

authorship, date and theology of Colossians as well as its relationship to the rest of the Pauline corpus. He discusses in detail the key issues raised in the interpretation of the letter such as the paucity of references to and quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the “absent” Holy Spirit. One feature which I found interesting and helpful was the section on the “prosopography of Colossians” in which Foster examines what is known (or can be reasonably assumed) about the individuals named in the text of the letter.

Some readers will disagree with Foster’s conclusion about the authorship of Colossians. He argues that it is a pseudepigraphical letter written shortly after the apostle’s death somewhere between AD 65 and 80 from Phrygia or somewhere near there. He clearly shows why he has reached this conclusion and he presents the other positions in a fair light. He also acknowledges that the question of the authorship of Colossians does not greatly affect the letter’s interpretation.

Perhaps the key issue in Colossians in its highly developed Christology. Foster links this to the scarcity of references to the Holy Spirit and to the “heresy” which the letter was written to counter. Foster argues that the problem in Colossae was not so much Judaisers in the community as a more general tendency towards syncretism, assimilating the Christian faith to the local religions.

Like the introduction that precedes it, the commentary section is meticulously detailed and very engaging. I have used it in preparing a couple of sermons on Colossians and will refer to it when writing next year’s Lent course on the prison letters.

This will become an essential reference work for scholars and prove a very useful commentary for preachers to have to hand. It has already displaced my other commentaries on what is one of my favourite Pauline letters. Highly recommended.

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5. NEW TESTAMENT

Trevor J. Burke, Andrew S. Malone and Brian Rosner, eds., *Paul as Pastor* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018)

In all the massive literature on the apostle Paul, surprisingly little attention has been paid to Paul as a pastor, although this might be explained by the fact that Paul never calls himself a pastor. The noun only appears in Ephesians 4, and the verb is used only in a literal sense (1 Cor. 9:7). This volume, the fruit of an academic conference in 2014 involving theologians from various Australian

colleges, admirably fills that gap and shows the value of reading Paul through this lens. Its opening article by Rosner demonstrates how family metaphors of father, mother and brother in Paul shed light on various aspects of his pastoral vision and practice, a theme which recurs in later studies. The next ten chapters are each devoted to what we can learn from specific books, beginning with a study of Acts which contains an insightful analysis of Acts 20 and challenges the popular view of Paul as a hit-and-run missionary rather than pastor. Each of the letters attributed to Paul are then studied, usually a chapter on each book although concluding with 1 and 2 Thessalonians (focused again on familial terms including “orphan” and “infant”) and then the Pastorals grouped together (where Robert Yarborough powerfully explores many of what he identifies as 68 references in the three letters showing Paul’s strong work ethic).

The emphasis throughout the book is not on particular pastoral problems and how they are handled, but rather on Paul’s pastoral vision and method more generally. Cumulatively they show how theological this vision is: God, not Paul, is the ultimate pastor of the churches and (as shown especially by Paul Barnett on 2 Corinthians) Christ is the model for Paul as pastor. His central pastoral goal is conformity of his churches to Christ. In Paul’s practice we see the importance of teaching (most fully in Orr’s detailed technical study of Eph. 4:11–12) and theological truth (for example, Bird and Dunne’s study of Galatians). In one of the most creative studies, Matthew Malcolm shows how in 1 Corinthians Paul pastors by reflecting on Scripture to interpret the Corinthians’ situation and respond to it in terms of them being like “the rulers of this age”.

In that and almost every study, we are vividly introduced to Paul as a real person facing challenges remarkably similar to those facing pastors today as he knows and cares for people and ruminates on their situation in the light of the gospel. There is painful conflict (most fully explored in 2 Corinthians) and the challenges of working as part of a team of pastors (part of Sarah Harris’ fascinating study of Philippians which looks at Euodia and Syntyche), both areas with clear parallels today. Concrete applications to contemporary pastoral practice are not drawn out but they do not need to be – the exposition of the letters and accounts of Paul’s practice, although quite academic in style, provide clear guidance for the reader. There are some areas which could be explored more, notably the pastoral character of many of Paul’s prayers and the question as to how his epistolary pastoral practice which is focused on here might relate to his approach when actually present.

The final three chapters offer a different perspective from that of New Testament exegesis, exploring how Paul as pastor has been influential in church history through studies of the Pastoral Epistles’ offices and the first Church of England ordinal, Augustine of Hippo and

George Whitefield.

The book, in short, has much to offer the working pastor and preacher but sadly at £85 few will be able to benefit from its insights.

Andrew Goddard

Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015)

Michael Gorman's *Becoming the Gospel* builds upon his two previous studies of Paul: *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (2001), and *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (2009), but readers do not have to be familiar with these earlier works to appreciate and learn from *Becoming the Gospel*.

According to Gorman, Paul's aim is that the churches that he founded and continued to influence should not simply believe the gospel; rather they should embody the good news that they have come to believe. When Christians embody the gospel they become partners with God in mission. Paul's letters to the churches are intended to help believers develop a missional consciousness in every aspect of their lives so that, individually and corporately, they express the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:1–11 is a key text both for Paul and for Gorman). Once they are formed by the mind of Christ, Christian communities become the gospel. Church is intended not simply be a sign of God's kingdom but an anticipatory participation in that kingdom.

To participate in and embody the gospel is to live lives that are visibly and publicly distinctive and different; as a consequence Christians will begin to attract the notice of family and neighbours. Faithful Christian living entails the rejection of the gods of family, city and empire. Those who choose to turn from these rival gods and cultic practices will not only come to the attention of others, they will inevitably begin to face criticism and come into conflict. To follow Christ exclusively means participating in the public life of the community in a visibly very different way and at times not sharing in that communal life at all.

Gorman argues that proclamation of the gospel in the early church happened more by this "embodying" of the gospel than by public announcement or preaching. On page 43 he describes the church as the "living exegesis" of the gospel. This is something for the church today to aspire to.

Gorman wants the church today to learn from the Pauline Churches' sharing in God's mission by becoming the gospel that we proclaim. To this end he concludes each

chapter with a look at a contemporary community or ministry which he regards as embodying the gospel.

Based upon careful exegesis of a number of Paul's letters (1 Thessalonians, Philippians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans) Gorman challenges the church today to not simply believe and preach the gospel, but to become God's Christ-like (cruciform) agents in our world, sharing with the Cruciform God in mission to that world.

Becoming the Gospel is highly recommended. Gorman sent me back to read Paul's letters with a deeper appreciation of what it means to be a church and to proclaim Christ, not just in Paul's day but in every generation. It challenges the contemporary Church to become more Christ-like in its life and mission, to become, in Gorman's words, once again a "living exegesis" of the gospel.

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Stanley Porter, *John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015)

Stanley Porter's readable yet scholarly book on John's gospel and what it teaches about Jesus comes highly recommended. It is divided into nine main chapters. First, Porter discusses John in comparison with other Gospels. This includes discussion of the date of composition of the Gospel. Second, Porter turns to public proclamation of Jesus in John's Gospel. By this he means the original audience. Turning completely away from the "Johannine community" hypothesis, Porter argues that the Fourth Gospel was written primarily as a public document. He defends this view through examination of the Prologue, and treatment of particular groups such as the Galileans, Jews, Pharisees and nobility, as well as Jesus use of the "I am" sayings. Chapter three focuses on sources. Porter argues that John's Gospel knows much material that is also evident in the synoptic, and that much of this material goes back to Jesus himself.

Chapter four engages with the Gospel's prologue in greater detail. Porter utilises four types of critical engagement: form criticism, source criticism, musical-liturgical criticism and functional criticism. He concludes that each have valuable contributions to make to the task of understanding the text and so should be used to complement each other. The fifth chapter focuses on the "I am" sayings. Having discussed the background of the sayings, Porter goes on to argue that they shape the christological structure of the Gospel as a whole. He identifies nine categories that he discusses in turn. Chapter six tackles the vexed question of the identity of