

of voices and extend the missiological dialogue beyond *Transforming Mission's* mostly Western and male partners. Evangelical readers will also notice that while Catholic voices (especially of the latter part of the century) and ecumenical leaders and texts are well represented, evangelical contributions such as the text of the Lausanne Covenant or the work of the continuation committees, although mentioned in some introductions, are not included. The Wheaton Declaration is cited but important evangelical voices such as those of Ralph Winter and John Stott are not mentioned. Thomas may have felt that evangelical landmark documents are readily available in Scherer and Beavan's 2-volume *New Directions in Missions and Evangelization* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992, 1994). Evangelical authors with wider ecumenical influence such as Roland Allen, John Mott, Orlando Costas, Charles Kraft, and Donald McGavran have been included. Texts representing some African independent church leaders are cited, but there is little from the charismatic and Pentecostal wings of the church. This selective touch shows that Thomas has not only been a capable editor but an interpreter of the history and theology of mission with his own perspective.

Despite these criticisms *Classic Texts* should be seen as an outstanding contribution and important reference work in any library of mission. It will be useful in the classroom as a companion volume to *Transforming Mission* or as a sourcebook in its own right for a variety of courses in different theological disciplines. It should also prove of enormous value to denominational leaders and directors of mission agencies as they struggle with the issues of the church in mission.

In short, no serious student of mission can afford to ignore this valuable volume which brings together texts not easily located in any other work.

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Witherington, Ben. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995. xx + 492 pp. \$34.99.

Dr. Witherington, noted for *Women in the Earliest Churches*, *Jesus the Sage*, and *Jesus, Paul, and the End of the World*, offers a unique and invaluable commentary on the Corinthian correspondence. This work brings together insights from rhetorical, social-scientific, and cultural-anthropological criticism under one cover with the fruits of the more traditional disciplines. As such, this book is a welcome resource for pastors and students who need to become acquainted with the fruits of these burgeoning disciplines—particularly with regard to the Corinthian letters, which have received so much attention in this regard from scholars such as E. A. Judge, W. A. Meeks, G. Theissen, M. M. Mitchell, and S. K. Stowers. The specialist will also appreciate Witherington's lively interaction with these and other scholars (especially his critique of Wire and Castelli).

While recent commentaries on 1 and 2 Corinthians have not ignored the importance of social-scientific and rhetorical criticism, Witherington thrusts these disciplines to the fore, providing the reader with a thorough grounding in the

context of these letters. This is accomplished through a new form for the commentary genre. First, Witherington focuses primarily on the rhetorical unit rather than on each individual verse in isolation. This allows the reader to see more clearly the developing rhetorical argument and strategy—the forest through the trees, so to speak—without sacrificing, however, discussion of important or misunderstood terms and references. Second, the commentary is interspersed with sections called “A Closer Look,” which succinctly provide essential background material for the section being investigated. The reader is thus afforded windows into pagan views of salvation, patronage in the ancient world, slavery, Greco-Roman prophecy, hardship catalogs in Stoic literature, and the like. Witherington includes a wealth of Greco-Roman comparative literature, bringing the reader into direct and frequent contact with Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, and the rhetorical handbooks.

Based on his observations of cultural norms and rhetorical *topoi* used in the letters, Witherington concludes that the Corinthians’ primary difficulty arises from their custom of evaluating their apostles by the standards of worldly orators and Sophists. He shows that anti-Sophistic rhetoric pervades 1 Corinthians 1 through 4, where the Corinthians themselves weigh Apollos over against Paul, as well as all of 2 Corinthians, where rival preachers have played up to the Corinthians’ preferences. A second difficulty unifying the correspondence is Paul’s refusal of patronage from Corinthian householders. He refuses to accept payment for his preaching, since God through Paul is the patron of the community. Such refusal amounts to an insult, and leads to Paul’s having to defend himself against all the usual enmity *topoi*—insincerity, deviousness, and general mudslinging. Throughout, Witherington shows that the Corinthians’ misunderstandings were not the result of malice or moral defect, but rather were quite natural given their primary socialization in Greco-Roman culture and norms.

Witherington presents a strong argument for the unity of 2 Corinthians, resting his case on rhetorical conventions and analogies from other speeches. The need to establish rapport and *ethos* in his audience’s eyes account for the conciliatory tone of 1:1-2:13, which he correctly identifies as an *insinuatio*. While I differ in detail with his rhetorical analysis of this passage, I support his interpretation of the rhetorical exigency which necessitates this indirect approach to the main issue. Witherington reads 6:14-7:1 not as an interpolation but as a digression, calling the Corinthians to abstain from pagan feasts (recalling 1 Cor 10:14-21). Here I would suggest that the passage is more integral to the appeal than Witherington, following Fee, allows. He correctly notes that Paul must simultaneously convince the believers to dissociate themselves from the rival preachers—the messengers of Satan (11:15)—and reestablish his own authority. Chapter 6:11-7:4 appears admirably to address both goals in a rhetorically adept manner, a position Furnish has argued and I have supported. The emphasis on “fellowship” and “partnership” in 6:14-7:1 would perhaps better apply to the main “partnership” to be renounced—that with the rival apostles. Such a position would consequently strengthen Witherington’s proposal of unity of the whole, placing in the heart of the letter a central appeal for both dissociation from rivals and association with Paul, God’s true ambassador. Finally, Witherington’s arguments for connecting chapters 10-13 to 1-9 are the most compelling so far to be advanced

on this difficult question.

With regard to patronage relations, which I agree are of central importance to Paul's difficulties with the Corinthians, I believe Paul's role might be further clarified through the use of "broker" terminology. That is, precisely on the basis of bringing the Corinthians into the favor of his own Patron (God), he has become the Corinthians' patron, and deserves the respect and honor which accompany that role. In the Greco-Roman context, this respect derives not solely from being God's agent (the *shaliach*, clearly Paul's *self*-understanding from his Jewish background), but also God's "broker" (or mediator)—one whose benefaction is access to a great patron.

Witherington is commendably sensitive to honor and shame as primary values in the ancient Mediterranean world, but appears in his "closer look" section on honor to have swallowed too much of Malina's model. For example, Malina lays heavy stress on the agonistic nature of competition for honor—one person wins honor from another's loss. But Witherington elsewhere even quotes Plutarch's dictum that is "odious and vulgar" to "win applause from the humiliation of another" or to "cause another's disgrace to win glory for oneself," which clearly counts against Malina's one-sided emphasis on competition. This is not so much a criticism of Witherington as of his sources, and I would add that only his "closer look" is affected. His own work with the text is so well grounded in classical authors that the failings of those dependent on modern cultural-anthropological studies do not harm his work. I would also suggest that "shame" (as *aidōs*) is not strictly a woman's value, for persons of either gender are concerned about reputation. This "shame" rather manifests itself in different arenas (e.g., virginity for a woman, courage for a man). Here Witherington rightly notes that women can indeed aspire to honor not only through modesty but also through benefaction, and that the *ekklēsia* opens up still other avenues for women to achieve honor.

On balance, this is a very fine commentary and essential reading for any study of or sermon on the Corinthian letters. Pastors and seminarians will especially appreciate the very thoughtful hermeneutical suggestions appearing in concluding paragraphs or, more often, in footnotes, which challenge us in the church to weigh our ministers and ourselves by God's standards rather than by worldly criteria, and to examine how we, like the Corinthians, continue to function with the mindset of our society rather than the mind of Christ.

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Zurcher, Jean. *La Perfection chrétienne*. Lausanne: Editions Belles Rivières, 1993.
118 pp. n.p.

In this revision of an earlier writing, the author, a well-known Seventh-day Adventist educator and administrator, attempts to define the meaning of the word *perfection* primarily for ministers and laypeople of his church. First he considers the biblical evidence and then he devotes his attention to the concept in the writings of Ellen White.