

Reviews: Books on the Apostle Paul, missions, prayer and worship

March 17, 2017

Paul Behaving Badly

By E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien (IVP Books)

InterVarsity Press follows up its books *God Behaving Badly* and *Jesus Behaving Badly* with an investigation of modern claims against the Apostle Paul. Was Paul supportive of slavery? Was he a male chauvinist? Homophobic? A hypocrite? Was the writer of most of the New Testament basically an arrogant jerk?

Paul has received much bad press in recent years, and reading this book is time well spent in correcting misconceptions about the apostle—and perhaps solidifying what we thought we knew about him. Readers also will receive insight into the principle of reading the Bible in its historical-cultural context.

Part apologetic and part biblical study aid, this offering by the coauthors of *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes* will give the Christian and the non-Christian a reason to go back and read Paul with an open mind and renewed appreciation for the man whose passion for Christ offended people from all backgrounds in his day and probably will continue to offend in ours.

Greg Bowman, pastor

Brock Baptist Church

Brock

Transcending Mission

By Michael W. Stroope (IVP Academic)

✘ The words we use are important. As author Mike Stroope, missions professor at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary, states in the introduction to *Transcending Mission*: "Words more than represent reality. ... A word is a premise from which conclusions flow and from which action is taken." With the power of words in mind, Stroope undertakes an examination of mission language.

This is, at its core, a book about words. After writing on the deficiency of most biblical justifications for the modern missions movement, Stroope traces the development of missions from the Catholic Jesuits of the 16th century through the development of Protestant missions. Stroope uses this history to demonstrate the word "missions" acquired baggage in the modern era due to its usage in justifying violence, colonialism and a problematic Christendom ideology. After examining the history of how Protestants talk about "missions," Stroope provides helpful suggestions for better ways of thinking through Christian witness.

Transcending Mission is a difficult read, especially for those new to thinking and talking about missiology. Nevertheless, it is an important book. The word "mission" has a negative connotation for much of the world, and with good reason. *Transcending Mission* is an extremely helpful guide to separating the Christian witness from the baggage accumulated by the modern missions movement.

Jake Raabe, student

Truett Theological Seminary

Waco

Talking with God...What to Say When You Don't Know How to Pray

By Adam Weber (Waterbrook / Multnomah)

Adam Weber is pastor of Embrace Church, a multisite congregation  with six campuses in South Dakota and Minnesota. He describes how the church began with a single focus it continues to maintain—prayer. In this easy-to-read book, Weber addresses the need for prayer in everyday situations. He wants readers to know “prayer is simple,” and he communicates the message by telling his life’s story from his childhood, to his days as a seminary student, to his experiences as a pastor.

Weber quotes Martin Luther, who said, “The fewer the words, the better the prayer.” He cites Luther in the chapter “Short. Simple. Honest.” It’s just one example of the quotes by noted Christian leaders Weber uses. Those quotations alone, which appear under each chapter title, make the book worth reading. However, there is so much more.

This book would be a great resource for someone who needs to begin a prayer life, get a stalled one going again or maintain a good one. Every pastor should have this book as a resource for his church family.

Skip Holman, minister of discipleship

Northeast Baptist Church

San Antonio

The Worship Pastor

By Zac Hicks (Zondervan)

 Zac Hicks from Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Ala.,

lets readers know those who bear the title “minister of music” are so much more! From the introduction, “Ready or Not, You’re a Pastor,” Hicks runs the gamut of “Worship Leader as ... ,” taking us in several chapters from “Church Lover” and “Corporate Mystic” to “Disciple Maker” and “Prayer Leader.” In his final chapter, Hicks describes the worship pastor as “Tour Guide”—an appropriate term for the author, who narrates an exploratory journey through the varied aspects and personas of exactly who the worship pastor is and what he or she does.

Hicks’ book is a must-read for every worship leader/minister of music. It would be great for the senior pastor, as well as personnel and search committee members. It includes an exhaustive Scripture index and a lengthy subject index. The author makes a compelling case in presenting the book’s central premise—that every worship leader is a pastor.

Skip Holman, minister of discipleship

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