

## Resensies

Braaten, C E & Jenson, R W, 2000. *Sin, death and the devil*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Prys: Onbekend.

Sonde, dood en die duiwel is by geleentheid al deur die bekende reformator, Maarten Luther as die onheilige triniteit uitgewys. In hierdie aangrypende boek deur 'n aantal vooraanstaande teoloë soos Braaten, Hauerwas, Niehaus en Meilaender, word die siek westerse samelewing, wat inderdaad al vanuit verskeie oorde getipeer is as 'n "gemeenskap van dood" skerp onder die teologiese vergrootglas geplaas. In die inleidende hoofstuk ontmasker Robert Jenson die nihilisme, kenmerkend van ons tyd, wat tot gevolg het dat sowel pastors, kerkmense as ongelowiges soms hooftronspelers in die nihilistiese tirannie-koor word. Hierna worstel Stanley Hauerwas op sy kenmerkende manier met die probleem van siekte en sonde en met moderne mense se morele dilemmas in hierdie verband. Sy term "sinsick", in aansluiting by Thomas Akwinas se beskouing dat sonde mens siek maak, help onder andere om moderne mense daarvan bewus te maak dat ons lewens deur dood en siekte gekonstitueer word en dat dit tekenend is van die feit dat iets ernstig verkeerd gegaan het. Die kerk se antwoord hierop behoort egter nie allerlei komplekse verklarings van die toestand van sonde en siekte te wees nie, maar eerder 'n aktiewe transformasie van individue se lewe sodat sondaars se identiteit herskryf kan word deur hulle nuwe verstaan en ervaring van die verlossingsgebeure.

Carl Braaten worstel op sy beurt indringend met die probleem van die duiwel in 'n hoofstuk, getiteld "Powers in conflict: Christ and the devil." Hy toon aan dat die Christendom altyd opgeskeep sit met die duiwel, of ons daarvan hou of nie. Met soveel bese stelsels en ideologieë in die wêreld om ons, kan ons eenvoudig in elk geval nie anders as om deurentyd met hierdie lewensgevaarlike vyand rekening te hou nie, in welke ge-waad hy hom ook al deur die loop van die geskiedenis klee. Die skreien-de mislukking van die kerk om mense te sensiteer om God se stem reg te hoor, is maar een van die vele suksesse van die Bese in hierdie verband.

Op hulle beurt skets Richard John Neuhaus en Vigen Guroian in die laaste twee hoofstukke die verhaal van nuwe lewe wat deur Jesus Christus in ons wêreld ingedra is, sowel as die verhaal van oorwinning oor die dood wat sterwende mense elke dag wêreldwyd in die gesig staar.

Hierdie boek is 'n moet vir elke leraar en student van die Bybel wat stoei met vrae rakende die realiteit en effek van dinge soos boosheid en die dood in ons moderne samelewing. Sonder om in ingewikkelde teolo-

giese redenasies te verval, slaag die verskillende outeurs goed daarin om vrae te vra wat in baie teologiese kringe as irrelevant beskou word. Die noodsaak van 'n evangelie van hoop, wat setel in die sterwe en opstanding van Christus as triomf oor boosheid, is die vernaamste rigtingwyser wat keer op keer in hierdie boek deurskemer. Dit hoort ongetwyfeld op die boekrak van enige moderne Christendenker.

S J Joubert

Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew*. Intervarsity Press, Leicester, 343 pp. Price £9.99.

Die gebruiklike inleidingsvrae word eerste in die boek verken. Dan begin die boek werklik lewe. Die outeur slaag daarin om selfs die geslagsregister in die begin van Matteus so interessant weer te gee dat 'n mens kwalik die boek kan neersit. Dit tittle word deurgaans in die oog gehou aangesien die tema van "Matteus se boodskap" gedurig deurskemer. Green neem dit waarvan Matteus skryf, en plaas dit in die konteks van 'n goed-ontwikkelde geheelbeeld. Dit kom voor asof Green Matteus se denke verstaan.

Jesus speel 'n sentrale rol, van die begin van die geslagsregister af, deur elke hoofstuk tot aan die einde waar 'n keuse aan die lesers gestel word om Jesus ook 'n rol in hulle lewens te laat speel. Hierdie Jesus is die vervulling van die Ou Testamentiese belofte... Iemand vanuit die oorspronklike leser se geledere, maar ook God en ons Verlosser. Dit wat God in Jesus vir ons deurgemaak het, roer ons hartsnare aan.

Green slaag daarin om sy boek vir beide die akademiese en populêre market te teiken. Hy skryf in 'n lekker leesstyl, maar is terselfdertyd akademies verantwoordbaar. 'n Mens bespeur gedurig toepassings van die Matteusbodskap op die hedendaagse persoon of konteks. Die boek poog daarom nie net om die boodskap van Matteus te bespreek nie, maar ook om die boodskap van Matteus vir vandag relevant te maak.

Dit is ietwat teleurstellend dat daar aan die einde van die werk nie meer spesifieke gevolgtreкке gemaak is nie.

Hierdie was een van die beste boeke wat ek in 'n lang ruk onder oë gehad het. Ek beveel dit ten sterkste aan.

P F Steenberg

Francisco Lozada (Jr.), *A literary reading of John 5. Text as construction*. Peter Lang: New York, 138 pp. Price unknown.

The aim of this Vanderbilt dissertation is to read the text of John 5 as construction. The main emphasis falls on methodological considerations. Lozada combines a "close reading" of the text (as he calls it) with insights from reader-response criticism.

The presentation of his material is very systematical. In his first chapter he discusses aspects, as well as exponents of literary criticism in the area of the Fourth Gospel. The way in which he does this is to discuss some publications on different aspects of relevance for his topic. In chapter two he discusses (a) the text as means, (where the emphasis mainly falls on historical-critical aspects) (b) the text as medium (where the emphasis falls on the text itself as well as on methods related to analyzing the text as phenomenon) and (c) the text as construction (where the emphasis falls on the contribution the reader makes to the understanding of the text).

In his third chapter Lozada offers an analysis of the plot development of John 5. It is basically a description of the flow of ideas in the Gospel and particularly in Chapter 5. The structure and reading of John 5 receives attention in chapter 4 of his book. He concludes (chapter 5) with a summary and a sample exercise in ideological criticism.

Lozada claims that his approach of reading John 5 offers new perspectives of understanding this text. Each flesh-and-blood reader contributes to the process of understanding in his or her own way. Lozada correctly emphasizes that this "contribution" of the reader, which leads to the "construction" of the text, takes place within the constraints of the text. That is why he combines reader-response with a close reading of the text. This is a good correction on some tendencies that want to "collapse" the meaning of the text into total relativism. To my mind, however, his "ideological reading" does again create some tension with the text of John, not only in relation to chapter 5, but also in relation to this Gospel as a whole. Although it is true that every reading of a text is a construction – in Lozada's sense – and that ideology plays a role in this "construction", the measure in which the ideology should be allowed to dominate the interpretation, should have been considered more carefully.

There are, however, shortcomings in the work of Lozada. He works very selectively with his sources. In his discussions of text-centered studies it seems that he is only aware of American work in this regard, with here and there a reference to scholars from outside America. This is very problematic, since substantial research was done outside America, which is simply ignored. Even more serious is the fact that he makes general conclusions on the state of Johannine research on this basis. This

really lacks academic and scientific finesse (Although the application of literary methods in the field of Biblical Studies is relatively "new" (only about 30 years old), Lozada does not use or discuss many articles related to his topic. Major critical discussions and developments in this field took place, not only in books, but also in journals. To largely ignore these developments and then try to make conclusions about the state of Johannine research in this respect, is unacceptable (see conclusions on, for instance, pages 37 and 39). I could also not find a motivation or guiding principle Lozada used for selecting the books (authors) he did. It seems to have been done in a subjective, uncontrolled and unmotivated way.

A further problem is his uncaredful use of literary terms. His remark that "the first literary critical development which has greatly informed Johannine literary scholars is New Criticism" (p. 5) should be seriously questioned. "New Criticism" is a technical term with a restricted meaning. On pages 37 and 38 he seems to use "New Criticism" and formalism as synonyms. The questions arise whether Lozada is aware of the development of formalism since the beginnings of the previous century (starting with the Russian formalists). Then he would have realized the broader development within the relative position of New Criticism. In devoting a whole chapter (ch 3) to narratology strengthens this suspicion. Narratology (as a form of structuralism) did not develop out of "New Criticism". His remark that "the second main literary development "which informed Johannine literary scholars ("is reader-response criticism") should also be questioned. He also does not standardize his terms. He, for instance, speaks of "intratextual reader" (implied reader) [page 38).

In Chapter 3 he presents a plot development. In this chapter he retells the story (using technical terms taken from narratology), highlighting certain aspects here and there. Reading this, I was constantly confronted with the question why he did not make use of known narratological techniques in describing the narrative of Chapter 5. To use words like "narrator" or "implied reader" does not make a description "narratology".

Apart from this, there are also typographical errors of different sorts in this book. There are typing errors; on page 44 the first chapter of this Gospel has 53 verses; on page 49 the sections of the book runs from 2:12-12:50 and then again from 12:1-17:26; on page 40 he still speaks of "this dissertation", and so on.

wings bespreek: die alledaagse lewe: werk en ontspanning; kuns, argitektuur, geskrifte in die wêreld van die Bybel; die godsdiens van die volkere; dood en grafte. Die teks word ryklik geïllustreer met foto's van die artefakte, geboue, ruïnes, rekonstruksies, sketse, mosaïke en versierings. Kleurfoto's versier die binne- en buite-omslag. 'n Lys van die argeologiese tydperke en karate van die Bybelse wêreld oriënteer die leser ten opsigte van die geografie en chronologie van die opgrawings. 'n Nuttige bibliografie dui die weg vir verdere studie in die argeologie aan.

Beter begrip vir die kultuur van die volkere rondom die Bybel word geskep. Insig in die lewe van die gewone mense word belig deur opgrawings wat in die eerste hoofstuk bespreek word. Raakpunte met Bybelse gedeeltes word krities bespreek en geëvalueer om tot insig en nadenke te stimuleer, interessant vir alle lesers en vir studente van die Woord.

F S Malan

To end on a positive note – physically the book looks very appealing. It has a beautiful cover and typographically the book is presented neatly.

J G van der Watt

McGrath A & Packer JI (series eds), Thomas Manton, *Jude* 1999 [1675] 223 pp. John Calvin, *1 & 2 Timothy & Titus* 1998 [1556] 208pp. John Owen, *Hebrews* 1998 [1680?] 269pp. The Crossway Classic Commentaries.

The republishing of these three commentaries in the Crossway Classic Series indicates a duality in New Testament scholarship. The republishing of commentaries by Manton, Calvin and Owen emphasises the tradition of interpretation school, as opposing newer schools, such as those that apply social scientific methodology to New Testament studies.

The commentaries, according to the blurps on the back covers are: “Original works by godly writers, tailored for the understanding of today’s reader”. The editors therefore see these commentaries as having practical value for contemporary interpreters. This vision is expressed clearly in the Series Preface: “These books will help today’s readers learn truth, wisdom, and devotion... In the realm of practical exposition promoting godliness, the old is often better than the new.” The republished commentaries are based on the NIV (1984), increasing at once the commentaries accessibility to lay people, but on the other restricting their value to critical scrutiny, where precise scriptural formulations (in commentator’s source languages) are essential. The original commentaries are important exegetical references unfortunately their original language and style has made way for greater uniformity and simplicity.

Though the editors consider a very broad readership, being “thoughtful readers – lay Christians, students, and those in the ministry”, I would recommend the three commentaries to pregraduate students who find them useful to studying the original commentaries.

P J Maritz

Eben Scheffler, *Fascinating Discoveries from the Biblical World*, with contributions by Willem Boshoff, Coenie Scheepers, Peet van Dyk, Chris le Roux. Pretoria: Biblia Publishers 2000, 144 pp. Prys onbekend.

‘n Keur word aangebied uit die afgelope twee eeue se interessantste argeologiese fondse in die lande wat met die mense van wie ons in die Bybel lees, verbind word. In ses afdelings word die vernaamste opgra-