

Book Briefs

In this section we acknowledge new books we have received over the last year for which we have not provided full book reviews. We have organized these into topical categories to help readers become aware of new books in specific areas.

Counselling

***Anger & Stress Management God's Way.* Wayne A. Mack. Original 2004, this edition, Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2017, 139 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-62995-295-6**

This book was originally published by a small press, Calvary Press Publishing. This new edition by P&R will perhaps promote wider circulation. The book is well titled, is very clearly organised by theme in all chapters, and is very accessible to a wide ranging audience. As the title tells us, two issues are the focus of the book: anger and stress and the counsel of the Scriptures to both. The first two chapters tackle the problem which must be considered first in any discussion of anger, namely the subject of when anger is right and when it is wrong. I thought the answer here was in accord with the Scriptures and was on solid ground. These two chapters would be excellent for a group Bible study or a teaching class for counsellors. A weaker chapter for me was chapter five, "Where Does Stress Come From?" I think there needed to be expansion here. Chapter six was most helpful on the theme of the consequences of stress. The closing chapters deal with overcoming stress biblically as believers. Overall, a good book to have in the college library as a resource for counselling courses; a useful group Bible study text; and also a useful tool for pastors to use in ministry. – *JCW*

Leadership

***Leader><Shift: One Becomes Less While Another Becomes More.* Gary L. Johnson. N.pl.: n.pub., 2013, 209 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-615-89093-7**

Though not a new release, this book has attracted interest as there are very few books written within the Christian world about leadership transitions. The work deals with four main sections as "The Preliminaries" about change which will come – "leaders have a shelf life". Then it develops "The Plan" of succession. Here there is much useful analysis and advice, but the book does not consider the multitude of factors which may hinder a smooth succession.

More text is needed in this section. Next, “The Process” is analysed as being much like a relay race, and finally “The People”, considers the main individuals affected – namely, the leader who is leaving, the incoming leader and others. The book ends with a most moving epilogue.

Though somewhat contextual with a focus on very large church models, there are still enough valid and timely ideas to make this a worthwhile read for leaders who are going through or will go through a leadership transition. This book should be included in the bibliographies for courses of those who teach about Christian leadership and also will be useful to Christian leaders who must always be preparing for the transitional time of their ministry. There are some nuggets of common sense wisdom here. I do wish some of these self-published books, such as this one, would start on the right page, as we have grown accustomed to reading with a standard layout for books.

– JCW

Church History

***The Unreformed Martin Luther: A Serious (and Not so Serious) Look at the Man Behind the Myths.* Andreas Malessa. Original in German, 2015. English edition, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017, 168 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-4456-2**

Paul Maier reminds us in the Preface that many legends and myths arose concerning Jesus. The same can be said for America’s first President George Washington and also for Martin Luther. This is an easy-read book and causes one to laugh often and also to see that history must be told truthfully. It is well translated from the German by the Hillmans. It would serve well as a book to read alongside a text on the Reformation as it would show how myths often arise. There are 25 chapters, so each is quite short and one does not need to read them in order. My wife and I read them often at supper, rambling around the book. They made us smile and we also learned a great deal; some chapters which will make one say, “Now that was new for me!” I am sure one of the first to be read will be the chapter entitled “Luther the Boozier”. This book makes church history truly interesting for those fearful of the subject. – JCW

Family

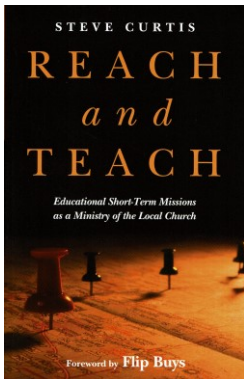
***Family Worship.* Donald S. Whitney. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016, 79 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-4780-5**

The author of what is now a modern classic for spiritual formation, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, has given us here in *Family Worship* a very concise and helpful resource to give away to many. It is not really anything

new that will be found here, but for some it will be a good reinforcement, for others an invitation written at a level and in a manner which will be accessible to begin, and for still others it will be a call back to what they had once known and practised. The five chapters cover family worship in the Bible, in church history, the elements of family worship and problems. The “problems” chapter deals with questions, such as, “What If the Father Is not a Christian?” A helpful discussion series of questions is included in this book. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life and Family Worship* should be in every pastor’s study and they should be given out to all in pre-marriage counselling. Either could also be used in a study group. One point, some of the scriptures used to support family worship really more broadly speak of family piety and nurture in a general sense. – *JCW*

Mission

***Reach and Teach: Educational Short-Term Missions as a Ministry of the Local Church.* Steve Curtis. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016, 138 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4982-9622-9**



Here is a book which sets forth the thesis that there truly is value in short-term mission (STM) strategies and ministries. STM is a field of much current study. The book operates under the thesis that “there remains a critical need for the education and equipping of indigenous pastors” (p. 49) and that a strategy of educational short-term missions which is church-based can help to train indigenous pastors and create resources for them. This model is referred to as EdSTM. Much current STM strategy concerns evangelism and humanitarian and development-based projects. The low point is theological training at the appropriate level, especially in many untargeted areas. The book is easy to read, has a good forward by Flip Buys, the past international director of the World Reformed Fellowship, and has a glossary, appendices, and a bibliography. The author is the international director for Timothy Two Project International. I commend this work and was thrilled to read it as ten years ago I wrote an article, “A Mission Strategy for Equipping National Leaders: MT3”¹ and see a very similar philosophical approach. Well done, Steve. – *JCW*

¹ Jack C. Whytock, “A Mission Strategy for Equipping National Leaders: MT3”, *Haddington House Journal* 11 (2009), 51-67.