterio-Pauline (91, 356). His arguments for the authenticity of the three letters in question are not likely to convince anyone who considers them deuterio-Pauline on other grounds.

Some intriguing proposals are made concerning the career of Paul that must be taken seriously. The agreement from the Jerusalem conference, by which Paul was to go to the Gentiles and others to "the

circumcision" (Gal 2:9), had neither geographic nor ethnic connotations. Rather, it meant simply that Paul's converts (whether Jews or Gentiles) would be accepted by Jerusalem purely on the basis of faith in Christ (143). The falling out between Peter and Paul at Antioch was rooted in the prior conviction of James that, if Gentiles need not be circumcised, then at least Jewish national identity had to be preserved at all costs among those of Jewish background, and Peter sided with him on that point (151-52). The so-called "Judaizers" in Galatia and Paul at Antioch were from the church at Antioch (not Jerusalem), and their tasks were to undermine Paul's authority and to put across their own version of Christianity with clarity and power (194-95), including the circumcision of Paul's Gentile converts. What propelled the Judaizers was the influx of Gentiles into the church in such numbers that the "vision of the church as the flowering of Judaism was in serious danger" (135). Moreover, members of the Antiochian community considered the Pauline churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Corinth to be their own responsibility, since those churches had been founded while Paul was their agent (194).

The author makes other proposals that are interesting, but of less import. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor 12:7) was simply "opposition to his ministry" in his churches (321). The false teachers at Colossae were not outsiders, nor opponents of Paul, but persons who followed a fad from esoteric Jewish teaching (248).

In addition to the more carefully argued proposals made in the book, there are some that are simply asserted. The author claims that the "spirit-people" at Corinth were followers of Apollos, who had been influenced specifically by Philo (275, 282). He claims that the letter to the Galatians was actually addressed to the intruders at Galatia, not to the Galatians themselves. And it is strange to read Murphy-O'Connor's claim twice (279, 289), on the basis of 1 Cor 11:2-16, that male homosexuals presided at the liturgy at Corinth, causing offense.

There are positions taken and assertions made that are highly speculative. The claim that Paul spent a year in Illyricum be-

tween his alleged return from Spain and his arrival back in Rome (363) is one. Claims for specific dates abound but remain speculative. And descriptions of what Paul saw on his journeys (257), and even what he thought (107, 251, 257), stretch one's credulity. In addition, the book should have had a good proofreader. The printing errors—errors of spelling, use of wrong fonts, dittographies, a run-on sentence, etc.—on pp. v, vi, 2, 11, 79, 87, 115, 121, 215, 243, 248, 254, 257, 262, 267, 275, 276, 370 are disconcerting.

In spite of risks taken, and sometimes because of them, the author has provided a highly informative and insightful book. He makes extensive use of Greco-Roman literary sources (citing over three dozen classical authors), Jewish sources, archaeological information, and geographical, topographical, and climatic observations in the places Paul traveled and inhabited. In addition, his book contains maps, illustrations, and indexes which are helpful.

The book engages, and does not simply cite, the work of other scholars in the field. Rather than summarizing the thought of Paul, the attention is on the particularities of the letters. Exegetical work, rather than systematization, is evident and insightful.

The book is without doubt very important. Its most challenging points are difficult to maintain within Pauline scholarship today, i.e., the authenticity of ten letters and two Roman imprisonments sandwiching a trip to Spain.

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DEEP SYMBOLS: THEIR POSTMODERN EFFACEMENT AND RECLAMATION, by Edward Farley. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996. Pp. 145. \$16.00 (paper).

In his *Deep Symbols*, Ed Farley has written a profound and prophetic book. As such, however, it is not an easy book to read. And the dis-ease that attends the reading is of two sorts. First, Farley is a top-notch philosophical theologian who is treating a complex and difficult topic. He undertakes a "thick description" of "words

of power," of "god-words"; this does not make for light reading. Moreover, while the language here is not overly technical, this writing does rest on the entire constructive theological project that Farley began years ago with *Ecclesial Man* (1975) and *Ecclesial Reflection* (1982) and has continued to the present with *Good and Evil* (1990) and *Divine Empathy* (1996). Farley now lifts up a theme that surfaced many times in his other writings. Not far into *Deep Symbols*, one finds oneself wishing one had read those previous works beforehand. Second, like all prophetic writing, this work is disturbing. Without being accusing or judgmental, Farley nevertheless calls minister theologians to task, and to a task. While not hard to hear, this call is still not so very easy to listen to.

Against the backdrop of postmodernity, Farley explores the "existence, infection, and possible convalescence" of the deep, life symbols by which communities have their being. While there is much ambiguity about our new world order, hardly anyone would deny that something has happened, that reality isn't what it used to be. And Farley makes bold to suggest that one fundamental aspect of the change (and the accompanying anxiety and dis-possession we may be feeling) relates to the erosion, diminishment, and atrophy of words of power. He examines five deep symbols: tradition, reality, obligation (duty), law, and hope. In each case, he asks after postmodernity's peculiar effect on the symbol and whether those which have been diminished in power can be "reenchanted" and rethought. Farley's selected symbols nest with numerous related terms and so draw larger dimensions of human life into the discussion. His suggestive examples gather, like a magnet, those from our own lived experience in family and community, church and ministry. These insightful pages ring true.

Just so, the disturbing character of Farley's exploration is manifest as one recognizes that he is not talking merely about terminology, a shift in language use, but about a basic threat to human and Christian community. The unsettling implication is that if there is indeed something about the present epoch that disallows the

reclamation (assessment and rethinking) of deep symbols, then the prospect of human life in any community is also diminished. It would be easy to despair, to declare our situation hopeless. And Farley does not offer a how-to in deep symbol repair. If readers are looking for easy-to-follow steps to reclaim god-words, they will not find them here. What is accomplished in these pages is something far more subtle and profound. This book's strength is the careful description of the symbolics that attend human being, and also the recasting of the very understanding of deep symbols in the sphere of the interhuman, that most often neglected aspect of human reality. In doing so, Farley catches the tune, still to be heard in all human community, that harmonizes with the Creativity ever at work there, and gives voice once more to the sustaining words that empower our life together. Without such a theological reenvisioning of the task, it would be truly an impossible job to center on, and sort out, and embody the deep symbols once and again. Yet, in so far as words of power persist as themes of sermons, liturgies, Bible studies in Christian communities, faithful reflective assessment of them is called forth. In a final chapter, Farley recalls Tillich's understanding of the interconnection between love, power, and justice to sketch the organic relations first between obligation, tradition, and law, and then reality and hope. The religious counterparts to these deep symbols become partners in the conversation.

In an earlier work, Farley illustrated a point by saying, "When modern teenagers sing in church, 'my sinful self my only shame,' virtually nothing comes to mind that has anything to do with the way they experience themselves, their peers, or their social world" (*Good and Evil*, 120). Any minister who has been met with blank stares from a class of confirmands will not argue the image. Of course, there may be congregations where the god-words, sin, human evil, and redemption seem relatively undiminished in power. But one would be hard pressed to stretch this claim to the wider community. Out there are teens for whom such notions do not compute. Indeed, *Deep Symbols* was not written "just for Chris-

tian believers or members of religious groups" (xi). No mission-minded congregation has concern only to preach to the choir. As Farley says, "Pastors, teachers, students, lay leaders, and church members all risk the health of the church when they take the words of power for granted" (27). None of them who read this book with understanding will ever step into a pulpit, or offer pastoral counsel, or teach a Sunday School class with the same perspective again. There will be new attentiveness to god-words born of the theological vision and understanding that is offered here. This book is and will be a challenge to the church.

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UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY, by Michael Downey. New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1997. Pp. 156. \$12.95 (paper).

PRACTICING OUR FAITH, edited by Dorothy Bass. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997. Pp. 231.

Ten years ago, when I was preparing a presentation on spirituality and modern life, I reviewed the listings in the seminary bookstore on the subject; at that time there were three partial shelves of books on this topic. Recently, when I looked again, the number of shelves devoted to books on spirituality and prayer totaled *more than three dozen!* This mushrooming trend is noted early in Michael Downey's book, *Understanding Christian Spirituality*, when he reports that the largest sales increase in nonfiction books in the twenty-first century is predicted to be in religion/spirituality. "The projection is that there will be 82 percent growth in these books between 1987 and 2020" (6).

If this projection is anywhere near correct, then it is important for pastors and general readers to develop some criteria to discern which books are worth acquiring, reading, and using. Moreover, it is increasingly crucial to generate some working definitions of prayer and spirituality for daily life. After all, a lot of the material

out there is superficial or misleading. Downey's book and the book edited by Dorothy Bass, *Practicing Our Faith*, are two helpful resources for these tasks. Neither is so technical as to elude the general reader, yet both are weighty enough to avoid sliding down the slope of sentimentalism, which is frequently the case in popular books on spirituality.

Eschewing "feel-good" spirituality, Downey begins his lucid examination of the subject by identifying deeper, more resonant spiritual trends. Although he regards with caution—even skepticism—the interests arising from psychological insight, the fascination with perceived wisdom from the east, and the claims of self-help movements, Downey nonetheless acknowledges these trends as a rising tide of spirituality in contemporary society. Agreeing with Phyllis A. Tickle, religion editor of the publishing and book-selling trade journal *Publishers Weekly*, Downey posits that "we in the U.S. are undergoing a second Reformation in our understanding and practice of religion and spirituality" (11).

He raises a series of questions such as "What is spirituality?"; "Why spirituality today?"; "What is *Christian* spirituality?" In turn he gives a measured response based on a Roman Catholic reading of the Christian tradition. Even though the primary audience may be Catholics, interested readers from the broader Christian tradition can gain insight into the wellsprings at the heart of this discussion. For example, referring to the work of Karl Rahner, Downey talks about the ordinary as a vehicle for God's grace in the world. "Human communication with God occurs in and through the whole array of words, actions, objects, events, indeed each and every dimension of human life, not just prayer, asceticism, meditation, contemplation, and other explicitly spiritual practices" (35).

This emphasis on the broad spectrum of human experience allows the author to establish a wide base for discussion. It is refreshing to find that while Christian spirituality proceeds from an understanding of the relational dynamic of the Trinity, it is never for Downey separated from active life in the world. Spirituality is

not the province of the clergy or the religious on their knees; "an authentic Christian spirituality [is] attentive to all creation, human life, and indeed the whole world as the dwelling of the Holy Spirit" (86).

Opening the discussion in this way has a freshening effect, but it also presents some problems. One is that the quiet and solitude of the devotional life can get lost in exhausting activity. Moreover, the list of the forms of spirituality that Downey discusses reads a little like the liberal agenda: feminist spirituality, spirituality of liberation, ecological spirituality, spirituality of cultural pluralism, marginality spirituality. It reads well, but do we smell in it the faintest whiff of political correctness?

While Dorothy Bass's book reflects similar concerns, her approach is quite different. Whereas Downey proceeds to a discussion of spirituality from a theological perspective, the essays in *Practicing Our Faith* derive from the practical. After all, if someone can be engaged in the practice of law or medicine, one can make a case for practicing faith. The case is made in fourteen chapters by different authors, each of whom discusses a different dimension of Christian life in the world. In one provocative chapter, for example, Larry Rasmussen discusses how communities are shaped and governed. "The shaping of communities is the practice by which we agree to be reliable personally and organizationally" (120). Proceeding from this premise, Rasmussen describes the church as an alternative community that sets a table and invites a diverse family of guests to tell stories and break bread together.

Other chapters discuss such matters as hospitality, keeping Sabbath, forgiveness, dying well, and singing our lives. The latter essay by Don E. Saliers is particularly suggestive, full of rich, intriguing material. Saliers affirms the capacity of song to enrich and enhance life, particularly the Christian life. "Whatever people can say with passion and in heightened speech they will end up singing in some form....The tensions, resolutions, moods, convictions, and playfulness of everyday life are translated into the patterns of sound. But so also are the deepest mysteries of love and death, of loss and recovery

of the sense of life" (182). Such insights can lead Christians to rich discussion as they puzzle through what and why they sing in praise to God.

This book seems designed for discussion and it is accompanied by a helpful discussion guide. Groups who read the essays in Bass's book together should find themselves engaged in both conversation and action regarding such matters as health, testimony, even household economics, all of which concern Christians in the modern world. The essays from a wide range of ecumenical writers are sometimes uneven; but all are provocative. They are augmented with italicized quotes from the Bible, literature, songs, and devotional writings. Suggestions for further reading and reflection close the book. The breadth and content of these essays warrant the warm endorsements at the beginning of the book from a wide company of readers such as Kathleen Norris, Robert Wuthnow, Robert Coles, and Bernard Cooke.

Taken together, these two books illustrate different approaches to the burgeoning area of spirituality. Each provides material for reflection and discussion. They should be valuable resources for pastors, alert adult readers, and students who are trying to get a dependable handle on the vast topics of spirituality and Christian living. Downey defines that task well when he affirms that spirituality should neither be ignored nor allowed to trickle off into self-generated satisfactions: "an authentic understanding of the spiritual life as experience, be it our own or that of others past and present, can only be of benefit in our faltering efforts to be conformed to the person of Christ through life in the Spirit" (140).

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**ENTERTAINMENT EVANGELISM:
TAKING THE CHURCH PUBLIC**, by
Walt Kallestad. Nashville: Abingdon,
1996. Pp. 144.

I have to admit that, although Kallestad's title and the images it conjures up have been repugnant to me, I admire his

willingness to hold on to the term “entertainment evangelism” and to face directly the issue of reaching a modern secular culture with the Christian message. I read this book in California in conversation with friends who, passionate for the gospel, daily must seek innovative ways to communicate Christ to a whole new breed of “cultured despisers” (or, perhaps better, blithe ignorers) of the faith. These friends (pastors and laity) are forced by their context and their faith to try to discern what is essentially Christian (the gospel itself, rather than its cultural manifestations) and invent new ways to proclaim that essential gospel in a climate that is, at least at first blush, remarkably uninterested or unresponsive.

In that quest, people view Kallestad as an ally. And, no doubt, he is. Walt Kallestad, senior pastor of the Community Church of Joy in Phoenix (the fastest growing Lutheran congregation in the United States), is firmly committed to the stated vision of that congregation: “That all may know Jesus Christ, and become a responsible member of his church, we share his love with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit.” Taking Paul’s “I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some” as a motto (it appears as the epigraph to the book), he is willing to do virtually whatever it takes to bring his vision to fruition.

At some level, one wonders what the anti-Kallestad fuss was all about, for obviously one can only cheer what Kallestad is for: the church as a vibrant, welcoming community, clear in its vision and creative, streamlined, and effective in its mission. His criticism that some of what passes for worship and preaching in contemporary congregations is simply boring and incompetent is, alas, valid; his insistence that new times and new conditions require new forms of worship and new tools for evangelism is as true now as it has always been.

Kallestad’s book offers practical guidance in one way to meet the new age: building a congregation, preferably a very large one, that meets people’s needs for community, meaning, and, yes, “high-quality, substantial Christian entertainment” (21) in the fullest and broadest pos-

sible way. His is, as Lyle Schaller observes on the dust cover, an “instruction manual for church in the twenty-first century. It explains how to build a congregation on Christ, prayer, music, joy, creativity, participatory worship, trust, learning, teams, small groups, missions, and the love of God.” And Schaller is right: the book does all those things.

Unmentioned in the book, to be sure, are other faithful communities of Christ that meet today’s challenges in other ways: small base communities, for example, of people committed to social change in the name of the gospel; house churches of people struggling to maintain a biblically based life in the midst of a world they find increasingly alien; liturgical communities with a strong ministry of word and sacrament that is anything but boring and that feeds them to live in service of God and neighbor. In other words, there *are* other models; but those who find Kallestad’s model appropriate for their situation will find help in this book—how to focus a people’s vision, present a variety of compelling worship opportunities, develop a community of prayer and fulfillment, and structure an organization that enables the vision. One could only wish that the whole church shared Kallestad’s hopeful outlook for church and ministry.

Kallestad begins his book with the debate that arose over his 1990 article on entertainment evangelism in *The Lutheran* magazine. He tackles the easy criticisms easily: that we have never done it this way before, that change is painful, that people are simply either jealous or suspicious of success. Somewhere, though, if he is to continue in this debate, he must take on the more difficult criticisms, which in this book, at least, he does not do. There is, for example, no significant discussion of the relation between style and content, particularly of the degree to which adopting an entertainment style baptizes the content of a culture of diversion. Although Kallestad recognizes that the entertainment mode and the megachurch model promote a star clergy and a cult of personality (20-21), and although he knows this can be dangerous if the star falls (à la Jimmy Swaggert or Jim Bakker), he does not address the problems for the church inherent in a cult of person-

ality even if the star does not fall. Is the system itself compatible with a New Testament notion of Christian community? Can the church name America's idolatrous worship of its stars (no one pays anyone but gods what we pay our entertainers) if the church's congregations are built around stars of its own?

Surprisingly, there is no serious mention in a book on evangelism of sin and evil. Is it possible to proclaim a Savior and Redeemer if we are not expressly clear about why we need redemption and salvation? If sin compromises cultures as well as individuals, as it does, what will it mean for the church to be successful? Peter Storey, the United Methodist Bishop of Johannesburg—hardly one uninterested in the relevance of the gospel to culture—is very leery of talking about a “successful” church. “I know,” he has said, “what a faithful church looks like. I don't know if I know what a successful church looks like.” True, this is not South Africa, and, worse, there is a lot of nonsense out there that passes for a “theology of the cross”—as though, for example, failure is ipso facto a sign of fidelity rather than merely of incompetence and sloth—but it is also true that those who emphasize church growth must always and forever be their own most severe critics, rigorously raising the question of whether or not the genuine scandal of the gospel and the cutting edge of the law are being soft-pedaled for the sake of marketing. People who know Kallestad and his ministry insist he does not truncate the Christian message. Still, in this book he does not face the hard questions; until he does, external critics will no doubt do it for him—at best, not because of sour grapes but precisely because of a passion for worship and the gospel that, though different in expression, is no less consuming than Kallestad's.

It is puzzling, for example, that Kallestad's closing chapter, including a discussion of “The Theology of Entertainment Evangelism,” works primarily from John 1:14a (“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”)—thereby affirming the church's radical entry into the world—without ever mentioning the terrible reality that in John's Gospel the light shines “in the dark-

ness”; while the darkness finally cannot overcome the light, it (the darkness, the world and its cultures—all of them, traditional and contemporary) do crucify the word of life in the interim. Kallestad's insufficient attention to our culture's sin and evil not only compromises his easy appropriation of cultural media and opens him to the slings and arrows of the traditional critics, more important, it calls into question the ability of his message to meet the contemporary world in all its ambiguity, where surely everything is not joy. Karl Menninger and F. Scott Peck have reminded us that, even from a psychological perspective, an affirmation of the world that is unable to name the realities of sin and evil will not be able to overcome or even cope with the world.

Kallestad wants to “take the church public,” though his definition of the term would not be shared by others with a similar desire. For Kallestad, a “public” church is user-friendly in its preaching and worship, maintains a visible profile in the community, appeals to the endorsement and participation of a community's movers and shakers, and is, above all, friendly and inviting (75-84). Though no one wants an unfriendly church, this is quite a different definition of “public” than that of, say, Martin Luther King, Jr., in his confrontation of his own community's movers and shakers, or of Richard John Neuhaus in his worry over the “naked public square.” Kallestad's “public” church is worthy of consideration, but it has no monopoly on its definition of “public” ministry.

Since Kallestad's book is largely (and legitimately) a how-to manual or motivational talk for those interested in emulating his model of ministry, he might find it unfair to criticize it for what it does not do. Kallestad might argue that he has no time for the internal debate because he is busy doing evangelistic ministry. A fair response. Nevertheless, the debate will not go away, and for good reasons. Both biblical theology (“the Word became flesh”) and McLuhanesque modernism (“the medium is the message”) recognize a profound relation between form and content. Kallestad's passion for creativity and innovation is well taken and instructive, but we

must also continue to ask and ask again just what it is that we are called to be creative about.

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LIES MY TEACHER TOLD ME: EVERYTHING YOUR AMERICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOK GOT WRONG, by James W. Loewen. New York: The New Press, 1995. Pp. x + 372.

There are certain secular books which every Christian pastor should read. James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me* is one such book. Loewen assesses official American history as it is presented in twelve leading textbooks, and he compares the histories tendered there with the truth about American history. What Loewen finds is a pattern of white-washing, obfuscation, and falsehood. The only suitable label he can find for this pattern is "lies." Because ministry with integrity will engage the culture, and because history as it happened and as it is remembered help form the culture, pastors will profit from reading Loewen's work.

The pageant of misinformation includes both falsehoods which are perpetuated and truths which are either distorted or denied. The book is so full of salient information that it defies responsible summarization. Nevertheless, I will include a few samples. Among the falsehoods which textbooks perpetuate are: the belief that Columbus launched his journey because Europe needed spices and the Turks had cut off the spice trade (which was disproved in 1915); the fiction that America was "settled" starting with the Mayflower in 1620 (Native Americans reached the continent ca. 30,000 B.C., and the Spanish had settled in the American west by the late 1500s); the depiction of the abolitionist John Brown as "insane" (Brown was not considered insane by anyone who knew him, including Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman, the second of whom would have been with Brown at Harper's Ferry if not for a last-minute illness, and it wasn't until 1900 that Brown's image was changed from hero to lunatic);

and the portrayal of post-Civil War reconstructionists as "scalawags" and "carpetbaggers" who exploited the South (the terms were "coined by white Southern Democrats to defame their opponents" [189]), but who in fact largely supported black rights and improved southern life.

Among the truths that textbooks ignore or simply misreport are: the use of Native Americans as slaves in America and as cargo in the slave trade; the fact that before European contact, the Native American population was between 10 and 20 million (these people were largely wiped out by European epidemics); the fact that from Lincoln until Woodrow Wilson the federal government was desegregated (Wilson re-segregated it); the leading role which many whites played in the abolition and civil rights movements; and the fact that Helen Keller was a passionate socialist (not simply a role-model for self-improvement). I have included this brief list only as a sample, not a survey, of the facts which the book reveals. No information communicated in this review can in any way replace what will be learned by reading the book.

Loewen attributes the pattern of deception in history textbooks to several factors: the desire to produce heroes for students, the impulse to be patriotic, the perceived need to make students "feel good" about America, and of course plain old racism. Woodrow Wilson is a case in point of the desire to produce heroes for students to admire. When Bill Clinton was reelected to a second term, Vice President Al Gore said that Clinton was taking a proud place in history with Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Woodrow Wilson, and F. D. Roosevelt. Most textbooks portray Wilson, the founder of the League of Nations, and president when women's suffrage was passed, as a hero. But as Loewen points out, the truth about Wilson shows he was no hero. Wilson was a vitriolic racist who re-segregated the federal government; closed the Democratic party to blacks; and submitted legislation to curtail black civil rights. Though U. S. Grant had largely dispersed the KKK following the Civil War, during Wilson's administration it flourished to national power. As

president of Princeton University he refused to admit blacks.

Wilson also abused U. S. military power to an unprecedented degree. Under Wilson, the United States intervened [i.e., invaded!] Latin America more often than at any other time in our history. We landed troops in Mexico in 1914, Haiti in 1915, the Dominican Republic in 1916, Mexico again in 1916 (and nine more times before the end of Wilson's presidency), Cuba in 1917, and Panama in 1918. Throughout his administration Wilson maintained forces in Nicaragua, using them to determine Nicaragua's president and to force passage of a treaty preferential to the United States (13).

Wilson choreographed the U. S. entrance into World War I, as well. "In 1917...he started sending secret monetary aid to the 'White' side of the Russian civil war. In the summer of 1918 he authorized a naval blockade of the Soviet Union and sent expeditionary forces to Murmansk, Archangel, and Vladivostok to help overthrow the Russian Revolution....American forces penetrated westward from Vladivostok to Lake Baikal...our troops finally left Vladivostok on April 1, 1920" (14). But textbooks don't teach these facts about Wilson, because "heroification prevents textbooks from showing Wilson's shortcomings" (21).

Loewen deserves special praise on two

points. First, he is honest about how accurate history can be. He admits that history is often about approximate probability and not absolute fact. He chastises textbooks for failing to admit that historians have major disagreements about "what actually happened." Historical data often conflict, are often scarce, and historians disagree about how to interpret the data. He believes students would find history more interesting if historians owned up to this reality. Second, he shows how textbooks will often admit an unsavory fact only to undermine the fact in the surrounding prose.

Loewen's book can be a painful read at times, because it brings to light truths about our national history that are unpleasant. Nor is Loewen's book perfect. At times I disagreed with Loewen on his interpretation of a historical particularity, especially in a section in which he defends trade unions and the universally meritorious effects of education. Nor is this book a cure-all for what ails American history. Loewen is often as blind in his prejudices as the authors of the twelve textbooks. But this is a fine piece of work. Every moment spent reading it is a profitable moment. I commend it to all readers.

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