



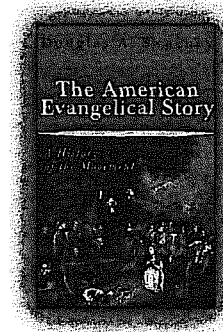
Reformation
& REVIVAL
JOURNAL

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BOOK BRIEFS

John H. Armstrong



THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL STORY

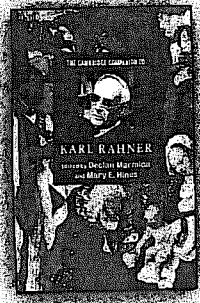
Douglas A. Sweeney

Grand Rapids: Baker Academic (2005)

208 pages, paper, \$17.99

Evangelical history has experienced a renaissance over the past two decades. The outpouring of published material has been immense. The interested reader often longs for an overview that cuts through the dense forest of arguments and developments. Sweeney, associate professor of church history and the history of Christian thought at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, provides a reliable and brief outline of the key features that define evangelicals and gives us an excellent survey. He explores the roots of the movement in both English Pietism and the Great Awakening, showing the diversity and challenges of the movement. Each chapter contains annotated suggestions for further reading.

One of the more important features of this survey is the importance Sweeney places on missions in the development of evangelicalism. He thus shows how evangelism is central to the development of evangelical history. The style is narrative and accessible. His treatment of the Black evangelical experience and the role of fundamentalism are well done. This is a reliable and insightful book that will serve both lay readers and classroom use.



**THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
KARL RAHNER**

Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines,
editors

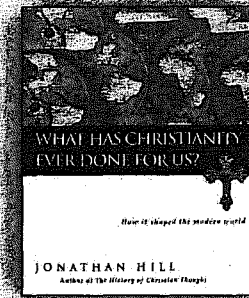
New York: Cambridge University Press (2005)

318 pages, cloth, \$70.00

(Also available in paper at \$25.00)

Karl Rahner (1904–1984) was clearly a theological giant in the twentieth century. His impact on the Catholic Church, and its movement toward modernity, was huge. It goes almost without saying that he was a controversial figure in more ways than one. His thought on religious pluralism, spirituality, postmodernism, ecumenism, and ethics are all immensely important. Rahner's emphasis was often counteracted by the more conservative emphasis of Cardinal Ratzinger, who is now Pope Benedict XVI.

This helpful volume is laid out in four parts. These are (1) spiritual, philosophical, and theological roots; (2) theological investigations; (3) conversations ongoing; and (4) retrospect and prospect. Nineteen scholars, mostly Catholic, write the essays that critique the work of Rahner under these four categories. The final essay was written by Rahner himself, shortly before his death in March 1984, and has the title, "Experiences of a Catholic Theologian." It is an interesting retrospective on his life's work. Rahner's emphasis upon the incomprehensible mystery of God seems right to me, but he plainly exceeded the bounds of ancient orthodoxy in the process of developing his existential thought.



**WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY EVER
DONE FOR US?**

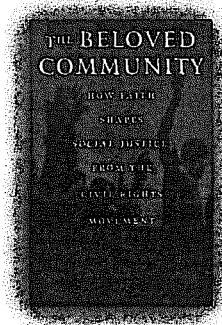
Jonathan Hill

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity
Press (2005)

192 pages, cloth, \$24.00

The question that drives this beautiful book is one that should be of interest to Christian and non-Christian alike: "What good, if any, has Christianity ever given to Western society?" Is there any value in preserving Christian influence in the modern world, especially in an age that is becoming more and more post-Christian every day? Hill answers this question positively by telling the Christian story in a way rarely told. He underscores the impact the Christian faith has had upon our current cultural milieu by a clearly written and wonderfully illustrated book. This volume would make a good supplemental read for a class and is accessible to all adults. It also makes for a great gift book, given the size and layout of the book. InterVarsity has done a magnificent job with the conception and development of this book.

Jonathan Hill is the author of two previous InterVarsity titles and earned a first-class degree in philosophy and theology from Oxford University and subsequently earned an MPhil in theology, also from Oxford. He takes the reader on a guided tour in this book that includes a look at Christian influence upon the arts, education, society, spirituality, ethics, and social justice. The story he tells avoids undue dogmatism and includes numerous sidebar quotations from major Christian writers throughout the book, giving the reader a feel for the point Hill makes.



THE BELOVED COMMUNITY: HOW FAITH SHAPES SOCIAL JUSTICE, FROM THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TO TODAY

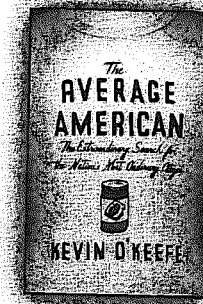
Charles Marsh

New York: Basic Books (2005)

292 pages, cloth, \$26.00

Charles Marsh is a theologian, historian, and wonderful story-teller. This makes for a great read whenever he engages a narrative like the story of the American civil rights movement. His earlier works, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer* and *God's Long Summer* (on the infamous Scopes Trial), were both superb treatments of their subjects. This new volume does not disappoint, again showing Marsh to be a great story-teller.

How should the Christian church pursue social justice in America? Marsh provides an answer that is both stunning in its breadth and inspiring in its every detail. By showing that Martin Luther King envisioned a just and caring society, built upon reconciliation, Marsh gives us a spiritual vision of what might have happened had that "beloved community" not come apart due to disillusionment and secular radicalism. Marsh shows how faith was central to the movement's early quest for social and racial justice. This is what one has called "lived theology."



THE AVERAGE AMERICAN: THE EXTRAORDINARY SEARCH FOR THE NATION'S MOST ORDINARY CITIZEN

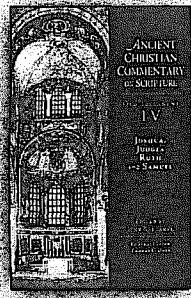
Kevin O'Keefe

New York: Public Affairs (2005)

320 pages, cloth, \$25.00

John Q. Public. Plain Jane. The Average Joe. We know the type, but we've never met the person, at least until now. After years as a successful marketing executive, and asserting to clients that he could predict the behavior of "the average American," Kevin O'Keefe began to get curious. Who was this average American, this John Q. Public? He decided to find out. After compiling over one thousand facts, O'Keefe completed a tour of the country in search of the sublimely ordinary, the person who most represents all that is average in the country.

O'Keefe's surprising journey revealed that a great deal of what we believe about ourselves is *not* true. We are not as culturally divided as often thought. Most people are staying in the suburbs and not moving to the exurbs. The facts about average Americans will surprise you. The story itself is lively, fun, and quite interesting.



**ANCIENT CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON
SCRIPTURE: JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH,
1-2 SAMUEL**

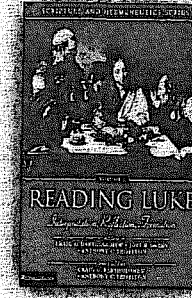
John R. Franke, editor

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press
(2005)

458 pages, cloth, \$40.00

The entry of the chosen people into the Promised Land was followed by the period of the judges and the early monarchy. The story may seem to have very little to say for the Christian faith in our day. But editor John Franke proves otherwise by gathering important sources from the earliest writings of the Christian church to show how Origen, Jerome, Rufinus, and Gregory of Nazianzus read and handled these Old Testament texts. The second valuable source for material that Franke utilizes comes from the question-and-answer formats, such as those by Augustine and Theodore of Cyr. This is a great treasure of writing that clearly provides the modern reader fresh insight into the text of Scripture that is rarely appreciated today.

John Franke, the editor of this particular volume in the series, is associate professor of theology at Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania. He is judicious in his selections for this volume. The audience for this commentary includes pastors, lay readers, and students who want to hear the ancient voice of the church by engaging the patristic world through the text of the Scriptures. This series has a sterling reputation, and this volume adds to that reputation by living up to the high standards we have come to expect.



**READING LUKE: INTERPRETATION,
REFLECTION, FORMATION**

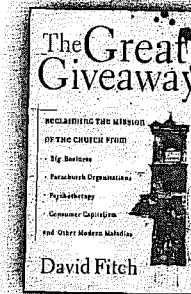
Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, and
Anthony C. Thiselton, editors

Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2005)

484 pages, cloth, \$39.99

This volume, number six in a series on Scripture and hermeneutics, is a collection of scholarly essays which seeks to advance the theological conversation that grows out of the study of the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Included in the book is an exchange of views on the use of the third gospel in the second century.

The volume includes sixteen essays that reveal a high degree of scholarship and erudition while they remain accessible to pastors and lay readers who are serious readers of academic material. The essays grew out of an annual gathering called the Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar, which was established in 1998. Forthcoming volumes are expected. The first five are all available from Zondervan as well. They make a great collection of important material.



THE GREAT GIVEAWAY

David E. Fitch

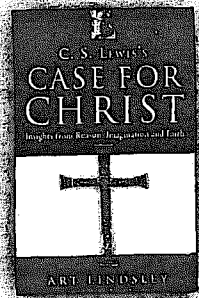
Grand Rapids: Baker (2005)

227 pages, paper, \$14.99

David Fitch, pastor of Life on the Vine Christian Community in Long Grove, Illinois, believes the modern church has failed to employ imagination and thus to build hope in

the hearts of disciples. He argues that much of what it means in our day to be the body of Christ has been given away through big business, parachurch organizations, psychotherapy, and consumer capitalism. It is pretty difficult to disagree when you consider his evidence.

The difference between this book and many similar jeremiads on evangelical failures, is that Fitch provides correction that is tried and true. He shows us a way out of the modern morass that goes back to the church's ancient and traditional practices, which have time and again come to the fore. If you would like help in leading a church beyond the culture and worship wars, this is a fine place to start. Highly recommended!



**C. S. LEWIS'S CASE FOR CHRIST:
INSIGHTS FROM REASON, IMAGINATION
AND FAITH**

Art Lindsley

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity

(2005)

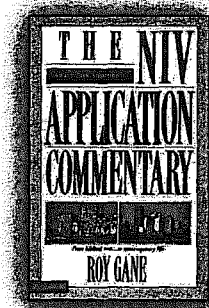
216 pages, paper, \$14.00

How did C. S. Lewis, perhaps the most popular Christian apologist of the twentieth century, face difficult questions about faith? These questions include those that still plague every Christian who seeks to relate faith to the modern world. For example, "How do we explain the Christian faith as truth and not simply cleverly invented myth?" And, "Doesn't evil in the world demonstrate the absence of a personal or loving God?" Even more pressing, in our age of growing pluralism: "How can anyone claim that one religion is finally right?"

Lindsley believes that Lewis is still popular because his "unique combination of abilities set him apart from others. His gifts included an ability to combine story, imagination, metaphor and reason; the rhetorical skill to order his ideas

clearly and persuasively; precision with words; and the empathy to understand people's deepest struggles, questions, and doubts. Better than many pastors and theologians, he was able to get in touch with the concerns of people." Lindsley's goal is not to replace Lewis. He urges you to read him for yourself, suggesting that you read *Mere Christianity* first and only then, using his book as a guide, to put together the key thoughts that you encountered in Lewis. Lindsley makes Lewis's apologetics more accessible to students and lay people alike.

Art Lindsley, a senior fellow at the C. S. Lewis Institute in Springfield, Virginia, is a conference and retreat speaker and author. He is also an extremely insightful student of the thought of C. S. Lewis.



**THE NIV APPLICATION COMMENTARY:
LEVITICUS, NUMBERS**

Roy Gane

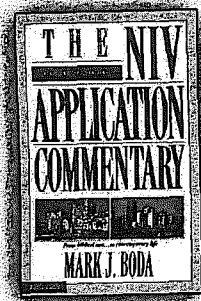
Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2005)

846 pages, cloth, \$32.99

This series initially gave me the impression that it was seeking to do the preacher's work in cute and unhelpful ways. I began to use numerous volumes in the series about two years ago, and my mind was immediately changed. The tag line says the intention is to move the reader "from the biblical text . . . to contemporary life." I believe the volumes I have used do that very well.

This particular volume seeks to show how God's laws, given to ancient Israel in a specific covenantal context, can apply to us today. The author argues that though the original context of these laws has disappeared, they are still filled with relevance and abiding principles that can be understood and

applied by us today. The style is clear and the commentary accomplishes what is intended. The author is a professor of Hebrew Bible at Andrews University, a Seventh Day Adventist school, in western Michigan.



***THE NIV APPLICATION COMMENTARY:
HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH***

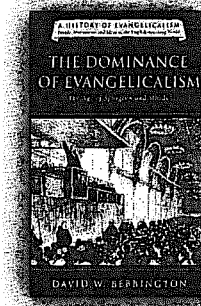
Mark J. Boda

Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2005)

846 pages, cloth, \$32.99

When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity the temple was in ruins. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah had the task of calling God's covenant people to their first priority: rebuild the house of the Lord. Because of the prophet's faithfulness and clarity the people overcame the many obstacles they faced and fulfilled their work. It is not an accident that this time has often been called a "golden period" in Israel's history.

Author Mark Boda is professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity School in Hamilton, Ontario. He carefully explores the links between this biblical era and our own times. He is a reliable guide and a fine writer. As with the aforementioned volume in this series, this is once again a solid addition to the set.



***THE DOMINANCE OF EVANGELICALISM:
THE AGE OF SPURGEON AND MOODY***

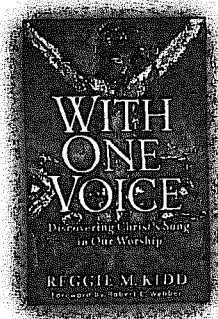
David W. Bebbington

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press
(2005)

288 pages, cloth, \$23.00

What does the word evangelical really mean? Where did evangelicals come from? Why is their influence so pervasive throughout the world? A few years ago InterVarsity Press began a series of five volumes called "A History of Evangelicalism" to answer these questions. The series looks at the people, movements, and ideas of evangelicalism in the English-speaking world over the course of three hundred years. The first volume, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, authored by Mark Noll, was a worthy beginning volume in the series. This new volume, by British historian David Bebbington, is the second to appear. It is equally impressive.

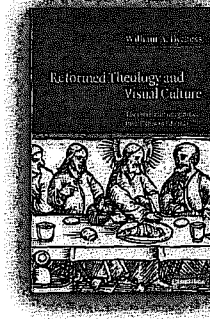
Bebbington's readable work surveys the people, events, and organizations that shaped the evangelical story in the second half of the nineteenth century. As affluence and globalization rose, what influence did religion have among the masses of people? And what motivated the great new waves of missionary passion that came out of these popular movements? Evangelicals understood what was happening in the world and saw how they could shape opinions and practices among Christians. Bebbington has a special interest in the history of politics, religion, and society, and that interest informs this excellent book throughout.



*WITH ONE VOICE: DISCOVERING
CHRIST'S SONG IN OUR WORSHIP*
Reggie M. Kidd
Grand Rapids: Baker (2005)
217 pages, paper, \$14.99

The contemporary church is racked with controversy over music. It has always amazed me that few, if any, of those who debate these issues ever construct a real theology of music and worship before they debate the issues of sound and style. Professor Reggie Kidd, who is himself a teacher of the New Testament *and* a musician, goes into the history and theology of Scripture to show how song is woven into the very fabric of Scripture's story. Through this he desires to bring believers experientially into God's heart and purpose in redemption. Kidd argues that music is more than an extra in worship, but rather it serves to bring us into the very company of Christ.

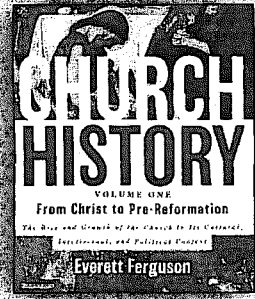
Kidd, a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida, also serves as pastor of worship at Orange-wood Presbyterian Church in Maitland, Florida. He loves to play the guitar and make good music, which he does with a biblical insight all too rare in our day.



*REFORMED THEOLOGY AND VISUAL
CULTURE: THE PROTESTANT
IMAGINATION FROM CALVIN TO
EDWARDS*
William A. Dyrness
New York: Cambridge University Press
(2005)
339 pages, cloth, \$85.00
(Available in paper for \$29.99)

Reformed Protestants are frequently accused of being dour and unimaginative, since their churches are generally without imagery and color, and their worship is centered on highly structured sermons, and not movement and drama. William Dyrness, professor of theology and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, provides a detailed and in-depth study of Reformed Protestantism which counteracts these commonly accepted ideas.

Dyrness provides extensive studies of sixteenth-century Geneva and England, as well as seventeenth-century England and Holland, showing that this tradition did impede the use and development of certain visual forms while it encouraged others, in the popular culture and in the ordering of the family and the community. What we see in this emphasis is an aesthetic of simplicity and inwardness. This work is quite academic in scope, but it also is readable for a wider audience if you have an interest in Reformed thought and culture.



*CHURCH HISTORY: FROM CHRIST
TO THE PRE-REFORMATION*

Everett Ferguson

Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2005)

544 pages, cloth, \$29.99

Context is everything in understanding the past. This first volume in a new series is committed to showing how context relates to the growth and development of the Christian church. As it spread and developed, it did not do so in a vacuum. Times, cultures, and events all helped to shape the church. This book aims at demonstrating how the history of the world and that of the church are interrelated.

This first volume shows how the church, from the time of Jesus, developed and expanded up to the time of the pre-Reformation in the sixteenth century. Everett Ferguson is surely one of the finest early-church scholars in America. He is also an able and engaging writer. The second volume in this two-part series will be written by John D. Woodbridge and Frank James, III. If it is as good as this volume, we will have a set that accomplishes something truly important for the study of church history. I recommend this volume with a great deal of excitement.