

REVIEWS

“Silently Farting in the Face of the Empire.” Review of *Paul and the Imperial Roman Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2004. ix + 198 pp. Pbk. £15.99. ISBN 1563884213.

“When the great lord passes, the wise peasant bows deeply, and silently farts.”
(Ethiopian proverb)¹

For most, Paul does not exactly have the reputation of a political revolutionary. (In)famous texts and their *Wirkungsgeschichte*—like Romans 13:1–7, or his apparent advice to slaves—have a lot to do with this. Who can forget Howard Thurman’s recollections of his grandmother, who had been a slave in the US-American South, refusing to listen to Paul’s letters because her former master’s preacher had used Paul to admonish the slaves to be obedient to their master?² I well remember a South African fellow graduate student at the University of Natal, where I was working on a “materialist reading” of Paul for an MA dissertation in the early 1990s, who quipped: “You are not trying to make us *like* Paul, are you?”

It is too easy to answer that to like or dislike Paul is not the issue; the texts and their effects live on. However one may look at the exegesis of Rom 13:1–7, both the actual text and its history continue to shape our reading of it, and our lives: we cannot ignore it or escape it. As a result, and in recognition of the notion of “the Bible as a site for struggle,” many have effectively read the prophets, Jesus, and Revelation as “the foundation,” from which other Biblical witnesses (like Paul) tended to deviate: either as reactionary contradiction, or as accommodationist compromise. But is that really the case with Paul? Horsley’s edited volume questions this again.

This is Horsley’s third edited volume on Paul in this vein, though it may be the most innovative of them. In 1997, Horsley edited *Paul and Empire*,³ which was more of a student reader drawing on excerpts from published works like Neil

1. Cited in James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), v.

2. Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1949).

3. Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997).

Elliott's *Liberating Paul*,⁴ or S. R. F. Price's *Rituals and Power*.⁵ Three years later, Horsley published a further collection of essays, this time as a *Festschrift* for Krister Stendahl⁶—a book which had a broader focus, presenting much more diverse views, but which included imaginative and provocative studies such as Sze-Kar Wan's "Collection for the Saints as Anti-colonial Act," a detailed study of Paul's so-called "collection" in light of postcolonial ethnographic theory. The essays of Horsley's latest edited volume, *Paul and the Imperial Roman Order*, the subject of this review, are in part the result of the "Paul and Politics" group in the Society for Biblical Literature. It builds on the previous work and sharpens the focus on the complex relations between Paul's gospel, his communities, and the Roman imperial order as experienced in those local communities.⁷

Robert Jowett ("The Corruption and Redemption of Creation," 25–46) proposes reading Rom. 8:18–23 in the context of the imperial (specifically: Augustan) ideology of the renewal of the world/fertility/"creation." Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*, for instance, includes an almost messianic idea of a regent who will restore nature, broken as it is by barbarians, the evils of luxury, etc.: under this ruler, "shall this glorious age begin... the earth shall not feel the harrow, nor the vine the pruning-hook; the sturdy ploughman, too shall now loose his oxen from his yoke" (27). Augustus had the Secular Games in 17 BCE put under the aegis of the rejuvenation of Mother Earth: the birth of a new age, etc. When Rom. 8:18–23 is read in this context, it is nothing short of calling this imperial propaganda a lie. Instead "of nature's joy at its deliverance through August and his successors, Paul hears only agonized groans" (41): in Rom. 8, (personified) creation is still groaning, waiting not for the *sotër* (saviour) Augustus, but for true salvation ushered in by the Christ event.

Abraham Smith ("Unmasking the Powers': Toward a Postcolonial Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," 47–66) suggests reading 1 Thess. not against the background of eschatology and "fanciful speculation about a 'rapture'" (47) but as Paul's attempt at "unmasking the powers' operative in Thessalonica" (ibid.). Set in the theoretical context of postcolonial studies' focus on historical and discursive ways in which (a) colonial powers seek to control, and (b) subaltern people resist, Smith locates 1 Thess. in the context of a tradition of "historical Israelite resistance to foreign rule," both in terms of physical resistance, and discursive challenge. Paul's forma-

4. Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

5. Simon R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

6. Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000).

7. Horsley has also published a number of "popularizing" works which build on these academic collections: Richard A. Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World* (New York: Putnam, 1997); Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Richard A. Horsley, *Religion and Empire: People, Power, and the Life of the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

tion of a network of small, “alternative communities” such as the one in Thessalonica enabled solidarity in the nascent movement which constituted “a fundamental ‘critique of this age and its values’”: a subtle critique, not surprisingly, but a fundamental critique and opposition nevertheless (54, citing J. Paul Sampley). The Thessalonian city authority took care to cultivate the Roman imperial rulers, becoming “local instruments of the Roman order” (58), highly visible in the day-to-day reality of the people in Thessalonica in the mid-first century CE. Smith proceeds to read 1 Thess. 2:13–16 and 1 Thess. 5:1–11 specifically as instances of “Paul’s encouragement of resistance to that imperial order” (*ibid.*). While the reading of 1 Thess. 5:3 (“When they say, ‘There is peace and security’ then sudden destruction will come upon them”) as directed against imperial propaganda of the *pax romana* is not that new, Smith’s less common reading of the notorious passage in 1 Thess 2 also enables him to overcome the problem of the charge of “anti-Judaism” against Paul.

In the third contribution, Neil Elliott (“The Apostle Paul’s Self-presentation as Anti-imperial Performance,” 67–88) studies ritual representations of power, both in the urban context of the Roman empire, and in Paul’s presence. Drawing on Price’s work in *Ritual and Power*, Elliott maintains that the provincial reality of urban life was characterized by an increasingly pervasive presence of the imperial cult, leading to “an effective imperial monopoly on the imagery of triumph” and a “distinctly Roman piety,” enabling the emperor “to accumulate ‘symbolic capital’ for himself,” while “piety in the provinces became saturated with the symbolized presence of the emperor” (71). Based on rhetorical studies in letter-writing and the performance of letters in an essentially oral culture, Elliott analyses the effect of Paul’s letters on their intended audience. In this context, then, Elliott offers a close reading of 2 Cor. 2:14–16 and imagery of Christ’s triumph; of 2 Cor. 10 and the imagery of war; and of 2 Cor. 1–11 and the theme of affliction (closely associated with the ritual of triumphal parades), pointing out the close connection between cross and resurrection: “‘showing forth the Lord’s death’ thus constitutes a ritual gesture of defiance, a refusal to allow the Empire’s exhibition of a crucified corpse to be determinative of the future of Jesus, or of the creation” (84). In all this, Paul’s conception of power, humiliation, shame and triumph inverts the imperial propaganda. A thoughtful “ecclesiological postscript” on the connection between the eucharist, liturgy, and torture today completes the chapter.

Rollin Ramsaran’s contribution to the book (“Resisting Imperial Domination and Influence: Paul’s Apocalyptic Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians,” 89–101) takes a closer look at the way in which Paul uses Graeco-Roman rhetoric in an apocalyptic key. While Paul’s rhetoric clearly makes use of certain conventions that we also find in the classical rhetorical handbooks, his use of apocalyptic *topoi* effectively undercuts the value system inherent in classical rhetoric: for example, the critique of the “rulers of this age,” the stress on the renewal of the people in their new community, and the ultimate vindication of the believers attacks the status-conscious ideals of some in the community (1 Cor. 1–4).

In the fifth chapter, Efraim Agosto (“Patronage and Commendation, Imperial and Anti-imperial,” 103–23) shifts the focus to the patronage system that under-

girds the empire. Drawing on the work of Richard Saller⁸ and others on patron–client relationships, Agosto directs attention to the way in which Paul’s “commendations” subtly destabilize the system of patronage in the empire; a system which in many ways provided the social, political and economic “glue” that held the empire together: oiling the wheels, entrenching social status. Agosto concludes that while there are superficial similarities with letters of commendations in this patron–client system, Paul subverts this by promoting a value system that is quite contrary to the ideology of the elite (1 Thess. 5:12–13; 1 Cor. 16:15–18; Phil. 2:25–30, 4:2–3; Rom. 16:1–2)—including his refusal to become the “client” of wealthy “patrons” in his new communities, and insisting on working “with his own hands,” or by stressing self-sacrificial service rather than the elite practice of *euergitism*, public “good works” which serve to maintain the status of the elite.

One of the most interesting chapters, and also the longest, is Erik Heen’s (“Phil 2:6–11 and Resistance to Local Timocratic Rule: *isa theō* and the Cult of the Emperor in the East,” 125–53)—but I may be biased because, some years ago, I worked a bit on what I then called a “materialist reading” of the Christ-hymn in Phil. 2. The surprising (or perhaps not so surprising!) thing is that reading the Christ-hymn against *isa theō* (“equal to God”) claims in the imperial cult is not much more common in scholarship. With a nod at Scott’s notion of “hidden transcripts” (put simply, the Christ-hymn functions in a covert way), Heen discusses the use of the formula in the eastern part of the empire, including Philippi. Rather than reading it against the usual (though often debated) theological notion of the pre-existence of Christ, Heen interprets Phil. 2:6–11 “as an expression of a hidden transcript that sets Christ over against the Roman emperor” (137). One wonders though how “hidden” this “discourse” would have been given that Heen himself points out the early imperial restriction of divine honours to the emperor (in the eastern empire).

The penultimate contribution is the only one that draws attention to aspects of Paul which are probably not quite as comforting to some of us as the rest of the book: Jennifer Wright Knust (“Paul and the Politics of Virtue and Vice,” 155–73) studies the rhetorical invective of sexual slander in Paul. By calling outsiders—and Gentiles in particular—sexually depraved, Paul follows a long-standing practice in both Hellenistic/Roman rhetoric, and biblical tradition. In itself, such invective can be seen as an attack on imperial propaganda, which depicted the emperor as the paragon of virtue; Rom. 1 in particular is a fruitful text in this regard. Utilizing current research on Paul and the sex/gender systems of the ancient Mediterranean, Knust concludes that “Paul’s condemnation of the sinful world in Rom 1 relied upon the gendered assumptions of his culture even though his goal was to depict his culture as entirely depraved” (170). (One might ask what exactly “Paul’s own culture” might be, but that is another matter.) Similarly, she argues that it is possible to read Rom. 6–8 in light of “the traditional association between ‘slavishness’ and desire” (171).

8. Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

The final, brief chapter consists of a summary response of the classicist, Simon Price (“Response,” 175–83), upon whose work many of the contributors draw, directly and indirectly. Price stresses the need for setting Paul in *local community contexts* rather than a vague notion of “the empire,” not only because “Rome was far,” but also because the interaction between the imperial centre and the provincial city authorities was a complex web of subaltern negotiation. “The issue is whether the provinces took any notice of developments in Rome, and if so, how they did so, and what differences (if any) local reception made to the local context. In other words, understanding the Greek context on its own terms is crucial” (177). Arguing for Paul and his communities as “subversives,” Price says, must be done in the context of the complex way in which local elites related to Rome (“Jews [and Christians] were not the only people to be unhappy,” 179)—something which Price acknowledges is hard to do because it runs counter to prevailing classical scholarship, which tends to stress the “harmony” of the empire. As a result, Price criticizes Jewett’s argument as relying too strongly on a contrast between Paul and Roman (as opposed to local, provincial) imperial sources, though Price then immediately points to precisely such local examples in the Greek East which could “bridge the gap” between Paul’s provincial communities and Rome—thus supporting Jowett’s conclusion. There is a subtle element of suspicion on the part of Price that the contributors to this volume have not quite succeeded in convincing him that Paul and his communities should be seen as “subversives” in the empire.

The book as a whole maintains a number of important general points about Paul and his world, highlighted by Horsley’s introduction, which is itself a very useful summary argument. Slavery as a complex social reality; patronage; the imperial cult; and rhetoric emerge as key elements in the re-evaluation of Paul. One of the most important points in this book is the notion of “religion” in the ancient Mediterranean. Horsley in particular points out the contrast to the pervading paradigm of modern biblical studies, which sets Paul in contrast with “Judaism” *as a religion*, understood as a personalized, individual faith, which is, and may be analysed as, a separate entity from other, equally “separate” spheres of life (economics, politics, etc.). Even the much debated “new perspective” on Paul, following Ed Sanders’s influential *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*⁹—which breathed new life into scholarship by challenging the basic opposition that Christian scholars had seen between Paul and Judaism—did not actually alter the paradigm itself: the discussion about the “new perspective” is predominantly couched in the same old stale notion of “Paul’s religion.” Instead of reading Paul in this fashion, Horsley argues, Paul should be understood in contrast not with first-century Judaism(s), but the early Roman imperial order, where “religion” (if this anachronistic term is used at all) is understood as an integral part of people’s life that cannot be separated from “other” spheres of life.

There is a clear sense in many chapters in this book that Paul cannot be seen as a “rabble-rousing revolutionary” (Horsley, 3). But it seems—fortunately—that we

9. Ed Parish Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

are getting to the point where western scholars can see that there is more to “resistance politics” than open revolt à la Spartacus, Simon bar Kokhba, or Che Guevara. Both Horsley and Heen explicitly refer to James Scott’s study, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, which signals an emerging realization on the part of first world academics that “the subaltern’s response” is complex. Scott argued that the analysis of power relations “in the real world” must include the subtleties and complexities of the subaltern’s response. Direct opposition is not the only form of resistance; there are “hidden transcripts” not immediately obvious to the outsider. Of course, many who lived and worked in “marginalized contexts” did not find Scott’s work all that new or surprising (though it did offer new conceptual tools): it describes an aspect of the struggle that is being encountered all the time in the real world, where people make day-to-day choices while trying to survive. Paulo Freire’s famous concept of the “culture of silence” among the oppressed describes only one aspect, though it is the one most obvious to the outsider. For obvious reasons, we need more sustained work on this aspect of Paul (and indeed the whole of the biblical witness); and in fact, Horsley apparently has just edited a book of essays along these lines.¹⁰ It should not surprise us to find that this may become a fruitful field for further biblical research.

The essays in this book are to be understood, Horsley emphasizes, as “somewhat exploratory ventures into uncharted territory” (19). It is well to highlight the fact that serious study of Paul in this light is still “young.” However, perhaps this does not pay sufficient tribute to earlier attempts to read Paul in this way. Works like Klaus Wengst’s *Pax Romana*¹¹ (which analysed the concept of peace as it relates to justice), published almost 20 years ago, began to develop new directions for Paul as well. It seems odd that such work remains largely underrated, if not ignored today—in spite of clear parallels, such as Wengst’s overt structural device of contrasting the NT witnesses with the imperial propaganda of Aelius Aristides (“To Rome”).

No doubt one could quibble with other details in various essays in this book. For example, Smith at one point states: “If Paul is drawing on the prophetic tradition and especially Deutero-Isaiah in 1 Thessalonians and throughout his corpus, he assuredly is writing resistance literature” (53). This strikes me as a *non sequitur*; the one does not necessarily follow from the other. In some chapters I wondered whether putting Paul too much in the context of his Hellenistic environment does not fundamentally neglect his rootedness in “the law, the prophets and the writ-

10. Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004)—I have not yet been able to get hold of this book in the UK.

11. Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1987; German original: München, Chr. Kaiser, 1986). Equally ignored remains Wengst’s insightful little study of “humility” (*tapeinôsis*) as the “solidarity of the humiliated”: *Humility, Solidarity of the Humiliated: The Transformation of an Attitude and Its Social Relevance in Graeco-Roman, Old Testament-Jewish and Early Christian Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1988; German original: München, Chr. Kaiser, 1987).

ings.” At times, one also wonders how influential the often cited—let’s call it: generally postcolonial—theoretical literature really has been for this collection of essays: sometimes it looks more like lip-service to what is expected in the secular academy rather than an important, integral element of the study concerned. And finally, some of the essays are clearly more persuasive than others.

But these issues matter relatively little given what is otherwise a series of well-argued pieces in this emerging field of study. Much more important than the inevitable minor shortcomings in a book at this early stage is the fact that a strong voice develops that counteracts the dominant paradigm in biblical scholarship, which is both ideologically tied to global capitalism and theoretically imprisoned by the Western cultural framework which sees “religion” as private, individual choice in a limited sphere of life. The book’s focus on “imperial order” also clearly resonates with issues we are facing ourselves (Horsley himself is quite explicit about that).

On the whole, then, the emerging body of recent work that is exemplified by Horsley’s collection presents a welcome new wave of Pauline scholarship, shaped as it is by recent social-scientific and socio-historical approaches: as such, it opens up the possibility of even closer cooperation between socially engaged theologians in the tradition of liberation theology, and biblical scholars (not that these are mutually exclusive camps!). Of course, we are no longer at the point that Gottwald criticized in the 1980s: that liberation theologies tended to exhibit an insufficient grounding in serious social-scientific and socio-historical scholarship.¹² And yes, the biblical work on Paul as presented in this book is in many ways still in its infancy. However, it does seem to me that we are at a point again where “cross-disciplinary” engagement shows great promise.

It is important to stress though that this book is not all comforting reading for “the Christian left.” It is not a matter of finding the resources to say at last: “now we have the key to read Paul as a subversive theologian.” At least some of the studies in this book also signal the alterity of Paul, of his communities, and his world. There is no easy correspondence between “us” and “them.” This is a discomfort that is important not to try and sweep under the carpet. Knust’s chapter in particular highlights this, and it is not surprising that this happens in relation to recent work on the ancient Mediterranean sex/gender concept (and is it an accident that Knust is the only female author in this book?). Issues of ethnicity in the Bible, including Paul, no doubt present another, complex field that will demand close attention in this regard.¹³ Paul and his world remain “other” not only in the sense that they, in their own way, challenge the prevailing consensus of global capitalism, but also in the sense that the “hidden transcripts” of the resistance of his communities remain partly alien to Christian resistance as conceptualized in the West. But that is hardly surprising in cross-cultural interaction (i.e. reading

12. See a number of essays in Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible in Its Social World and in Ours* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

13. See Mark G. Brett, ed., *Ethnicity and the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

the Bible), and it would be a mistake to think that either is therefore necessarily “not of the gospel.”

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Martin L. Cook, *The Moral Warrior: Ethics and Service in the U.S. Military*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004. 174 pp. \$17.95. Pbk. ISBN 0791462420.

This book creatively applies the Augustinian just war tradition to the U.S. military as it faces challenges posed by our new geopolitical context. The wars in Somalia, Bosnia, and Iraq, combined with advances in strategic weaponry, raise new questions about the ethics of using military force. For the past 400 years, just war thinking presupposed a Westphalian model for international relations. On this model, independent and sovereign nation-states respected national boundaries. War was justified only when one nation invaded, or was about to invade, another nation. Soldiers signed on under an implicit contract with their nation: they offered to kill or be killed for the safety of their country; their country assured its soldiers that it would not declare war unless the security of the nation was at risk. The officers of one state recognized and honored the officers of another state, even an enemy state.

All of this has changed. Cook sees General Eisenhower’s refusal to meet with defeated German General von Arnim after he was captured as the symbolic beginning of this shift. Since World War II, the U.S. military has increasingly been used not to protect the vital security of the nation, but to serve universal moral ends, such as promoting democracy, supporting human rights, and removing oppressors. The murderous political situations of Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and the Sudan cry out for “someone” to do something to help. Because, especially since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. is the sole military superpower in the world, that “someone” has been and will be the U.S. or one of its U.S. supported allies. Cook examines how this new, post-Westphalian, situation poses challenges for the moral aspects of the military as a profession, the moral role of military advice in international relations, and the ethics of military force in humanitarian interventions and in fighting terrorism. Though Cook’s insights about each of these topics merit careful consideration, I will focus on the last two: humanitarian intervention and the war on terrorism.

Cook examines several proposals for “just peacemaking” where humanitarian interventions are necessary. His main thesis is that just war criteria provide valuable moral principles to determine when to use military force to create and keep the peace. “Legitimate authority” determining intervention, for example, would ideally be the United Nations. But reality falls short of the ideal. The veto power of permanent members of the UN Security Council impairs needed action, as it did, for example, on the decision to take action in Kosovo. Moreover, the dilemma of UN-led humanitarian intervention is that the UN does not have the military means necessary to enforce its directives even if the Security Council could reach

agreement. These problems, Cook says, will exist for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, Cook suggests that regional “coalitions of the willing,” such as NATO, should decide when to use military force if one wants “frequent and effective” humanitarian interventions (102). Cook creatively applies this and other just war criteria to humanitarian intervention, always with balanced attention to geopolitical realities, on the one hand, and the moral tradition, on the other.

Global terrorism poses its own distinctive challenges to just war theory. Under Westphalian assumptions only states can wage war with each other. But terrorists groups such as al Qaeda are not states. As the “War on Terror” expands globally, the role of different states varies. When, as in Afghanistan, the state harbors terrorists, a war on the Taliban government fits within the older framework. Others, like Georgia, invite U.S. forces to cooperate with their own forces to fight terrorism. Still others, like Pakistan, suppress terrorists without direct U.S. involvement. But what if a state refuses to cooperate? Traditionally the Westphalian respect for territorial sovereignty resists interference on the part of other nations.

Here Cook turns to pre-Westphalian patterns for guidance. Though the era of Westphalian sovereignty may be fading, the just war theory was formed during a pre-Westphalian context of threats to the Pax Romana. As Augustine argued, the relative peace provided by the Roman Empire merits countering violent threats of invaders with military means as a “mournful but necessary duty.” The Pax Americana, though plagued by all manner of faults, is finally worth defending. As Cook sees it, this “Pax” is at risk. He says, “it does not require much imagination to envision the human consequences of a collapse of the complex and interlocking structures of the modern international system” (115–16). If al Qaeda gets what it hopes for, “what would fall would not be the United States of America, but rather the entire world order created over centuries by the forces of capitalism, Enlightenment rationality, modern science, and political democracy” (114). The war on terror, then, is justified not so much to defend one’s nation as to defend the moral and civilizational ideals of the modern West. Cook continues to uphold the classic *jus in bello* criteria of non-combatant immunity and proportionality, even for wars on terror.

Cook’s perceptive analysis of the new situation for the U.S. military is complemented by proposals and suggestions for reform. Although all but the final revision of this book was written before the U.S. invaded Iraq, much of what Cook says has relevance to the invasion and its aftermath. Cook has thought deeply about the lessons of the war in Kosovo, Kuwait, and Somalia. Having taught for more than a decade in two U.S. military academies, Cook is in a unique position to write this book.

Cook does not give extensive consideration to the deeper moral and religious foundations for just war theory, or to pacifist objections. The strength of the book is its application of these criteria to war in our times. Cook’s commanding knowledge of the U.S. military, and his extensive reflection on the moral aspects of the military profession and strategy, make this book both timely and well worth the read. Unlike those who respond to the horrors of war by throwing moral principles to the wind, or by condemning war, Cook continues to affirm the need for and relevance of moral principles, knowing full well that they will be regularly violated.

I have doubts about Cook's sense that civilization as we know it is in real danger, and thus about his retrieval of pre-Westphalian justifications of war to defend civilizational ideals rather than nation-states. Cook rightly points to the real limits of how just war theorists have justified war under Westphalian assumptions, and sketches an alternative worthy of thoughtful consideration by all who want to think about the ethics of modern war.

Much of what Cook says is marked by a sense of urgency. Early in the book Cook presents the U.S. with a choice that he says will determine the course of history. He presents this choice through an extended comparison of present-day U.S. with ancient Athens. Like the U.S. today, Athens was in the midst of a shifting geopolitical context that it little understood. Athenian naval power gave it a leading role among the members of the Delian League as the League repelled the invading Persians. After the war, instead of using her superior power to benefit all the allies in the League, Athens used her power to enrich her own cultural, economic, and political life. As Athens sought to extend and secure her Empire she created enemies at home. Cook underscores irony in that "Athens's limitless pursuit of absolute and unilateral security was the seedbed of absolute insecurity" (9). Athens insisted that all legal disputes between Athens and her allies be tried in Athenian courts. Contrary to the advice of Nicias, the Athenians sent a fleet to invade Sicily. The assault failed miserably, and Athens began to spiral downward toward her own self-inflicted demise.

Like Athens, the present-day U.S. "finds itself at a moment history hands to few states, and then for only a limited period of time. It is a world-historical moment at which active engagement might well result in a permanent change to the geopolitical landscape of the world" (17). The U.S. can either act multilaterally to the benefit of all, or she can act unilaterally to advance her own narrowly conceived interests.

Though there may still be time to reverse course, Cook warns that many recent international actions on the part of the U.S. suggest it is following the path of imperialist Athens. The U.S. is blind to the growing opinion in the rest of the world that the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and "free trade" are "just extensions of imperial dominance" (12). The U.S. exempts itself from the International Criminal Court. Instead of funding and reforming the United Nations, the U.S. "tends to give it inadequate resources...and then complain of the UN's failures" (17). The U.S. complains that Europeans are not bearing their fair share of the costs of their defenses, but then resists when they take steps to organize such a capability. "Just like Athens, the United States finds it difficult to conceive of larger international structures that would be fairer to all states and more effective in making its present favorable place in the world less a threat to other states" (17).

This is indeed a sobering and alarming sketch of recent U.S. international policy. Let us hope that the U.S. leaders find the imagination and humility necessary to reverse course in the direction recommended by Cook.

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Wendy Dackson, *The Ecclesiology of Archbishop William Temple (1881–1944)*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004. vii + 288 pp. Hbk. £69.95. ISBN 0-7734-6433-6.

Fashion in theology and church politics is fickle. At a time when the British churches are wringing their hands about their waning social influence, the work of the one Archbishop of Canterbury whose public profile demonstrably shaped the course of twentieth-century British life—Temple—languishes, largely uncelebrated and untaught. Few factors are so eloquent of Anglicanism’s apparent determination to achieve sectarian status as the prolonged denigration of Temple’s work and legacy by fashionable neo-, and radical, orthodoxies in the academy, and his neglect by the structures of a church restlessly in thrall to novelty.

For a substantial proportion of the six decades since his death, Temple’s reputation has rested mainly upon his slim, popular volume of 1942, *Christianity and Social Order*, written when he was Archbishop of York and appearing after his post to Canterbury. Published by Penguin, and carrying that publisher’s standard wartime note on the endpapers to: “leave this book at a Post Office when you have read it, so that men and women in the services may enjoy it too,” the book must have had a readership far beyond its sales figures, so its status and influence are justifiable. The “Middle Axiom” approach to theological engagement with social affairs, tentatively set out at the end of the book, informed church practice (in and beyond Anglicanism) for decades, and it is, perhaps, the tiredness of this practical legacy as much as Temple’s own thought, which has become the target of those for whom so much twentieth-century Anglican faith and practice is seen as an aberration. But what is, for obvious reasons, hidden below the surface of *Christianity and Social Order* is Temple’s own, highly developed, theology and ecclesiology. It is the major achievement of Wendy Dackson’s book to rebuild our picture of Temple so that the theologian is reconnected to the social activist: the Anglican divine to the meddling Lord Spiritual.

In many ways, Dackson has done no more than any serious student of Temple should do. She has read and reflected upon pretty well everything he ever wrote, including the (to many) forbidding volumes of systematic theology such as *Mens Creatrix* (1917), *Christus Veritas* (1924), and his sermons as headmaster of Repton. That reading leads her to identify clear lines of continuity in Temple’s thought, even as he learned to present complex theological ideas for popular audiences. Thus she demonstrates the sound, thoroughly Anglican, and resolutely orthodox, thinking from which Temple developed a political ecclesiology which informed his public persona as Archbishop, his enduring contribution to the shaping of post-War British public life and, of course, *Christianity and Social Order* and its legacy. Written before the Anglican Communion descended into its current round of internecine destructiveness, Dackson’s book is a potent reminder of the theological seriousness of Anglican ecclesiology, especially in its relationship to public life, politics and society.

Dackson’s first step is to establish Temple’s place as part of an Anglican tradition which is well-rooted and authentic. Even to speak of an Anglican theological

tradition requires a degree of subtlety if Anglicanism is not to be misrepresented as somehow analogous to Roman Catholic doctrine as defined by a curia. This she achieves through a careful deployment of MacIntyre's notion of tradition-constituted (and constitutive) enquiry, which immediately allows her to put Temple into conversation with influences such as Hooker, Maurice and Gore, and contemporaries like Demant, in ways which establish both the lineages and the contribution which his thinking makes to Anglican theology.

Having "placed" Temple in this way, Dackson goes on to explore his ecclesiology—although she first clears the ground by tackling head-on the view that Temple had no ecclesiology worth discussing. This, she argues, stems from an over-hasty reading of the passage in *Christianity and Social Order* in which Temple asserts that nine-tenths of the church's work is carried out by people acting in their daily lives in ways completely unconnected with the institutional life of the church. True as this may be, it is precisely the remaining one-tenth which authenticates and informs the totality of Christian witness. Not only is a developed ecclesiology essential to Temple's thought: Temple himself recognized this and offers a well-worked-out theology of the church on which his political theology and his personal stances are plainly rooted.

A short review does not offer the scope to engage in detail with Dackson's arguments. However, she establishes convincingly that Temple's ecclesiology is grounded in a sacramental, as well as an incarnational, emphasis, and that it is in the sacrament of baptism that he finds the pivotal doctrine from which flows his political and social engagement. For, in contrast to the eucharist, baptism is the sacrament which the church performs for those who are not yet its members. It is, of its essence, concerned with the relationship between the church and that which is not (yet) of the church, and is thus a highly significant moment in any theology of the interim which has not leapt prematurely to a Kingdom already fulfilled in its totality. This emphasis on baptism establishes Temple as having not only a political ecclesiology, but an evangelical theology (in the best, non-partisan, sense). Dackson shows comprehensively how this political ecclesiology and Temple's understandings of the state cohere with his public utterances and personal commitments.

Important as it is that Temple's work is restored to us in its true theological depth, it will take rather more to establish him again as a theologian whose authentic Anglicanism contributes meaningfully to today's ecclesial debates. In her final chapter, Dackson begins this process by bringing Temple's ecclesiology into dialogue with two contemporary theologians whose work is not immediately regarded as standing within the Temple tradition: John Milbank and Oliver O'Donovan.

Milbank's disdain for the things Temple generally stands for is well known, so it is not surprising that Dackson judges his Radical Orthodoxy to be deficient in precisely those areas where Temple is strongest—that is, Milbank's ecclesiology is "nebulous" and his account of the Christian's role within temporal society attenuated. As a result, Milbank's political theology is unable to inform action in the theological interim. Dackson is surely right in these criticisms, although I would have enjoyed a more extended dialogue with the considerable body of work which has critiqued Milbank, and indeed his own thinking since *Theology and Social Theory*.

Much more fruitful, perhaps surprisingly, is Dackson's engagement with O'Donovan. Here she finds an understanding of the interim compatible with Temple's although O'Donovan's central metaphor of the church as a city contrasts with the (in her view) greater political potential of Temple's governing image of the church as the Body of Christ. The Body metaphor, with its potential for a discourse of suffering, judgment and fellowship, offers a helpfully rich entry point for an engagement with political processes as well as political goals.

It is in this dialogue with O'Donovan that Dackson implicitly sets an agenda for the next steps in political theology. For O'Donovan's more recent work has continued the task of reconstructing an evangelical political theology in the Latin tradition and appears to have taken him into a stronger rejection of Enlightenment modernity than was, perhaps, apparent in *The Desire of the Nations*. One cannot see Temple following O'Donovan in this direction. And yet the latter's immense strength is his determination to make political theology truly a theological, rather than a social, enterprise, rooted in the authentic narratives of faith and church. Dackson has shown us that Temple—usually regarded as the doyen of rather untheological political and social action in the churches—is, in fact, as profoundly rooted in seriously theological enquiry as O'Donovan. The next steps must be to highlight the particular contribution of that Anglican tradition, in all its untidy engagements with modernity, to a political theology of equivalent seriousness to those emanating from the more illiberal and sectarian strands within contemporary Christian thought. This book is a significant contribution to that major task.

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Angela Pears, *Feminist Christian Encounters*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. 198 pp. Hbk. £47.50. ISBN 0754609901.

This sometimes insightful book rehearses well the major themes and vexed contemporary questions of “feminism” and feminist informed Christian theologies. Its concern is with the methods and strategies of feminist-informed theologies, and with the question of authority. It aims, firstly, to map out the origins and development of feminist-informed Christian theologies and their encounters with feminisms generally and to show, secondly, that this leads to a view of these encounters as “diverse, vital and often problematic” (34). This is followed by an exploration of three diverse feminist writers in order to show how they deal with the question of authority and how they employ key methodological mechanisms of feminist values and critique within the framework of feminist-informed Christian theologies. By focusing on method Pears suggests that we can move beyond the persistent discourse of compatibility/incompatibility. Her focus on the authority given by her selected writers to Christian theology and tradition and how the resultant inherent tensions are maintained is explored through the lens of the practical, and the experiential. In other words, working from the evidence of existing theologies “it

investigates *how* apparently creative and constructive relationships are maintained between feminisms and Christian theology and tradition, rather than theorising about *if* such relationships are possible" (4).

The structure of the book is clear and linear, and it would thus be a valuable textbook for students and general readers approaching feminist informed Christian theologies for the first time. The structure of the two introductory chapters helpfully gives a context to Pears' arguments and to her presentation of the three individual theologians and their work. Chapter 1 traces the development of feminist-informed theologies through the first and second waves, showing their diversity and comparable developments. Although undoubtedly equally well treated elsewhere, this chapter serves as a useful reminder of the history of the emergence of feminist-informed Christian theologies within an historical context of the emergence of feminisms generally. Pears' brief but detailed analysis of Mary Daly's early work, and the work of Rosemary Radford Ruether and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza offers not only a helpful historical context within the thrust of the whole book but also shows how these women have contributed to not just the *what* of feminisms generally but also the *how*. Further, it shows how these theologians envisage and provide a radical theological departure in terms of the content and methodology of Christian theology, whether that is reformist in nature (Ruether and Fiorenza) or even beyond Christianity (Daly).

What is particularly helpful in this chapter is Pears' very fine tracing of the tensions that have emerged within Christian feminism itself such that it could no longer be talked about in the singular—therefore feminist-informed Christian theologies. Also Pears shows clearly that feminist-informed Christian theologies, due to their vital nature, have themselves evolved presuppositions and problems of exclusion that are in need of constant challenge and deconstruction. Further in this chapter, although it was refreshing to see mention of perhaps now lesser known but very influential feminists in their time, it was nonetheless helpful that she concentrates her presentation on incompatibility between feminism and theology in the well-known works of Christ, Goldberg, Starhawk and especially Daly.

Daly, indeed, provides the quintessential exemplar for the opening of Chapter 2, which concentrates on some feminists' rejection of Christianity and traditional religion. Pears' concentration on (and slightly repetitious presentation of) Mary Daly, along with Carol Christ and Daphne Hampson, does show clearly how the discourse became dominated by the compatibility/incompatibility argument and how even if not explicitly addressed, all subsequent Christian feminist theologies are inevitably influenced and implicitly address this concern.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 focus on the works of Carter Heyward, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Marcella Althaus-Reid respectively. The entirely clear and at times original reading of both Fiorenza and Heyward's developing use, albeit in different ways, of the Christian tradition, allows Pears to show both the methodology and the inherent critiques operating in their evolving theologies. Pears' use of an overview of their theologies, drawing liberally on the authors' own writings, allows her to present the tensions in them, but also to show how these theologians deal with an allegiance both to feminisms and Christianity. In the case of Heyward, Pears

illustrates, this is by a radical reconceptualizing of traditional Christian imagery and concepts, and in the case of Fiorenza, the prioritizing of women's experience and the employment of the hermeneutics of suspicion, of proclamation, remembrance, historical reconstruction, and creative actualization. This allows Fiorenza to present a reading of the Bible and an understanding of the ministry of Jesus that is compatible with feminist values and with women's experience.

What is a methodologically effective presentation, on Pears' part, of an overview of writers' work and developing understandings in the case of Heyward and Fiorenza, comes somewhat unstuck in the chapter on Marcella Althaus-Reid, where one is tempted to wonder if Pears is attempting to compare like with unlike. While Fiorenza and Heyward rely, albeit in different ways, on orthodox Christian theology as redemptive/liberating/hopeful, Althaus-Reid bases herself in a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on queer theory, post-colonial criticism, Marxist studies, continental philosophy, and systematic theology. This does not lend itself well to Pears' previous methodological presentation. Althaus-Reid's work, while as challenging to Christian theology as Mary Daly's early work, does not explicitly draw primarily on Christian theology, nor does it draw specifically on feminisms as might be conventionally understood and used. It is because of factors such as these that the compatibility argument seems rather too thin at times, since Althaus-Reid does not have a concern for any reconstruction of Christian symbols.

However, this book does present a useful overview of these authors and their themes, and in the final chapter does begin to draw attention to, and raise some of, the most serious questions facing feminisms and feminist theology today, including whether feminisms really do have a future specifically related to their primary historical role of overcoming gender-based injustice. This book provides a useful companion on that journey.

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Nicola Slee, *Praying Like A Woman*. London: SPCK, 2004. viii + 152 pp. Pbk. ISBN 0281055998.

Now that many publishers are aware of inclusive language and imagery, it is rare and refreshing to see a book entirely comprised of prayers which are specifically and unashamedly feminist.

What does it mean to "pray like a woman"? Nicola Slee answers that question in a variety of ways in her introduction, and in the prayers themselves.

Themes of Christian feminist theology emerge throughout the book. There are prayers of embodiment, including one written in preparation for the author's hysterectomy which links a woman's bleeding with the body and blood of the eucharist. There are prayers of anger, protest and rage, some directed against a patriarchal church, others crying out to God, and others protesting at human injustice. There are prayers which resonate with an affirming theology of sexuality,

including gay and lesbian relationships, and singleness. There are prayers which reclaim women's stories—the mother of the prodigal son, the woman with the flow of blood—and challenge us to listen to the voices of women who have never been heard. There are prayers of community, of silence and of contemplation, of joy and praise, and prayers which seek to image God in new ways.

Each section of the book has a short introduction, which tells something of the author's own story and the theology emerging from that. So the individual prayers are set in a context, often with further information in the notes at the back. The book is in part a record of one woman's journey in prayer—but a journey which many of us, who have lived through the growth and development of Christian feminist theology from the earliest days of *Women in Theology* (when some of these prayers were first published) can identify with. For those who have lived and worked with feminist theology, this book feels like an old friend, perhaps dressed in new clothing, but one with whom we feel instantly at home; for others, there is much here to give new insights, inspiration and challenge. Some readers may feel uncomfortable with some of the imagery and language—there are some pieces that men will find it hard to identify with, and others that will offend any who have an unquestioning or uncritical attitude to faith or church—but that does not lessen the importance of hearing and responding to the challenge.

This is not a book to sit and read through in one sitting. I suspect that readers will dip into it, or use section headings or the indices provided to hunt out prayers on specific themes. Many of the pieces will lend themselves to use in women's liturgies or groups; a few are appropriate for more general congregational use. Some readers will turn again and again to prayers that become well-loved favourites, finding words that speak to their own needs and situations. Most of all, this is a book to be prayed, rather than read. In her introduction Nicola Slee says: "We must find a way of praying which is ours." For many women, this book will have an important part to play in that process of discovering what it means to pray like a woman.

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Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, Community and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State between the Wars*. Oxford Historical Monographs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. ix + 257 pp. Hbk. £55.00. ISBN 0-19-927089-9.

Why should readers of *Political Theology* be interested in an account of political theory from 1918–1939, and the long dead figures of Ernest Barker (first professor of political science at Cambridge), and William Temple (Archbishop of Canterbury now over 60 years ago)? There are two clear reasons why this is an important study, apart from its innate interest to those who are fascinated by English politics in the first half of the twentieth century or who seek to understand the Church of England in its last moment of real cultural influence before its precipitate collapse after 1960.

One reason why this book can be strongly recommended concerns the Jonathan Clark thesis which is by no means resolved. The second reason is that it offers a way of understanding why the decline of political theology as a public discourse in Britain took place over the last 40 years. Let me begin with the Clark thesis. Grimley's book is another addition to the growing number of books that seek to recover the central role of religion in British politics. The publication in 1985 of Jonathan Clark's *English Society 1688–1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice During the Ancien Regime* marked the appearance of a new trend in historiography. The Whig interpretation of history had for two centuries focused on the growth of equality, parliamentary representation, economic disparities and the struggle for freedom. This tradition saw the emergence of the Labour Party as the culmination of a long struggle to emancipate the working class. Such historians as E. P. Thompson are the most magisterial exponents of this genre. It relegated religion, the aristocracy, tradition and the organic community of rural life to a mere footnote, if that. More often they became the enemies of the progressive history of Britain to be swept away by the blood and toil of the free men (and women) of Britain.

Clark's epoch-making book swept all this away when it appeared in 1985. It has produced one of the fiercest debates in modern history, though as so often theologians have ignored the debate almost totally. Clark's revisionist account portrayed an English society in the "long eighteenth century" from 1688 to 1932 structured around religion and tradition. Furthermore he argued that even today economic development and rapid social change can occur within traditional societies, dominated by the monarchy, religion and the aristocracy. Asian countries in particular reflect this trend. Clark's account has aroused fierce criticism, especially from John Brewer, but in spite of the justified criticisms there is no doubt that Clark has changed the debate.

Grimley takes the debate further. For Grimley, religion in the interwar period provided a way of talking about national community. It was this which enabled Anglicanism to be identified with Englishness against the threats of fascism. Yet it could also be used to weather the storms of class politics, especially the general strike of 1926, and the failure of Edward VIII to accept the role of constitutional monarch. Grimley is brilliant in discerning how again and again political theory, such as pluralism, or concepts of the welfare state, had their origins in a discourse that was as much religious as political. In some ways he is doing the same as another famous modern historian Linda Colley whose *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1832* (1992) followed Clark in showing how religion could invigorate popular culture and national life.

Yet there is a subtlety in his argument which goes beyond the rather overdrawn picture found sometimes in Colley and Clark. His analysis of the thought of Ernest Barker, and Alexander Lindsay (Master of Balliol College, Oxford 1924–49 and close friend of Archbishop William Temple) is detailed and acute. Both wrote extensively on theories of the modern state, and engaged in dialogue with Harold Laski, and other socialists.

The second value of Grimley's study is the concluding chapter where he engages with a very different debate about secularization. He argues that it was because Anglicanism justified itself as the guardian of national community in terms of a cultural defence that it survived as a prominent cultural ideology for as long as it did. Grimley writes, "Liberal Anglicanism provided a theoretical underpinning for English civil religion. It offered a providentialist account of national history and destiny..." (225).

However the sophistication of this model allowed it to critique both class conflict and economic competition. It always distinguished between state and nation so that it could be critical of the state in the name of the nation. As Grimley notes, the shadows of this sophisticated understanding of polity lingered long over the debate on *Faith in the City*, the hard-hitting report of the Church of England in 1985 which so incensed Margaret Thatcher. Much of the conceptual understanding of state and community found in the authors of *Faith in the City* are echoes of the interwar Anglican account of political theory. Yet they were really fading echoes. The decline in the appeal to a national community was very marked after 1960. The loss of a sense of national, moral community was acute and it was only in times of crisis (like 1985) that the old rhetoric came back, echoes of a long-lost ballad of national unity under the purposes of God.

Grimley's book is of course also valuable simply as a contribution to the study of interwar politics (especially on Baldwin) and on the Church of England's intellectual hegemony in religious thought. Is there, then, nothing I would seek to challenge in this study? Perhaps the only thing is that it lacks a sense of how theological and philosophical analysis could provide a different viewpoint from his historical one. The great name that is missing is that of Donald MacKinnon. His magisterial account of the impact of philosophical idealism on theology and politics in this period is a notable absence. MacKinnon would have argued that theologians influenced by T. H. Green had a more complex attitude to utilitarianism than a straightforward reading of William Temple might suggest. Certainly the treatment of Christianity by the British Idealists aroused both admiration and some hesitation among theologians such as Holland, Moberly and (in a later generation) William Temple. It is also the case that by the end of the 1930s a new group of theologians was definitely challenging the hegemony of William Temple, Hensley Henson and W. R. Inge. There are no references to Michael Ramsey, whom Asquith described as the last hope of the Liberal Party when he was President of the Cambridge Union. But Ramsey became a theologian (and far later a famous Archbishop of Canterbury) and his writing from the mid-1930s engaged with the Continental theology of Karl Barth as an antidote to the Nazi threat. That again is a missing dimension.

But these are small criticisms of what is likely to become a definitive work. It is definitive about the contribution of Anglicanism to political philosophy in this period. It thus splendidly vindicates Clark's overall thesis that Whig historians have been blind in their exclusion of religion from political life. No one could argue after Grimley's argument that Anglicanism was a mere footnote to national political debate in the interwar period in Britain. Grimley is also a good guide to the history of the Church of England at this time, and contributes some very suggestive ideas

to the debate about secularization in modern Britain. As an added bonus, his style is elegant, and has many humorous asides. Grimley says that the book has taken over a decade in coming to birth, but the final product is indeed excellent. I hope he will publish more on this topic.

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Rodney D. Holder, *God, the Multiverse and Everything: Modern Cosmology and the Argument from Design*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. viii + 211 pp. ISBN 0-7546-5116-9.

The strap line to the title tells it all: Modern cosmology and the argument from design. So, this book revisits the old argument from design discussion, but does so from the perspective of modern cosmology. What it fails to disclose is that the author, who is described as a priest in charge of the parish of the Claydons, Diocese of Oxford, is also a physicist totally at home with the cosmological literature, and so can guide the rest of us through this material with great authority, which indeed he does. The result is an in-depth analysis of the argument from design, starting from the current understanding of the universe, and in particular the “fine-tuning” of its parameters needed to produce conditions suitable for life (its anthropological potential, if you wish).

“Fine-tuning” is the current shorthand for the observation that the physical constants of the universe need to take on values very close to their observed values for the universe to be an interesting place at all. Some of these values need to be defined to within very precise limits, and yet there seems to be no *a priori* reason why these values should be what they are. It might, for example, be possible to envisage a universe in which the force of gravity were slightly different, but even the most slight reduction in its force would have led to the universe flying apart without forming any interesting components such as stars and planets. A slight deviation in the opposite direction would mean everything condensing back into black holes before they had time for features such as life to evolve. There is a large number of such constants (perhaps over 50 of them) to which the universe is very sensitive. It seems almost a miracle that, if we were to allow these parameters to vary in the population of potential universes, that they take on the very precise values that they do, except of course for the fact that if they were different, we would not be inhabiting the universe. The design argument says that this exceeding fine-tuning required to produce a universe capable of supporting life is itself the evidence for a designer of the universe.

Holder sets himself the limited, but still very challenging task, of explaining the fine-tuning of the universe. He attempts to demonstrate that the theistic explanation (i.e. God made it so) is at least as probable an explanation as any of the scientific alternatives. He does this by recourse to classic Bayesian statistics to compare the probabilities of alternative hypotheses, and so concludes that the existence of a designer for the universe is the “best” of the competing hypotheses. In doing so he

is of course following Pascal's lead in applying statistics and mathematics to religious issues—although his argument is not the same as Pascal's famous wager.

In order to put bones on this analysis, Dr Holder presents us with a brief, yet cogent, informative and challenging review of the current state of cosmological argument, and the philosophical arguments that go with it. He then goes on to show how Bayesian statistics helps science decide between competing prior hypotheses on the basis of evidence.

To illustrate both Holder's method, and to identify one problem with his argument, we note that Bayes theorem, as he states it, can be written symbolically:

$$P[H / E] = \frac{P[E / H]}{P[E]} P[H]$$

In which P[H] is the prior possibility of hypothesis H
 P[E] is the probability of the evidence
 P[E/H] is the probability of the evidence given the hypothesis
 And P[H/E] is the probability of the hypothesis after the evidence has been observed (the posterior probability).

In terms of the current discussion, the hypothesis, H, is that the universe is the work of a designer; the evidence, E, is the fine-tuning of the universe.

Even where it is difficult to assign absolute values to the quantities, it is often possible to assign relative values to the terms in this equation. In particular, by evaluating the same expression for a series of different prior hypotheses, H₁, ... ,H_n, it is possible to use the method to identify which of the hypotheses is the most likely in the light of the evidence presented.

One difficulty is that, if the prior probability of the hypothesis, P[H], is always and exactly zero, then the value of the posterior probability is also exactly zero. Hence, if an investigator denies the possibility of God in the first place, then no amount of evidence will act as corroboration. Only if one admits the possibility of God at all, can this calculus be used.

However, in order to use this statistical framework, Holder has to identify the current scientific hypotheses that also claim to explain the fine-tuning of the universe. These he identifies as, first, the "brute fact" that we live in a universe as it is, and there is no explanation to be done. The second is the multiple universes hypothesis (the multiverse of the book's title) in which we just happen to live in the one highly improbable universe in which the conditions for human life are fulfilled. (Although we can also adopt the anthropic principle that only in such a universe would we be here to observe it.) The third hypothesis is that the fine-tuning is the evidence of purposive creation by someone or something that we would identify as God. (Holder rejects the idea that the universe is the creation of some sentient alien from another universe, though for the purposes of this argument, such a being would be indistinguishable from a creator God.)

The first of these hypotheses in fact explains nothing, and so is rejected as being just vacuous, and of no power in the scientific sense of the term.

The assignment of prior probabilities to each of the alternative hypotheses depends in turn on one's own scientific judgment. Whichever way we turn, we have to postulate additional entities in the Okhamite sense. Whether it is more sensible to postulate an infinity of in principle unknowable universes, or a single but totally different kind of being that we call God, is perhaps a personal decision. Holder is clearly unhappy with the many universe hypothesis, for many reasons—of which perhaps the clearest is that in many ways by being infinitely many it actually explains very little, and is in addition in principle untestable.

Given Holder's belief in God, he assigns a high prior probability of their being a God, the conclusion that a designer universe is the most probable explanation of its fine-tuning is almost an inevitable consequence of the Bayesian analysis. It will, however, do nothing to convince those who would a priori assign a zero prior probability to the existence of God. So the argument would never convert a convinced atheist.

What is more worrying is, however, the fact that Holder considers only three hypotheses that might explain the fine-tuning of the universe. Certainly of the three hypotheses presented, the theistic one seems most useful. But Holder deliberately excludes the possibility of other newer hypotheses coming along that might explain the fine-tuning in another. He does examine the arguments for the inflationary universe as a way of helping the multiverse theories, but finds them unconvincing. I am more worried in that he rejects as chimeral the notion of a unified theory that will show how all the fine-tuning is the inevitable result of some as yet unexplored property of the universe. Such a theory may become available at some time in the future, and then his analysis would of course be rendered, if not null and void, at least out of date. There is a sense in that what Holder is doing is re-inventing the "God of the Gaps." Because science cannot as yet explain the fine-tuning of the universe, does it mean that it never will?

Nevertheless, in reaching this point, Holder has given us a marvellous excursion into the language and territory of modern cosmology. The material is well written, and beautifully presented, and just to make sure that we are not put off by too many equations, the nutty mathematics are given as a series of appendices. I wonder, however, who will read this book? Scientists familiar with the material certainly, if they are of a philosophical bent. Theologians would, however, I suspect, struggle with the mathematics (even the restricted amount in the text). Despite this, I would recommend that they persevere—the rewards are great. To see theologians grappling with this material is an example to the rest for the theological world, and a reminder to the physicists that they don't hold all the truth.

So, in the end Dr Holder needs to be congratulated in producing such an enormously interesting and engaging book. On the way, he produces many wonderful insights, many useful summaries of material that most of us have only half digested. We may argue whether he is right in his conclusion, but we can only benefit from following his argument.

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Charles Reed, *Just War?* London: SPCK, 2004. x + 181 pp. Pbk. £14.99. ISBN 0-281-05654-4.

The Changing Society and the Churches series, published by SPCK, seeks to “engage with secular issues and understandings and the challenges and opportunities these pose to the churches.”

Charles Reed’s contribution “*Just War?*” asks searching questions not only of the just war tradition, but of the “way in which the British churches sought to offer counsel to governments and wider society on issues of war and peace following the end of the cold war.”

Reed begins by introducing two themes which are developed throughout the book: first, the increasing secularization of society resulting in the marginalization of religious language, and second, the radical transformation in the way the use of military force is viewed and used by nations as an integral part of foreign policy.

Reed roots his discussions in the often painful reality of Iraq 1990–2003, a period which begins and ends with major conflicts, although some would argue that the use of force during the years of military enforced sanctions was simply a different form of warfare which may be likened to a siege. It is a little disappointing, while understandable, that these intervening years and the many complex moral ethical issues are quickly passed over. However, Reed’s point that the “theological fault lines and tensions that were evident in the Churches’ response to the war remained in evidence throughout the 1990s” is well made.

It is encouraging to have a book that moves easily between theory, tradition and the reality of the events discussed in the case study. Reed moves with ease from the political to the Church setting, from the past to the present, exploring the framework that the just war theory provides for the churches, and those they seek to influence. Drawing on the moral reasoning of Paul Ramsey, Turner Johnston and George Weigel, Reed critically analyses the British churches’ contribution to the political debate surrounding Iraq during the 1990s.

Chapter 1 sets the scene by considering “Politics, Power and Religion in New Order,” reviewing some of the wide-ranging literature covering the period and subject. Reed not surprisingly suggests that 1990–2003 generated an “unprecedented level of public and political debate.” This chapter asks all the pertinent questions, balancing the various arguments and laying a strong foundation for the succeeding chapters.

Chapter 2 provides a canter through the theological traditions that have influenced the churches’ understanding of war and peace with an emphasis on the period under discussion. Beginning with the Old Testament, Reed considers the use and misuse of scripture and tradition by both pacifist and non pacifist in an illuminating way, concluding:

“There are similarities between the wars of Deuteronomy and the struggles of the post-Cold War period. Even if the historical accuracy of these wars is in doubt, the texts provide insights into the writers’ world-views which continue to dominate the twenty first century” (11).

The Old Testament imagery, which has become more prominent in U.S. foreign policy since the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the role of the New Christian Right, and its emphasis on redemption and conversation which presents an uncompromising moral message, is well considered. This theology moves comfortably into a war against terrorism, as the Christian Right argues for the USA to act as redeemer nation.

Reed asks appropriate questions about the authority by which the churches contribute to the debate on war and peace, and concludes this search through scripture by suggesting that there is little in the Bible that could be seen as providing clear unambiguous moral teaching. However, the just war tradition provides “clear rules, principles and values which have wide appeal and validity and from which a particular judgement may be deducted as to the morality of any use of force” (31). Reed develops this theme and its strengths and weaknesses over the next few chapters.

The just war tradition is presented in detail in Chapter 3, relating it to the UN articles and Security Council Resolutions of the 1990s, and set against theological considerations. In seeking to rediscover the just war tradition, Reed argues, that to maintain its integrity, “the tradition requires a more holistic and balanced approach” (42). The contrast with the previous “nuclear area” is clear, and conflict is seen in a more conventional model, which Coates¹ suggests has resulted in the “partial moral rehabilitation of armed force” as an instrument of state.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this book’s timely appearance is the concept of asymmetric warfare,² following the horrors of 9/11. The arguments concerning a new security agenda, just intervention, anticipatory self-defence, terrorism, and the implications for the just war tradition are well presented, concluding that, “the overriding concern of the just war theory is to ensure the primacy of peace over war” (59).

Chapter 4 deals in depth with the case study of the first and second Gulf Wars, focusing particularly on the British churches approach to the issue of war and peace. Exploring the fact that the church and the politicians often found themselves using the same just war terminology in which to argue their case, Reed suggests that this was an encouraging trend in that it “provides a warning against attempts to dissociate the practice of governments from ethics” (61).

Reed quite rightly discusses the international response to the invasion of Kuwait, against the background of a changing world view as a result of the end of the Cold War. Reed does not avoid the difficult questions and tackles issues such as the fact that there was no “one voice” of the British churches, with the Scottish and Irish churches condemning the 1991 war while the Church of England house of Bishops hesitated until the very eve of the conflict. This debate in particular and UK domestic scene in general are dealt with in detail. The contribution of the World Council of Churches is also considered in this chapter.

1. See Reed’s discussions of Coates in n. 30 on p. 156.

2. Asymmetric warfare includes “threats outside the range of conventional warfare and difficult to respond to in kind (e.g., a suicide bomber).”

It is interesting that while it seems that the first Gulf War met the just war criteria, the churches were reluctant to agree with this conclusion, which highlights the tension between “a Christian realist and a Christian pacifist understanding of the just war tradition” (97).

Chapter 5 begins with the statement, “If the First Gulf War gave rise to the ‘new world order’ then the second Gulf War gave it renewed shape and meaning” (99). Was this conflict an illegitimate act of aggression by the USA and the UK? Or was it justified by the overwhelming evidence of criminal behaviour by Saddam Hussein over the years? Indeed, as this review is written, on the second anniversary of the beginning of the conflict the debate still rages.

Beginning with the events of September 11, 2001, the issues surrounding this are discussed in depth. Again the British churches were divided in opposition to the war, perhaps reflecting the mood of the nation. This division was not only with regard to ethics but on the strategy used to engage in the debate. Reed does not shy from the subject of the “dodgy dossier” and considers its effect on the debate.

Was the second Gulf War just? The answer depends on a number of complex issues which Reed relates in an uncomplicated way, helping the reader consider the differing perspectives and come to their own conclusions.

This book at first glance may appear small, but it tackles some very large and complex questions, which society continues to ask. Its timely appearance is to be commended, and its purchase recommended.

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Warren Goldstein, *William Sloane Coffin, Jr.: A Holy Impatience* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004). xiii + 369 pp. Hbk. \$30.00. ISBN 0-300-10221-6.

In the opening pages of this well-rendered biography, Warren Goldstein observes that William Sloane Coffin, Jr. is the last of a “once flourishing breed” in American life, the liberal Protestant leader who makes a large public impact by appealing to the “faith and conscience” of Americans (x). Ebullient, charming, self-confident, aggressively masculine, a passionate advocate of social justice and biblical religion, a galvanizing public performer, and clueless in his intimate relationships, Coffin makes a fascinating biographical subject. In Goldstein, a historian at the University of Hartford and author of a prize-winning book on early American baseball, Coffin has a skilled biographer who is up to the task.

Goldstein emphasizes that Coffin got his ample supply of self-confidence from his privileged background and the formative love of a refined, hard-driving mother. He was born in 1924 into the New York liberal Protestant establishment. Coffin’s paternal grandfather Edmund Coffin was a member of Yale’s “Skull and Bones” secret society, a civic-minded Republican, and a pro bono attorney for Union Theological Seminary; his father William Sloane Coffin was a Skull and Bonesman, a kindlier version of Edmund Coffin’s civic-minded Republicanism, and a real estate

baron; his uncle Henry Sloane Coffin was a Skull and Bonesman and the president of Union Theological Seminary.

His mother Catherine Butterfield Coffin was a midwesterner who spent her school years at a boarding school in Kenosha, Wisconsin and treasured her Edith Wharton-esque years as Will Coffin's spouse. When Catherine's son William was nine years old, her husband died of an apparent heart attack, and she had to leave behind her old New York world of dinner parties and servants. Taking her two boys to Carmel, California, Catherine surprised them by becoming intimately involved in their daily lives; Bill was the chief beneficiary. Well into his middle age he remained deeply influenced by her strong opinions and personality.

As a youth he showed promise as a pianist, spending a year at a music conservatory in Paris in the company of his mother, but World War II interrupted Coffin's studies at Yale Music School. At the age of nineteen he joined the Army and immediately rejoiced at joining a world of men. Dropping his family's genteel Republicanism, Coffin added Russian to his collection of languages, trained officers to negotiate with the Russian army in Europe, and twice extended his tour of duty. In 1947 he returned to New Haven and Yale, where his mother had relocated, and later began studies at Union Theological Seminary, mostly because Reinhold Niebuhr was there.

But Coffin craved action over book-learning, which he found in the CIA. From 1950 to 1953 he trained Russian émigrés in Germany to infiltrate the Soviet Union. His radiant optimism and sense of mission proved inspiring to the trainees, but most of them were quickly captured upon entering the Soviet Union, meeting a harsh fate. Coffin later concluded that there was a pro-Soviet mole in the CIA; he also remembered the entire period as a dismal one for him personally.

In 1953 he resumed his seminary studies at Yale Divinity School, where H. Richard Niebuhr and Robert L. Calhoun were the dominant theological influences. Coffin absorbed from them a neoliberal/neo-orthodox sense of historic Christianity, though his teachers later recalled that he was too swashbuckling to be really teachable. Roaring around campus on a big BMW motorcycle, he delighted in daredevil stunts, regaled partygoers with Russian songs and tales of his secret warriorism, and developed his provocative, biblical style of preaching.

Upon being ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in 1956 Coffin gave a year to Phillips Academy (Andover) as a chaplain, a year to Williams College, and then landed "the only job I really wanted," the Yale chaplaincy (104). From long family tradition and personal experience he knew that Yale was stuffy, bland, and conservative, "the bland leading the bland" (104). He also figured, rightly, that he was perfectly suited by background and temperament to change its culture. Coffin preached a "pro-intellect, anti-intellectual" message to packed houses at Battell Chapel, pressed the administration to admit more Jewish students, and, in 1961, won his first dose of national fame as a civil rights activist. He was the first white Northern Protestant establishment leader to join the Freedom Riders. Riding the bus from Atlanta to Montgomery, Alabama, Coffin was probably saved from physical harm in Montgomery when he got arrested; the next day he made the front page of the *New York Times*, which spurred other Northern liberals to Alabama.

In the late 1960s his fame skyrocketed as a leader of the anti-Vietnam war movement. In 1965 Coffin joined Abraham Joshua Heschel, Daniel Berrigan, and Richard John Neuhaus in co-founding Clergy Concerned About Vietnam, which became a major anti-war organization. By 1967 he was deeply involved in the draft resistance movement, which led to his conviction the following year of conspiring to aid and abet draft resistance; the case was later appealed and dropped. *Doonesbury* creator Garry Trudeau recalls that Coffin's presence at Yale during those years was so robust and powerful that "without him, the very air would have lost its charge. With him, we were forever changed" (back cover).

In 1977 Coffin accepted the pastorate of historic Riverside Church in New York, where his felicitous sermons, rich in biblical allusions, revived a declining congregation. He also turned the church into a national center of a burgeoning nuclear disarmament movement, which led to his last career move, heading the disarmament organization SANE/Freeze in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Goldstein emphasizes that Coffin never developed much of an intimate life, "despite three marriages, one long-carried torch, a large number of relationships with other women, three children, two step-children, two siblings, a demanding mother, and dozens, if not hundreds, of good friends" (324). He lived for public challenge and applause, never cultivating the virtue of intimate self-giving. Coffin's first marriage started poorly and got worse; his second ended with hellish fighting that led to embarrassing courtroom publicity; in his third marriage he finally found a spouse who accepted him as he was. But more than any liberal Protestant leader of his time except Martin Luther King, Jr., Coffin inspired millions of Americans to stand for a juster, more peaceable America as a response to the divine will.

He worked hard at his preaching craft, Goldstein observes, connecting with a vast audience through witty aphorisms and common sense. Moreover, Coffin stood out from his clerical peers by projecting an image of secure masculinity and showing that he was at home in the everyday secular world. Above all, he preached the scriptural Word with an eloquent and joyful exuberance. Coffin was a public celebrant of the redemptive power of love divine. *William Sloane Coffin, Jr.: A Holy Impatience* rises to the level of its remarkable subject.

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