

Another more pervasive ground for debate is the common assumption that NT Scripture is simply a human construction. On the whole, however, DeMaris's original assertion that "ritual is central to, and definitive for, early Christian life" has received an excellent defense.

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Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*, revised and expanded. Peabody: Hendrikson, 2009. 286 pp. Paperback, \$19.95.

Michael J. Gorman teaches at Princeton Theological Seminary and St. Mary's Seminary and University. He considers Bruce Manning Metzger to be his mentor; in fact, the book is dedicated to his memory. The current work is a revision of *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (2001), which is itself a revision of *Texts and Contexts* (1994, 1998). In essence, the current work is the fourth revision of the author's original publication. In 2005, Hendrikson published a companion volume, *Scripture: An Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation*, which is the work of fifteen Protestant (including the author) and Catholic scholars, all of whom are faculty members of the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore.

*Elements of Biblical Exegesis* is founded on the notion that the task of exegesis is the careful historical, literary, and theological analysis of the biblical text. As a result, the author prefers to focus on the methodology of the synchronic approach, which deals mainly with the final form of the biblical text. He believes that exegetes of all levels primarily meet the text as it stands in the biblical canon rather than engage or interact with the original source or the development stage of the text. The *synchronic approach* is not concerned with oral traditions or hypothetical sources; rather, it analyzes the text in relation to the context or worldview in which it first appeared. In his opinion, for a book that is concerned with the elements of exegesis, this methodology is better suited to achieve his goal. Whereas he does not invalidate the value of the *diachronic approach* (historical-critical method) that deals mainly with the formation of the text, he devotes limited attention to this methodology because it requires technical historical and linguistics skills that not all readers possess (23). Perhaps the most revealing reason he notes for avoiding the diachronic approach is the fact that in recent years this methodology has come under critical questioning as a viable tool for biblical exegesis. Another approach to biblical exegesis is the *existential approach* that focuses primarily on a fundamental spiritual encounter with God through meditation on the text, an instrumental approach that is also known as *theological* or *transformative*. The author also limits the use of this approach because it requires sophisticated theological perspectives not readily available

to the average reader and because this methodology relies heavily on elements that the synchronic approach already covers, therefore accomplishing a similar goal. The eclectic and integrated approach of Gorman's elementary methodology proposes a systematic approach to exegesis that addresses three major areas that his definition of the task points out while maintaining a delicate balance of the scholarly and scientific demands of biblical research: the academic need for seminary students to write successful exegesis papers without being overwhelmed with unnecessary details at such an early stage; the pastoral need of ministers who write sermons on a weekly basis; and the acknowledgment of the divine and supernatural origin of the Scriptures.

Perhaps the author's most valuable philosophical contribution to the task of exegesis in my opinion is his threefold view of exegesis as investigation, conversation, and art. As an investigation, exegesis involves asking thoughtful questions about the multifaceted dimensions of the biblical text; Gorman's elements are built on this premise. The book models how these questions should be asked and which questions are appropriate to ask depending on the type of literature the exegete encounters in the NT. The task of questioning the text as a whole, its historical context (tradition, source, and redaction), its contextual setting and intertextual (literal and cultural) revelation and implications, clearly guide the student in understanding the importance of asking the proper questions that a particular type of text demands. Gorman sees the task of the exegete as one who carefully "listens" to the views of informed sources regarding the text under analysis for the purpose of learning and, if necessary, adjusting conclusions. This aspect of Gorman's approach is assumed or ignored in other approaches such as the synchronic and existential approaches and is not often included in modern methodologies. However, it is essential learning and reflective device for students of scriptural exegesis. Finally, the author sees the task of exegesis as an art, which he believes differentiates his work from other authors'. Rather he believes that exegetes need to use their imagination, intuition, sensitivity, and openness to be creative in the way the tools of exegesis are used. This threefold approach to exegesis fosters the preparation of a living document that may be updated as new discoveries are made in the process of investigation, implementation, reflection, and refinement.

Whereas Gordon Fee's *New Testament Exegesis* is founded on the analysis of the original text, Gorman's *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* focuses more on the analysis of the translated text, devoting only a few paragraphs to exegesis in the original language. His intent is for beginning exegetes to follow his general principles whether they are using a translation or the original biblical text. The downside to his approach, in my opinion, is that it does not provide a tutorial as to how these tools are used; Fee, on the other hand, offers a basic guide so that the student can begin using them immediately. Another aspect of Gorman's methodology to consider is that his approach is only suitable for analyzing short passages of Scripture, at most an entire chapter. Other

methodologies, including Fee's, are designed to analyze entire biblical books. As a result, Gorman does not include a section for Greek or Hebrew word analysis, a guide to the critical apparatus, or a lexicon.

The book may appeal to general audiences who want to master the basics of biblical exegesis or who wish to explore Scripture from a sound platform. Pastors would benefit by adopting basic principles of exegesis to inform their weekly sermons. Perhaps the strength of the book, however, lies in the time it spends defining the task of exegesis and preparing the student to understand the implications of exegesis. Fee's methodology, on the other hand, does not provide this essential background, instead assuming that the student already understands the issues of exegesis. In Gorman's estimation, many approach the study of the Scriptures loosely; a methodology that is too complex or that assumes the rudiments may discourage those serious students who would like to get started. His methodology fulfills this purpose by providing an insightful guide that can inspire students, laity, and ministers to take the study of the Scriptures more seriously by applying solid elementary principles with effective scholarly skills that can, finally, lead to sound conclusions.

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Hackleman, Douglas. *Who Watches? Who Cares? Misadventures in Stewardship*. Morrison, CO: Members for Church Accountability, 2008. 379 pp. Paper, \$25.00.

*Who Watches? Who Cares? Misadventures in Stewardship* is a compilation of narratives that examine the demise of a number of Seventh-day Adventist institutions between 1978 and 2000. The book outlines the involvement of a number of church leaders who sometimes became entangled in get-rich-quick schemes that subsequently led to financial losses and closure of the institution and spillover consequences to other Adventist institutions. In other cases, grievous mismanagement of organizational assets occurred, again to the loss of the institution.

This volume grew out of a meeting of a small group of church lay members called "Members for Church Accountability" who gathered at Loma Linda in 2001 to discuss the causes and possible remedies to "financial misadventures" in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The published accounts are not based on interviews with the individuals involved and/or mentioned in the chapters, but on extensive documentation obtained by Members for Accountability. The narratives are considered to be only a representative sample of many more that could have been told of financial losses in Adventist institutions over the 1978-2000 period.

As expressed in the publisher's preface, the publication hopes that "the lessons so expensively taught by the very avoidable mistakes revealed in these miserable stories will make their readers more responsible delegates from constituent churches, more informed members of decision-making