

affinities shared between them. He presents the evidence of the following versions: the Greek, the Aramaic, the Ethiopic, the Coptic, and the Latin. Herein is one of the chief values of this book: it makes available in a convenient location the essential textual data for evaluating the Syriac variants in these chapters of Joshua.

Another strength of this book is its careful sifting of the sometimes-difficult textual evidence for Joshua. Erbes demonstrates a judicious balance and fair handling of the materials as he goes about his text-critical assignment. When the evidence is clear he draws out the conclusions that are warranted. When the evidence is not convincingly clear in terms of the conclusions that it points to, he shows appropriate restraint. Although his resolution of problem passages is not equally persuasive in every case due to the limitations of the available evidence, his presentation of the data allows the reader to reach his or her own conclusions.

The book has been executed with considerable care. Typographical errors, whether in English or in one of the ancient languages cited throughout the book, are relatively few and far between. Given the complexity of the multilingual content of the book, the level of accuracy that has been reached is commendable.

I have only two concerns to express. First, the system of abbreviations utilized throughout the book is extremely complicated. This, along with the multilingual presentation of ancient texts, may prove to be a deterrent for many readers. This difficulty probably cannot be avoided entirely, but if there were some way to simplify the presentation this would be highly desirable. Second, there is a tendency to use terminology of dependence that is actually anachronistic when describing the relationship of the Syriac version to the Masoretic text. For example, in many places the author speaks of the Peshitta as "following" or being "based on" or being "a direct translation from" (or some similar expression) the Masoretic text. But an earlier text does not "follow" a later one. To say so is to invert the logical sequence. It would be preferable instead to speak of agreement or congruence with the MT rather than to speak of dependence upon it. In fact, Erbes often avoids this problem, describing the Peshitta as agreeing with "the equivalent of" the Masoretic text. But a more consistent use of suitable terminology is desirable.

These are relatively minor points, and they should not detract from the fact that this is an excellent textual treatment of these five chapters of Joshua. We look forward to the author's discussion of the remaining portions of the book of Joshua, a task that may require yet another three volumes!

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Green, Joel B. *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. xcii + 928 pp. Hardcover, \$50.00.

With the recent publication of several exhaustive commentaries on Luke, one might be tempted to not make another investment of time and money for yet another lengthy commentary on the same book. Such a decision, in this case, would be a mistake for unlike most Lukan commentaries, Green's commentary approaches Luke from a literary perspective while "showing very little concern for traditional form-critical and redaction-critical issues" (viii). It is this literary

perspective that provides many fresh insights into Luke thus making Green's commentary well worth the investment for his primary audience of "the working pastor and teacher" (viii). This commentary replaces Norval Geldenhuys commentary in the original NICNT series.

After an impressive sixty-seven page bibliography, Green, (currently professor of NT Interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary) identifies, explains, and defends his methodology of narrative criticism in the introduction. The specific genre of Luke is identified as ancient historiography as opposed to "Greco-Roman biography" (5). On this basis, the reader should expect "a narrative in which recent history is given prominence, issues of both causation and teleology are accorded privilege, and determined research is placed in the service of persuasive and engaging instruction" (6). Green's literary perspective leads him to see a narrative unity in Luke-Acts with the single purpose of bringing "salvation in all of its fullness to all people" (9). As one might expect, this same literary perspective leads Green to give little consideration to authorship issues, and no consideration of either Lukan sources or the date of its composition. The relatively brief nature of the basic introductory issues seems to demonstrate that Green's concern is clearly to deal with the text as we have it today, and not to get side-tracked in theological speculation which is deemed irrelevant.

The commentary divides Luke into eight major sections. Each major section begins with an extensive discussion of the linking elements between the previous section and the one under discussion. Spread throughout the commentary are a total of twelve "interpretive asides" (xi) which deal more specifically and extensively with topics such as: "The Literary Structure of the Birth Narrative," "The Structure and Role of Mary's Song," "The Structure and Role of Zechariah's Song," and "The Birth of Jesus in Literary and Social Perspective," to only mention a few. Desiring to use a text "that is readily available and widely used in churches" (x), Green's commentary follows the translation of the NRSV.

The real strength of Green's commentary lies in his ability to constantly relate the individual parts of specific events in Luke to the larger overall literary picture of the entire Gospel. He does this with impressive skill throughout his discussion of the ministry of Jesus; even in the midst of discussing the crucifixion, Green points out the numerous motifs that connect it with events going all the way back to the birth narrative. Also helpful, are Green's lucid explanations of various cultural customs and issues (Graeco-Roman marriage customs, family relationships, and first-century table etiquette), which open up further insights into the meaning of the text. Combining these strengths with a very readable explanation of the texts (discussion of all Greek words and concepts are only found in the footnotes) and thirty-eight pages of scriptural index (including every reference in Luke) along with a comprehensive subject index make the material both readable and assessable for pastor or teacher.

If there is any shortfall to Green's commentary it is only those deficiencies which are inherent in the nature of literary criticism itself. Historical difficulties, such as those surrounding the census in Luke 2:1-7, are seen as insignificant to the literary meaning of the text and are therefore not dealt with. Along this same line, problematic issues between Luke and the other Synoptic Gospels are also not mentioned.

Green's commentary would make an important addition to the library of any pastor or teacher who is interested in preaching or teaching from Luke's Gospel. His work is well written, thorough, and coherent. However, due to some of the weaknesses associated with literary criticism, one should also supplement Green's commentary with a more detailed work like Bock's two-volume work (BECNT, 1994, 1996), which deals with the historical and synoptic issues not covered in Green.

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Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. 288 pp. Paper, \$16.99.

Aubrey Malphurs is president of Vision Ministries International, an organization that assists churches with training and consulting on issues such as leadership, vision, church planting, and church renewal. He is perhaps best known, however, for the books he has written on these same topics, which include such titles as *The Dynamics of Pastoral Leadership*, *Planting Growing Churches for the Twenty-first Century*, and *Values-Driven Leadership*. Malphurs's *Advanced Strategic Planning* is of the same genre as his earlier works.

Malphurs contends that the church in North America is like a ship without a rudder, being blown about by the winds of cultural upheaval and change. His purpose in writing *Advanced Strategic Planning* is to provide church leaders with a good strategic planning process so they can better "think through the core issues of ministry and then implement their conclusions" (9). For Malphurs, this strategic planning process is "the necessary rudder that will biblically and thoughtfully guide the church through these and future times of unprecedented, convoluted change" (10).

Malphurs divides *Advanced Strategic Planning* into two major sections. First, he provides a preplanning checklist for leaders who are serious about the strategic planning process. He also includes a one-chapter primer on organizational development in which he focuses on the concept of the "sigmoid" (S-shaped) curve. Essentially, the sigmoid curve is an S-shaped line graph that represents the life cycle of organisms, civilizations, and organizations—including, Malphurs would say—the church. This curve depicts how things begin, grow rapidly, plateau, decline, and then die. Instead of simply assuming that the church is doomed, however, Malphurs argues that the strategic planning process he proposes will enable the church to start new, successful S-curves and thus stave off death (46).

The remainder of the book (section 2) is composed of nine chapters in which Malphurs takes his readers through a nine-step strategic planning process. These nine steps (and the basic question to be asked at each step) are as follows: (1) ministry analysis (What kind of church are we?), (2) values discovery and development (Why do we do what we do?), (3) mission development (What are we supposed to be doing?), (4) environmental scan (What's going on out there?), (5) vision development (What kind of church would we like to be?), (6) strategy development (How will we get to where we want to be?), (7) strategy implementation (Where do we begin, when, and with whom?), (8) preparation for ministry contingencies (How will we handle surprises?), (9) ministry evaluation (How are we doing?).

Malphurs concludes with a series of appendices which contain sample vision,