

One might compare Bosch's use of paradigm to the principle of periodization in the study of history. This system allows the author to locate a movement in time and space and to concentrate on defining features without getting lost in excessive detail. It also facilitates a multi-disciplinary approach, obviously a great gain in missionary studies. But Bosch's concept of paradigm goes beyond that of periodization. In this he is indebted to Hans Küng, Michael Polanyi, and Thomas Kuhn, for whom paradigm shifts involve pronounced discontinuity from earlier paradigms. Bosch uses paradigmization and change with erudition and learning and with a high degree of responsibility. However, the question arises as to whether this medium exerts a subtle temptation to over-emphasize the element of change.

Doctoral students in theology, mission, and church history will find in this volume a great deal to stimulate thought and research. They should rejoice that there is at last a magisterial, scholarly study, devoid of cant and bias, that inexorably penetrates and deftly categorizes the theological dimensions of the missionary enterprise of the major Christian communities of the Christian era. Any missionary/administrator who is willing to invest the time and effort will also find a great deal here to clarify thought regarding, and give perspective to, contemporary challenges and opportunities in mission.

This is a thoroughly scholarly and extensively documented book, with a large bibliography and indices of scriptural references, subjects, authors and personal names. A few minor errors are noted. Most noticeably Joseph Schmidlin is misnamed "Julius" (4) and C. F. Henry is misnamed "Harry" (404).

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Brueggeman, Walter. *Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful Reading to Faithful Living*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. x + 325 pp. \$14.95.

Brueggeman's book contains a collection of essays and lectures dating from 1984 to 1988. The audiences for the original presentations vary from a convocation of the Sisters of Mercy to readers of *Horizons in Biblical Theology*. The approach is closely tied to the social studies. Brueggeman's first chapter is based on the work of clinical psychologist Pruyser (9). Brueggeman admits following Norman Gottwald's social analysis (263; 284, n. 2). Copious endnotes show more than passing acquaintance with other authors in the social sciences.

The key word throughout is "imagination," which the author himself has described as "rooted in news of a God who acts, speaks, lives, cares,

and frees" (23). For Brueggeman, "*Interpretive obedience* is an act of imaginative construal to show how the non-negotiable intentions of Yahweh are to be discerned and practiced in our situation. . . ." (1). "There is no eternal interpretation, no single "meaning" (131). Brueggeman states his thesis: "Liberated, imaginative interpretation and disciplined, committed obedience depend on and require each other for faithfulness" (1). He further notes that "the connection between interpretation and obedience, as Ricoeur repeatedly insists, is imagination" (4).

The biblical basis for Brueggeman's thought is found in Old Testament themes and stories: the covenant, the patriarchs, the prophets. His focus is on the application of the imaginative, alternative biblical script to the reality of everyday life. Living out this application leads to wholeness, community, peace and justice, and praise. In contrast to this imaginative alternative is the oppression of empire (146), royal monopoly (186), and temple power (271), which preserves the status quo and demands obedience.

Brueggeman places the "chapter on preaching the ten commandments at the structural center" of his book (3). At the "center and interpretive focus" of the decalogue is the Sabbath, a symbol of God's rest, a representation of freedom within the community, and above all, a radical invitation to equality—all must rest (151-152). The Ten Commandments are, he says, "the decree of the inscrutable God for the shape of a new, bonded relation" (146). "The alternative to the empire and its brick quotas is not unqualified, autonomous freedom but a new summons to obedience" (147). "For biblical faith, the ten commandments are absolute and non-negotiable" (152). "The decalogue is an invitation to evangelical obedience," which "is genuine delight" (155). However, the nonnegotiability of the Decalogue is to be held in tension with "interpretive openness" in order to avoid "imperial absoluteness and destructive autonomy." Today's preacher seeks to engage the congregation in an "interpretive process to ask how the liberating will of the Covenant God is to be enacted among us" (153).

In several of the chapters Brueggeman speaks of the center versus the margins: the dominant community—empire, king and priests, or modern social organization—against the poor and landless. The margin hears "new readings which are compelling and unavoidable" (129). "The imagination at the margin . . . evokes and articulates power against the oppressive monopolies" (191). "People who care about peace and justice in American society are essentially exiles who must practice their faith in a hostile environment" (206). The biblical *habiru* are the displaced, marginal people; God makes them into a community that dreams different dreams and endorses a new ethic (298-299). Marginal people, says Brueggeman, must be "brought to their proper place, in the midst of the community"; God will not allow otherwise (306).

Land is a major concern of Brueggeman's (chaps. 7, 11, 12). The relation between man and land is akin to that between husband and wife. Both are hurt by domination and promiscuity, thus sexuality and economics are linked together. The ownership of major portions of land by the rich and few is domination; pollution is the result of promiscuous land use. Christians who listen to alternative biblical reality should be involved in correcting the distorted relation by working to make land an inalienable patrimony and restoring fertility to the earth. Brueggeman sees the tenth commandment as a preventive for land confiscation (245), to "protect the weak in their small land holdings against the great power of government" (150). In swearing allegiance to Yahweh, "Israel also embraced a new notion of land management" (266).

Brueggeman rightly points out the centrality of the fourth commandment. The same benefits that Sabbath observance brought to the Israelites minister to the needs of moderns in search of rest and equality. Unfortunately, Brueggeman seems to miss the possibility of Sabbath observance today as a corrective to the broken relation between God and humans, humans and the land, humans and fellow humans.

It is strange that one who admits the inadequacy of historical-critical Bible study (119) should consistently accept its conclusions. For example, "much of the Old Testament is generated in the sixth century B.C.E" (205); second Isaiah is exilic and Daniel is the "dramatic close to the Old Testament" (186); the tenth commandment articulates an "Israelite vision of social organization" (245).

Some of Brueggeman's assertions invite question. That "Israel is a social and theological experiment in alternative land management" (240) seems to limit God's purpose for the nation. Brueggeman limits the tenth commandment to "right land relations" (150); why so? One wonders what biblical basis there is for stating that Jesus "proposed to give land . . . back to those who had lost it" (253). Was the king in Israel "always the head of the priesthood" (278)? In healing on the Sabbath, was Jesus "violating the Sabbath" (154) or tradition?

Brueggeman urges critical reflection "on the church's call to obedient mission" (100). If mission includes the folly of preaching as well as caring for the land and those marginalized by society, we do well not only to reflect on it, but to obediently pursue it.