

and not simply those of western philosophy, themes such as that of the land, together with the anthropological and soterio-logical insights it provides, are gaining their rightful place in the theological enterprise.

Professors Andelson and Dawsey recognize that the land problem is not the only social problem, and that their solution of a land value tax would not solve all social ills. They maintain, however, that it is "the most basic social problem, and that its solution would do more to lift the curse of poverty than would anything else" (10). However, in my opinion, this assertion remains to be proved.

We must ask why the narrow category of land? Could property be the larger category and land a subset of this? Or could the problem be one of domination—a problem that precedes the Exodus, going back to the creation narrative. As an aspect of oppression, Domination involves more than land. The authors, I find, have not proved that the wider rubric of oppression, under which Liberation Theology works, is less adequate than their narrower proposal. It seems to me that their position should be an expansion of rather than a substitution for Liberation Theology.

A large segment of the volume is a critique of Marxism and liberation (based largely on Michael Novak's *Will it Liberate?*) in such areas as, dependency theory, the concept of alienation, the theory of surplus value, the doctrine of class struggle, and socialism. In many instances the arguments have much validity. But in a number of cases what appears is a critique of Marx and radical liberationism more than temperate and balanced liberation theologians, such as, Jon Sobrino and even Gustavo Gutierrez, who comprise the majority of the guild. Thus the theological system the authors critique would hardly be recognized by many in the enterprise as Liberation Theology.

With such extensive research as has gone into this work, it is surprising that W. D. Davies' seminal 1974 work, *The Gospel and the Land*, which describes in detail the territorial theology in Judaism and Early Christianity, is not even noted.

I believe that "Land" is an excellent category on which to theologize. But this book's proposal may not lead us to the promised land. I felt left instead in a wasteland.

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PEDRITO U. MAYNARD-REID

Beasley-Murray, George Raymond. *Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991. xii + 131 pp. Paperback, \$7.95.

Gospel of Life is the published version, in slightly expanded form, of the 1990 Payton Lectures delivered by the author at Fuller Theological Seminary. As such, the book is not an exhaustive study of the theology of

the Fourth Gospel, but it does provide a valuable sequel to Beasley-Murray's fruitful commentary on *John* in the Word Biblical Commentary Series. Readers familiar with the positions the author takes in the earlier volume will gain even greater benefit from the present work.

Gospel of Life is divided into an introduction and six chapters which treat, to use general terms, the topics of salvation, christology, the cross, the Holy Spirit, the sacraments, and the church according to the unique expressions of the Fourth Gospel. A British evangelical, Beasley-Murray approaches the Gospel as a theological history of Jesus which is best understood by someone who enters sympathetically into the Gospel author's portrayal of Jesus.

The first chapter is an outstanding introduction to the theme that Beasley-Murray considers central to the Fourth Gospel. While the Synoptic Gospels express salvation as entering into the Kingdom of God, the term which most clearly expresses salvation in the Fourth Gospel is "life," eternal in quality yet fully present. Beasley-Murray argues, however, that the present reality of life in the Fourth Gospel in no way compromises the historical line of eschatology; rather, John's vertical dualism has initiated the ongoing eschatological action of Christ.

The second chapter is equally outstanding. Beasley-Murray presents the theme of Christology through the Johannine concept of the "sending of the Son." The study of ancient messenger procedures and the Logos theme of the Prologue illuminate the Gospel's Christology. While these first two chapters are not groundbreaking contributions to the scholarly debate over Johannine theology, they are truly artful introductions to the central realities of the Gospel. The reader cannot help but feel more at home in the Fourth Gospel after perusing these thoughtful treatises.

The last four chapters of the book continue the textual survey approach, but with a bit less of the brilliance and insight characteristic of the book's opening chapters, although the fourth chapter (on the Holy Spirit) does stand out. The meaning of the cross for John is explicated with particular emphasis on the "lifting up" sayings. The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who continues and carries on the mission of Jesus after his lifting up. The sacraments are neither central nor absent from the Gospel, but are introduced in an indirect manner. Although ecclesiology is not a major theme of the Gospel, the figures of the vine, the flock, the bride, and the school of fish (John 21), along with the prayer of John 17, suggest the general shape of the church as envisioned by the Gospel's author.

Beasley-Murray's handling of the text could be called sober minimalism from a conservative perspective. He tends to avoid extreme interpretations, saying confidently what is clearly in the text and walking with care where competent scholarship is in disagreement, but always with a bias toward the position of the Gospel's author, wherever that can be determined with reasonable certainty.

Although many critical scholars would be uncomfortable with some of the positions taken in *Gospel of Life*, the book fills a need for a basic but serious study of the Fourth Gospel's theology that is thoroughly grounded in the text. The book offers, therefore, a solid foundation for deeper and broader study into the overwhelming mass of scholarly literature on the Fourth Gospel.

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Boice, James Montgomery. *Romans 1-4*. Romans. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 512 pp. \$29.95.

The author of this volume, James Montgomery Boice, has been senior pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia for almost a quarter of a century. He is known as an innovative and pioneering church pastor, radio speaker, and editor. In this expositional commentary on Romans 1-4, which is the first in a four-volume series on the entire book of Romans, Boice the preacher stands out.

The preface suggests that Boice is awed by the book of Romans and is impressed with the astonishing changes that it has wrought in the lives of people. He admits that his study has "instructed, moved, and even deeply stirred" him. He sees Christians as having the responsibility of sharing the gospel with others so they too can be transformed by it. He presents the comments of others who have themselves been impressed by Romans. Two such are Samuel Coleridge, who views Romans as "the profoundest book in existence," and Godet, who suggests that "every great spiritual revival in the church" is connected in some way with the book of Romans.

Boice's study also revealed to him how shallow study of Romans and the gospel has been. While most Christians would claim that they have mastered Romans 1-4, Boice thinks study has not yet begun. He perceives obsession with "man-centered, need-oriented teaching" which results in what could be labelled spiritual anemia. Against this background, one can perhaps understand why he has produced on four chapters a commentary that exceeds 500 pages.

His aim in this volume seems to be to help people rediscover Romans, underlining his pastoral and evangelistic concerns. Furthermore, a reading of the preface affirms that his book is made up of sermons and radio talks.

This volume, then, is an exposition of the gospel as it is presented by Paul in the first four chapters of Romans. It is a verse-by-verse exposition in sermon-like manner and units. Twenty-two chapters are devoted to Romans 1, twenty to Romans 3, eight to Romans 2, and nine to chapter 4. These fifty-nine chapters are divided into five parts. The first is introductory and among other issues explores Paul's obsession with Jesus