central catalyst of the Reformation—church authority—is still a challenging issue for the church today. There is a difficult balance between the cherished egalitarian Protestant principle of "the priesthood of all believers," and the practice of order and authority in the day-to-day life of the church. Brewer clearly describes this challenge, but the solutions are obviously beyond his reach.

Regarding *extreme unction*, for many traditions, including Adventism, Brewer's proposed ideas are mainly a description of standard practice. For all intents and purposes, this places the author's suggested ideas in full agreement with Adventism. It still seems important, however, to support Brewer's appeal for the church to maintain a healthy practice of the biblical mandate to pray for the sick, as well as those on their deathbeds, and to offer anointing to those that request it.

Regarding the *Lord's Supper*, it is hard to see the extent to which Luther's views are useful today; though Brewer's suggestion to consider Luther's views as a way to balance Zwingli's "mere symbolism" seemed understandable and logical. Perhaps the most helpful part is Luther's rejection of philosophy as the basis for explaining spiritual/theological matters and his proposal that biblical mysteries be accepted by faith, without the attempt to explain that which has not been clearly revealed in God's word.

Brewer's message tends to lose some strength when he moves from the general to the specifics of his discussion. While the historical sketches are rich and provide a solid backdrop for each of the discussions on the sacraments, the possible applications for the church today are not as strong. Still, this book is an excellent read for college students, as well as for practitioners, and can be used as a primer on the historical development of the sacraments, from the early church to the time of the Reformation, written from a Protestant perspective. Perhaps a section with questions to ponder at the end of each chapter would strengthen the application sections.

Brewer's appeal to contemporary Protestantism to take a fresh look at the seven sacraments, and consider them as relevant practices for the church, using Luther as a filter, should be taken seriously. Overall, this is a book worth reading for everyone interested in observing and evaluating the Protestant Church of the past, in order to enhance the Protestant Church of the present.

Berrien Springs, Michigan   Gerardo Oudri

Cartwright, John, Gabriel Etzel, Christopher Jackson, and Timothy Paul Jones. *Teaching the World: Foundations for Online Theological Education.* Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2017. xviii + 188 pp. Softcover. USD 24.99.

This book by Cartwright, Etzel, Jackson, and Jones is a collaborative effort to examine the question of whether online education can be as good as traditional learning on a physical campus. Some schools reject online training categorically (Beeson Divinity School), while a few *only* use online venues for education (Rockbridge Seminary). In 2012, the Association of Theological

Schools (ATS) made "the momentous decision to grant exceptions to the on-campus requirement. Already more than a dozen ATS-accredited seminaries are offering fully online masters of divinity degrees" (10), such as Fuller Theological Seminary and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Additionally, in 2017, "145 out of 271" of ATS schools "offered at least six online courses" (18). In this growing trend towards online education, Timothy P. Jones, associate vice president for the Global Campus at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY), has pooled together three dissertations on the subject, written by Cartwright, Etzel, and Jackson. The three sections in the book correspond to the labors of these three students. In an opening chapter, Jones shares the book's key suggestion and main argument against the critiques of online education, stating that the local church "as an essential part of the curriculum" might serve the need for face-to-face community better than the traditional school campus (13).

Christopher Dwight Jackson explores "Better Foundations for Online Learning" (section I, 15–66). Taking his cues from Robert Funk's article "The Apostolic *Parousia*: Form and Significance" in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox*, ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 249–268, Jackson highlights that Paul not only "believed that his presence could be mediated by means of the epistle" (32) but that "in some circumstances his personal presence would be less effective than an emissary or a letter" (33; see 2 Cor 2:3–4; 9:5). Jackson then borrows from "contemporary social presence theory" (37) a distinction between "intimacy" (feeling of closeness) and "immediacy" (i.e., face-to-face, telephone, letter/online) (38). He highlights that "the displaying of immediacy behaviors by a teacher is correlated to student success, whether in face-to-face or online formats" (41). An "ideal approach to theological education" respects the fact that the online format is more effective for some courses, such as systematic or historical courses, than for others, like homiletics (49). The final chapter interacts in some detail with Paul House's "Hewing to Scripture's Pattern: A Plea for Personal Theological Education," *Colloquy* (2010): 2–6, in which he used theological arguments against online theological education (57–59). Jackson finds House's case overstated and highlights that there "are far more similarities and fewer differences between Pauline epistolography and theological education than there are between God's incarnational self-disclosure and theological education" (64).

Gabriel Etzel elaborates on "Better Faculty for Online Learning" (section II, 67–130). After a very general theological frame of reference (ch. 5, "Online Faculty and the Image of God"), Etzel focuses on "Online Faculty and Theological Competency" (ch. 6, 89–106). The online medium converts the role of the teacher "from the conveyer of information to the 'creator of learning environments'" (98, see also Ruth Lester, "Converting My Course Converted Me: How Reinventing an On-Campus Course for an Online Environment Reinvigorated My Teaching," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 9.4 [2006]: 236–242), in which the student changes from "a passive listener

or reader to an active participant in the learning process" (99). Theological competence should take priority over pedagogical and technological skills when hiring online faculty. Etzel reviews various studies about spiritual formation with online media (108–115) before describing the best possible online professor: A person who is involved in ministry and models Christ as a person of character that is willing to suffer, displays strength with humility, and leads through serving (118–129).

In the last section, John Cartwright elaborates on "Better Practices in the Classroom" (131–182). Given that "the average age of the undergraduate online learner" is thirty-four years of age (140), Cartwright first applies ten best practices from "Adult Learning Theory" to online education (142–144). In the next chapter, Cartwright draws from his doctoral research, in which a group of seventeen evangelical educators generated forty-four statements about how to achieve the "four program learning outcomes . . . associated with the ATS M.Div. program" (154). The most important contribution of this research is a discovery of a student's local church as a context for ministerial training: "It is the power of real mentors in real churches that takes personal development to a much deeper level" (162). The last chapter, "The Advantage of Ministry Training in Context," cements the main suggestion of this book. Describing examples such as the associate pastor, the volunteer at a church, and the soldier who is deployed oversees, Cartwright points out that "a master of divinity degree that does not require relocation is not only possible today, but also may be ideal" (170). And it is ideal because "online students can immediately practice what they are learning in their in-context community" (171). When combined with an intentional strategy and an academic structure, online theological training in partnership with the student's church of origin "can combine the best of both theory and practice, achieving the desired learning outcomes" (180–181).

The collaboration of three dissertations bundling one argument in under 200 pages is a great model for harnessing the power of technical research in order to make it relevant for a specific subject. Jones has done a wonderful job of conceptualizing and executing a team project that should serve as an example in other disciplines of theology.

There are some concerns, however, with Jackson's methods. His theological argument for online education relies too heavily on Paul's letters and yet, at the same time, does not read them deeply enough. First, is not the concept of the "absent presence" a pervasive theologoumenon in the Bible? God walking with Adam in the garden (Gen 3:8), his face-to-face communication with Moses (Deut 34:10), and Jesus's short time of incarnation are nothing more than brief exceptions to the rule of God's "absent presence" among his people. Whether the theophanies consisted of visions (Gen 15:1), dreams (Gen 20:3), a voice from heaven (Dan 4:31), a cloud (Exod 14:19) or thunderstorms (Exod 19:16, 19)—God's mode of self-disclosure is usually partial and indirect. As Christian believers, we "fix our eyes on what is unseen" (2 Cor 4:18) because we are "away from the Lord" since "we live by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:6–7). These few references might suffice to show that indirect modes

of communication between God and humanity dominate biblical history, imposed by the distance between transcendence and immanence. Second, although Jackson goes to great lengths to establish the argument of the "absent presence," the need for it becomes less urgent considering the book's overall thesis of shifting the face-to-face communication to the local church community. Third, Paul says more about his means of creating intimate presence in his letters than Jackson indicates. When he says, "we opened wide our hearts to you" (2 Cor 6:11) or "you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. I take great pride in you" (2 Cor 7:3–4), the apostle reveals a disposition far beyond that of the typical classroom environment. Such depth of relationship between the teacher and the student might tip the vote for an ideal context of theological training in the direction of a church rather than a college campus.

Cartwright's suggestion that the local church become an integral part of the M.Div. online curriculum deserves full attention. Having worked through three degrees on the campus of three different seminaries, I frequently met highly experienced pastors and evangelists who came from all over the world to be nothing but full-time students. Their home churches were deprived of their service. The churches in the cities of the seminaries were flooded with more gifts and talents than they could absorb. In addition, a workers' ministry muscles can atrophy for their lack of use during the many years of academic training. Asynchronous models of online training, on the other hand, are able to decentralize and contextualize the contents of the curriculum without disconnecting the student from the vast history of pastoral care.

This proposal, however, still needs to be tested by real-life experiments. Not every church is set up to provide the intellectual space needed for critical thinking beyond tribal attitudes and opinions. Additionally, some important questions would need to be considered, such as whether the leadership of a church would fund and protect *important* hours of learning without calling the student into *urgent* matters of ministry, or whether a college and church could become accountable to each other based on independent standards of quality control. Would a church even submit to policies and obligations required by accrediting agencies? Do colleges have the budget to build their programs in close cooperation and communication with local churches? Until the authors are able to answer this slew of questions, the key proposal of this book is a great idea, but perhaps nothing more than that.

Newburgh, Indiana   Lars Kierspel

Chryssides, George D. *Jehovah's Witnesses: Continuity and Change*. London: Routledge, 2016. xii + 308 pp. Hardcover. USD 160.00. Softcover. USD 49.95. eBook. USD 24.98.

George D. Chryssides's *Jehovah's Witnesses: Continuity and Change* features a historical and theological narrative that spans from the time of Charles Taze Russell until 2014. Chryssides was well-equipped to undertake this task; he completed a BD in Systematic Theology from the University of Glasgow and