

## **Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews**

The flat earth problem, for instance, can be solved by regarding references to it as poetry (pp 270-271)! That it formed part of the broad world view at the time is completely ignored.

ID's strongest argument is the claim to irreducible complexity. Behe describes it as follows: "An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly ... by slight, successive modifications of a precursory system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional ... . Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on" (quoted in Ajala 2006:78).

The following references to irreducible complexity are found in the work: the structure of the vertebrate eye (p 43; refuted by Ajala 2006:79-80), the structure of the protein haemoglobin (p 43; refuted by Ajala 2006:82-83), and flagellum (p 104, refuted by Ajala 2006:80-1). Also see pages 57-59.

In this connection Ajala (2006:78) writes: "But evolutionists have pointed out, again and again, with supporting evidence, that organs and other components of living beings are not irreducibly complex – they do not come about suddenly, or in one fell swoop." The examples given of irreducible complexity are not irreducible at all.

To summarize: ID is an ideology which assumes religious-sectarian traits. It is veiled creationism. It relies on a few examples, most of which have been refuted by authoritative scientists. They try to turn ID into proof of the existence of god – an attempt which like other "god of the gaps models" will eventually result in embarrassment. There is no doubt that ID has its followers, but the same can be said of many of the other pseudo-scientific movements. Ajala (2006: 90) points out "that the theory of evolution is not incompatible with belief in the existence of God and God's presence in the workings of the universe."



### **Dunn, J D G, 2005 – *The new perspective on Paul: Collected essays***

Publisher: Mohr Siebeck. Hardcover 536 Pages. Price: Unknown

#### **Reviewer: Dr Gys Loubser (University of Pretoria)**

Since the early eighties Dunn has established himself as the most prolific proponent of the so-called *New Perspective on Paul*. Before him there were scholars such as G F Moore, J Parkes and, of course, the one from whom he profited most, E P Sanders (pp 5-6).

It was Sanders who introduced the concept of *covenantal nomism* to explain Israel's understanding of its relationship with God. Israel could not initiate or create the relationship with God. This, only God could do in his divine grace. They did, however, have the responsibility to live up to their obligations as decreed in Torah. Thus, living according to Torah was not about *getting in*, but about *staying in* the relationship with God. Sanders' aim was to indicate that it was not true that Second Temple Judaism, from which Paul stemmed, was stripped of grace and was wholly a meritorious religion. In fact, it even allowed for imperfection, atonement and forgiveness for repenting sinners.

For Dunn this is a timely correction to too staunch a Lutheran view of Jewish justification. Having said this he, however, still felt that Sanders' Paul does not make sense. "If the Judaism of Paul's day also gave such a place to divine election, atonement and forgiveness, then what was Paul objecting to?"(p 7). His position is basically "that Paul's own teaching on justification focuses largely, if not principally, on the need to overcome the barrier

which the law was seen to interpose between Jew and Gentile, so that the 'all' of 'to all who believe' (Rm 1:17) signifies in the first place 'Gentile as well as Jew'" (p 15). Further: "It suggests that 'works of law' became a key slogan in Paul's exposition of his justification gospel because so many of Paul's fellow Jewish believers were insisting on certain works as indispensable to salvation" (p 15).

The book is a compilation of twenty of Dunn's articles from 1983-2004, dealing with subjects such as the *New Perspective* on Paul, Torah, works of law, covenantal nomism, law in both Galatians and Romans, continuity and discontinuity between Judaism and Early Christianity, Paul and justification, et cetera. As such it is vastly beneficial to New Testament scholarship, making it that much easier for Pauline scholars and students to follow his writings in a (chrono)logical sequence within a single volume.

However, the publication is more than a mere compilation. The book's added value is to be found in its introduction of 88 pages: *The New Perspective: Whence, what and whither?* in which Dunn attempts to give new direction to the debate. He takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the Pauline landscape as he sees it. He indicates to his fellow travelers how different aspects of the landscape relate to and fit into one another.

The first section provides a brief orientation to the reader on how he came to accept and develop the *New Perspective*. This is followed by a section: "Clarifying confusions and misunderstandings," in which he urges critics to "focus on the central thrust of the case and not allow itself to be distracted by phrases which might have been chosen more carefully, or by specifically directed comments taken out of context" (p 16). He deals with the following criticisms: that the *New Perspective* was set up as a repudiation of the traditional Lutheran view of faith and justification (pp 17-22); that he had reduced "works of law" to a few "boundary markers" (pp 22-26); that Paul's objection to law was merely about a certain attitude (pp 26-33); and that he had reduced Paul's view of justification to a pragmatic solution to a relationship problem amongst Christians (pp 33-37).

He should be credited for his thoroughness in dealing with different texts, as well as his willingness to enter into debate with fellow scholars who have challenged – even severely criticized – his thesis, as much as he is willing to take comfort in and acknowledge those who have supported him. He takes pains to acknowledge criticisms that have been aired, especially those of the last decade. He tries to react in a balanced way, also acknowledging that "there is some justification for these critical comments since my early formulations were not sufficiently refined. So at least some restatement is called for" (p 17). In this regard the footnotes in his introduction are extremely important. It is his reactions to these criticisms that really take the debate forward.

It has to be said that although the Dunn who writes this introduction is willing to deal fairly with criticism and to reformulate more carefully, he does make comments that do not fit into this picture. On page 21 he remarks: "I am astonished by and repudiate entirely the charge that 'the new perspective on Paul' constitutes an attack on and denial of that Lutheran fundamental. Anyone who reads that from my writing is reading in what he wants to see, not reading out what is there. The point I am trying to make is simply that there is another dimension (or other dimensions) of the biblical doctrine of God's justice and of Paul's teaching on justification which have been overlooked and neglected, and that it is important to recover these aspects and to think them through afresh in the changing circumstances of today's world" (21). Dunn probably had not intended to attack the Lutheran position, but rereading the relevant articles, such an impression is created. It most definitely is the impression shared by the very elaborate list of "responsible scholars" he refers to (21). It would have been more fitting not to question the intentions of his critics, but simply to use the opportunity to set the record straight.

In the third section of his introduction, Dunn acknowledges that the past decade's scholarly debate has brought him "to a sharper and more nuanced appreciation of what was at stake for Paul" (p 38). In this section he tries to take the debate forward, focusing on

## **Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews**

Galatians: 3:10-14 (pp 38-41); Romans 3:19-20, 4:4-8 and 9:11-12 (pp 41-47); on the issue of whether Paul broke with the law (pp 47-50); and the later writings of the Pauline corpus (pp 51-54). He adds a fourth section in which he deals with the question of whether Sanders' point of view is possibly an exaggeration (pp 55-63); whether justification by faith is complimented by some kind of a process (pp 63-72); the role of works in God's judgement upon believers (pp 72-80); and participation in Christ leading to transformation (pp 80-86).

This book should certainly be added to the libraries of all individuals and institutions with an interest in Pauline studies. Not all students across the world have access to the relevant journals and publications in which these articles originally appeared. Whether or not one agrees with Dunn in everything he proposes, or even as far as his main thesis is concerned, is beside the point. His position has become so prominent, articulated and influential, that no Pauline scholar can proceed without taking due cognizance of Dunn's perspective. The publishers and author should be thanked for providing in this need.



### **Glancy, J A 2006 – *Slavery in Early Christianity***

Publisher: Fortress. Paperback, 230 pages. Price: Unknown

#### **Reviewer: Dr M Cromhout (Johannesburg)**

In her introduction Glancy notes that her study "focuses on the impact of the ubiquitous ancient institution of slavery on the emergence and development of Christianity" (p 3). In this study, Glancy paints a grim picture of ancient slavery as she delves through various ancient sources, and explains what the normal dynamics between slave and slaveholder were like. Above all else, her sympathies and interest lie mainly with the circumstances of the slaves themselves. Taking into consideration that slavery was an established fact of life, Glancy investigates the early Christian texts to analyze their impact on the early church. What emerges is an understanding of the subject which is at the same time illuminating, and to our modern (Christian) sensibilities, quite alarming.

In the first chapter Glancy looks at the ancient rhetoric of slavery, and notes that slaves were often referred to as "the bodies". As mere "bodies", they were subject to being used pretty much according to the personal whims of their owners, something which extended even beyond the slave's manumission. This included physical and verbal abuse, as well as sexual penetration, since slaves had no control over their own bodies. Slaves could also act as surrogate bodies for their owners to accomplish various acts of violence on others. In addition, female slaves acted as wet-nurses and also expanded their owners' wealth if they nursed their own children. Generally, the gender specific liabilities of slaves placed them "outside the game of honor" (p 27). In addition to the realities mentioned above, male slaves endured the permanent status of a boy. Glancy also makes a brief study of spiritual slavery and somatic metaphors in Epictetus and Paul's Letter to the Galatians, which inter alia, are further indications of the physical abuse endured by slaves as well as the somatic liabilities that accompany servile status.

Chapter 2 focuses specifically on slavery in the Pauline churches. Since Pauline Christianity was an urban phenomenon, Paul's contact with slavery would have been mainly with the urban variety. Here Glancy questions the normal public/male and private/female spaces constructed by scholars. Apart from encountering slaves in the homes of those who offered him hospitality, Paul would have encountered slaves, including women, in public places and streets. Slaves were also found in every occupation in Greco-Roman cities. Some managed to organize a family life, although most lived under conditions that did not enable