

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.

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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

a DPhil in Philosophy of Religion from the University of Oxford. He spent his career studying new religious movements and currently serves as an honorary research fellow at York St. John University and the University of Birmingham. Previously, he published the *Historical Dictionary of Jehovah's Witnesses*, *Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements* 85 (Plymouth: Scarecrow, 2008) and *The A to Z of Jehovah's Witnesses*, *The A to Z Guide* 104 (Plymouth: Scarecrow, 2009).

Chryssides's three books on Jehovah's Witnesses compliment the small corpus of recent academic monographs focused on this religious community. Three are worthy of mention: Shawn Francis Peters, *Judging Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious Persecution and the Dawn of the Rights Revolution* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000); Andrew Holden, *Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement* (London: Routledge, 2002); and M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of the Jehovah's Witnesses*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015). The first two works are focused studies: Peters's book is the best source on the challenging experience of Jehovah's Witnesses during the World War II period, and Holden's text is an excellent ethnographic study on a congregation in Blackburn, England. By contrast, Penton's book, now in its third edition, remains the most comprehensive historical narrative on the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Chryssides's primary contribution in his most recent book is its emphasis on continuity and change, particularly in relation to the Jehovah's Witnesses beliefs and practices.

As Chryssides states, "The aim of this book is to provide an accurate account of the Jehovah's Witnesses, showing how the Watch Tower organization originated, how it has progressed throughout time, and highlighting the issues it faces in the twenty-first century" (6). He accomplishes this goal through a combination of historical and thematic approaches. By his own admission, Chryssides is "particularly interested in exploring the theology that underpins the Watch Tower Society's teaching and practices" (12), and each chapter reflects this focus.

This book is particularly useful in dispelling popular misconceptions about the Jehovah's Witnesses. The reader is informed, for example, that the Witnesses have not (and do not) continually set new dates for the end of the world, they do not teach that only 144,000 people will be saved, potential Witnesses are not required to convert two people before they can be baptized, and members of this religion are no longer opposed to vaccinations. Furthermore, Chryssides points out that Jehovah's Witnesses do not identify as fundamentalists, premillennialists, or pacifists.

Chryssides also critiques some of the theoretical framework that has been used to explain the Witnesses. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses organizational history cannot be adequately explained by Max Weber's theory regarding the institutionalization of new religious movements—there is not a clear shift from charisma to institutionalization. Similarly, since Jehovah's Witnesses did not predict that Christ would return on a number of consecutive dates (1874, 1914, 1918, 1925, and 1975) this religious movement

cannot be correctly understood through the lens of cognitive dissonance, as proposed by Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanly Schachter in their influential text, *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

*Jehovah's Witnesses: Continuity and Change* is an excellent book and receives my full recommendation, yet it (like every other text) has some drawbacks. Though Chryssides demonstrates a scrupulous understanding of Watchtower theology, he at times contrasts this group with Seventh-day Adventism, which he is less familiar with. Accordingly, Chryssides asserts that the Witnesses's understanding of the Archangel Michael originated with Ellen G. White. This suggestion is misleading because White did not believe that Christ (or Michael) was a created being. Unlike the Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists point out that the Greek word for "angel" also means "messenger" and that Michael is an angel only in this latter sense—he is God's Archmessenger, not a created being at the top of the angelic hierarchy. In a similar vein, Seventh-day Adventists are Trinitarian, Jehovah's Witnesses are not.

Chryssides also claims that Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses both celebrate the Memorial on Easter Sundays. Adventists have never celebrated the Memorial, which is a practice unique to Jehovah's Witnesses. Rather, Seventh-day Adventists hold communion quarterly, along with many other Protestant groups, and do not typically gather for worship on Easter Sunday since they observe Saturday as the Sabbath. Chryssides misses this point, however, and further suggests that "both Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses prefer to emphasize the Memorial, since it is the death of Jesus and his ransom sacrifice for the world's sins that lies at the heart of their theology, rather than the resurrection, which, despite its undoubted importance, does not have the same soteriological function" (202). Contrary to this assertion, Seventh-day Adventists emphasize that Christ's death *and* resurrection are critically important for human salvation.

Finally, Chryssides claims that "Seventh-day Adventists continue to celebrate these [Jewish] festivals" as outlined in the Old Testament (208). Though Seventh-day Adventists do observe the biblical Sabbath, they do not observe (and have not observed in the past) any Old Testament festivals or feasts. As with his comparison regarding the Memorial, Chryssides provides no source for his information about Seventh-day Adventism on this point. This raises an important issue regarding comparison: when comparison is done, it should be based upon similar types of sources or information. Chryssides bases his understanding of the Witnesses on official organizational sources, but does not do the same with Seventh-day Adventists.

Though there are issues with some—and it is only some—of Chryssides's comparisons, it should be stressed that these minor problems do not detract from the overall importance of his work. This text is highly informative in regard to its primary subject, the Jehovah's Witnesses. In reference to this, however, a final point should be made. Chryssides's book is an institutional/intellectual work, focused on leaders and official teachings. This

focus is useful because it contributes to the scholarly understanding of Watchtower ideology, but it also masks as much as it reveals. Chryssides argues that Jehovah's Witnesses are highly uniform in their belief and practice. This may be true, but religious groups tend to be highly diverse, especially if they have members spread throughout the world and are numbered into the millions. Therefore, cultural and social histories of Jehovah's Witnesses still need to be written so that this religious group and their history is better understood.

In spite of any issue that might be raised, *Jehovah's Witnesses: Continuity and Change* is an excellent study on this "older new religion." Very few authoritative studies regarding the Jehovah's Witnesses have thus far been conducted and this new book is a masterful text. Therefore, it should be recognized for what it is: a significant contribution to the scholarly corpus on Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as an important work in the broader field of religious studies and new religious movements. Scholars and non-specialists alike will benefit greatly from Chryssides's work.

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Collins, John J. *Scriptures and Sectarianism: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xi + 329 pp. Softcover. USD 45.00.

This book provides a collection of journal articles and book chapters on the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) written by John J. Collins and published between 2004 and 2013. Although not the original edition, there is much to be gained from this reprint of WUNT 332 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). Initiatives like these make expensive volumes from European publishers easily accessible to students who might not usually have access to them—an important step in the flourishing of DSS scholarship. From the early days of the discovery of the DSS, there were accusations that a selected few were hiding the important knowledge about Christianity and Ancient Judaism found in the manuscripts of Qumran. Although things have changed dramatically since all of the readable Qumran fragments have been published, it is still true that not everybody has access to specialized studies on these documents. This is because most of the cutting-edge scholarship on the DSS is produced by European publishers at a high cost. Eerdmans and SBL Press attempt to popularize this knowledge by reprinting expensive volumes of prestigious series, like WUNT (Mohr Siebeck) and STDJ (Brill), at an affordable price, and this book is an example of this important effort.

This collection also demonstrates the value of gathering materials from leading thinkers on the DSS and consolidating them into one place. Until recently, most studies on the manuscripts from Qumran were produced by the selected few who were part of the publication project. Their reflections were frequently published in journals and conference volumes which were not easily accessible to the broad academic community. Collections such as this one, which include Collins's reflection on the DSS, are quite helpful and can save hours of searching among different volumes. A highlight of this volume is