

guarded. On the one hand, he affirms that her ministry had a lasting impact upon the church in providing both doctrinal influence and an ideological framework for the church's mission, while, on the other hand, he seems to hold that such an influence was historically conditioned by her nineteenth-century heritage. I believe he is right in saying that Ellen White upheld a dialectical approach to continuity and change in Adventist teaching: changes to the fundamental doctrines tended to jeopardize the church's self-understanding while revisions to secondary teachings would not constitute a threat (239-240). Furthermore, I agree that she supported the idea that "doctrinal development was first and foremost a process in which old truths were rediscovered and restored to the church" and that such truths may need to be reinterpreted or recontextualized for a new generation (241-242). However, I feel uncomfortable with the general thrust of Pöhler's conclusion in this chapter. I somehow doubt that Ellen White would be open to such an unrestrained revisionist model of doctrinal change as he seems to imply.

In his conclusion, Pöhler argues that the best approach to doctrinal development in Adventism appears to be a dynamic restorationist model of faithfulness to the Bible (249). This approach, he thinks, will help the church accept and deal positively with its growing theological/doctrinal pluralism without further endangering its unity. Seventh-day Adventists who wish to reinterpret fundamental beliefs will be pleased with this proposed model; others will find the book's conclusions indecisive and tentative. The discussion regarding continuity and change in Adventist teaching is certainly not over.

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Webb, William J. *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001. 301 pp. Paper, \$24.99.

This book is about developing church policy in relationship to the biblical text. Webb first introduces the basic questions of the Christian and culture. The second section examines biblical authority in terms of the prominence and trajectory of themes through the Scriptures. Over half of the book details his criteria for the authority of scriptural themes. Webb finds some themes "persuasive" and others "inconclusive" based on such criteria as whether there is a purpose statement in the text or whether it is grounded in Creation or the Fall. In general, the NT has greater authority than the OT. In fact, "Appeal to the OT" is the title of one section in the chapter "Inconclusive Criteria." The emphasis of this section is on the inconsistent manner in which NT texts appropriate OT statements, but there also is a generalized preference for NT authority.

The third section examines the use of "Extrascriptural Criteria." These criteria are cultural values and scientific and social-scientific evidence. This section is a scant thirty-five pages, followed by a ten-page conclusion. There are four appendices, three of them examining Paul's statements on women in the church. There is also a bibliography and indices.

Slaves, women, and homosexuals are the case studies which Webb uses to explore his methodology. The superficial similarity to *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women* by Willard Swartley is not accidental, but Webb is prescriptive where

Swartley is descriptive. In spite of Webb's title, the attention paid to slavery and homosexuality is marginal. The book is about women and their roles in the church and society. All other topics are foils for Webb's interest in gender issues.

In spite of Webb's interest in gender issues, he misses some rather large targets. He notes that the biblical emphasis on procreation and disdain for singleness may be dismissed because church consensus has found value in singleness and does not require sexual reproduction for Christian fulfillment (124-126). But he seems unaware that these reproduction values are limited to the OT and that the NT nowhere connects sexuality with reproduction or promotes reproduction even among the married members of the church. The dramatic shift in reproductive values between the Testaments should have been a strong point in his analysis. Likewise, he ignores the significant gender distinction between Matt 5:31-32 and 19:3-12. The first text explores the divorce issue through the woman, the second through the man. The distinction should carry some relevance in his study which focuses strongly on the issues of women in the church.

Webb's method mostly works from predetermined conclusions. The outcome is fixed and is merely tangential to any real biblical authority. Though Sabbath and vegetarianism are recognized as values stemming from Creation, the consensus of Christianity is to ignore or modify these practices, and Webb decides that consensus should determine church policy (124-126). Likewise, the food restrictions of Acts 15:20 may be ignored because Webb found them to be "culturally relative," even though he finds nothing in the text which indicates cultural relativity. When Christianity confronts culture, he grounds the Christian part of the confrontation in tradition with a façade of scriptural authority.

His comments on footwashing (John 13) are telling. Even though he finds the continuity of the OT, Jesus, and Paul "impressive," he states that "this continuity in tradition simply clouds the issue of cultural assessment" (204). He finds counter-cultural significance in the role reversal, for the rabbi (Jesus) washed the feet of the disciples, but fails to find continuity in modern churches. However, in several modern churches prelates wash the feet of paupers or church members wash the feet of their peers. Even tradition does not seem to impact Webb, unless it is his tradition.

Webb's method has much to recommend it, but not perhaps the way he applies it. It is well to pay attention to the ingredients that we use when determining how biblical authority will translate into church policy. Webb has provided a systematic set of questions, which we may ask of the text and ourselves when we seek to understand how biblical authority (and, e.g., authority of tradition, culture, science) shapes our church policies. But should we use this analysis to construct defenses for predetermined policies (Webb's method) or to critique our policies and ask openly whether we are satisfied with how we have used the Bible as an authority?

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Winter, Bruce W. *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. xx + 344 pp. Paper, \$28.00.

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