

# Consensus

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## Matthew

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examine. But too much discomfort makes it almost impossible to relate to someone else's point of view.

One area of discomfort has to do with Endicott's approach to feminism and theology. I do believe that the traditional patriarchal expression of Christian faith needs to be transformed. Some feminists would argue that this is impossible. They would say that patriarchy is so deeply ingrained that Christianity is beyond redemption. They would opt to create a new expression of faith. Endicott is much closer to this point of view than I. She is willing to reject the traditional Hebrew Scriptures' denunciation of the pagan goddesses and pray "Asherah, restore your blessing" (p. 95). That, in my opinion, takes her outside the limits of the Christian tradition, a place where I am unwilling to go.

The other difficulty I have with the book is the author's style. This I admit has much to do with personal taste. But I do believe that the impact of Endicott's creativity is lost in several ways. I think that her story lines are often too long and complicated. Her best story in my opinion is "How love came into the world". I found it a very moving and tender story. It has that impact because it is focused and concise. I also think that some of Endicott's stories read more like personal reflections than stories. Perhaps what she has to say could be said better as a series of meditations or reflections. If they are to be left as stories they need to be tightened up.

It is my opinion that *Dreaming the Tree of Life* would have limited appeal to the majority within church circles. However, for anyone interested in openly exploring feminist spirituality, this book will offer some thought-provoking images and ideas.

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### **Matthew. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching**

Douglas R.A. Hare  
Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993  
320 pp. + bibliography \$22.00 U.S.

Hare's work, part of the *Interpretation* series, is an important resource for all those who work with the book of Matthew in a preaching or teaching situation. It is equally valuable for those who only desire to study the Gospel in more detail. Basing his commentary on the Revised Standard Version, Hare seeks to supplement the work of exegetical scholars, "by emphasizing what each passage means to Matthew and, by extension, to the modern church" (p. vii). He examines the book in three parts: One—Who

is Jesus?, 1:1–4:11; Two—The Messiah's Ministry to Israel, 4:12–16:12; and Three—The Messiah's Obedient Submission to Death, 16:13–28:30. Each of these parts is divided by the flow of the story line, often corresponding to lectionary readings.

Hare asserts with Kähler that the Gospel is "a passion narrative with an extended introduction". "Its dominant characteristic... is its moral earnestness" (p. 1). Faith in Christ is more than hearing; it is to be lived daily in obedience, as proclaimed by the evangelist.

Throughout the commentary, the author makes many references to corresponding passages in the Hebrew Bible. He also makes connections with the other Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, so much so that reading this commentary would familiarize one very well with the development of the canon. The reader very early on is brought into the midst of the society in which Jesus ministered, and the one to which Matthew wrote. These are compared and contrasted with our own, and with the issues dominant in the present day. Hare also offers examples of what other commentators have written, especially when there is debate over translation and interpretation. He gives full consideration to passages dealing with the role of women, and argues for a more inclusive approach.

The passages in English are not given in blocks, however, transliterations of the Greek are provided where necessary. Hare does offer his own translations where he considers others lacking, and explains why.

To buy this commentary only to have information on the Gospel would be value enough. However, its real value perhaps lies not in the answers it provides, but in the questions it poses. Hare constantly reminds teachers and preachers of their task by engaging them in the text, by making them stop and think how it relates to the present day, and by challenging their notions of what Matthew meant or means. He keeps both the reader's intellect and imagination in gear, and in so doing succeeds in aiding the proclamation of the Gospel in faithfulness to the 2000 year old intent of its author. Hare's work will not replace other commentaries, but it should have a place alongside those which are more exegetical in nature. His is just as "scholarly" as those, in his own way.

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## **Integrative Family Therapy**

David C. Olsen

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993

96 pp. \$12.50

This volume, *Integrative Family Therapy* is part of the Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series, co-edited by Howard W. Stone and Howard Clinebell.