

theological connections between the Psalms in the present Psalter. Each psalm is analyzed in its own merits, and little effort is made to see the message of a particular psalm in the light of other Psalms and of the whole Psalter. The author often refers to earlier commentaries, such as those by Dahood, Delitzsch, and Kirkpatrick, but in a book of this magnitude some readers will expect to see more engaging surveys of the works by other renowned psalm scholars, like Mays and Brueggemann. It would also be helpful to include dialogue with the perspectives of later writers, such as deClaisse-Walford and Jacobson, and of more recent trends in psalmic studies, including linguistic approaches and canonical criticism. Transliteration of Hebrew and Greek words with English letters would make this book more reader-friendly, particularly for readers who have no knowledge of biblical languages. After all, they are mentioned as the author's primary audience. The index of Hebrew word studies at the end of the book present a challenge for people who do not read Hebrew. In addition, a glossary would be a helpful feature for a book written with pastors and students in mind, since it is almost impossible to avoid using technical terms in the book (for example, *hithpalpel*, [479]; preterite with *waw* consecutive, [601]; asseverative particle, [703]). Some psalm outlines seem to be overly detailed, making it quite difficult to grasp the overall structure of these psalms (e.g., 27–28, 97–98, 212–213, 246–247).

The above minor critique is, by far, surpassed by the praise that this book should receive. Perhaps the most appealing feature of this book is the mastery with which the author combines scholarly, linguistic, historical, theological, and devotional insights. Pastors will find this book to be an excellent homiletical resource. Readers will be immensely enriched by its theological and spiritual depth. This book is thus highly recommended to pastors, teachers, students, and readers with a genuine love for the Psalms.

Washington Adventist University
Takoma Park, Maryland

DRAGOSLAVA SANTRAC

Sampley, J. Paul. *Walking in Love: Moral Progress and Spiritual Growth with the Apostle Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. 444 pp. Hardcover. USD 79.00.

Paul Sampley's book, *Walking in Love*, is written not for the scholarly guild, but for inquiring persons who are interested in the Christian walk. Focusing upon the seven undisputed letters of the Pauline literature—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon—Sampley wants “to understand, on the basis of the evidence from his letters, how Paul thought believers should discern and do the will of God and walk in love with God, with Christ, and with one another” (xi).

Chapter one, “After His Call, Paul Sets Out,” lays the groundwork for Sampley's study with some basics: God called Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles to proclaim a message of “Christ and him crucified” throughout the large cities of the Mediterranean world. The apostle's missionary activity created predominately Gentile assemblies which gathered in house churches; the organizational structure of these house churches was fairly open-ended,

with leadership emerging from within the local church. Paul and his co-workers modeled this life of faith by actively seeking to express love, care, comfort, and encouragement to others.

Chapter two, “The Big Story: What in the World is God Doing?” sketches the story of redemption which undergirds Paul’s letters, from “the creation of the world to the end-time beyond the return of Christ, beyond the expected resurrection of all who have died in the Lord, beyond the defeat of all rival powers, to Christ’s ultimate turning over the kingdom/reign to God” (26). Paul’s apocalyptic worldview is shaped by a timeframe that begins with Jesus’s death and resurrection and concludes with his return at the end times. This interim time period is characterized by the coexistence of the old and new ages, with believers living the new creation life in a tension-filled, sin-ridden world.

Chapter three, “New Creation Beings: Responsive and Responsible,” explores the anthropological dimensions of Paul’s letters (mind, heart, body, spirit, and soul) with a view of ascertaining the believer’s ability to do moral reasoning in light of the challenges of living within the sin-ridden world. In the believers’ past life, “sin had gained . . . a beachhead” (52), making their hearts insensate and their minds worthless. Delivered from the debilitating effects of sin, believers have refurbished minds, with Spirit-enabled capacities to avoid being conformed to this age, and increasing abilities to discern the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God (Rom 12:2).

In chapter four, “Believers’ Progress: From Babies to Adults,” Sampley describes how new creation beings make moral progress through discipline and self-examination, “to become more like Christ and to give ever wider expression in every aspect of their lives to the fruit that the Spirit enables and inspires in all believers” (94). At the same time, Paul believes it is possible for the believer to inappropriately use his God-given freedom to regress, run in vain, fall in battle, lose one’s faith, and cause a fellow believer to fall (127).

Chapter five, “Baptism: Starting Well and Ending Better,” explicates the nature of baptism. Baptism is the believers’ “rite of entry into the life of faith” (133). In the ritual act of baptism, believers take off one garment and put on another, symbolizing their putting off of the old self and “putting on Christ.” Meanwhile, the community makes a declaration of “oneness” (Gal 3:28), symbolizing their new identity in Christ, one that eradicates distinctions regarding ethnicity (Jew and Greek), social standing (slave and free), and gender (male and female). Baptism frames the believers’ entire faithful life, from its new life in Christ until its completion at the last day.

Chapter six, “Lord’s Supper: How to Eat, Drink, and Live Well,” details Paul’s assessment of the Lord’s Supper in the life of faith (1 Cor 11:17–34). In response to the Corinthians’ desecration of the Lord’s Supper through their factions and divisiveness, Paul rehearses the Jesus traditions of the last supper with the disciples. Believers celebrate the Lord’s Supper in order to be reminded of where they have come from—their shared death with Christ—and of what awaits them at the end times—Christ’s return. Paul applies the meal’s ethical implications by telling the Corinthians they must

engage in a “double-sided examination” in which they reflect on how they are related to Christ and to the members of the body of Christ.

Chapter seven, “Judgment: God’s of Us, Ours of Each Other, and of Ourselves,” expounds the judgment motif in the Pauline corpus. There will be an end-time judgment in which God will hold all believers accountable on the basis of their works/deeds. Within the church, there is an appropriate kind of admonishment which believers owe one another; such instruction is undertaken with “the hope that believers may help one another grow and progress in the life of faith and in their loving of one another” (228). Nonetheless, the most powerful and appropriate kind of admonishment occurs when believers accurately self-test and discern the body of Christ, bringing themselves “more in line with God’s purposes in and through” (232) them.

Chapter eight, “Us and Them: Relations and Contact with the Outside World,” examines how Pauline communities lived the new creation life alongside nonbelieving neighbors. The communities did not attract attention from outsiders, given the small size of house churches, and Paul’s advice for believers was to keep a low profile and “remain as you were.” Interactions between believers and non-believers can be seen in Paul’s council on marriage/divorce, the unbelievers’ attendance of worship services, and dinners with unbelieving neighbors. Christian communities must exercise care in not being contaminated by the sinfulness of this age and, at the same time, demonstrate love toward unbelievers, since they are potential converts.

Chapter nine, “Making Choices Right and Sitting Loose in the Saddle,” summarizes the core basics of Paul’s moral reasoning. The entire deliberation process is like a video comprised of certain constituent frames, considerations, and questions: (a) a vice-list fence that provides believers with the moral space of appropriate conduct and a border which demarcates inappropriate conduct; (b) what is your measure of faith and what do you know?; (c) are you fully convinced/persuaded?; (d) do you have any doubts/waverings?; (e) are you under compulsion to do the deed in question or to act in a particular fashion?; (f) will your action harm or cause a brother or sister in the faith to stumble or fall?

Chapter ten, “Epilogue: Paul for the Twenty-First Century,” considers the contemporary relevance of Paul’s thought—his suppositions and convictions. On the basis of “*other Pauline values and convictions*” (312), Sampley qualifies a number of Pauline motifs (e.g., submission to governing authorities, civil courts, and lawsuits) and posits the relevance of a few others (e.g., Paul’s vision of the believer’s spiritual life as one of growth).

Sampley’s depiction of Paul’s teaching on spiritual growth, however, raises a number of important questions. First, *there is the question of ascertaining the interplay between the moral reasoning of the individual believer and the ethical deliberations/responsibilities of the community of believers*. Sampley argues that the Christian walk is a communal endeavor, where “we believers belong to one another” (374). Paul values equally the individual and community with neither dominating the other: “Neither the communal nature of the life of faith nor the individual (and collective) moral growth and progress can be left out or diminished or the total shape of Paul’s vision is distorted” (376).

Nonetheless, as one reads through Sampley's analysis of Paul's moral reasoning, one is left with the impression that the emphasis falls upon the individual, particularly when he maintains that the "moral clearing house . . . is individuated and located in the heart and mind of each individual believer" (280–281). Interpreters are left with the challenge of balancing and weighing such a perspective against the communal dimensions of the letters, particularly those passages that suggest Paul's primary pastoral vision is for the transformation of Christian communities (e.g., Rom 15:15–17; 2 Cor 1:12–14; 11:1–3; Phil 2:16–18; 1 Thess 2:19–20). Sampley's analysis highlights the importance of ascertaining Paul's vision concerning the role of the individual, and of the community, in ethical decision-making regarding moral progress.

Second, *there is the question of giving due credence to the situational character of Paul's letters*. While recognizing that none of the letters provide us with a "quasi-systematic layout of his beliefs and practices" (xiii), Sampley argues, on the basis of 1 Cor 4:17—"to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them in every church,"—that it is possible to delineate the apostle's teaching on spiritual growth. Interpreters are left with another challenge of determining whether Sampley's sketch of Paul's moral teaching across the undisputed letters is an "abstraction" or common threads that weave together into a "fabric" that one could call "walking in love." Nonetheless, it is quite possible that such an outline of Paul's teaching was not comprehensively and consistently applied to the Pauline communities, particularly given Paul's pronounced stress on his practice of accommodation, adaptation, and flexibility in proclaiming the gospel (1 Cor 9:19–23), as well as the evidence from the letters themselves, which reveal the apostle's robust contextualization of the gospel. Might not the nature of Paul's moral reasoning be varied, with its application uniquely predicated on the contingencies of the socio-historical setting of a particular congregation? All who desire to delineate renderings of Paul's thought from his letters, even in limited fashion, face the daunting task of the occasional/situational dimension of the letters.

Third, *there is the question regarding the nature of Paul's moral reasoning established solely on the undisputed letters*. Several important factors need to be considered in order to determine the authentic letters of Paul: the possibility of development of thought on the part of Paul; the "consistency of expression" criteria one ought to apply to an ancient corpus of writings; the degree of influence the secretary played in the composition of the letters; and the possibility Paul commissioned and supervised the production of a number of the letters. A renewed evaluation of the foregoing factors is leading some NT scholars to re-examine the issues of authenticity. Thus, a chapter outlining the nature of Paul's moral reasoning on the basis of all thirteen letters would have helped readers who believe the apostle wrote these canonical writings or those readers who are unconcerned about matters of authorship and simply wish to study Paul on the basis of the canon. What adjustments would Sampley make in his description of "Paul's ways" if he incorporated into his analysis, say, the realized eschatology of Colossians and Ephesians—their change of

temporal categories into spatial categories (326)? Or the “routinization of charisma”—the institutionalization features of the Pastorals?

The foregoing questions Sampley’s book raises for readers should not be viewed as shortcomings, but illustrative of the book’s potential benefit for all who desire to understand Paul’s moral reasoning. The book is focused upon the Pauline corpus and not inclined to interpret Paul through a particular perspective (e.g., Lutheran, Catholic, Jewish, New Perspective, post-New Perspective, etc.). It is clearly written and reflects Sampley’s appreciation and lifelong study of the apostle Paul. It thoroughly engages the “heart of Paul’s purposes in all his letters” (xii) and will doubtless be “an elixir or potion for anyone who is interested in making spiritual and moral progress in their lives” (x).

Loma Linda University
Loma Linda, CA

LEO RANZOLIN

Sessoms, Rick, with Tim Brannagan. *Leading with Story: Cultivating Christ-centered Leaders in a Storycentric Generation*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2016. xxiv + 246 pp. Softcover. USD 14.39.

Rick Sessoms appears to be a widely-travelled author with an impressive website (www.freedomtolead.net). The subtitle of the book is *Cultivating Christ-Centered Leaders in a Storycentric Generation*. The book addresses the needs of leadership development in oral or, as he puts it, “storycentric” cultures. The reality is that this pertains to the majority of the world, increasingly so in the West, where more and more people are screen-oriented rather than book-oriented. The objective of his organization, Freedom to Lead, is to “bridge the gap between character formation and ministry development” (214).

It is not a simple task to impress such a literate audience as the readers of this journal with the realities of the majority-world, where learning is accomplished through story, poetry, art, and song rather than by reading books and articles. The reality is that a significant number of students in the Seminary where I taught come from storycentric cultures, where they are accustomed to learning in a very different format than formal classes with lectures. Another striking reality is that we are training pastors and leaders to work in an increasingly storycentric world, even in the West, Europe, and North America. Such is the new migratory world in which we now live.

The importance of this may be seen in the recent national elections in the United States. Traditionally, politics were (assumed to be) rational and information-fed. We now are adjusting to a political scene that appeals far more to the emotions, fears, and feelings. People vote how they “feel” more than what they “read,” in spite of the irrationality. For Christians, this may suggest why the charismatics and Pentecostal churches are so rapidly expanding, while the more staid, formal religious bodies shrink.

The Bible was first given to a storycentric people. Much of it is in story form. Notice the importance given to songs, of Moses, of Miriam, of Deborah, the Psalms, the song of the vineyard in Isaiah. The teachings of Jesus largely took the form of stories. The fact that we call them “parables” does not make