

Book Reviews

Parker, Monroe (Monk), **Through Sunshine and Shadows** (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publ, 1987, 240 pp hard \$8.95); reviewed by Warren Vanhetloo.

The evident purpose of Dr. Parker in relating "My first 77 years" is to entertain unto edification. As an autobiography, the account is necessarily factual. As a living example of the good hand of God on a fully yielded servant, the written relating of events is as comforting and encouraging as the oral exhortations to hundreds of prospective preachers at Bob Jones University and Pillsbury College. This book should provide stimulus to service for generations to come.

All who have known Dr. Parker will rejoice that he has engaged in the effort necessary to record his tests and triumphs. Some who have not known personally this "Dean of Evangelists" will marvel as he relates how God used him to reach thousands for the Lord Jesus Christ. Some who have been enamored with compromising mass rallies may be surprised at how God honored separatist, local church exalting evangelism. Dr. Parker left a lasting imprint as an educator. His teaching continues on in this book.

The feature of this book most often expressed by others has been its humor. Many entertaining accounts add spice throughout. Three incidents when Dr. Parker faced death are related for spiritual encouragement. This book is not boastful of men but of God. It will edify both men and women; it will excite young people looking forward to Christian service.

Fowler, Paul B, **Abortion: Toward an Evangelical Consensus** (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987, 225 pp, \$11.95); reviewed by Samuel Harbin

Fowler has done a commendable job in exposing a weak spot in the armor of evangelical Christianity, that being the failure of evangelicals to come to a unified response to answer the runaway epidemic of abortion in the last quarter century. The historical documentation and development of his case is thoroughgoing and conclusive. He reveals the cause for this awkward silence in the evangelical community: there is no agreement across the board as to the definition of personhood. His logical conclusion that an unbiblical definition of personhood leaves the door wide open for infanticide and euthanasia is one that should startle many who have adopted a middle-of-the-road position.

The author has developed a strong scriptural argument that stresses the value of personhood, and extends that value to the unborn, to the mentally or physically handicapped, to the infirm. His approach to the issue is one that relies not on emotion or the telling of "horror stories" that surround the abortion process, but rather on sound Scriptural exegesis. He then portrays the adverse physical and emotional effects suffered by both those who have abortions performed as well as the people who perform the abortions. He graphically discusses the cruel and inhumane methods of abortion that are commonly used throughout our society.

This volume is to be highly recommended to give to someone who may be considering an abortion, or to any believer who is unsure of where he might stand on this critical issue.

Olasky, Marvin, **Prodigal Press: The Anti-Christian Bias of the American Media** (Westchester, ILL: Crossway Books, 1988, 246 pp, paper); reviewed by E Robert Jordan

I have not read many books about Christian journalism or journalists, but this book certainly had to be one of the best that I have ever read on the subject.

Dr. Olasky is obviously a strong Calvinist as is indicated throughout his book. The greatest strengths of the book are found in chapter one, "The Decline of American Journalism" which presents a history of journalism in America, and in chapter three, "Not Without Personal Cost" which presents a history of some of the great editors of America. Without this book it would be very difficult for a casual reader or layman to ever get this information.

I highly recommend this book; it is certainly needed for today. *Prodigal Press* should be read by every pastor, theological student and full-time Christian worker.

Fagerstrom, Douglas L, ed, **Singles Ministry Handbook: A Practical Guide to Reaching Adult Singles in the Church** (Wheaton, ILL: Victor Books, 1988, 304 pp, hard); reviewed by Charles E McLain

The editor has brought together the works of over 30 authors representing not only a number of different denominations but more importantly many years of experience in working with singles in a broad spectrum of singles ministries. In his preface the editor points out several facts that not only should startle every senior pastor's complacency in the area of singles' ministry but also represent part of the frustration and overwhelming concern of every singles pastor/worker. One of these facts is that "single adults are without question the fastest growing subculture of our world" (p 9). Another of these eye-opening facts is that "one half of America's adults are single" (p 9). These two facts alone in view of the proportion of singles in the average church congregation tell us something about the effect of our outreach (or lack thereof) into the communities in which we live.

The book is composed of six sections. Each section contains individual chapters by different authors covering, in various degrees of thoroughness, a full range of topics within that section.

The first section of the book focuses on the need for a singles ministry. Is a ministry aimed specifically at singles really needed in the church today? What is the proper philosophy and the Biblical basis for such a ministry? Also included are a history of marriage, divorce, remarriage and singleness along with a survey of myths and realities surrounding singleness.

The second section deals with singles themselves as the objects of ministry. After dealing with the single identity in general each succeeding chapter deals with a separate category of singleness. This section is quite comprehensive focusing on young and old singles; divorced, widowed, and never married singles; as well as single parents and their children.

The third section covers the needs and issues of the singles ministry. The topics in this section include self-esteem, intimacy, dating, planning, finances, sexuality, moral choices, abuse and abused, and much more.

The fourth section, the longest in the book, considers a variety of aspects in a singles ministry. Different roles in ministry are examined—singles to singles, marrieds to singles, the senior pastor, etc. Different methods of ministry are considered—small group, Bible study, discipleship, counseling, etc. Several practical considerations are discussed such as organization, recruiting and training leaders, evangelism, defining purposes and goals, building community within a singles group etc.

The fifth section covers programs for ministry. Help is offered for ministries in both small and large churches. Specific programs discussed are retreats, conferences, community and foreign outreach, integrating singles into the life of the church, and growing the singles ministry.

The final section of the book deals with three topics—the role of the singles minister in the church, the ethics of the single adult leader and the importance of prayer.

As I read through the book several impressions filled my thoughts. First, I was dismayed by the lack of footnotes. As I read I found myself wishing that the authors had footnoted their articles so that I might pursue further study on some topics. This deficiency is partially remedied by a somewhat extensive list (pp 289-304) of suggested readings arranged topically around several major areas of singles ministry. Secondly, I found myself wishing that the articles were longer. In many cases the articles seemed like appetizers before a feast, but no meal followed. Just as I began to rejoice in the article or began to revel in the information, I would come to the end. My only conclusion was that I would have to pursue the whole meal by securing the individual authors' books. Thirdly, and by far most importantly, I found great reassurance and practical value in this book. After having worked with singles for several years. I found myself in chapter after chapter and sometimes on page after page saying to myself, "I wish I had read this years ago, before I learned from experience." I found that the lessons that I had learned from experience and the principles that I had gleaned from Scripture, in application to singles ministry, were not unique to me or my ministry but apparently were common wherever singles are ministered to.

It is my estimation that the editor has fully reached his goal of providing "a comprehensive resource" and "overview of each of the needs, major concerns, and areas of singles ministry that are most significant" (p 10). This book is the best comprehensive guide to singles ministry that I have read. It is concise and clear. It contains principles, practices, and testimony. It provides encouragement for both singles and their leaders. It more importantly whets the appetite for more and then gives 16 pages of bibliography for further reading and study. The pastor who is either contemplating or initiating a singles ministry in his church will find this book a must. It will not only give him resources and ideas, but it will also keep him from errors learned in the school of experience. The pastor with an established ministry will find this book a worthy addition to his library and a stimulation to his ministry. This book is a tool that will enable the singles worker to understand and to minister better to the singles in his church.

Van Der Woude, A. S., gen edit, trans by Sierd Woudstra, **The World of the Bible**, Bible Handbook, Vol I (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publ Co, 1986, 496 pp hard \$34.95) reviewed by Warren Vanhetloo.

This is the sort of reference work a pastor can profitably have in his study for quick reference. It is more complete than a Bible dictionary type treatment without being cumbersome. For review and refresher, many pastors will wisely read it cover to cover.

The collection is the work of six Dutch scholars and twelve contributors, all recognized continental specialists. Thus the reader must be alert for JEDP prejudice, late date of the Exodus, etc. These do not often mar the factual surveys. The greatest contribution for a pastor is the concise collection of up-to-date archaeological information from various technical sources. Specialists have collected and condensed things difficult for a pastor to locate.

The book surveys six areas: geography of Bible lands, archaeology of Palestine, languages of the ancient Near East, textual criticism of OT and NT, history of the Near East to the second century A.D., and customs and institutions, both of daily life and of religious life. This last section is particularly practical. Maps and photographs add greatly to the value of the book, especially sample documents from all forms of writing and from all periods.

Obviously this is a reference which will be often used as students train in seminaries. Recommended bibliography is extensive. The translator is to be commended for absence of "Dutchisms" often retained by translators. Content amply justifies expenditure of the list price. It is not a book it sit unused on the shelf.

Dieter, Melvin E. and others, **Five Views on Sanctification** (Grand Rapids: Academie Zondervan Books, 1987, paper 254 pp \$9.45) reviewed by Warren Vanhetloo.

This is an extremely helpful book to clarify misrepresentations often made about others. Each writer presents what he understands to be a proper view and notes variations as well as denying misrepresentations. Two Arminian views, Wesleyan and Pentecostal, are presented and two Calvinistic views, Reformed and Dispensational, and a "mediating" and "balanced" (p. 152) Keswick view. Immediately following each presentation are brief evaluations from the four other writers.

As promised on the jacket, "the authors find more common ground than might be expected." The evaluations often begin by observing that the bulk of the presentation would be acceptable as presented and then note a few differences of label or expression. It is evident that there is greater agreement about acceptable Christian living than usually recognized.

Yet differences are clearly apparent. The two Arminian writers assert it is as possible to lose salvation as it is to lose gains in sanctification. The Reformed presentation includes excellent exegesis of Scripture but to show that the believer was in Christ as He died on the cross because of election, no Scripture is presented. At times it seems that differences are largely of vocabulary or of emphasis. Much space is given to a perhaps unfruitful attempt to label a regenerated man's remaining potential for sin: old man, old self, old nature, former life, capacity, carnality, etc.

For those concerned about correctly comprehending and stating the views of others, this book is in the realm of required reading. For all believers the various exhortations unto holiness are beneficial. God will certainly be honored by the respect in disagreement displayed in this book.

Lingenfelter, Shirwood, and Mayers, Marvin, **Ministering Cross-Culturally** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986, 125 pp); reviewed by W Lynn Snyder

In this book the co-authors stress the need to understand the cultural values of those to whom you minister. Drawing from the model of Christ's own incarnation, the authors highlight the need for incarnational evangelism and ministry. Jesus' offer of salvation is effective, they maintain, because of His ability to adapt to the human situation. The major assertion in the book then is that people will not identify with you or your values unless they sense a willingness on your part to identify with them and their values.

In chapters 3-8, the authors focus on key areas of cultural understanding and adaptation. In chapter 3 *time* is the cultural value under consideration. Are the people schedule oriented or event oriented? In chapter 4 the authors scrutinize the area of *moral judgment*. Do the people make judgments on the basis of specific acts of behavior ("dichotomistic" approach) or are they more concerned about a person's overall pattern of behavior ("holistic" approach)?

In chapter 5 the authors highlight *crisis-orientation*. Are the people "crisis-oriented," that is, are they always prepared for the worst, or are they "non-crisis-oriented" with a nonchalant approach to managing crisis? In chapter 6 the subject is that of *goals*. Are the people "task oriented" or "people oriented," that is, willing to sacrifice personal goals for the strengthening of personal and group relationships?

In chapter 7 a *sense of worth* is discussed. Is worth or prestige assigned by birth and family rank or attained by personal achievements? Finally in chapter 8 the cultural view concerning *vulnerability* is considered. Is it customary to hide or to expose vulnerability among the people?

At the end of each chapter, the authors present what they consider to be the biblical position on each cultural issue. Their proof texts are, for the most part, biblically developed. In order to minister effectively in the cross-cultural context, you must immerse yourself in the culture of the people. You must understand and accept the cultural values of those to whom you minister.

The author's aim is commendable. We do live in a society that does not know how to develop relationships. We take our relationships for granted. We assume that relationships just naturally grow and develop with no thought and little effort. Worse than that we do not know how to break off relationships with minimal damage to either party. Consequently, a book on the subject is welcomed. Some of what is said in this book is good and helpful. For instance he notes that "the couple's degree of commitment is no higher than the lesser of the two partner's commitment" (p 110) and the "once you take your eyes off your partner's needs and desires and begin to focus on your own, you lose the ability to fully and freely give to your partner" (p 129).

However, this book does contain conspicuous weaknesses and requires great caution in its use. First, other than a few passing comments little is said about a couple's relationship to God in their relationship to each other. There are no references to considering God's will in a relationship. Second, there are very few references to Scripture. Most of the Scripture that is referred to is simply a passing reference. The only Scripture that is discussed in any length to support the author's views is I Thessalonians 4:2-6 in chapter 8 on sex (pp 68f). Thirdly, in his dealing with restoring a relationship or with healing after a breakup, he makes no reference to the need for confession and repentance to either God or the partner involved. Since most of his illustrations of damaged and destroyed relationships were the result of pre-marital sexual involvement, dealing with sin would seem to be an indispensable aspect of healing. However, the author never mentions it as part of healing. Without repentance and confession there can be no healing or restoration (I John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13).

This is not a book I would hand my teenagers to read. There may be some good points in the book but they can only be discovered with careful discernment and must be assimilated in light of God's Word. This book may be useful as a resource or idea book for pastors, parents and youth workers but not as a first choice. I would not recommend it for teenage readers.

Chap Clark, **Next Time I Fall in Love: How to Handle Sex, Intimacy, and Feelings in Dating Relationships** (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, distributed by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1987, 144 pp, paper) reviewed by Charles E McLain

According to the author, this book began "as an hour-long seminar designed to help high schoolers understand the many aspects of dating relationships" (p 5). However, the book was written only after several years of seminar presentations, continued study, and experience in teaching similar courses on the high school level. The author's motivation for writing was the desperate "need to understand how to develop and maintain healthy relationships"; that is, "to help all the Anns and Jeffs to stop hurting each other in selfish relationships" (p 5) Although the author states that his book is aimed at those "from junior highers to single adults" (p 5), the majority of his illustrations and much of his discussion focuses on teenagers.

The chapter format is clear containing a large section of discussion followed by a 2-3 sentence summary and 2 or 3 questions designed to stimulate further thought. In chapters 2 through 4 the author attempts to define love and its connection in a dating relationship. In chapter 2 he defines *eros* type love as "originally and simply a passionate love for a thing" (p 18). It is characterized according to him as temporary, conditional, and self-centered (pp 20-22). On the other hand, *agape* type love is love for a person (p 35). This love is characterized by giving, commitment, deliberate choice, and endurance (p 26f). According to the author, the difference between love in a high school dating relationship and love in a marriage is not its quality (*eros* versus *agape*) but its quantity (that is, the amount of *agape* love) (p 28). He also states that "a happy and fulfilling dating relationship" can be maintained if the balance between *eros* and *agape* "at least be tipped toward the Agape end" (p34).

In Chapter 5 he deals with self esteem. He observes that "only when you get a good, healthy handle on your self-image can you be freed up to enter a relationship for what you can give" (p 42). Part of developing this proper self-image is by seeing "Yourself as valuable and worthy of affection" (p 45).

In chapter 6 he deals with feelings, their intensity and their untrustworthiness. In chapter 7 he covers the subject of time. He points out how relationships are smothered by excessive time together. He also considers the need to plan and to limit dating. In chapter 8 he treats the subject of sex. This is one of the few discussions where the author makes any reference to Scripture. He states, "Despite how modern life has changed, God still says no to sexual intercourse outside the boundaries of marriage... He wants us to 'save ourselves for marriage' not only because it's better and more rewarding in marriage.. but because he loves us" (p 63). He also warns against being fooled about false intimacy and the physical and emotional dangers of "heavy sexual involvement" without commitment.

Chapter 9 deals with intimacy. In teenagers he likens premature intimacy to being "all grown up and no place to go" (p 73). Chapters 11 and 12 deal with breaking up and healing after a break up.

Chapters 14 through 16 consider how to determine the health of a relationship. The author offers a "relationship graph" designed to chart the emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of a relationship along with the degree of commitment in the relationship. Basically the emotional, physical, and social aspects measure *eros* type love; while the intellectual and spiritual aspects along with commitment measure *agape* type love. His basic thesis is that "when

any area... exceeds the commitment, you have the potential of pain in that relationship" (p 133). Thus he points out that even relationships that have a predominance of *agape* type love (the intellectual and spiritual areas) can be eroded and destroyed if the degree of commitment does not equal the spiritual and intellectual levels of the relationship (pp 131-133).