

kowtowing to powerful and devious religious groups? Is she applauding society for being more agnostic than the pious would have? At times—as when disputing Carter’s thesis—she states that religion is a powerful force in the country, yet when finding fault with the nation’s rejection of gay marriage, which she apparently supports under law, the United States is unequivocally not “Christian.” Is it possible America is both?

There is an apparent agenda against religious convictions under the guise of the public good. After opining that religious organizations ought to be curbed from using their property to suit their desires when it interferes with a neighborhood’s image, Hamilton continues to asseverate that landlords contravene fair-housing laws by rejecting unmarried couples or other tenants that run contrary to their own beliefs. The author even indiscreetly finds fault—because of public good—with the religiously motivated act of home schooling. It has always been tenebrous aligning individual liberties with the larger society. Hamilton’s emphasis upon *res publica* (“public good”) makes her appear to be a pre-Revolutionary Whig, who would have neglected individual liberties for the whole. However, it depends upon the issue at hand. In religious land use cases the individual must accede to the many, but with gay marriage, she implies that the multitude must comply with the wishes of the individual. It is a difficult issue that remains opaque after reading this work.

The issues raised in this work affect all. Whether one believes they belong to God or to the state, it is vital that humans belongs to each other. There is a unitary harmony that must be maintained in a commonwealth. *God vs. the Gavel* leaves the impression that freedom is not so much passively demanding one’s own rights, but rather actively being a keeper of each other’s.

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Harris, Murray J. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. cxxviii + 989 pp. Hardcover, \$75.00.

Murray J. Harris is Professor Emeritus of New Testament Exegesis and Theology at Trinity Evangelical School, Deerfield, Illinois. He has published a number of scholarly articles and his published books include *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1983); *From Grave to Glory: Resurrection in the New Testament: Including a Response to Norman L. Geisler* (Zondervan, 1990); *Colossians and Philemon (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)* (Eerdmans, 1990); *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Baker, 1992); *Three Crucial Questions about Jesus* (Baker, 1994); and *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Devotion to Christ*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 8 (InterVarsity, 2001). He also coedited *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce* (Eerdmans, 1980).

It has been said that if Solomon would write Eccl 12:12 today, he might well say: “Of the making of many Bible Commentaries there is no end.” That is why Harris is aware that “it has become incumbent on authors to indicate in what ways they believe their commentaries make a distinctive contribution to New Testament studies” (xiii). Harris offers three reasons for the uniqueness of his commentary: he is “now inclined to defend the integrity of the canonical 2 Corinthians with even more confidence” (xiii) and has seen many other commentators recently come to similar conclusions; one of the aims of the New International Greek Testament Commentary series is to “cater particularly to the needs of students of the Greek text” (xii) because “Scripture cannot be understood theologically unless it has first been understood grammatically” (xiv); and the commentary offers a “Chronology of the Relations of Paul, Timothy, and Titus with the Corinthian Church” (xv).

In the introduction, Harris discusses literary issues, such as authorship, the “severe letter” and the integrity and purpose of the letter. There is agreement among scholars about Pauline authorship of 2 Corinthians since it belongs to the *Hauptbriefen*, as F. C. Baur called them. However, no letter is more closely tied to the vagaries of historical circumstance than 2 Corinthians, not so much in regard to the historicity, but to the identity of the “severe letter” or *Tränenbrief*. Harris offers, to those who reject the identification of the “sorrowful letter” as 1 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians 10–13, the option of a letter that is no longer

extant (7). According to Harris, “the ‘severe letter’ may have been a very brief and intensely personal missive, simply calling for the discipline of the ‘guilty party’” (8). Almost all twentieth-century hypotheses regarding the integrity of 2 Corinthians are based on nineteenth-century antecedents (8). After listing the main theories, Harris discusses 2 Cor 2:14–7:4; 6:14–7:1; 8–9; 10–13. While most scholars hold to the integrity of 2 Cor 1–7, Harris and others see 2:14–7:4 as a digression not in the sense that Paul departs from his central theme, but in the sense that he leaves the topic of his personal travel narrative, only to resume it at 7:5 (14). Regarding 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, Harris concludes “that, notwithstanding the *prima facie* non-Pauline features of the paragraph, its incontestable Pauline characteristics . . . suggest that it stems *in toto* from Paul’s own hand” (25). Once it is agreed that chapters 8 and 9 belong together, there is no difficulty in viewing them as a natural addition to 2 Cor 1–7 (29). Finally, Harris discusses the reasons for separating 2 Cor 10–13 from 1–9, but opts for the integrity of the letter since the Hausrath and Semler hypotheses create more difficulties than they solve (51). Does that mean, asks Harris, that the letter was written on one single occasion, at one sitting? “Not at all” (50). He holds only that the work was regarded as a single composition and was dispatched to its addressees as a single missive (50).

Harris states the twofold purpose of the letter. First, the arrival of Paul’s assistant Titus brought good news of the favorable response of the majority of the Corinthians to the “severe letter” (7:6–16). Second, with the arrival of Titus came fresh, disturbing news concerning Corinth (51).

Following the introduction, Harris deals with historical issues. He finds textual support (12:14; 13:1–2) for an extra visit to Corinth (the so-called “painful visit”) between the founding visit and the one recorded in Acts 20:2–3 during Paul’s Ephesian ministry (54, 57), which Harris dates to a period of about eighteen months between the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians, dating 2 Corinthians to the autumn of 56 (67).

Paul’s opponents in 2 Corinthians are identified as Jews from Judea, “who came to Corinth as self-appointed agents of a Judaizing program” (87). Organizing the collection for the mother church in Jerusalem, Harris concludes, was not motivated by a desire to find a Christian substitute for the Temple tax (97), but because Paul envisaged the collection as “cementing Jewish-Gentile unity” (99). Last, in terms of introductory material, Harris displays his “Chronology of the Relationship of Paul, Timothy, and Titus with the Corinthian Church,” analyzes the form, structure, and content of 2 Corinthians and summarizes its theology.

Considerations of space prohibit a verse or even a chapter-by-chapter summary and critique. The commentary is more than 1,100 pages without the introduction. Harris himself is aware that some passages receive a disproportionate amount of space, but justifies it by the fact that 2 Cor 1:8–11; 5:1–10; and 5:16–21 are among the most theologically important sections of 2 Corinthians (xv). Since 2 Cor 5:1–10 is probably the most contested section of the letter and, at the same time, was the focus of Harris’s doctoral thesis at the University of Manchester in 1970, I will interact with him at this point.

In 2 Cor 5:1–10, Paul describes the Christian confidence in the face of death. Most commentators find it impossible to deny that Paul is here reckoning with either the possibility or probability of his own preparousia decease (365). It is commendable that Harris treats the passage as directly related to 2 Cor 4:7–18. Already v. 1 presents its challenge by stating that “we have (ἔχομεν) a building from God.” Does this denote present possession or future acquisition? Before detailed discussion is undertaken, Harris provides an overview of the major interpretations of ἔχομεν (375). Of the five views outlined and discussed (375–380), the author separates the two with the least difficulties attached to them, which are “resurrection at the parousia” and “ideal possession of the spiritual body at death with real possession at the parousia,” of which Harris favors the latter, while preserving resurrection for the parousia in accordance with 1 Cor 15 (380). Against those exegetes who refer vv. 6–10 to the parousia, Harris asserts that a temporal distinction can hardly be drawn between the destruction of the earthly house (v. 1) and the departure of the mortal body (v. 8) (400). He correctly states that the ἐκδημία of v. 8, as with the κατάλυσις of v. 1, transpires at death (400). He sees no reason to suppose that an

interval of time separates the absence from the body and the being at home with the Lord (400). Unfortunately, Harris does not state that he presupposes the parousia in between. Several pages later he points out unambiguously that “[f]or Paul immortality was not a natural attribute of the human soul which guaranteed its survival through and after death, but a gift from God which the Christian gained at the parousia by means of the resurrection” (410). Those dying before the parousia will experience an interval of disembodiment, to speak with the metaphor used by Paul in this passage, between their death and the resurrection (402). The author concludes this pericope with a summary of 2 Cor 5:1-10, in which he mentions among other things that there is no indication that the physical body is the container of the soul, the despicable outer garment which oppresses the soul and hampers its free expression, or that the body is worthless (410).

The format of the commentary is logical and useful. Each passage is accompanied by an introduction, a translation with detailed textual notes, a thorough line-by-line exegesis, and, finally, a relevant bibliography in an abbreviated form—a format that makes the commentary accessible at any verse.

On the whole, the strength of the commentary is manifold. The substantial bibliography demonstrates that the author has worked through an impressive amount of secondary literature on the epistle. The many footnotes throughout the commentary reveal the engagement with this vast amount of secondary literature and leave one with the impression that hardly any stone remains unturned. Indexes of subjects, authors, and Greek words conclude a serious piece of scholarship. The series title makes clear that this commentary targets those who have a working knowledge of NT Greek.

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Keller, Eva. *The Road to Clarity: Seventh-day Adventism in Madagascar*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. xvii + 286 pp. Paper, \$24.95.

Question: What is the result of Seventh-day Adventist religious activity in a country such as Madagascar? *Answer:* An association of African intellectuals. This is one of the major results of this study, which is a significantly revised version of a Ph.D. dissertation in social anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The author is a Research Fellow in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

The Road to Clarity is the first major publication about Adventism in Africa from the perspective of the anthropology of religion, and indeed one of the few published scholarly monographs on African Adventists. It is a unique study in that it explores the actual lives of non-Western Christians, based on a comparatively long period of participant observation—something which has been done so far by only a few scholars. After twenty months of field work, Eva Keller authentically portrays the nature of Malagasy Adventists' dedication to their faith in their particular cultural context.

After several introductory chapters dealing with Maroantsetra and Sahameloka (places where she conducted her research), Christianity in Madagascar, Adventism, and the people with whom she lived, Keller unfolds a discourse about Bible study, knowledge, and learning, and presents several chapters that discuss the problems that Adventists encounter in dealing with Malagasy culture. She comes to the conclusion that, for them, the major attraction of becoming and, especially, remaining Seventh-day Adventists is the excitement brought by study and intellectual activity. Thus, she disputes the common concept that in their religious choice, adherents of Christian churches in Africa are mainly motivated by utilitarian motives.

With *The Road to Clarity*, Keller has produced a pioneering study in several respects. First, she describes the religious activities, persuasions, and worldview of ordinary “Third World” Adventist Christians in a most empathic and realistic way, which is quite impressive given the fact that she is not personally connected to the Christian faith. It is probably not an overstatement that this is the most sensitive study of Adventism outside North America by a non-Adventist. Details which a casual observer might overlook are explained accurately, such as the importance of the “Great Controversy” motif as the framework of