

fallacy" (p. 66), Osborn appears to fall under the same criticism when he sets human experience—with its intuitions about good and evil that color one's understanding of reality to the point of functioning as a priori assumptions—at the starting point of theistic humanism. Furthermore, a better development of the forgiveness proposal would have enriched the third chapter, just as the outstanding perspective on the slave revolt morality did for the fourth.

That being said, the book is a must for all those interested in criticism of naturalistic humanism from a theistic perspective. The erudition manifested, the detailed analysis, the respectful tone, the balanced argumentation all commend this book's usefulness. Teachers can use this for graduate courses in philosophy and pastors can find a clear voice supporting their theistic approach to human dignity, rights, and equality. *Humanism and the Death of God: Searching for the Good after Darwin, Marx, and Nietzsche* is a book that should be on the shelf of all concerned about Christianity's contemporary relevance.

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*Before We Call Them Strangers: What Adventists Ought to Know about Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus*, by Paul Dybdahl. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2017. 166 pp. ISBN 9781629093604. Hardcover. US\$ 14.95.

In *Before We Call Them Strangers: What Adventists Ought to Know about Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus*, Paul Dybdahl explored the basic teachings of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. He also includes his interviews with devout adherents of these three religions, indicates what he likes about each of these religions, and identifies twelve areas of similarity shared by Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim adherents.

Dybdahl begins the first chapter with brief reflections on George Vandeman's book "What I like About..." which proposes a friendly approach to interacting with people of other faiths. A friendly approach entails listening to even those with whom we disagree because we probably have something to like and learn from them. Dybdahl draws on his students' experiences in a World Religions class to demonstrate that studying other religions' teachings might lead to an analysis of one's own beliefs and the discovery of significant Bible verses that have been skimmed over too quickly.

In chapter 2, Dybdahl discusses why we should listen to those we consider "heathen." He argues that God can talk to those presently considered heathen since he has previously spoken through persons of different faiths. God spoke to his people through sinful people like Noah and heathens like Neco, the king of Egypt; Nebuchadnezzar; and Cyrus. Jesus demonstrated God's concern for all peoples by citing positive examples of gentile faith so Jews could learn from them. Dybdahl clarifies that listening to other faiths does not imply that Christianity is incomplete or that we support their views. Instead, it suggests that we recognize that God speaks to us in ways beyond our comprehension and that he uses a variety of channels to guide us. It also shows that we can mingle with others while remaining separate from the world to carry out Jesus's commission to go into all the world. However, listening to others should be done without compromising our identity. Dybdahl illustrates his viewpoints repeatedly to ensure that the readers understand him correctly.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 address the author's interaction with Islam. First, Dybdahl summarizes the global spread of Islam, followed by its basic tenets and its history. Considering God's promise to multiply Ishmael's descendants, Dybdahl argues that Ishmael's most significant influence on the contemporary world comes through Islam, which I find to be an agreeable inference. One of the strengths of this book is that it describes the tenets and history of Islam in a nutshell. In other words, Dybdahl's discussion about Islam is short, and yet it contains essential information for readers to see the overall picture of Islam, including its core doctrines, common practices, and expansion worldwide. Another strength of Dybdahl's discussion about Islam is the interviews with two imams. These in-depth interviews provide insights for readers to understand the true essence of controversial issues such as Islam's prestige as a peaceful religion, the concept of jihad, the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam, Islam's view of Jesus, the role of women in Islam, temporary marriage, the reference to Muslims as people of the book, and dietary restrictions. The imams' clarification of the above issues can help people revise their previous assumptions about Islam. Besides, the imams' suggestion about what Christians and Muslims might learn from one another is significant for approaching Muslims. Dybdahl's appreciation of Islam helps us see how Muslims practice their beliefs. It is a good reflection for Christians to reexamine their Christian faith and how they put faith into practice daily.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 contain the author's interaction with Buddhism. Dybdahl begins his discussion with an overview of Buddhism, which includes its history, global spread, and central beliefs and practices. Even though this discussion does not describe all that Buddhism is, it provides the reader with a better understanding of the various branches of Buddhism and some fundamental ideas shared by Buddhists. Chapter 7

presents Dybdahl's interviews with two devout Buddhists. He asked them different questions based on their particular backgrounds. Dybdahl crafted the questions to ensure that both interviewees expressed their understanding of Buddhism's central teachings and views about Jesus and Christianity. These interviews are an excellent example of creatively asking probing questions to find more details about the issues being addressed. The interviewees' views about their religion and Christianity cannot be taken as the final word, yet they help us engage in meaningful conversations with Buddhists. For example, one of the interviewees sees the Christian idea of "the one way" as a key difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. Upon realizing how Buddhists see the one-way idea of Christians, one may develop a strategy to interact with Buddhists who practice the dharma, which incorporates a different view of faith. In chapter 8, Dybdahl discusses what he appreciates about Buddhism. This chapter serves as a good reminder that Buddhists share many similar values with Christians. Further, it shows that valuable lessons can be learned from people of other faiths. Dybdahl's six possible ways in which Buddhist belief may prompt Christians to revisit truths in their own tradition make this book worth reading.

Chapters 9, 10, and 11 provide the author's interaction with Buddhism, including the history and global expansion of Hinduism, Hindu beliefs and practices, the interviews with two Hindus, and what he likes about Hindus. Dybdahl's creativity to synthesize the diverse beliefs and practices of Hindus in just fourteen pages is noteworthy. I agree with Dybdahl that this overview of Hinduism contains essential information for approaching Hindus with a greater understanding of their religion. At the same time, one needs to know that it does not describe Hinduism comprehensively. For example, ritual bathing in a holy river, one of the most significant Hindu rituals, is not included in the summary. Furthermore, a discussion about cows shows the Hindu attitude toward cows, yet the connection between cows and Hindu deities and reincarnation is missing in the book.

Dybdahl's interviews with two Hindus show that Hinduism is vast, complex, and has deep philosophical foundations. Besides, it is flexible in that it can incorporate the teachings of other religions while also considering different views of reality as valid. The caste system is a sensitive issue, and Hindus usually say that it does not originate from the Vedas. The interviewees are quite defensive in addressing the caste system. The sad reality is that the caste system is still very much alive among Hindus today. I agree with Dybdahl that several elements in Hinduism can challenge us to examine our own faith in fresh ways. For example, how the Hindus practice their faith through devotion, prayer, and care for nature can inspire others. As a result, they attract people to them through "low-

pressure evangelism." Indeed, there are valuable lessons that Christians can learn from Hindus.

Dybdahl concludes the book with twelve areas of similarity that he found among each religion. I agree with Dybdahl that each religion includes sincere and insincere people. The problem is that we are all biased and assume our religion is superior to other religions when comparing their hateful and violent people with the nice and kind Christian people. It is crucial to acknowledge our own brokenness before judging weak spots in other religions because we recognize human universal brokenness. I agree that we must approach people from different religions with respect. Chapter 12 is a good reminder that each religion shares certain similarities, and we ought to discover something beyond other religious labels. One may label Buddhists as idol worshippers without learning about their belief in a future deliverer. Dybdahl recognizes that different faiths have substantial distinctions, yet it is essential to recognize our similarities with others in order to establish bridges with them.

Dybdahl correctly asserts that each religion has its own struggles. For example, every religion teaches its followers to live a moral life, but people struggle to follow their religion's ethical codes. Unfortunately, we tend to judge others based on their failures while ignoring our own struggle to follow the ethical codes of our religion. The same tension is present when religions discuss gender inequality. Our struggles simply show the necessity of listening to others before building fences between us and others. Furthermore, Dybdahl is correct in asserting that demonic power is a primary problem in every religion. A Hindu woman and a young Christian man can both experience the supernatural powers of demons, as much as a Buddhist man trying to appease the spirits by offering a chicken so his son would be free from the harassment of evil spirits. Demon possession and torment is not a mere mental illness but a real problem for many in the world. Christians should demonstrate the Holy Spirit's power beyond any intellectual or philosophical argument.

Rather than being an academic study, Dybdahl's book uses a friendly approach to the basic teachings of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Even though these three religions' teachings may be found in several other works, the presented interviews with two adherents of each faith make this book a valuable contribution. However, since Dybdahl only provides transcribed data from the interviews, readers need to compare and contrast each interview question and answer to gain a fair summary of the interviewees' perspectives. Instead of presenting the transcribed interview data, this book might benefit readers more by providing themes, categories, and interpretations of the data acquired through the interviews.

This book is recommended for seminary students, pastors, and even church members who want to understand people of other faiths. The book

aims to change one's negative perceptions of non-Christian religions and offer a new perspective about them. At the same time, it is a significant encouragement for Christians to rediscover who they are and what they believe. This book will help readers develop a friendly approach and attitude towards other faiths and overcome the "fortress" or "us versus them" mentality that is so widespread today.

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*The Essentials of Christian Thought: Seeing Reality through the Biblical Story*, by Roger E. Olson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. 236 pp. + 16 pp. appendix. Paperback. US\$ 18.99.

Written by the well-known theologian and church historian Roger E. Olson, *The Essentials of Christian Thought: Seeing Reality through the Biblical Story* explores the implicit metaphysics behind the biblical narrative. The purpose of the book is "exposition and therapy" (p. 107), clarifying the biblical worldview to help Christian readers and educators avoid conscious or unconscious syncretism. In a clear, precise, yet simple language, Olson builds an argument that "the philosophy of the Bible can stand on its own two feet" (p. 70), without having to borrow from extrabiblical ones.

Apart from the preface and introduction, the book is structured in seven chapters, each followed by an interlude detailing the issues raised in the previous chapter. The first chapter presents the postfoundationalist epistemic perspective of the author. More specifically, the author accepts a qualified form of postliberalism as his methodological outlook. Olson commends its proposal that "the meaning of the Bible is not outside of it" (p. 44). He contends that the biblical worldview with its central metaphysical assumptions offers the best answer to the basic questions of life.

The second chapter indicates God as the ultimate reality of the Bible. God is supernatural, personal, but not human. Olson defines supernatural as that which is not dependent on nature. Personal means having intelligence, will, and self-determination. Calling this metaphysical vision "biblical theistic personalism" (p. 63), the author points out in the third chapter that various theologians retrieved it. Among these, Claude Tresmontant and Edmond La Beaume Cherbonnier play a key role. Olson quotes them frequently in the book, detailing their efforts of separating the