

much of the point of Paul's military metaphor, which advocates energetic engagement against the foe. Hoehner also assumes a largely individualistic reading of the passage and fails to take full account of the trend in recent scholarship to view the passage as offering a corporate perspective.

In comparison to its contributions, the flaws of Hoehner's commentary are few, and it deserves full attention on the part of students of Ephesians. While pastors and teachers may find themselves frequently reaching for shorter treatments, anyone seeking a detailed understanding of Ephesians will learn to take advantage of Hoehner's thorough work and will be blessed in doing so.

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Kistemaker, Simon. *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. x + 635 pp. Hardcover, \$44.99.

Simon Kistemaker is emeritus professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. He is also editor of, and a major contributor to, the New Testament Commentary series, which he took over after the death of William Hendriksen in 1982. He comes to the book of Revelation as more of a generalist than a specialist, having written books on the Gospels, Acts, the Corinthian and Thessalonian letters, Pastorals, and Hebrews before taking on the last book of the NT. This observation may be the ground of some of the shortcomings noted below.

The reader is not in doubt from the first page that this commentary will be from the perspective of faith. Kistemaker sees Revelation as different from the Jewish apocalypses. It is not simply a human attempt to reach out to God. God himself, not John, is the primary author of this book. For Kistemaker, this means that its contents should be examined reverently as God's holy Word. I appreciated the faith-based, devotional tone of the commentary.

While in Kistemaker's view the Apocalypse does seem to anticipate a final judgment and an end to history, the primary approach of his commentary seems firmly located in the idealist camp. Kistemaker does not see Revelation as a history of past events or a detailed prophecy of the future. The book does not specify particular events, but rather principles that apply to the issues of any age and place. While the images in the book are drawn from the Mediterranean world of the first Christian century, the message of the book is universal and abiding. Through the book of Revelation, believers received comfort and assurance to endure spiritual conflicts to the end.

The aim of the book is not to forge new directions in scholarship, but to be a detailed guide for pastors and serious Bible students from an evangelical perspective. The book is clear and easy to read, provides a fresh translation, and is filled with practical applications that often are not easy to come by in a book like Revelation.

I believe, however, that the book has serious shortcomings from a scholarly perspective. While Kistemaker has noted the existence of most

significant Revelation scholars (the intriguing work of David Barr, however, is never mentioned), he has ignored recent major discussions, and there is little evidence of the periodical literature in the book. Extensive citation is largely limited to other authors of commentaries. Especially featured in the footnotes are Aune, Bauckham, Beale, Charles, Hendriksen, Swete, and Thomas.

An example of how current scholarship has been ignored is the section entitled "Persecution under Domitian" (35-37). Kistemaker takes the traditional position that Revelation was written in the context of persecution related to Domitian's demand for worship, repeating the views of writers such as Ramsay, Beckwith, Hemer, and Thomas. While he cites Leonard Thompson a single time in support of this view, he gives no indication that Thompson actually holds the opposite view. In his book *Apocalypse and Empire* (and an extensive article in *Semeia* 36 not cited by Kistemaker), Thompson offers extensive critique of the evidence that Domitian was a persecutor of Christians. Although Beale has offered cautions regarding Thompson's position in the Introduction to his 1999 commentary, the Reading the Apocalypse Seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature (late 1990s) found Thompson's case largely convincing. Regardless of the outcome of this significant debate, the reader of Kistemaker's commentary will be unaware of the issue unless he or she chooses to look up the lone reference to Thompson in a footnote on page 35.

At times, it also appears that Kistemaker has not done careful firsthand observation of the Greek text of Revelation, in spite of having produced his own translation. While the commentary is large in size, there are many exegetical omissions in it. A few examples from the seven seals will have to suffice for a short review.

In Rev 6:10, the souls under the altar cry out for "judgment" and "vengeance" (a negative with the present tense). The fulfillment of their request is found in the repetition of these words in the aorist tense in 19:2. The parallel is not mentioned in the commentary on either verse. In his translation of Rev 6:11, Kistemaker adds the phrase "the number of" to explain what is "completed" with no indication in the commentary that this phrase is an interpretive emendation rather than a translation of the text. As a result, there is no discussion of the exegetical possibilities of the text as it reads.

In Rev 7:1-3, Kistemaker translates accurately but does not note in his comments on the passage that while earth, sea, and trees are in danger (Rev 7:1, 3), the four winds are commissioned to harm only the earth and the sea (7:2). A close reading of this anomaly begs for explanation, but none will be found in this commentary. In Rev 7:4 and 9:16, one finds the only two places in the book where the phrase "I heard the number" occurs in the context of four angels. This parallel suggests a significant link between the 144,000 and the enemy hordes of the sixth trumpet. The parallel is not mentioned in Kistemaker.

I regret, therefore, that this well-written and inspiring commentary does not seem to have the kind of substance that would make it a constant reference in my future scholarly endeavors. A student who can afford only one or two

commentaries would be much better served by Aune and Beale. But I believe Kistemaker's work will find its place in the libraries of many pastors and serious lay students of the book of Revelation.

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Longenecker, Richard N., ed. *Community Formation: In the Early Church and in the Church Today*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002. 237 pp. Paper, \$19.95.

This reasonably sized volume, made up of essays by leading biblical scholars, theologians, and historians, provides a fascinating and readable introduction to the church's understanding and organization of its structure, both in earliest times and in recent years—a subject often more prosaically known as “church order.” Using a loosely diachronic approach, the book begins with an overview of some of the forms of community prevalent in the NT world, followed by a major section devoted to exploring community formation in the various NT documents, two detailed chapters on some of its manifestations in the early church, and, finally, several aspects of its diversity in the church today.

Aimed at “the earnest reader and the Christian church at large” (xviii), the book's usefulness for the scholar and specialist is limited to some degree by its lack of footnotes. (Each essay does end with a generous bibliography, however, to which many authors make reference during the course of their essays.) For the novice, Longenecker provides in his introduction a brief overview of some of the struggles concerning church order over the past 150 years, paying particular attention to the divisive debates over whether God has actually originated and ordained any particular church structure.

Section 1 (“The Social Context”) opens with an overview, written by Richard Ascough, of some of the more common Greco-Roman philosophic, religious, and (other) voluntary associations that were available as models for the newly forming Christian groups of the first and second centuries. Alan Segal then explores the community experiences of the Judaism(s) out of which Christianity developed, giving particular attention to the structures of temple worship, synagogue, and family observance, and the ways in which these structures adapted in response to the consecutive threats of Hellenism and Jerusalem's destruction. Standing a little apart from the other articles in this section, Peter Richardson's “Building ‘an Association’ (*Synodos*) . . . and a Place of Their Own” directs one's attention to the relevant architectural practices during this time period. Richardson notes significant similarities among buildings used by the various Christian, Jewish, and Greco-Roman voluntary associations, postulating that Christian churches at first modeled themselves on the pattern of the synagogue, later on the Greco-Roman voluntary associations (on which the synagogues themselves had earlier patterned themselves), and later after Constantine, on the basilica model of established power.

In the NT section, Craig Evans's opening essay on the Gospels focuses upon the major features of Jesus' ministry which later formed the model for the