

actions. The book would have been more complete if the main actors in the financial misadventures had offered their own interpretation of events and the lessons they learned. While the call for more lay involvement and better board oversight is necessary and a good beginning to effect change, an explanation of the situation from these leaders' own perspectives might also serve to prevent current and future generations of church leaders from falling into these financial errors again.

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Harvey, Susan Ashbrook, and David G. Hunter, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. xxvii+1020 pp. Hardcover, \$150.00.

"Recent decades have seen an explosion of research in the area of 'early Christian studies'" (1). So begins the introduction to this Handbook of 46 essays whose list of authors reads like a who's who of top scholars in the newly defined discipline of Early Christian Studies. Both the discipline itself and the period of history that it covers have undergone name and attitude changes. Gone are the days when a single scholar could keep up with all aspects of scholarship on the early church. There are just too many specialists currently working in too many fields and subdisciplines. I expect that Henry Chadwick's *magnum opus*, *The Church in Ancient Society* (Oxford, 2003), will be the last one-person volume to cover the entire discipline. The current volume is intended to present a *status questionis* for the 46 subdisciplines included.

"From Patristics to Early Christian Studies," Elizabeth Clark's essay, in the "Prolegomen" section, which leads the first of eight parts to the Handbook heralds the name change, including a comprehensive overview of the rise and demise of the field of Patristics. Clark follows the discipline of Patristics from its origins in the modern field of Christian history by scholars such as Johann Mosheim (*Ecclesiastical History*, 1750) and Augustus Neander (*General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 1854) to the studies of Adolph von Harnack and other nineteenth-century scholars, which emphasized the first three Christian centuries and which focused on the publishing of the primary sources thereby providing greater access to the patristic texts. More recently, integration of social-science interpretations of history and the study of religion expanded the discipline from the Fathers of the Church to include all of the religions of the era, including Judaism, Manicheism, the traditional Greco-Roman religions, and the Christian "heretical" groups.

The second part of the book addresses four aspects of the historical evidence with which the discipline works, including material evidence, with essays on archeology, the visual arts, epigraphy (e.g., inscriptions), and boustrophedon (i.e., book creation) ("Paleography and Codicology"). Part 3, "Identities," highlights the religious people groups that emerge and/or function alongside and within Christianity in the early centuries of the era, including Jews, pagans, Gnostics, Manichaens, Arians, and Pelagians. Part 4 addresses regional and geographical issues and concerns of the five regions

surrounding the Mediterranean. Part 5, "Structures and Authorities," contains six essays that provide an overview of the societal authority structures, such as clergy, biblical canon, creeds and councils, imperial government, households, and monasticism.

Part 6 presents nine essays on Christian culture(s), including "Homiletics" by Wendy Mayer and "Early Christian Historians and Historiography" by William Adler. Illustrative of the types of essays in this part is Susan Ashbrook Harvey's essay on "Martyr Passions and Hagiography." She provides both a history of the interpretation of the narratives and the history of the narratives themselves, and she correctly values the social information that can be gathered from historical sources that was missed by a purely historical-critical assignment of most of the genre to myth or legend. This social information includes "descriptions of illness, infertility, mental instability, domestic violence; children, prostitutes, and other social outcasts," as well as descriptions of "spaces normally omitted from the purview of official or mainstream documents: the household, the kitchen, the living quarters of women and slaves" (612). Harvey balances this with an appreciation for the "rigorous order" that the critical methodologies brought to the "vast body of hagiographical literature" (614), allowing the patterns, *topoi*, and conventions of the narratives to emerge and be used by interpreters of these sources.

Part 7, "Ritual, Piety, and Practice," outlines not only the early practices of liturgical interest such as initiation, Eucharist and prayer, but also four other important aspects of Christian practice, including asceticism, penance, the practices surrounding the martyr cults, and pilgrimage.

Part 8, "Theology," my personal favorite, is comprised of six essays on five theological themes ("Interpretation of Scripture, Frances M. Young; "Doctrine of God," Lewis Ayres and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz; "Christ and Christologies," Brian E. Daley; and "Doctrine of Creation," Paul M. Blowers) and a final, excellent essay on tools for the discipline by Francine Cardman ("Early Christian Ethics").

This truly monumental volume provides a much-needed summary of where the discipline of Early Christian Studies stands in each of its fields and subspecialties. Reading it in its entirety provides a complete survey of the discipline. Each essay, with its excellent bibliography, is a tool to bring one quickly up to date on a subdiscipline.

The book itself heralds the degree to which historiography of the early Christian era is in explosive flux. As part of this explosion, it follows just two years after Charles Kannengiesser's edited, two-volume *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Brill, 2006), which was itself the first of six volumes of Brill's series, "The Bible in Ancient Christianity." The appropriate melding of the borders between New Testament Studies and Early Christian Studies, on one hand, preceded by Mohr and Siebeck's new journal, *Early Christianity* (2010), and, on the other, by the newly designated period "Late Antiquity," brought to light by Johns Hopkins University Press's *Journal of Late Antiquity*, now in its third year, illustrate both this flux and explosion of scholarship. With the rapid growth and development of these new fields of exploration, it will not be

many years before this handbook will need to be updated. Still, if I only had one book on the first six Christian centuries, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* would be that book.

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King, E. Marcella Anderson, and Kevin L. Morgan, *More Than Words: A Study of Inspiration and Ellen White's Use of Sources in The Desire of Ages*. Berrien Springs: Honor Him Publishers, 2009. 165 pp. + 27 pp. appendices. \$19.95.

This book is an attempt to provide a “layman’s point of view” about the pivotal conclusions from the Life of Christ Research Project (1983-1988) headed by Fred Veltman, who was at the time a professor at Pacific Union College. The primary author, E. Marcella Anderson King, was a secretary and later research assistant to J. Paul Stauffer and Veltman. Her manuscript was brought to fruition through the editorial work of coauthor Kevin L. Morgan, a Seventh-day Adventist minister living in North Carolina. Together the two authors put together an apologetic work aimed at undermining critics of Ellen G. White’s life and ministry, who claim that White maliciously plagiarized her writings from other contemporary sources. Although the Life of Christ Research Project has been completed for almost two decades, King states that “few Adventists have heard much about it and what they have heard is often distorted” (9).

In chapter 1, the authors highlight White’s lifelong desire to produce a thorough treatment on the life of Christ, along with an overview by her literary assistants. Chapter 2 argues that the charges of plagiarism and misuse of sources by White’s critics need to be answered. However, the section, which is only two pages long, hardly deserves to be considered a chapter and does not do justice in analyzing what these charges are.

Chapter 3 is a marked-up and annotated version of chapter 1 of *The Desire of Ages*. The real value of King and Morgan’s efforts is found in their highlighting of the adaptations White and her assistants made when using and reusing her earlier writings as well as the adaptations they made of other authors’ material. The pattern is repeated in chapter 5, which is an analysis of chapter 2 of *The Desire of Ages*, and chapter 6, an analysis of chapter 77 of *The Desire of Ages*. At the end of chapters 3, 4, and 6 are brief analyses (56-58, 62, 111) that the authors expand in chapter 7 in their evaluation of White’s use of sources.

The authors shy away from the term “borrowing” to describe White’s literary use of other authors. Instead they point to her own description of how “gems of thought are to be gathered up and redeemed from their companionship with error” (*Review and Herald*, October 23, 1894, cited on 118). “Some ‘thought gems’ required very little adapting. . . . Others required considerably more” (119). Although there are “recognizable parallels scattered through the rest of Ellen White’s writings,” the colorful examples provided by King and Morgan indicate that she used a wide variety of sources in the writing of *The*