

This book is useful for anyone who has an interest in the relation between science and faith. Though it requires slow, thoughtful reading, even the nontechnical reader can gain much from its insights.

Kenneth D. Mulzac

Vos, Howard F. *Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands*. Revised edition. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003. viii + 856 pp.

Howard F. Vos is Emeritus Professor of History and Archeology at King's College, New York. An experienced archeologist, traveler and scholar, this prolific author has written or edited about twenty-five books, including *Nelson's New Illustrated Manners and Customs* (Nelson, 1999) and *Archaeology and Bible History* (Zondervan, 1992).

*Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands* is a revised version of the 1967 edition but the ideals are the same, providing sound, updated material on all the Bible lands: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Palestine, Phoenicia, Syria, Iran, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Greece, Malta, and Italy. Divided into eleven chapters, each thoroughly discussing one of the Bible lands, this book follows a logical pattern; first establishing the territory as a true Bible land and then detailing features such as geography, history, archeological findings, personalities, kingship and kingdoms, cultures and the intermingling of peoples, settlements and cities, politics and governance. Each chapter ends with research notes and a bibliography dealing with issues in that particular land. Thousands of details are brought vividly to light in Vos' vigorous and easy-to-read style.

A very interesting feature of this book is that it covers the entire Bible. It is not infrequent that a shortfall of works of this nature is to concentrate on Palestine (and perhaps Egypt) and focus largely, if not exclusively, on the Old Testament. Vos avoids this pitfall and engages the reader by weaving elements from outside the Bible with those within. This creates a picture where the Bible comes alive with a renewed freshness in its own space and time.

Vos has achieved a comprehensive presentation of the historical geography of the Bible lands by providing a logical way of dealing with each land. Generally, he follows the contours of the Bible in his investigation. Since the earliest events in the OT took place in Mesopotamia, it is dealt with first. Egypt is then canvassed because the Israelites lived there for hundreds of years, even though their forefathers, the Patriarchs, occupied Palestine before the migration to Egypt. Palestine is given great coverage since almost a millennium's worth of events, in both Old and New Testaments, took place there. Since Palestine and Phoenicia enjoyed relations during the United Monarchy, the chapter on Phoenicia is presented before that on Syria, which had political links with the kingdoms in the Divided Monarchy. After the fall of Israel and Judah to the Assyrians and Babylonians, respectively (both Mesopotamian powers), the whole area was

controlled by Persia or biblical Iran. Hence, the discussion on Syria is in the sixth chapter.

Palestine again featured heavily in the first century with the New Testament and events in the life of Jesus. However, under the auspices of Roman rule and law, Paul, who dominates the New Testament narratives after Jesus in the Gospels, carried out his evangelistic and missionary work, rapidly expanding the borders of the church in the territories of Cyprus, Asia Minor, Greece, Malta, and Italy. These comprise the last five chapters.

Several features stand out in this expansive volume: (1) To be certain, there are several works of this nature but this surpasses them in terms of scope and breath; (2) it is well researched, evidencing extensive dialogue with scholarship; (3) it is filled with details that relate to the biblical story, and while not theological, helps the reader to understand things related to theology; (4) it is well illustrated, with hundreds of pictures and full-color maps; (5) it is user-friendly with its Scripture, general and map indices allowing easy access to details in the book. Perhaps the one disappointment is that it lacks a chapter on Ancient Iraq, since Babylon is important in the Bible.

This book is useful for pastors, students and teachers as an invaluable resource for a better understanding of the Bible. I recommend it in the superlative.

Kenneth D. Mulzac

Webber, Robert E. *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003. 219 pp.

Robert E. Webber is Myers Professor of Ministry at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Illinois, and president of the Institute for Worship Studies. He has written 40 books on worship and the church and edited *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* (StarSong, 1994), a multivolume encyclopedia of more than 3,700 pages.

In *Ancient-Future Evangelism* Webber deals with the roots and historical development of the Christian faith and how these might mold an authentic faith in our post-Christian world. The focus is on understanding discipleship, spiritual formation, and evangelism. After the introductory chapter, "The Way New Christians Have Been Formed" (17-37), in which Webber gives a brief but insightful historical overview of how converts were formed in the New Testament, the book is divided into two parts. The first comprises chapters 2-6.

In the second chapter, "Make Disciples" (41-54), Webber aligns discipleship with conversion and shows how converts were grown in the early church. This enveloped a fourfold procedure that included (1) evangelism, (2) discipleship, (3) spiritual formation, and (4) Christian vocation. These constituted important rites of passage where the seeker progressed from initial conversion to instruction in the faith, overcoming evil in his/her personal life, and the daily practice of Christianity.