

## **Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews**

Brownson argues that baptism should be seen as a Christian practice that declares God's promises to man. This perspective is used to answer all the questions about faith and people's perspectives on baptism in our times. Issues discussed include rebaptism, infant baptism, the meaning baptism has for people who no longer believe; the place where baptism should take place et cetera. All discussions are pastorally orientated.

The book consists of thirty short chapters (seldom more than eight pages apiece) which each masterly answers one specific question on the meaning or practice of baptism. References to historical works and Biblical passages abound and are well integrated into the discussion. The book can be read from beginning to end, but also offers the possibility of being used as a reference work, reading the chapters in a random fashion in order to answer specific questions.

Every chapter is concluded with a summary of three to six bulleted phrases. This serves as a very useful search facility of the contents of the chapter or as a study-aid for students. In addition, a few questions and statements *for further reflection and discussion* are included, as well as a very short reference for further study on the contents of the specific chapter. The thirty chapters are grouped in six sections namely:

- Basic questions;
- The core meanings of baptism;
- Baptism, faith and salvation;
- The case for infant baptism;
- Disputes and questions surrounding infant baptism;
- Pastoral decisions surrounding baptism.

An index of Scripture references and a select annotated bibliography on baptism are included. Apart from the book's value for the scholar or student, it would be very useful for any church member in deepening their understanding of baptism.



### **Brueggemann, W 2006 – *The word that redescribes the world: The Bible and discipleship***

Publisher: Fortress. Pages 235. Price: Unknown.

#### **Reviewer: Rev André Ungerer (Klerksdorp)**

The title of the book already indicates that Brueggemann – as always – begins with the text of the Scripture. Throughout the book both the danger and the power of Scripture are emphasized and a mode of looking that is confrontational, especially between text and the world we live in, is encountered. Brueggemann, as an Old Testament scholar, uses a rich variety of texts, also from the New Testament, to confront the world we live in. The text of the world is described in various ways throughout the book: It is the text of the Enlightenment, of modernism, autonomous freedom, technical solutions to every problem, sexual emancipation, systematic violence, to name but a few. The book is about the redescription (by means of the Word) that protests against the initial description and presentation of reality (the World) which is not an adequate or trustworthy account.

The subtitle *The Bible and discipleship* does not imply a ten point plan as a *modus operandi* on how to encourage discipleship in a congregation, for in Brueggemann's own

words: “*Discipleship is no easy church program*”. Brueggemann dwells on the fundamental issues of the God who calls and the God who sends. In short God calls to discipleship, that is, to follow his presence and purpose and promise, with disciplines being needed for the project. God sends because (a) this God has compelling authority to issue imperatives that anticipate ready acceptance and (b) this God has a compelling passion for what is to be affected and enacted in the world over which this God is governor.

This book consists of a collection of essays written and published in a variety of contexts and in response to a number of different questions and invitations. The book follows a threefold arrangement organizing the contents into three sections, with a total of 11 chapters (essays), edited by Patrick D Miller.

The first section, *The Word redescribing the world*, occupies itself with the Biblical text and the way in which Biblical redescription may be practiced with authority in a cultural context in which old patterns of authority have become outdated. In *Proclamatory confrontations* Brueggemann describes the preacher’s difficult task in his/her confrontation with truth and power. He characterizes preaching as truth speaking to power – “*in our postmodern world it is a power that is endlessly subtle, complex and elusive*”.

The second section, *The Word redefining the possible*, begins with Jerusalem as a general metaphor that can be applied to all our cities and Brueggemann links it to the urgent issues facing our cities today. The chapter about evangelism and discipleship provides an excellent and critical reflection on these disciplines. As Brueggemann states: “The talk makes the walk possible, and the walk is to heal, to break all vicious cycles of diminishment that violate the intention of the creator”. In the next chapter the dangers of consumerism as a life of self-preoccupation are cast in the light of Biblical citizenship which is one of being truly blessed givers. The section ends with a chapter on ecumenism as the shared practice of a peculiar identity.

In the last section Brueggemann presents a vision of a community of disciples that is shaped by the Word, firstly by commissioning the disciples to fight against scarcity and then by describing how holiness becomes generosity. The book is concluded with a chapter on patriotism for the citizens of the penultimate superpower. It is perhaps apt to end this review by quoting Brueggemann’s own reference to preaching as *truth speaking to power*. This book is indeed about truth speaking to power in such a way that it mobilizes the Christian community to participate in being the truth in such a manner that it can no longer be ignored.



**Burridge, R A & Gould, G 2004 – *Jesus now and then***

Publisher: Eerdmans. Pages Xii + 215. Price: \$16.00

**Reviewer: Prof Ernest van Eck (University of Pretoria)**

*Jesus now and then* must be read in terms of what it is: a reworking of nine lectures on the effect Jesus had on people *then* (the New Testament and the early church) and *now*, presented to King’s College students coming from different religious backgrounds and who were not necessarily studying theology. Because of this particular setting and the original aim, expect a book that presents the issues at an introductory level. Therefore, do not expect in-depth discussions on, for example, the question of the historical Jesus or Paul’s relationship to Jesus. Moreover, since the authors are who they are (Burridge, who was responsible for the part on the New Testament and Gould, who focused on the early church), expect the