

other Pauline letters leads the argument against Pauline authorship to its place of final rest.

This book is a must read for all Pauline scholars and students. It maps a new path for a direction of investigation that has been neglected in Colossian studies for a long time. The rigorous approach in the development of methodology for the study of allusions and echoes is highly commendable and may serve as a firm foundation for such studies within and beyond Pauline studies.

Mxolisi Michael Sokupa

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Christianity among the Religions of the World, by Carlos G. Martin. Lanham: University Press of America, 2007. Pp. xiv + 439. ISBN 978-0-7618-3793-0. Paperback. \$55.00.

Carlos G. Martin is currently director of the Institute of Missions and Evangelism at Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee. He obtained a Ph.D. in Missions and Evangelism from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. His eight years of teaching and missionary work in Asia provided him with an opportunity to meet people of most religions and he has done additional seminars in Europe, Africa, Australia and all three Americas. He is also author of *The Science of Soul Winning and Turning the World Upside Down*.

According to the preface, this work grew out of Martin's own class and lecture notes which he developed over the years. It is meant to serve as an introduction to World Religions and was designed as a textbook for Christian colleges, seminaries and universities. It is written from an Interdenominational Protestant/Evangelical perspective and is meant not only to inform the student about the religions of the world but also to inspire them for mission work (pp. xiii-xiv).

The textbook was designed in the form of a very clear outline in order for teachers and students to have easy access to the plethora of information contained in the book, (somewhat akin to Wikipedia). Each of the chapters not only focuses on giving a very helpful historical overview of the religion and its theology, but also includes suggestions for Christian witness to that particular group. There are excellent diagrams, tables and figures throughout the book which aid in the understanding of complex subjects. The book is very well researched, with an excellent endnote section of both print and web resources to provide pathways for further exploration of the subject matter.

The book is divided into seven parts. The first section begins with an excellent overview of the concept of religion and its major categories (pp. 3–16). It then discusses the rather thorny issue of “Is there salvation outside of Christianity?” (pp. 17–22) and provides a good rationale for evangelism (pp. 23–32). The next three sections deal with the major religions of South Asia including Hinduism (pp. 35–72); Jainism (pp. 73–83); Sikhism (pp. 85–99); the major divisions of Buddhism (pp. 103–51). Part four begins with an introduction to Chinese religions (pp. 155–65) and discusses in detail the East Asia religions of Confucianism (pp. 167–181); Taoism (pp. 183–97) and Shintoism (pp. 199–218). The final chapter in this section gives insights in how to witness to other East Asians (pp. 219–30). This section of the book is particularly strong and shows that Martin’s eight years of missionary work and teaching in Asia provided him with an intimate knowledge of the people and the challenges facing Christianity in that part of the world.

Part five discusses the religions of the Middle East including Judaism (pp. 233–53); Zoroastrianism (pp. 255–63); Islam (pp. 265–304) and Bahá’ism (pp. 305–13). As missiologists and practitioners of Christian religion know, the challenge facing the church in understanding and relating to Muslims is almost overwhelming. Martin does a good job here of introducing the basic tenets of Islam, giving a brief overview of the challenge of contextualization and providing an excellent bibliography to promote further study.

The sixth part begins with a chapter outlining a brief history of Christianity (pp. 317–28) which is then followed by chapters on Catholicism (pp. 329–49), Protestantism (pp. 351–59); Christian sects and cults (pp. 361–72) with a final chapter on the secular mind and Christianity (pp. 373–84). Although Martin is right on the mark for including secularism in this section, he perhaps needs to broaden his scope by not only discussing the atheistic secularist but the growing influence of secularism within “religious” people as well. In addition, although the discussion of the Catholic Church is excellent, the size and historical influence of the Orthodox religion should have perhaps garnered further exploration (pp. 331–33). The last part discusses Traditional Folk Religions (pp. 387–403) and Occultism (pp. 405–18). The book concludes with a very good general index (pp. 419–35) and an index to biblical references (pp. 437–39).

In my opinion, Martin has more than met his goal in providing a good introduction to World Religions for colleges, seminaries and university teachers and students. It was an invaluable resource to me recently when I was given the task of teaching a graduate level class on world religions here in Asia. I found the organization, writing and illustrations in the book to be

clear and very useful, a real compendium of valuable information for the teacher and student alike.

I would have further appreciated the book if a hard bound copy would be available for about the same price as the current soft bound version. I would also observe that the small graphics used to introduce some of the chapters did not measure up to the content of the book. These quibbles aside, the book is a valuable asset for those who want to both understand and witness to the religions we find in our world today.

James H. Park

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

More than Meets the Ear: Discovering the Hidden Contexts of Old Testament Conversations, by Victor H. Matthews. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. Pp. xii + 198. ISBN 978-0-8028-0384-9. US\$ 25.00.

This book begins with an important preface by the author in which he explains that the book aims to focus on the embedded dialogue in biblical stories, utilizing "the method and techniques current in sociology, critical geography, socio-linguistics, and social psychology" (p. vi). The objective of the book is to equip the reader to "step more effectively into the world of ancient Israelite conversations" and make the written text "become living social artifacts of their or the author's time and social environment" (p. viii).

In each of the five chapters which follow the brief list of abbreviations (pp. xi-xii), Matthews attempts to briefly introduce a method from the social sciences or communication theory and then apply it to a particular biblical narrative in order to demonstrate its usefulness to the biblical reader.

Chapter one spends time explaining some of the current methods developed within the fields of social psychology and sociology. Matthews draws heavily on the theoretical groundwork of leaders within the field such as Gilles Fauconnier, Maxwell Atkinson, Mark Knapp and John Daly, and then goes on to explain the use of embedded dialogue as a way of engaging the biblical text. The author focuses on the "formal speeches and debates, casual conversations, and commercial transactions" (p. 1) within the OT narratives. These embedded dialogues are included in the narrations for a purpose and uncovering both the purpose and exploring the choice of words, as well as the situation and culture in which the dialogue takes place gives the reader of the biblical text more opportunities to fully understand the communicative intent of the biblical author. Chapter two further develops the application of the methods described in chapter one with an extended exegesis of the story of Judah and Tamar found in Gen 38. Particular attention is given to the structural analysis drawing on cognitive linguistics and mental space