

much space to the discussion of the works of Childs and Sanders on canonical criticism, and effectively describes and differentiates between their approaches. Nevertheless, his essay seems to put forward a canonical approach that is little more than descriptive of how the canon has functioned and can function in the shaping of theology. Clack's essay vividly conveys the primary intent of feminist NT interpretation to oppose patriarchy and uphold liberation: this is the fundamental interpretative commitment. Further, Clack follows Reuther in affirming a reductionist reading, for such a reading merely acknowledges what happens all the time: "Feminists are not alone in bringing their own ideas and beliefs to the biblical material. All reading is like this" (p. 373). True enough, all reading is, to some degree, "perspectival." But not all readers will join Clack in making a virtue of selectivity; indeed, many will regard ideologically driven selective approaches to the NT more as using than reading the text.

Porter and Tombs are to be commended for presenting this helpful collection of essays on NT interpretation, even if the work is not quite as distinctive as they suggest.

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Darius Salter. *American Evangelism: Its Theology and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996. 408 pp. \$21.99.

Evangelism and theology belong together, and any contemporary author worthy of note must work hard at appreciating the dependence of the one discipline on the other. It has been said before that "evangelists should teach theology and theologians should teach evangelism," and the need for this interaction was never more crucial than at this present time. The very nature of the gospel demands both theological reflection linked with faithful proclamation, and there are altogether too many examples of the imbalance of emphasizing one to the detriment of the other. In this context, then, Darius Salter has made a valuable contribution and challenges us yet again with the ways we understand the Good News in the North American cultural setting. Salter himself teaches preaching and pastoral theology at the Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, MO, which information gives us valuable clues in understanding his theoretical and practical perspective. He approaches his subject from a Wesleyan-Holiness background and conviction; as a pastor, administrator, and teacher he can relate to his readers from several levels of understanding. His critique of Luther, Calvin, and J. I. Packer in the first chapter betrays an Arminian persuasion, but he is generally fair in his treatment of the theological foundations for evangelism, moving across the spectrum of authors and practitioners in ways that are both insightful and helpful.

To begin with, Salter does exactly what he should do when writing a book on evangelism: he should tell us what he means when he speaks about evangelism. We are encouraged then when he sets out to work on such a definition, following the discussion with a brief survey of other definitions and descriptions of evangelism. The author's definition of evangelism is stated in terms of what "the community of God does to make new creatures in Christ Jesus," omitting explicit reference to the content of the gospel message the church is mandated to proclaim. Isn't evangelism too often

defined or described in terms of human activity, attracting people who are more naturally drawn to activism, perhaps even, only those with the gift of evangelism? Yet, Salter critiques traditional definitions of evangelism as defective when they don't leave room for evaluation or effectiveness.

In chaps. 2 and 3, the author sketches out a theology of evangelism which focuses on the biblical concept of salvation (divine solvency). Three questions are helpfully suggested as lines of direction to investigate the deeper meaning of salvation: a) How *intensively* does the Holy Spirit transform a person through faith in Jesus Christ? 2) How *extensive* is the salvation offered by Jesus Christ? c) "Finally, there is the *expansive* question: 'What should be the realistic evangelistic expectations of the church as it enters the third millennium?'" The reader is keen to learn what the author seems ready to explain, but, alas, we are disappointed when we read that the material to be covered "will not be a systematic treatment of these questions because, frankly, I believe that conclusive answers are highly controversial, if not completely elusive" (p. 36). Instead of attempting to answer these questions, the author does outline a soteriology of evangelism under the following rubrics: a loss of innocence, a loss of intimacy, a loss of identity, the loss of life, and the loss of dominion, after which an "ordo salutis" is proposed, including the Wesleyan concept of "entire sanctification." When Salter writes about translating theology into evangelistic action he is on solid ground by describing the relationship between evangelism and theology, but his point is softened somewhat: "A conviction for evangelism must rest on a theology. Such a theology consists of a knowledge inventory of God and His plan for us, which is a supernatural gift of God" (p. 62). The proposed theology consists of the "message, mission, means, motive, and model for evangelism" suggesting neatly ordered titles from either lecture notes or homiletical outlines. And the author is commended for stating correctly that "the full theology does not need to be completely understood, but the essentials need to be communicated for a healthy birth into the kingdom." However, this reviewer is disappointed when Scott Peck (*People of the Lie*) is quoted in a theological context of a discussion of sin and the results of evil. As a final comment on this section on theology, there is a strong suggestion that in using the exclusive model of Jesus as evangelist, itinerancy seems to be the recommended model for contemporary evangelism, especially since George Whitefield, John Wesley, and Billy Graham are seen as illustrations of the basic paradigm. Hopefully, the best of the theology and practice of these effective disciples of the Savior can be applied.

The disciplines of history, psychology, and sociology are put to good use by Salter in the next three chapters, and it must be admitted that the most helpful books on such a practical subject as evangelism will include discussions on these very disciplines. Theology must always be viewed in a context and the American context of this volume demands such contextualization. The section on history is helpful because it covers evangelists, churches, and denominations, with a comprehensive sweep and diverse selection. In citing the examples of evangelistic pastors, the author accurately assesses one of the major problems of churches and evangelism: "the evangelistic tide of churches will not rise higher than the pastor's gravitational pull for the lost" (p. 118). Furthermore, the appreciation for parachurch movements must be noted in light of the fact that denominationally-oriented writers often have little time (much less appreciation) for parachurch movements and what they have contributed to

American religious life as well as to the vision and encouragement of many churches and denominations. With regard to the relationship of psychology and evangelism, Salter's discussion is generally helpful in that he is aware of the pitfalls of an unhealthy trend to rationalize sin and the need for biblical remedies on the one hand, and the need for evangelists to be aware of the ways in which people learn and tend to receive information which requires change and conversion. Although one looks in vain for reference to some kind of analysis of postmodernism (even the mention of it!), the author helpfully discusses the paradigm shift that has certainly taken place in recent years, and after listing eight significant sociological shifts, he engages the reader in an insightfully analysis and critique:

As our already pluralistic society becomes ever more fragmented, evangelism will need to incorporate an apologetic model of evangelism that is not only crystal clear about its own truth claims, but is also aware of the basic tenets of other claims to truth. Could it be that present evangelistic models only primarily reach those who already possess the basic worldview of the evangelist? (pp. 189-93)

Church leaders (especially those pastors and teachers in the academy) will do well to heed the wise words offered in these three chapters.

Chapter 7 surveys familiar territory, the landscape of methods and techniques, most of which are well-known, including an in-depth discussion of a theology of revival. Also considered is a helpful look at church planting as well as an extended analysis of door-to-door evangelism. With each of these discussions the author concludes each section with a critique. This chapter reveals the most traditional ideas of the author and places him in the mainstream of approaches used by churches and evangelistic organizations in the middle portion of this century. Chapter 8 moves ahead with a survey of ways in which the church has positioned itself to realize and apply its methods and strategies. Considerable weight is given to the popularized "church growth school" approach associated with Peter Wagner and Lyle Schaller, both of whom are quoted several times in this section. Evidence of this thinking is the statement from Wagner that "confidence will not be won without political savvy" meaning that the wise pastor will not move ahead of his people and will consider the ideas of "those who have sacrificed over the years to make the church possible" (p. 244). Additionally, there are brief discussions on the megachurch, the "baby boomers," secular suburbanites, working out a mission statement, and finally, a survey of some of the programs that have demonstrated effectiveness in churches and parachurches.

Preaching takes center stage in chap. 9 under the rubric of "proclamation" and begins with a brief word study of the word (KJV) itself, alongside "persuasion" and "dialogue." Calling on Dennis Kinlaw, Bill Hybels, Haddon Robinson, Fred Craddock, Daniel Bauman, and Bill Dyrness, the author seeks to present a theology of preaching which manifests all the characteristics of a course with the same name. It is certainly helpful that Salter interacts with these preachers as well as the data compiled by Jim Engel in his analysis of the process toward a spiritual decision and stages of spiritual growth following conversion. In a certain sense, this chapter represents a theological approach which was missing in the earlier "theological" sections. In chap. 10 evangelism is shown to be

greatly enhanced by a theology of worship where it is stated that "if evangelism is the door of the church, worship is its interior" (p. 304). The author rightly argues that through the genuine worship of a holy and righteous God, those unbelievers in attendance will be drawn to the Savior, not only through the gate of the mind, but also through experiencing God with one's whole body. Citations from such luminaries as William Willimon, Robert Webber, David Mains, Bill Hybels, and Ed Young complement the author's emphasis on wholistic evangelism, providing illustrations and contemporary examples. It is to be lamented, however, that Salter overlooked the excellent work of John Piper, the Baptist preacher-theologian, who has written extensively on just these very concepts.

By the time the author arrives at his chapter on "Lifestyle Evangelism" (chap. 11), he will have covered much of the essential material related to evangelism, from both the theoretical and the practical perspectives. But this chapter deserves thorough reading and reflection because of popular misunderstandings and misconceptions of what the term actually means. Too often, advocates of so-called "relational" or "lifestyle" evangelism overlook the power of the gospel revealed in the Bible, as well as the urgency of the message in an eschatological context of the second Advent. Followers of these teachers often confess that too many of their evangelistic efforts have been "all lifestyle, and no evangelism." The author also contributes to this continuing discussion by utilizing "intentional" along with evangelism in a helpful way, knowing that most of us without the gift of evangelism always need to look for opportunities and plan on following through on those open doors: "People need to be motivated by a joy that doesn't take themselves too seriously and radically enables them to reschedule their priorities so that they have time to spend with their neighbors" (p. 344). Further, Salter speaks of "the explosive power of a higher affection" and in commenting on 2 Tim 2:4 he says, "That's it! We are too entangled in the affairs of this life to do the work of evangelism" (p. 345). This fine chapter concludes in an excellent way when the author states that "Lifestyle is the heart and soul of evangelism—an evangelism that earnestly seeks the wisdom of God with the full *intention* of acting out that wisdom" (p. 354).

The final chapter (chap. 12) is entitled "Evangelism in a Technological Age" and is largely a commentary on the ways in which television has influenced our culture and it is not a pretty picture. With the aid of Neil Postman (*Amusing Ourselves to Death*) and the Institute for American Church Growth, the author briefly analyzes, critiques, and offers "redemptive suggestions" in regard to the Christian use of television as a mass medium. He chides the church for choosing "America's most enculturated medium to proclaim a message that is diametrically opposed to the American ethos" because ". . . as a medium (it) is not able to deal with the nuances of the gospel and the paradoxes of theology, much less the transcendence of a Holy God" (p. 365). This is a serious charge indeed, and it is to be hoped that the author can envision an actual worship service in a local church in which the speaker and worship leaders deal more effectively with such nuances and paradoxes of theology than the electronic medium of television. As a matter of fact, Salter does provide some very helpful and encouraging suggestions to conclude the chapter, but the "coup de grace" is delivered by Postman: "I believe I am not mistaken in saying that Christianity is a demanding and serious religion. When it is delivered as easy and amusing, it is another kind of religion" (p. 367).

American Evangelism by Darius Salter will be able to stand alongside other recent books on the theology of evangelism by Lewis Drummond, Ben Johnson, and Harry Poe, and that is good company. While the theology is not nearly as informed and nuanced as that of the three authors above, the unique contribution Salter makes is certainly in the area of integration of other disciplines, especially sociology, psychology, and the use of technology. And while it is doubtful that any professor of evangelism in graduate education would ever adopt just one textbook for a course, this one surely will deserve consideration as one of the major components of such a course. It is more traditional than one would like in addressing the pressing needs of our contemporary culture, so perhaps the best way to use this text would be to supplement it with other resources aimed more directly at the postmodern people who inhabit the planet in this area of the globe. Salter is to be complimented for helping all of us who teach at the graduate level continue to work hard at integrating theology and evangelism with our students and in our churches.

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