

BOOK REVIEWS

Balmer, Randall. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. xii + 246 pp. Paperback, \$8.95.

What Balmer has attempted to do in this work is to give the reader a number of vignettes of the American evangelical subculture. A former evangelical, with a strong Mid-Western, Fundamentalist background, Balmer, at times, reveals the struggle of the expatriate trying to come to terms with his roots. If the book works at all, it is probably because Balmer has exercised what Mark Noll calls "believing criticism."

The serious question is whether the book works as intended. The prologue and epilogue give every indication that Balmer has attempted to unveil a cross-section of evangelicalism to give the outsider a feel for what the subculture is about. In some ways he has succeeded; in others he appears to have projected more caricature than characterization. The portraits vary from sympathetic to objective—Balmer never descends to a mean, frontal "attack."

In five of the first six chapters the "subculture" seems to find its most accurate portrayal. Chapter 1 ("California Kickback") describes Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel. Chapter 2 ("Dallas Orthodoxy") relates a visit to Dallas Theological Seminary. Chapter 3 ("On Location") presents a rather sympathetic portrayal of Bible-believing film director Donald W. Thompson, probably best known for the apocalyptic film *A Thief in the Night* (1972). Chapter 5 ("Adirondack Fundamentalism") provides a poignant and deeply personal reaction to Jack Wyrzten's Word of Life summer camp ministry in Schroon Lake, N.Y. Finally, chapter 6 ("Campaign Journal") takes the reader on the evangelical political campaign trail of 1988.

In these chapters one seems to really catch the pulse of what is going on in the majority of evangelical venues across the United States. When Balmer leaves these paths, the book begins to take on the aura of the caricature.

The fastest growing wing of the evangelical community is the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, yet it is only dealt with in chap. 4 in a report on the bizarre ministry of the so-called "Phoenix Prophet," Neal Frisby, the reclusive healing and visionary prophet of the Capstone Cathedral of Phoenix, Arizona. One wonders why Balmer would pick out a Neal Frisby for the Pentecostal vignette in his book. Is he trying to give the impression to the uninitiated that all Pentecostals are "holy rollers" who give forth strange prophecies and fleece their flocks with sham healings?

One is also left to wonder about his choice of portraits for the "Holiness" community (chap. 10, "Camp Meeting"). My fellowship with "Holiness" people gives me a much broader picture than the geriatric campmeeting in sunny Florida where we are left with the impression that "Holiness" victory promises results in nothing more than the failures of a closet homosexual. Certainly campmeetings continue to play an important role in Holiness piety, but I am not convinced this one is typical.

It appears that what we have in Balmer's treatment of the Holiness-Pentecostal branches of evangelicalism is a vivid demonstration of the grounds for Donald Dayton's strong call for a "moratorium" on the use of the word "evangelical" because of its background in the "power politics of the neo-evangelicals after World War II." One is left to wonder if Balmer has fallen prey to such Princetonian-evangelical "power politics"; he would have been wise to seek wider counsel on his Holiness-Pentecostal choices. It is interesting to note that all of his expert evangelical partners in dialogue are of the Calvinistic-Princetonian variety (Mark Noll, Grant Wacker, and Harry Stout). Was there not a Donald Dayton or a Melvin E. Dieter to consult?

To sum up the negative: while the book is readable, often interpretatively insightful and informative, I fear that Balmer's somewhat idiosyncratic approach to conservative Wesleyans and Pentecostals will only continue to propagate caricature rather than helpful and accurate insights.

With the above disclaimers, the book could be used in courses on contemporary, popular American religious movements or comparative religions. The most helpful and sensitive part of the book was Balmer's portrayal of the struggles of teenagers who grow up in conservative traditions and find themselves isolated by their conscientious convictions from the larger popular culture. Further, his reactions to Schroon Lake ought to be required reading for every conservative Bible college and seminary youth ministry course.

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WOODROW WHIDDEN

Clapp, Philip S., Barbara Friberg, and Timothy Friberg, eds. *Analytical Concordance of the Greek New Testament*. 2 vols. Baker's Greek New Testament Library. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991. 4,879 pp. \$190.00.

The *Analytical Concordance of the Greek New Testament* is a massive two-volume work, most helpful for the in-depth study of New Testament Greek, second only to a computerized grammatical concordance. These two volumes constitute volumes 2 and 3 of Baker's Greek New Testament Library. They are a lexical and a grammatical concordance, respectively,