

and secure fact that benefits the whole human family, who in Christ have received, like the prodigal son of the parable, the ring, the robe, and the shoes of sonship. The words spoken by the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism, "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," were not only to Christ but to all mankind with whom Christ had just publicly identified himself. While the whole family has been restored to its original relation with God, each member, like Adam in the beginning, has to express his or her will to obey God and be a part of God's kingdom. This is a decision that has no meritorious value and must not be understood as "man's part" in his salvation. Thus we have both the breadth of universalism and the certainty of particularism in the Second Adam.

This book is stylistically well written and deals from a biblical standpoint with a most important and practical theme of theology. It will provide a rewarding experience for its readers.

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Richards, Lawrence O., and Martin, Gilbert R. *A Theology of Personal Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1981. 332 pp. \$12.95.

The reader of this book must remember that he is studying a textbook. Like most textbooks, it requires more than just cursory reading. One of the most important hurdles in the understanding of this volume is mastering the vocabulary. The authors have used a minimum of terms from biblical and philosophical theology, but they have coined and borrowed terms that express their understanding of their theme, *a contemporary theology of the laity*. So the reader must come to sense the meaning (as understood by the authors) of such terms as "Believer-priests," "Body gifts," "Discipling," "Equipping," "Giftedness," "Identity," "Laos," "Personal Ministries," "Vision," "Modeling," "Gift of Prophecy," "Relationships," "Servanthood," etc.

A succinct summary of the structure of the book is found on p. 144: "The first part of the present text sought to define core theological truths that must be considered if we are to have God's perspective on personal ministries and giftedness. With a theology thus defined, we can now suggest some of the implications. *Then* we have a basis both to evaluate present practices and to develop ways of living together as Christ's church that better express God's plan for His body."

In harmony with this summary, the first part of the book is captioned, *Theological Core: The Identity of the Believer*. The chapter headings are "A People of God," "A New Covenant People," "A Kingdom People," "A Servant People," "An Empowered People," and "A Gifted People." The second part of the book is designated, *Practical Implications*. The chapter

headings are "Identity Implications," "Communicating Vision," "Building Relationships and Community," "Making Disciples," "Equipping," "Extending Freedom," and "Understanding Leadership."

In their emphasis on the importance of lay participation in the church, the authors contrast two types of church structures: (1) The conventional pyramid type with strata of people in leadership roles, where "goals are set at the top and directives pass downward through the structure" (p. 299). (2) What the authors call the "servant team structure," where "leaders are perceived as being in a lower, supportive position" and "decisions are made by the actual teams operating the ministry" (*ibid.*). The concept of the work of the *laos* emphasized throughout the book is based on the servant-team idea.

One important practical question is left unanswered: Is it possible to fully incorporate the "laos" in a church that is traditionally highly organized on more or less the pyramid pattern? Or is a congregational structure the only way to go if the laity are to fulfill their mission? The authors do not deal specifically with this question, but it must not be overlooked.

The following quotations and comments highlight topics that were of special interest to the present reviewer:

(1) "There is no essential difference in identity between a pastor and a new Christian. . . . There will be a difference of role, a difference in how each serves others. But each Christian is to find his identity in the fact that now, in Christ, he has become one of the people of God" (p. 14).

(2) "How essential that each Christian comes to understand himself and his potential as a ministering person by recognizing the meaning of the Spirit's presence and acknowledging the power that this makes available in and through him" (p. 102).

(3) God has a vision, the authors declare, clearly expressed in the NT, of a restored humanity, a holy people who live good lives and who are more concerned with others than themselves. These people are described as submitting to God's authority, as a worshiping, witnessing, and ministering church. The authors contrast this divine vision with the limitations of human tradition (see pp. 165-181).

(4) An excellent chapter on discipleship (pp. 219-237) stresses the importance of obedience to Jesus. "Making disciples, not simply making converts, is Jesus' Great Commission to the church" (p. 223).

(5) The authors maintain that churches must run the risk of giving "our brothers and sisters the freedom to live in obedience to the voice of God as they hear him speak" (p. 278). They insist, "We must become a risking community rather than a fearful one. No, not a foolishly risking people. But a people who risk wisely by opening themselves up with a childlike trust to obey God's Word and follow His ways, no matter how foolish they may seem to the reasoning of the natural mind" (p. 284).

At the close of each chapter is a section called "Probe." It is made up of case histories, discussion questions, thought provokers, and resources. Some of this material is drawn from Martin's experience as a pastor of the Trinity Church of Seattle, Washington. This material is illustrative, challenging, and extremely practical.

This book may be studied with profit by ministers and informed laymen. It will not be easy reading for either group, but if it is accepted as a textbook and read with diligence and discrimination, it can open new avenues for the church in the fulfillment of its mission.

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Sell, Charles M. *Family Ministry: The Enrichment of Family Life Through the Church*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1981. 298 pp. \$11.95.

Probably no Christian would deny the importance of the Christian home or its foundational place in the life of the congregation. But to what extent and by what means the church should involve itself in family ministry is another question. Charles Sell, director of the School of Christian Education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, points out that evangelicals have largely ignored the family-life emphasis because of its liberal base, because of its rooting in the behavioral sciences, and because it did not fit into their nineteenth-century style of approach to Christian education. In short, it was not conducive to their aims of reaching the lost and teaching the Bible.

Sell's aim is to undergird family-life education with evangelical theology while retaining the best of its sociological understandings. He attempts to weld the work of modern behavioral science to biblical passages in such a way as to meet the needs of the most conservative church leaders and members.

The author begins by describing the plight of today's family and the consequent need for a special home ministry. While faithful to Scripture, he expands traditional viewpoints in statements such as "The Bible doesn't demand that marriage be continued as a marathon of misery. It stresses the fulfillment of marriage, not merely the duty of remaining married. Church leaders are not discharging the whole of their responsibility if they warn against divorce but do not teach about marriage. Marital fidelity includes more than avoiding an affair; it demands that there be a growing, satisfying relationship between marriage partners" (p. 22).

Professionals who have taught that higher expectations have the potential for greater disappointments will not be surprised that "it is to be expected that as friendship becomes more important in marriage, more