

should the general public be treated as if they were from some sort of cult group (i.e., as being present only to pay and pray without questioning). Certainly, better communication is a commendable alternative to either of these options. It is in this regard that Stiebing's clearly written book is to be recommended to people of all backgrounds. Hopefully, it will be an inspiration to other scholars to produce marketable material for general consumption in addition to their usual scholarly articles. Stiebing is to be commended for his efforts to close this "communication gap" between scholars and the general public.

Ajax, Ontario LIS 3V5  
Canada

HERB STORCK

Walton, Robert C. *Chronological Background Charts of Church History*. Academie Books. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986. [xi pp.] + 84 Charts + [10 pp.]. Paperback, \$8.95.

*Chronological Background Charts of Church History* contains a wealth of historical detail in both table and diagram format. The book's spiral-bound pages are in 8½" by 11", and a number of the entries span two facing pages. Unfortunately, there is no commentary or "running text" as such, nor are there explanatory notes. Also, the publication lacks page numbers.

For the most part, the charts are serviceable and fairly reliable. The wide selection of material from the Early Church to the twentieth century makes it evident that, as the author states in his Preface, his "greatest challenge lay in taking a vast amount of information and reducing it to some orderly form" for classroom use (unnumbered Preface page). Earle E. Cairns, in a brief Foreword, has summarized the book as presenting "the significant facts of the past in useful charts and diagrams so that the student can see what facts are important and what their relationship is to the story of the church. The book will be a useful supplement to classroom text and lectures, supplying information on the who, what, when, where, and how of church history. It will also be useful to the general reader who desires a brief survey of the important data of church history" (unnumbered Foreword page).

Indeed, Walton has reduced a vast amount of material into an orderly form, and surely there is value in this for students in the classroom and for others with a basic knowledge of church history. I would disagree with Cairns, however, in seeing usefulness for the "general reader who desires a brief survey of the important data of church history." The material is too fragmentary for that, and much of it would probably confuse the un-knowledgeable reader.

The charts in this volume are divided into the following broad topic areas: "The Ancient Church (to 476)" (charts 1-18), "The Medieval Church (476-1517)" (charts 19-31), "The Reformation (1517-1648)" (charts 32-44), "The Modern European Church (from 1648)" (charts 45-52), "The American Church (from 1607)" (charts 53-76), and "Miscellaneous" (charts 77-84). As a few examples of the kinds of material covered, the following may be mentioned: "Early Symbols of Christianity," "The Apostolic Fathers," "Major Monastic Orders," Protestant reformers (in several groupings), theological issues of the Reformation era (under several headings), family trees of various American church groups, Popes recognized by the Catholic Church, Protestant and Catholic missionaries, and prominent English translations of the Bible. Furthermore, the richness of the material under some of the headings is almost breathtaking.

But tabulations of the sort given in this volume of "Chronological Background Charts" create their own hazards. The very sketchiness of the data can lead to misunderstandings at times. And the danger of presenting erroneous information increases in proportion to the amount and range of the data covered. Unfortunately, Walton's book—which is very good in many ways—suffers from what would appear to be a disproportionate amount of error in facts and in interpretive summaries. Chart 6, e.g., should indicate that Tertullian wrote a treatise against Praxeas (not Praxeus). Chart 32 contains several errors in connection with the "Four Major Reformers"—the most striking, perhaps, that Martin Luther was educated in Leipzig when in reality he was educated at the Universities of Erfurt and Wittenberg. Also, it is somewhat misleading to state that in "1508 [Luther] began teaching at the University of Wittenberg." (Luther did teach at the University of Wittenberg from 1508 to 1509, but only temporarily as a professor in the arts faculty; his first theological lectures subsequently took place in Erfurt, and it was not until after he received his doctorate in October of 1512 that he began his long and distinguished career as a theology professor at Wittenberg.)

Chart 62, on so-called "American Cults," supplies incorrect information in a number of instances; the diagramming in Chart 44 erroneously indicates the Reformed Tradition as a branch off from Lutheran tradition; and Chart 78, "The Pendulum Effect in Church History," displays such problematical generalizations that it might better have been omitted entirely. While a "pendulum effect" certainly did operate in various ways, it is erroneous to portray, as Chart 78 does, Gnosticism of the second and third centuries as a pendulum-swing away from Montanism, and Monasticism as a pendulum-swing away from Gnosticism.

The volume has a good index (useful indeed for a work of this sort). Unfortunately, the bibliography is limited and of rather unequal quality. Even Williston Walker's standard *History of the Christian Church* has been omitted, even though Walker's name has been included in Chart 84 as among the "Notable Protestant Historians of the Church."

In closing, I would recommend this volume as being a helpful tool for persons already sufficiently initiated into church history to be able to use it effectively—persons who can recognize and appreciate its values (and there are many), but who also are sufficiently grounded in the discipline to be able to differentiate between fact and non-fact.

Andrews University

KENNETH A. STRAND

Watts, John D. W. *Isaiah 34-66*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 25. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987. xxxiii + 386 pp. \$24.95.

This volume represents the continuation and completion of Watts's unusual two-volume commentary on Isaiah. In scope and format it follows the pattern of the English-language Hermeneia series and the German-language *Biblischer Kommentar* series. Indeed, Watts acknowledges his debt to Wildberger's Isaiah commentary in the BK series (*Isaiah 1-33*, p. xi). The treatment of each text unit opens with a bibliography. Then follows a new translation with extensive textual notes. The form, structure, and setting are discussed, comments on individual verses follow, and an explanation of the theology or message of the passage concludes the treatment. Where necessary, this pattern is interrupted by excursions on individual problems. The bibliographies are extensive and up-to-date; the form, structure, setting, and comments are clearly set out and repeatedly offer helpful insights; and the explanations consist of brief summations of the importance attached to the passages under study.

The unusual aspect of Watts's work is associated with his understanding of the composition of the entire prophetic book. In distinction from both critical scholarship, which proceeds from the assumption of a three-part authorship of the Isaiah prophecy, and conservative scholarship, which assumes a single author (namely the eighth-century prophet Isaiah), Watts views the entire book from the perspective of a fifth-century writer (ca. 435 B.C.) to whom the entire Isaiah prophecy or "vision" is attributed. Thus, Watts is only marginally interested in the person and ministry of the eighth-century prophet named Isaiah and in the earlier history of the Isaiah prophecies. The focus throughout is upon the "vision" of Isaiah, meaning the particular understanding of God's plan for Israel which the proposed fifth-century writer applied to ten generations of Israelites living between the eighth and fifth centuries B.C. Central to that vision is the concept that from the eighth century forward God no longer views national Israel, Jerusalem, and its kingship as the arena of his activity on earth. Rather, the empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, now provide that arena, and Israel must fit into it by occupying a role of servitude in relation to the nations of the world (*Isaiah 1-33*, pp. xxxi-xxxii).