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

Richard Doss
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

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

broadly. However, one can also define Christology narrowly based on Χριστός ("Christ" or "Messiah") or its Hebrew counterpart מָשִׁיחַ ("the Anointed One") as Christologically applied to Jesus (excluding priests, who are also "anointed ones," in a semantic sense). Since Porter and Dyer examine eleven titles, including the "Messiah," it only shows their proclivity for a broader christological view. Regarding "tradition," they refer it to "a belief or pattern of thought that is given meaning within a group of people, often passed down from one point of origin that is given a special meaning" (p. xxii). In this book, they argue that the traditions about how Jesus's identity is understood can be considered as the origin of NT Christology (p. xii), given that they emerged before Jesus's movement. Additionally, in the introduction, I appreciate Porter and Dyer's caveats, stated so as not to construe them of writing Christology narrowly. For example, they make clear that the traditions in ancient and early Judaism were not always meant to be leading to Christ. Each tradition has a religious and socio-cultural framework. Note that some of these traditions are applied by NT writers to Christ in surprising ways (p. xxiii).

The main part of the book centers around eleven chapters that delve into the various titles and traditions associated with Jesus. These titles include Jesus the Lord, Prophet, Son of Man, Son of God, Suffering Servant, Passover Lamb, Messiah, Savior, Last Adam, Word, and High Priest. Any cognizant reader of the *Sacred Tradition in the New Testament* (2016) would quickly recognize that some chapters of Porter's 2016 monograph form the basis in the present volume. The reason is that Porter wrote *Sacred Tradition in the New Testament*, a rigorously research monograph, is developed, while Porter and Dyer contemplated the prospect of producing a more comprehensible publication that would delve deeper into the examined traditions, with a specific emphasis on NT Christology. Consequently, the present volume draws upon five chapters from the *Sacred Tradition in the New Testament*, which serve as a foundational framework for chs. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (p. xi).

In the main body of the book, Porter and Dyer undertake an examination of the historical origins of the titles for Jesus found in the OT, early Jewish, and Greco-Roman literature, and analyze the specific contexts in which NT writers drew upon these traditions in order to convey their understanding of the portrait of Christ. Having established the traditions that NT writers attribute to Jesus, Porter and Dyer undoubtedly expand the horizons from which to view Jesus. Nonetheless, the titles that the authors tackled in this book are not new, as previous scholars have also dealt with them in their respective work. But these earlier works fail to emphasize the traditions as

Porter and Dyer stress them. This is at least the claim of Porter and Dyer. However, one wonders if previous scholars who emphasized Jesus's titles really neglected these traditions. The work of the present authors appears to suggest that an emphasis on the titles with recurrent patterns in the OT and Second Temple literature is tantamount to emphasizing the traditions. In this sense, traditions and titles go hand in hand, at least when christological titles are in view.

Whatever it is, some interesting and/or fresh ideas merit Porter and Dyer's scholarly work. On Jesus the "Lord," I like Porter and Dyer's idea that Jesus's lordship is both present and future as hinted by the NT's use of Ps 110:1, depicting "enemies under his feet" (p. 21). In this sense, the present authors depart from Cullmann, who argued that the title "Lord" concerns Jesus's present work. Besides, the description of a complete subjugation of the enemies in Ps 110:1 is not often emphasized as a concept for Jesus's title, since "Lord" is frequently used to support His messiahship. Regarding the title of Jesus as "Prophet" and "Suffering Servant," Porter and Dyer not only align Jesus's suffering to that of the prophets who were before Him, but they also connect it to the suffering of the servant of God in Isa 53 (pp. 45, 108–9). This explains the puzzle of a messiah who suffers instead of achieving triumph according to the popular understanding of the people. Thus, Porter and Dyer offer a nuanced tradition of Jesus's suffering.

In the conclusion, Porter and Dyer provide an overview for the development of the christological debate, highlighting the core questions on Jesus's nature and identity. They maintain that Jesus was one with the God of Israel (p. 228), which can be substantiated by Jesus's title as Word (*Logos* and Wisdom traditions combined) (pp. 189–209). Porter and Dyer make clear that NT Christology in no way embraces an adoptionist or developmental view of Jesus's divine identity. This trajectory finds support in Greco-Roman thought, but is alien in the NT portrayals of Jesus, unless wrongly interpreted. Porter and Dyer also mention in passing some representative studies in favor of a high Christology, such as that of Bauckham, who argues that Jesus is incorporated into the divine identity; Hurtado, who stresses that the devotion and worship reserved for God alone is also given to Jesus, and Tilling, who uses a relational view, arguing that the relation between Christ and the believers is the same in essence between God and Israel (pp. 231–32). Despite some criticisms against the said approaches, they obtain some merits because of their emphasis on a high Christology. This is the perspective that Porter and Dyer also advocate, but they establish this idea by the titles and traditions they explored, which in their estimation, also emphasize a high Christology (p. 232).

While high Christology scholars who are steeped in titular Christology may agree with Porter and Dyer's idea, others may not be comfortable with it. I am not sure if Adam and Suffering Servant Christology can provide clear-cut descriptions of Jesus's divine identity. The mention of Adam in the NT concerns primarily the new creation and kingdom of God motifs, and thus, tracing Jesus's lineage through Adam's and David's lineages achieves this point (Matthean and Lukan genealogies). Secondly, Paul's use of Adam and second Adam imagery is meant to emphasize the realms in which people live, i.e., either in Adam or in that of the second Adam. The contexts in which the said imagery occurs do not seemingly fit with the divine identity. Concerning the Suffering Servant, it seems cogent to say that it sheds light on the Messiah who suffers defeat instead of achieving victory in a geo-political perspective. Extending the imagery beyond what it was meant to convey obscures the intentional focus of the Suffering Servant motif. Moreover, low Christology scholars who argue that Jesus is just a mere man or an elevated individual, rather than a divine being, will likely neither be comfortable with Porter and Dyer's traditions approach, which borders on titular Christology. Although the eleven titles and traditions applied to Jesus agreeably paint a robust picture of who Jesus is, the fact is that these titles are not exclusive to Jesus alone but are shared with mortal beings.

A further observation concerns methodology. While Porter and Dyer's emphasis on traditions leading to titles is illuminating, one may see the approach as overly dependent on a linear model of development. By introducing the approach focusing on traditions as the "origins" of NT Christology, the authors may underplay the discontinuities and surprising innovations in the earliest Christian conviction that Jesus is one with the God of Israel. Scholars such as Richard Bauckham and Larry Hurtado, for example, have emphasized not only continuity with Jewish traditions but also the radical reconfiguration of monotheism in light of Christ. Hurtado radicalizes the point by arguing that the earliest Christians included Jesus within the worship practices reserved exclusively for the one God of Israel. Bauckham, for his part, contends that Jesus is uniquely identified with God's own divine identity, thereby redefining Jewish monotheism around Him. Porter and Dyer's approach, by contrast, appears to be more descriptive than explanatory and interpretive. Additionally, although the book is valuable for its breadth and clarity, it could engage more critically with alternative low Christology perspectives rather than simply affirming a high Christology through the titles and traditions. This then suggests that the book is best viewed as a reliable introductory synthesis rather than as a decisive contribution to ongoing debates in Christology.

In my evaluation, a high Christology gains more merit when it argues for what Jesus has done, identifies Him with the God of Israel, and incorporates Him in the divine identity, including the devotion and worship reserved for God alone. The good thing is that Porter and Dyer have acknowledged the strength of these approaches (pp. 228, 231–32), though in the present volume they choose to provide a strong footing for the titles approach by means of exploring the traditions that NT writers have applied to Jesus.

Dindo Paglinawan
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Thiessen, Matthew. *A Jewish Paul: The Messiah's Herald to the Gentiles*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. Pp. xii + 187. Hardcover, $49.99. Paperback, $24.99. Kindle, 24.99.

In *A Jewish Paul: The Messiah's Herald to the Gentiles*, Matthew Thiessen examines the Apostle Paul's identity in relation to first-century Judaism. Thiessen contends that Paul was thoroughly Jewish, operating within the diverse landscape of Jewish culture, maintaining his Jewish identity and practices. However, Paul asserted that Gentile converts to the Messiah need not fully embrace Judaism, such as through circumcision, which he regarded as unnecessary "cosmetic surgery" (pp. 83–100). This book is significant because it challenges traditional views that depict Paul as breaking away from Judaism to establish a new religion, namely, orthodox Christianity.

The book is structured into several well-organized chapters, framed by an introduction and conclusion. In the introduction, Thiessen clarifies that his work aims to introduce readers to the question of Paul's relationship to Judaism (p. 3). He sets the stage by engaging with various scholarly perspectives, such as the Lutheran, covenantal, ethnocentric, and apocalyptic views, ultimately rejecting the notion that Paul perceived any inherent flaws in Judaism. Thiessen argues that Paul remained an observant Jew until his death, aligning with modern interpretations like the Sonderweg ("special path," a kind of view) reading of Paul, the radical new perspective, and Paul within Judaism, while uniquely emphasizing Paul's adherence to Jewish customs as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles (p. 10).

Thiessen begins the main body by situating Paul within the first-century Jewish context (chap. 1). He argues against the view that Judaism required