Tobin Miller Shearer. *Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

The Civil Rights Movement encompassed more than organized marches, sit-ins, boycotts, and freedom rides led by organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). It also included protests by members of mostly white religious denominations who never joined demonstrators and marchers or wound up in jail. The latter displayed the same degree of courage and commitment, and contributed just as much to the struggle as participants in SCLC and SNCC. They did so by conducting "quiet demonstrations" in their homes, sanctuaries, and other "intimate settings" against racial prejudice. That is the message of this book, which recounts how that movement unfolded within mainly the Old Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite denominations. Tobin Miller Shearer believes his book is groundbreaking because it brings to light a major part of the civil rights movement, the pervasiveness and characteristics of which scholars have heretofore failed to recognize. It is, he says, "a new civil rights story" (231).

Shearer's conclusions are based on evidence from cases that occurred mostly between 1935 and 1971, and that involved (1) protests by African-American Mennonite women and their white sisters; (2) Fresh Air programs; (3) the response to Vincent Harding's effort to obtain Mennonites' support for organized nonviolent protests; (4) interracial marriage; (5) conflict over integrated congregational worship; and (6) the influence of James Forman's Black Manifesto.

Shearer maintains that his study supports at least two other important findings. First, because Mennonites behaved toward, and thought about, African-Americans no differently than did white non-Mennonite churchgoers, "[r]acial intolerance and overt oppression need to be framed as common practice rather than as exceptions," among white Mennonites (235). Second, "These richly complex narratives also challenge Mennonite histories of the twentieth century by bringing African-American Mennonites from the margins to the center of historical inquiry" (xiii).

Four of the six cases – recounted in chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6 – appear to support Shearer's thesis. However, his findings regarding the Black Manifesto and Fresh Air children, who "challenged racism in white homes during the 1950s and '60s" and "brought the movement to communities untouched by adult organizers" (228), are both unconvincing. Shearer argues that these minors slew all the numerous white racist dragons they encountered, unaided by any direct assistance or advocacy from parents and guardians. But that claim strains one's sense of logic in light of what our experiences teach us about the nature of such children.

As for the Manifesto, it is difficult to understand why that document was so necessary and critical in initiating and fostering "conversations" between African-American and white Mennonite leaders about economic justice and power sharing as Shearer suggests (219), given that the Mennonite church had a strong tradition of daily demonstrations led by Mennonites (including some he identifies in his narrative) who knew, or should have known, how to adequately address such issues without needing inspiration from Forman. In these two areas his conclusions appear, at least to me, to be buoyed by conviction rather than supported by adequate data.

Finally, the book is less an account of a *new* civil rights story than it is a 20th-century version of a much older one. Ever since whites established the system of slavery and racial tyranny in the United States, black people and their allies have protested against them. That protest included both direct confrontations such as those led by abolitionists, and quieter, subtler forms of protest by slaves, such as the deliberate destruction of work tools. The 20th-century civil rights protests such as demonstrations and marches are reminiscent of the former, while the actions of Lark and Swartzentruber, as described by the author, are suggestive of the latter. Though the historical record shows that the legalized systems of slavery and segregation were far more vulnerable to the first form of protest than the second, the latter nevertheless had and continues to have importance in the struggle against oppression. Shearer's account is a strong and welcome confirmation of that fact.

Daily Demonstrators has considerable merit, despite the limitations noted above. It shows that the accomplishments of the civil rights movement cannot reasonably be attributed to a few charismatic individuals or a few

mass-based nationwide organizations. And by using the stories of African-American Mennonites to convey that message, the author has helped bring that group from the margins to the center of historical inquiry. The book deserves a place in elementary, high school, college, and university libraries.

Lee Roy Berry, Jr., Attorney, former Associate Professor of Political Science, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana

Eric Metaxas. *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy: A Righteous Gentile vs. The Third Reich*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer has become something of a contemporary saint – claimed by individuals of liberal and conservative persuasions. He is lauded as an exemplar of grace in the face of suffering and of dedicated friendship, and as a martyr for the Christian faith. His life is well documented, but he has been little discussed of late. Eric Metaxas's *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* promises to improve our understanding of Bonhoeffer as good man and as anti-Nazi conspirator.

There is little documentation of the first few years or last few months of Bonhoeffer's life. However, we know much about his adult life from his own writings and those of friends and family. Metaxas brings these different sources together to tell the story. Bonhoeffer was born into a German aristocratic family in Breslau. His father was a well-known academic, and other members of his family played prominent roles in German society. He was raised in a home that trained him academically and culturally. Emphasis on spirituality was limited but he soon made up for that deficit himself.

Bonhoeffer excelled in school and in 1927 at age 21 graduated from Berlin University with a doctorate. He was an accomplished academic but chose to put his energies into the pastorate, excelling in work as diverse as youth ministry and seminary teaching. Wanting to broaden his horizons and connect ecumenically, he accepted positions in Spain, the United States, and Britain. These connections influenced his involvement in the conspiracy to kill Hitler. International connections would also have allowed him to escape

the war, but after a brief visit to the US he determined that his calling was to Germany.

Bonhoeffer was outspoken about problems with the Nazi government but had little success convincing the larger church to respond to the encroaching evil. Thus, he put his efforts into mentoring others and serving as a sort of itinerant pastor/spy under the protection of a government agency run by his uncle. He had a much different vantage point from that of the average German for considering how one should respond to social evil.

Bonhoeffer's concern for ethics manifested itself early, in his dissertation and in his subsequent volume entitled *Ethics*. While he found a theological justification for the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler, his ethics, according to Metaxas, were rooted in an understanding of the radical call of Christian discipleship. The plot failed, and records that ultimately implicated Bonhoeffer made their way into Nazi hands. He was hanged just three weeks short of the end of World War II.

At 542 pages, this is a long book, with a level of detail that weakens it. Much of the extra detail is interesting but not clearly related to the core narrative (e.g., the near drowning of a nanny, details of Nazi atrocities). Letters and sermons are quoted in long passages that do not add to the summary Metaxas provides.

A more serious problem is that the book gives us less of a sense of Bonhoeffer the man than it could have. He is depicted, for instance, as being born with upstanding morals, as seeing the dangers of evil before others, as having a consistent and clear theological vision, and as keeping his composure in all situations. I am not calling for debunking the "myth" of Bonhoeffer but for taking his struggles more seriously. Not to attend to his weaknesses and complexities makes him into an unattainable example, a figure who somehow sees the world more clearly than the rest of us. This often makes the actions of others in the narrative hard to understand. Indeed, the book provides little clue as to why the evils of the Nazi regime, so obvious to Bonhoeffer, were initially not noticed by many of those around him and never noticed by some in the church.

Nonetheless, Metaxas works hard both to draw out the evangelical side of the theological motivations that drove Bonhoeffer and to connect Bonhoeffer's experience and theology with his actions. He also provides a

strong impression of Bonhoeffer as a man of character. This text, with its valuable index, will be a helpful supplementary introduction to Bonhoeffer for both general readers and introductory classes on his life and theology.

Mark D. Chapman, Assistant Professor of Research Methods, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Ontario

J. Kirk Boyd. *2048: Humanity's Agreement to Live Together.* San Francisco: Berrett Koehler, 2010.

J. Kirk Boyd has a vision, namely to see an International Bill of Human Rights drafted by 2048, the 100th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "The goal is to have a written agreement that is enforceable in the courts of all countries by the year 2048" (6). His vision is more than a dream. Boyd's book documents and expands upon the 2048 Project, a movement animated by the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. The law school has developed an internet website allowing anyone around the world to comment on, contribute to, and critique the draft of the future Bill of Human Rights. Participants in the movement aim to draft a bill with such high levels of international public support that each country's leadership will have no choice but to adopt it. The forty-year timeline reflects the understanding that this is no simple endeavor.

This book describes where the 2048 Project is coming from, what it is, and where it is going. Part One gives the history of the writing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and then explores hurdles to the present project's success. The first hurdle to overcome is ego. The new Bill is to be a people's document, so each contribution will be reviewed and critiqued without regard to the contributor's identity. The second hurdle is to achieve the "1% solution," that is, one percent of the world's population participating in the project and one percent of the world's GNP going to fund implementation.

Part Two explores the fundamentals underlying the International Bill of Human Rights, namely the Five Freedoms: Franklin Roosevelt's four

freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear – plus "freedom for the environment." Each freedom is explored in its own short chapter.

Part Three charts the steps towards the project's goal. It begins with a regional example of what might be made global: the European Convention of Human Rights, a legal document enforceable in every European Union member country. Boyd addresses the "cultural myth" that human rights is a Western concept, arguing that the basic values underlying human rights are common throughout the world. The remainder of this section explains how everyone can participate in the project. The process will be inclusive, and the document will not be created only by lawyers. Every occupation, generation, nationality, and culture should be involved. Boyd invokes the beauty of art that transcends national, religious and cultural boundaries: "Our task is to focus, think, write, and decide together to create the most beautiful Bill of Rights that has ever been written" (120).

2048 is an easy read, aimed at a wide audience. Many of the author's personal stories give it a homey feeling. It is very optimistic, advocating for every reader's participation in the process. But as such it is light in analysis and downplays the challenges, making it easy to criticize, as seen in the following two examples. (1) On the surface, the European Convention on Human Rights appears to be a wonderful instance of what the 2048 project hopes to achieve globally. However, this is overly optimistic, considering that the Convention is part of a much larger European Union apparatus. The EU is first and foremost an economic union, and membership in it requires adopting the Convention. Can the proposed International Bill of Human Rights take hold without leveraging a similar economic union? Could it stand alone against the onslaught of World Trade Organization regulation? Perhaps the new Bill needs to be integrated into the WTO. (2) Boyd asserts the "1% solution" – one percent of global GNP – will not require a new tax but can be a re-allocation of a portion of the current global defense budgets. Not only is this a massive economic dislocation for workers, but opposition from well-funded lobbies of the military industry would make it a most daunting task.

And yet…. The idea that human rights might become legally enforceable anywhere in the world is a heady notion. It is a project that we

should support, even just by learning about it through reading Boyd's book. The real challenge is to go beyond easy criticisms and begin thinking about solutions. The 2048 project website is a venue to air suggestions. Together, we might indeed be able to create the International Bill of Human Rights.

Michael Hunter, Master's degree student, University for Peace, San José, Costa Rica

Nathan C. Funk and Abdul Aziz Said. *Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2009.

This is an important book for anyone who cares about the Middle East. The first Part gives the context for why religions can be a source of peacemaking and why the typical "us versus them" narrative between the West and the Middle East needs to be re-written. The authors reject the notion of a "clash of civilizations," and they take on stereotypes of "mutual ignorance" and how "imprisonment in hostile narratives" makes peacemaking so difficult (8). They offer a perceptive analysis of how western foreign policies presume that the Islamic world does not have indigenous resources to solve its own problems, and how western involvement in the Middle East has inhibited the latter's ability to carve out its own solutions.

Given the genuinely Middle-Eastern-grown nonviolent resistance, dubbed in 2011 the "April Spring," in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, the book is not only prophetic but becoming more relevant. The authors demonstrate how "policy choices are mediated and constrained by interpretations of history, and by preconceptions about the 'other's' character and behavioral repertoire" (231). They reveal how little the West has engaged with Muslim conceptions of peace, justice, political participation, cultural diversity, economic development, and ecological sustainability (9, 11). Funk and Said adeptly show that it is a misperception to see "the Islamic-Western conflict" as inevitable and unalterable because of "incompatible doctrines and values" (231).

Part Two makes explicit the types of resources Islam can contribute

to peacemaking. The authors categorize these in five ways that provide a thick description of Islamic spirituality, theology, and ethics as related to violence, peace, and justice. Here the reader encounters a diversity of Islamic approaches to peace. The authors hope that "knowledge of this diversity can provide a powerful basis for intercultural bridge building and for innovative policy frameworks" based on shared values, transforming Western and Middle Eastern engagement away from the singular "war on terror" security threat framework and the pervasive view of Islamic culture as "seemingly exotic" (10, 232). This section provides a wealth of information to enrich dialogues between the two groups, and should be required reading both for Muslims in the Middle East as well as the Diaspora and for all westerners engaged with the Muslim Middle East, whether as archaeologists, military/security personnel, academics, diplomats, policy makers, religious workers, development aid workers, or members of other NGOs.

Constructive ideas on how the West and the Middle Eastern Islamic world could cooperate on peacemaking are the subject of Part Three. Here the authors discuss specific recommendations for where constructive actions can be empowered. Aiming primarily at a western policy making/shaping audience, they acknowledge that these proposals are relevant to both stakeholders. Recommendations include creating a "new relationship" in the public discourse of political figures, media analysts and others (252, 253).

Another recommendation is addressing root causes of concerns, fears, and grievances on both sides, instead of manipulating fear-predicated narratives with religious rhetoric, so that opposing points of view are presented in a context acknowledging "shared humanity, interdependent futures, and the pursuit of solutions that respect the basic needs and interest of all concerned parties" (254). Funk and Said discuss strategies for transforming conflict instead of escalating it. They urge strengthening cross-cultural diplomacy through a deeper knowledge of one another's language, history, and culture, including "religious literacy," and the inherent complexities (257). They describe what a "multilateral, human security framework" could look like and how it would go beyond simply staking out positions (259). Negotiated, dialogue-based solutions are one way that "Western policies might also include efforts to enhance regional conflict resolution capacity" (260).

Recognizing the strong links to the Diaspora Muslim communities of North America and Europe, and attending to immigrant experiences can also send positive messages. Taking more steps to "ensure inclusion of Muslims in Western societies" will shape Muslim perceptions globally. The degree to which immigrants have a positive experience with education and economic opportunities, freedom of religious expression, respectful coexistence, and a fair rule of law will help diplomatic efforts between different societies (261). "By contributing to the radicalization of young Muslim men, overmilitarization of the 'war on terror' has done more to destabilize the Muslim Middle East than to cultivate a basis for sustainable peace" (261). Western approaches abroad need to be consistent with those at home, lest hypocrisy damage the viable democratic projects taking place in the Middle East region (262).

Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East will benefit all who read it not only for its historical information and its insights into Islam as a religious, political, and cultural resource for Middle East peacemaking, but for a better understanding of the nuances of peacemaking where communities face deep-rooted misperceptions, power imbalances, and ongoing trauma. It provides points of contact for doing comparative theologies with Christians, Jews, and others in peace theology and peacebuilding, as well as avenues for dialogue between the Muslim community and the West.

Susan Kennel Harrison, PhD candidate, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology

John G. Stackhouse, Jr. *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Canadian evangelical theologian John Stackhouse has written a "big, academic book" that articulates a "comprehensive" understanding of culture and the Christian life in light of the reality of God (ix, 4). As the title suggests, the argument of *Making the Best of It* is that discipleship is rightly negotiated in the midst of present-day cultural and political activities. Disciples

maximize faithfulness to God from situation to situation, prioritizing neither consistency nor purity but rather adequate response to God in this morally ambiguous post-lapsarian world. Stackhouse presents this argument as an updated evangelical Christian Realism that embraces the contingencies and tragedies of modern life without labeling this embrace as a compromise.

The author presents his evangelical Realist pantheon in the first two parts of the book. In the first part he "reappropriates" H. Richard Niebuhr's Christ and Culture typology. He defends the validity of this typology so long as each type is taken as a legitimate strategy for different Christians at different times and places. The second part of the book lifts themes from the life and works of C.S. Lewis, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. These luminaries offer resources for a comprehensive realism that surveys culture in light of God's action. In the third part, Stackhouse presents his version of Realism. He starts by defining his method: Christian ethics is a dynamic "conversation" between scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, under the power of the Holy Spirit and oriented towards Jesus. The pneumatological aspect of this method is especially important, as it allows Stackhouse to subordinate methodical ethical investigation to what God might ask of us in any given situation (179). Yet we have to understand each situation with reference to its place in the grand "Christian Story" of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.

From that story we learn that discipleship is about both the individual and society, the spiritual and the material, unity and diversity, the world to come and this world, and God's interests and human interests (202-205). Although Christians have a special calling, it is "nested" within God's larger demand that humans seek peaceful cultural flourishing or *shalom* (220). Because we live between fall and eschaton, *shalom* cannot be fully attained. Vocational discernment is necessary for individuals and congregations, and there will be a great diversity of faithful, *shalom*-seeking responses. God may have a "normal" will for culture, but that will is constantly adjusted to bring the most *shalom* out of each fallen situation. Faithfulness to such a God means integrity and effectiveness cannot be divorced (293). It means making the best of every area of culture.

Like other Christian Realists, Stackhouse sees his primary opponents to be Christians who think discipleship requires separation from some

areas of cultural activity, and specifically from violence (195-98, 279-88). This strategy is represented throughout the volume by John Howard Yoder and the Anabaptist tradition, although Stackhouse recognizes that not all Anabaptists follow this line (24). Actually, he says he is writing to surpass both withdrawal and "take-over" options (5-6), but defeating the latter is not integral to his argument. Yoder is the major target because his is "the most attractive and provocative alternative" to the author's own model (310). For readers of this journal, the engagement with Yoder is probably the book's most interesting feature. It is an exemplar of the parasitic dependence on a distorted reading of Yoder that too often characterizes Christian Realism.

Stackhouse seems to have read very little of Yoder's work, and most of his comments are restricted to isolated quotations from *The Priestly Kingdom*. From this scant textual basis Yoder is accused of reducing scripture to the gospels (192, n16); holding an immanent eschatology (276); failing to discuss the possibility of Christians wielding political power (276, n9); advocating cultural "withdrawal" (278-79); "abandoning" the world (281, n19); and refusing to give examples of successful nonviolent action (286). For anyone familiar with the scope of Yoder's writings, this portrayal is libelous. But without it Stackhouse lacks a *raison d'être* for his denial of the radical imitation of Christ. By equating radical discipleship with irresponsible withdrawal, he can present his option as responsible engagement. If pacifism can be responsible and engaged, then his argument founders. The new Realism is the same as the old. Long live Realism.

Jamie Pitts, PhD candidate, New College, University of Edinburgh

Miroslav Volf. *Captive to the Word of God: Engaging the Scriptures for Contemporary Theological Reflection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

In this collection of essays on theological interpretation of Scripture, Miroslav Volf expresses his conviction that it is the Bible that ultimately serves as the wellspring of theology, its source of life and vigor. As a biblical scholar by training, I do not always find it easy to understand what theologians do with

the Bible. Indeed, although ostensibly governed by interpretation of the selfsame text, our two disciplines approach that text with quite different sets of assumptions. Volf recognizes this, and begins with an attempt to explain his own practice of "theological readings of biblical texts."

Theological readings, Volf explains, differ from the exegeses of (historical-critical) biblical scholars in insisting on the Bible's contemporary relevance as the primary site of God's self-revelation. This does not mean, he is quick to add, that those who undertake such readings neglect historical considerations; rather, they insist that, as Scripture, this text is not *merely* historical. It speaks also to us.

The final four chapters of this volume, all of which were published or presented on previous occasions, are case studies, a series of efforts by Volf to exemplify such theological engagement with Scripture. Chapter 3, which treats 1 Peter, will likely be of particular interest to those in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. For Volf, 1 Peter attests not to a Troeltschian sect that defines itself over against dominant society but to a community characterized by "soft difference" from its contemporaries – a community of aliens and sojourners, to be sure, but one that respects, engages, and invites its neighbors rather than vilifying them.

Chapter 4 addresses the relationship of the church to "the world," now in dialogue with the Gospel of John. Volf takes issue with the common reading according to which John is a starkly dualistic text characterized by rigid oppositions between darkness and light, etc. In fact, John cannot be considered dualistic, the author asserts, since the "oppositional dualities" the text establishes are ultimately overcome by God's love of "the world" and the Word's becoming flesh. For Volf, the "peculiar kind of exclusivism" (113) attested by the Fourth Gospel is at once more credible and, given its "utterly loving attitude toward the world" (121), more authentically respectful of difference than the facile pluralism championed in much modern thought.

In chapter 5, Volf seeks to articulate the meaning of the Christian conviction that "God is love" in the context of Muslim-Christian dialogue. In contrast to the previous two chapters, this is not so much a theological reading of 1 John as a theological reflection sponsored by certain of the epistle's themes. Similarly, the final chapter provides a reflection on modern economic life that engages the ruminations of Ecclesiastes on human

insatiability and the futility of economic "progress."

These are thoughtful pieces, and Volf arrives at some compelling theological conclusions. I am not convinced, however, that these conclusions derive from his reading of the texts with which he interacts. It may be a time-honored theological tradition to find the Trinity in the assertion that "God is love" ("If love is an essential attribute of God independent of the existence of everything that is not God, how could God be love if God were not . . . somehow also differentiated in God's own being?" [138]), but I wonder why this particular instance of theological reasoning with the text is deemed legitimate while others are excluded. (Why, for example, can one not infer, as Volf's Muslim interlocutors are wont to do [134], that Jesus is the "offspring" of the Father from the common biblical assertion that he is the Son of God?)

What we have here and throughout the book, I think, is a rule of faith operating as an undisclosed hermeneutical principle. Thus, when Volf foreshortens his initial methodological discussion by stating that theological reading of Scripture is an art, not a science (4), a cynical reader might suggest that his art consists of finding ways to align Scripture with orthodoxy.

Given that only the first chapter was newly written for this collection, it is not surprising that the book is somewhat disjointed. (Chapter 2, reprising Volf's conception of the relationship between practices and beliefs, feels particularly out of place.) Thus, the work as a whole lacks both the coherence and the depth of methodological reflection that would make it a significant contribution to the hermeneutical discussion to which its subtitle alludes.

Ryan S. Schellenberg, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Fresno Pacific University, Fresno, California

Jon M. Isaak, *New Testament Theology: Extending the Table*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011.

Jon Isaak has written an engaging, comprehensive theology of the New Testament. He understands "biblical theology" to have two dimensions: "descriptive" and "constructive" (17). More than half of his volume is given to the "descriptive" task, treating matters of authorship, context, and distinctive content and perspective, much like an Introduction. He begins with the Pauline corpus, then treats each of the Gospels, including Luke/Acts as one work, and Revelation, and concludes with the Catholic Epistles. Isaak is excellent at helping the reader appreciate the distinctive character, voice, and theological perspective of each author. He is fully conversant with, and judicious in, his use of critical methods of biblical scholarship, not shying away from stating his own critical judgments, even where those might run up against cherished traditions. His treatments of the contents of the NT will give the reader a solid introduction to where contemporary scholarship finds itself.

In the second part (after the "intermission") Isaak takes up the theologically "constructive" task of addressing topics such as christology, revelation, theology, anthropology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. He wishes to respect the multi-valence of the biblical witness. Even so, some of the distinctiveness of the various voices gives way, perhaps inevitably, to the harmony of the choir (xviii, 229). While scholarship often keeps them separate, Isaak wisely insists on keeping them together, believing that the theology of the church must be deeply rooted in an informed reading of, and listening to, the NT. He effectively employs G. B. Caird's metaphor of a conference table (xviii, 19, *passim*) to which are invited not only the various NT writers but also interpreters, past and present, including readers of Isaak's own effort to moderate the discussion and elicit clarification from the participants. Sitting close to Isaak at the conference table are Luke Timothy Johnson, G. B. Caird, Norman Kraus, and his former teachers and colleagues at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, most prominently John E. Toews.

Since the table is extended to include readers of Isaak's book, let me "grab the mic" and offer my own comments. I appreciate the author's

respectful attentiveness to NT participants in the conference. Each of them is invited to state central concerns clearly and succinctly. He is respectful too of the diversity of interpreters. I find myself largely in agreement with his take on Paul (he seems largely to embrace the "New Perspective"), even if it remains a challenge to let Paul speak as a Jew at the conference table, rather than as a "Christian."

It may be the special vulnerability of any biblical theology restricting itself to the NT, but I would like to see another session on revelation at this conference in which the role of the Scriptures that the NT writers themselves knew is given greater attention. The role of Wisdom, especially of personified Wisdom in relation to christology, receives scant attention, even though it appears to have played a determinative role in the development of how Jesus was understood (e.g., Matt. 11, John 1, 1 Cor. 1, Phil. 2, Col. 1). I would love to listen in on the exchange between Paul, Matthew, John, and James.

The influence on Isaak of René Girard is felt whenever the themes of judgment and atonement appear, with the result that juridical views of atonement, for example, are less explored than sidelined. In my opinion "discernment" and cause and effect do not do justice to divine agency in judgment as understood by NT writers. Lastly, a distinct focus on soteriology would have allowed the author to explicate more fully his provocative notion of salvation as "God's creative and transformative activity to complete creation – God's *shalom* project" (317, à la Bernhard Ott, 21), and the missional role of the church as joining in that creation "project," and to place it in conversation with other takes on soteriology in the NT.

Isaak writes with great clarity and energy. Each chapter concludes with creative and instructive exercises, making this an excellent classroom textbook or a resource for an adult education setting in which participants are eager for an intellectual and spiritual challenge. His metaphor of the table is wonderfully hospitable, and will ensure that readers will see themselves "at the table" as fully engaged participants. Isaak has moderated an excellent session at this conference-without-end.

Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, Professor of Religious Studies, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario