

Lee's book is political. It is not a call to arms, but a call to lay down arms—a call to nonviolent resistance of injustice through the use and innovation of the lament tradition. Lament, for Lee, is at once an expression of sorrow and a vehicle of protest, and she seeks change in political structures by the voicing of lament by people seeking justice in the world. Lee maintains that the innovation of lament by people utilising and recreating the lament traditions might promote lasting change toward peace in the world. This is, perhaps, an ambitious political agenda; but it is a worthy one. And when reading the collection of laments that have arisen from and seeded into movements for change it's hard not to wonder if there might be something in it.

This is a book to be dipped into time and time again. Its expressions of grief and lament resonate with all who share humanity. These laments in turn may inspire both our own expressions of grief, and solidarity with those whose mourn, gentling God's people to action in a hurting world.

ALAN G. PADGETT AND STEVE WILKENS. *CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN THOUGHT: A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHERS, IDEAS AND MOVEMENTS. VOLUME 3: JOURNEY TO POSTMODERNITY IN THE 20TH CENTURY*. DOWNERS GROVE: IVP ACADEMIC, 2009. (PP. 388) [ISBN: 978-1-84474-388-9]

MYK HABETS

CAREY BAPTIST COLLEGE

This is the third and final volume in the series *Christianity and Western Thought* and continues in the tradition established in the first two volumes. The three volumes have appeared in 10 year intervals and as such have taken much longer to complete than the publishers originally intended. The series was initiated by Colin Brown, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and he was scheduled to complete all three volumes. However, his work load and age meant he could not complete the project beyond the first volume, so Padgett and Wilkens stepped in to complete volumes 2 and 3. Together, this three volume set establishes itself as one of a number of extremely helpful overviews of key philosophers, philosophies, and cultural ideas from a broadly evangelical Christian worldview. More than simply a summary of Western philosophy, each volume offers critical interaction and insightful perspectives on the range of topics covered. Volumes 2 and 3 are more limited in their scope than volume 1, and as such diverge somewhat from the original intent. This is not a critical comment, however, merely an observation. By limiting the scope of the final 2 volumes the authors are able to develop ideas with more rigour and provide more extensive interaction with the themes. Volume 1 surveys the ancient world to the Age of Enlightenment; volume 2 examines faith and reason in the 19th century; while volume 3 offers a broad sweep of 20th century philosophical thought from the demise of idealism to the establishment of postmodernism.

Written in a narrative style the 10 chapters of volume 3 are eminently readable for the non-specialist and open up the themes and personalities involved in critical but honest detail. Chapter one examines the

demise of idealism; chapter 2 the rise of analytic philosophy; chapter 3 pays close consideration to Heidegger and German existentialism; and chapter 4 moves onto French existentialism. Chapter 5 is one of the only chapters in the book to look directly at theological concerns as it turns its attention to existence and the Word of God in dialectical theology and neo-orthodoxy. The next four chapters examine pragmatism and process philosophies on the rise in America; further developments in analytic philosophy; issues surrounding Christian philosophy; and finally the journey to postmodernism. A final chapter offers a retrospect and reflection.

I have found these volumes extremely reliable and useful guides over a number of years. Throughout each volume, including this one, the authors offer their own critical judgements on the philosophies they are canvassing, and each time they do it is sage advice. To illustrate, in chapter 2 Bertrand Russell's early analytic philosophy is analysed and then assessed. The authors spend time dealing with Russell's objections to Christianity—the ethical, biblical, and philosophical—before offering a reply. Russell's Cartesian approach to epistemology is examined and found wanting as Padgett and Wilkens suggest that the existence of God can be understood, after Alvin Plantinga, as “properly basic” (p. 50). Further, Russell's arguments are weak as he “too easily dismisses views that he doesn't like, without bothering to examine sophisticated, scholarly versions of the arguments” (p. 51). A series of such arguments follows. While Christians have often been guilty of adopting the same approach as Russell in this regard, Wilkens and Padgett offer an exemplary alternative throughout this volume.

Chapter 5 deserves special mention, “Existence and the Word of God: Dialectical and Neo-Orthodoxy” (pp. 131-183). My undergraduate education was dominated by critical North American interpretations of Barth and what was then pejoratively called “neo-orthodoxy.” Treating neo-orthodoxy and the theologies of Bultmann, Barth, and Brunner (R. Niebuhr and Paul Tillich are also included in chapter 5) as all of one piece, the interpretation was always hostile and, it turns out, often inaccurate. So this chapter, written by two North American scholars who are not Barthian, piqued my interest. I am glad to report that their analysis of what was called neo-orthodoxy is fair and even-handed and matches the quality of the rest of the volume. Acknowledging the fact that “neo-orthodoxy” is a pejorative label applied by critics; they quite rightly identify the theology of Karl Barth and others of the period as “dialectical theology.” Dialectical theology has certain general defining features: it stresses the transcendence of God as the Wholly Other; its theology accommodates what appears to be paradox within Scripture; it holds to revelation as an event; is a protest against rationalistic religion in any of its manifest forms; uses an existential method; and has a renewed emphasis on human sinfulness (pp. 132-133). In their evaluation of Barth's theology in particular, the question of universalism appears, as would be expected; along with the distinction Barth maintained between the Word of God written and the Word of God, thus Barth did not equate Scripture strictly with divine revelation; the christologically conditioned nature of all of his theology; and his reimagining of the doctrine of election. To each of these issues the authors offer critique while establishing the context out of which Barth wrote.

Christianity and Western Thought deserves to be in the library of every theology lecturer and on the shelves of good church libraries. As key thinkers of Western thinking are interacted with at high schools

and universities, and as their influence is felt in daily life, this series offers a serious yet readable map to navigate one's way through the complexities of the arguments and keep a solid, evangelical, Christian worldview in focus. I for one am exceedingly glad the series has been completed and completed so well.

CRAIG L. BLOMBERG AND SUNG WOOK CHUNG, EDS. *A CASE FOR HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM: AN ALTERNATIVE TO 'LEFT BEHIND' ESCHATOLOGY*. GRAND RAPIDS: BAKER, 2009. (XIX + 184 PP.) [ISBN: 978-0-8010-3596-8]

MYK HABETS

CAREY BAPTIST COLLEGE

Dispensational versions of eschatology have dominated evangelical theology for the last 100 years, especially in North America. The most common expression of such eschatology is the hugely popular sixteen volumes of the *Left Behind* novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins (1995–2007), which sold millions of copies worldwide, and the earlier best seller of Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970). This version of eschatology offers a complicated and detailed timeline of future events, central to which is the secret pre-tribulation rapture of the church, the great tribulation, the rise of two individuals—the false prophet and the anti-Christ—the restoration of ethnic/national Israel, followed by the return of Christ to the earth to rule for a millennium, the last battle, the final judgments (of nations, individuals, Israel, and Gentiles), and the ushering in of the New Heavens and New Earth. For many Baptists this version of eschatology is the only one they could narrate. However, surprising it is to many, this is not the dominant understanding of eschatology in church history, or today.

Most Christian academics working today broadly fall into the amillennial category (a few are postmillennial); arguing that the promises to Israel are now spiritual in nature and are enfolded into the promises for the church. There is no literal tribulation, false prophet, anti-Christ, or millennium to come. For those who don't accept this argument on Scriptural grounds, there is a third option—historical premillennialism. Historic premillennialists see a future for Israel, a literal second coming of Christ to the earth for a golden age (1000 years or not), and then the creation of the new heavens and new earth. In addition, this position argues that historic premillennialism was the dominant position of the early church and of the Church Fathers and thus it has an eminent orthodox pedigree. It is this position the contributors to the present volume support, articulate, and seek to popularise. Most of the chapters of this volume were presented at a Denver Seminary conference on the theme and edited for this volume. Six of the contributors are Denver Seminary faculty and are historic premillennialists, the other two come from a South American Dispensationalist and a patristics scholar respectively. The volume does not seek to present a holistic or systematic exposition of historic premillennialism; rather, it offers perspectival reflections on aspects of this eschatology, something common to conference papers.

Four chapters address historical type issues. Timothy Weber critically reflects on the rise of Dispensational premillennialism and the demise of historic premillennialism until the work of George Eldon