

"There can be no doubt", he says, "that intrasystemic consistency is a quality which is to be admired. However, it is perfectly possible to have an entirely coherent system which has no meaningful relation to the real world" (153). His critique highlights the inadequacies of postliberalism's commitment to extralinguistic and extrasystemic realities.

The chapter on postmodernism begins with a good assessment of the impacts of the Enlightenment and modernity on evangelicalism and then follows with a short critique of postmodernism. Although accurate in his criticism, McGrath could have elaborated longer on the vulnerabilities of postmodern ideology. He limits himself to issues of truth, openness and tolerance in the writings of Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard, and to postmodernism's inconsistency to innocently declare itself 'true'.

In the last chapter, McGrath addresses religious pluralism and its attempts at reducing religious experiences to universal categories. He spurns such attempts as reflecting western cultural biases. He believes that discussions "about religious pluralism have been seriously hindered by a well-meaning but ultimately spurious mindset which . . . suppresses or evades the differences between faiths in order to construct some artificial theory which accounts for commonalities" (215). McGrath asserts that evangelicalism can make a contribution to religious dialogue by first acknowledging honestly some fundamental differences between religions and then appealing to the Augustinian religious impulse in all humans as a point of convergence between religions. Christianity has particularities to contribute to this dialogue in its understanding of God as revealed in Jesus Christ through Scripture which should be respected with integrity.

Thus, based on his understanding of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture, McGrath affirms that evangelicalism is internally coherent and is an intellectual approach capable of shaping and renewing the life of the Christian church in spite of the challenges posed by its contemporary rivals. His book is a positive and thoughtful contribution to the current discussion on the place of truth in evangelicalism and western society. In spite of some shortfalls regarding the authority of Scripture in relation to hermeneutics, *A Passion for Truth* will, I believe, encourage confidence in the intellectual integrity and relevance of the gospel message.

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Naden, Roy C. *The Lamb among the Beasts*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996. 300 pp. Cloth, \$23.99.

Probably the greatest difficulty in studying the Book of Revelation is to draw out personal and practical implications for everyday life. The author's contribution towards this goal is noticeable. Dr. Roy C. Naden is a gifted Australian who has successfully worked in many arenas: pastor, evangelist, musician, television producer, university professor, author, and a genuine friend to his many students. In each of these vocations he has challenged conventional wisdom, and sought to communicate new paradigms of thought for both spiritual and secular audiences. Such a diverse background may help to explain his clear and

easy style in *The Lamb among the Beasts*.

At the beginning the author names the audience for which the book is written. It is for "college students and lay people who have an interest in apocalyptic writing" (12). Thus, Naden does not waste readers' time with extreme interpretations, nor immerse them in elaborate discussions understood only by trained theologians. Rather in each chapter he comes swiftly to John's main focus: Jesus the Lamb the hope of the world.

Two characteristics mark this work. First, it is Christ-centered. You will read that Revelation is not primarily about beasts, dragons, and false prophets. They are to be kept in the background. In the foreground we see the Lamb, the champion of His people who promises and produces vindication for them. In a world of war and hopelessness, this commentary brings to light John's message of hope. With unusual clarity the reader is shown Jesus, thus the face of Christ, not antichrist is the one this commentary imprints on our minds.

In chapter 1 the resurrected Jesus promises "I will return"; chapters 2 and 3 portray Jesus supporting His churches; He is worshiped by all heaven in chapters 4 and 5, proclaimed in chapter 6, attacked by Satan in 8, 9 and 12, proclaimed by the church in chapter 11. In chapter 13 Jesus is mimicked in a parade of satanic opposition; in chapter 14 He commissions the church; in chapters 15-18 He judges Babylon; and chapters 19-21 picture Him victorious with his bride, the redeemed, in heaven forever.

A second defining characteristic of this commentary is its clear set of five interpretive principles from "the historicist point of view" (11). The first of these five is "that the most of what we read is couched in symbols and is not meant to be understood literally." (49). Thus, references to historical events and people are to be understood as symbolic of worldwide issues and events. Another concerns the endless numerals that are used as symbols of predictable qualities. The most important clues to the meaning of the chapters are taken from the Olivet sermon of Matthew 24-25, and from the OT Book of Daniel.

I offer this one criticism: 300 pages is hardly sufficient to encompass the complex message of the Apocalypse. Although the treatment is comprehensive, one sometimes feels the author is being squeezed for space. One approach which is particularly helpful, is that in the most difficult passages, such as the Plagues and the Millennium, Naden sets out more than one possible interpretation, gives the strengths and shortcomings of each and leaves it to the reader to take a position. This degree of openness not only allows, it invites the reader to be a student, and to prayerfully evaluate the meaning of the text personally.

The Lamb among the Beasts has the qualities to ensure it will enjoy a long and productive life. It presents the cream of the author's theological understanding, balanced with pastoral and evangelistic concerns, "to help us see and hear Jesus and in this way to find security in Him." I highly recommend this work, especially to those who have, for various reasons, lost sight of what is the Book of Revelation all about.