

ongoing discussion on the genre, setting, ideology, and historical development of penitential prayers. In her contribution Flesher studies female imagery and lamentations in the book of Judith (pp 83-104). Contra Westermann, she shows that the lament was never replaced by penitential prayers, but that both forms were used. It should rather be borne in mind that the exile resulted in a shift in theological thinking and consequently “the tone and language of the prayers shifted in response to this new theological commitment” (p 103). Newman’s study of the Prayer of Manasseh (pp 105-125) analyzes the formal similarities and differences between the prayer and Psalm 51. In her paper she argues that Manasseh’s prayer “represents a counter discourse to other penitential prayers of the Second Temple period ...” (p 105). It does not have marked structural or lexical affinities with the early postexilic corporate prayers of penitence.

In the section with contributions on the relation of penitential prayers to the Dead Sea Scrolls, Falk studies the influence of scriptural motifs on the development of institutionalized penitential prayer (pp 127-157). He first studies scriptural resources for penitential prayer and then uses this information to examine the influence of these on the Dead Sea Scrolls. He concludes that penitential prayers played an essential part in a system of atonement at Qumran, which usually included sacrifice. Arnold’s study of repentance and the Qumran covenant ceremony (pp 159-175) indicates that the Qumran community used forms prominent in the penitential prayer tradition but that the ceremony itself did not precisely take on the form of a penitential prayer. The ceremony was rather a rite of passage establishing the strict boundaries of the community. Chazon depicts the *Words of the Luminaries* (pp 177-186) as a document standing at the crossroads of a new development in the history of penitential prayer. It is a “sterling example of how penitential prayer was pressed into a service of new religious practice of daily petition for ongoing needs” (p 186). In her contribution, Nitzan studies traditional and atypical motifs in penitential prayers from Qumran (pp 187-208). She indicates that common Jewish penitential prayers were brought to Qumran by men who joined the community and that a “presectarian circle of penitents close to the Qumran community” (p 207) could even be suggested.

This publication indeed showcases the complexity and diversity of the phenomenon of penitential prayers. Scholars in the field of Second Temple studies will find it an enriching experience to read this book. It is also highly recommended for those interested in prayers and their different forms in the Bible.

Bondos, D A 2007 – *Salvation and the cross*

Publisher: Fortress. 210 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Dr D P Veldsman (University of Pretoria)

David Brandos is an ordained Lutheran minister and professor of Theology at the Theological Community of Mexico. He teaches Systematic Theology and Biblical Studies at an ecumenical consortium of seminaries in Mexico City. Since 2005, Brandos has published three monographs, namely *The Letter and the Spirit: Discerning God’s Will in a Complex World* (2005), *Paul on the cross: Reconstructing the apostle’s story of redemption* (2006) and *Salvation and the cross* (2007). The latter work is on soteriology, that is, on the meaning of being saved and therefore also of the Christian claim that Christ died for our sins.

From his vantage point that “when Christians speak of salvation, they tell a story”, Brandos poses the (descriptive) question on the what, why and how of redemption as it is

understood by Christians. In the thirteen chapters he covers stories of redemption from the 7th century BC prophet Isaiah (Ch 1) to the 20th century liberation and feminist theologians Jon Sobrino (Ch 12) and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Ch 13) to uncover the rich, diverse and even competing (objective and subjective) understandings of salvation, their social context and their strengths and weaknesses. The work includes: The writings of Luke and Paul (Ch 2-3), the Church Fathers Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa and Anselm (Ch 4-6), the Reformers Luther and Calvin (Ch 7-8), and the German theologians Ritschl, Barth and Bultmann (Ch 9-11). Brandos has chosen these specific “stories on salvation” since they offer the reader a rich variety of very different perspectives on the subject. Brandos (page 3) – in my opinion – succeeds well in reaching the aim he has set for himself. In his own words: “By gaining a deeper understanding of the many problems, questions, and issues involved, it is hoped that the readers may be enabled to develop their own views on the subject more clearly while at the same time gaining a greater appreciation of views that differ from their own as well as the difficulties inherent to all of these views”. This he has done exceptionally well. His soteriological survey in which “these figures speak for themselves”, can admirably serve both the reading and teaching of soteriological viewpoints for student and teacher alike, especially since he highlights not only the inescapable connectivity of different views on salvation with different understandings of God, but also their varied dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the word of God and the sacraments given the adopted understandings of the work of Christ. Brandos convincingly concludes that any understanding of God, salvation or the work of Christ will in many respects be inevitably problematic. What is, however, important to him, is that in its own way, each of the stories of redemption he considered, is capable of contributing to the transformation of human beings and the world. This indeed is not only a theological mouthful, but a valuable insight for formulating any soteriological perspective. What enhances the value of text even more, is the inclusion of a helpful Timeline (ix-xi), Additional Resources (consisting of lists for Further Reading and Discussion Questions on each chapter, 199-210) a Glossary (211-213) and an Index (215-220).

Cooper, T D 2007 – Dimensions of evil: Contemporary perspectives

Publishers: Fortress Press. Paperback 285 pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Ms Anastasia Apostolides (University of Pretoria)

This book deals with the problem of evil. Terry D Cooper, a Professor of Psychology at St. Louis Community College-Meramec, analyzes how evil is understood by the multiple perspectives of evolutionary biology, evolutionary psychology, philosophy and systematic theology, ethics, feminist theory, liberation theology and so on. Cooper examines the works of pivotal thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sigmund Freud, Aaron Beck, Carl Jung, Paul Tillich and Phil Hefner, to name but a few. Cooper aims to investigate the destruction caused by evil in the natural, psychological and social or systemic realms experienced in life. Cooper begins by stating that “writing a book on evil is an overwhelming task that can easily push an author into feelings of embarrassing grandiosity” (page 8), but also explains that this is “not a definitive book on the entire problem of evil”, but a book that “furthers the conversation” on the problem of evil (p 9).

In chapters one and two Cooper explores Darwin’s theory of evolution and the destructiveness of nature or natural evil that it presents. Darwin’s work still remains a challenge to traditional theological views of God. Cooper furthers his examination of post-