

more focus. For instance, Studebaker claims to interact with and critique modern and postmodern pneumatologies. To do this he identifies five 'postmodern' theologians: Clark Pinnock, Gary Badcock, Jurgen Moltmann, Peter Hodgson, and Michael Welker. However, it is not clear these are 'postmodern' theologians! What makes them so? In addition Studebaker only allocates on average two paragraphs to the analysis of each theologian (pp. 78-84). He then singles out Stanley Grenz, John Franke, Reinhard Hutter, James Buckley and David Yeago for specific comment but once again allocates only several paragraphs to each (pp. 85-88). Such a short analysis means Studebaker falls foul to caricature and essentially sets up straw men which he subsequently beats down. He does return to these theologians in later chapters but never in any depth and never in such a way that makes this so-called interaction with so-called 'postmodernity' useful. He would have been better to have concentrated on Grenz and Franke's, *Beyond Foundationalism*, and made that the focus of his analysis. As with other volumes in this series there are no indexes included which makes easy access to topics extremely difficult. Finally, there is no conclusion to the work, it just seems to finish in mid-flight adding to the frustration of a rather tedious reading of the work.

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David H. Jensen. ***Responsive Labor: A Theology of Work***
Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006 (ISBN 13-978-0-664-23021-0), xiii + 141 pp.

David Jensen's book is a useful addition to the literature on the relevant and practical theological issue of work. He begins by arguing that the topic of human labours 'is rather foreign' to theologians and they assume that what really matters for the life of faith is time spent away from work: in church, in prayer, in contemplation. Consequently, too many Christians regard their time on the job as tangential to the claims of their faith. Jensen's book aims to recover 'a Christian theological vision of ordinary work, a vision that grounds human labor in God's initiating activity' (p. x).

In particular, Jensen wishes to give us a theology of work from within the Reformed tradition. This emerges in chapter two where he reviews a variety of images of human labor in both Christian and secular traditions. These range from the biblical narrative regarding work through medieval perspectives (e.g. the Benedictine view that sees labour as a necessary antidote to idleness) and Lutheran teachings (i.e. work is as an active calling to serve in the world) to the Catholic tradition which sees work as cocreative with God. Hegel and Marx provide a philosophical foundation for work as self-realisation and against its often-alienating outcomes. Ultimately, Jensen takes a view that emphasises the sovereignty of God in extending his grace to all of creation thereby allowing human work to be good as long as God's work is prior and we accept our labour as being a thankful cocreative response to others and finally back to God. The remaining chapters of Jensen's book explore some of the implications of this responsive labour.

How can we know God's preceding work and respond to it? Chapter three answers this question in establishing a Trinitarian view of work. Using Rahner's concept of the 'economic Trinity', Jensen contends that the persons in the Trinity act as an open economy participating fully and abundantly in the life of creation. Consequently, the Trinity is a statement about

God's work of redemption: God's maintenance of the household, creation of new things in the household, and desire to draw all things into full communion in a household of love (p. 50).

Making the gloomy observation that scarcity, efficiency, standardization, avariciousness, lack and overwork epitomize the economies of the West, Jensen contends that God's self-disclosure as Trinity in the economy of salvation counters this 'reality' by pointing to the inherent value of difference, abundance, interdependence, just distribution, and fun in work. In other words, God's work redeems our labours and the economies of which they are part. As we faithfully believe and act in the Triune God, we hope for 'the transformation of alienated human work as it is enfolded in God's very life' (p. 51).

Chapter four presents a lengthy meditation on the Eucharist as the definitive example of God's Triune work and of humanity's response to it. As Jensen notes, without human labour there is no Eucharist. The Eucharist presents us with a vision of work that disrupts the separation of the secular and the sacred. As a Eucharistic

people who encounter Christ in all that we do, work is no longer a place foreign to the Christian faith. However, work is not simply sacred because Christians happen to be doing it, but rather because the Eucharist and the liturgy ‘tear open heaven’ (p. 75) ensuring God’s holiness envelops all that we do. The workplace has worth because it is God’s place, where one’s work belongs not only to oneself but also to God. At the same time, the Eucharist transfigures our perspective of the world. It is no longer a place of lack but rather of abundance and superfluity. This counters current utilitarian notions of function and scarcity that encourage and result in numerous transgressions against our fellow human beings. Such economic views, Jensen contends, stand over against the *pleroma* (fullness) and gift of God’s *oikos* (economy).

This book makes a useful contribution to the growing literature in the theology of work area. While definitely Reformed, the author is commended for the inclusion of ideas from other traditions. These augment his analysis while positively highlighting the catholicity and diversity of the Christian church. Jensen’s exploration and use of the Trinity and the Eucharist was, at the same time, both illuminating and convicting. However, some constructive criticism remains. First, from a theological perspective, using the perichoretic nature of Trinity as an analogy for work has limitations. Our understanding of the Triune God must surely inform our working practice. However, to infer, for example, that because the mutually interpenetrated persons in the Trinity engage in distinctive functions means that each human person is also infinitely valued in their work, that no-one should be unemployed, or that no worker should not be elevated over another is surely drawing a long-bow. Perichoresis is employed to describe the dissimilarity between intra-Trinitarian relations and human-to-human relations. Human beings do not participate in a common substance and consequently remain distinct individuals even in the most intimate of their relations.

Second, Jensen’s emphasis on divine sovereignty cannot help but give the impression that creation is completed (p. 84). While the new has come in Christ, and in a proleptic sense the redemption of creation has occurred, for those of us still struggling with sin and working in conditions governed by the fall, this type of over-realised eschatology is precarious. It can lead to a lack of realistic application for the here and now. Indeed, Jensen seemingly fails to offer any substantial pathway between the pathologies of work in a fallen world and the ideal that he offers.

Finally, the book's theology appears undiscriminating in both time and place in being worldwide. The author assumes that the North American context is similar, if not the same, to other working environments. This simplistic supposition devalues his effort and begs for a theological analysis that takes into account different cultural and working contexts.

There are other issues worth noting as well. Jensen, perhaps wisely, remarks on his lack of expertise in economics. This is a valid observation. Some of the data provided is out-of-date and there is limited understanding about such economic issues as scarcity, unemployment, and global capitalism. Indeed, a number of other theologians engage with these economic issues at a more in-depth level. Furthermore, there is minimal discussion linking recent changes in the workplace such as the quality of work life (QWL) movement, stakeholder theory, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) as examples of a shift towards the kind of work environment Jensen advocates. Indeed, the reader cannot help but feel that for Jensen all work as it currently exists is bad when this is simply not the case. Despite these criticisms, Jenson's work is a valuable critique of labour, pointing toward more humane and disciplined approaches to work and towards the basic character of work as gratitude and gift, a response to the grace of the Triune God.

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