

12). In his book, Kaiser argues likewise that the classic theories of inspiration are “all too limited to sufficiently encapsulate Ellen White’s incarnational, integrated, and wholistic view and experience of inspiration” (68). Therefore, “instead of referring to the phenomenon that Ellen White experienced as ‘thought inspiration,’ as Adventist scholars have frequently done, it would be more fitting to describe that experience as a dynamic, incarnational, multi-faceted divine inspiration” (411). And the same is also true about the experiences of biblical prophets.

The rigorous academic nature of the content of *Trust and Doubt* makes it not the easiest reading for more superficial readers. But church historians, scholars, as well as those who desire to gain a better understanding of how early Adventists understood and dealt with the issue of inspiration will most certainly value this book as an extremely rich mine of reliable information. I highly recommend this insightful and very helpful work!

Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

ALBERTO R. TIMM

Koet, Bart J. *The Go-Between: Augustine on Deacons*. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xvi + 169 pp. USD 119.00.

Bart Koet is a Professor of New Testament and early Christian literature at Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, and he has researched how the early church incorporated biblical traditions, and lately, he has focused on leadership in the early church. He has also published on the relationship of the interpretation of Scripture with the interpretation of dreams.

The aim of this book, as stated by the author, is “to examine the information on deacons contained in the works of Augustine” (2). Koet explains that his desired outcome is to set “a profile of his [Augustine’s] conception of the ministry of the deacon. Such a profile would be a limited local profile on one particular fourth-century Church, nothing more and nothing less” (2). Although Koet suggests a historically limited understanding of the role of deacons, I think this work might benefit those interested in ecclesiastical management and leadership, since Koet talks about the popularity of the concept of servant leadership, as he discusses the etymology of the Greek word for deacon (*diakon*) which has a meaning of serving. Koet suggests, however, that this limited notion of the word *diakonia* (servant) is insufficient to encompass the actual work of the ecclesiastical deacon. Because of its popularity though, it has caused the ecclesiastical deacon’s role to be merely a humble servant to the poor. He shows how this understanding of the Greek influenced the German *Diakonie* movement, which then affected the prescribed ministry of the deacon in the Catholic Church. In his view, the early Christian understanding of the role of a deacon went beyond charity work, and also included liturgical functions. Thus, the limited definition has

caused scholarship to skip over and neglect the deacon's specific characteristics in the early church. Koet hopes in this book to illuminate this debate from Augustine's perspective of what he thinks was a more robust view of the role of the deacon.

After these remarks, Koet explains why Augustine of Hippo is a good reference in the Christian understanding of the role of the deacon. He finishes the first chapter with an outline of the following chapters. Before digging into the writings of Augustine, however, the author gives his linguistic and historical analysis of the Greek family of words from the stem *diakon-* in both classical and biblical literature, including Greek philosophers, and the Septuagint. He concludes that "recent results of philological and exegetical studies" are pertinent for a better evaluation of *diakonia* in the early church (7). This is followed by a similar study of *diakon-* in the New Testament and other Christian writings before Augustine. In chapters four to seven, readers will find Koet's study on Augustine and the role of the ecclesiastical deacons. First, Koet covers some relevant details about Augustine's career and his view of the ministries of the church. In chapter five, he demonstrates that Augustine's deacon functioned as a messenger. The deacons delivered letters and were the envoys of the bishops in Augustine's time. Sometimes they even accompanied the bishop on trips. In chapter six, Koet examines how Augustine saw deacons as evangelists and preachers alongside the bishop, a connection he continues to explore in the following chapter. For Augustine, explains Koet, deacons were holy ministers of the church. Using some illustrations from the Christian tradition, he shows a close connection of the bishop with the deacons. This connection has its roots in Acts 6 and it continues in the time of Augustine, he argues. One good historical example of this partnership is pope Sixtus II and deacon Lawrence of Rome. Koet notes three 'deacons' that Augustine especially preached about: Saint Stephen, Saint Lawrence, and Saint Vincent.

In chapter eight, the author summarizes the main points of his study of Augustine's deacons. These were co-workers with the bishop, assisting the bishop in different capacities like treasury, liturgy, and catechesis (instruction). They also function as intermediaries, or as Koet calls them, the "go-between" the bishop and the church members. He also indicates the necessity of comparing Augustine's description with those of Cyprian, Jerome, and John Chrysostom. In his epilogue, Koet ventures into applying the past to the present role of the deacons. He again stresses that in the early church and Augustine, the deacons were not social workers dealing solely with the poor. This was the work of the whole Christian community including the bishops. Since this book is intended to be an exposition on Catholic theology, Koet also refers to how Vatican II sees the deacons as serving in the task of sanctifying (liturgy), the task of preaching Scriptures, and the task of pastoring (charity). Although the Vatican's view about the role of the deacons is helpful, Koet thinks that

these functions have not been implemented locally, though the last task, of pastoring, is often emphasized by priests. Based on his study of Augustine's writings, Koet calls for a restoration of the communicative role of the deacons in evangelism, especially in this digital age.

The Go-Between is a fine work of scholarship. Koet has analyzed and summarized well the writings of Augustine on the topic and presented a better image of the deacon's role in the Church at large. The background chapters help the reader understand his evaluation of Augustine's deacons and strengthens his main thesis. Even though the author comes with a Catholic agenda, I recommend this book to all those who are interested in ecclesiology and more practically to those involved in the ministries of their local church. Church administrators, for example, would especially benefit from the historical lessons on the role of the deacons, and maybe find the motivation to improve their role in various denominations. For my fellow Seventh-day Adventists, *The Go-Between: Augustine on Deacons* may be seen as a useful resource in our attempt to overcome the deep divisions on the particular functions of specific ecclesiastical functionaries.

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Kulik, Alexander, ed. *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019. 543 pp. USD 150.00.

Assisted by Gabriele Boccaccini, Lorenzo DiTommaso, David Hamidović, and Michael Stone, Kulik has put together a great guide to the extant literature presumably produced by Jews in antiquity. I see it as a necessary complement to modern collections of the ancient literature of the Jews (e.g. James Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010]), and to books that summarize these texts (e.g. George Nickelsburg's *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 2nd ed. [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2011]).

Besides the introduction, the book contains twenty-six chapters divided into four sections, (A) Traditions, (B) Corpora, (C) Comparative Perspective: Alternative Modes of Transmission, and (D) Trajectories of Traditions. This last section has only two chapters. The one by James Charlesworth provides a good overview of the Jewish material preserved by Christians in each area discussed in section (A), with his reflection on the impact of these texts in Christianity and a suggestive template of how to create a taxonomy of Jewish traditions altered by Christians. The other chapter in section (D), by Lorenzo DiTommaso, is a thematic bibliography of recent works on the history of tradition about figures from the Hebrew Bible or Jewish tradition organized alphabetically from Abraham to Susanna.