

Unquestionably, this is the definitive work on SDA attitudes toward Catholicism. Bruinsma's 72-page bibliography and 300 heavily footnoted pages demonstrate his scholarly thoroughness. He uses sources critically, sifting the biased or hagiographic from the objective and scholarly. Bruinsma raises questions about the paradox of how Rome can be declining from its "deadly wound" yet be dangerous (52); the irony of SDAs rejecting the Trinity as "popish error" but later accepting it as biblical (110); and their refusal either to dialogue with Catholic leaders or to become politically active against Catholicism (116). New light is shed on Ellen White, who was more concerned about saving Catholic souls than with attacking the hierarchy.

Regrettably, this outstanding book has its flaws. Its small, typewritten print; its use of Britishisms (spelling, midsentence parenthetical phrases, excessive exclamations, and—worst of all—"Burnt-over District"); and its odd style of paragraphing mar the reader's enjoyment. Poor proofreading has admitted dozens of mistakes—one-word "orphans," misspellings, poor punctuation. American readers know that the French and Indian War began in 1754 (not 1756); that the Fox sisters lived in Hydesville (not Rochester); and that Xenia is in Ohio.

Nonetheless, both church historians and laity will benefit from a close reading of this book. Someone should now study SDA attitudes toward Catholicism from 1965 to the present.

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Campbell, R. Alastair. *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994. xiv + 309 pp. \$43.95.

The author, Tutor in New Testament Theology at Spurgeon's College in London, traced "the elders" from the Old Testament through the life and institutions of Second Temple Judaism and the Graeco-Roman world of the first century before tackling the subject in the New Testament writings. He admits that for Ancient Israel "our sources say very little about the elders" (20), and "the period between the reforms of Nehemiah and the Maccabean uprising is a notoriously shadowy one so far as hard evidence goes" (28). Campbell says that the question, Who ran the ancient synagogues? is "a hard question to answer," "partly due to the fragmentary nature of our evidence" (45); therefore the author and the reader have to be cautious about their conclusions.

From the reading of Jewish sources the author concludes that the "elders are senior men of the community, heads of the leading families within it, who as such exercise an authority that is informal, representative and collective . . . 'The elders' does not so much denote an office as

connote prestige" (65). Therefore, we should not look at the synagogue as the forerunner of the eldership.

A brief survey of selected Graeco-Roman sources leads the author to conclude that "in most places at most times power lay with those born to wealthy families, whose senior members were leaders in the state, city or rural community" (95). Therefore, he concludes, the elders owed "their position to seniority relative to others within the household" (96).

In discussing the New Testament references, the author adopts the position that not all letters attributed to Paul are his. He doubts that Colossians and Ephesians are Pauline (97) and he denies that the Pastorals were written by Paul (176ff.). He opines that "the historical reliability of Acts is a matter of controversy" (141), and appears not to consider the participation of the Holy Spirit in the writing of some of the books of the Bible (146-148).

In spite of these limitations, there are some positive points in his presentation. For example, his suggestion that the house-churches in Jerusalem were similar to the Pauline household churches seems plausible. He then infers, "if the earliest Christians met in homes, then they also had leaders at the household level, leaders provided by the household structure itself" (153). These leaders would be called the *episkopoi* or "overseers," instead of "the elders" (160). When in one area the number of house churches would increase, it would seem natural to have their leaders (*episkopoi*) meet to coordinate actions, and be referred to as "the elders." In this way, "the elders" would be the natural leaders *kat' oikon*, and some of them might be appointed as leaders *kat' ekklesian* (171).

The author proposes that the Pastoral Epistles were "written, not to effect an amalgamation of overseers and elders, but to legitimate the authority of the new overseer" as a third stage (196), the *episkopos* (singular), bishop of a city or *kata polin* (206).

With this background, the author looks at postapostolic writings, such as 1 Clement, Ignatius, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Didache*, and finds that the references to the elders or presbyters, overseers, and bishops seem to fit his paradigm. The ascendancy of the *monepiskopos*, or sole bishop, becomes increasingly clear, amalgamated with the office of *sacerdos* (priest), which is first given to the bishop from the beginning of the 3rd century, and later used for the presbyters, the bishop's delegates, since the 4th century (231).

Since our context is different from the early Christian times, "it is difficult to imagine how the conclusions of this study could be straightforwardly translated into contemporary practice" (254). But he suggests that the study can still speak to our times with regards to the ordination of women and "the common understanding of the ministry, as exemplified by the Lima report of the World Council of Churches" (255).

The author concludes with two well-taken points: first, in calling their leaders overseers or elders, the churches implied that the personal qualities required of those who served as overseers. Second, since "the elders" is a collective title, it points to the "collegial character of Christian oversight . . . none should exercise that oversight without consulting other leaders, as well as the people under their care" (260).

The *Works Cited* section (261-291) does not follow regular bibliographic style, though it identifies the sources clearly enough. There follows an Index of Modern Authors, and an Index to the Scriptures, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Other Jewish Writings, and Dead Sea Scrolls.

Very few misspellings were noted, as we have come to expect from this publisher, and most of them are in the titles of German books.

All in all, Campbell's work is thought-provoking, and even if we cannot support all of his conclusions, it will be a stimulating book for anyone interested in the development of the eldership in the Christian church.

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Cate, Robert L. *An Introduction to the History Books of the Old Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994. 128 pp. \$12.99.

Because Old Testament historical books deserve their own introductory discussions, Cate's attempt to give due attention to this part of the Old Testament should be welcomed.

After a general introduction to Old Testament history writing, its purpose and study, Cate discusses each of the twelve historical books. The two-part books, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah, are taken together. Each section of this main body consists of following basic parts: glossary, place in canon, date and authorship, organization of the book, summary of contents, message, and questions for reflection and review. In addition, Cate offers brief character studies of Joshua, Ruth, Samuel, Saul, David, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. Two chronological charts and three maps are included. Cate rounds out his book with a chapter on the message of the history books and a Scripture index.

Cate's book is an easy-to-understand and clearly written introduction to the Old Testament historical books. The glossaries and the review questions are helpful for beginning students and autodidacts in the area of Old Testament historical books, though the editorial arrangement of the glossaries takes too much space. Especially commendable are the rather general character descriptions of important individuals, which is a new feature in biblical introductions. They should be explored in more detail.