

ACADEMIC ALERT

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IVP's Book Bulletin for Professors

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First Things, First Theology

Kevin Vanhoozer is a welcome new author to IVP. He presently serves as research professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. Anyone who is familiar with Vanhoozer's work knows of his concern for our use and understanding of Scripture. *First Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics* explores those issues and concerns which form the backdrop for much of what he has said on Scripture in his other works. Gary Deddo, IVP editor, conducted this interview with the aim to get to know a little better the author behind the books.

DEDDO: First, Kevin, we will have to admit that this time we let the author's title stand. Where does the title *First Theology* come from? And what does it mean?

VANHOOZER: Thanks for keeping the title and for giving me an opportunity to explain it. I suppose it comes from my imagination. It's a metaphor that allows me to pull a number of related ideas together. Proverbial wisdom reminds us to keep "first things first." Pauline wisdom exhorts us to keep our first love, Jesus Christ. And philosophical wisdom

has searched since ancient times for "first principles," that is, principles of being, knowledge and action. Aristotle was the first to coin the term "first philosophy," which in his view referred to the study of what is ultimately real. Modern philosophers considered their priority to be laying the foundations for knowledge. In modernity, therefore, epistemology became first philosophy. In post-modernity, what counts as first philosophy is up for grabs.



Kevin Vanhoozer

There is historical precedent for employing this idea in theology. Origen's *First Principles* is widely regarded as the first system of Christian theology written in the early church. The Greek word in Origen's title for "first principles," *arche* can mean "origin" or "first cause" as well as "sovereignty" or "dominion." First theology thus treats what happens "in the beginning" when one seeks to speak and think about God

■ *continued on page 2*

THE ORIGINS OF MATERIALISM

Moral Darwinism is a book that takes us back into the annals of intellectual history as well as forward into the concerns for our present cultural situation. In the middle lies Darwinism. Ben Wiker, who is a lecturer in theology and science at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, was more than willing to be interviewed by IVP editor Gary Deddo to let us in on the roots which, for him, nourished this book.



Ben Wiker

WIKER: Well, that's a rather long story, but most immediately, it was reading Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, which is less well known than his *Origin of Species*, but should always be read with the *Origin*.

In the *Origin*, Darwin set forth his famous arguments con-

cerning the power of natural selection to create all biological forms, but he was very careful not to mention how it all applied to human beings. In the *Descent*, which came out about a decade later, Darwin did apply his arguments about natural selection directly to human beings. It is only then that we see that Darwin's evolutionary account had direct and immediate implications for morality. Morality, according to Darwin, is just one more evolved trait caused by the mechanism of natural selection. I should say that in the plural—moralities—to be accurate. Many different moralities arise—or better, evolve—among human beings at different times and places, no one of them ultimately better than any other (any more than a certain length of finch beak is better or worse than another). Although Darwin tried to assert that evolution was somehow aiming at a kind of morality of sympathy, his efforts were undercut by his own argument. Evolution is absolutely nonteleological. It can't aim at anything. Not only did Darwin relativize morality, but (little known to many) he drew out the immediate eugenic implications of natural selection: too many of the "unfit" human beings sur-

■ *continued on page 3*

Vanhoozer: continued from page 1 ■

authoritatively. In particular, what principles rule what we say about God, what we say (and do) in God's name? "First," then, means not merely "earliest in time" but "foremost in importance." It has to do with what is most basic or fundamental in theology. Of special importance is our picture of how God is involved with Scripture and how we must be involved with Scripture in order to hear the Word of God therein. It's not so much a synonym for theological method as it is a name for the most important theological assumptions or presuppositions that undergird the whole of one's theology,

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including one's method. Just as exegesis without presuppositions is not possible, so too with theology.

DEDDO: Kevin, the issue of Scripture has been an ongoing concern of yours for some time. You haven't left that issue behind with *First Theology*. You must see something fruitful in the ongoing discussion. Do you see some constructive advance happening?

VANHOOZER: As Henry Chadwick once reminded me, Scripture has been an ongoing concern of the church long before I took it on! And there's a good reason for that. Scripture is the source of our knowledge of God, the locus of the authoritative testimony to the Son of God, and the means by which the Spirit of God assembles and governs the church. So on the one hand, doing justice to all that is in Scripture—to all that Scripture is—is a perennial challenge to the theologian.

At the same time, I do see some exciting new developments as we seek to triangulate Scripture, theology and the church. First, we've come to see that the Bible is more than a book of information. To think of the Bible as a theological "textbook" is to misconstrue it. Yes, there are truth and principles; but there are also stories, songs, prayers, dreams, prophecies, speeches and so forth. In the 1980s theologians rediscovered biblical narrative. What is the theological significance of narrative? To treat biblical narrative simply as a source for a reconstructed history or a reassembled theology is to miss the particular contribution that narrative qua narrative has to make, which is to render a world in which identifiable agents relate with one another.

After centuries of treating the Bible as a handbook of revealed propositions that theologians are to set out in logical order, we're beginning to appreciate the theological significance of the original forms of biblical literature. In my more optimistic moments I like to think that this rediscovery may be as important as the recovery of the original biblical languages was for the Reformation.

DEDDO: How would you compare this book with your previous book, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*

VANHOOZER: *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* was an attempt to respond to a number of challenges to the possibility of interpreting not only the Bible but texts in general. Two problems stood out: first, is there something in the text that is independent of its readers, to which readers should be held responsible? Second, whose interpretation counts as legitimate, and why? I tried to think Christianly about these two problems, and that meant thinking about them with the resources of Trinitarian theology.

First Theology is something of a "prequel" to my previous book. It lays out the doctrine of God as triune communicative agent on which the argument of *Is There a Meaning?* rests. For the first order of business in first theology is to learn the identity of the God of Jesus Christ (namely, Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Then, having determined who he is, we must go on to say what God is like (for example, loving and sovereign).

First Theology is also a sequel. Instead of talking only about method (what Jeffrey Stout likens to clearing one's throat), I actually go on to propose some things (Vanhoozer talks!). Three chapters apply the kind of hermeneutics I commend to texts taken from the Fourth Gospel. Other chapters represent hermeneutical forays into the domains of culture and apologetics. For if I'm right that God and God's Word must be our first thoughts no matter what else we're thinking about, then it's as proper for Christians to think theologically about meaning and truth, or goodness and beauty, as it is about specific doctrines.

DEDDO: You're concerned in this book to show the connection between theology and Scripture. Some would find that problematic. How did you come to see the fruitfulness of bringing these two things together?

VANHOOZER: You're right. Biblical scholars and theologians have their separate journals, their separate professional societies and their different methodologies. All too often, there is conflict within the theological faculties between these two

groups. I think we usually recognize the right of the other to exist, but even an *entente cordiale* is a far cry from meaningful dialogue.

The fact of the matter is that biblical studies and theology need one another. Better: the church needs these disciplines to need one another. Neither philosophical theology nor biblical studies alone provides the means for enabling the church to hear the Word of God in Scripture. Theology divorced from Scripture leads to idolatry; the Bible divorced from theology leads to "religion," that is, to merely historical descriptions of what certain people back then thought about God. To paraphrase Kant: "verses without doctrines are blind; doctrines without verses are empty."

If we're to make progress, we must move beyond suspicions and stereotyping. Theologians, at their best, do not merely abstract truths from the Bible. Technical concepts, like *homousios*, can represent fruitful insights into the meaning of the text. Conversely, biblical scholars, at their best, do not merely tell us who wrote what when. Rather, concepts and commentaries alike lead us deeper into the Scriptures and the Scriptures deeper into us.

One cannot think about either God or Scripture in isolation from the other without running into problems. Perhaps the clearest example today of the need for first theology is the debate over the openness of God. In my view, the debate is really a matter of first theology, of treating God, Scripture and hermeneutics as one admittedly complex problem.

DEDDO: You also see some connection between Scripture, the acts of God and our action. Tell us something of what's behind that insight.

VANHOOZER: Calvin links the knowledge of God to self-knowledge. What is it to be a person? I think the doctrine of the Trinity shows us that God is personal in that Father, Son and Spirit exist in communal relations with one another. Similarly, God enters into covenantal relations with human beings through his Word and his Spirit. Human beings, created in God's image, are likewise communicative agents who relate to one another and to God in various covenantal ways.

Now Scripture is the book of the covenant, the charter that establishes and governs God's relation with his people. The Bible is God's communicative action, his Spirit-accompanied Word, by which he enters into covenantal relations with human beings. It follows that the communicative acts in Scripture are the means through which humans enjoy personal relations with God. The proper end of Scripture, taken as communicative action, is communion between God and his people.

How we respond with our communicative action to God's communicative action in Scripture is therefore all-important. For the pattern of our response to Scripture is the pattern of our relationship to God. It follows that our interpretation of



Wiker: continued from page 1 ■

vived, and the “fittest” weren’t breeding enough. In fact, Darwin says so much that is shocking in the *Descent*, that anybody reading it can immediately see the essential connection between Darwinism and the kind of moral views being touted today as “cutting edge.”

DEDDO: Some don’t appreciate making that kind of connection. How have you responded to that objection?

WIKER: Well, I know there’s a well-worn objection that divides Darwin the scientist, who formulated

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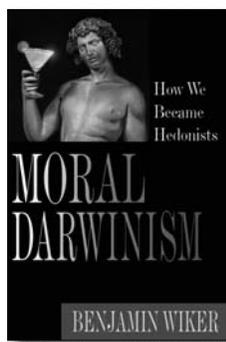
the principles of natural selection, from the use that later Darwinists made of his arguments—such as to provide a foundation for Social Darwinism or eugenics—but that division is arbitrarily drawn. Like it or not, it is quite clear when you read his *Descent of Man* that Darwin himself was the first Social Darwinist and the father of the modern eugenics movement. Social Darwinism and eugenics are derived directly from his principle of natural selection.

I think the real reason for people objecting to someone making connections between Darwinism and things like eugenics is that they don’t want the theory to be tarnished by its moral implications. But the implications are there, not only in the text, but as evidenced in the social and moral effects Darwinism has had in the century and a half since it appeared.

DEDDO: What helped you see the connection between Darwinism and our present moral state of affairs?

WIKER: There are certainly some very obvious connections, although oddly enough, they are all too often overlooked. For example, most if not all of “traditional” morality is based on the assumption that human beings are a distinct species. Thus, the prohibition against murder is defined in terms of human nature. Don’t murder! Don’t murder what? Aphids? Anteaters? Orangutans? No, don’t kill other innocent human beings. With Darwinism, however, that species distinction between human beings and other animals is completely blurred. There is no longer any moral line to be drawn because the species line has been erased. Darwinists like Richard Dawkins and Peter Singer understand this perfectly. Dawkins argues, in his *Blind Watchmaker*, that the only reason that we

believe we can derive moral distinctions from human nature is that “the intermediates between humans and chimps are all dead.” That is, if there existed a smooth spectrum of species connecting chimpanzees and human beings, with no “missing links,” there would be no foundation for morality. Once we see ourselves as just one more animal on the evolutionary spectrum, then we must either affirm that our morality applies to all living things, or deny that our morality has any foundation at all. Generally Darwinists provide a kind of incoherent



stew of both. They treat some animals as if they had the same moral status as human beings and treat human beings, in some respects, as if they were just one more animal. On the one hand, they will argue for animal rights; on the other, they assert that deformed or old and

infirm human beings should be “put down” out of the same compassion we show for our pets.

DEDDO: In your book you actually see a profound connection between our present moral climate which can be traced back to its roots through Darwin all the way to Epicurus. How did you come to see that more distant connection? And really, can such a link to ancient Greece be of interest beyond merely scholarly curiosity?

WIKER: We need to realize, first of all, that Darwinism is part of a much larger theoretical and moral worldview—materialism—and that it can be traced all the way back to the ancient Greek Epicurus. As I argue, Darwinism is just the modern form of ancient Epicureanism (with a modern “spin” which makes it hedonistic).

That becomes especially clear when you read the first-century B.C. Roman Epicurean poet Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* [*On the Nature of Things*]. In Lucretius’s poem you find an extraordinary thing: Darwin’s account of evolution, written almost two millennia before Darwin! Furthermore, Lucretius’s evolutionary account is part of his overall materialist argument about nature and human nature—a materialist cosmology into which the evolutionary account fits perfectly. This cosmology necessarily entails a materialist account of morality, which again looks suspiciously modern!

In *Moral Darwinism* I trace that account historically, showing how it forms the basis of modern materialist thought, not only in regard to science but also in regard to morality. As it turns out, our present moral state of affairs, morbid as it is, is the result of having accepted the entire materialist package, of which Darwinism was an essential part. This larger materialist package supports all kinds of things which are morally repugnant to Christians,

not only (as I mentioned) Social Darwinism and eugenics, but also sexual libertinism, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, cloning and so on. That certainly makes it of more than mere scholarly interest!

DEDDO: Your thinking moves to a certain degree along the lines of what has become known as the Intelligent Design movement, but your connection to that movement has been rather recent, hasn’t it? Could you relate to us some of your own intellectual journey along that similar path?

WIKER: In one sense, my connection to the Intelligent Design movement has been quite recent. In fact, I didn’t know such a thing existed until about two years ago. Somehow or other I picked up a copy of William Dembski’s *Intelligent Design* and found an intellectual home, as it were. I wrote a review of that book—very positive, of course—and contacted Bill Dembski so that I could send him a copy. One thing led to another, and I am now a fellow of the Discovery Institute, the Seattle-based think tank for Intelligent Design.

In another sense, however, I had been looking for something like the Intelligent Design movement for about twenty years. From the time I first read St. Thomas Aquinas’s proofs of the existence of God, I was convinced of two things. First, that the

MOST IF NOT ALL OF “TRADITIONAL” MORALITY IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE A DISTINCT SPECIES. . . . WITH DARWINISM, HOWEVER, . . . THERE IS NO LONGER ANY MORAL LINE TO BE DRAWN BECAUSE THE SPECIES LINE HAS BEEN ERASED.

existence of God could be demonstrated by natural reason and that the demonstration would be from the effects of God in nature. Second, that the account of nature on which St. Thomas depended was insufficient. Simply repeating his arguments, however convincing they were in many respects, would not be enough. Enter the Intelligent Design movement, which brings St. Thomas up to date, so to speak.

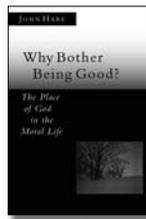
DEDDO: It seems clear that your concerns stretch beyond mere criticism of secular society. You see certain problems also within the church. How do you see this book helping the church to be faithful in its own life and thought?

WIKER: First, no matter how good the intentions of many Christians, good intentions are not enough if our understanding of the current moral situation is confused. As C. S. Lewis rightly said, “If you are lost, going full speed ahead is only going to get you more lost.” Sometimes the only way out of the forest is to retrace our steps.

Following up on this, as I argue in the book, our

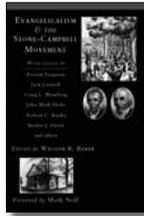
New & Noteworthy

In *Why Bother Being Good?* John Hare, professor of philosophy at Calvin College, seeks to answer two fundamental questions: "Is morality doable?" and if so, "Where does the authority of morality come from?" The author examines the nature of goodness and morality, the human condition, the need for God's assistance (i.e., atonement, justification and sanctification), providence, and the role of reason and the value of community in moral development. He says, "If all the arguments in this book work, what I have shown is that the morality we are familiar with requires a theological background if it is going to make sense." Writing for a general audience, Hare carefully defines terms and uses poetry and narrative to help the reader follow his arguments, making this unique and surprisingly fresh book an excellent introduction to moral philosophy.



terms he proposes and in the way he alone makes possible. As I. Howard Marshall says, "The author cuts back through the undergrowth of our inherited traditions to the clarity and straightforwardness of the biblical teaching. . . . Despite the scholarship behind it, all this is done with a beautiful simplicity and clarity that makes the book readily available to a wide circle of readers."

Since 1996, the Evangelical Theological Society's annual meetings have included sessions hosted by the Stone-Campbell Adherents Study Group, in which biblical scholars, theologians and church historians have examined the relationship between the Stone-Campbell (or Restoration) Movement and contemporary evangelicalism. The fruit of that work is presented in *Evangelicalism & the Stone-Campbell Movement*, edited by William R. Baker. As Mark Noll points out in his foreword, Restorationist figures such as Max Lucado have recently given the Stone-Campbell Movement greater visibility within evangelical circles, yet many evangelicals are still largely unaware of this movement's heritage and distinctives. With leading Stone-Campbell scholars like Everett Ferguson and Jack Cottrell interacting with evangelicals like Stan Grenz and Craig Blomberg, this volume provides an excellent starting point for exploring how Stone-Campbell thought contributes to evangelical thinking.



Like many academic books, Larry R. Helyer's *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period: A Guide for New Testament Students* was birthed in the classroom. After years of teaching such a course and using a textbook not particularly geared to the needs of students of the New Testament, he decided to write one himself. The result is a textbook that takes students on a highly informative and interesting tour of Second Temple literature, pointing out the setting, content and character of these works, the questions they are addressing and, of course, their relevance for understanding the times and literature of the New Testament. Where possible, representative parallels are clearly and helpfully organized in charts. A bibliography of the best and most accessible texts precedes each section.

Two who have seen the book have this to say:

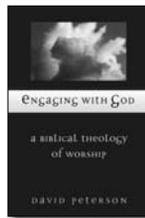
"The literature of second temple Judaism is so vast that few college or seminary students ever receive a decent introduction to it at all. Here, in one volume, are references to judicious samplings from every major corpus, complete with introduction and background, and detailed explanation of relevance for New Testament studies. A wonderful gift for students and professors alike. Perhaps many will now actually teach, and teach substantially, on the topic!" **CRAIG BLOMBERG**, of Denver Seminary

A few years back, we began distributing books for IVP-UK that weren't available in North America through other Christian publishers. Immediately two books showed much better sales than any others. *According to Plan* was one of those. This was meeting a need as a text for introductory biblical theology that nothing else was. So we decided to publish it ourselves. Straightforward, easy to read, full of charts and study questions with no unnecessary technicalities, it is perfect for undergraduates and for bringing new graduate students quickly up to speed. How do the Old and New Testaments fit together? What is the point of biblical theology? What is the overall story of the Bible? What difference does it make? This introductory text is an enormously useful book for understanding how the Bible fits together as the unfolding story of God's plan for salvation.



"There are many useful books on Second Temple Jewish literature, for which reason I nearly passed this book by. But once I began actually examining it, I recognized the thoroughness of Larry Helyer's acquaintance with the sources and how carefully he has prepared this book with New Testament students in mind. I believe it will provide an excellent resource for those who want access to the most important materials for New Testament study." **CRAIG KEENER**

The other IVP-UK book we distributed that received a great response was *Engaging with God*. So we are publishing it too. Originally released in the U.S. by Eerdmans, this book has always been in demand. Through careful exegesis in both Old and New Testaments, David Peterson unveils in this biblical theology the total life-orientation of worship that is found in Scripture. Rather than determining for ourselves how we should worship, we, his people, are called to engage with God on the

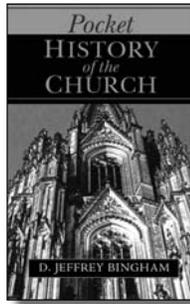


Have you ever wondered what quantum indeterminacy has to do with the omniscience of God or what quantum mechanics has to do with the doctrine of predestination? Have you ever ruminated on the theological implications of Chaos theory or of Gödel's proof? Well, if you have (or if you haven't but want to) then you won't want to miss John Jefferson Davis's latest work, *The Frontiers of Science and Faith: Examining Questions from the Big Bang to the End of the Universe*. This provocative engagement of theology and the natural sciences originally developed as research for a course on the Frontiers of Science and Faith and was the winner of the Templeton Foundation's science and religion model course program. So next time you consider the search for extraterrestrial intelligence and its relation to the doctrine of redemption, you'll be glad you have a copy of *Frontiers* nearby. ■



INTRODUCING THE NEWEST "POCKET" BOOKS FROM IVP

Let's face it, writing a *Pocket History of the Church* is not the fast track to academic prestige. But when Mark Noll comments that "Jeffrey Bingham has written a carefully-etched series of postcards from a big, big country called The Past," even hard-nosed specialists might recognize an ally to their cause. And why not? The incisive historical summary is a genre with a pedigree at least as old as the ancient epitome. We highly recommend Bingham's *Pocket History* as a starting point for students, offering them a bird's eye view of church history and a stimulant to their further study of that big and distant country that bears



in IVP's series of *Pocket Dictionaries*, this little book offers clear, concise and reliable defini-

so mightily on the present.

In the same spirit, but taking on its subject by nuts 'n bolts, Arthur Patzia and Anthony Petrota's *Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies* will prove to be a great friend to students delving into biblical studies. The newest offering

of the terminology that peppers the pages of texts and reference works in biblical studies. Many a professor of biblical studies has puzzled over the blank stares that meet their discussion of recensions, paraenesis or Qumran (Is that the same as Qu'ran?)—until they realize that they too are speaking an unknown tongue at not even the third hour of the morning. Here's an effective *pro•pae•deu•tic* to put in the hands of your students who are beginning to negotiate their passage through introductory courses in the Old or New Testament. It will take them where Merriam-Webster dares not tread. ■

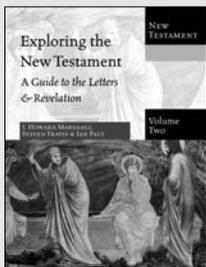
N. T. Intro . . . the Next Generation, Vol. 2

Exploring the New Testament, Vol. 2: A Guide to the Letters & Revelation—written by I. Howard Marshall and Stephen Travis, with Ian Paul contributing the chapter on Revelation—is a textbook introduction packed with the kind of information and perspective you want your students to grasp. Clearly and accessibly written and organized, it rises above the stuffiness of much academic prose and the plain bread of featureless text. And it is written by two masters of their discipline.

Each letter is discussed in terms of authorship, style, structure, themes and the situation it addresses. But always the emphasis is on getting students to read and engage with the New Testament documents. Separate chapters are devoted to Greco-Roman background, ancient letter writing, Paul's missionary theology and the interpretation of the New Testament letters. Anchored in an evangelical perspective, this book models an air of open dialogue with other viewpoints, presenting them with respectful care and evaluating them with evenhanded thoughtfulness.

Like its companion volume on the Gospels and Acts, *Exploring 2* brims with features that enhance its usefulness for professors and students and give it an interactive quality. Boxes pose questions for further reflection or explore related issues; charts and tables organize information; and maps and glossaries further support the text.

In addition to its many other qualities, *Exploring the New Testament, Vol. 2* is an introduction that successfully runs the middle ground between too big and too small, and it is easily adaptable to your own style of teaching. There are a number of textbook options available these days for New Testament introduction, some new and some tried and true. We encourage you to give these two volumes a try for the 2002-2003 academic year. We don't think you will be disappointed! ■

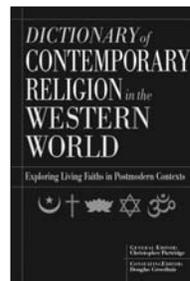


Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World

In the midst of a plethora of dictionaries of religion, we think our new *Dictionary of Contemporary Religions in the Western World* (or DCRWW) stands out as a valuable tool for those engaged in the intellectual border crossings that are so characteristic of our rapidly changing and pluralized world. The title is descriptive, not simply evocative. Since it is contemporary, it might be described as picking up where the history of religion leaves off. And its unique contribution is a focus on how these contemporary religions thrive, function and respond in the Western world that we now call postmodern.

And what about the religions? The DCRWW offers overviews of the contemporary blooms of perennial species—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. But not to the neglect of Confucianism, Jainism, Shintoism, Taoism, Tantrism and Zoroastrianism. Even the cultural influence and interaction of religion is mapped in a mini-library of articles on "Religion and"—the arts, the environment, education, globalization, human rights, media, philosophy, politics, psychology, science, sexuality and so forth. A panoply of new religious movements unfolds in articles ordering them under their mother religions or native soils. And the hybrid buds of new age spiritualities and therapies, psychedelic spirituality and parapsychology, neopaganism and UFOism, as well as other contemporary and postmodern religious impulses are carefully probed.

Edited by Christopher Partridge and Douglas Groothuis, the DCRWW is well suited to the needs of students, teachers, ministers and cross-cultural workers who are trying to sort out the bewildering landscape of religion. Middleweight in size (under 400 pages) and affordable in price (\$24.99), it will also serve nicely as a required text or resource for courses in contemporary religion or crosscultural mission. ■



Vanhoozer: continued from page 2 ■

Scripture is itself a crucial part of our covenant life with God.

DEDDO: What works or influences, over the long haul, have had a significant effect on the development of your thought? Could you recommend to our readers a couple of other books they might want to read in connection with your line of thinking?

VANHOOZER: Shades of Cana! You've saved the best, or at least the hardest, question till now. Let me start with culture and the general intellectual context. I've witnessed not only the demise of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, but all the undoing of the hegemony of modernity. The loss of universal standards for rationality associated with postmodernity has touched theology too.

Two other developments in philosophy have also been influential. From the philosophy of language came the insight that words are more than representations of the world. J. L. Austin argued that we do things with words, things like promising, telling, commanding, asking. *First Theology* is to a large extent a development of the insight that God too does things in and through the language and literature of the Bible. Of course, Isaiah 55:11 teaches this as well; philosophy therefore gets credit not for a goal, but for an assist. Another help came from Plantinga's advice to Christian philosophers not to let secular thinkers always set the agenda. And this leads me to the third and most important influence on my thought, which comes from theology itself.

I have been greatly encouraged by a new-found confidence among theologians who have resisted the modernist urge to "apologize" before theologizing. We don't need to demythologize, or to correlate, or otherwise to demonstrate the plausibility of the biblical worldview to a scientific age. We simply need to get on with it. I saw something of this confidence in Van Til's unapologetically presuppositional apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary under my teacher John Frame. The other person I must mention in this context is the late Hans Frei of Yale, who as much as anyone in North America has led us out of the wilderness of liberal theology. Yet it was not until my own sojourn in the far country—Britain—during my years teaching at the University of Edinburgh, that I began to conceive a vision for an evangelical theology that would be primarily constructive rather than primarily reactionary. This involved building bridges with nonevangelical theologians who are nevertheless orthodox. An important turning point was a 1995 conference on "Bible and Theology" at King's College London, organized by Francis Watson, which brought together biblical scholars and systematic theologians interested in overcom-

ing the ugly ditch that has for centuries separated their disciplines. A commitment to the theological interpretation of Scripture is a crucial plank in the larger constructive theological agenda.

Of the many books that I could list, let me mention Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* and John Webster's *Word and Church*. Webster's

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work in particular is a good example of what I'm talking about. Rather than letting present criticisms shape (and possibly distort!) his view, he instead reflects on Scripture in light of faith and Christian doctrine. He understands that the best apologetics is a good dogmatics!

DEDDO: Where do you see evangelical theology going, and what's next for you?

VANHOOZER: I'm the son not of a prophet, but of a pharmacist, so I can't respond to the first half of your question other than speculatively.

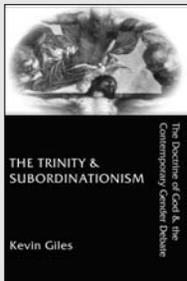
Evangelical theology is presently in something of an identity crisis: What does it mean to do theology evangelically today? Are evangelicals modern or postmodern, postliberal or postconservative? I see us wrestling with these and similar questions regarding first theology for several more years. What's next for me? I'm tempted to say "second" theology, and in a sense that's correct. I've been a tiller of the theological ground long enough; it's time to do some planting. The church needs theologians to roll up their sleeves and get back to work on the basics: helping church members understand God, themselves and the best way to participate in what God is doing in the world today. That, anyway, is the thrust of my current project on the nature of doctrine. After that, I plan to work on the doctrine of divine providence. In general, I'd like to keep working on basic Christian doctrine in pursuit of the three "Ws": wisdom, witness, worship. If I'm truly successful, perhaps one day I'll write the kind of theology that can actually be preached! ■

The Trinity & Subordinationism

This book grew out of the debate regarding the place and role of women now taking place among evangelical theologians and biblical scholars and in their respective churches. It should make a significant contribution to that controversy, moving the discussion in a helpful direction. But it also makes its own contribution to historical theology on the topic of subordinationism in the doctrine of the Trinity.

Acknowledging that there have been a number of forms of subordinationism throughout the history of the church, Kevin Giles finds all of them wanting, including contemporary forms of role/function subordinationism. Agreeing with Warfield, he finds Hodge's and the theology of others like his, seriously wanting. The early church's wrestlings with how to most faithfully speak about the divinity of the incarnate Son and the relations of Father with the Son and Spirit turn out to provide guidance not only on the matter of subordinationism but also for biblical interpretation in general.

Giles applies the lessons learned in that ancient controversy to two cases; namely, the interpretation of scriptural texts dealing with the status of women and of slaves. Giles contends that in both these cases all evangelicals have departed from the traditional interpretation of those texts whether dealing with women or slaves. The question is how best to reinterpret those texts. Giles affirms the reinterpretation taken up by evangelicals with respect to slavery. However, on the issue of women, Giles believes that the hermeneutical standard set as early as the Arian controversy and reaffirmed in the Reformation has not been held up by those who follow the hierarchical complementarian position. Even if complete resolution is not achieved, all parties will benefit from a careful reading of Giles's work. If this book seems to have some overlap with another of our recent publications, William Webb's *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, that is because there is a certain convergence. Reading them both together is recommended! ■



Wiker: *continued from page 3* ■

contemporary moral debates are defined by two rival and incompatible views of the universe and of human nature, two irreconcilable cosmological-moral accounts, that of the materialist and that of the Christian. Much of the book is spent disentangling the two, tracing them back to their respective sources and showing how the two are indeed fundamentally antagonistic.

In fact, we find out by reading Epicurus and Lucretius, that materialism was designed to destroy all religion. When Christianity arose on the scene, not too long after Lucretius wrote his Epicurean materialist epic poem, it showed itself to be immediately antagonistic to Epicurean materialism. This fundamental antagonism can be traced historically over the next millennium and a half.

But then a strange thing happened. As a result of the rise of a materialist account of nature and science during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, Epicureanism and Christianity began to be indiscriminately mixed. The result was not a true mixture, however—it couldn't be, since they were fundamentally irreconcilable. The result was that the materialism slowly ate away at the Christianity, like a kind of acid, and the West has consequently become increasingly secularized (or de-Christianized). But the phenomenon of secularization—in all its dimensions, including the moral dimension—is simply the steady victory of Epicurean materialism over

Christianity.

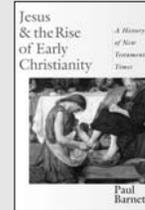
Today, unfortunately, we find Christians all over the map, supporting all kinds of things which were actually meant to destroy Christianity. For example, we find Christians supporting the entire Darwinian account of natural selection, an

TODAY, UNFORTUNATELY, WE FIND CHRISTIANS ALL OVER THE MAP, SUPPORTING ALL KINDS OF THINGS WHICH WERE ACTUALLY MEANT TO DESTROY CHRISTIANITY.

account which makes God completely redundant. We also find Christians supporting abortion and euthanasia even though, from the earliest documents of the church forward, such things have been forbidden. If we trace the materialist account of evolution and the materialist support for abortion and euthanasia to their historical source, we find Epicurean materialism, an account of nature and human nature designed to eliminate religion and to instantiate a purely this-worldly system of ethics.

Until Christians are far more clear about the pedigree of their opinions, they will continue to borrow ideas and positions from an alien source, a source which, especially in modernity, was designed to destroy Christianity. ■

New In Paperback



Paul Barnett's *Jesus & the Rise of Early Christianity* leads us through the vibrant landscape of the first-century Greco-Roman world. This comprehensive survey of New

Testament history, with its emphasis on the propelling role of the historical and risen Jesus in the rise of Christianity, is now available in paperback.



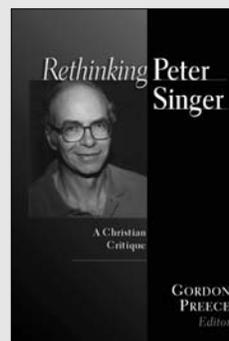
William A. Dembski's *Intelligent Design* provides a crucial link between science and theology. This is a pivotal work from a thinker whom Phillip Johnson calls "one of

the most important of the 'design' theorists," and it, too, is now available in paperback. ■

REAFFIRMING *Traditional* ETHICS

Controversial philosopher Peter Singer in one of his books called for us to "rethink" traditional ethics, especially on our understanding of life, death and the relation of human beings to other forms of life. This book calls on readers to rethink Peter Singer's radical utilitarian ethics. Singer got his start in Australia, and the four contributors for this book are fellow Australians who have contended with his thinking for a number of years. They give us an incisive perspective not only on his approach to ethics but on his views of animal rights, infanticide, Christianity, the nature of humanity and euthanasia. For what is at stake is far more than treating animals well—a theme that often attracts listeners to his presentations. His proposal for active euthanasia and infanticide judged on a utilitarian basis has led to the cancelation of his lectures in Germany and to protests in Europe and the U.S.

His appointment to a chaired position at Princeton University created some controversy. What is less widely known is his opposition to Christianity in particular, not just generic forms of traditional



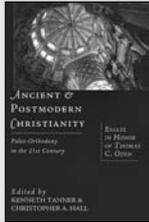
(Western) ethics. Beneath all his analysis lies an understanding of the human person that would appear to be irreconcilable with a Christian view. Singer boldly identifies his aims in the title of his most recent book, *Unsanctifying Human Life: Essays in Ethics*. The controversy over his work is not accidental or exaggerated.

This book, edited by Gordon Preece, with Andrew Sloane, Graham Cole and Lindsay Wilson, helps us to understand Singer's thinking and to make an informed and persuasive response to his confrontational proposal. As the subtitle of another of his books says, Singer hopes his philosophy will lead to "the collapse of traditional ethics." We trust that such rumors are entirely premature. ■

POSTMODERN OR ANCIENT?

One of the joyful ironies of postmodernity is the openness to and even quest for ancient wisdom. Nowhere has this interest in ancient wisdom been more apparent to us at IVP than in the astonishingly positive response to the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. It shouldn't have surprised us; Tom Oden, the editor of the series, was himself a convert from faddish "what's-happenin'-now" theology to what he terms paleo-orthodoxy.

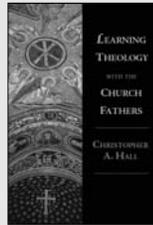
Several new books join the IVP library of useful resources on this ancient wisdom. First is a tribute to Oden and his work on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. *Ancient & Postmodern Christianity: Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21st Century*, edited by Kenneth Tanner and Christopher A. Hall, assembles essays from nineteen Oden friends and former students, covering a significant array of topics, from worship and theology to history and ethics. Among the contributors are Robert Jensen,



J. I. Packer, Thomas Howard, Robert Webber, William J. Abraham, Geoffrey Wainwright, Carl E. Braaten, Stanley J. Grenz, Richard John Neuhaus and Wolfhart Pannenberg.

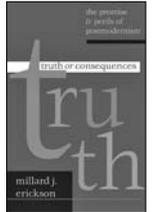
Chris Hall has added *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers* to his earlier *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers*. Here readers are invited to look over the fathers' shoulders to see not only what they taught about Scripture, Christ, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, sin and salvation, providence, the church and the resurrection, but how and why they thought what they did. This is fascinating, edifying historical theology at its best.

And speaking of the ACCS, we have added two new volumes—*Matthew 14-28*, edited by Manlio Simonetti, and *Genesis 12-50*, edited by Mark Sheridan—bringing the totals of volumes now in print to three for the Old Testament and eight for the New. ■



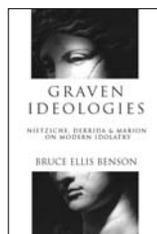
CONGRATULATIONS to CT Book Award Winners

We are happy to announce that four IVP books were awarded *Christianity Today* book awards in 2002. Millard J. Erickson's *Truth or Consequences* won in the Apologetics/Evangelism category and Harold Netland's *Encountering Religious Pluralism* tied for the award in the Christianity and Culture category. Awards of merit went to Timothy Dudley-Smith's *John Stott: The Later Years in the History/Biography* category and to T. M. Moore's *Ecclesiastes: Ancient Wisdom When All Else Fails* in the Spirituality category. ■



NIETZSCHE, DERRIDA & MARION ON MODERN IDOLATRY

The Christian reception of those who have critiqued both Christianity and the developments of Western culture since the Enlightenment is still under review. Bruce Benson's thoughtful and well-informed book makes a significant contribution to that ongoing conversation. Often included under the rubric of postmodern thought, the names of two of the philosophers treated in this book, Nietzsche and Derrida, are widely known. Benson's careful analysis of their thought brings out some less widely recognized ideas that came to inform their more mature thought—mainly the danger of ideological idolatries. Christian orthodoxy shares, or ought to share, this same concern. They all recommend having very good idol detectors. In conversation with the less well-known philosopher Marion, Benson helps us turn the corner from philosophy to



theology. How is it that we can truly speak of God? How can philosophy and theology contribute to the task without falling back into idolatry? Can either be of real service in the witness to the transcendent God? Taking us beyond Marion, but mindful of the critiques of Nietzsche and Derrida and the contributions of Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenology, Benson engages a full range of biblical teaching to help us see how both theology and philosophy may recognize their respective limits and work in tandem to preserve the otherness, mystery and praise of the God to whom we may bear a prophetic witness. A brilliant Christian engagement with post-modern philosophy. ■

ACADEMIC ALERT

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