

## Book Reviews

**Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May**

**Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey: Guidance for Those Who Teach and Nurture**

2010. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

Reviewed by Desiree Segura-April

Listening to children, taking their reflections seriously, is a relatively new value in many societies. For most of history, including within the Christian tradition, children were “to be seen and not heard.” In recent times, childhood studies from sociological, anthropological, and psychological perspectives have challenged this assumption and focused on the agency of children (Corsaro 2004; Qvortrup 2005; Gielen and Roopnarine 2004, James and Prout 1997; LeVine and New 2008). Children are now often recognized as important contributors to society, rather than passive recipients of socialization. Development organizations champion child participation at all stages of programming, and listening to children is highly valued. In the book *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey* Stonehouse and May provide a much-needed call to the church and families to actively listen to children’s reflections on their spiritual lives and faith journeys.

The book is equally valuable for children’s and family pastors, parents, church members, seminary students, and para-church groups. Stonehouse and May have artfully translated academic research into a helpful resource for all of these audiences. It is rare to find a book that includes so much data from primary research with children, yet also gives practical suggestions for ministry based on the research implications. This book is invaluable for graduate studies in Christian education, pastoral ministry, child development, and other related fields.

Several research projects form the basis of the book. “The Listening to Children Study” followed forty children over a period of seven years using a variety of methods. The children’s drawings and interviews over this span allowed a glimpse into how faith grows and changes through childhood and adolescence. The interviews with parents helped in understanding partnership between the church and the family. The “Adult Reflections Study” gave insight into experiences that may help and hinder children coming to faith. The “Good Shepherd Research” explored the Reflective

Engagement ministry approach with eighteen preschoolers, and the “Good Shepherd Family Research” tested the same approach with six families with children aged six to ten. Each of these projects brought insights into the ways in which children respond to particular styles of evangelism, discipleship, children’s worship, Christian education, family worship, and corporate worship. The book expertly weaves together the implications for ministry from all four studies.

Stonehouse and May carefully avoid presenting their findings as a theory on child spirituality or faith development. Rather, they emphasize that the research affirms the value of listening to and learning from children’s theological reflections and suggests how the church and families may help and hinder faith development. The research also demonstrated the profoundly positive impact of the Reflective Engagement approach to ministry. This approach emphasizes creating a sacred space where children worship that includes careful telling of Bible stories and a quiet, reflective environment where children can hear from God, talk to God, re-tell the stories using simple materials, and reflect theologically using art supplies, dance, song, etc. The research demonstrated the long-term impact of this type of experience for both children and families.

Some other findings include the crucial partnership between families and the church, the power of the biblical Story, and the value of cultivating compassion and service from a young age. Some very profound thinking about God was seen among the children whose families nurtured faith daily through their conversations and activities and intentional family times spent in the Word and worship. At the same time, the church was crucial in the child’s experience of the body of Christ, intergenerational corporate worship, and meaningful relationships with other Christians. The research also demonstrated the power of the Bible itself to impact a child’s thinking. Hearing key Bible stories multiple times from a young age through Reflective Engagement and family Bible experiences gave children a sense of the grand narrative of the biblical Story, and they began to find their own place within that. Finally, the authors were surprised by the way in which the children demonstrated an engagement with justice and compassion. Children treated marginalized children at school with care and kindness despite the unpopularity of doing so. They often initiated compassionate responses on their own. These actions seemed to stem from an understanding of a loving and compassionate God and their desire to be like that God. The research suggested that this image of God was rooted both in their exposure to God in the Bible and worship and their experiences and conversations with other Christians.

These findings corroborate research results from the “College Transition Project” of the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) which discovered that participation in intergenerational worship during high school, talking about

faith with their parents, understanding God as a loving God who cares about them, and participating in social justice activities were key factors in helping youth group graduates stick with their faith and connect with a faith community after high school graduation.<sup>1</sup> FYI presents further findings on what contributes to “Sticky Faith” for youth in several forthcoming books (Powell, Griffin, and Crawford 2011; Powell and Griffin 2011; Powell and Clark 2011). The Stonehouse and May research indicates that this kind of faith begins cultivation long before students reach high school.

Stonehouse and May do not discuss spiritual development among children who don’t grow up in Christian families or the church. Further research is necessary to discover how the church can become more missional among the millions of children around the world who live in situations of risk. What might Reflective Engagement look like for children living and working on the streets? How does the Grand Story connect with children who have been sexually exploited or lost their families to HIV and Aids? How can we listen to these children about their understanding of a loving God who cares for them? The children in this book are leading the way in sharing God’s love outside the walls of the church. May we follow their lead.

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**Dyron B. Daughrity**

**The Changing World of Christianity: The Global History of a Borderless Religion**

2010. New York: Peter Lang

Reviewed by Meesaeng Lee Choi

*The Changing World of Christianity: The Global History of a Borderless Religion* is researched and written “to understand how Christianity—originally a Middle Eastern faith—became the largest, most international religion in the world” as its author Dyron B. Daughrity states in the beginning chapter, “Christianity: the Largest Faith.” Daughrity, a historian of religion, who has most familiarity with Christianity among world religions, demonstrates a major change in the demographics of Christianity in relation to religious cartography “through the lenses of population trends, conversion rates, immigration, fertility, geographical diversity, politics, persecution, oppression, colonialism, and war.” Kenneth Scott Latourette, Stephen Neill, and Andrew Walls, the former missionary-western thinkers began to take notice of the epochal shifts in Christian demographics. Daughrity suggests, Lamin Sanneh (“The Changing Face of Christianity”) and Philip Jenkins (in his acclaimed trilogy, *The Next Christendom*, *The New Faces of Christianity*, and *God’s Continent* which reveals that the center of gravity for Christianity has shifted into “Global South”) as the leading historians in the field.

In this comprehensive project to describe the history and current trends of Christianity, world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity) are divided into mainly eight cultural blocks (in the order of the book): the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, North America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. In the first page of each chapter the book presents maps and tables with statistics of people (population, median age, life expectancy, and fertility rate) and religion (top religions, number of Christians, and major Christian groupings) for each cultural block to help us understand the demographics and access the updated information clearly.

“How Christianity functions in all eight of the world’s cultural blocks” could be analyzed in a similar methodology as anthropologist Clifford Geertz does in his book published in 1968, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (which outlined the intricate developments of a transcontinental faith). Travelling across the globe to places like India, China, and Malaysia, Daughrity has made observations and done research to analyze global Christianity and produce this work only as “a starting point” for further research more effectively and accurately. This book would be recommended for those (both scholars and students) who have just launched into a study of the field of Changing World Christianity and to gain basic encyclopedic knowledge in a very concise form of 290 pages.

Daughrity's study resulted in fascinating surprises. The discovery that the world is not as diverse as one might think as opposed to popular belief was striking. His research shows that among seven billion current world population, one third (33%) are Christian, one-fifth (20%) are Muslim, one-eighth (13%) are Hindu, and one-seventeenth (6%) are Buddhist. Over half of humanity is either Christian or Islamic. Cultural geography demonstrates that these two religions prevail over 70% of the world's inhabited territory. Other religions in the world including Judaism, Sikhism, Baha'I Faith are less than half of one percent of the world's population. More importantly, this study overthrows some scholars' comment that Islam is going to be the most predominant religion of the world. Daughrity even suggests that "it would be difficult to offer a truly global understanding of Islam because Islam has yet to significantly impact several cultural blocks in the world." Islam is not so significant in Latin America and the Caribbean and it is tiny percent in North America and Oceania. Indeed six of the world's eight cultural blocks, Christianity is the largest faith.

Daughrity, who teaches World Christianity and History of Christianity at Pepperdine University, California, explores the interplay of globalization and world Christianity: globalization is radically changing the nature of Christianity; vice versa, Christianity has deeply impacted globalization, resulting in what he suggests to call "Christobalization." With his belief that "there is no greater social institution that demonstrates the complexities and effects of globalization in our world today," this work balances between geographical and chronological globalization in delineating each cultural block Christianity: not only geographical global Christianity in each cultural block (region by region, and then country by country) but also chronological history of religion despite its limitations.

The book which deals with the history and analyzes the current situation of Christianity presents the future of Christianity for further study from "a global perspective" which has been envisioned in scholars like Justo L. Gonzalez (an encompassing future and a truly catholic future in his *Changing Shape of Church History*, 2002) and Alister E. McGrath (*The Future of Christianity*, 2002). The book suggests predictions such as the unavoidable academic study of Christianity in the social sciences and the humanities, since Daughrity believes that looking at Christianity, the comparatively recent phenomenon as a global institution (significant transformation) would present a very helpful lens for observing human culture, how it interacts with people from all eight of the world's cultural blocks, how a religion "spans the globe, united in some things, yet marvelously variegated in others."

One thing we need to consider in this book is the usage of the term, "southern Christianity" or "the South" or the "Global South." To refer to Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Daughrity picked the "Global

South” as the preferred term today and other previous historic expressions such as the “third world,” the “two-thirds world,” or the “developing world” as rather antiquated and somewhat biased. However, it seems that Daugherty might ignore the term “Majority World” or “Majority World Christianity” which was unanimously voted to be used by participants in the 2004 Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization, Bangkok, Thailand and is regarded as the best expression currently available and. There have been some challenges in utilizing the phrase, the “Global South” or “southern Christianity” to refer Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America due to a rapid expansion of Christianity in Asia, especially China.

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### **Derek Tidball**

#### **The Message of Holiness: Restoring God’s Masterpiece**

2010. Downers Grove, IL. *Inter-Varsity Press*

*Reviewed by Joseph R. Dongell*

This well-written volume on holiness by Derek Tidball, former Principal of the London School of Theology and Baptist pastor, stands among several works addressing Biblical themes within the larger series entitled “The Bible Speaks Today.”

Tidball is certainly aware of the wide range of biblical interpretations and spiritual experiences encircling this matter. But in this present volume Tidball is less interested in debating the differences between respective theological systems than in proposing a positive vision of holiness constructed from a selection of key biblical passages. Lest we miss his point, the author explicitly declares that his primary objective is “.not to inform our heads. .or to warm our hearts. .but to transform our lives. ”

The author takes as his starting point the instruction repeated four times in Scripture: “I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.” Accordingly, the core content of holiness must be found “in imitating the character of God. .it means cultivating all that would reproduce his image in us. It means becoming increasingly God-centred, Christ-like, and Spirit empowered.”

There is much to admire in Tidball’s development of his theme. First, he sets the whole matter under six headings that move naturally through his agenda: The foundation of holiness; Visions of holiness; The transformation of holiness; The dimensions of holiness; Pathways to holiness; and The destination of holiness. Tidball’s decision to unpack the theme of holiness

through the examination of *extended* biblical passages (e.g. Isaiah 58:1-14; John 17:6-19; Proverbs 2:1-22) is refreshingly helpful. Such treatment of whole passages allows internal textual ligaments to be exposed, and prevents Tidball's work from flattening out into a topical treatment of isolated proof-texts. Finally, Tidball's analysis of the "dimensions" of holiness (inner; personal; corporate; and social) nicely extends the vision of holiness into ranges of human experience too often treated separately.

Though Tidball wishes to emphasize the common ground shared by Evangelicals about holiness, he graciously admits that his Baptist perspective will sooner or later be recognized by readers. We find four such indicators: First, Tidball contends that holiness is a "progressive experience rather than a sudden achievement" (p. 213), apparently believing that holiness must be experienced either progressively or suddenly. Is no combination of modes possible? Second, Tidball acknowledges that the Spirit may meet us in "out-of-the-ordinary" ways, but implies that such encounters will cause believers to imagine they incapable of being tempted or of sinning (p. 214). Does Tidball view experiences with the Spirit as somehow paranormal, and more troublesome than helpful? Third, though Tidball often enough exhorts readers to live a holy life now, he more often softens expectations for what is actually attainable in this life. He seems to imagine that only two pathways exist: absolute, sinless perfection (which all would deny), and an endless, sloggish battle with sin, often characterized by failure (a pathway which Tidball apparently affirms). Is there no pathway of expectation marked out in Scripture that is *characterized by victory* without being confused with the pipe dream absolute, sinless perfection?

Fourth, we would have hoped that a book on holiness would have tapped into the rich and *emphatic* vein of Biblical teaching that love is the call that comprehends all other commandments (Rom. 12:9), and the unmistakable mark of those truly born anew. If (as Tidball asserts at the outset) holiness involves imitating the character of God, then should not the truth that God is love (I John 4:7-8) highlight *love* as the central content of holiness? Ought not love become the organizing center of reflections about God's character brought to life within us through the Spirit?

These reservations of ours should not obscure the overall quality and value of Tidball's work. One would be hard-pressed to find a treatment of holiness with greater breadth in solid exposition, or depth in exploration, or urgency in pastoral concern.

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**Accordance. Scholars Collection  
DVD-ROM and CD-ROM, version 8**

2008. OakTree Software, Inc.

*Reviewed by Michael D. Matlock and Jason R. Jackson*

Accordance 8 (Acc8) is a premier Bible study software program allowing seminarians, Church leaders who teach Scripture, and advanced Bible students an assortment of fine exegetical resources. In this review, we focus our attention more specifically upon the Scholars Collection of Accordance because it contains foundational original language texts and tools for Bible study. Acc8 is designed specifically for a Macintosh operating system (10.1 or higher). Windows and Linux users can obtain a free Mac OS emulator to run Acc8, but there is a slight loss of functionality in the areas of printing, copying Hebrew and Greek fonts, and viewing maps.

Acc8 is the kind of product Mac users expect: fast, reliable, and easy to use. This latest version features a universal binary format that runs natively on the new Intel-based Macs. Acc8 provides frequent free upgrades, exceptional online (podcasts and training videos) and toll-free technical support, and a vibrant discussion forum with frequent staff interaction. There are three levels in the Scholars Collection: Introductory, \$149; Standard, \$249; and Premier, \$349. Scholar's Premier contains the Greek and Hebrew texts and lexicons in the Standard and Introductory levels, but also includes Rahlfs' revised Septuagint with the Kraft/Taylor/Wheeler morphology and two fine theological dictionaries: Jenni-Westermann for the OT and Spicq for the NT. Acc8 may be purchased with a group discount (for students, faculty, domestic and international ministers, et al.) such as the twenty-five percent discount currently offered to Asbury Theological Seminary students coordinated by a language teaching fellow.

While nothing new for Accordance, the Acc8 interface design continues to make studying and searching the Bible central to the overall program and is remarkably simple to operate. This is evident from the opening of the main window, the "workspace," which is an integrated search and display window built on the "what you see is what you get" principle. For example, the workspace window is divided into three sections. At the extreme top, there is a tab section to organize and utilize each resource opened; this tab organization system resembles a physical file folder system. Directly under the tab section, the "search entry box" is located. Here, users can select which language and/or version of the Bible to search and choose if they want to search for words or verses. If users are interested in searching the category of words, they can perform basic search options such as simple word or phrase searches and also sophisticated grammatical searches. Bible students have the option to: 1) limit their search to a particular boundary



(e.g. clause, sentence, etc.) within a user-definable range (e.g. Matthew, Gospels, New Testament, etc.); 2) highlight textual variants; and 3) choose to view a range of verses surrounding the result verses. The results are instantly displayed under the search entry box in the third and largest portion of the workspace (the “search results” window), and the results can be viewed in a variety of ways.

Advanced searching options are astounding in Acc8, and users may harness the power by utilizing a set of memorizable commands and symbols, all of which may also be accessed through a convenient drop-down search menu or keyboard shortcuts. The commands are organized into connecting commands (e.g. AND, NOT, FOLLOWED BY, WITHIN # WORDS, etc.) and stand-alone commands, including two new powerful commands. The INFER command allows searching within a passage for quotations from and allusions to another passage, and the FUZZY command searches for inexact phrases. Acc8 also offers a “construct search” or graphical search option in English, Greek, and Hebrew, which enables users to find specific grammatical constructions more visually. There is also a “search all” function that allows users to search for occurrences of a word, verse, phrase, etc. throughout their library of resources. Finally, Acc8 provides an additional “details” option for every type of word search which will graph, chart, and analyze the search results and supply the user with a basic concordance.

A user may also expand the display portion by adding Bible study resources to the current workspace by opening additional panes containing other comparable texts or translations, reference tools (e.g. commentaries), or user-created notes. Within a particular workspace, panes may be arranged vertically or horizontally; dragged into a new position; customized with regard to colors, sizes, and highlights; and saved for future reference. In addition, other research tools such as lexicons, dictionaries, commentaries, maps, and timelines may be added to the workspace through the tab system or opened in a new workspace for concurrent viewing with other workspaces. Users are thus able to create their own unique uncluttered workspace.

In addition to the primary workspace window, Acc8 features three auxiliary windows: 1) an instant details box, 2) a searchable library providing easy access to modules, and 3) a resource palette. The instant detail box shows the basic parsing information, transliteration, key number, and primary gloss(es) for every word in a tagged text simply by scrolling the mouse over a word. Advanced information can be obtained by ‘triple-clicking’ on a word within any tool. The library window, which is fully searchable, allows user access to every tool within their library. Users may choose to open a new tool or look up a word or phrase selected within the current display in a new tool. The resource palette provides access to more detailed information of many resources in Acc8.

In the remaining balance of the review, beyond the impressive concordance features of the program, we will call attention to some of the more important exegetical features of the program for seminarians and other Bible students who understand original biblical languages. Users can click on the speech tool to hear the original languages read. In terms of syntactical analysis, users can construct their own grammatically color-coded sentence diagrams making grammatical analysis of texts more understandable; with one click on the “syntax” icon, Acc8 creates a syntax function chart for any passage which users can also conveniently fill out and print.

In terms of Greek reference grammars, Scholars Premier comes with Robertson’s *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* and Burton’s *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*; Wallace’s *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* may be purchased as an add-on. As for biblical Hebrew reference grammars, buyers can purchase add-ons: Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley’s *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, Joüon-Muraoka’s revised *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, and Waltke-O’Connor’s *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. For the Septuagint, Conybeare-Stock’s *Grammar of Septuagint Greek* comes standard with Scholars Premier.

In the area of biblical Greek language lexicons, Thayer’s and Louw-Nida’s lexicons as well as Newman’s *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* come standard; Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich (BDAG, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), Liddell and Scott’s intermediate lexicon (L & S) and Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie’s (LEH) lexicon for the Septuagint are available for an additional cost. As for biblical Hebrew and Aramaic lexicons, program users can utilize the abridged Brown, Driver, and Briggs’ (BDB) lexicon; the unabridged BDB, *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (CDCH), and Koehler-Baumgartner’s (HALOT) lexicon are obtainable as add-on modules. With Scholars Premier, the user receives the following theological dictionaries: Jenni-Westermann’s *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Harris-Archer-Waltke’s *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, and Spicq’s *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*.

With regard to exegetical commentaries, students have several good options for purchase including the Word Biblical, Hermencia, Pillar New Testament, New International Greek Testament, JPS Torah, and several other sets. The scholarly six-volume Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary, the one volume Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, and the IVP black NT dictionaries can be purchased separately. When Bible study students need to compare parallel passages in the Bible, there are a host of options such as several Gospel modules, an Epistles version, Old Testament passages, and Old Testament texts found in the New Testament. For those Bible students interested in the study of Early Judaism, Early Christianity, and

Rabbinics, there are a plethora of excellent add-on original language texts (including many morphologically tagged) and translation resources. Lastly, we should mention that the (add-on) Graphics DVD includes excellent Bible maps, timelines and photos for personal and instructional uses.

With a portable computer, Bible students can conveniently tote what would be an otherwise massive hard copy library; in just a couple of months, the Acc8 app for the iPhone/iPad will be available making Bible study on the go even more convenient. We close our review by noting a couple of areas of improvement or items that buyers should realize. First, more Unicode support is needed for Acc8. The ability to import html documents with Unicode non-Latin languages (e.g. Chinese) into the Accordance user tools as well is not currently possible. Moreover, the able to export Unicode Hebrew fonts to word processors such as MS Word is problematic although fault lies with MS Word not Accordance. Second, even though Acc8 does have the option to display texts and background tools such as maps and timelines in a parallel pane if two workspaces are opened, the reviewers would welcome an option to have the parallel panes in the same tab so that the user does not have to open a new workspace and resize both workspaces to view them side by side. Finally, in terms of pricing, we would prefer a slightly more generous amount of modules in the various levels of the program. Nevertheless, the reviewers highly recommend this program for seminarians and others with higher level Bible study education.

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**Paul L. Gavrilyuk, Douglas M. Koskela, Jason E. Vickers, Eds.**  
**Immersed in the Life of God: The Healing Resources of the Christian Faith**

2008. *Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.*

*Reviewed by Stephen Seamands*

What do doctrinal resources have to do with healing and renewal in the church today? Very little in the minds of many Christians. Some would even set them in opposition to each other. Doctrine then is looked upon as an impediment to healing, a dose of bad medicine detrimental to the patient's health. However, throughout his distinguished career spanning the last three decades, William J. Abraham, as a professor of philosophy, evangelism, or systematic theology, and as a leader in United Methodist and ecumenical church renewal, has passionately, perceptively and persistently insisted that

the exact opposite is true. When properly carried out, he has consistently maintained, immersion in the church's rich and wide-ranging doctrinal resources is truly good medicine and will work wonders to bring deep healing for her ill.

During the first decade of his career, Abraham's scholarly work largely reflected his philosophical interests. The second, by contrast, emerged primarily from his engagement in more practical ecclesial concerns related to evangelism and catechesis. The third has seen the integration and culmination of the first two in his development and articulation of "canonical theism," the notion that the church's canon not only includes scripture but also extends to creeds, councils, sacraments, sacred images, ministerial orders and saints.

This volume of academic essays, written by various friends, colleagues, and students of Abraham, celebrates and honors his rich and prodigious work over the decades. In festschrifts such as this, sometimes the contributors, reflecting various expertise and interests, cover a wide-range of subjects, but there is an overall lack of unified focus. Not so here. Regardless of what Christian tradition, belief or practice is under consideration—conversion, initiation, scripture, liturgy, ceremony, reconciliation, confession, cognition, ethics, theodicy—the concern is always, like Abraham's, to explore how it contributes to the healing of human brokenness and provides good medicine for the church's soul. No doubt John Wesley, given his generally acknowledged therapeutic approach to salvation, would be pleased.

In making the connection to healing as they do, the distinguished contributors expand and deepen our understanding of the nature and role of Christian healing. They also suggest that a healing dimension seems to permeate every aspect of our faith. As one who teaches a course on the theology and practice of healing, this volume will therefore be useful to me in helping students who often come with narrow conceptions of healing broaden their understanding.

I only wished another essay had been included—one dealing with what most people tend to think of first when they hear the word "healing," i.e., the supernatural, miraculous kind of healing common in the ministry of Jesus. How does the church today recover a proper balanced understanding and practice related to this type of healing? Surely, that is a crucial question we must wrestle with today, especially in the light of our global context. An essay reflecting upon it would make this already useful volume even better.

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**Thomas Jay Oord**

**The Nature of Love: A Theology**

*St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2010*

*Reviewed by Wm. Andrew Schwartz*

*The Nature of Love* is groundbreaking work, in which Thomas Jay Oord does what few theologians have done – offer a coherent theology of love in dialogue with other important love theologies. The book compliments a second recent book by Oord, *Defining Love*, which defines love and engages the scientific and philosophical communities on the same subject.

Oord defines love as acting “intentionally, in sympathetic/empathetic response to God and others, to promote overall well-being.” The middle chapters explore issues of love arising from biblical, historical, and philosophical concerns. The final chapter provides Oord’s own vision, a perspective he calls “Essential Kenosis.”

Early on, Oord examines biblical uses of love by using Anders Nygren’s work as his touchstone. This examination reveals two primary insights: 1) the Bible contains ambiguous and inconsistent uses of love language; 2) love is the overarching theme in the Bible.

Inconsistent uses of love in the Bible, says Oord, make defining love from a strictly biblical perspective impossible. “Love” possesses multiple uses and meanings. Oord captures the heart and dominant meaning of love in the Bible, however, which he identifies as intentionally responding to God and others to do good.

Oord sharply distinguishes his definition of love from St. Augustine’s. While Augustine requires a qualifying word like “proper” or “improper” to distinguish love as good or bad, Oord considers love always to pertain to doing good. According to the dominant use of “love” in Scripture, love is always proper; “improper love” is an oxymoron.

Oord says love takes diverse forms. A child’s love for a parent may take a different form than a spouse’s love for a spouse. Attempts to promote overall well-being can produce diverse results and consequences. But the lover’s intent to bring about good is of primary consideration.

Oord identifies both similarities and differences between his understanding of love and Clark Pinnock’s version of open theology. He is largely sympathetic to Pinnock’s views. As a relational theologian, Oord believes God is personal and genuinely experiences time. If love involves an empathetic/sympathetic response, God must experience time and relate to others moment by moment.

Oord departs from Pinnock’s version of open theism, however, on the issue of God’s voluntary self-limitation. Pinnock believes God voluntarily chooses to limit God’s own power to allow creaturely freedom. Oord

contends that a God voluntarily self-limited could, at any moment, choose to become un-self-limited. Divine voluntary limitation leaves God culpable for failing to prevent genuine evil and innocent suffering in the world. Such a God, Oord suggests, does not love consistently.

Oord titles the final chapter, “Essential Kenosis.” In doing so, he intentionally associates his theology of love with the kenosis passage in Philippians 2. Oord argues that Jesus is central to a Christian theology of love, and the kenosis passage is a significant means by which we understand the divine love Jesus displays.

Oord makes an important distinction between Essential Kenosis and the voluntarily self-limitation of theologies like Pinnock’s. For Oord, Essential Kenosis involves *involuntary* self-limitation. God is limited by God’s own nature – love; God cannot not love. Divine love always grants freedom and/or agency to creatures. This notion overcomes the problem of evil and other dilemmas for Christian theology, all the while not requiring that external forces, worlds, or laws outside God constrain divine power.

Some implications of Essential Kenosis are provided in the final segments of *The Nature of Love*. Oord presents what his new theory of divine love and power mean for understanding creation, eschatology, miracles, theodicy, and the resurrection of Jesus. If God’s essentially kenotic love is theology’s starting point, many traditional Christian doctrines must be reformulated in ways consistent with the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Perhaps surprising to some readers, these reformulations often fit the biblical text better than traditional doctrines. The theology proclaiming God’s involuntary self-limitation and kenotic love offers new lenses by which Christians can revision theology and experience God in a fresh way.

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**James R. Payton**  
**Getting the Reformation Wrong. Correcting some**  
**Misunderstandings**

*Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010, 240 pages, \$23*

*Reviewed by Ben Witherington*

History is unquestionably messy and complex, and this is all the more the case when one is considering some of the most turbulent and momentous epochs in history. One such period is the Reformation, and James R. Payton, professor of history at Redeemer University College in Ancaster Ontario, is determined to demonstrate to us how we have gotten various things wrong about the period called the Reformation.

Like any good historian, Payton insists that we study the Reformation in its proper context, which is to say in light of the previous era of the Middle

Ages and the Renaissance. This is why he spends the first two substantial chapters of the book giving us a précis about those two eras insofar as they have a bearing on how we should interpret the Reformation. For example, he stresses that there was already a considerable outcry for reformation of the church in both of these eras, and a few efforts at affecting such a change. Western Christendom knew things were not well and kept calling for ‘reformatio in capite et membris’—‘reformation in head and members’ The problem was, those who heard the cry and could do something about it, largely ignored it or practiced call forwarding. In his chapter about the Renaissance, one of the best in this helpful study, Payton rightly notes that the ‘humanism’ that arose in this period was not in fact the forebear of modern secular humanism. It was rather a reaction to scholasticism and an attempt to recover the wisdom of antiquity, through the study of what we today call the Greek and Latin classics, but also through the study of the master works of the patristic fathers as well. As Payton rightly points out, humanists like Petrarch or Erasmus were not attempting to shack themselves free from the shackles of Christianity. Rather, in the case of most of these humanists, they were sincere Christians who wrote treatises about both the ‘classics’ and about Christian antiquity as well. What they were reacting to was the stifling legacy of medieval scholasticism.

This book is very well written, and remarkably free of typos (but see p. 116 line 10), and beginning with the third chapter (pp. 72ff.) Payton really turns to the meat of his subject—the ways in which even we Protestants have gotten the Protestant Reformation wrong. At the epicenter of the early chapters of this part of the book is of course that former Augustinian monk, Martin Luther. Payton skillfully reminds us that Luther, despite all his fulminating against scholastic scholarship of various sorts was himself a product of a Catholic scholastic education, had an earned PhD, and unlike various of the other Reformers (e.g. Erasmus, Melancthon, Bucer) was not a part of the humanist movement that wanted to get back behind the medieval ways of arguing and doing theology. Indeed, Luther used the very same sorts of invective, polemics, character attacks and the like that were all too common in scholastic debates. In this regard, he was very different from various of his fellow Reformers. Luther, for example, unlike Melancthon was not trained in rhetoric, nor did he read the NT in a rhetorical manner, for the most part. It is thus all the more ironic that Luther saw Rom. 1.16-17 as the crucial thesis statement of Romans, which trumpeted the great truth of justification by grace through faith alone. Luther however was not a social reformer, and when the Peasant Revolt emerged, he was for its violent suppression. His theology of two kingdoms, with the realm of rulers and knights being part of kingdom No. 2 which could not be expected to run on Christian principles, set him at odds with

other Reformers, especially the more radical ones. He was a champion of church reform, not of state reform.

Chapter 4 succinctly chronicles how, while the Reformers all generally agreed on justification by grace through faith, and on the notion of Scripture as the ultimate norm, there were in fact many crucial subjects, on which they had heated disagreements, for example about the Lord's Supper. The most crucial chapters in this book however are Chapters 5-6 which deal with the two banner notions of *sole fide* and the notion of *sole scriptura* (pp. 115-59). These chapters repay close scrutiny. One of the things Payton is exercised to demonstrate in Chapter 5 is that the Reformers did not think that 'faith' was ever alone. It was always accompanied by the work of the Spirit, and the enabling to do good works (though they were not viewed as salvific). The Reformers did not think that merely notional assent to the proposition that Jesus is Lord was all there was to being saved. Perhaps the oddest part of the book is pp. 127-30 where Payton is critical of camp meetings and revivals in North America, where he suggests the notion that a crisis experience and a moment of 'decision for Christ', even if followed by a dissolute life, had nonetheless saved the person for all eternity. It is hard to know what sort of revivals he is thinking of— certainly not the Methodist and holiness revivals which stressed not only conversion but holiness of heart and life. It may be that we have been getting some things wrong about the Reformation, but Payton is just as guilty of getting some things wrong about the Camp meetings and revivals of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In Chapter 5, Payton rather easily demonstrates that the Reformers did not mean by *sola Scriptura*, that Scripture was the only norm for the church. To the contrary they also saw the ancient creeds, the ecumenical councils and the wisdom of the ancient church fathers as norms of a lesser sort as well. In this respect the Protestant Reformers stand quite apart from some modern Evangelicals who seem to think that their forebears insisted that the Bible alone is the authority and norm for the church. While the Reformers agreed that the canon should be the measuring rod for all else and the super norm of all other norms, they did not think that the Bible was the sole authority in and for the church. It is somewhat surprising that in an otherwise excellent chapter Payton takes a potshot at the NIV as if its translators had fallen prey to the 'Scripture good, tradition bad' caricature. Having personally known many of the NIV translators and their views, I can say without fear of contradiction, this was not the view of the translators like Doug Stuart and Gordon Fee who taught me.

Chapters 7-9 explain how the Anabaptists fit into this larger picture (they were not a unified group and are the forebears of the Mennonites and the Amish, but not so much the Baptists in America, who were more indebted to the English Baptists). What is striking is that in the big 'baptism'



controversy, every single one of the major Reformers— Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Bucer, Beza, Knox, Cranmer, Wesley all were convinced that infant baptism was a good Biblical practice. Adult baptism was not a doctrine of the major Protestant Reformers. Indeed, one could argue that while the Baptists owed something to the Radical Reformation, they were part of a different renewal movement than what has come to be called the Protestant Reformation. To his credit (in chapter 8) Payton covers the Counter-Reformation launched in large part by the Jesuits, against the Protestant Reformation, with the result that many of the successes of the Protestant movement in eastern and central and western Europe were reversed by the Jesuits. How did they do it? By founding great Christian schools that even the Protestants wanted to send their children to, children who mostly were converted back to Catholicism in these schools. Payton also covers in chapter 9 the rise of Protestant scholasticism after the time of the great Reformers, and here again he is on target in his critique of the successors of Luther and Calvin and the other Reformers who resorted to a scholastic method of systematizing and atomizing the Biblical text in ways that departed from the *modus operandi* of the Reformers and indeed from some of their theological conclusions as well.

In chapter 10, entitled ‘Did the Reformation Succeed?’ Payton demonstrates, reformer by reformer that each of the major reformers would not have been able to answer yes to that question. Indeed, many of them died prematurely or died disillusioned with the outcome, and that includes Luther. Had Payton extended his study, as he should have done, to the English Reformation, he would have come to the person of John Wesley— who witnessed, affirmed, and was indeed excited about, to his dying day, the incredible success of the Wesleyan revival, a revival that went on for over two generations and did not degenerate into some sort of theological scholasticism. Wesley was well satisfied with the Methodist revival’s ability to transform various aspects of both English and then American culture, and indeed would have seen Wilberforce’s remarkable success in ending the slave trade in England not long after his death as a further example of how the Gospel could affect both spiritual and social transformation. The difference between Wesley and the earlier Reformers is that Wesley did not set himself up in opposition to the Catholic Church, did not spend his time in continual theological bickering, did not see himself in apocalyptic terms, nor did he see himself as a prophet predicting on the near horizon the return of Christ. This is not to say Wesley was unconcerned about orthodoxy, but the orthodoxy he was concerned about was what the Bible clearly taught, or its clear implications. In fact, he would reject major tenants of the theological platforms of the previous Reformers (e.g. Luther’s ‘bondage of the human will’ idea and his two kingdoms notion, Calvin’s

predestination and eternal security, Zwingli's under emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the Anabaptists repudiation of infant baptism etc.). Payton's study is excellent in what it covers in various ways, but it ignores the last full flowering of the Reformation in England and then America.

In Chapters 11-12 which conclude this study Payton is able to demonstrate that the Reformation period should not in itself be seen as a norm, or as some golden age of church history that we should seek to imitate in detail. He also shows that a balanced appreciation of the Reformation allows that it produced both triumphs (getting back to the heart of the Gospel of justification by faith) and tragedies, the latter being a movement that has now splintered into some 26,000 or more different denominations. It is a mark of a good study that it produces this sort of extended response. In view of the fact that this book is well under 300 pages, Payton would have done well to have finished the job— by dealing with the English Reformation that followed the Continental one. Had he done so, he might well have been able to modify some of his more negative conclusions.

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**Kenneth Cain Kinghorn**  
**The Story of Asbury Theological Seminary**

2010. Published by Emeth Press

Reviewed by Laurence W Wood

Asbury Seminary has just released (October 2010) *The Story of Asbury Theological Seminary*, written by Kenneth Cain Kinghorn. In 1910 Henry Clay Morrison became president of Asbury College, and that year the school began a special course of study for those planning to enter full-time ministry. At that time, the college constructed a two-story frame dormitory solely for those ministerial students. These divinity students soon formed a Theologues Club, which grew impressively until the Seminary was officially launched in 1923. The year of 1910 was a year of beginning, so in a sense this institutional history is a centennial volume.

The 498-page *Story of Asbury Theological Seminary* is a comprehensive chronicle of the Seminary, carefully documented with endnotes following each of its twenty chapters. Kinghorn has written a faithful, factual, and

fair account, devoid of his personal opinions in so far as that is possible. He said, “Although the chronicles of the Seminary are filled with numerous instances of God’s miraculous intervention, guidance, and blessing, this book is not intended to be hagiographic. The story of Asbury Theological Seminary is not without misunderstandings, missteps, and mistakes and this book does not avoid them.”

Kinghorn’s writing style makes this real history easy to read like a fascinating story, except there is nothing fictitious or unreal within these pages. Kinghorn carries the reader along with the inclusion of sagas of heroic drama, inspiring episodes, accounts of courage, examples of faith, and incidents of divine providence. An added feature of this book is its inclusion of more than 300 photographs. The appendices consist of a chronology, a list of faculty members from 1923 to 2010 (with their dates of service), an index of subjects, and an index of photographs.

The author closes the book with the following words: “Charles Wesley’s hymn *And Can It Be That I Should Gain?* is the Seminary’s official hymn. Considering the challenges that the founders faced and the obstacles the generations have overcome, Asbury Seminary’s very existence and the global work of theological education in which it is engaged are at once unlikely and astonishing. Indeed, one might ask, ‘And can it be?’”

Those interested in the history of Asbury Theological Seminary will find this book fascinating reading, although at times it becomes a bit tedious by giving too much attention to incidental details.

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### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> See [www.fulleryouthinstitute.org/college-transition/](http://www.fulleryouthinstitute.org/college-transition/) for more information on this and other related studies and resources.