

gospel in the Old Reformed Confessions. Furthermore, he seems to have overlooked the fact that already as early as in the Ten Theses of Bern (*Theses Bernenses*, 1528) this identification seems to be presupposed, which is later specifically spelled out in the First Helvetic Confession (1536).

Rohls's book raises a number of crucial questions for any theological tradition, such as: What is the nature and binding character of a confession? Who or what is the final authority and norm for a confession? Is it Scripture, the church, or has the confession assumed such an authoritative status itself? Why do we need confessions at all? Can any church afford to do without them? Does not unity of faith require and presuppose a unity of confession?

Rohls's book provides the English reader with a readable translation and a wealth of information at one's fingertips. Aside from a minor misspelling in the dedication (it should read: *Allgäu*) the book has been carefully proofread. It will be a standard in its field for a long time to come. Thanks to Westminster/John Knox Press for making it available to the English-speaking world.

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Ryken, Leland, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998. 1,058 pp. Hardcover, \$39.99.

Leland Ryken, a Wheaton College English professor, is perhaps the best known of the conservative "Bible as Literature" experts. His textbooks, such as *The Literature of the Bible*, *Words of Delight*, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, and *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (which he and Longman coedited), have been used in Christian colleges throughout the country. Tremper Longman III is the author of *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, a coeditor of *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, and a writer of commentaries, publishing since 1993 about three books a year that he has written or edited. James C. Wilhoit teaches Christian education at Wheaton and has authored *Christian Education and the Search for Meaning* and coauthored *Effective Bible Teaching* with Ryken.

The primary intent of the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* was to focus on aspects of the Bible inadequately covered by most Bible dictionaries: imagery, metaphors, and archetypes. It grew, however, to include entries on "character types, plot motifs, type scenes, rhetorical devices, literary genres and the individual books of the Bible" (preface, n.p.). The audience is primarily "not scholars but laypeople," but scholars will find this a very useful reference work, and pastors who use a topical approach to Scripture in their sermons will find the book invaluable.

About 175 writers from around the English-speaking world contributed to the book, many of them theologians, others English teachers, and many of unspecified affiliation. The editors, however, decided that they were doing so much "shaping, rewriting and augmenting" that the writers would not receive credit for individual articles. I strongly disagree with this decision, on the basis of 1 Tim 5:18.

I approve, though of the aim and approach of the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Like C. S. Lewis, although I write about theology, my Ph.D. is in English

Literature, and the training received in literary analysis and the interpretation of poetry has given a sensitivity to biblical language lacking in many trained primarily in theology. For example, one of my fantasies is to be sitting next to Martin Luther when he is banging on the table shouting *Hoc est Corpus Meum!* I imagine poking him with my elbow and saying, *sotto voce*, "Brother Martin, *hoc est*, 'this is'—it's a *metaphor*."

In general, the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* is very successful. As one might expect, given the editors, the approach is quite conservative. Though clearly cognizant of the various historical-critical approaches and contemporary theory, their approach to Scripture is respectful. Literary approaches to the Bible are increasingly popular among theologians, and I suspect one reason is that when your faith in the Bible as the Word of God has slipped, you can still talk about the beauty of the language without feeling guilty. However, this needn't negate the usefulness of these approaches. Discussing plot conventions, the editors write, "Underlying this dictionary is an editorial bias that runs counter to the tendency of some to find fiction in the Bible, namely, a conviction that the very presence of such universal elements in the Bible makes it more lifelike, not less lifelike. There can be no doubt that the writers of the Bible carefully selected and arranged their material. The result is that the accounts we find in the Bible are more highly structured than real life is ordinarily felt to be, with the result that we see things more clearly in the Bible than we usually do in real life" (*xvi-xvii*). One great benefit of this book is the proof it offers that the study of the Bible's literary form and techniques is not inimical to faith.

Given that the focus of the book is imagery, the entries rarely deal with the archeological context or the etymological sources, though the anthropological context is frequently seen, and the ANE writings are brought in quite often. The dictionary is resolutely English, with no Greek or Hebrew that I could see and little recognition that one English word may be used to translate, say, several different Hebrew words, each with its own shade of meaning lost in translation. (I'm sure the authors are aware of this and made their decision on good grounds, but still the lack of consideration of the original languages is a weakness.)

The approach to each entry is primarily topical: the author analyzes the usage of the word, divides it into its different meanings, and presents each, along with representative texts and concise analysis. This approach is very useful, often offering insights which might not have occurred to readers doing their own word studies. For example, we know the many references to chaff and its burning, but have we considered that "Chaff evokes an image of lightness, instability and worthlessness" (136)? Or have we thought that "Since the word ashes is literally an image of complete waste, it also lends itself to use as a metaphor for weakness, ephemerality and emptiness" (50)?

Most readers will be content with most entries, and there are few entries that cannot teach most of us something. However, those who have done their own word studies will find many of the entries to be lacking their own insights (perhaps this is inevitable), so they are not exhaustive. For example, the entry on "remnant" was so weak that as I read it I thought, wouldn't Gerhard Hasel be furious! Then I found that the entry cited Hasel's book on the remnant, but gave the place of publication as Berrien Springs, *Missouri*. The entry on "Stand, Standing" does not deal with the

important symbolic action of Michael standing up in Dan 12:1 (nor is there an entry on "Arise," where this idea might also have been discussed).

Another example of a weak reading is in the entry on "Satan." The author writes, in summary, "In the OT, Satan functions as a member of the divine council under the sovereignty of God," then adds that in the NT, however, Satan is the devil or enemy (761). This ignores the fact that Job presents Satan as having come "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it" (1:7), appearing before the Lord as a visiting accuser or adversary rather than as a council member. Also, Rev 12:10 is conveniently ignored, wherein Satan is described as "the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night." Surely this verse would have provided a splendid opportunity, in a book such as this, to point out both the paradox in this passage in Revelation—Satan is both "hurled to the earth" (vv. 9, 10) and accusing continually before God—and the way it illuminates Satan's wandering and accusing in Job, suggesting a metaphorical revelation in human terms of a very real state of affairs.

The author of the entry on "Servant" writes that Jesus wanted leaders to be servants, then writes, "The modern church picks up this concept in theory by using words such as *deacons*, *ministers* or *pastors* for its leaders" (774). Unfortunately, the audience at which this book is aimed would not necessarily recognize that "deacon" and "minister" literally mean "servant" in the Greek. Indeed, by its choice of words, the "modern church" does not pick up "this concept in theory" but obscures it in order to glorify the holders of offices, as has been done since the second century. The article on "Slave, Slavery" does not deal with this either, nor with the epistle writers who describe themselves as slaves of Christ. Is this not imagery? Surely this image deserves study (and emulation).

Despite the size of this book, it is far from complete. Among the images I thought to look for and didn't find were "burn," "consume," "dedicate," "devote," and "elder." There is an entry on "antihero," but none on "type," "antitype," or "emblem," all much more important aspects of biblical imagery than is the antihero.

Despite these gripes, I think the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* is a very fine book, and I expect to refer to it often to look for insights I might have missed. Topical word analysis is a very useful tool, both for students learning the tools of the trade and for personal study, so long as one does not ignore the context, and the *Dictionary* offers hundreds of good examples of such analyses. Though meant primarily for the amateur, theologians will find that they use the book often, especially because of its emphasis on the imagery and literary aspects of the Bible. Teachers of "Bible as Literature" may find the book less useful unless they shift away from the study of rhetorical form and toward an analysis of imagery and meaning in their classes, but they may find that students would approve such a change.

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Webb, Joseph M. *Preaching and the Challenge of Pluralism*. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice, 1998. 184 pp. Paperback, \$19.99.

*Preaching and the Challenge of Pluralism* provides a significant discussion of the challenge our pluralistic world brings to the art of biblical preaching. But