

extrabiblical literature tends to focus on the god's change of heart before returning to his or her shrine, the Israelite account emphasizes that God would change the hearts of the people (142).

Though Block provides readers with a valuable tool for better understanding Israel's religion against its ANE backdrop, a few problems need to be addressed. As he recognizes, he employs a deductive approach. He formulates questions and then searches "for answers from whatever source" (114). In this quest for answers, he does not pay enough attention to the historical contexts of the ANE sources and seems to make generalizations on the basis of scanty evidence. Thus, in order to reconstruct the ANE theology, he gathers data originating from different historical periods, genres, and cultures. The legitimacy of this eclectic approach is doubtful, and the overall picture seems to be an abstraction made possible by a kind of proof-text approach.

Overall, the book gives the impression that it is an apologia emphasizing the superiority of Israel's religion against its Ancient Near Eastern counterparts. This may not sound politically correct in this postmodern age of pluralism and relativism, in which many scholars tend to place every cultural phenomenon on the same ethical and moral level and to avoid any value judgments on cultures or customs. However, once it is understood that the author is an evangelical, who takes for granted the reliability of the biblical records and accepts the value judgments made by the Bible writers themselves regarding their surrounding cultures, his approach becomes understandable.

Despite some methodological deficiencies, this work provides a useful contribution to ANE theology in general. Aspects of detail to be commended include the extensive footnotes and a selected and updated bibliography, which provide additional information about significant details and sources. Indices of Scripture, extrabiblical materials, authors, and subjects also make this work helpful for consultation on specific topics. The publishers are to be commended for the fine quality of printing and exclusion of typographical errors.

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ELIAS BRASIL DE SOUZA

Conn, Harvie M., and Manuel Ortiz. *Urban Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001. 527 pp. \$29.99.

At the time of his death, in 1999, Harvie Conn was emeritus professor of missions at Westminster Theological Seminary. He had edited the journal *Urban Mission* for ten years, and had authored two other books, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* and *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds*. Harvie was one of the foremost proponents of and authority on urban mission. Manuel Ortiz, coauthor and professor of ministry and urban mission, authored *The Hispanic Challenge* and *One New People* published by InterVarsity.

Conn was a frequent speaker at professional meetings and a serious proponent of socially responsible mission. This book represents his wealth of experience in doing and teaching. Manuel Ortiz speaks of his willingness to submit himself to Conn's demands of time and style, and, upon the death of Conn, completed the final chapters.

Urban mission has never been highly popular among conservative Christians,

who have struggled with an antiurban bias that views cities with fear and suspicion. It is important to remember, however, that many of the writers of Scripture lived in urban centers. Moses was raised in urban Egypt. David created the urban reality of Jerusalem, where most of the other prophets lived and wrote. Daniel and Ezekiel were thoroughly urban as were Ezra and Nehemiah. Jesus lived and ministered in largely urban Galilee, Paul planted urban churches and John wrote the book of Revelation to seven urban churches. The authors wrote out of the conviction that God desires the church to address the serious and forgotten needs of the cities with biblically consistent principles and strategies.

Conn and Ortiz begin (chaps. 1-3) by placing biblical principles and strategies within a proper historical context by developing a broad, global perspective on urban history and demographics.

The second section of the book examines God's historical urban concerns. These chapters (4-7) address the historic arguments of cities as evil and as the means of reflecting God's missionary purpose. Chapters 5 and 6 are a survey that seems directed toward the typically rural, village-oriented conservative Christian, helping this person to understand that the Bible is clearly urban in its style and orientation. In the mind of the reviewer, the material on the OT deserves more attention than it receives. In chapter 7 the authors make a good case for the Christian transformation of cities through the practice of *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*.

Part 3 of the book seeks to achieve an understanding of what is meant by the terms "city," "urban," and "urbanism"; the place of religion in the city; and the city as a power factor and geographical center, related to its immediate and global environments. Chapter 8 is particularly useful as it looks at the city as both a place and a process, while chapter 9 notes the frequent inability of Christians to consciously see the religious motifs of urbanism, or the urban style of understanding and relating to the transcendent.

Chapter 10 may be disturbing to many evangelical Christians, particularly Seventh-day Adventists. In its treatment of power as an urban reality, the authors are favorable toward Pentecostal realities in most of the cities of the world. These churches have discovered or grasped a connection between urbanism and Christianity in a style of worship that clearly brings the urban concept of power into the church.

In the remaining chapters of Part 3, the authors examine the city as a regional center and change agent. They then note various ways in which the church is successfully dealing with these factors. The authors particularly study the recent development of megachurches, the house church, and cell group movements.

Part 4, "Developing Urban Church Growth Eyes," is a serious invitation to the urban practitioner to recognize the usefulness of the social sciences. In this matter the urban church planter must, as an agent of transformation, be careful to maintain a biblical perspective and a clear goal for the church.

Part 5 assists the reader in the application of the social sciences, understanding and working with such factors as people groups, migration, poverty, and ethnic church planting. The chapter on "Spiritual Warfare in the City" (chap. 19) is particularly useful for the western-trained practitioner.

The sixth part of the book explores the needs for contextualized urban leadership. Urban mission and ministry differ from rural and suburban mission and ministry because of a number of cultural factors that often bother and even frighten nonurban peoples: cultural diversity, the media, commercialization, the tempo, and the systemic complexity are just a few of these cultural factors. Due to these factors, it is often necessary to train nonurban peoples in the same way people are trained for a cross-cultural mission appointment. This section explores criteria for leadership, the curriculum for training urban and mentoring leaders, and for mobilizing and equipping urban laity.

The book is broad and fast-paced. The authors have attempted to cover and interrelate many serious and important factors of urban mission in one book. While the book is broad in its coverage, it has not lost a serious concern for the particulars. The thirty-seven-page bibliography is exhaustive and worth the price of the book itself.

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BRUCE CAMPBELL MOYER

Crapanzano, Vincent. *Serving the Word: Literalism in America from the Pulpit to the Bench*. New York: New Press, 2000. xxvi + 406 pp. Hardcover, \$27.95.

Serving the Word studies the literalist reading of two basic foundation texts of American society, the Bible and the U.S. Constitution. Literalism is characterized by understanding texts according to their "literal," "plain," and "self-evident" meaning. Of course, anyone who spends much time among diverse communities doing "literal" readings of these texts will find what Crapanzano found, that the plain sense of the texts is not universal and uniform. A large part of Crapanzano's study details the various ways in which plain sense varies among those seeking a literalist reading. This study generally takes a negative stance on the use of literalism in either the church or the courts.

The book is divided into two halves: three chapters devoted to Bible literalism among evangelicals, followed by four chapters on "conservative" American jurisprudence. While these are characterized by similar forms of literalism, an introduction and conclusion attempting to relate the two types meets with limited success because too much of a divide is left between them. The book has an incomplete feel, as if Crapanzano lost himself in detail and didn't comprehend the shape of the larger picture. However, the detail is readily accessible through the index.

Crapanzano finds one important theme running through both literalist endeavors: confidence. Evangelicals seek confidence in their understanding of God and salvation. They seek to have a stable foundation for understanding their place in the universe. Likewise, the whole legal community, which in its broadest sense includes the entire population of the country, seeks confidence in the interpretation of law. This confidence produces stability, which means that we can go about our business knowing what conduct the government regulates and how much freedom we have in our public and private affairs. But this theme is not fully realized in the conclusion of *Serving the Word*.

The author never fully recognizes the populist nature of the phenomena that he is studying. The literalist method is a populist protest against the power of