Greeks adapted the writing system for their alphabet" (179). The Phoenicians spread their unique alphabet throughout the Levant region yet left almost no historical record.

In the conclusion of *Ancient Israel's Neighbors*, Doak reflects on how the history of these peoples can help us understand the modern world. He points out that throughout history, humans have developed different cultures, customs, convictions, and social and political systems. Part of this development was the creation of political boundaries and social hierarchy, the main characteristics of civilization.

For those seeking a brief overview of these peoples mentioned in the Scriptures in relation to Israel, *Ancient Israel's Neighbors* is a good resource. For a deeper engagement with the ancient sources, one needs to look elsewhere, in books such as the *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, edited by Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Baker, 1998). I highly recommend Doak's book to students looking for an outline of ancient Israel from ancient Near Eastern texts and archaeology that takes into consideration its neighbors.

Berrien Springs, Michigan Ronaldo da Silva

Du Mez, Kristin Kobes. *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*. New York, NY: LiveRight, 2020. 344 pp. + index. Hardcover. USD 24.95.

One of the most shocking moments of my career took place when, during a pastoral visit, I discovered that one of my church members was stockpiling weapons and ammunition. Barack Obama had recently been elected president, and this church member had a heavily fortified basement replete with dozens of high-powered weapons and enough ammunition for a small army—he was, as he told me, ready to shoot his way through the time of trouble. This form of militant Adventism, from a devout Adventist who served as a church leader and who claimed an Adventist pedigree stemming back generations, is more of a reflection of the militant masculinity associated with a segment of white evangelical culture, as described by author Kristin Du Mez.

The author traces the origins of this book to a Donald Trump campaign stop at her small, midwestern Bible college. Ultimately 68 percent of the white Evangelical Protestant vote went for Trump. This same demographic is reflected in the opposition to immigration reform. They shared a more negative view of immigrants than any other religious demographic. Two-thirds supported Trump's border wall. "White evangelicals are significantly more authoritarian than other religious groups, and they express confidence in their religious leaders at much higher rates than do members of other faiths" (4).

Du Mez explains this thesis further:

> But evangelical support for Trump was no aberration, nor was it merely a pragmatic choice. It was, rather, the culmination of evangelicals' embrace of militant masculinity, an ideology that enshrines patriarchal authority and condones the callous display of power, at home and abroad. By the time Trump arrived proclaiming himself their savior, conservative white evangelicals had already traded a faith that privileges humility and elevates 'the least of these' for one that derides gentleness as the province of wusses. Rather than turning the other cheek, they'd resolved to defend their faith and their nation, secure in the knowledge that the ends justify the means. Having replaced the Jesus of the Gospels with a vengeful warrior Christ, it's no wonder many came to think of Trump in the same way. In 2016, many observers were stunned at evangelicals' apparent betrayal of their own values. In reality, evangelicals did not cast their vote despite their beliefs, but because of them. (3)

At the heart of this is the penchant of many evangelicals for proof-texting. With 31,000 Bible verses, which ones are essential and which can be "readily ignored or explained away?" (5). Instead, a much more compelling ideology has captured a part of the evangelical imagination: Christian nationalism, which Du Mez defines as "the belief that America is God's chosen nation and must be defended as such." This belief serves more than anything else as a predictor of intolerance toward immigrants, racial minorities, and non-Christians (4).

This form of evangelicalism does not include black Christians, who see it as more of "a white religious brand" (6). Instead, for conservative white evangelicals, "the Christian gospel has become inextricably linked to a staunch commitment to patriarchal authority, gender difference, and Christian nationalism, and all of these are intertwined with white racial identity" (6–7). It is important that this "God-and-country faith" includes people who both attend and do not attend church. "It creates affinities across denominational, regional, and socioeconomic differences, even as it divides Americans—and American Christians—into those who embrace these values, and those who do not" (7).

The onscreen embodiment of the heroic cowboy and idealized American soldier is personified by John Wayne, the icon of rugged American manliness. Although not religious, interestingly, he would in time become an icon of Christian masculinity. "Wayne would come to symbolize a different set of virtues—a nostalgic yearning for a mythical 'Christian America,' a return to 'traditional' gender roles, and the reassertion of (white) patriarchal authority" (10). Early chapters in Du Mez's book trace the origins of this militant masculinity (15–59).

Contemporary evangelical partisanship was part of a broader alignment that transformed partisan politics from the 1950s to the 1980s, something evangelicals helped make happen. "For conservatives," Du Mez argues, "a

defense of white patriarchy would move to the center of their coalescing cultural and political identity" (33). The civil rights movement, Vietnam, and feminism challenged these reigning dogmas, especially the civil rights movement, which from this perspective "seemed unpatriotic." She adds, "Having embraced the idea of America as a 'Christian nation,' it was hard to accept a critique of the nation as fundamental as that advanced by the civil rights movement" (38). Another example was the 1968 election of Richard Nixon, in which evangelicals held the key to his victory. A lapsed Quaker, Nixon was not very religious. Yet he knew that Billy Graham could help him win over evangelical votes (ultimately, white evangelicals were a significant part of his majority, capturing 69 percent of the votes for Nixon). "Nixon knew how to speak the language of Evangelicals and how to appeal to their values through symbol and spectacle" (45). Nixon and Graham fused religion and politics through "Honor America Day" and the symbolism of flags. If only they had more faith, they could win the Vietnam War and live with less fear. By the time Nixon was reelected in 1972, he had captured 84 percent of the evangelical vote. "The alliance between the Republican Party and Evangelical Christians seemed secure" (48).

Conservative evangelicals also upheld the military in uncritical esteem. Fundamentalists were some of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Vietnam War—a war that intended to get rid of "godless communism" (49). This war, for Du Mez, more than anything else "was pivotal to the formation of an emerging evangelical identity" (50). The failed war was perceived as an affront to American manhood, especially for American evangelicals. Boys must be taught how to fight and that such violence was sanctified. "This conflation of religious and secular can be seen in the cultlike status John Wayne enjoyed among American conservatives in the 1960s and 1970s" (54). Even Wayne's crassness was part of his appeal, setting a pattern for evangelical heroes, both religious and secular. "Wayne might come up short in terms of traditional virtue, but he excelled at embodying a different set of virtues" (59). These virtues included masculine strength, aggression, and redemptive violence—themes Du Mez explores in subsequent chapters. Of special note is the rise of "male headship" ideology. This became particularly pronounced through the ministries of Jerry Falwell and James Dobson.

Chapter six discusses this same fusion of conservative Christianity with politics during the presidency of Ronald Reagan (103–117). A strong military and aggressive foreign policy aligned with an evangelical view of masculine power (113). Chapter seven examines how Jerry Fallwell led the way in canonizing Oliver North in the Iran-Contra controversy (118–133). What he did was justifiable given the fusion between faith and politics that lionized assertive militarism. This paved the way for the Religious Right, who thrived on a sense of embattlement (140). After the threat of communism disappeared, evangelical men began to look to new models for their masculinity. Ministries

like Promise Keepers arose to help encourage "Godly male bonding" and to facilitate "stealth political cells" (151). Fallwell and others knew how to mix religion with sports. Thus, sports and the military "reinforced a dualistic view of the world" that separated winners from losers (156). A whole cadre of books resulted, crafting and championing the prosperity gospel, neo-Calvinism, and Christian masculinity. During the 1980s and 1990s, a new complementarian theology, rooted in male authority and the submission of women, became the litmus test of a true evangelical (169). Also, a "purity culture" developed that depended upon female modesty. Since men had nearly irresistible sex drives, it was up to wives to satisfy their husbands' every sexual need in order to remove temptation. Books like John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart* (Thomas Nelson, 2001) generated a contemporary tone of evangelical militancy. His "warrior God" was all about male aggression. By the early 2000s, the rise of New Calvinism coincided neatly with patriarchal ideals (203).

A major hub of this militant Christianity was Colorado Springs, the center of the United States Air Force Academy and the North American Air Defense Command, and also the center of a series of evangelical, charismatic, and fundamentalist churches. In 1991, James Dobson relocated his ministry to a 47-acre complex overlooking the air force academy. Dobson was a master of fusing politics and religion.

After September 11, Islam replaced communism as the chief enemy of America (219–232). Since race had always been central to the formation of some white evangelicals' politics and cultural identity, the election of Barak Obama contributed to a sense of embattlement and emboldened more militant voices (238). By the time of the 2016 election, gender also remained a key reason that many evangelicals supported Donald J. Trump over Hillary Clinton (250–251). The support for Trump was not instantaneous. At first, most evangelicals preferred more traditional candidates. Adventist readers will note the appearance of Ben Carson's candidacy as a case in point (252). He knew how to play politics to white Protestant American Evangelicals, showing just how much some segments of Adventism had fused with this political trend. As an African American conservative, he believed that a Muslim should be disqualified from serving as president, supported the right to fly the Confederate flag, compared political correctness to the practices of Nazi Germany, and suggested that the Holocaust would not have happened had Jews been armed.

Ultimately, with Trump as their "high priest," by the 2010s, many high-profile cases showed a willingness by many evangelicals to turn a blind eye to abuses of power in the interest of maintaining patriarchal authority (272). Such ideological extremes reflected the mainstream culture.

In the end, Doug Wilson, John Piper, Mark Driscoll, James Dobson, Doug Phillips, and John Eldredge all preached a mutually reinforcing vision of Christian masculinity—of patriarchy and submission, sex and power. It

was a vision that promised protection for women but left women without defense, one that worshipped power and turned a blind eye to justice, and one that transformed the Jesus of the Gospels into an image of their own making (294).

Du Mez makes a compelling case that white American Evangelicalism is, at its core, a cultural and political movement within American culture, a force that supersedes even its theology (298). By 2016, Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware had begun to advance a theology of the Trinity that made Jesus "eternally subordinate" to God the Father to justify the eternal, God-ordained subordination of women to men (298). "For critics," says the author, "this raised an important question: were men defending patriarchy because they believed it to be biblical, or were they twisting the Scriptures in order to defend patriarchy?" (298). This fusion of religion and politics has made it difficult to discern between the sacred and the secular.

What this book makes clear is the challenge of Christian nationalism for Seventh-day Adventists in the United States today. This book should be a wake-up call for every thoughtful Adventist to think carefully about their religious and political outlooks—are we allowing our politics to mold our faith, rather than the other way around? For a church with a heritage of religious liberty, how has it become normalized in some Adventist circles to stockpile weapons and ammunition for the time of trouble? While some can argue that these are exceptions, at least in the midwestern United States (where I have largely taught and pastored), most Adventists firmly supported Trump for many of the reasons outlined by the author of this book. This raises questions about just how extensive this fusion between religion and politics is and just how much this larger cultural milieu has shaped and even transformed Adventist identity for many Adventists. Similarly, compared to the wider evangelical world, how do these political alignments differ along racial and socioeconomic lines in Adventism?

Gerry Chudleigh's 2014 paper "A Short History of the Headship Doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church" traces this Adventist embrace of complementarian theology that occurred from the 1970s onward (https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/433232). Many Adventists behind the periodical *Adventists Affirm* and similar groups who strongly oppose women's ordination do not realize that they parallel conservative evangelical ideology and politics. Chudleigh chronicles how many of these same evangelical conservatives described by Du Mez became popularized within Adventism, particularly through the writings of Samuele Bacchiochi. It should therefore also come as no surprise that as neo-Calvinist ideas have become popularized in some Adventist circles, to a surprising degree, a parallel resurgence of anti-Trinitarianism has emerged. What is significant is that much of the anti-Trinitarian rhetoric within Adventism of recent vintage utilizes, to a large degree, this same complementarian ideology.

In conclusion, this book raises the issue of Christian nationalism as a far-reaching topic that needs careful analysis and study. A similar work within Adventism is overdue. It was the reading of this book more than anything else that prompted me to spearhead an online conference about this topic under the auspices of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS), cosponsored by the North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Department, and cosponsored by several other denominational entities on Sabbath afternoon, April 24, 2021. This is a first attempt to explore the challenges posed by Christian nationalism by Adventist thought leaders (for those readers interested, the full conference can be viewed at https://www.nadministerial.com/stories/christian-nationalism-adventism-and-prophecy). According to NAD leaders, this was up until then one of the best attended virtual events they had ever hosted, with thousands of comments and views. If such online participation is any indication, this is an extremely relevant topic that deserves further exploration in the future.

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Estes, Douglas, ed. *The Tree of Life*. TBN 27. Leiden: Brill, 2020. xxii + 467 pp. Hardcover. USD 298.00.

The Tree of Life is volume 27 of Brill's Themes in Biblical Narrative (TBN) series, which "publishes studies dealing with early interpretations and receptions of Biblical materials" (https://brill.com/view/serial/TBN). Modern scholarship has offered relatively little engagement with the tree of life motif (1). The new addition to the TBN series attempts to "fill this lacuna with a constructive investigation of the tree of life from its origin in human history up to various modern theological perspectives" (1). *The Tree of Life* contains fourteen contributions by seventeen scholars, led by editor Douglas Estes, then associate professor of NT and practical theology at South University, Columbia, SC, now associate professor of biblical studies and practical theology at Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS.

After a foreword by James H. Charlesworth and an introduction by Douglas Estes, the remaining articles examine the tree of life motif focusing on six main perspectives: ANE material (chs. 1–2), biblical texts (chs. 3–4, 8), early extrabiblical literature (chs. 5–7, 9–11), the medieval period (ch. 12), Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian traditions (ch. 13), and the modern period (ch. 14). The book closes with a conclusion written by the editor. In this review, I interact in a little more depth with the articles dealing directly with biblical material since it is the area of research *AUSS* readers are most attentive to.

In chapter one, "The Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Literature," Charles L. Echols surveys the ancient Near Eastern texts for the phrase "the