

The author concludes with two well-taken points: first, in calling their leaders overseers or elders, the churches implied that the personal qualities required of those who served as overseers. Second, since "the elders" is a collective title, it points to the "collegial character of Christian oversight . . . none should exercise that oversight without consulting other leaders, as well as the people under their care" (260).

The *Works Cited* section (261-291) does not follow regular bibliographic style, though it identifies the sources clearly enough. There follows an Index of Modern Authors, and an Index to the Scriptures, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Other Jewish Writings, and Dead Sea Scrolls.

Very few misspellings were noted, as we have come to expect from this publisher, and most of them are in the titles of German books.

All in all, Campbell's work is thought-provoking, and even if we cannot support all of his conclusions, it will be a stimulating book for anyone interested in the development of the eldership in the Christian church.

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Cate, Robert L. *An Introduction to the History Books of the Old Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994. 128 pp. \$12.99.

Because Old Testament historical books deserve their own introductory discussions, Cate's attempt to give due attention to this part of the Old Testament should be welcomed.

After a general introduction to Old Testament history writing, its purpose and study, Cate discusses each of the twelve historical books. The two-part books, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah, are taken together. Each section of this main body consists of following basic parts: glossary, place in canon, date and authorship, organization of the book, summary of contents, message, and questions for reflection and review. In addition, Cate offers brief character studies of Joshua, Ruth, Samuel, Saul, David, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. Two chronological charts and three maps are included. Cate rounds out his book with a chapter on the message of the history books and a Scripture index.

Cate's book is an easy-to-understand and clearly written introduction to the Old Testament historical books. The glossaries and the review questions are helpful for beginning students and autodidacts in the area of Old Testament historical books, though the editorial arrangement of the glossaries takes too much space. Especially commendable are the rather general character descriptions of important individuals, which is a new feature in biblical introductions. They should be explored in more detail.

Cate's introduction "is intended as a textbook for college or seminary classes dealing with the Old Testament history books" (xi). With this intention in mind, a number of serious shortcomings appear in this book. The lack of academic references presents a major deficiency. The final bibliography (167-169) with only 44 items is too limited. The sectional bibliographies cannot make up for this deficiency as they each contain a selection of no more than seven commentaries. No reference to articles appears in the bibliographies. Helpful footnotes referring to other materials are often missing.

Cate fails to interact with other views on the history, development, and interpretation of the text. For example, Cate lists 15 duplicate reports found in 1 and 2 Samuel apparently supporting the two-source hypothesis (56), only to say that each "can be explained satisfactorily" and to add in one breath that they also may have been edited by the Deuteronomic historian(s) (57). Thus, the claim that each biblical book "will be introduced in the light of the best biblical scholarship" (xi) is farfetched.

Cate spends too much time in summarizing the contents of each Old Testament historical book. About 57 pages—one-third of the book—recount the biblical history and are therefore superfluous. Of course, this part of the book contains some historical or theological explanations, e.g. the Semitic concept of *herem* (19), the significance of genealogies (120-121), and the specific method and purpose of the Chronicler (122-125). But these themes could have been discussed more profitably in a section on special issues of each book.

Finally, one might wish that Cate had explained his own hermeneutical method more sufficiently. He regards the Bible as "God's self-revelation" (11), a report of his mighty acts, while at the same time he claims to use all kinds of disciplines in the field of Old Testament criticism (9-11). For example, Cate seemingly supports the concepts of Deuteronomic history and Deuteronomic historians (5, 16, 57) and of the Levitical editorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah (5, 114, 131), but he neither mentions the still ongoing scholarly discussion on these concepts, nor what he really means by these terms. A methodological explanation and clear definitions of what Cate understands by the different kinds of criticisms would have been desirable.

Compared to D. M. Howard's recent *Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books* (1993), Cate has written an introduction to the historical books of the Old Testament which lay bible readers will find understandable and very helpful as a first introduction. It may thus be recommended as a first reader. But the major shortcomings of this book prevent it from being labeled a college or seminary textbook, whereas Howard's *Introduction* presents an uptodate, scholarly, interactive introduction which could be recommended without hesitation for classroom use.

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