

audience. As a molecular biologist, I found the philosophical and design theory papers to be reasonably understandable, as they should be for most readers. On the other hand, some papers use unnecessarily obscure terminology. Examples of this are the papers on basic types mentioned previously, in which scientific (Latin) names are used for different taxonomic groups, with only occasional hints at what the groups being discussed actually are. To get a clear picture of what is being discussed requires looking up the meaning of Latin names like *Estrildidae* (finches), *Maloideae* (a subgroup in the rose family), and *Geeae* (still a mystery to me). This distracts unnecessarily from understanding and complicates the concepts being presented.

Mere Creation is a brilliant compilation of papers presenting exciting new theories about nature within the context of creation. It is not for the casual reader, but it is for those who want to learn some of the latest and best thinking that is going on in this area. As a resource for understanding how a creationist perspective is capable of producing new and exciting ideas and suggesting profitable lines of future research, *Mere Creation* is an invaluable resource. It belongs in the collection of every scientist who deals with questions surrounding the origin of life and also in the collections of pastors and theologians who wish to knowledgeably address apparent conflict between the prevailing evolution paradigm in science and a literal interpretation of the Bible.

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Dittes, James E. *Pastoral Counseling: The Basics*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999. 173 pp. Paperback, \$16.95.

In the last five years, more than twenty books have been written with the title "Pastoral Counseling," Dittes's work being one of the latest. This book, according to the author, is a record of what he has learned in 45 years of teaching pastoral counseling at Yale Divinity School (ix). Therefore, no primary or secondary sources of information are presented; there are no footnotes and no bibliography.

The book raises many interesting and important questions related to the work of the pastoral counselor, such as: "How can I help?" "How can I make a difference?" "How do I counsel the same people I have to preach to and the same people I have to ask for a housing allowance?" The author pretends to answer those "How" questions with the "What" question: "What is pastoral counseling?" And throughout the book, several working and practical definitions are presented: Pastoral Counseling is "the pastoral response of providing the spiritual climate that maximizes the opportunity for the parishioner to grow in personhood and the capacity to cope. The pastoral counselor empowers the parishioner to identify the problem and discover resources" (10); "swimming alongside [the counselee], that is pastoral counseling" (23); pastoral counseling cannot change the facts of poverty, injustice, abuse, oppression, "But pastoral counseling is profoundly committed and effective in energizing people to address such facts, changing what they can and coping creatively as they must" (161). He finishes his book with a very practical definition: "To reclaim commitment and clarity, to beget faith, hope, and love, to find life affirmed—this is the conversion of soul that sometimes happens in pastoral counseling" (161).

Throughout the book the author presents what he considers to be the different

functions a counselor performs during counseling. In chapter 1 he presents some important functions, such as hearing the meaning of events and problems (24), grieving (24), coping and functioning (29), and self-regard (32). In the rest of the chapters the author clearly presents a very humanistic approach to pastoral counseling. He sees the pastoral counselor as a provider of unconditional regard and support for the self (48). The pastoral counselor is basically a witness (chap. 3) that is conveyed through intense listening, remembering, and noticing, very focused and with undivided attention (91). And as a promoter of the humanistic approach, the issue and role of feelings during counseling is clearly presented (chap. 5).

I find of supreme importance the last chapter of the book, where Dittes deals with the spiritual aspect of pastoral counseling. The author begins by dealing with "God's benign sovereignty" as a remedy for guilt and failure, since the counselor and the counselee are both in God's hands (146), and ends with a very nice presentation of the pastoral counselor as priest and prophet.

I was a little disappointed with the general content of this book. I found the title to be misleading. It is not about the "basics" of pastoral counseling, as the title indicates. This book is more about the philosophy than the basics of pastoral counseling. I was expecting the ABC's of pastoral counseling, and I found instead another systemic effort to increase the reputation of the humanistic (Rogerian) approach to counseling. In this, I found the author to be extremely biased, especially when he presents Carl Rogers as "the eminent counselor" (121). Very briefly he mentions Freud's legacy and his contributions (139), but he sees his approach as a daunting model that is very intimidating because of its demands, especially with a huge investment of time (142), but fails to mention other approaches to counseling and their effectiveness and importance.

The title may attract those that are interested in the basic procedures to assist counselees, but this book is more for experienced counselors looking for a good philosophical and theological foundation for the work they are engaged in, and no one can do that any better than what Dittes does in this book.

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Fahlbusch, Erwin, et al., eds. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*. Vol. 1, A-D. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. xl + 893 pp. Hardcover, \$100.00.

Encyclopedic is the only word that can possibly capture the breadth of *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*. At present only the first of five projected volumes has been released in English, but if the other four maintain the scope and quality of the first, the finished product will be a major contribution to the understanding of world Christianity.

The *Encyclopedia of Christianity* is based on the third revised edition of the *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon: Internationale theologische Enzyklopädie* (1986-97). The English version, however, is more than a translation. Many of the articles have been tailored to specifically meet the needs of English readers. In addition, several articles have been added just for English readers. Other articles have been expanded to provide more complete and up-to-date coverage. Beyond those modifications are updated and expanded bibliographies. Not only have the more recent works in