

he lists publications which may be helpful and gives examples of academics, in a variety of fields, who have successfully employed Christian perspectives to add breadth and depth to their work.

Much has been written in recent years about the failure of the educational establishment to generate an intellectual center which defines meaning and purpose and moral value. *Outrageous* differs from most of these in that having sharply voiced this concern, it gets down to the business of providing suggestions, both intellectual and practical, for a positive approach. Marsden seeks a way forward by promoting understanding of why things have come to be as they are, and thus also promotes approaches that are sensitive and appropriate to the contemporary ethos.

As indicated, the book is addressed to Christian scholars in mainline academia and to faculties in church-sponsored institutions who are confronted by pressures, both practical and intellectual, as well as internal and external, to conform to the dominant academic ethos. The influence of this study may very well be greatest in the encouragement it provides to the latter. Marsden has rendered the Christian academic community an enormous service, and this study should be a highly useful resource for faculty discussion, colloquiums on the integration of faith and learning, and the conscious maintenance of a Christian worldview. It should be in all university libraries as well as those of denominational education advisory boards.

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RUSSELL STAPLES

Murphy, Roland E., and Elizabeth Huwiler. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs*, New International Bible Commentary, vol. 12. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999. xv + 312 pp. Paperback, \$11.95.

This volume consists of two independent commentaries: Murphy on Proverbs and Huwiler on Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. Thus there is some redundancy. For example, both authors introduce Wisdom literature in general before introducing their particular wisdom texts. Both describe in detail the many contradictions in their texts. The reader might wish they had read each other on this topic, for much of the "problem" of contradictions in Ecclesiastes evaporates when seen in light of the rhetorical method of Proverbs.

These commentaries are intended to bring the biblical text in touch with modern lives. However, while the target audience reads the Bible for religious content, Murphy does not seem completely comfortable writing a commentary for someone "who is also religiously inclined" (7). He is not quite prepared to assist readers who take more than an academic interest in the text. Though Murphy's comments are often insightful and helpful, they also require more of the lay reader than most other works in this series. These commentaries are not extensively annotated, so the scholar is advised to look elsewhere for detailed analysis and references.

While scholarly analysis is kept as simple as possible, it is in the more academic portions of the commentary that Murphy is in his element. Murphy understands the biblical Wisdom texts and their traditions to be postexilic, even though many of the parallels in surrounding cultures are far older. There are undiscussed assumptions behind this conclusion. Murphy is probably skeptical about the survival of both

written and oral traditions from the preexilic period and finds it safest to assume no more textual history than absolutely necessary. This methodological presupposition is not explicit and will escape most readers of the commentary.

Like Murphy, Huwiler is most comfortable with a relatively late date for the text of Ecclesiastes. Though Huwiler does not wish to go against the grain of scholarship and claim a pre-Hellenistic provenance for Ecclesiastes, she makes it clear that similar materials had been produced for centuries in Egypt and Mesopotamia. She also shows parallels between Ecclesiastes and Greek literature, indicating some support for a Hellenistic date. However, some of these parallels are already represented in earlier Egyptian and Akkadian writings.

Although the method of the author of Ecclesiastes is described in some detail, Huwiler does not point out the unusual quality of this work, namely, that the writer is an experimenter and critic of tradition. In keeping with the commentary's expected audience, Huwiler does relate the author's message to modern thought and popular culture, including references to pop music and pop philosophy. At no point does she seriously question the appropriateness of Ecclesiastes as Scripture. She assumes the book to be relevant and gleans abundant relevance for the modern worshiper.

On the Song of Songs, Huwiler is cautious and comes to no firm conclusions, either about the ancient provenance of the Song or its modern meaning in the church. She notes several features of the poem that are special within the context of Scripture: It treats sexuality as a self-standing subject and it has the female speaking from her own vantage point. One might conclude that the purpose of this text is to balance the treatment of human sexuality found through most of the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. But Huwiler does not succeed in explaining the Song of Songs as part of its present religious context, i.e., the Bible. The great unanswered question remains: What is this book doing here in the Bible?

As a whole, this commentary volume is useful but uneven. As a work on wisdom literature it contrasts two books and two commentators. As two commentaries in one volume it contains only the continuity that one would expect to find between separate commentaries in the same series.

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Neyrey, Jerome H. *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998. viii + 287 pp. Paperback, \$26.00.

Neyrey applies the model of honor and shame as pivotal Mediterranean values to two important aspects of the Gospel according to Matthew. After a brief introduction to how honor and dishonor are represented, attained, and ascribed in the ancient Mediterranean region (in which he also defends the use of the term "Mediterranean" as a meaningful cultural category, an obvious response to critics), Neyrey first shows how Matthew presents aspects of Jesus' life that would be readily understood as claims about Jesus' honor rating. A particular strength of this work (one that also emerges in his volume, *Portraits of Paul*, coauthored with B. J. Malina) is Neyrey's reliance on classical rhetoricians as native informants about how a person's honor was perceived and evaluated. This step is a marked