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eschatology, purgatory, and the theme of the *Apokatastasis Panton*. In relation to the latter, he asserts the impossibility of an unequivocal doctrine of universalism. He proffers, instead, Christ’s descent into hell as a pan-temporal event by which the Gospel confronts all peoples. Proleptic anticipation, then, presumes both the uncertainty of the future of all and the certainty of the coming of the Lord of the church, twin themes which encourage the church to act in the present.

This book surveys an impressive amount of material related to eschatology. Unfortunately, this text, which discusses everything from Parsism to Branch Davidians by way of Joachim of Fiore, sometimes reads in an encyclopaedic manner. Moreover, a thinker as complex as Martin Heidegger is treated within the space of twenty-five lines and the reader is left wondering whether s/he understands the real consequence of Heidegger’s thought in relationship to the thesis of the book. Although a synthetic moment is sometimes wanting, *Eschatology* serves as a useful survey and provides the reader with a good lay of the promised land.

Allen G. Jorgenson
St. James Lutheran Church
Mannheim, Ontario

David Schnasa Jacobsen and Günter Wasserberg
160 pages, $23.99 Softcover

Preachers and scholars of preaching should read this excellent book both for its specific help in interpreting Luke-Acts in sermons and as a model of how exegesis and homiletics can work together. Wasserberg offers exegesis. Jacobsen (a creative scholar of the Second Testament in his own right) shows how the preacher can move from exegetical discovery to the sermon. The exegesis and the homiletical suggestions are fully integrated.

The book has a fresh thesis. According to these authors, Luke-Acts is a “grief document,” that is, a document that seeks to help Luke’s Christian community deal theologically with the grief that accompanies the separation of the Christian community from Judaism. The church,
which had primarily been a Jewish community, was engaging in the gentile mission. Formerly a Jewish movement, the Lukan church was becoming a distinct community. This separation was accompanied by hostility among family members and friends. Some synagogues disciplined members associated with the Christian movement.

To oversimplify, the authors believe that Luke assuages the grief of the community by explaining the rift between church and synagogue. Luke portrayed many Jewish people as resistant to Jesus and to the witness of the early church. Luke further explains this resistance as God hardening many Jewish hearts against the Gospel. In this respect, the authors move away from the current trend in Second Testament and preaching to soften our perception of criticism of Jewish people, texts, practices, and institutions in the Second Testament, understanding such critique as in-house prophetic criticism. Our authors lead us to face fully the anti-Jewish dimensions of such materials and to recognize how they have fed anti-Semitism.


For preaching, Jacobsen divides each text into scenes. A sermon then follows the movement of the plot of each text as it unfolds scene by scene. This part of the book creatively adapts David Buttrick's notions of the sermon as a plot of moves and preaching in the mode of immediacy (though elements of preaching in the mode of reflection appear). The sermonic discussions are incisive in theological penetration and evocative in language.

This book is exceptionally attentive to anti-Jewish implications in Luke-Acts (and in preaching). While some scholars and preachers may think that Wasserberg and Jacobsen overstate these emphases, preachers who read this book want always to take account of how a passage and a sermon relate with our Jewish heritage.
Gustav Nelson’s *Service is the Point* has been promoted as a book that will offer hope and guidance for pastors and other church leaders to deepen people’s commitment to the call of Christ. His objective is to counter the maintenance mentality so predominate in the church’s culture and for laity to take the call to discipleship seriously.

Each chapter touches on some aspect of how service can renew or transform congregational life: worship, new-members class, renewal of members, youth, children, church council, vision, and mission. It is a book of interest for pastors who are involved in leadership training and rejuvenate growth in the local congregation.

Nelson contends that the focus of *Service Is the Point* is service. I get a different reading: the hub of this book is the concept of covenant. That should not surprise us since Nelson’s denomination is the Presbyterian Church (USA). But in so doing, he makes an assumption that all congregations think covenantally. Many do, but most Lutheran congregations do not. “Covenant” is not as popular a model among Lutherans as it is among Reformed congregations. That is not to say there is nothing to learn here. Nelson offers a great deal of wisdom that can be gleaned and applied to congregational life. Then again, I do not think Nelson has anything new to say that has not been said elsewhere. What he does is apply it to the covenant model.

Still, throughout the book I read another assumption: just do it and it will work. Any of us who have been in the parish know it is not that simple. Maybe Reformed congregations are different, but I suspect not. David Buttrick, Buffington Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, comments on the back cover, “Gus proposes a ‘covenant model’ for churches, and then, in a series of useful chapters, tells you how a covenant church can come alive.” More beneficial would have been situations where his approach met