



ACADEMIC ALERT

IVP Academic's Book Bulletin for Professors • Volume 22 • Number 1 • Spring 2013

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| Extra! Extra!

See insert page for a sneak peek at the latest volume in the Reformation Commentary on Scripture series.

Annual Meetings

The Spring conference line up looks especially promising this year. See you there!

The **2013 Christian Association for Psychological Studies International Conference**, convened around the theme of crosscultural care and counsel, will be held in Portland, Oregon, on April 4-6, 2013.

The **22nd Annual Wheaton Theology Conference**, "Christian Political Witness," will explore the biblical and theological contours of the relationship between Christian faith and political authority. Join us in Wheaton, Illinois, on April 4-6, 2013.

Empire and Its Discontents

*Scot McKnight recently spoke with us about **Jesus Is Lord, Caesar Is Not**, a timely appraisal of "empire criticism" and its uneasy reign over current New Testament scholarship.*

In *Jesus Is Lord, Caesar Is Not*, respected biblical scholars have come together under the skillful direction of Scot McKnight and Joe Modica to investigate the increasingly popular approach in New Testament scholarship of interpreting the text through the lens of empire. The New Testament is immersed in the often hostile world of the Roman Empire, but its relationship to that world is complex. What are we to make of Jesus' call to "render unto Caesar," for example, in light of Luke's announcement that the savior and Lord whose arrival heralds good news is—not Caesar, but—Jesus? Is there tension between Peter's command to "honor the emperor" and John's apocalyptic denouncement of Rome as "Babylon the

Great, mother of harlots"? The result of this collaboration is a groundbreaking yet accessible critical evaluation of empire criticism. Academic editor Brannon Ellis recently had a chat with Scot about the new book.

Ellis: Scot, how do you define "empire criticism"?

McKnight: Empire criticism is the scholarly attempt to see anti-empire, anti-imperial, anti-Caesar, anti-Rome beliefs at work in New Testament language that may elude modern readers. The foundation of this approach is that to call Jesus "Lord" was necessarily to declare that Caesar was not Lord, which means the gospel confession was actually a subversion of the imperial claims of Rome's

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Second Edition Spells Good News for Gospel Studies

*After an impressive twenty-year career, the first edition of **Dictionary of Jesus & the Gospels** hangs up its jacket. Editors Joel Green and Jeannine Brown do some stumping for the second edition.*

The forthcoming release of the second edition of the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* marks a significant event. Having recently completed the Black Dictionary series with the publication of the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, we have circled around to redo the original volume. The general editor is Joel B. Green, and along with associate editors Jeannine Brown and Nicholas Perrin the team has executed a full overhaul of the venerable *DJG*. All but a handful of the articles have been reassigned, some topics have been dropped and others have been added. Dan Reid, who has been the development editor of this series from start to finish, had the following conversation with Joel Green and Jeannine Brown (Nick Perrin was unavailable at the time). Here we explore some of what

you can expect to see in the new *DJG* in the context of developments in Jesus and Gospels studies since 1992.

Reid: It's been over twenty years since the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* appeared in 1992 and a lot has happened in Jesus and Gospel studies. In broad strokes, what differences can people expect see?

Green: Well, there will be changes on just about every page! Although we asked that a few articles be updated, the vast majority of articles have been replaced. A few essays have dropped out and a few new ones added. I think the biggest difference our readers will notice is the further influence of newer redaction-critical, literary-critical and narrative studies on many essays. Without neglecting historical questions, our readers will find

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Empire, continued from page 1

emperor.

Ellis: How did you and Joe become interested in empire criticism? And can you give us some of your favorite authors and books advocating this perspective?

McKnight: I remember Joe and I had a conversation one time; I mentioned that I found this new approach to be stretching the information that we found in the Bible, and too often seemingly connected to the politics of the particular person who happened to be seeing anti-empire ideology in the NT. Joe agreed, and the rest is history. The best authors working within the framework of empire criticism are Warren Carter and Richard Horsley. We also see this at times in N. T. Wright. I'd include Kavin Rowe at Duke and Brigitte Kahl at Union Theological Seminary as well.

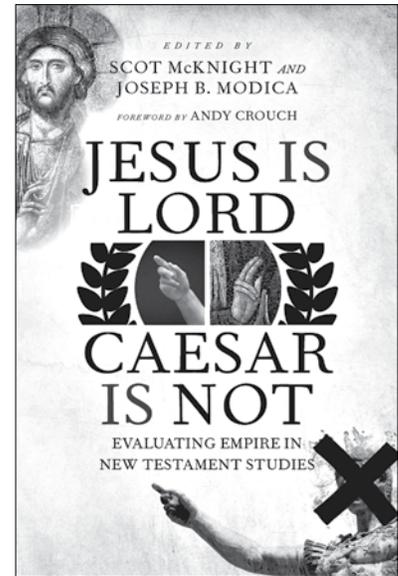
Ellis: Your book is something of a sympathetic critique of this area of New Testament scholarship. What do the proponents of empire criticism get right? Where does this approach fall short or overreach?

McKnight: The contributors in *Jesus Is Lord* don't all agree on everything; some are more sympathetic with empire criticism while others find the evidence for anti-empire claims unconvincing. Joe and I are each open to being convinced,

but we're also old enough to know that trends like this come and go. What ought to be remembered is that the last several generations of New Testament scholars were mostly trained in Greek and Roman classics, and very few of them saw as much anti-empire ideology in the biblical text. They at times saw inklings of it, and it makes us wonder if perhaps it's the "inklings" approach that's most accurate. Undoubtedly, empire criticism is teaching us to be alert to themes we might be missing; it's calling us to go back to the texts in their historical contexts to study them again, and to be alert to the contribution of postcolonial interpretations. What some have said about Paul's entry into Rome in Acts 28:11-16, for example—that it sounds an awful lot like an emperor's entry—is the sort of thing that we need to think about. But to see large-scale imperial subversiveness throughout the New Testament, or to translate "kingdom" as "empire," in a conscious way, overcooks the texts. Sometimes this approach tends to read empire into the New Testament more than within it.

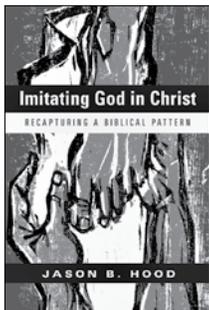
Ellis: How might the conclusions of your book speak to the contemporary church's contexts in North American culture and politics?

McKnight: What this book will do, we



hope and pray, is get more Christians alert to the realities of the first Christians who were taking root in the Roman empire, and how empire impacted them. And we hope it will make us more alert to how the Bible speaks prophetically into empire ideologies in our day. We hope it will teach us to be more alert to the church as a political option—one that offers a lasting alternative to "all earthly powers." ■

Imitation Reformed



"WWJD," or "What Would Jesus Do?" was the question popularized several years ago. But the idea has a long history, memorably enshrined in

the medieval Thomas à Kempis's work, *The Imitation of Christ*. In contemporary Christianity some have reduced the theme of imitation to a volitional moral-

ism. This has been strongly opposed by some Reformed evangelicals who have denounced imitation as hostile to the gospel of God's accomplished work in Christ. But is this the proper biblical response?

Jason Hood thinks not, and in *Imitating God in Christ*, he leads us in (so the subtitle runs) *Recapturing a Biblical Pattern* of imitation. Beginning with humans created in the image of God, he develops a biblical-theological and historical perspective, including a full

and robust look at the Gospels and Paul. What did Paul say he taught "everywhere and in every church"? The answer is critical. And whether you question or believe in the legitimacy of imitating Jesus, Hood is an able and informed conversation partner who will take you to a new place of understanding.

In the words of Michael Bird, "The long lost discipline of the *imitatio Christi* is persuasively and poignantly recaptured here by Jason Hood." ■

Dictionary, continued from page 1

a heightened interest in the contribution of each Gospel writer to the various subjects explored in the dictionary.

Brown: Readers will also experience a more diverse range of authors of entries than was possible twenty years ago, each writing from their area of expertise. We

the (then recently published) *DJG* so helpful that I assigned it as a textbook. It was a great tool to expose students to a broad range of relevant topics for their understanding of the Gospels, written by top-notch scholars in accessible ways. The bibliographic material also pointed

torical Jesus studies has declined in some circles because of the calcification of earlier proposals that took a minimalist position on what can be said of Jesus of Nazareth; in this case, students of Jesus and the Gospels have tended to proceed on the basis of “what we are sure didn’t happen.”

Nevertheless, names like Wright and Chilton and Allison come to mind, as well as those of a number of newer contributors to the field. Or consider a publication like *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, edited by Darrell

Historically, preachers and theologians turned to the Gospels not so much to reconstruct the life of Jesus, but to hear and heed the call of the Gospels to follow Jesus as savior and Lord.

are pleased to have brought scholars on board for this project from across the globe and in ways that represent the growing ethnic and gender diversity of biblical studies.

Reid: Joel, you were a recently minted PhD when we did the original *DJG*. Since then you have published numerous studies and collections in your field and you have been involved in editing other reference works. How do you view reference works like this?

Green: My guess is that the original *DJG* is the single most influential project with which I have ever been associated. It has served so many students and pastors, and not a few scholars, as the go-to reference work. I see it on bookshelves everywhere, often with post-it notes sticking out, turned down pages, worn edges—all signs that it has been well used and much appreciated. It’s no surprise to those of us in the field that the number of commentaries, journal articles and monographs is so numerous that it’s hard to know how to get started with a question. The *DJG* has had a crucial role as the first place to turn for orientation, perspective and bibliography.

Brown: I would add that when I was first teaching courses on the Gospels I found

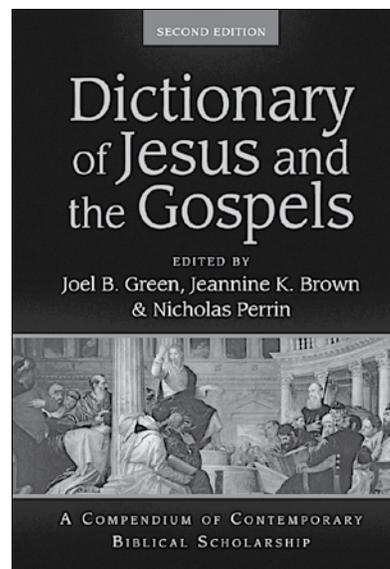
students in the right direction for further study of any particular topic.

Reid: If someone last took a seminary class in Jesus or the Gospels twenty years ago, what are some of the more recent areas of study—and thus *DJG* articles—that they might want to take note of?

Brown: Given the methodological diversity that now characterizes biblical studies, those who pick up *DJG* in its second edition will be able to explore reading the Gospels from a variety of methodological angles. The *DJG* now includes entries on a variety of criticisms, including narrative, postcolonial, African-American, Latino/Latina, as well as theological and canonical engagement with the Gospels.

Reid: Do you think the so-called quest of the historical Jesus has abated in recent years?

Green: I would say that the quest for the historical Jesus has lost some of its public notoriety in the last decade or so, but that Jesus studies remains pretty strong. It’s lost some of its public luster because projects like the Jesus Seminar have waned, and because some of the “stars” who fed the wider public interest have run their course. Unfortunately, from my perspective, it’s also true to say that his-

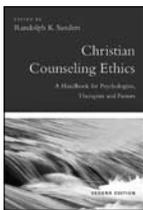


Bock and Bob Webb, and written by members of the Institute for Biblical Research Jesus Group. There’s also renewed interest in issues of method, including work in the philosophy of history and in social memory—interests that have pressed hard against what have been the tools of the trade for so many decades.

Reid: What if any areas related to the Jewish or Roman “background” of the Gospels have seen the most significant growth in knowledge over the past twenty years? And what have been the effects?

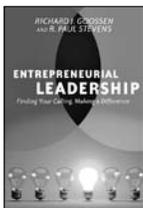
Brown: Research on the beliefs and practices of first-century Judaism, or Judaisms, begun before the first publication of *DJG*, has continued unabated and has reshaped our understanding of the

New & Noteworthy



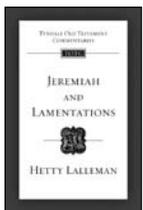
Since its first publication, *Christian Counseling Ethics: A Handbook for Psychologists, Therapists and Pastors* has become a standard reference work

for Christian mental health professionals and a key text at Christian universities and seminaries. This thoroughly revised edition, edited by Randolph K. Sanders, assesses the professional and cultural developments that have altered the counseling landscape since the 1997 edition.



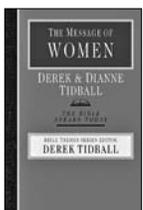
Drawing on exhaustive research, practical experience and decades of teaching marketplace theology, Richard Goossen and R. Paul

Stevens present a theologically robust vision of Christian entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurial Leadership: Finding Your Calling, Making a Difference* is must-reading for leaders who want to ground their calling in the mission of the triune God.



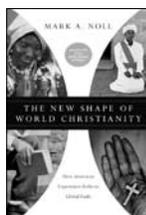
Lifting out the understated themes of love, grace, promise and renewal in Jeremiah and Lamentations, Hetty

Lalleman's new contribution to the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series opens our eyes to an important chapter in salvation history.



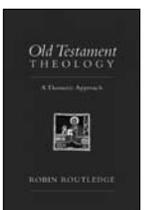
Derek and Dianne Tidball take on the subject of women in Scripture in the latest installment of The Bible Speaks Today Bible Themes series, *The*

Message of Women. The authors attempt to defuse the polemics around gender in Christianity, beginning with a distinction between creation and new creation perspectives. We learn about women under the old covenant, women under the new covenant and women in the early church.



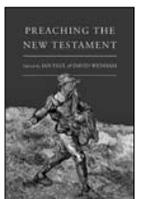
The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith—now in paperback! Adding complexity to

older missiological arguments about American global influence, Mark Noll suggests that *how* Americans have come to practice the Christian faith is just as globally important as *what* the American church has done in the world.



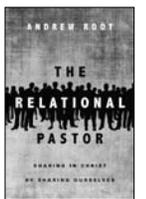
Robin Routledge's *Old Testament Theology* is designed for beginning students and others who are hard-pressed for time. Routledge provides a

substantial overview of the central issues and themes in Old Testament theology, noting unity and coherence in the text as well as awareness of diversity. Now in paperback!



The writers of the New Testament communicated with passion. *Preaching the New Testament*, edited by Ian Paul and David Wenham, investigates how

we can preach with equal vigor and faithfulness from those texts. Building on the fundamentals of interpretation, communication and application, this book encourages preachers and Bible teachers to proclaim the good news to hearers today.



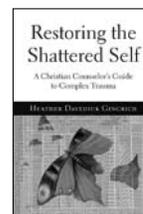
Practical theologian Andrew Root deconstructs relational ministry as we have come to understand it, calling for a new breed of “empathic minister”

to take the helm in our churches. *The Relational Pastor: Sharing Christ by Sharing Ourselves* brings current practice in touch with incarnational theology, proposing a more robust understanding of the relationships that make up the body of Christ.



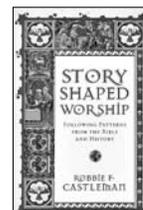
Beyond practical theology courses and internships, how can M.Div. students know what they will face *before* they get burned out, worn out or run out? To

find out, the authors of *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* undertook a five-year in-depth research project among dozens of working pastors. Here is their combined wisdom on ministry for the long haul.



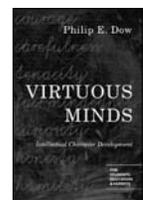
In *Restoring the Shattered Self: A Christian Counselor's Guide to Complex Trauma*, Heather Davediuk

Gingrich applies years of clinical experience to the sensitive task of treating complex traumatic stress disorder (CTSD). Writing for Christian counselors who have not received training in complex trauma, Gingrich integrates current trauma therapy research with Christian priorities such as prayer and spiritual warfare.



Story-Shaped Worship: Following Patterns from the Bible and History marks Robbie Castleman's first

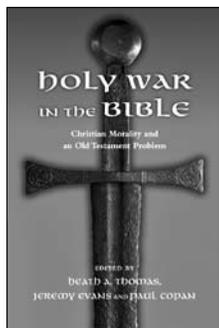
step into the field of academic writing. And a firm step it is. She argues that right worship requires neither a radical break from the past nor a traditionalist return to earlier forms of church, but a sensitivity to patterns of response to God evidenced in Scripture and church history.



In *Virtuous Minds: Intellectual Character Development*, Philip Dow explores the implications of setting intellectual character (rather than intel-

lectual *content*) at the heart of our educational programs. With ample stories and suggestions, Dow shows how intellectual virtues like tenacity, carefulness and curiosity are teachable traits that can produce good lives.

When God Declares War



The challenge of a seemingly genocidal God who commands ruthless warfare has bewildered Bible readers for generations. The theme of divine war is

not limited to the Old Testament historical books, however. It is prevalent in the prophets and wisdom literature as

well. Yet it doesn't stop there. The New Testament book of Revelation is full of similar imagery. The questions we are left with multiply in what has become one of the hottest topics in the academy and the church.

Rather than viewing the issue through the lens of a single discipline, *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem* does more. Here a range of expert contributors, under the direction of editors Heath A. Thomas, Jeremy Evans and Paul Copan, engage in

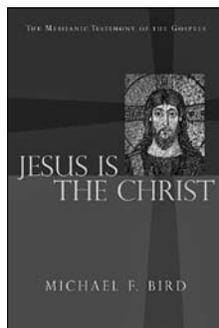
a multidisciplinary approach that considers the issue from a variety of perspectives: biblical, ethical, philosophical and theological.

While the writers recognize that such a difficult and delicate topic cannot be resolved in a simplistic manner, the different threads of this book weave together a satisfying tapestry. Ultimately we find in the overarching biblical narrative a picture of divine redemption that shows the place of divine war in the salvific movement of God. ■

Would Jesus Deny Christ?

What is the preeminent title of Jesus? In his new book, *Jesus Is the Christ: The Messianic Testimony of the Gospels*, Michael Bird answers this question in a way that will likely come as a surprise to many biblical scholars. At the core of the Gospels' portrayal of Jesus, Bird argues, is his role as Messiah.

The Gospels' messianic claims have long been thought of as a later addition, a fabrication or an inconsequential aside. But Bird unveils how each Evangelist in his own way illuminates



Jesus' messiahship, as well as how central this role of Jesus is in the broader story of salvation. The theological implications are equally significant:

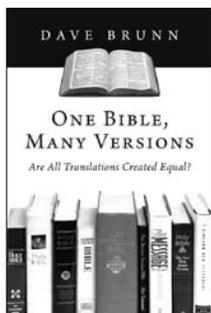
Bird concludes

that Jesus' messiahship is the "mother of all Christology." Exploring this messianic theme provides greater insight not only

into Jesus himself but also the Evangelists and the audiences for which they wrote.

Craig A. Evans of Acadia Divinity College affirms Bird's conclusions, saying: "Bird rightly presupposes that Jesus understood himself as Israel's Messiah, whose mission was to bring forgiveness and salvation to Israel and beyond. In his new book Bird shows how the evangelists understood Jesus and his saving work and what his significance continues to be." ■

Diary of a Professional Translator



For many years now, there has been a vigorous debate among English-speaking Christians regarding the right principles for Bible translation. One side advocates for "literal" or "word-for-word" translation, while the other side argues that "dynamic equivalent" or "thought-for-thought" translation best conveys the message in a different linguistic and cultural context.

One side advocates for "literal" or "word-for-word" translation, while the other side argues that "dynamic equivalent" or "thought-for-thought" translation best conveys the message in a different linguistic and cultural context.

Enter Dave Brunn, who has years of experience as an actual Bible translator among the Lamogai people in Papua New Guinea. His work as a missionary has made him keenly aware of the challenges associated with crosscultural communication. The result of meticulous research, *One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* shows how all translations, even those that claim to be the most literal, engage in thought-for-thought translation. Moreover, "idiomatic" translations often use a word-for-word translation where ostensibly "literal" translations do not. The lines demarcat-

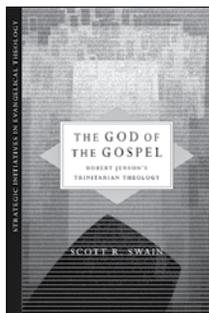
ing one translation from another prove to be quite blurry. Brunn offers a "plea for realism" that redirects our attention away from translation theory toward translation practice. He shows that, despite the theoretical divisions, there is a practical unity in terms of the shared need to communicate the meaning of the text—a meaning that might be communicated in multiple ways. *One Bible, Many Versions* is an informative resource for students and teachers alike that has the potential to reorient the conversation about translation and interpretation. ■

Should We Take Jenson as Gospel?

The latest volume in the Strategic Initiatives in Evangelical Theology series is for the many students and scholars now taking an interest in the evolutionary chain that turned a classical doctrine into the showpiece of modern trinitarian theology.

In *The God of the Gospel: Robert Jenson's Trinitarian Theology*, Scott R. Swain of Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, provides what might be the definitive critical reading of Robert W. Jenson's trinitarian theology from an evangelical perspective. Setting Jenson within the larger story of the twentieth-century trinitarian revival, Swain proposes constructive pathways back to a classical understanding of the Trinity.

Who is the God of the gospel? Jenson's way of answering this question, according to Swain, hinges on the nature of the relationship between God in himself and the redemptive events



through which God becomes *our God*.

Swain first locates Jenson's pursuit of a relentlessly "evangelical" understanding of God

in the broader history of trinitarian theology after Karl Barth, before carefully and sympathetically unpacking Jenson's doctrine of the Trinity. For Jenson, one of today's most prominent theologians, the answer to the question, "Who is the God of the gospel?" may be summarized as, "The one who raised Jesus from the dead." Swain then offers a constructive evaluation of Jenson's account of the mutually constitutive character of God's intrinsic identity and saving acts.

Although critical of many of Jenson's trinitarian reinterpretations, Swain

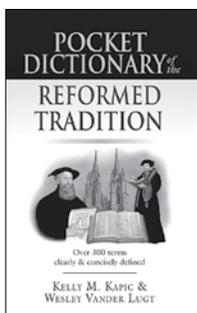
remains attentive to Jenson's concerns and insights. In the process, Swain sheds new light on what it means for the ecumenical trinitarian tradition to advocate a truly evangelical doctrine of the Trinity in the wake of the twentieth-century recasting of the identity of the God of the gospel. ■

Read an uncorrected sample chapter of this book at ivpress.com/godofthegospel

LA Theology Conference 2013

The organizers of the first annual Los Angeles Theology Conference invited Scott Swain to present a breakout paper entitled "The Obedience of the Eternal Son: Catholic Trinitarianism and Reformed Christology." Dedicated to the topic of "Christology, Ancient and Modern," the conference ran from January 17-18, 2013. For more information, visit latheology.com.

Let the Era of Mobile Dogmatics Commence!



The Pocket Dictionary series has earned its reputation for providing accurate, economical and quick-draw reference books for beginning stu-

dents in theological disciplines. Some readers have even used them as handy primers. Kelly M. Kopic and Wesley Vander Lugt's new *Pocket Dictionary of the Reformed Tradition* will be the front-line resource for students tuning into the five-hundred-year-old conversation called the Reformed tradition. In over 300 carefully defined entries they give us an alphabetized guide, from accommodation to Zwinglianism. And for

further study they have added a valuable topical bibliographic guide.

When we began this series we never suspected that we would be carrying high-powered computer devices around in our pockets, loaded with "apps" and much else. At the age of fourteen, the Pocket Dictionary series has now joined the smart-phone generation with the introduction of the IVP Pocket Reference App. Only \$1.99, this portable, expandable and customizable library comes stocked with the complete set of more than 300 terms from the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Available for iOS and Android platforms, the app is pretty convenient:

- Browse terms alphabetically
- Add your own terms
- Attach notes to any entry



- Search terms, definitions or notes
- Swipe from entry to entry within any dictionary in your library
- Highlight your favorite terms
- Copy and paste text within definitions or notes
- Share terms and notes via Facebook, Twitter or email
- Read offline—no Wi-Fi needed

Plus, you can add more dictionaries as options within the IVP Pocket Reference App as they come available. Next up: C. Stephen Evans's *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* and Stanley J. Grenz and Jay T. Smith's *Pocket Dictionary of Ethics*. ■

Dictionary, continued from page 3

Gospels. Jewish scholars who have joined the conversation, including Neusner, Levine and Reinhartz, have provided an important caution against anti-Semitic tendencies in Christian interpretation of Jesus and the Gospels. As a result, scholars today need to account for a more nuanced picture of the Jewish setting of the Gospels, including reassessment of purity concerns and practices, portrayals of various Jewish groups, and the relationship between the Jesus movement and other parts of Judaism during the time of the writing of the Gospels.

In terms of the broader canvas of the Greco-Roman world, recent work on the role of empire in the Gospels has been illuminating. The fact that Jesus suffered a Roman form of execution—crucifixion was a Roman practice—means that paying attention to the Gospels as situated within the Roman Empire can be productive. Scholars such as Carter and Horsley have provided some interesting and provocative starting points for this discussion.

Reid: We now have an article on theological interpretation of the Gospels, which is something we didn't have before. How have the Gospels fared in theological interpretation?

Green: Renewed interest in theological interpretation is only about fifteen years old and is still establishing a toehold in study of the Gospels. Whatever else it does, though, theological interpretation is emphasizing the theological character of the Gospels and the difference it makes when we read the Gospels from within the faith commitments of God's people. Theological interpreters have begun to produce commentaries on the Gospels, though I have to say that the fruit of these labors has been less than impressive so far. Commentators thus far have tended to struggle either with how to listen to the Gospel narrative or with how to learn from scholarship on the Gospels without enslaving themselves

to that scholarship. This is too bad, since theological interpretation of the Gospels represents an avenue of study with genuine promise for the church. And it has the capacity to take with utmost seriousness recent work in the philosophy of history and in social memory studies. It's not too much to say that, historically, preachers and theologians turned to the Gospels not so much to reconstruct the life of Jesus or in search of a foundation for the church's faith, but to be engaged theologically and, indeed, to hear and heed the call of the Gospels to follow Jesus, God's Son, as Savior and Lord.

Brown: Theological interpretation of the Gospels might especially benefit from interdisciplinary conversations between biblical scholars and theologians/ethicists, given their common focus on the life and work of Jesus Christ. Contemporary theologians attend to the latter but often without specific attention to the narrative contours of the individual Gospels, as Joel just noted. Biblical scholars, on the other hand, are skilled at listening to the individual evangelists but are often less adept at asking the questions that are particularly fruitful for theological reflection. Bringing these foci and skill sets together suggests a promising way forward for theological appropriation of the Gospels.

Reid: Many students of Jesus and the Gospels have, following Tom Wright, found that plugging the Gospels into the story of Israel and the theme of exile and restoration has turned on some lights in texts that seemed otherwise dark or dulled by familiarity. Do you think this interpretive move has yet more potential?

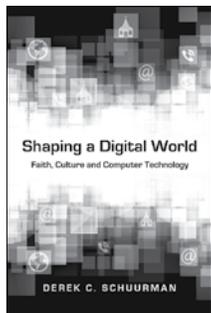
Green: In some ways, the utility of Wright's position is demonstrated by how often this approach is genuinely illuminating. My guess is that we need more, not less, of this pressure to read the message of Jesus and the Gospels within the grand story of God's agenda with God's people, not least as a counter to the ease with which we read stories from the Gospel

against the backdrop of our own experiences and stories. My hope is that we will move beyond Wright in two respects. First, a number of responses to Wright have demonstrated the degree to which he was painting with broad strokes as he portrayed "the story of Israel." In fact, there's more than one way to tell that story—or, in fact, that story was told in more than one way among theologians in the Second Temple period. Second, four of those other voices who related Israel's story were Matthew, Mark, Luke and John! And how each of them grapples with Israel's story, and situates Jesus' story in relation to Israel's story, needs more attention.

Reid: Jeannine, what do you think are some of the most interesting questions on the table for current study of the Gospels, either individually or as a corpus?

Brown: Intertextual methods and interests seem to me to be particularly fruitful in Gospel scholarship at present, especially as each Gospel demonstrates a profound and primary reliance on Israel's story and Scriptures. Intertextuality, though a method with strong literary and historical starting points, presses for recognition of what Joel has described as the theological character of the Gospels. For example, identifying and exploring the theological motif of the Isaianic New Exodus in the Gospels derives, in part, from a more careful look at the evangelists' use of the Old Testament. It will be interesting to see the ongoing offerings of intertextuality to study of the Gospels in coming years. ■

Theology After the Computer



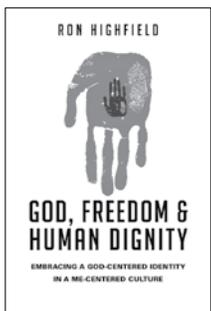
Digital technology is the “furniture” of our modern world: so ubiquitous that it hardly commands our attention. As a result, it is easy to view technology as theologically irrelevant. In *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer*

Technology, computer science instructor and former electrical engineer Derek Schuurman sets out to provide a theology of computer technology that recognizes its proper place within an overarching narrative of creation, fall and redemption. In a world of tweets and status updates, the book offers an answer to the question: “What do bytes have to do with Christian beliefs?”

Technology, Schuurman argues, is not neutral, but neither is there an exclusively “Christian” form of technological production and use. Instead, he guides readers to see that the digital world, when responsibly used, can become an integral part of God’s shalom for the earth. Building on the Christian worldview approach synthesized by Albert Wolters who was himself influenced by Herman Dooyeweerd and Abraham Kuyper, *Shaping a Digital World* significantly revitalizes that discussion by patching in communication theorists like Jacques Ellul, Marshall McLuhan and Neil Postman.

Notable for its concise and accessible presentation, Schuurman’s book will ensure that your connection with undergraduates is secure. ■

God for What Ails Us



Does the existence of God threaten human dignity? Does divine omnipotence compete with human freedom? These are among the questions Ron Highfield tackles in his analysis—both concise in treatment and encyclopedic in scope—in

God, Freedom and Human Dignity: Embracing a God-Centered Identity in a Me-Centered Culture. In part one of the book, Highfield takes the reader on a historical and philosophical journey in order to uncover the origins of the modern “empty self” and to illuminate its false assumptions, secret aspirations and unwelcome limitations. Part two of the book switches from cultural analysis to theological reflection. The triune God of the gospel relates to humanity with an empowering power that elicits, through noncompetitive persuasion, our own dignity and agency. The freedom of God alone establishes the “glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom 8:21). Drawing on everyone from Plato and Augustine, Descartes and Locke, Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre, Highfield’s work is

both demanding and exciting, representing the work of a seasoned scholar and educator. Here’s what some of your colleagues are saying about it:

“Ron Highfield’s book explores the philosophical and theological inner world of the core human temptation—the Promethean quest to challenge and even be god. By unmasking the impulses, desires and arrogance of the modern self, *God, Freedom and Human Dignity* provides for anyone who cares about the gospel today a guide to the postmodern condition and where the gospel must strike first. If this book were pocket size you’d find a copy in my pocket.”

—SCOT MCKNIGHT, Northern Seminary

“In this fine book Ron Highfield exposes the false advertising of those who call us to find true freedom and dignity apart from an obedient relationship to our Maker. And he does it with philosophical and theological savvy, charting the complex course that has gotten us to the delusions of ‘modern selfhood.’”

—RICHARD MOUW, Fuller Theological Seminary ■

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