

beneficial to the needs of many people who would like to hear God's word anew.

Hyunsok Doh

Gregg, Steve, ed. *Revelation: Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*. Nashville: Nelson, 1997. xvi + 528 pp.

Steve Gregg is director of the Great Commission School and Good News Underground, private ministries that focus on the study of Scripture. He also teaches regularly for Youth With A Mission schools internationally. The current work is the result of his personal struggles with teaching the book of Revelation in as honest and objective a way as possible.

Although initially convinced of a particular view of the interpretation of the book, over time he began to realize that matters were not so simple and straightforward as he had imagined. He finally came to the point where he began to respect the various strengths that each of the different major interpretational methods contributes to an understanding of the book. He began to study widely in the commentaries so that he could share with his students the best arguments in favor of each of the four major approaches which he deems "credible" (1). As he culled materials from the various commentaries, Gregg found a tremendous amount of overlap between commentaries within each of the four approaches. Surprised to find that no one had compiled the four approaches into a single work so where they could be compared passage by passage, he decided to undertake the task himself.

This volume is a compendium of scholarly interpretation selected from a broad range of scholarship, mostly edited into four parallel columns representing the four major interpretational approaches, which he labels "Historicist," "Preterist," "Futurist," and "Spiritual." It does not represent Gregg's own views, but rather he attempts to fairly represent the four approaches by citing the views of scholars whom he believes are representative in each respective area. In Rev 1-3 he does not divide the commentary into parallel columns, since "there are not four distinct opinions among exegetes" (5) in interpreting the seven letters of Christ to the churches of Asia, "Though there are portions of those chapters that lend themselves more to one than to others of the four approaches" (*ibid.*). In Rev 20-22 he exchanges the four columns for three, representing three major millennial viewpoints, the premillennial, the amillennial, and the postmillennial, since the debate in these chapters hinges more on one's millennial perspective than on one of the four approaches used in chapters 4-19.

After his introduction to the commentary, Gregg begins his study with an introduction to the book of Revelation and an analysis of each of the four interpretational approaches. He explains why he selected the four approaches and no others. He also explains how he undertook the difficult task of classifying the

views of the various scholars into one or another of the four camps, especially since some scholars do not fall clearly into any one camp.

The commentary itself is divided into eight parts, each dealing with one or more chapters that he groups into a thematic unit. At the beginning of each part, he includes a summary of the different views of each of the four approaches in regard to some of the larger aspects of the vision or section. Then he goes through the contents of each section a few verses at a time, providing the commentary in parallel columns which include his own summary of the views of scholars representing each respective approach, along with citation and quotations from the scholars themselves.

His selected bibliography (6-8) of sixty-three sources identifies ten as preterist, five as late-date preterist/spiritual, eight as historicist, ten as spiritual, and thirteen as futurist. The other seventeen are not identified. This reflects an attempt to be fair to all sides, though the historicist commentators are slightly under-represented. To his great credit, Gregg has dealt remarkably evenhandedly with the various approaches. This is his stated goal: "My object has not been to advocate any position above another, so I hope that my own opinion will not be evident" (4). "It is not my desire to showcase my own opinions (which have changed a number of times and may do so again in the future) but to present with as much objectivity as possible the classic approaches of expositors more qualified than I am" (*ibid.*) While one may deduce his leaning by a careful reading of his analysis of the four approaches, he has been as fair and objective as one could reasonably expect. This is the real strength of this work. For the Bible student who wants to descriptively compare the different ways any given passage, or the whole of Revelation, is interpreted by scholars of varying methodological persuasions, this volume is a treasure trove.

Having said that, however, I would note at the same time that Gregg has not been equally representative across the board. The historicist approach, for example, is very complex, having within its scope many varieties of interpretation—one of the reasons why it is so widely criticized by scholarship, which values consensus and an assured result. Yet Gregg cites fewer scholars to represent the historicist approach than for the other approaches, which have less diversity in interpretation. Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) historicism, which has a unique but strong tradition, as he himself observes (34), is represented once in the bibliography but only twice in the whole commentary (104, 280). The one bibliographic source is not a well-known SDA work by a representative Revelation scholar (of which there are not a few), nor are the two citations in the commentary particularly notable or unique to Adventist historicism. Those two points were widely taught before Adventism ever came on the stage of action. This leaves no representation in the book of any uniquely Adventist historicist interpretations, despite the fact that probably no religious denomination has made a greater contribution to the study of the book of Revelation in the last 150 years than has

the SDA Church. In omitting its contributions, there appears to be a bias, though perhaps not intentional.

A Scripture Index and a Subject and Author Index complete this volume and make it useful. I highly recommend this work as an aid to the study of the book of Revelation for students, pastors, and teachers who want to broaden their perspectives and understand views other than those they already cherish. For those who want to be told the answers or to confirm their own presuppositions, this is not the book; they will only be confused and disappointed.

Edwin Reynolds

Matsuoka, Fumitaka. *The Color of Faith: Building Community in a Multiracial Society*. Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1998. viii + 143 pp.

Fumitaka Matsuoka is vice-president for academic affairs and dean of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. He authored *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches* (United Church Press, 1995). In *The Color of Faith* he uses an interdisciplinary approach to tackle the raging question of how race shapes people in the USA. His ideal is to explore the “interplay between race and the faith community” (vii). He succeeds in this in the four chapters of this book, each of which requires careful, contemplative reading and re-reading.

Chapter 1, “The Spiritual Pain of Interracial Estrangement and a Yearning for a Different way of Coming Together as a People” (1-24), describes the long, painful history of the lack of communication (silence) among people in the USA. Certain historical realities (e.g., slavery, immigration exclusion laws, and the internment of Japanese-Americans at the start of WWII), cannot be ignored. US society is fragmented along lines of difference such as race, class, culture, and ethnicity. This breeds estrangement. It is characterized by the loss of dialogue “that engages people in relationships. Silence and suspicion of others govern our societal life” (3). Therefore, there is an urgent need for people to come together. Violence, injustice, intolerance, and all those *-isms* that erode trust among people, must be obliterated. They must be replaced with true communion that focuses on peoplehood, justice, mutual respect, the equality of all humanity, and shared value. It is the responsibility and duty of the Christian community to promote these qualities. The church can no longer reflect the flaws of US society, some of which are deeply embedded in the collective memory of several groups. The church must avail itself of the divine mandate to effect healing, human relatedness one to another, disarming rage, and building trusting relationships. This is the goal of communion.

Chapter 2, “How Does Race Shape People? Ways of Speaking about Race” (25-56), deals with precisely these two issues. With regard to the first, Matsuoka contends, “When the identity of racial groups is shaped by opposition to others,