

## BOOK REVIEWS

Annan, Kent. *Slow Kingdom Coming: Practices for Doing Justice, Loving Mercy and Walking Humbly in the World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016. 149 pp. Softcover. USD 14.40.

Over the years I have donated funds, spent time and energy marching in demonstrations, been personally involved in inner-city ministries, and served the poor as a senior advisor for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). I have spent time in the worst slums this world knows. This is a book that I could have used many years ago.

Kent Annan's book is, at the same time, troubling, helpful, and liberating. Troubling, as it reminds us of how difficult and demanding our involvement in social justice can be, but liberating as he leads his reader through five helpful practices he has discovered. These helpful practices do not speed up the kingdom, but they make the process understandable, realistic, and more satisfying. Annan reminds us that the best change is generally slow change. The practices are attention, confession, respect, partnering, and truthing. Annan tells us, "The five practices in this book can help you find the freedom to handle *what you can* and *what you're called to*—and then handle this *well*—as we respond faithfully to risks and opportunities around us" (11).

Attention is the art of focusing, giving ourselves opportunity to really see and grasp what is happening, and what should be happening. It does not happen quickly or easily.

Confession is the admission that we are often complicit, in little-understood ways, in the problem, particularly when we do not admit our own ignorance, our own lack of real understanding of the problem or issue. Confession involves admitting our mixed motives and the unavoidable sinfulness (humanness) of any of our responses. Confession comes when we are willing to admit that the people we are attempting to help probably know more about the problem and solutions than we do.

Respect can only grow out of the practice of confession. Here we learn to see the inherent intelligence of the people we seek to help. Here we learn to work "for" and "with," even "under" them, rather than "at" them. The chapter on respect was, in my opinion, one of the most insightful. It emphasizes the need to slow down, so we can see and hear the problem, before rushing in with answers to questions that no one is asking, a common Western response. It talks of the need to learn the proper (local) manner of showing respect.

Partnering recognizes the common tendency for us to do more *for* a community, or *to* a community, when what is needed is to work *with* a community. This moves us beyond a "messiah" mentality, a common Western misconception. We pretend to have all the answers, even before the right questions have been asked. Annan takes the practice of partnership to new depths and breadths.

The chapter on truthing emphasizes the need for continuous evaluation and offers us excellent examples of both the need and the effective process. This is often the more difficult of the disciplines and involves openness to

criticism. One of my students wrote to me that his project had collapsed in failure. He was moving on. I insisted that he had not failed if there were lessons to be learned and shared. I insisted that he return to the project and do a thorough analysis of why it had failed and write it up for the benefit of others. This, too, is part of truthing.

Ethicists and practitioners of social justice, socially involved pastors, workers and volunteers in relief and development, and even average persons who want to make a difference in the world, will find this a rewarding read.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

BRUCE CAMPBELL MOYER

Gitin, Seymour, ed. *The Ancient Pottery of Israel and Its Neighbors from the Iron Age through the Hellenistic Period*. 2 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2015. 794 pp. Hardcover. USD 240.00.

This two-volume set is the long-gestated replacement for Ruth Amiran's seminal work *The Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land*. In the preface and editor's notes, Seymour Gitin lays out the rules for the "new 'ceramic bible'" and the history of its creation (1). He mentions that there are volumes dealing with the Neolithic Period through the Late Bronze Age that are in preparation. Gitin discusses the gargantuan effort undertaken in collecting pottery drawings from hundreds of new excavations that have been carried out in the fifty years since Amiran's volume. Over 6,000 pottery drawings are included in these two volumes and each had to be redrawn for consistency, a truly monumental task. Volume One goes from the Iron Age I through the Late Iron Age IIC, covering each of the different regions on either side of the Jordan River. Volume Two looks at imports from the Mediterranean world and the pottery of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods. Two choices were made here, the first geographical/cultural and the second chronological. In terms of geography, the area being discussed was divided into eight regions (Transjordan, the Negev, Philistia, Judah, Samaria, Jezreel Valley, Northern Coastal Plain, and Galilee). The rationale for this specific division was never explained. In terms of chronology, despite (or perhaps because of) disagreement between authors, Gitin chose to use the "traditional dating published in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Vols. 1-5*." I understand the reason for doing this and having some kind of consistency between the chapters was necessary.

Following the introductory section, the first volume contains the following chapters. Iron Age I: Northern Coastal Plain, Galilee, Samaria, Jezreel Valley, Judah, and Negev (Amihai Mazar); Iron Age I: Philistia (Trude Dothan and Alexander Zukerman); Iron Age I: Transjordan (Larry G. Herr); Iron Age IIA-B: Northern Coastal Plain (Gunnar Lehmann); Iron Age IIA-B: Northern Valleys and Upper Galilee (Amnon Ben-Tor and Anabel Zarzecki-Peleg); Iron Age IIA-B: Samaria (Ron E. Tappy); Iron Age IIA-B: Judah and the Negev (Ze'ev Herzog and Lily Singer-Avitz); Iron Age IIA-B: Philistia (Seymour Gitin); Iron Age IIA-B: Transjordan (Larry G. Herr); Iron Age IIC: Northern Coast, Carmel Coast, Galilee, and Jezreel Valley (Ayelet Gilboa); Iron Age IIC: Samaria (Ron E. Tappy); Iron Age IIC: Judah

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](http://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

his teaching less storycentric. In Judaism, the *Seder* is an annual retelling of the story of the Jewish people, reinforced with food, songs, and table fellowship.

The first part of this book (chapters one to three) wonderfully alerts the reader to the importance of relating to a storycentric culture. For seminary teachers, this is an important reminder to be sensitive to the majority-world students in their classes, and to the need to speak, effectively, to post-modern congregations through their students. The first three chapters, in themselves, are worth the price of the book.

Unfortunately, the book seems poorly structured. Chapters four through twelve move into the area of leadership development, with a strong emphasis on character development, with only occasional references back to the storycentric culture that was the focus of the first three chapters.

The bulk of parts two and three contain numerous illustrations, and perhaps this is Sessoms's nod to the importance of story. The author does give appropriate emphasis to the need for culturally appropriate leadership, which is important in our multi-cultural society and multi-cultural churches. A leader or pastor who understands that leadership can be different in different cultures is better prepared for his or her leadership role.

Sessoms gives excellent insight into the need for mentoring, as well as on-the-job training. He also stresses the need to treat people at the level of their potential, enabling and empowering nascent leaders.

One of the strong points of the book is the inclusion of a numbered summary at the end of each chapter. Actually, reading these before the chapter alerts one to the author's major points of emphasis.

In critique, I sometimes found Sessoms's stories and illustrations sufficiently vague to leave me wondering at their authenticity. They seem too "pat" to be genuine. Otherwise, he is very familiar with leadership, leadership training, and the minefields of culture.

The final chapter, "The Garden Project," is a very practical, very helpful recapping of the book. He does this by using his ministry, Freedom to Lead, as a model of what can and should be done. It ends with a very well done "Lessons Learned" section that pulls the rest of the book together.

Who should read this book? Missionaries and professors of missions are a major target of the book. They are on the front lines of cultural differences. However, in our migratory world, with its emphasis on multiculturalism, pastors and professors of leadership will also benefit greatly from this small volume. Homileticians would also receive benefit from this reminder of how important story, poetry, art, and song are in changing people's worldviews and cementing new insights into malleable minds.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

BRUCE CAMPBELL MOYER

Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. *Micab: A Commentary*. OTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015. xxxiii + 268 pp. Hardcover. USD 50.00.

Outside of the United Nations building in New York stands a tall bronze sculpture made by the Russian artist Yevgeny Vuchetich that was presented to