



# Book Reviews

**April 2016**

*Section Editors: Craig Nesson, Ralph Klein, Troy Troftgruben*

***Solidarity Ethics: Transformation in a Globalized World.*** By Rebecca Todd Peters. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4514-6558-7. xx & 141. Paperback. \$39.00.

Can beneficiaries of the unjust global economic order work for a just and sustainable world? They can and should endeavor to transform the world, responds Rebecca Todd Peters. She adds that it is possible only in solidarity with the victims of an unjust world order. Solidarity, according to Peters, is the foundation for social change.

Locating the ethic of solidarity in the larger field of Christian social ethics, Peters invites readers to understand their privilege, transcend differences, build relationships with others, and engage in structural change. Chapter 1 surveys and summarizes different historical and contemporary—political and theological—theories of solidarity, placing them in their historical contexts. Highlighting the significance of moral habits and intuitions in social change, Chapter 2 categorizes three responses of people of the first world to poverty: sympathy, responsibility, and mutuality. Peters identifies the strengths and limitations of sympathy and responsibility, proposing mutuality as an ideal way to build solidarity. Surveying prophetic and pragmatic responses to structural injustice, Chapter 3 calls for a new theology, especially for people of privilege, based on the principles of social justice and sustainability. Metanoia, honoring difference, accountability, and action are each integral tasks in this ethic.

The following three chapters offer practical ways that people of privilege can live into the solidarity ethic. Chapter 4 invites the reader to be alert to one's privilege, examine the history of unjust structures, and consciously seek lifestyle and social changes. In Chapter 5, Peters suggests practical ways of living into justice, evolving alternative economies, and realigning relationships. Exhibiting exuberant hope for a just society, the book calls for interfaith efforts toward a just and sustainable global order.

Looking at poverty and justice with a liberationist lens, Peters takes the economic context seriously, engages the scriptures, challenges structural issues, and calls for community action. Addressed to Christian communities of the United States, she unravels complex and challenging concepts in gentle and accessible language. Peters offers a rare combination of prophetic voice and practical wisdom. Congregations will find the book helpful both for personal study and for use in church study classes.

*James Taneti  
Campbell University*

***Women's Socioeconomic Status and Religious Leadership in Asia Minor in the First Two Centuries C.E.*** By Katherine Bain. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. ISBN: 1-4514-6992-6. xiii & 210 pages. Paperback. \$49.00.

In her first and brilliant book, Katherine Bain illumines the reader's understanding of women's status and leadership in the early Christian communities. Interpreting ancient texts and funerary inscriptions of the past from a feminist perspective, Bain argues that both gender and wealth determined the social status and religious leadership of women in the first two centuries of the Christian era.

This dissertation-turned-book is divided into four chapters. In her introduction, Bain surveys the previous studies, including that of her mentor Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, on women's status in the early Christian history. She also introduces the theoretical lens she uses in her research. Chapter 1 reviews the debate on whether wealth or gender or both determined the religious leadership of women in antiquity. Only understanding women's status in socioeconomic institutions of household, patronage, and slavery would enable one to determine women's religious status, Bain concludes. In the second chapter, Bain buttresses her thesis with the case of wealthy women and their household status in Asia Minor in the first two centuries of the Common Era. According to Bain, in addition to wealth, marital status of a woman is another determining factor in her social status. With a fascinating interpretation of biblical and extra-biblical texts and inscriptions, Bain in the third chapter illumines our understanding of biblical women such as Phoebe. Identifying different occupations that slave women were engaged in, chapter 4 argues that slave women were not completely denied access to wealth, but is inconclusive on whether slave women could hold patronage of religious groups as their free counterparts did.

Bain's conclusions enrich the riveting conversation on women's status in Christian origins, started two decades ago by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza. With her skillful interpretation of ancient texts and funerary monuments, Bain dispels the popular constructs of "silent" women in the early Christian movement. Women, according to Bain, did provide religious leadership in the early Christian communities as patrons and preachers. She, however, does not ignore the attempts of male bishops to silence women. Committed to producing knowledge for greater justice, Bain provides professional biblical scholars and amateur Christian leaders a general background to the New Testament world and an in-depth word analysis to understand key terms in regard to the status of women in the early church.

*James Taneti  
Campbell University*



***Before Nature: A Christian Spirituality.*** By H. Paul Santmire. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4514-7300-1. xxvii & 253 pages. Paper. \$39.00.

**H**. Paul Santmire with this book culminates a career, spanning over forty years, devoted to Christian ministry in communion with and advocacy for God's creation. This publication provides a lifetime of reflection on the spiritual dimension related to human interdependence with God and nature, a worthy bookend to his earlier classic, *The Travail of Nature*, published in 1985. Santmire has been prescient and prophetic in his commitment to ecological theology even before this field attained its name and following.

At the heart of this spirituality, which is intimately related to nature, Santmire advocates for permeating one's life with what he has constructed as "the Trinity Prayer": "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit, come and reign" (23). The proof is in the practice, and the author makes a compelling case in commending the Trinity Prayer to his readers and to future generations, not least of all because the mystery of the Trinity invites us deeply into the mystery of God's entire creation. Praying the Trinity prayer provides not only a thread tying together the book but a practice for integrating all of life and a sign of our eschatological hope.

Even more mysteriously, from time to time, between the petitions of the Trinity Prayer, I reflect about those particular creatures—the monarch butterfly, the purple beech, and my wife Laurel—as creatures that have been given being and becoming by the two hands of God, Christ the Good Shepherd and the Spirit, the Lifegiving One. Those created realities are what they are insofar as they are held together by the cosmic Christ, and insofar as they are sustained in their sufferings by the same cosmic Christ, as they may suffer in different ways. The same three creatures of God have also become what they have become because of eliciting powers of the Spirit, drawing them into ever new realizations of being, toward their ultimate eternal fulfillment in God (233).

Not only a book of testimony about the author's own personal journey into the mystery of our Trinitarian God's love for nature, it is an invitation to contemplate and enter into the presence of the God who will "be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). I recommend this book for many reasons: its stirring prose, its references to relevant literature, its theological maturity, its spiritual depth, and its passionate witness by a saint in love with nature and the God who created. Thanks be to the Triune God!

Craig L. Nesson  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

***A Church Undone: Documents from the German Christian Faith Movement, 1932–1940.*** Selected, translated, and introduced by Mary M. Solberg. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4514-6472-6. xvii & 486 pages. Paper. \$59.00.

**M**any who know the stories of Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Paul Schneider as representatives of the Confessing Church may assume that resistance to the Nazification of the Protestant Church was widespread. Nothing could be further from the truth. The vast majority of those identifying with the Confessing Church primarily resisted only insofar as they opposed German Christian interference in church government, not because of ethical objections to eliminationist policies against Jewish people or other victims of the Hitler regime.

This collection, expertly translated and introduced by Mary Solberg, provides readers and researchers materials, chronologically ordered, not previously available in English. The introduction locates the selections in historical context and poses the haunting ethical question: "If we were the German people of the time, could we expect to have responded any better?" The book includes a fascinating genealogy of the German Christian movement (44) and other photos that assist us to imagine the literary world in which the German Christians operated, including a photo of Luther with this quote: "I was born to serve my Germans, and them I will serve" (178). Luther's anti-Semitic writings played an enormous role in the disaster here documented.

Each of the twenty-one chapters deserves individual attention. Perhaps most unnerving is the speech by Gerhard Kittel on "The Jewish Question," delivered already on June 1, 1933, in which he explicitly verbalizes, even while discounting, the possibility of "violent extermination of the Jews" (207). Solberg comments: "What is chilling about this 1933 statement is first that it was made at all—in a public lecture by a highly regarded teacher-scholar. . . . Furthermore, Kittel seems to dismiss the "option" of extermination chiefly on the grounds of expedience. . . . With historical hindsight, Kittel's statement and the complete absence of any expressed moral compunction take our breath away" (32–33). Other representative documents are "The Original Guidelines of the German Christian Faith Movement," "Speech at the Sports Palace at Berlin," "God's Word in German: The Sermon on the Mount, Germanized," and "The Godesberg Declaration and Responses."

This volume also includes "Theological Existence Today!" by Karl Barth, representative of the minority opposition to the German Christian tide. Selections by other major theologians—Kittel, Emanuel Hirsch, and Paul Althaus—demonstrate the varying degrees to which the theological establishment coalesced in support of the Third Reich. Taken together, the writings exhibit the effectiveness of propaganda, here disguised in theological arguments, so to permeate public discourse that unthinkable premises begin to be taken for granted. This publication serves as a



cautionary tale about the nature of public discourse in our own time, needful of confessing.

I recommend reading this anthology alongside of Susannah Heschel's *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*, which details the role of the theological faculty at Jena and especially the career of Walter Grundmann, who directed the "Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence in German Church Life" at Eisenach in the shadow of the Wartburg Castle. Grundmann's excerpt in this collection illustrates the extent to which denying the Jewish identity of Jesus had become commonplace in the period leading up to, during, and even after the Nazi era. This volume makes available long-needed resource material in a well-designed collection to serve both as historical record and mirror for the theological challenges we face.

Craig L. Nessian  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

---

***Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible Through Palestinian Eyes.*** By Mitri Raheb. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-6269-8065-5. x & 166 pages. Paper. \$20.00.

The author serves as senior pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church and president of Dar al-Kalima University College in Bethlehem, Palestine. This book seeks to deconstruct distorted narratives that obfuscate political realities in the conflict between Israel and Palestine and to appeal to the biblical narrative for reclaiming and constructing a narrative that serves the cause of genuine democracy and peace for both nations. 0

Raheb locates the current conflict and struggle in a history of empires and occupations that stretches back to biblical times. Key to his argument is the claim that the State of Israel today functions as Empire and should not be facily identified with the biblical Israel. To do the latter results in a form of religious identity politics, as formulated by American Evangelical Christians, which evades the obligations of a neighbor politics that would privilege protection of the persecuted. Rather, the biblical narrative makes clear God's defense of the weak, Jesus' empowering ministry for the marginalized, and Spirit's inspiring of creative resistance.

The biblical narrative provides energy for imagining a new and different Middle East: "Without a new driving vision and without allowing for such an imaginative process to take place, the region will spiral into chaos. ...Only a bold vision can pull the region out of its current chaos" (129). This book offers astute historical and political analysis of the current impasse. It summons Jewish people to turn to the biblical narrative for reclaiming an alternative vision of justice and shalom in relation to Palestine, even as the author articulates a biblical narrative that accords with the longing for liberation by the Palestinian people. This book invites readers critically to examine the standard accounts

of the geopolitical conflict over Palestine that threatens the peace of the entire world. Even more, Raheb articulates a vision of hope that is deeply invested in Scripture. All of us need such hope for God's shalom to create new vision and politics for the future of the Middle East.

Craig L. Nessian  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

---

***The History of Theological Education.*** By Justo L. González. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4267-8191-9. xi & 155 pages. Paper. \$39.99.

The scholarly range and erudition of Justo González never ceases to amaze. In this very concise text the author surveys the entire history of Christian theological education and in a provocative conclusion charts a course for the future. One immediate lesson: we have not always done theological education the way we have come to know it in the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. The earliest forms of theological education emerged with the catechumenate and among those who sought theological wisdom out of love for the knowledge of God. The writing and reading of books served this latter purpose. When monastic and cathedral schools were formed in the early medieval period, not many clerics had this form of education. Scholasticism brought a flowering of cathedral schools, but even with this development, the primary purpose was, in the words of Anselm, pursuit of "the truth which my heart believes and loves," not the preparation of candidates for ministry.

The Protestant Reformation brought in its wake new attention to education for both clergy and laity. Formal theological education became a standard requirement for ordination. Interestingly, however, it was with the Catholic Reformation that "seminary" emerged with a focus not only on knowledge but also on the "formation" characteristic of semimonastic schools. After the Reformation, Protestant Scholasticism (Orthodoxy) aimed to consolidate and systematize doctrinal formulations. This formalization of learning gave rise to the "Pietist Reaction," with its emphases on pastoral training to support the universal priesthood of all believers, including Bible study, practicing a living faith, and acts of Christian charity.

Modern theological education, as we have come to know it, took its classical form at the University of Berlin under the design of Schleiermacher, who distinguished between philosophical theology, historical theology, and practical theology. With this concept there emerged a gap between theory and practice that continues to disturb theological education today, especially notable in the focus on disciplinary specializations in the graduate education of professors, who then are called to the vocation of preparing leaders for the church. At the same time González minces no words in critiquing the "canonization of ignorance" which has functioned as fundamentalist counterpoint in modern theological education.



The final two chapters summarize the sweep of theological education's history and project a future course. While still valuing the place for residential theological education, González offers an expansive vision: the crucial importance of formation, the potential of theological education through the Internet, the value of the action-reflection model, a greater role for the church in educating its next generation of leaders, claiming theological education as a lifelong process, and the imperative of theological education for all the baptized. The financial pressures facing the current model can become an occasion for creativity in reinventing the shape of theological education needful for the future of God's mission in the world. González has provided remarkable service in stirring imagination for this future.

Craig L. Nessian  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

---

***Beyond the Centaur: Imagining the Intelligent Body.*** By Margaret R. Miles. Eugene, Ore. Cascade Books, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-625-64420-6. xiv and 131 pages. Paper. \$18.00.

For centuries, philosophers, theologians, and others have regarded the human being as something akin to a centaur—that is, made up of “parts” that fit together in varying degrees of harmony. Overwhelmingly, the constituent “parts” of a human being have been the body and the soul, with the body typically being interpreted as the “weak link.” Thus, in her book, Miles wants to replace the image of the human as a metaphorical centaur with another image, that of the “intelligent body.” With that thesis in mind, the book is designed as a thought experiment, an exploration about how we might understand ourselves differently, act differently, and move differently, if we conceptualize ourselves as “intelligent bodies”—an integrated whole, rather than a combination of parts.

The book is organized in two halves: the first half is a historical treatment of the understanding of the human being, structured in two main chapters: “Before Descartes” and “Descartes, Pascal and the Intelligent Body.” These chapters are a helpful refresher on how we got to where we are today, with a deeply entrenched understanding of the human person as constituted by a hierarchical arrangement of components. The last chapter concludes with an endorsement of Maxine Sheets Johnstone's argument that “persons cannot be dissected and analyzed into parts” (40). In support of that argument, Miles endorses the image of the “intelligent body” as more adequately accounting for human experience. The second half goes on to offer some new ways of “imagining the intelligent body.”

This is the most constructive, creative section of the book, with chapters explaining how intelligent bodies “move,” “feel,” “think,” “believe,” and “die.” Miles weaves into these chapters her own personal experiences, with her own family and also with her

volunteer work with hospice patients. In this way she models the need for academic scholarship to explicitly represent and describe “intelligent bodies,” rather than pretend that all academics are disembodied, rational minds—“untainted” by physical experiences and biases. She makes clear that the way we view bodies—their limits, their pain—and the way we value bodies (not) matters deeply for how we treat each other and the world.

At the end of the book Miles concludes: “We can *perceive* ourselves and others as rational minds stubbornly defending certain *ideas* and trying to overlook insubordinate bodies. Or we can think of ourselves and others as whole persons, directed—led—to the beauty and significance of our lives by the particular *experiences* by which we are shaped, by the people we have loved and who have loved us, by the circumstances of our childhood, and by the arts we choose to live with daily” (119). It will not be an easy switch, but Miles makes a compelling argument that it is, nonetheless, vitally necessary.

Kristin Johnston Largent  
Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg

---

***Seventy Images of Grace in the Epistles That Make All the Difference in Daily Life.*** By Norma Cook Everist. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-6256-4739-9. xxvii & 183 pages. Paperback. \$24.00.

There is a bevy of literature in the field of biblical studies on strategies for interpreting scriptural images. Biblical scholars have skillfully examined the texts and artifacts from the ancient world to illumine our understanding of biblical images. There is also voluminous writing by ethicists and pastoral theologians on how to use scriptural images to interpret contemporary social challenges and personal life crises. Not many employ the ordinary challenges of life to interpret biblical images and identify the difference these images make in everyday life. Norma Cook Everist, professor of Church Administration and Educational Ministry at Wartburg Theological Seminary, draws from her experiences as a pastor and caregiver in weaving together life stories with biblical images, so that each interprets the other.

Life is a journey, full of changes, challenges, and opportunities. The challenges can transfigure into opportunities. People use scripture to cope with crises, while biblical images in turn empower them. Everist interprets more than seventy such images, drawn primarily from the New Testament Epistles. She identifies the significance of biblical images at different stations of life. In this clearly and thoughtfully written book, Everist locates people's journeys amid contrasting situations of life—from bondage to freedom, darkness to light, death to life, alienation to belonging, meaninglessness to purpose, and suffering to hope. Everist punctuates each biblical image with a life story, exploring its meaning for life and making the narrative illumine the text.



The stories include those of loss, illness, grief, guilt, unemployment, and alienation.

A Lutheran pastor, Everist recognizes the importance of community in a believer's healing and highlights the priesthood of all believers. In addition to an already rich commentary on biblical images, in the final pages of the book, Everist provides guidelines for congregational members to become agents of healing and hope in the lives of other believers and in society. Congregations would benefit immensely from studying these chapters together in groups, more so if they were to start with the final chapter. Needless to say, seminarians and caregivers will find this book richly rewarding.

*James Taneti*  
*Campbell University*

***The Pastor.*** By Wilhelm Loehe. Edited by Charles P. Schaum. Translated by Wolf Dietrich Knappe and Charles P. Schaum. St. Louis: Concordia, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-7586-5027-6. viii & 363 pages. Paper. \$39.99.

Wilhelm Loehe (1808–1872) was a multifaceted contributor to the life, theology, and mission of the church in nineteenth-century Germany. The founding of an International Loehe Society in 2005 has directed new attention to the Loehe legacy, furthered by this translation of his *Der evangelische Geistliche*, rendered here as “The Pastor.” The life and work of Loehe provides a focal point of ongoing interest not only for those institutions centered in Neuendettelsau, Germany, where Loehe lived out his pastoral career, but for those both in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (via the Iowa Synod) appreciative of his lasting contributions.

Loehe published these materials originally in two volumes. The contents reflect Loehe's wisdom as a pastor, compiling the material he believed was most needful for the preparation of pastors in his mid-nineteenth century context. Booklet One was the reworking of an article, “Contributions to Pastoral Theology,” first published in 1847–1848. It includes chapters on the themes: starting out in the office, conduct, marriage of the pastor, and final thoughts on emeriti. Two appendixes are added to Booklet One, the first for pastors' wives and the second on parish registers. The main content of Booklet Two derives from notes taken as dictation based on Loehe's instruction in 1853 to students at the Mission Institute in Neuendettelsau. Themes include: homiletics, catechesis, liturgics, pastoral care, and pastoral care of the sick. An appendix to Booklet Two offers “A Short Treatise on How to Preach Aright and How to Expound and Apply the Sacred Text.”

It is delightful to have this work from Loehe now available in English. Wolf Knappe and Charles Schaum have done great

labor by birthing this translation. The book is particularly useful as a historical record of the state of the pastoral arts as conceived by an excellent practitioner more than 150 years ago. Of course, such a volume requires discernment regarding how such ministerial advice might be put into practice today. A maxim first learned from Paul Holmer seems apropos: the degree to which Loehe delves into more general and complex theological concerns is the degree to which Loehe's insights continue to bear fruit for pastoral ministry today; conversely, the more concrete his advice about particular issues, the more antiquated some of his views appear now.

A quote on the centrality of the ministry of the Word from the chapter on homiletics: “Therefore it is quite correct if one finds the *character* and the *highest of all the virtues of a shepherd* in the ability to teach. ...In fact the pastor has no other means to fulfill his office than the *divine word*; everything else one might think of as a means for the Holy Office to become fruitful and helpful only in connection to the Word” (199). And a quote about the pastoral vocation: “Of all human professions, the pastoral office demands the greatest mental powers of production. ...One therefore should think that especially the richest minds would be drawn toward theology, like iron to a magnet” (8). Without denigrating the equal significance of other vocations, would that even in small measure young people with such gifts would hear and heed such a call in our day!

Given my vocation at Wartburg Theological Seminary, it is especially fascinating to note the continuity between the pastoral theology of Loehe and the prodigious publications of J. Michael Reu in these same fields. Likewise it is heartwarming to read in the Foreword to Booklet Two: “Dedicated to the graduates of the two closely connected planting schools, the Evangelical Lutheran Preachers Seminary in Wartburg at St. Sebald at the Well, Iowa, and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission School at Neuendettelsau in Middle Franconia” (155).

*Craig L. Nessian*  
*Wartburg Theological Seminary*

***To All Nations from All Nations: A History of the Christian Missionary Movement.*** By Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi and Justo L. Gonzalez. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013. ISBN 978-1-4267-5489-0. 484 pages. Paper. \$49.99.

Before Western missiologists publicly acknowledged the assertion that Christian missions belongs to all (and “all” means Christians throughout the world), Cardoza-Orlandi and Gonzalez were challenging deep-seated assumptions about the centrifugal approach to missionary movement. The spread of Christianity was never purely a Western product.

While the world's religious demographics continue to change, the projection of the southward shift in the gravitational center of Christianity, as now affirmed by historians, is noth-



ing new. The persistent inflow of immigrants to the north, or economically more advanced regions, has made the respective societies increasingly diverse. This new trend does not necessarily intensify the fear of the other, but opens us to the possibility of effective intercultural relationships. The church does more than evangelize non-Christians but seeks ways to engage culturally different others, who form the one body of Christ. Thus Cardoza-Orlandi and Gonzalez insist that a polycentric perspective is necessary—not only for reading the past, but also for promoting the principle of mutuality for the future of Christianity.

Arguably, indigenous Christians with their wisdom embody important assets that build the church. The different forms of Christianity will enrich our faith, as it inspires us to appreciate how God's salvation works among people all over the earth. Taking seriously the voice of indigenous Christians also helps attain a responsible command of the relation of historiography to missionary movement. Non-Western Christianity should not be considered a mere part of the missionary movement. It is, rather, a major constituent of church history. Integrating the history of Christian missions with the history of the church will give new directions toward a missiological ecclesiology that further enlarges the vision of inclusivity within the body of Christ. This work calls forth a radical transformation of missiological praxis, a new way of relating to others and witnessing to the gospel.

*Man Hei, Yip*  
*The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia*

---

***Discovering Matthew: Content, Interpretation, Reception.*** By Ian Boxall. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8028-7238-2. ix & 206 pages. Paper. \$22.00.

“Comprehensive, up to date and student-friendly introduction to the books of the Bible: their structure, content, theological concerns, key interpretative debates and historical reception” is the stated purpose of Eerdmans’ new series “Discovering Biblical Texts.” In *Discovering Matthew* Ian Boxall, associate professor of New Testament at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., has accomplished this purpose. After an introduction, Boxall examines interpretative approaches in chapters 2–5, considers narrative content in thematic sections in chapters 6–12, and ends with conclusions about interpreting Matthew for today in chapter 13.

In chapter 2, Boxall assesses different ways of interpreting Matthew. He finds value in historical, literary, and theological approaches, as well as recognizing the importance of the reader’s own perspective and openness “to the different readings of other ages, cultures, theological traditions and interest groups” (29). Chapter 3 focuses on the text of Matthew, describing scholarly inquiry about the Gospel’s author, date, narrative arrangement, and insights from the critical process of establishing the text from

multiple manuscripts. Chapter 4 considers the interactive role of characters and significance of settings in the narrative. Chapter 5 surveys the varied scholarly proposals regarding the Gospel’s author and his context, intended audience, and relationship to post-70 C.E. Jewish and Roman worlds.

With a focus on narrative context and themes, Boxall deals in chapter 6 with the content and intent of the infancy stories (Matthew 1–2). Chapter 7 considers Matthew’s portrayal of Jesus as teacher, the teaching discourses, Jesus’ parables, and judgment and apocalyptic themes. “Jesus as Healer and Exorcist” (chapter 8) looks at the writer’s use of specific Greek terms, arrangement of stories, associations of healing with the Son of David title, and redaction of these stories to highlight Christology, discipleship, and faith themes.

Chapter 9 explores the ways in which Matthew portrays Jesus the Messiah as fulfilling the law and the prophets, focusing particularly on the “formula citations.” In chapter 10, Boxall unravels interpretive complexities surrounding the Gospel’s view of “church” as functioning in Matthew’s own day (post-70 C.E.). The chapter explores the Gospel’s perspective on the relationship of Israel and the church, the role of Peter (with particular reference to the controversial text of 16:18), and the relationship between the church and the nations. Chapter 11 draws heavily on narrative-critical analyses to describe Matthew’s presentation of the passion and death of Jesus: its distinctive features, portrayal of Jesus and others, and misuse by the later church to fuel anti-Jewish attitudes and behavior. Finally in chapter 12, Boxall compares the stories of the empty tomb and appearances of the risen Jesus in Matthew 28 with Mark 16, examining distinctive features and contrasting their view with perspectives on life beyond death in first-century Judaism.

Boxall’s volume affords a fair and accessible airing of most interpretive debates regarding significant texts and themes in Matthew. A real bonus is his awareness of church fathers’ interpretations of certain key passages and how texts were rendered in visual and musical art. Boxall’s handling of the narrative world of Matthew in chapter 4, however, could have been enriched by drawing on other scholarly work beyond that of Jack Kingsbury.

Boxall’s *Discovering Matthew* appropriately highlights the rich layers of meaning generated by the Gospel of Matthew and assists the reader well in negotiating its long history of reception. For courses focusing on Matthew at the college and seminary level, Boxall’s offering would be excellent. Pastors could also benefit from this updated summary of scholarly research on Matthew, whereas most lay people might find its discussion too technical.

*James L. Bailey*  
*Emeritus, Wartburg Seminary*  
*Duluth, Minnesota*



***How to Read the Bible Without Losing Your Mind: A Truth-Seeker's Guide to Making Sense of Scripture.*** By Kent Blevins. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-6256-4065-9. xviii & 204. Paper. \$25.00.

In *How to Read the Bible Without Losing Your Mind*, Kent Blevins urges Christians to become “truth-seekers” in reading the Bible and discovering its truths. The book consists of eight chapters. In the first, Blevins discusses the importance of coming to Scripture with humility, curiosity, and an open mind. In chapter 2, Blevins summarizes the complex process of the Bible’s formation, noting the different Bibles that have come into existence. Chapter 3 touches on contradictions and inconsistencies in biblical texts—an unsettling point for those who hold an inerrant view of the Bible. In chapter 4, Blevins presents a “bottom-up” approach for discerning the nature of biblical authority based on what the Bible says, not on what readers think it ought to say. Chapter 5 outlines a process for honest reflection that helps readers identify their own personal and cultural “hub symbols” (e.g., biases, assumptions). In chapter 6, Blevins identifies some of the Bible’s hub symbols (e.g., justice, *shalom*) that echo the voice of God through the perspectives of biblical authors based on their experiences of God. Here Blevins also draws attention to conflicting portrayals of God in the Bible, such as vengeful, merciful, patriarchal, or loving. Blevins, in chapter 7, switches to a “top-down” method to identify modern-day concerns not represented in the Bible (e.g., cloning, global warming), and issues such as homosexuality that may be alluded to briefly but are debated heavily today. In chapter 8, Blevins reiterates his challenge for Christians not to abandon intellectual inquiry when claiming the Bible’s authority for their lives.

In *How to Read the Bible*, Blevins offers Christians tools for exploring what the Bible says in a way that allows them to appreciate a broader view of issues, both biblical and contemporary. The book may be helpful for anyone desiring to be challenged by digging deeper into what the Bible says, especially Christians seeking more careful ways to read and study. The book is largely geared toward readers with conservative leanings, since it ultimately challenges traditional views on such matters as homosexuality and the infallibility of scripture. At the same time, this may itself prove to be a roadblock for the book’s reception and influence among the readers whom it most aims to address. Readers are ultimately left to sort out distinctions that go beyond the scope of Blevins’s book, yet remain relevant for faith formation: (1) distinguishing the nature of truth from fact, given the elusive and ambiguous nature of truth, (2) discerning the directions and origins of faith in reading scripture, and (3) finding a balance between subjecting faith to challenging scrutiny and remaining firm in one’s convictions.

Lace Williams Tinajero  
Spokane Valley, Wash.

***Professional Sexual Ethics: A Holistic Ministry Approach.*** Edited by Patricia Beattie Jung and Darryl W. Stephens. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8006-9943-7. v & 244 pages. Paper. \$24.00.

Filled with a variety of case studies, holistic approaches to sexuality, as well as discussion questions following each essay, *Professional Sexual Ethics: A Holistic Ministry Approach*, offers church workers a multifaceted understanding of professional sexual ethics. The book features twenty essays within four major sections: Ethical Landscape of Ministry, Sources of Wisdom, Practices of Ministry, and Pastoral Leadership. This organization allows the essays included to cover a wide variety of topics that speak directly to those within mainline Protestant ministry contexts. While primarily focused toward ordained ministers, or students on the path to ordination, this text also offers case studies that speak to the situation of other church staff members such as youth workers.

Overall, this text would be very helpful in the vast majority of church settings, particularly if used by multiple staff members who were engaged in conversation about its contents. Though the text does set out to offer a holistic approach to professional sexual ethics, it falls a bit short in acknowledging what a truly holistic, healthy, and life giving sexual ethic might look like in our congregations. Many of the essays lean heavily on the traditional platonic dualisms between body and soul, resulting in many of the essays being unable to offer a practical way of moving forward and instead seeming to suggest that simply ignoring sexuality is the only option. On the other hand a few of the essays offer a very positive view of both the body and sexuality and put forth wonderful ways to live in relationship with a variety of people in our church communities in ways that exhibit excellent professional sexual ethics.

K. M. Deaver  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



***Sensing the Scriptures: Aminadab's Chariot and the Predicament of Biblical Interpretation.*** By Karlfried Froehlich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7080-3. ix & 175 pages. Paper. \$25.00.

The task of interpreting the biblical canon has been central to the development and history of the Church, beginning with the patristic fathers and continuing to today. In his book *Sensing the Scriptures: Aminadab's Chariot and the Predicament of Biblical Interpretation*, Karlfried Froehlich calls modern readers' attention to the seemingly narrow interpretation that results from a strictly literal reading and study of scripture. Using as anagogical representation an obscure image from Song of Songs 6:12—whose Hebrew meaning is indiscernible, but is translated by the Vulgate as Aminadab's chariot—Froehlich suggests reclaiming the Medieval four-fold sense of scripture as a way to broaden the current approach to biblical interpretation. Through an extensive review of the history of biblical interpretation the historical development of the Aristotelian hierarchy of the senses, the book presents biblical interpretation as a function of principles rather than a task governed by rules, where the principles define the parameters into which we wish to move the text by our interpretation. Thus, the author is not suggesting a new method of interpretation as much as expanding the levels of meaning available in the scriptures. The four scriptural senses are as follows: (1) the literal, pertaining to the original language, words, syntax, original meaning of the author, and historical context; (2) the allegorical, pertaining to the theology and doctrine for

the content of Christian faith; (3) the tropological, pertaining to moral instruction and living lives of love; and (4) the anagogical, pertaining to a “forward and upward eschatology” that moves us toward our mystical union with Christ in the present time (113). The author pairs these “senses” with the Aristotelian hierarchy of the physical senses, pairing literal with touch as the foundation, allegory with sight, tropology with hearing, and anagogy with taste and smell.

While Froehlich presents an extremely thorough history of biblical interpretation and the senses, he assumes readers are deeply knowledgeable about this extensive history. More to the point, although the author presents the historic development of interpretation well, in my opinion, the argument regarding the implementation and relevance of these four interpretive principles for our current context is suggestive but not entirely persuasive. For instance, Froehlich claims that the anagogical sense neither negates nor strays from the foundation of the literal sense, yet his anagogical examples seem to be entirely removed from the literal sense of the text even in respect to his central image of Aminadab's chariot. Though Froehlich presents a well-developed history of biblical interpretation, the most useful point of his argument is simply his caution regarding the narrowness of limiting interpretation strictly to its literal sense. While this caution is merited, the book's proposal is questionable as a truly better alternative for doing biblical interpretation today.

*Dan Baldwin*  
*Wartburg Theological Seminary*