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The Jesus movement: a social history of its first century

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explored are particularly fascinating: how old were Adam and Eve at creation? how tall were they? what language did they speak? (Hebrew remained the most popular choice, but arguments for other possibilities such as Flemish or Swedish were also put forth).

The Age of Enlightenment brought a sharp decrease in works of literature and exegesis on the Garden of Eden. Geological discoveries and evolutionary thought challenged the "historical" content and veracity of Genesis. The "garden of delights" was largely reduced to a symbol.

During the period under consideration, notions of the earthly paradise and original sin were closely linked in Western theology. Delumeau concludes by citing second-century bishops Theophilus of Antioch and Irenaeus, who believed Adam and Eve merely impulsive children and that after the first sin the human race set out on a new path leading to incorruptibility. He suggests that the modern world can learn from the story of Eden by drawing upon their insights.

History of Paradise provides a scholarly yet easy-to-read survey of views of Eden which helps place literary and theological texts of earlier times into context. It draws upon a wide range of references, theological, literary, and artistic. Extensive endnotes identify sources consulted, although the addition of a bibliography would have made the book a more useful tool for further research. A personal name index is included, although this is not complete.

The book was first published in French in 1992, and appeared in a hardback English edition in 1995, ably translated by Matthew O'Connell. It constitutes part one of a proposed trilogy, with subsequent volumes to consider millennial expectations and "the hope of perfect and unending joy on our earth in the divine light of the Christian other world" (1). Jean Delumeau, a Roman Catholic historian of religion at the Collège de France in Nantes, is the author of numerous other works, including *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture*.

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The Jesus Movement: A Social History of the First Century

Ekkehard W. and Wolfgang Stegemann

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999

xix + 532 pages, \$45.00 Hardcover

The Jesus Movement by the Stegemann brothers stands as a most welcome contribution to the flowering field of both Jesus studies and the early communities that followed him. When I was working my way toward

specialization in the New Testament field (late 1960s) there was virtually no serious multi-disciplinary studies of these topics. Geographical, archeological, sociology and social analysis received at best rather superficial and brief description in passing. New Testament texts were studied, even by critical scholars, as ends in themselves, and the Jesus Movement was most often distinguished from other Jewish groups rather than identified with them.

Shortly after I left the New Testament field for another there appeared a growing explosion of studies using the multi-disciplinary approach to get at the full meaning of New Testament texts. Names like Wayne Meeks and Gerd Theissen stand out as just two examples of pioneers in this scholarly flowering. With the 1990s emergence of yet another quest for the historical Jesus (the Jesus Seminar, John Dominic Crossan, Burton Mack, N.T. Wright, Marcus Borg, Raymond Brown, Geza Vermès, et. al.) and the serious social analysis found among Q scholars (John Kloppenborg, William Arnal, et. al.), this increased attention to such disciplines as sociology and history has demanded axiomatic attention for those who used to be called simply "New Testament scholars."

Into this context comes the Stegemanns' textbook, welcome for both its thorough breadth and for the gap it fills in the expanding field of what one might call the sociology of the early followers of Jesus. Although I applaud this work, save for two minor criticisms, it strikes me that it is appropriate to dispense with these quickly in order to underscore the finer qualities which dominate the book: 1) Over the years I have noted the tendency of textbooks to be dense, tedious, at times, even boring. Often all that drives the reader to plow through textbook material is interest in the subject matter. Sadly, *The Jesus Movement* fits this suggested model. How much can be attributed to the authors, to the translator and to the nature of the text, I dare not apportion. But I ask where are the likes of John Dominic Crossan or Barbara Tuchman who turn dry bones to living flesh. 2) I find that, although the Stegemanns display a comprehensive use of documents from the period, there seems to be less attention to critical analysis around the layering of documents (i.e., Q and the Gospel of Thomas).

These two critiques, even if correct, detract from the work in only minor ways and might properly be labelled matters of debate. Above all, *The Jesus Movement* is a monumental work and a vital additional to the field. It is superbly organized allowing the reader not only to follow its logic step by step but also to utilize the work as a ready reference. The charts of the various communities from Jesus to the post-apostolic era showing their class structure are a marvellous teaching tool. Above all, it stands as a comprehensive effort on its designated subject so desperately needed in the area. The Stegemann brothers' *The Jesus Movement* has filled a large gap in an exciting and growing field, and it has done so with exemplary scholarly quality and integrity.

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