

in biblical citations, quotations from recognized theologians and Ellen G. White, and cross-cultural real-life examples.

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Whiteman, Darrell. *Crossing Cultures with the Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2024. Pp. xvi + 255. Paperback \$20.

In *Crossing Cultures with the Gospel*, influential missiologist Darryl Whiteman distills a lifetime of learning, reflecting, and teaching on cross-cultural ministry. In one volume, Whiteman manages to synthesize in an approachable way much of the best known about engaging in cross-cultural ministry.

Whiteman is a well-known figure in the area of cross-cultural mission. As a well-regarded authority, Whiteman taught for many years at the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary, as an adjunct professor at Yale, and interim director of the Overseas Ministry Study Center (OSMC). Whiteman combines classic anthropological training with a love for cross-cultural missionary work. He is a sought-after lecturer and missionary trainer.

Crossing Cultures with the Gospel is split into five parts. In Part I, Whitman begins with an introduction to the concept of culture and why understanding culture is essential for effective cross-cultural ministry. He articulates a view of culture that roots it in God's creation (p. 16). He argues for a reading of Scripture that emphasizes how God interacted with people in and through their cultures (p. 53). And he shows with many illustrations and theories how cultural analysis and understanding are essential to effective cross-cultural ministry. In Part II, Whiteman lays out the vision of incarnational ministry as the ideal model for cross-cultural engagement. Building on a theology of *kenosis*, the self-emptying of Jesus, he calls cross-cultural workers to sacrificially lay down their own cultures and to identify deeply with those they serve (pp. 65–66). It is in this deep identification with others that the Holy Spirit can most powerfully use cross-cultural workers to communicate the gospel in terms that can be understood across cultural barriers (p. 83). In Part III, Whiteman addresses problems of worldview and cross-cultural communication. He shows how, without appropriate humility and

reflection, paramessages can enter into and subvert attempts to share the gospel (p. 116). Part IV addresses the issue of culture shock and how to prepare for and overcome it. And in Part V, "Growing in to Effective Communicators," Whiteman argues that cross-cultural missionaries should seek to bond with the local people and ultimately become bicultural people themselves.

Crossing Cultures with the Gospel is written in an engaging style with many lively illustrations drawn from Whiteman's many years of experience. The reader is continually engaged and provoked to thoughtful reflection. Much of what Whiteman shares is not new in the study of cross-cultural mission work. Yet this book excels as a concise and helpful synthesis of culture and communication theory for cross-cultural work.

Whiteman's use of the motif of incarnational ministry may be criticized as unrealistic. Humans can never understand what the incarnation cost Jesus and it is not in our power to become incarnational in the way Jesus was incarnational. Yet Whiteman's argument is that Christians should surrender to the cross and, through grace in the power of the Holy Spirit, pour out their lives in service to others. In this understanding, incarnation means surrendering as far as possible one's own cultural preferences and predilections for the sake of others. If Whiteman's can be criticized in his view on the incarnation, it is for his own criticism of those who hold too tightly to, or cannot give up on, their own cultural preferences for the sake of serving others more completely. There is only one incarnation. But there are countless examples of Christians who have let go of their own cultures in order to sacrificially serve others as lesser models of the incarnation.

Seventh-day Adventist readers will be disturbed by his discussion of the ancestors in Chapter 6. Whiteman endorses the idea that ancestral spirits continue to interact with humans after death (p. 101). While Whiteman is functioning with a theology of the afterlife that Adventists disagree with, his comments should serve as an invitation for Adventists to develop a better and more nuanced understanding of the "powers, principalities," and ancestors that trouble so much of humankind. Further, his comments on ancestors should be a warning to those living with a secular/modernist worldview to take the problem of spirits seriously as they enter cross-cultural ministry.

In the main, *Crossing Cultures with the Gospel* has more to commend than to criticize. Readers will be inspired by Whiteman's heart and desire to see new generations of cross-cultural missionaries breaking barriers for Jesus in sacrificial ministry. His call to fully identify with and bond to local people

in *kenotic* love should inspire disciples of Jesus to do more for those whom God wants to reach.

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Porter, Stanley E. Porter and Bryan R. Dyer. *Origins of New Testament Christology: An Introduction to the Traditions and Titles Applied to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. Pp. xxv + 278. Kindle \$ 28.49. Paperback \$18.72. Hardback \$29.99.

Porter and Dyer's *Origins of New Testament Christology* attempts to elucidate the portrayal of Jesus in the New Testament (p. xix). The book can be divided into three major sections: the introduction, the body of the book, which contains eleven chapters, and the conclusion. At the outset, Porter and Dyer mention crucial details, just some of which are mentioned here. While there are various approaches (e.g., book by book, chronological, and title approach) in writing NT Christology, Porter and Dyer explore the traditions applied by the NT writers to Jesus (pp xviii–xxi). In doing so, their approach overlaps with the titular approach of doing Christology by Taylor, Cullmann, and Hahn. Porter and Dyer's preference for a tradition-based approach over other models is due to its capability to focus on significant titles and attributions that play a role in understanding Jesus (pp. xxii, cf. p. 227). An endeavor of this kind of research entails recognition of the religious and socio-cultural traditions of the day. Hence, their survey of the traditions depicting the portrait of Jesus in the NT is informed by the OT, early Jewish literatures, and Greco-Roman thoughts (p. xx). Porter and Dyer's emphasis on the traditions, which in turn lead to the titles for Jesus, is the main contribution of the book. However, how much they have contributed to the area of NT Christology can be relativized by what titles a scholar considers relevant to Christology.

Other important details in the introduction pertain to the complexity of defining Christology and tradition. I agree with Porter and Dyer in saying that the meaning of "Christology" depends on the theologian and the questions he or she articulates for it. For them, though, Christology is commonly recognized as the study of Christ's person (anthropology) and works (soteriology) (pp. xviii–xix). Obviously, this definition overlaps with biblical anthropology and soteriology, and for this reason, Christology is defined too