

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redescription may be practiced with authority in a cultural context in which old patterns of authority have become outdated.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.

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**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

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genre of the gospels being described as Lives (see Burridge's *What are the Gospels? A comparison with Graeco-Roman biography*, 1992), Mark as the roaring lion, Matthew as the human face, Luke as the burden-bearing ox and John as the high-flying eagle (see Burridge's *Four Gospels, one Jesus?* 1994), and expect an emphasis on the contribution of the Cappadocian Fathers when Jesus' humanity and divinity is discussed (Gould).

Contents-wise, the book consists of an introduction (ch 1, co-authored by the two authors) and two parts, the New Testament (Part I, written by Burridge) and the early church (Part II, written by Gould). In a certain sense the first chapter can be seen as a summary of what is to follow, focusing on the Christological debates in the early and modern church on who Jesus was (then) and is (now). In Part I Burridge discusses the historical Jesus-question (ch 2), Jesus as the different gospel writers presented him (ch 3), Paul's understanding of Jesus (ch 4) and the views of Jesus in the New Testament (ch 5). Part II, written by Gould, has as its focus what the early church taught about Jesus (ch 6), the way in which the early Christians had worshipped Jesus (ch 7), the confession of Jesus as being wholly human and divine (ch 8), and modern day understandings of Jesus (ch 9).

Taking its purpose into consideration, Burridge and Gould must be congratulated on a book that is well written. The historical and theological questions surrounding Jesus are presented in a non-technical and understandable manner. Many undergraduate students in my classes over the past two years can vouch for this. The box inserts, explaining some of the "difficult" terms used, are useful and are welcomed. The suggested reading list at the end, however, could have been expanded to have been more representative of the scholarly debate *Jesus now and then* wants to introduce.

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### **Cromhout, M 2007 – *Jesus and identity: Reconstructing Judean ethnicity in Q (Matrix: The Bible in Mediterranean context, 2)***

Publisher: Wipf & Stock, Pages xiv-390. Price: Unknown

#### **Reviewer: Prof Joseph Verheyden (Leuven – The Netherlands)**

This book, the revised version of a doctoral dissertation supervised by A van Aarde and submitted to the University of Pretoria in 2006, proposes to study the complex and crucial issue of understanding how early Christianity (or "Messianism" as the author prefers to call it) saw itself within its original "Jewish" (Cromhout: "Judean") context, how this perception functioned, and how it eventually may have influenced its emancipation from its roots to adopt (an)other identity/-ies. For this is above all a book about identity, how it is created, and how religion and ethnicity have interplayed in the particular situation of earliest Judaeo-Christianity.

In the first (pp 9-66) of his five chapters, Cromhout offers a detailed analysis of two major books on the historical Jesus (J P Meier's *Marginal Jew* and J D Crossan's *Mediterranean Jewish peasant*) and deals with how they have given a place to the question of Jesus' ethnic identity. Building on "ethnicity theory" Cromhout discusses the topic from several perspectives (creation of identity by means of the group's name, the role of myths related to its ancestry, collective memory, the group's geographical, linguistic, and religious traditions, its social construct, and the particular practices and customs it shared). Meier's Jesus appears to be both in line with and to deviate from its Judean ethnicity. The latter is especially clear in the way in which Jesus' demands had forced his followers to largely give