This is food for thought for men who often hold the ability to give a woman an opportunity (or not); where are the female role models in our NZ churches? These comments alone make her chapter worth a read.

This review cannot include a comment on each chapter (as much as I would like), but I will end with thoughts on two more chapters which widen the scope of the book; Clare Hendry's chapter on being called as a "permanent deacon," and Kate Wharton's on being a single Priest–in–Charge.

Clare's theology is complementarian and her call was unexpected. She was about to start a two–year Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Mississippi, when God spoke to her about working in the Church of England. When she applied, she was rejected and instead began teaching Pastoral Counselling at Oak Hill Theological College where she trained other ordinands. For Clare her journey to ordination took many years; this is not an uncommon story for women or men. In each step she has sensed "God had the place" for her. She now works as an honorary assistant minister (yet another unpaid woman) in a church plant on the edge of Muswell Hill.

Kate Wharton is an inspirational young woman who talks openly about the reality of life as a single women minister. When she was aged 14, the vote was passed in favour of women priests; "*how could there be any other view"* she mused, *"but* [the vote] *didn't have much bearing on my day to day life"* (p. 164). How wrong we can be! As Kate continues with her story she is clearly a women who thrives on the challenges of pastoral ministry and who takes being young, single and a women in her stride. "In the first week of my curacy," Kate writes, "I was greeted cheerily with, 'Morning Father!' People often ask 'so what do we call you then love?' to which I tend to reply 'well I'll answer to most things, but Kate will do for a start!'" (p. 174). Kate has gone on to speak about singleness in large gatherings (she had planned to say no!) and later to write a book, *Single Minded*, and is now an Area Dean in Liverpool. Her story is one where there was little angst around her gender and so maybe as the final chapter, is one which leaves increased hope for what may lie ahead for women in the church and a good place to end this book.

I think there is also hope for women evangelicals in NZ, but I want to leave this review with a plea: Getting to know and appreciate the challenges for women is critical for men; we need to think about what we say and how we say it; we need to think theologically and relationally; have you begun this journey? This book may be a start for you but it will not be all you need. It is a light read, and it offers no answers, but it might make both men and women think more deeply. The church is in desperate need of women's voices in key leadership roles; how can we image God with only one gender doing most of the thinking and planning, let alone all the pastoral caring, payer and teaching. Women and men notice different things in the biblical text, we "see" different opportunities and viewpoints. Together these give a wider, deeper, richer picture of God. Together.

DONALD P. MOFFAT. *EZRA'S SOCIAL DRAMA: IDENTITY, MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EZRA 9 AND 10*. LIBRARY OF HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES 579. NEW YORK: BLOOMSBURY, 2013. xiii + 218 PP. [ISBN 978–0–567–60912–0].

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In recent years a host of studies have appeared on the post-exilic period and more specifically on the intermarriage crisis in Ezra 9–10. Moffat adds his perspective to this using the anthropologist Victor Turner's "social drama" model to interpret the events. To Turner's four stages (breach, mounting crisis, redress/reconciliation and reintegration/schism) he adds Cottle's fifth stage of ebbing/revivification where the memory of the social drama ebbs and revives in the public consciousness. Moffat states his aim as twofold (p. 3): to understand the meaning that writer(s) and readers of Ezra 9–10 may have derived from the story and to recover something of the historical situation behind the narrative that can contribute to a historical reconstruction of Persian Yehud.

After setting out his agenda and some methodological matters regarding the possibilities and limits of social science methods in the first chapter, Chapter 2 paints the larger picture of the Persian province, Yehud. Moffat describes its geography, population size, and political situation in order to illuminate social processes at work in the mixed marriage crisis. He concludes that Yehud was run on authoritarian lines both in terms of the Persian administration and in the local communities. Thus he convincingly questions scholarly views that imagine the resolution to the mixed marriage crisis as a democratic process with individual freedom to dissent from the community's decision.

Chapter 3 argues for the compositional unity of Ezra 9–10 with sufficient linguistic connections and unified narrative flow to be treated together. Moffat also agrees with a number of other scholars that Neh 8 (the public reading of the law) is chronologically prior to Ezra 9–10. This is particularly significant for him because it becomes the foundation for his later argument that Ezra in his teaching role is central to the crisis even though the narrative downplays him.

Chapter 4 begins the textual study proper with the acknowledged focus being on the cultural and religious aspects of the narrative. Perhaps the title could have reflected this, as its present name ("Ezra 9–10") does not reveal much of the content one could expect. Moffat explores how the community defined itself, the "foreigners", the sin of intermarriage and how the crisis developed and was resolved. Moffat sums up the emphasis of the text on the sin of the community as a "transgression of cultic purity", which I find puzzling (p. 71). Does he mean ritual impurity? Although it does not disturb his larger argument, his use of "cultic" here and elsewhere is, in my view, confusing. On the one hand, he uses cultic in the standard sense relating to the people ("cultic staff" p. 71) and practices around the temple (p. 83). On the other, he applies it more broadly to describe worship of and faithfulness to Yahweh, which he calls "cultic loyalty" as opposed to idolatry and apostasy (p. 181). In Deuteronomy, he calls the major sin "cultic pollution" (p. 72) when he means the worship of other gods (he cites Deut 11:17; 29:23–27). This is especially problematic when Deuteronomy does not associate sin with pollution (unlike the priestly

material) and faithfulness to YHWH in obedience to his commandments is much more broadly defined in the book than the cult and its practices.

Nevertheless, this chapter has some good observations and a convincing argument for Ezra's central role in forcing the issue in the crisis through the use of ritual (a tool whose centrality Turner highlights). Moffat makes the case that given the directive nature of the Persian administration and Ezra's high status, his public act of self-humiliation could not be ignored by the community leadership. He also understands Ezra to have been influential in providing the teaching on the law that led to the breach, and the solution suggested by Shecaniah. This is plausible if one accepts Neh 8's priority before the events in Ezra 9–10 and given the reference to Ezra's advice in the matter (10:3).

Chapter 5 comes to the heart of the matter. Moffat concentrates on three aspects: root paradigms, symbols (key aspects of Turner's theory) and the stages of the social drama. He identifies the exodus as the root metaphor for restoration. Although exodus motifs have long been noted in the book of Ezra, Moffat argues that the exodus paradigm forms a key aspect of the exiles' worldview, which shapes their understanding of the mixed marriage crisis. He sees two particular stories from the exodus period which inform the issues in Ezra 9–10 along with Deut 7 (the ban on intermarriage with Canaanites). One is the story of Achan's unfaithfulness (*ma'al*) in taking dedicated things (*herem*) in Josh 7, which shares key language with Ezra 9–10. The other recounts Israel's sin at Baal-Peor in Num 25. This latter connection is not alluded to in Ezra 9–10 though Moffat points out that Ezra's genealogy included Phinehas (7:5) whose descendants are also mentioned among the people who returned with Ezra (8:2). It is plausible, as Moffat claims, that the incident at Baal–Peor was part of a pool of stories used in penitential prayers (e.g. Ps 106:28-31) and other literature (e.g. Deut 4:3) in the post–exilic period and so will have shaped the larger background of post-exilic thinking.

Moffat identifies foreign women as major symbols in the crisis that cause the breach but also become the means of redressive action and reintegration for the community (through divorce as part of the reparation needed alongside a guilt offering). He sees here again a link with the exodus paradigm and especially Num 25. The "foreign" label attached to the women builds on Deuteronomic ideas of foreignness defined as not conforming to Israel's worship and the practice of abominations, a description routinely applied to pre-conquest inhabitants of Canaan. Moffat also notes some similarities with the "strange woman" in Prov 1–9, though he posits no direct connection. Rather, he sees in these texts a testimony to a social discourse that conceives some women as foreign and dangerous. Drawing on priestly ideas Ezra 9 also associates these foreign women with a highly contagious pollution that is compared to the impurity of menstruation. There is some uncertainty how Moffat understands this impurity: as metaphorical–symbolic or ritual. Whatever the exact meaning he clearly shows that this cluster of ideas make the symbol of foreign women a powerful motivator for action.

Finally, the chapter walks the reader through Ezra 9–10 as social drama identifying Turner's four stages in the narrative. Moffat reiterates and expands on a number of points already mentioned in Chapter

4 particularly highlighting the importance of Ezra's ritual action in turning the breach into a social crisis, which demands a response from the community.

Chapter 6 then concludes with some explorations regarding the relationship between the narrative and historical events and examining the residual memory of the crisis in later literature. Moffat covers here a variety of issues, which give weight to the claim of many that the intermarriage crisis in Ezra 9–10 is not literary fiction. Rather, its many details correspond to recognisable features of the post–exilic period with an internal logic discernible in the story that is rooted in historic reality. So, for instance, he notes the recurrent motif of the exodus in postexilic literature, which demonstrates that the paradigm was deeply embedded in the consciousness of the period. He takes issue with Grabbe, who sees several Ezras reflected in the narrative and who considers Ezra's action weak and inappropriate to a man of his high status. Moffat discusses the economic and political explanations frequently given as to why marriages with "foreign" women were feared, but concludes that notwithstanding these subsidiary considerations the primary reason was the ideological emphasis on purity. He argues against Janzen's witch-hunt theory that places the blame on the women and instead suggests that the text holds the men responsible and requires reparation from them. He also critiques Blenkinsopp's suggestion that not all may have complied with the community's decision on divorce. Moffat thinks this unlikely based on his explorations into the social dynamics of postexilic society. Finally, he examines the residual effect of the crisis comparing the localised and slightly differently presented issue in Neh 13. He concludes that the recurrence of the intermarriage crisis does not mean that the process was ineffective in Ezra 9–10. He wonders if the differences he notes in Neh 13 reflect a shift in the community's understanding of holiness (purity language recedes in connection to lay people). He also speculates about the effects of the social stigma on those whose names were recorded in the earlier crisis in Ezra 9–10.

While Moffat mentions some biblical books that are more accepting of cross-cultural marriages (Esther, Ruth), he does not explore other Second Temple writings (e.g. 4QMMT, *Jubilees*, the Book of Judith, *The Testament of Levi*), which condemn mixed marriages and echo ideas of pollution present in Ezra 9–10. The fact that later rabbinic teaching finally regularised practices around intermarriage and condemned the approaches of zealotry evident in many of these non–biblical sources suggests that the issue continued to be a live one for several centuries and the earlier solutions offered were, in the final analysis, not entirely satisfactory.

Overall, Moffat's book is an interesting and valuable contribution to the study of the postexilic period and the story of Ezra 9–10. His discussion of the exodus as root paradigm, the foreign women as symbol and key motivators for action, as well as his exploration of Ezra's role as catalyst in the crisis through the power of ritual, are particular highlights. This is a worthwhile piece of work that gives added weight to arguments already raised by other scholars and fills in details in the text and its historic background not covered by others. As a revised dissertation this is primarily of benefit for those in biblical studies interested in the postexilic period or in social science approaches of biblical texts.