

Berryman notes that the two communities have distinctly different goals. The emphasis among the Roman Catholics is to build the church as a religio-political structure and maintain its institutional strengths. The Protestant emphasis is on leading people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through conversion and subsequent worship experiences. Since the Protestants have no hegemony to defend, they are still in some competition with each other as well as the Catholic hegemony. For Catholics, Berryman suggests, the question for the future is "not simply quantitative (numbers of those entering religious life) but qualitative: is there a younger generation able to grasp the signs of the times and to respond to the new challenges of the twenty-first century?" (157).

For Protestants (chap. 13) the issue is one of division within the body. Berryman draws the family tree of Protestants from two parents: non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal, with the former divided into "historic" and "faith missions" and the latter divided into "classical" Pentecostal and "neo-Pentecostal," with the latter now growing in dominance. Neither of these two groups has a political agenda, and thus they live outside the mainstream of the Catholic society. This lack, from Berryman's perspective, leaves them less focused and more "other worldly," focusing instead on their relative degrees of conservatism and forms of leadership development.

The final chapter (14) focuses on important lessons each group might learn from the other as they lurch toward the twenty-first century in Latin America.

This book is an excellent introduction to church life in the two cities described and will be appreciated in college and seminary classes on urban mission and ministry.

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Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997. 384 pp. Hardcover, \$24.99.

In the midst of the maelstrom of theological wranglings, and the revivification of the search for the historical Jesus ("the third quest"), comes a volume which aims to inform and guide theological students, and by extension enlighten the understanding of interested spectators.

Craig L. Blomberg, professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, is no stranger to the Gospels, having written two other volumes on this topic. In this volume, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*, he surveys the Gospels in their historical and cultural contexts. In so doing, he examines their differing purposes and explores their implications for contemporary study, discussion, and Christian living. Twenty years of exposure to theological thought on the Gospels convinced Blomberg of a need for a volume which provides a systematically balanced treatment of the five essential aspects of study in the Gospels. These are (1) historical background, (2) critical methods, (3) introduction, (4) a survey of the life of Christ, and (5) historical and theological syntheses. Blomberg arranges the nineteen chapters of his book in accordance with these five areas.

In part 1, he carefully outlines the historical background of the political,

religious, and socioeconomic factors at play from Intertestamental to New Testament times. In his comprehensive coverage he describes and explains events, systems, beliefs, religions, ideologies, and philosophies. His examination of Gnosticism is especially noteworthy, as he discusses the similarities between Gnostic and Christian thought. This treatment makes the book an effective pedagogical tool. Of concern is his footnote endorsement of the idea that Jesus drank alcoholic beverages (59). This has implications for contemporary Christianity which beg for further exploration.

In part 2, he examines the historical and literary criticisms of the Gospels by outlining the historical development and current hermeneutical peculiarities of such disciplines as source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, canon criticism, narrative criticism, structuralism, and poststructuralism. Blomberg's ample analysis of the parable of the Wicked Servant (Matt 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-112; and Lk 20:9-19) from the above perspectives is a useful addition to his book (see 108ff).

Blomberg seems overly defensive of the Markan priority he subscribes to. This is understandable since his main arguments and his extended deliberations are built upon this position. He recognizes, however, that all the objections against this position cannot be dismissed easily. This is especially evident in face of the strong patristic testimony which would favor Matthean priority (90). In defense, Blomberg proposes that Matthew may have read Mark while doing a stage-by-stage composition of his Gospel (90). This highly speculative explanation receives justification only from the fact that in the area of speculation, it does not stand alone.

Part 3 looks at the introduction to the four Gospels. Proceeding on the tentative assumption that they are anonymous and that the names of the Gospels were not supplied by the authors themselves, Blomberg proposes to invert the normal sequence applied in the discussion of introductory topics (113). In this approach, structure and theology (based upon the information discernible in the texts) would be discussed first, and afterwards "the more speculative considerations of setting and author" (113).

He starts out by warning about the danger of "imposing too much structure or symmetry when trying to outline these books," while ignoring the fact that the Gospels were written to be read aloud (115). He examines Mark, Matthew, and Luke along the line of structure, theology (views of Jesus and other distinctive theories), circumstances, and authorship. In view of the Gospel of John's evident peculiarities, the line of approach differs slightly with the issue of historicity preceding the others. Blomberg's structural reconstruction and theological reasoning accord with his evangelical perspective. His proposed thematic structure is sound, although the parameters of some of his pericopes are different from those of other scholars.

In his study of the issue of authorship, Blomberg examines the pros and cons of traditional authorship. It is clear, however, that he relies heavily on the testimonies of the church fathers and the authoritative, historical voice of Josephus. From this he concludes that Mark, Matthew, and Luke were written during the '60s, and John in the '80s. It is obvious that such conclusions are

conducive for Markan Priority. Of the synoptics, Luke poses the greatest challenge to Blomberg's approach. However, he solves this by looking at the chiasmic link between Luke and the Book of Acts (140ff).

Of much concern to me in this section are the following: First, Blomberg downplays the prominence of women clearly evident in Mark's Gospel (120). Second, he introduces themes that he doesn't explore. An example of this is his implied belief that empowerment for obedience to moral demands was not available before Christ (129). In the same vein, one has to question what he means by a "law-free Christianity" (148). This lack of treatment may be made excusable by the limitations of space, but it is indeed unfortunate.

In part 4, Blomberg provides a survey of the life of Christ. The first chapter of this section surveys the various approaches to the historical Jesus by examining works of scholars such as Bultmann and Schweitzer. His survey eventually brings him face-to-face with the "Jesus Seminar," which he berates as having "wildly improbable methodological presuppositions" (184). From this, Blomberg outlines a brief chronology of the life of Christ based on selection of the Gospels' main themes and patterns. It is interesting that he proposes to attempt the explanation of "a few commonly held misinterpretations of passages" (178), but makes some blatant mistakes himself.

For example, his use of Acts 10 to argue that God declares unclean food clean (276) is a clear misinterpretation of a vision dealing with bigotry and racial prejudice (see Acts 10:28). In addition, his use of Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; and Rev 1:10 as proof that Christians replaced Sabbath with Sunday lacks credibility, since there is nothing within these passages authorizing such a change. I strongly suspect that many evangelicals will also be alarmed at the prospect of Peter being the rock upon which the church of God is built (278, 279).

Blomberg's concluding section, "Historical and Theological Synthesis," looks at extrabiblical evidence for the Gospels' reliability, and concludes with a survey of the theology of Jesus. The list of additional evidences he provides is a positive feature of his book. The survey of the theology of Jesus is a fitting conclusion to a valuable contribution to the study of the Man—Christ Jesus. It is not surprising that Blomberg concludes with an appeal to follow Jesus.

Despite relatively few areas of concern, I am impressed with Blomberg's pedagogical skills and wealth of knowledge. His interest in the person of Christ more than the study of Christology is not only refreshing, but hopefully infectious. His work is worth the reading.

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Brand, Leonard. *Faith, Reason, and Earth History: A Paradigm of Earth and Biological Origins by Intelligent Design*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997. 350 pp. Hardcover, \$34.99.

Scores of books interpreting earth history from a conservative Christian perspective have been published in recent years, but few of these books have been authored by persons as scientifically well-informed as Leonard Brand. Brand's