

claims. He starts promisingly - the first major chapter (on 'the uniqueness of Jesus Christ') is a good statement of a conservative view. However whilst this chapter takes up some 26 pages, the second (on that evangelical favourite, scripture) demands 68.

The second section is mixed. McGrath is unconvincing on postliberalism and adds nothing new on pluralism. By far the strongest chapter is that which critiques postmodernism. Both the strengths and the limitations of this crucial part of the modern intellectual scene are fairly identified. Here the title of the book becomes important. McGrath argues well for a tighter sense of 'truth' than some postmodernists concede. Nevertheless, the ways in which postmodernism may act as a critical ally are accepted.

This acceptance of aspects of post-enlightenment thought is significant. *A Passion for Truth* may adopt the superstructure of standard evangelical apologetic method in its extensive treatment of scripture but McGrath is altering the foundations. He is clear, for instance, about the need to move beyond the Princeton theology of the Hodges and Warfield. McGrath is undoubtedly right to make this call. A high view of scripture does not - indeed, cannot - depend upon rationalism alone. For evangelicals the implications of such a shift are considerable. In this book McGrath dares to try new paths. For this alone *A Passion for Truth* is worth reading.

Martin Sutherland

S.J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1996).

I bought Stanley Grenz's 'A Primer on Postmodernism' because, in a climate where 'paradigm shift' seems to be shouted from every street corner, I wanted a reasonably concise yet thorough introduction into the (supposedly) emerging parading of postmodernism.

The book satisfied my curiosity admirably. As an introduction, I found Grenz's use of the well-known Star Trek series (Star Trek, and Star Trek: The Next Generation) a creative way of describing the difference between the modern and postmodern views. Especially helpful to my mind is his chapter on the philosophers of postmodernism, in which overviews are given of the philosophical stances of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty. This chapter, building on the earlier chapters describing the rise of the modern world view and the philosophical ancestry of postmodernism, left me feeling that I could actually understand they hydra-headed beast of postmodernism. But Grenz doesn't set up this sample of postmodern thinkers simplistically so as to knock them down like straw men. For example, where some Christians would cry 'Look at the inherent contradictions', Grenz acknowledges the postmodernist thinkers' wrestling with denying that their world view is a world view, and with their critiquing reason with reason. Where *A Primer on Postmodernism* did disappoint was in the section on the gospel and the postmodern context. This is too short; it almost feels like an afterthought. Viewed charitably, Grenz maybe ensuring that I as the reader will have to wrestle to develop a response appropriate to postmodernism when encountered in my context. But I doubt I will discover it in as clear-cut a form as described.

In common with many books which seek to distill patterns from the mess of reality, I suspect Grenz has oversimplified the idea of a transition from the modern to postmodern era in order to draw a line in the sand. He could perhaps have been more circumspect like Millard Erickson who suggests (*Where is Theology Going?*, 1994, p 54) that postmodernism may represent a paradigm shift that will require a response. Despite these reservations, however, I think 'A Primer on Postmodernism' is well worth reading, especially if it replaces that latest 'How To' book out of the USA.

Jeff Whittaker.