

inadequate to account for the simplest forms of life, let alone the origin of the universe.

Blanchard writes an excellent chapter on the role of faith in science and in religion, clearly contrasting the belief required of the evolutionary scientist and the trust placed in an omnipotent Creator who has revealed his handiwork in the very things that he has made. Facts fit the creation record, giving credence to faith in the invisible Creator. This, of course, leads to the expectation that there would be biographical summaries of many Bible-believing and creationist scientists of modern history. Blanchard points out in his chapter “Ignorant Fatheads” (the pejorative used by evolutionists about creationists) that the atheistic and naturalistic purveyors of scientism still use the knowledge and discoveries of these great men in their own disciplines.

Although the book is written with a Christian audience in mind, Blanchard closes with a clear appeal to the non-believer. He challenges the reader to see the evidence for a creationist worldview not merely as a better message, but as a critical message. God, Blanchard concludes, has revealed himself in creation, in the Bible, and in his Son, Jesus Christ. Trusting in the omnipotent Creator as Savior and Lord is “not to reject or abandon reason or scientific principles, but to go beyond both and to join millions of others who, over thousands of years, have found God to be true to his Word, and whose search for greater truth than science could ever uncover has led them to a life-transforming relationship with the Creator” (pp. 127–28).

Blanchard covers the subject well and keeps the reader engrossed. As a quick summary of the main reasons for a creationist faith, *Has Science God Rid of God?* is an excellent book for college-bound young people, for parents who wish to answer the questions of their children who are exposed to evolutionary “facts” at an ever-younger age, and for those who are willing to “be ready to give an answer” (1 Pet 3:15) concerning this vital issue.

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Making Sense of the New Testament: Three Crucial Questions. By Craig L. Blomberg. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004, 192 pp., \$14.99.

Craig Blomberg’s *Making Sense of the New Testament* is published as a companion volume to Tremper Longman’s 1998 book, *Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions*. In the current volume, Blomberg sets out to identify “three crucial questions” that must be answered by anyone who wishes to consider the truth claims of the NT.

In chapter 1 he answers the question of whether the NT presents a reliable historical portrait of Jesus. Here he takes up the old question of whether the Christ of history resembles the Christ of the Scriptures. Blomberg concludes that the historicity of the Gospels and Acts is confirmed by sound evidence and that accepting their historical claims does not require

a leap of faith. He does a good job of taking the reader step-by-step through the evidence, and in the end produces a very convincing apologetic for the veracity of the Gospels and Acts.

In chapter 2 Blomberg takes up the controversial question of whether Paul was the true founder of Christianity. He queries whether the teaching of Jesus can be reconciled with the teaching of the great apostle to the Gentiles: "Was Paul, in fact, the second founder, or perhaps even the true founder of Christianity as it has developed down the centuries?" (p. 15). In this section Blomberg responds to the skeptical charge that Paul's letters reveal a radical revision of the teachings of the historical Jesus. He does well to point out that Paul is aware of the Jesus traditions that were current in his day and that some of these traditions appear in his letters. In 1 Cor 11: 23–25, for instance, Paul makes use of a tradition that was handed down to him by word of mouth. This tradition looks remarkably similar to Luke's version of Jesus' words at the Last Supper (Luke 22: 19–20). Paul's and Luke's use of a common oral tradition shows the antiquity of Paul's theology of atonement and that he was concerned with the historical Jesus.

Blomberg wrestles with other texts in Paul that allude directly or indirectly to Jesus' teachings. He says, "Theological distinctives between the two men remain, and the differing purposes of the Gospels and the Epistles must be taken into account" (p. 106). Thus, there is more evidence of continuity between Jesus and Paul than is commonly acknowledged by NT scholars, and the points of discontinuity can be explained by the different purposes of Paul the letter writer and the evangelists who wrote the Gospels.

In chapter 3 Blomberg considers how the NT applies to the modern day. He explores the various principles that govern the interpretation of the NT's diverse literary forms. These include: (1) determining the original application intended by the author of the passage, (2) evaluating the level of specificity of those applications to see if they should be or can be transferred across time and space to other audiences, (3) if they cannot be transferred, identifying broader cross-cultural principles that the specific elements of the text reflect, and (4) finding appropriate contemporary applications that embody those principles (p. 108). He then works out these principles in relation to the different sections of the NT canon: the Gospels, Acts, Paul's letters, Hebrews and General Epistles, and the Revelation.

The principles that Blomberg elucidates can provide a good starting point for developing legitimate implications out of the author's original meaning. One notices, however, that it is still unclear how one is to know when it is appropriate to move beyond the intention of the biblical author in applying the Scripture. For example, on p. 140 Blomberg says that the interpreter needs to "recognize that Paul lays down principles which could not be fully implemented in his world but which challenge later Christians to move even *further* in the directions he was already heading" (emphasis mine). This *further* idea sounds remarkably similar to William Webb's "redemptive movement hermeneutic," to which Blomberg refers in an extended footnote on pp. 172–173. Webb's hermeneutic appears to the

present reviewer to be highly unstable and, in Webb's application of it, favorable to an egalitarian reading of Paul.

In sum, Blomberg has produced a handy little primer on some of the basic questions that face the reader of the NT. There is not much new here for specialists in the field, but this book will be useful for beginning students of the NT at both the college and graduate levels. It is also useful as an apologetic tool for anyone who might be interested in evidence concerning the historical claims of the NT.

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Perspectives on Church Government. Edited by Chad Owen Brand and R. Stanton Norman. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004, 336 pp., \$19.99.

This timely book on church polity explores the three traditional ecclesiologies: Episcopal (the bishop-led church), Presbyterian (the presbytery-led church), Congregational (the congregation-led church), and two modified positions.

The chapter advocating single elder rule is written by Danny Akin, President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. James R. White, a Reformed Baptist pastor, who serves as an adjunct professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, makes a case for plural elders. The chapter advocating pure congregational government is written by James Leo Garrett, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, while theologian Robert L. Reymond defends the Presbyterian model. The Episcopalian position is handled by Paul F. M. Zahl.

At the end of each chapter is a response by the other four contributors. This is a thoughtful way of clarifying not only the various points of view, but also a way of putting each view in a larger perspective.

Of the five contributors, Akin gives the best scriptural defense for his view. Garrett, however, charges Akin with limiting the powers granted to the congregation to calling a pastor, ordaining ministers and deacons, purchasing property, constructing buildings, changing bylaws, etc., with all other powers belonging to the pastor and his staff. Garrett defines congregational polity as the "final human authority" in the broadest of terms, stating that decisions about "membership, leadership, doctrine, worship, conduct, missions, finances, property, relationships, and the like are to be made by the gathered congregation except when such decisions have been delegated by the congregation to individual members or groups of members" (p. 157).

Dr. Reymond rather forcefully questions Akin's interpretation of many of the Scriptures he uses. However, Reymond uses logic rather than biblical consensus to question Akin's interpretation. For instance, he questions what the word *church* means. Does it mean the assembly of the whole or does it



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