

Book Reviews

The Lamb of God. By Sergius Bulgakov, translated by Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008. xv + 456 pp. \$34.00.

Feminist theologians and other New Testament scholars, including members of the popular Jesus Seminar, have given unusual significance to the Wisdom tradition and the Divine Sophia in recent years. *The Lamb of God* by a Russian Orthodox theologian precedes this interest by decades and has unsuspected relevance to current studies. It provides an ontological coherence that is complementary to theological exposition of Sophia in the West, and it finds harmonization in the confusing array of biblical references in the interpretations of Sophia available today. The contribution to North American Protestantism is a metaphysical context for plausibility of belief in and worship of the Trinity.

Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944) is called the leading Orthodox theologian of the twentieth century. *The Lamb of God* is his work on Christology in a trilogy under the title *On Divine Humanity*, including *The Bride of the Lamb* (Church) and *The Comforter* (Holy Spirit). Both of these books were published by Eerdmans and reviewed in LTQ in Fall 2003 and Winter 2004 respectively. The present volume begins with a detailed study of the Nicean Chalcedonian creed of the two natures of Christ in its patristic origin and biblical warrant. Father Bulgakov proceeds to develop his theological view of the perfect union of Divinity and Humanity in Christ and of the transfiguring relation of God to humanity and the world. He asserts that the main concern of the Chalcedonian synthesis had been soteriological and referral to revelation rather than a theological amplification of how the Word became flesh in Jesus Christ, the "God-Man."

A curiosity of this massive book is an Appendix translated from a Russian journal of 1933 which is the author's own review in the third person. It is recommended that the reader start with that and consult it from time to time. (443-447)

Sergius Bulgakov was introduced to North American readers primarily by Paul Valliere's *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key*, reviewed in LTQ in Spring, 2001, pages 52-56. He was the son of a priest and became a Marxist economist in his early years, changing from philosophical materialism under the influence of German idealism to become a lay theologian. He was thirty-four at the time of the 1905

“intelligentsia’s revolution,” which gave Russia an uncertain constitutional monarchy, and for a time he advocated Christian socialism. In 1909, his essay “Heroism and Humility” appeared, and in 1912 *The Philosophy of Economy*, relating practical problems with mystical faith and developing his theology of Divine Sophia (Wisdom). Under the influence of Vladimir Solovyov (reviewed in LTQ Winter 2005), and derived largely from Proverbs 8:22-32, “sophiology” became identified with Bulgakov as the doctrine of the relation of God’s being and creation’s being.

Bulgakov was marginalized politically by the revolution of 1917, but participated as a layman in the national Church Council which reestablished the patriarchate after a lapse of 200 years. He was ordained at Pentecost the following year in Danilov Monastery in Moscow. While teaching at a university in Crimea, he was arrested and expelled from the Soviet Union in 1922, went to Prague, then Paris. There he became founding dean of a theological institute in honor of his namesake Saint Sergius. Support came from Russian emigrés and Protestant ecumenical figures like John R. Mott, and from the World Council of Churches after World War II.

He became prominent through his writings, as evidenced by mention in the correspondence of Jacques Maritain and the novelist Julien Green, dialogue with Vatican II figure Yves Congar, and by active participation in Faith and Order meetings of the ecumenical movement. Bulgakov’s later years were devoted to dogmatic theology, writing *On the Humanity of God* and other works. He sees theological tradition as an “on-going, organic process,” and emphasizes the creative human receptivity (the creaturely Sophia) that makes divine incarnation (the Divine Sophia) possible. In what was called “the Sophiology Affair” in 1935, he was unofficially denounced for heresy. Archimandrite Placide Deseille, professor at the Saint Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris and monastic superior related to Mount Athos, wrote recently that Father Bulgakov never sought to vary from Orthodox teaching. Sophiology does not represent the action of the Holy Spirit but the freedom and creativity of human endeavor, even in a materialistic sense. It calls to mind process theology.

At the beginning of the 21st century, much importance is being given Sergius Bulgakov. A young Russian told this reviewer that during the period of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, Bulgakov and others were read avidly because it was the first non-Marxist Russian philosophy students discovered. The martyred priest Alexander Men (1935-1990) shows his influence. Father Bulgakov was described by an Orthodox bishop in France as “one of the best, who looked for the Trinitarian revelation in all the circumstances of life, as much private as

social.” The library at the Saint Sergius Institute in Paris has a card index under Bulgakov with 79 titles in Russian and 19 in French or English. A new series of translations of his works into French has reached twelve volumes, beginning in 1982 and as recently as 1996. Bulgakov archives are preserved there for research. Scholarly studies, related bibliographies, and reports of conferences are provided by the Sergius Bulgakov Society online at sbulgakovsociety@yahoo.com.

The Lamb of God opens with an introduction entitled “The Dialectic of the Idea of Divine-Humanity in the Patristic Epoch.” This section will be useful to readers with a special interest in the Early Church Fathers, probably where Protestants will feel most at home. With particular attention to Apollinarius of Laodicea, Bulgakov says that it was he who first raised the critical question: How is the Incarnation possible? In effect, “How are true divinity and true humanity related?” What is Divine-Humanity? Mere man cannot save the world, and God cannot save us if God is not “mixed” with us.

The author considers those *patres* who are (rightly) considered heretics to be better theologians than many of the orthodox but are one-sided and intractable. They make a contribution and must be taken seriously, even Arius and Nestorius. In the dogma of two natures in Christ and ultimately two wills in one manifestation, Chalcedon said “No” to both schools of Alexandria and Antioch, raising them to a higher level, but this was a dogmatic solution not a theological achievement. The most difficult question was: can Divinity suffer and die? What follows is the response of what Bulgakov considers a new Chalcedonian era.

Chapter 1 is an exposition of the Divine Sophia. Readers will find this heavy going, but later chapters will bring a focus in the theological connectedness of New Testament texts and the Trinitarian hermeneutic of Hebrew Scripture. Divine Sophia is “nothing other than God’s nature...the absolute content of absolute life.” (102) The relation is developed between God and the world, the Logos and Imago Dei, the Holy Trinity, and the Incarnation through the multifaceted concept of “sophianicity.” Man’s humanity is directly correlated to God. Without Sophia, God is absolutely transcendent and unknowable. The purpose is to show what makes possible the interaction of God and the world ontologically, not only in two natures in Christ but in *theosis* or deification of human being. The author presents a mystico-philosophical definition:

Sophia is the Wisdom of God; she is the Glory of God; she is the humanity in God; she is the Divine-Humanity; she is the body of God (or the ‘garment’

of Divinity); she is the Divine world, existing in God 'before' the creation. (117)

Chapter 2 describes the meaning of the Creaturely Sophia. Readers with a facility for metaphysics will be interested in Bulgakov's constant dialogue with German philosophy in Schopenhauer, Hegel, Schelling, or Kant. The ontological relation to the creation in love is part of the very concept of God, because God is not an abstract Absolute. But the ontological distance must be preserved unconditionally. Only God can surmount the abyss in a metaphysical kenosis. Bulgakov shows the participation of God in relativity, in time, in becoming. (134) Time is nourished by and permeated with eternity ceaselessly revealing itself.

Illustrated with biblical texts, highly technical descriptions follow on the human being as "uncreated-created, divine-cosmic being, divine-human in structure from its origin," - the living image of the God-in-three Persons in His Wisdom.(140) The doctrine of the Fall is described as human freedom that paradoxically expresses the omnipotence of God. Self-positing without the Proto-Image extinguishes love for the divine and becomes self-divinization. (142) The *Imago Dei* is the inalienable ontological foundation of humankind, the initial power implanted in humans for their life and creative activity, and the world will avoid destruction because of Sophia, God's providence. (148) It is why things work and why things work out. Because of Sophia, human nature has its own persuasiveness and authenticity, its thought and beauty, the hope of transformation by the Spirit. (151)

Chapter 3 is The Incarnation. With this chapter, exposition of biblical texts in relation to God's love for the world and the divinity of Christ is especially provocative. The theme of the Lamb of God commences. In the creaturely Sophia, the world contains something divine for God as God's self-revelation, as the love-creator. The remarks about angels will be disconcerting for some, but they signify God's providence: "In the most general sense, this action can be defined as grace in which man is acted upon by divine thought and will, thereby bringing his will and activity into conformity with God's thought." (161) In anticipation of his emphasis on the kenosis of the Second Person of the Trinity as the crux of Incarnation, an excursus on history brings the astonishing declaration about the question of an indirect revelation of God in paganism, and by implication in other religions and philosophies: "There are neither biblical nor theological grounds for a negative answer."(164) Sophianicity means the cosmic

and religious immanence of God's action dialectically in all humankind.

The Incarnation of the Logos evokes a string of New Testament texts affirming the coming of Christ "before the creation," primordial grace! In effect, the Lamb of God is sacrificed before the foundation of the world, because of his ontological as well as redemptive nature. (171) The Logos becomes man in order to make man God, the characteristic Orthodox confession. Man's psycho-corporeal organism is a creaturely form of sophianicity identified with the life of the world, because it bears the image of God, a pedestal for the spiritual. (173-4) The union of the two natures in Christ is described not as an abstract dogmatic schema but as a consciousness of our religious experience. In relation to the sophianic role of Mary in giving integral humanity to the God-Man, Protestant theology is criticized for insensitivity to her being the New Eve.

Chapter 4 is Emmanuel, the God-Man. If the difficulty of Orthodox theological terminology and metaphysical perspective are daunting, Protestant readers will find it immensely worthwhile and attractive at least to read this chapter by itself. Scriptural precedent is abundant in portraying the voluntary impoverishment of Divinity as the Word becomes flesh. Kenotic love of the Trinity is evident throughout the New Testament and in the act of Creation itself. Bulgakov explains how Christ is still part of the Trinity in His manhood, whose metaphysical Golgotha shows that the historical Golgotha is not only redemptive but ontological, for the God who will be "all in all." Many Trinitarian signs in the New Testament are cited, but the divinity of Christ was never manifested in the world as glory and power, only in relation to his humanity. The theme of "kenosis" is central to this discussion of True Man, True God, for example in explication of Jesus' prayers as his self-abasement to save the world in love. No question is left unexplored of how the two natures, two wills, and two energies are united without confusion or separation in one "hypostasis."

The author affirms that Son of Man and Son of God are equal terms in the Gospels, with both apocalyptic and eschatological force in one and ontological in the other, expressing the natural relation of creaturely and Divine Sophia in God's contact with the world. Called "the God-Man" in order not to lose sight of his two natures, Jesus shares in psycho-corporeal concreteness both in his individual nature but also on the historical and social scale. In effect, he was a Jew of his time like any other, whose daily life was ordinary and whose suffering was real. Bulgakov defends "the sacred human authenticity of the Divine-Human life." (274) The image of Christ's divine-humanity is based on the authentic image of God in humans.

Chapter 5 is The Work of Christ, Prophet, Priest, and King. One comes to realize that Bulgakov's point of departure is always the biblical testimony. The text gives life to liturgy, doctrine, and faith. Trinitarian formulation is the philosophical reflection on the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ in Scripture and the mystical experience of the first community of believers related theologically. This chapter also has familiar texts with hermeneutic observations, giving a concreteness that earlier expositions of sophianicity lacked. The prophetic ministry of Jesus places him in the line of Jewish prophets or teachers. But he is the subject of his own preaching. Gospel morality is the relation of the soul to God, to eternity, not unrealizable demands and utopianism deprived of religious cohesion. Apocalyptic prophesy (e.g. *Matthew 24-25* or *Revelation*) is first century imagery not to be taken literally but in an ontological sense.

The High Priestly role of the God-Man is redemption from sin but also means God's purpose of "universal deification," the sanctification of human essence. Bulgakov points out that, like the Transfiguration, the words of the Last Supper on the shedding of blood preceded the cross, "above time" as it were, symbolizing the crucifixion as more than an historical event, an anticipation of Christ's eternal glory in the coming of the Kingdom. (340) He discusses the Fall and how the Son receives all sin and dies voluntarily by not turning away from his liberating prophetic ministry. No mention is made of actual Roman responsibility, except in that Jesus made himself accessible to coercion, mocking, pain and death on the cross. (368) All things in Christianity must be considered in a Trinitarian manner, and in a further discussion of Arianism and Docetism, we are told that we must not think that in the Holy Trinity only the Son suffers. (370)

The Resurrection and Ascension are discussed in unusual detail, such as the bodily appearances and omnipotemporal descent to where all the dead are. He writes:

To be sure the Ascension to heaven is not Christ's departure into the astronomical space of the stars and galaxies, and in general is not a departure to some other *place*, for "heaven" is not a place, and in any case it is not *another* place in relation to the earth. The Ascension signifies not a physical but a *metaphysical* departure from the world, analogous to Christ's metaphysical descent from heaven to earth, which resulted in his physical presence on the earth....Heaven, is the Holy Trinity itself *in its Glory* and it is the Divine Sophia. To this, to His Glory, the Son of God who had descended to earth returns. (392)

And yet, the Ascension does not separate Christ from the earth, because of the dynamic power by which his spirit acts in the world mystically, sacramentally, and practically in Christians and their works, his promise to be with us, but also co-suffering with all who suffer and in the unceasing battle against the forces of evil, never abandoning humankind. (cf. Matt. 25:35-36) This leads to the explication of the work of Christ as King. *The Lamb of God* culminates with the serious analysis of *Revelation*, Father Serge declining in a footnote to speak categorically. (422) He affirms that Christ's Kingdom must be accomplished through the work of the world itself, because it is both divine and human, the transfiguration of the creature. "Being in essence Christ's work, man's creative activity in history must reveal and manifest the entire profundity and power of humanity." (437) Sophianicity implies that all worthy human culture is called to be transfigured in the Kingdom of God as the "self-revelation of true humanity" and does thereby serve in this way. The in-humanization of the Trinity is the humanization of the world.

Sophianicity is his grasp of the wholeness of the creation and the striving of history, despite brokenness and finitude, by the creaturely wisdom that is congruent with the Divine Wisdom which is God's. He shows Trinitarian spirituality engaged creatively and positively with modern social problems and cultural reality. As a theologian, he is an intellectual model of historic Christian faith that can enrich and inspire contemporary pastoral ministry, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. To enter into dialogue with post-modernism on the basis of Trinitarian theology represents a scope of Christian faith that is not merely rationalist or moralistic. It draws on philosophical imagination rare among Western clergy.

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John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist. By Warren Carter. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2006. xvi + 264 pp. \$19.95.

While presenting a sound introduction to John's Gospel, Warren Carter consistently offers the sort of interpretive insight that experienced interpreters, especially seasoned preachers, will appreciate. Carter's approach is particularly rich in literary observations. At the same time, all the standard questions of Johannine interpretation – such as christology and pneumatology, the church and the sacraments,

Johannine dualism, and the vexing problem of “the Jews” – receive careful treatment.

Part One features narrative analysis. Like most interpreters Carter identifies John as an instance of ancient biography, yet to this description Carter adds the Gospel’s profound revelatory dimension. Thus, John is an “ancient revelatory biography” (ch. 1). While his presentation of the Gospel’s plot (understandably?) suffers from more summary than analysis, Carter helpfully observes seven characteristic elements, such as quest stories and festivals, upon which that plot builds (ch. 2). Perhaps unfortunately, the helpful discussion of John’s style, including ambiguity, riddle, and irony, follows four chapters later (ch. 6). Carter provides deep analysis of the Gospel’s characters, and he particularly notes how women contribute to the revelation of Jesus (chs. 3-4). Carter suggests that John’s distinctive dualistic language reflects “the distinctive and alternative identity” of Jesus’ followers (ch. 5).

Parts Two and Three move from literary analysis to assessment. Chapter 7 presents a rare discussion of how the Gospel interprets Scripture and earlier Jesus traditions. Carter’s review of modern scholarship on the evolution of John’s Gospel and the Johannine community is sophisticated and up to date; moreover, Carter contributes a reflection on the Gospel’s critique against the Roman order (ch. 8). After summarizing modern proposals concerning the Gospel’s authorship and audience, Carter wisely admits that “we have only limited clues” (194; ch. 9). Nevertheless, Carter provides a helpful interpretation of the Gospel’s “gospel” that addresses topics such as christology, ecclesiology, sacramentology, and human believing (ch. 10). A Postscript wrestles – helpfully I think – to honor John’s exclusive (or sectarian) claims in our contemporary pluralistic world.

Readers will be impressed by Carter’s interpretive wisdom as well as his wide reading, clear writing, and judicious judgment. Clearly, this book goes beyond a mere review of what others have said to offer both new insight and creative synthesis. I have only one concern and one complaint. My concern: Carter often reduces his discussion of a given topic to a list of ideas or factors to consider. Such lists don’t provide a sense of how these ideas relate to one another or whether some are more fundamental than others. My complaint is that the book lacks a topical index. Such an index would be useful in that some topics appear in unexpected places. (For example, one finds the

discussion of determinism occurs in the chapter on Johannine dualism.) This is the one book I would choose for an elective course on John.

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Saved From Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross. By S. Mark Heim. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006. xiv + 346 pp. \$28.00.

The Scandalous God: The Use and Abuse of the Cross. By Vitor Westhelle. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2006. xii + 180 pp. \$23.00.

In the last decade or so theologians have strongly affirmed and radically questioned the significance of the cross. Do traditional understandings of the cross valorize suffering or violence? Are atonement models, which see redemption in terms of sacrifice or debt satisfaction, fitting for a contemporary worldview? Does the cross produce a piety that encourages Christians, especially women, to acquiesce to suffering? These challenging questions are of concern for both Mark Heim, Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Theological School, and Vitor Westhelle, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Heim offers a thoughtful, provocative, and important examination of the problem of sacrifice grounded in Rene Girard's theory of mimetic rivalry and scapegoating violence. He is convinced that Anselmic sacrificial atonement theories have misread the language of sacrifice in relation to Jesus' death in the New Testament. Heim forcefully argues that the language of sacrifice is crucial, for it reveals what we are saved *from*. God's forgiveness and acceptance of sinful human beings does not demand or require the sacrifice of innocent blood. "Jesus didn't volunteer to get into God's justice machine. God volunteered to get into ours" (xi). Christians can say that "Jesus died for our sins," yet Jesus' death is not God's act of scapegoat violence; it is ours. Jesus' death on the cross reveals the horrors of scapegoat violence humans have employed to establish social order. The cross exposes the mechanisms of such violence found in human mythologies, interpersonal relationships, social practices, and political ideologies.

Heim proceeds to develop a theology of the cross in three parts. Part I discusses the scriptural context of Jesus' cross in the structures of scapegoating violence against the innocent. Specifically

he provides a close reading of the images of victimization in the stories of Cain and Abel, Job, Jonah, Susanna (the apocryphal addendum to Daniel), and in the psalms.

Part II traces the passion narratives as they tell the story of sacrifice from the victim's point of view. Heim shows how God, by becoming the "visible victim" in Jesus, exposes the perverse nature of the whole scapegoating system. The cross of Jesus allowed God "to act from that place . . . of utter abandonment, . . ., the place from which vengeance could most legitimately be exacted. . . . When God, who cannot be silenced and who will not take vengeance, stands in the place, the web of sacrifice collapses" (162). The resurrection judges and defeats the scapegoating system by making it impossible to keep the victim invisible. Thus the cross is a sinful human act and divine saving act.

Part III addresses the post-resurrection world of the church and its attempts to make sense of what the cross of Jesus reveals. Heim contends that the death of Jesus on a cross saves us from sacrificial violence. To follow the way of the cross is thus to resist the mechanism of scapegoating violence and to stand in solidarity with victims, since they will remind us of Jesus.

Two questions arise from Heim's argument. First of all, is it appropriate to reduce all sacrifice mentioned in the Bible to the logic of scapegoating? Heim appears to do so, yet I'm not convinced one can. Second, why did Heim not engage recent interpretations of Anselm's theology of the cross which cut against the typical readings? His commonplace characterization of Anselm stands in contrast to the recent (re)reading offered by David Bentley Hart ("A Gift Exceeding Every Debt," *Pro Ecclesia* 7 [1993]: 333-349). Hart has cogently argued that Anselm does not set divine justice against mercy and forgiveness. Anselm's account does not assert that Christ's atoning work was a substitutionary sacrifice meant to pay a debt incurred or to satisfy a justice that follows the logic of "what is due." Rather, Hart argues that Anselm's account of the atonement resonates with the vision of the early Church, whereby God in Christ is understood to be acting on humanity's behalf in order to redeem humanity from powers to which we give over ourselves, offering liberation from sin and death. The atonement does not follow a calculus of "what is due" but is a matter of God giving and giving again. Such divine donation and redonation follows a logic of forgiveness which bears humanity's rejection of the gift of divine love and opens a path for humanity to return to God through Christ's act of recapitulation.

In the end, *Saved From Sacrifice* is a welcomed theology of the cross for our time. It offers fresh insights that have practical and

pastoral significance; systematic and practical theologians should consider using this book in the seminary classroom.

As with Heim, Westhelle also reinterprets the meaning of the cross for today. If Heim is scandalized by how we have misunderstood the meaning of sacrifice in light of the cross, Westhelle is scandalized by how the church has domesticated the disturbing news of a crucified Savior. He wants to make the scandal of the cross both shocking and transformative once more. One could argue that he boldly reinterprets Luther's theology of the cross for a 21st century Western context.

Exemplifying the integrity of spirituality and theology, his thesis is that the cross—and the resurrection that interprets it—is not mere theory but a way of life. He fleshes out his thesis in a twofold manner. In the initial four chapters he offers a historical summary of the motif of the cross and the efforts at its domestication. Westhelle then proceeds, through a creative use of art, poetry, literature, and philosophy, to craft six thematic chapters which explore the implications of a *theologia crucis* for various contemporary concerns.

He is most helpful as he traces how the church, from its inception to today, has sought to evade the reality of the cross as both divinely intended and revelatory. Of particular importance for contemporary theology is Westhelle's claim that some modern liberal, liberationist, feminist, and womanist theologies echo the Docetic and Ebionite efforts to evade the scandalous cross. The efforts of contemporary theologies to claim that God did not will the violence of the cross or use it for redemptive purpose are domestications; such efforts shield God from involvement in pain and suffering. His response to these current domestications is that the cross and its theology "is a practice of solidarity with the pain of the world, which follows the encounter with Christ Crucified" (112). A theology of the cross calls us to recognize the suffering of the world and the pain of God. For Westhelle, the cross exposes the reality of the abyss of human existence. Yet, the resurrection evinces the love in the shadow of the abyss that makes life possible. While the cross reveals the horrible reality of injustice, oppression, and tyranny, the resurrection does not so much save us from such a reality as empower us to wrestle for our suffering neighbors in the world. In this way he shares with Heim the concern that the cross, once again, become a paradigm of life lived in solidarity and hope with persons who bear the crosses of this world.

Westhelle writes evocatively, poetically. Yet, at times, his prose is dense, and in the latter part of the book he is somewhat prone to abstraction. Moreover, there is, at times, a disjointed character to sections of the book, especially in the last several chapters. In one

moment he will be engaged in typical academic theology and the next quoting a poet; from discussing resurrection one moment to distinguishing between “map” and “itinerary” to engaging Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. For all its rich theological insight, college students and, perhaps, some seminary students will likely be frustrated by the style, making theological engagement difficult. However, for the patient reader, Westhelle’s book is to be contemplated, absorbed, and digested. I intend to re-read this haunting yet beautiful book as Lenten discipline. Hopefully, any reader who seriously contemplates Westhelle’s profound meditative gloss on Luther’s “the cross alone is our theology” will recognize the cross as a practice, a way of life, which draws us into the suffering of God in and for the world.

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Graceful Speech: An Invitation to Preaching. By Lucy Lind Hogan. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006. xiii + 209 pp. \$24.95.

As with all other theological, academic disciplines, white men have dominated teaching and writing in homiletics throughout the history of the Western church. In recent decades, however, women and persons of color have begun to raise significant voices in homiletics, and the field is slowly shifting thanks to their contributions. The publication of Lucy Lind Hogan’s *Graceful Speech* is a major landmark in this process in that it is the first introductory homiletics textbook written in the United States by a woman. This represents a long, hard journey from women having to argue for their right to be in the pulpit, to writing about how women preach, to prescribing elements of preaching in general, to shaping the teaching of preaching at its core level. Of course, women scholars of preaching have been doing this in the classroom for some time, but now Hogan, an Episcopal priest and professor at Wesley Theological Seminary, joins the hosts of other male scholars offering textbooks available for professors to use in introductory preaching classes.

Graceful Speech is divided into three main sections. The first, “Becoming a Preacher,” includes four chapters that deal with a theology of preaching and the character of the preacher. In chapter 1, she presents a theology of preaching rooted in the Trinity, especially “the *perichoresis*, the divine dance that is God” as depicted in Andrei Rublev’s famous icon of the Trinity sitting around the table. The

relationality, mutuality, and participation of the Trinity translate into a preaching round table involving God, preacher and listener. In another work, Hogan develops an understanding of the preaching task that grows out of radical orthodoxy (“Alpha, Omega, and Everything in Between: Toward a Postsecular Homiletics, in *Purposes of Preaching*, ed. Jana Childers (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004) 67-82). Although she does not name that theological perspective in *Graceful Speech*, and wants to present a discussion open to different perspectives on preaching, her Trinitarian theological orientation that grows out of radical orthodoxy clearly informs her discussion in ways that some will enlivening while others find it too narrow.

Chapters 2-4 move to the question of the call, authority, habits and virtues of the preacher. These chapters represent a fine discussion of the preacher’s character (in line with virtue ethics)—a discussion often missing from introductory discussions of preaching. Part of the reason she gives this so much attention is that she is persuaded that classical rhetorical thought ought to inform contemporary speech. This move is consistent with Hogan’s earlier work in rhetoric and preaching (see Lucy Lind Hogan and Robert Reid, *Connecting with the Congregation: Rhetoric and the Art of Preaching*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1999). Homileticsians are divided over the usefulness of using ancient Aristotelian rhetorical categories for teaching preaching in the twenty-first century, but rarely will beginning preachers find the rhetorical proofs of ethos, pathos and logos explained in as accessible a form as here. Later in the book, however, the classical rhetorical concepts are at times presented with such speed that it makes it clear they greatly have informed the writer’s perspective but will not shape students’ engagement of the process Hogan presents unless they have some prior exposure to the rhetorical categories.

The second major section of the book deals with “Crafting the Sermon” and includes four chapters dealing with actual sermon construction. Specifically they focus on interpreting the listeners and the context in which they listen, interpreting the biblical text, the creative process, and sermonic form. Her introduction of these topics is insightful and at times poetic. Readers will be inspired to take these steps seriously. However, each of the chapters would have benefited from being longer and unpacking the subject in more detail, so that the inspiration could better be translated into actual practice. For example, the exegetical process is reduced to a two page bulleted list of questions (102-03). It is a good list, but it is terribly dense for introductory students trying to figure out how to apply what they learn in biblical classes to what they will be doing in sermon preparation.

The third major section is entitled "Communicating the Gospel." Hogan presents this section as dealing with "more effective ways to turn a written text into a sermon" (xiii), but it is a catch all of different topics. Chapter 9 deals with language and illustrations and really belongs in Part 2 under issues of sermon composition. Chapter 10 deals with seasonal preaching and preaching on special occasions. Chapter 11 deals with performance of the sermon. And Chapter 12 deals with the future of preaching in terms of the need for preachers to engage in multisensory approaches to proclaiming the gospel in our changing culture.

While I have some concerns about how well this book may serve in an introductory preaching class, it is a wonderful read for experienced preachers. I have told clergy groups that a good way to grow in their homiletical art is to return occasionally to basics which those who preach regularly take for granted. Hogan's book is great opportunity for such a return. Her theological focus and use of classic rhetorical concepts will enrich preacher's reflection on their work. This book will help pastors in the routine of preaching remember, celebrate and embrace the high calling, privilege and responsibility that goes with preparing to step up to the pulpit week in and week out to offer a congregation in the broken world a little graceful speech..

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Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays. By E. A. Judge. Edited by David M. Scholer. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008. xx + 227pp. \$24.95.

Social Distinctives is a collection of eight essays by E. A. Judge on the social setting of the New Testament. These essays were selected by Scholer (with the input of Judge) as "pivotal" essays to Judge's larger scholarly agenda. Two other volumes (with other editors and publisher) are planned. In this current collection, four of the essays were originally published in minor Australian journals, two were originally short pamphlets (now out of print).

Scholer describes Judge as a pioneer in social-scientific criticism. Social-scientific criticism of the Bible is an approach that bridges textual studies, historical inquiry, and the social sciences. The hope is that, by understanding the social context from which the

biblical text emerged, modern readers can be better attuned to language, meaning, intention, and historical development.

Seven out of the eight essays focus on Paul. The first (title) essay is a manifesto for social critique of the biblical text. Other essays explore the social status of Paul, Paul and contemporary rhetoric, Paul in Classical society, cultural conformity and innovation in Paul, Paul as typical "moral teacher" from antiquity, and Paul as (radical) social critic. Judge's essays often begin (and perhaps end) in medias res; he launches into his topic and immediately begins to survey every tangent. In typical form, Judge often finds biblical text "surely," "certainly," and "without argument" indicates certain meanings. While some may not always share his confidence, one can scarcely ever think of a biblical passage or relevant issue that has eluded him.

Certainly, to evaluate the work and legacy of E. A. Judge, the volume is essential reading. For anyone interested in history-of-exegesis (particularly anyone wanting to understand the development of social-scientific criticism), the work is important. Still, the essays themselves are a bit dated. Judge writes, for example, that the communities of Jesus in Galilee most certainly were rural and peasant with no contact with Roman urban culture. Would he, however, insist on this given our present archaeological picture of Sepphoris? How would his views of Paul the classicist-turned-cultural-radical engage Horsley's two, recent volumes on Paul and Roman imperial culture? How would other related, contemporary, methodologies intersect with his work (such as postcolonialism)? Many sociological categories much discussed by contemporary critics (such as gender identity and construction, sexuality, social deviance) are not discussed by Judge at all. This is not a critique of Judge, per se (his essays predate these concerns), but it does caution the novice reader; many of these conversations have moved beyond where Judge leaves them.

Social Distinctives also contains an introductory essay by Scholer that evaluates Judge's contribution to biblical studies and a comprehensive bibliography of Judge's works. It will be of most interest for intermediate students/preliminary scholars of the social world of early Christianity, specialists in the methods and history of biblical exegesis, advocates of social-scientific biblical criticism, and scholars of Paul.

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A Theology of Public Life. By Charles Mathewes. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. ix + 366 pp. \$99.00.

In this insightful work, Charles Mathewes attempts to move beyond much of the recent literature on religion and public life by joining a theological argument for how Christians might involve themselves in the public realm with a theology that grounds this involvement in religious meaning. Mathewes draws upon his expertise in Augustinian theology to build a Christian theology that places participation in public life at the very center of what it means to be a Christian.

Mathewes' agenda is ambitious and he ably articulates a theology of public life that challenges dominant liberal political theories that promote human autonomy and alienation rather than reconciliation. At its core, Mathewes' theology makes engagement with others essential for knowledge of God and self and this engagement is properly lived out in the virtues of faith, hope, and love in ways that avoid apocalyptic escapism on the one hand and the quest for the accumulation and abuse of power on the other, extremes that have marked so much of the history of the Christian relationship to the public realm.

Although Mathewes never offers an explicit discussion of whether public life is limited to the actions of individual Christians or might include collective action on the part of the church, his Augustinian heritage suggests the former. If so, there is something ironic about his theology that posits public life as a liturgical act in which God's grace is made manifestly immanent to human beings in ways that joins humans together as a community in faith, and the fact that the book offers little in the way of inspiration for how Christians might act in public as the church. However, this is more a quibble about how we apply Mathewes' theology than any serious misgiving about his theology itself.

A Theology of Public Life is, above all, a hopeful book. In his call to engage the world in faith, hope, and love, Mathewes persuasively challenges the cynicism and privatization that pervades so much of political, social, and religious life in the early twenty-first century. Yet, the hope conveyed is by no means naïve about the real struggles that inhabit meaningful public participation. Mathewes agrees with those who see public life as deeply conflicted, but by departing from any sense that such conflict is rooted in human ontology, Mathewes prepares Christians for the reality of public life without reducing that reality to inescapable violence and estrangement. As a result, Mathewes offers a highly compelling prospect for

Christians to contribute to their communities in public ways and find deep religious meaning in the process.

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After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West. By Eugene F. Rogers, Jr. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005. xi + 251 pp. \$22.00.

After the Spirit is one of ten in a Wm. B. Eerdmans series called "Radical Traditions: Theology in a Postcritical Key," edited by Stanley Hauerwas and Peter Ochs. The purpose of the series is stated in a fly leaf to "invite Jewish, Christian and Islamic theologians back to the word, recovering and articulating modes of scriptural reasoning as that which underlies modernist reasoning and therefore has the capacity - and authority - to correct it." The intention is to be non-apologetic and thereby challenge current social and political "arrangements" of modernity. The present volume is a sign of the renewal of attention to the Trinity in Western theology and especially the intratrinitarian role and physicality of the Holy Spirit, informed by Eastern Christianity, the Ecumenical Fathers, and fresh readings of familiar biblical narratives.

Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., is professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, formerly at the University of Virginia. He is editor of *Theology and Sexuality: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (2002) and author of *Sexuality and the Christian Body: Their Way into the Triune God* (1999) and *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (1994). His books are invariably applauded by reviewers as "remarkable," because of his breadth of illustrative knowledge and innovative theological correlations.

The title *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West*, delineates the theme of Rogers' work as the pursuit of an elusive aspect of the Trinity leading to an original theological formulation of the Holy Spirit, not ignoring modern sources from Karl Barth to Rowan Williams, but enriching reflection with Pavel Florensky or Sergius Bulgakov and many other theologians of a less familiar devotion. Even remote referrals to Symeon Stylites or Ephrem the Syrian are among the colorful ancestors called upon to clarify the centrality of the Holy Spirit in Christian holiness. It is a book of scholarship and art. Of course, Aquinas, Augustine, Luther,

Calvin of the common tradition are cited when useful, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, Dumitru Staniloae, and Kathryn Tanner show the contemporary relevance of the study, but so do Dante, El Greco, Julian of Norwich and Charles Péguy serve among the many cultural musings that enliven the discourse.

Fifteen theses chart the course of “constructive pneumatology” the author will develop. They serve as an outline of the important biblical insights and patristic paradigms characterized here. He cautions that the Persons of the Trinity are distinct only to themselves, not toward the world; theologically or mystically they are variations on a theme. An excursus on pages 47 to 52 represents a rare discussion of “deification” or θεωσις from both Western and Eastern theological or pastoral perspectives. Also of interest is the mention of Sergius Bulgakov’s systematic exposition of Sophia, Wisdom relating the divine and human essences, which is dismissed as “an extravagant hypothesis we need not follow.” (42, fn. 36).

After the Spirit is in two parts: I. You Wonder Where the Spirit Went; and II. The Spirit Rests On The Body of the Son. Rogers is preoccupied with the imprecision and generally subordinate identity of the Holy Spirit in Western, particularly Protestant, theology. Bulgakov raises the same issue in *The Comforter*: “Why is the Holy Spirit also not True God of True God, without separation or confusion, like the Son in the Nicean Chalcedonian Definition?” (See LTQ, Winter 2004, pages 276-279.) Rogers asks: “What does the Spirit do? Is there nothing the Spirit can do that the Son cannot do better?” He shows in Barth and elsewhere that discussions of the Holy Spirit tend to wind up being about the Son. He asks if the Spirit is superfluous, and he seeks the narratives that seem to be lacking for the Spirit.

For the Spirit to be more than an abstraction or an experience in subjectivity, of dubious Trinitarian consequence, he argues that it should be thought of not “spiritually” but materially. The Spirit is fully implicated in the Incarnation of the Son through the womb of Mary, and Romans 8:11 shows Paul’s view of triune life of the Spirit in his theology of the Resurrection. Rogers associates the Holy Spirit with the human body, bread, water, corporeality, sexuality. The second part of the book demonstrates the concurrence of the Spirit, alluded to as “she” rather than “it,” in the narrative forms for Resurrection, Annunciation, Baptism, Transfiguration, Ascension and Pentecost.

An Epilogue called “The Spirit Rests on the Son in Those Who Do Not Know How to Pray,” reveals an underlying personal and devotional discretion, in a brief turn to Thomas Aquinas. *After the Spirit* is a seminal academic inquiry, but the Holy Spirit is not offered as an academic matter. A pleasant and instructive feature are eight

glossy prints of iconic reproductions, following page 132, that show the Triune depiction of texts relating the baptism, annunciation, transfiguration, ascension, Pentecost, and resurrection in the New Testament. Twenty pages of bibliography plus Indexes of Names and Subjects and Scripture References are useful for the learning and appreciation of this fine book.

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