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BOOK NOTES **Compiled and Annotated**

by

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For the first two issues of *The Progressive Catholic Review* we will present brief summaries of a sampling of books published over the last five years. In this first issue we will include a sampling of titles in BIBLICAL STUDIES and HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY (General, Early Christianity, Medieval Christianity, Early Modern Christianity, Christianity in the United States, and Old/“Independent” Catholic Christianity). In the second issue we will include a sampling of titles in various sub-areas of THEOLOGY (Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, Christian Ethics: Society, Justice, and Peace, Ecclesiology: The Church as a Subject of Theological Study, The Sacramental Church and the Sacraments, Liturgy: History, Theological Reflections, and Practical Guides, Ecumenism, Miscellaneous: Theological Studies Difficult to Classify) and FRANCISCAN STUDIES (Historical Treatments, Franciscan Spirituality). These summaries are taken from the bibliographies of the St. Francis Virtual House of Studies:

<http://www.csfcecc.org/sfvhouse/sfvbib.html>

These bibliographies are still under construction and will be regularly updated. Please refer to them for works published more than five years ago.

In subsequent issues of *PCR* we will include brief summaries of important works in each of the above areas that have appeared since the publication of the previous issue. We also welcome the submission of reviews or review essays from readers. If you wish to have a review considered for publication, please know that we are flexible on the length of submissions and style. Use any standard template (e.g. University of Chicago, MLA, APA) as long as the style is consistent. Submissions should be in MSWord 1997 (or later) and sent as an attachment to ecathrev@gmail.com.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

***Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible*, Edited by R. R. Reno. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005- .**

This innovative series has assigned the task of the commentary of each book of the Bible to a leading theologian. The results thus far are exciting and intellectually stimulating. The following have appeared thus far:

Phillip Cary, *Jonah*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2008.

Douglas Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009.

Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2006.

Robert W. Jenson, *Ezekiel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009.

Matthew Levering, *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007.

Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006.

Joseph L. Magina, *Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009.

Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005.

Ephraim Radner, *Leviticus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008.

Risrto Saarinen, *The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2008.

***Biblica: The Bible Atlas - A Social and Historical Journey Through the Lands of the Bible*, Edited by Barry J. Beitzell. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2007.**

This enormous book (oversized and 575 pages long) is an excellent atlas, and so much more. The essays on social and economic contexts of the various books of the Bible by some of the most respected biblical scholars around the world make this a valuable resource. One can usually find it for an unusually low price on Amazon.

***The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, Translated and edited by Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg, and Edward M. Cook. New York: HarperOne, revised edition, 2005.**

In addition to the texts of the ancient writings the book contains commentary with an interesting and plausible, if not conclusive, argument that the writings were not produced by the Essene community. The jury is still out on that one, but the commentary does give valuable insights into culture out of which Christianity first emerged.

Christian E. Hauer and William A. Young, *An Introduction to the Bible: A Journey into Three Worlds*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 7th edition, 2007.

The “Three Worlds” are literary, historical and contemporary. Hauer and Young thus take into account the texts, the contexts in which they were written, and the contexts in which we read them in our own time. This useful device takes the reader into the world of critical analysis and provides a great deal of food for thought in preparation for serious biblical study.

Stephen L. Harris and Robert L. Platzner, *The Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2nd edition, 2007.
Stephen L. Harris, *The New Testament: A Student’s Introduction*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 6th edition, 2008.

These two volumes are particularly useful for those interested in disputed passages and writings that were not eventually included in the canon of scripture.

Matthew Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis: A Theology of Biblical Interpretation*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

Levering presents a case for combining critical and historical tools with a phenomenology of faith, thus placing the reader of Scripture in the worlds of both scholarship and faith. Such approaches are exclusively either anthropocentric or theocentric. This, of course, creates some ambiguity and tension. The reader thus enters fully into the perspective of the Biblical world.

***The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*, Edited by Marvin Meyer, Introduced by Elaine H. Pagels. New York: HarperOne, 2007.**

This is a meticulously edited collection of the Early Coptic writings found in 1945 in Nag Hammadi, Egypt. The scholarly commentary is excellent.

Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 2006.

This is one of the books one could profitably turn to after having read Virkler and Ayayo. The perspective is Evangelical. The scholarship is solid.

Jaroslav Pelikan, *Whose Bible Is It? A History of the Scriptures Through the Ages*. New York: Viking, 2005.

Although he does not ignore the problem of canonicity, Pelikan’s concern is less with what was in the Bible at any given time than how the Bible is perceived in different times and by different populations. Perhaps the title should have been Which Bible Is It?

Christopher R. Seitz, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2007.

In this small volume Seitz does two important things. First, he offers a concise summary of recent scholarship on the prophets. Seitz then makes an intriguing case for the superiority of the traditional canonical structure of the arrangement of the prophetic writings over one that places them in historical sequence. While acknowledging that the latter is necessary for tracing the history of the scriptures, he argues the former makes more catechetical sense because of the continuing thematic links.

Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

And after having read Osborne, one could profitably turn to Vanhoozer. He is also an Evangelical and his scholarship is also solid. His mastery of the nuances of post-modern theorists such as Searle, Austin, Ricoeur, Gadamer, Hirsch, Derrida and Fish is impressive and is put to good use in the development of a perspective that is at once faithful to the Christian tradition and comfortable in the intellectual world of the 21st century. (Those familiar with Stanley Fish will immediately get the parody in the main title).

Henry Virkler, Karelyne Ayayo, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2007.

This is an accessible introduction to historical-cultural and contextual analysis, lexical-syntactical analysis, theological analysis, genre identification and analysis. One has to look elsewhere for a comprehensive overview of the history and subtleties of hermeneutics, but this is a good place to gain an initial, if somewhat limited, view of Biblical interpretation.

Brian L. Webster, *The Cambridge Introduction to Biblical Hebrew with CD-ROM*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

The accessible, almost intuitive, approach to the Hebrew language and a CD with a workbook and a variety of resources make this the best introduction now available.

Megan Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Williams does not deal with the problem of canonicity but she does a fine job of placing the development of the canon in the context of the web of intrigue that was Rome, the "Second City" of the empire in Jerome's time.

N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009.

This brief book contains some big visions. Wright presents us with four points of productive tension in Paul the person and Paul's writings: Paul as Faithful Jew / Proud Roman Citizen; a narrative of Creation / Covenant; a Messianic / Apocalyptic climax; the dual (and dueling) worlds of Gospel / empire.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

GENERAL:

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: the First Three Thousand Years*. New York: Viking, 2009.

This sweeping narrative (more than 1,000 pages) contains a useful and insightful first section that explains the extra millennium in the title. MacCulloch spends the first 60 pages summarizing the Hebraic, Hellenistic intellectual and the Roman influences that shaped the world in which Christianity emerged. While it is a brief treatment (less than one-tenth of a book dedicated to one-third of the advertised three millennia), the relevant pre-Christian past is more detailed and better developed in this volume than in any other comparable work.

Richard P. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism*. New York: HarperOne, 2008.

This is both excellent history and excellent ecclesiology. The author is particularly good at correlating the evolution of Catholicism with social and cultural change.

***The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Edited by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Rev. 3rd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.**

*This is an important resource book for the History of Christianity and all fields in Theology. The third edition has been released thrice in slightly different forms, but it is worth looking for the 1997 original which you can purchase for a fraction of the price of the two later versions. For causal use, one can also do well with **The Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd revised edition** (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).*

***A People's History of Christianity: The Lived Religion of Christians in the First Two Thousand Years*, Edited by Denis Janz. 7 volumes. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005-2008.**

Insightful essays by more than 100 excellent scholars on the wide variety of social and cultural contexts of Christianity throughout the world and over two millennia make this a rich resource. Excellent guides to additional reading are a wonderful bonus. The constituent volumes are:

Christian Origins, Edited by Richard A. Horsley. (2006)

Late Ancient Christianity, Edited by Virginia Burrus. (2005)

Byzantine Christianity, Edited by Derek Krueger. (2006)

Medieval Christianity, Edited by Daniel Ethan Bornstein and Denis R. Janz. (2007)

Reformation Christianity, Edited by Peter Matheson. (2006)

Modern Christianity to 1900, Edited by Amanda Porterfield and Denis R. Janz. (2007)

Twentieth-Century Global Christianity, Edited by Mary Farrell Bednarowski. (2008)

Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

*This meticulously researched volume studies the influence of the Marian concept on Western Civilization and beyond. Its scope is as expansive as Jaroslav Pelikan's *Mary Through the Ages* (though it is much longer) and its detail is as rich as Robert Orsi's *The Madonna of 115th Street* (though it spans centuries and the globe).*

Bruce L. Shelly, *Church History in Plain Language*. 3rd Edition. New York: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

This is an excellent "starter" book for those with no background in the field but who want a comprehensive introduction.

EARLY CHRISTIANITY:

***Christian Origins: Vol. 1 of A People's History of Christianity*, Edited by Richard A. Horsley. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.**

The original essays synthesize recent research for a popular audience in a way that is respectful of both the scholarship and the reader.

Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

In spite of the sub-title, this book belongs in the Ancient section as well as the Medieval. The interplay between the "New Rome" of Constantinople and the development of Eastern Christianity is one of the dominant themes in this excellent book.

Phillip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died*. New York: HarperOne, 2008.

Jenkins provides a fascinating and useful look at Christianity as it developed on the fringes of the Roman Empire (and beyond) and apart from the incipient centralizing tendencies in a monarchical papacy.

Late Ancient Christianity: Vol. 2 of A People's History of Christianity, Edited by Virginia Burrus. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

The original essays synthesize recent research for a popular audience in a way that is respectful of both the scholarship and the reader.

James J. O'Donnell, *The Ruin of the Roman Empire: A New History*. New York: Ecco, 2008.

Contrasting the world-views of King Theodoric, Emperor Justinian, and Pope Gregory in the late 5th through the early 7th centuries, O'Donnell analyzes the intricate interplay between political and religious dynamics in the transition from the Ancient to the Medieval world.

Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History, Edited by Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2005.

The research is solid and the evidence is clear. There really isn't much more to be said.

Second Century Christianity, Edited by Robert M. Grant. 2nd edition. Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 2005.

This is a useful collection of primary sources from pagan as well as Christian sources.

MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY:

Thomas Cahill, *Mysteries of the Middle Ages: And the Beginning of the Modern World*. New York: Random House, 2006.

Cahill draws together insights on Eleanor of Aquitaine, Francis of Assisi, Abelard, Aquinas, Dante, Giotto, Bacon, and the rise of the cult of the Virgin Mary into a rich tapestry of the contributions of the High Middle Ages to Modern sensibilities. It is good to reflect on the overwhelmingly religious origins of what many have dismissively called secular culture.

Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 3, Early Medieval Christianities, c.600-c.1100, Edited by Thomas F. X. Nobel and Julia M. H. Smith. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

and

The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 4, Christianity in Western Europe, c.1100-c.1500, Edited by Miri Rubin and Walter Simons. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. *These are for the reader looking for great detail. The 1500 pages of these two volumes contain original scholarly articles on a wide variety of topics indicating the remarkable diversity of the era.*

Jerrilynn D. Dodds, María Rosa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

This excellent study of a specific local instance of inter-religious cooperation and indeed exploration of ideas is a glimpse of a world that did exist and then disappeared as the result of retrenchment of political and religious authority threatened by freedom of inquiry and conscience.

Tom Holland, *The Forge of Christendom: The End of Days and the Epic Rise of the West*. New York: Doubleday, 2008.

This is a well crafted book based on equally well conceived and executed research. I think it is an important book. Ironically, I come to a radically different conclusion than does the author. Holland sees the end of the first Millennium as a time of intense fusion between the political and social order of an emergent Europe and the missionary zeal of Christianity that would conquer and transform the world. I read his book as a cautionary tale about a Church that is too much of this world and a political culture that assumes that it has God on its side. However one reads this, it is an instructive piece of writing about some of the nuanced contradictions in Medieval Christianity.

Lauro Martines, *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

The Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) is often cast in the role of a fanatical reformer. Martines argues that he was a visionary gifted with significant insight into the human experience who sought to reform both the civil and religious life of 15th-century Florence.

***Medieval Christianity: A People's History of Christianity*, Edited by Daniel Ethan Bornstein and Denise R. Janz. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.**

The scholarly articles written for this volume are an excellent introduction to the rich tapestry of great diversity in Medieval Christianity.

Edward Mullins, *The Popes of Avignon: A Century in Exile*. New York: BlueBridge, 2008.

Although lacking in primary source documentation, this is a very good introductory study of the secularizing tendencies in the papacy during the 14th century. The book does contain a useful bibliography.

***Medieval Christianity in Practice*, Edited by Miri Rubin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.**

This remarkable source book brings together a wide array of genres (liturgical texts, sermons, popular devotional material, and much more) from all regions of Medieval Europe.

EARLY MODRN CHRISTIANITY:

Please Note: Much of what follows in this section and the section to follow will deal with aspects of various Protestant Reformations and their influence over the next four centuries. We see these as part of the history of the Church writ large, and not as peripheral to our perspective as evangelical and ecumenical Catholics. All of these trends, Protestant and Catholic, helped to shape the world in which we live.

G. W. Bernard, *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

The title of this major reinterpretation suggests a narrow monographic study, but this book is a nuanced and sustained 700 page sweeping analytical treatment. Bernard rejects two major mono-causal traditions in the historiography of the English Reformation: 1) the libidinous and power-craving monarch, and 2) the rise of the merchant class. To his credit, Bernard does not reject these factors, but places them in a complex matrix of theological, political, and cultural considerations. The detailed notes and the ten page bibliography are wonderful guides to further reading in this field.

R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

This brief book gives a remarkably detailed account of the Council of Trent, subsequent doctrinal developments up to the late 18th century, the relationship of Roman Catholic Reform and Iberian global expansion, and the changing social composition of the Roman Curia.

Alister McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution—A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.

According to McGrath, the radical idea is that individuals can interpret the Bible for themselves. He begins with the "Accidental Revolutionary" Martin Luther and takes us on through the more general cultural implications of that idea, as well as more historically recent movements such as Pentecostalism.

Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*. Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 2008.

Partee is a rare and valuable scholar. He is a Calvinist who seems able to encounter and unpack the works of Calvin without projecting the later developments of Calvinists onto the 16th-century documents. As a result, we have an excellent analysis of a Catholic reformer named Calvin who did exist instead of an historical reconstruction of a generic Protestant who did not exist. This is an excellent entry book for understanding this often misunderstood theologian and ecclesiologist.

Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

The sermons, songs, woodcuts, pamphlets and books produced by the reformers give evidence of several techniques of persuasion from logical argument to slogans in order to present an alternative to the rhetoric of conservation of received practices. In so doing, Pettegree argues, the reformers transformed passive audiences into convinced and committed communities.

***Reformation Christianity: A People's History of Christianity*, edited by Peter Matheson. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.**

This collection of essays by excellent social historians of Christianity is the best single volume available on the impact of the various reformations on daily life and the significance of changes in the patterns of life during the 16th century for understanding the social origins of those reformations.

Kirsi Stjerna, *Women of the Reformation*. Malden, MA: Wylie-Blackwell, 2009.

This book contains a series of biographical sketches of women who made substantive contributions to the various reformations. These include (but are not limited to) matriarch Katharina von Bora Luther, Queen Jeanne d'Albret, prophetess Ursula Jost, and the classics scholar Olympia Fulvia Morata. These profiles are rendered even more useful by the use of social history to provide context and theological analysis to more fully understand their significant roles.

***A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts With Introductions*, Edited by Denis Janz. 2nd Edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.**

If one is looking for a one volume collection with writings from across the spectrum of reformations, this is the one I would recommend.

MODERN CHRISTIANITY:

Giuseppe Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*. New York: Orbis Books, 2006.

This is a useful brief overview by one of the editors of the massive five volume series of essays on the history of the Council.

Angela Bonavoglia, *Good Catholic Girls: How Women are Leading the Fight to Change the Church*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.

This is a popular and useful descriptive account, but with little analysis and interpretive nuance.

Kenneth Briggs, *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2006.

The argument is a little exaggerated (the promises were never explicit) but this study of diminishing expectations in the wake of Vatican II is useful.

John C. Caiassa, *The War of the Jesus and Darwin Fishes: Religion and Science in the Postmodern World*. Edison, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007.

This is a good statement of the opinion that is held by a great many evolutionary biologists and theologians. There need be no warfare between science and religion. Nor need we try to reconcile them. They perform different functions.

***The Emerging Christian Way: Thoughts, Stories, and Wisdom for a Faith of Transformation*, Edited by Michael Schwartzentruber. Kelowna, BC Canada: CopperHouse, 2006.**

The essays present useful overviews on a variety of “post-modern” approaches to Christianity, from the Jesus seminar folk to the “Emergent Church.”

***A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450-1990: A Documentary Sourcebook*, Edited by Klaus Koschorke, et al. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007.**

This is a useful sourcebook for those looking for an introduction to modern Christianity in the world beyond Europe and North America.

Hans Küng, *Disputed Truth: Memoirs II*. New York: Continuum, 2008.

*This is the second volume of Küng’s memoirs (*My Struggle for Freedom: Memoirs*, was published in 2003). His emphasis on the local church, shared authority, and the contingent nature of all theology and (to a certain extent) of doctrine itself is of particular importance to those of us in the Old Catholic tradition.*

***Modern Christianity to 1900: A People’s History of Christianity*, Edited by Amanda Porterfield and Denis R. Janz. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007**
and

***Twentieth-century Global Christianity: A People’s History of Christianity*, Edited by Mary Farrell Bednarowski. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.**

The essays in these two volumes present an impressive array of summaries of recent scholarship on the wide variety of Christian responses to modernity and secular culture.

John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua, and Six Sermons*, Edited by Frank M. Turner. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

This recent edition of Newman’s 1879 spiritual autobiography (and a selection of six of his representative sermons) provides a good introduction to this thoughtful Christian thinker who interpreted the time in which he lived as an era of the replacement of Christianity by the worship of the modern State. His search for an authentic Apostolic voice led him from Anglican Christianity to the Roman Catholic Church. Alas, Newman was to find himself almost as uncomfortable with Rome’s rejection of modernity as he was with England’s embracing it. Turner provides useful background information in his editorial notes.

John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

O'Malley presents a positive perspective on Vatican II. His argument is clear and is worth considering alongside the perspectives of conservatives on the one hand and the disappointed former periti on the other.

Michael O'Neill Printy. *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

This study of the impact of the Enlightenment on German pastors and theologians is a necessary background to understanding the rejection of the outcomes of Vatican I in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

The title is brief, but the book is enormous in size (almost 900 pages) and scope (which stretches across millennia). Taylor begins with a deceptively simple question: "What does it mean to say that we live in a secular age?" His long answer is the most detailed, sophisticated, historically nuanced, and convincing philosophical analysis of the problem this compiler has seen. A final chapter is filled with insights for Christians on the implications of and opportunities offered by this secular age.

***Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* Edited by David G. Schultenover. New York: Continuum, 2007.**

The five contributors to this volume conclude that the answer is a qualified yes. The degree of qualification depends on which author one is reading. All however agree that 1) the Council did not go as far as most progressives would wish, and 2) the Council accomplished far more than conservatives are comfortable with. All of the essays are excellent, and their different interpretations present a great deal of food for thought.

David Yallop, *The Power and the Glory: Inside the Dark Heart of John Paul II's Vatican*. New York: Carroll and Graf, 2007.

Yallop, an investigative journalist, consulted an enormous range of printed sources and archival collections in this well documented and carefully argued critique of the pontificate of John Paul II. It is a view from inside the Vatican with which Hans Küng struggled following Vatican II. This account can profitably be read in tandem with Küng's memoirs (see above).

CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES:

Please Note: As in the previous two sections the reader will encounter in the following material information that at first glance may seem peripheral at best to the Catholic experience in America. There are two considerations which makes all of the titles in this section relevant. First, the general culture in this nation was shaped dominantly by British Evangelical Protestant influences. Second, some of

those who share the Ecumenical Catholic perspective came from an Evangelical background and have either reacted to it or have brought a good deal of that background with them into their new ecclesial home. For both reasons, it is in our best interest to understand this large part of the American religious landscape.

Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006.

Anderson takes Tertullian's famous quote, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" and adds to it a second question. "What has Antioch to do with Jerusalem?" Thus the book addresses not only the relationship between secular and Christian cultures, but also variant Christian cultures. Anderson is particularly interested in the tension and possible congruity between "normative" American Christianity (in its endless variety) and the Emerging Church phenomenon. In this thoughtful theological reflection, Anderson offers an analysis of contemporary history that will cause advocates of both normative and emerging forms to stop and reflect.

Gregory A. Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.

*One of the great ironies of American religious history is the Evangelical fear that Roman Catholic political ambitions would erode the barrier between Church and State. What makes that ironic is the historical reality of an "Evangelical United Front" that exercised a virtual religious, social and cultural hegemony in the United States from the early 19th century until well into the 20th century. That hegemony was successfully challenged in the 1950s and 1960s. In the mid-1970s Evangelicals responded with a variety of political counter-attacks under the umbrella banner of "The Moral Majority." Evangelical pastor Gregory Boyd offers a strenuous critique of this resurgence based on both biblical theology and a nuanced understanding of American History. (See also Rosin's *God's Harvard* and Sharlet's *The Family* summarized in this section)*

James Carroll, *Practicing Catholic*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.

*In this informal memoir Carroll reflects on his life as an American Roman Catholic over the past half century or so. Along the way he discusses Richard Cushing, Leonard Feeney, John Courtney Murray, Vatican II, Hans Küng, the sex-abuse scandals, Benedict, and much more. Carroll provides an interesting chronology of American Catholic history from Leo XIII's promulgation of *Satis Cognitum* in 1896 to Benedict XVI's visit to the White House in 2008 (pp. 323-327).*

Bruce Feiler, *American's Prophet: Moses and the American Story*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Feiler has crafted a thoughtful analysis of the place of Moses in American political discourse, social rhetoric, and popular culture iconography. The various migrations to America, both

voluntary and involuntary, are invested with biblical meaning through the frequent invocation of the leader of the most significant migration in our religious narratives.

J. C. Hallman, *The Devil Is a Gentleman: Exploring America's Religious Fringe*. New York: Random House, 2006.

*This is a useful but quirky book. Reflections on William James (author of **The Variety of Religious Experience**) are intertwined with sensitive, almost poetic, ethnographies of a variety of non-normative religious communities. The book is well worth reading, but for a more analytical treatment of the varieties of religious experience in the United States, one is better served by R. Laurence Moore, **Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans** (1986).*

Jon Meacham, *American Gospel: God, The Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation*. New York: Random House, 2006.

*Neither Christian conservatives nor devout secularists will be comfortable with this book, but readers with some sense of the complexity and ambiguity of American history will find it both refreshing and illuminating. Meacham analyzes the emergence of a pragmatic "Civil Religion" that facilitates discourse about **res publica** while preserving the integrity of private opinion, whether religious or non-religious.*

Hanna Rosin, *God's Harvard: A Christian College on a Mission to Save America*. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2007.

*Some of the "brightest and best" politically conservative Evangelicals are educated at Patrick Henry College. Washington Post journalist Rosin renders an excellent piece of investigative reporting. (see also Boyd's **The Myth of a Christian Nation** and Sharlet's **The Family** in this section)*

Frank Schaeffer, *Crazy for God: How I Grew Up As One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2007.

The author worked with the ministries of both Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell (among others). His insider's view into this important variant of Christianity in the United States is a valuable addition to our understanding of the more conservative expressions of the Evangelical ethos. Yes, of course, one must take into account that he is writing as one who has rejected the expression he once embraced.

Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008.

While Sharlet is prone to considerable exaggerations, and often blurs important distinctions between Fundamentalism, Evangelicalism, and Civil Religion, his close analysis of the implications of a group of conservative Christian power brokers in the United States is sobering.

(See also Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation* and Rosin, *God's Harvard* summarized in this section)

Gary Wills, *Head and Heart: American Christianities*. New York: Penguin, 2007.

How do Puritans, Via Media Anglicans, Sectarians, Deists, Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and a huge variety of home-grown variations form a more perfect union? This and other vexing questions are explored (if not fully answered) in Gary Wills attempt to understand Christianity as a plural reality in the unfolding of American history.

OLD / “INDEPENDENT” CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY:

Robert W. Caruso, *The Old Catholic Church: Understanding the Origin, Essence, and Theology of a Church that is Unknown and Misunderstood by Many in North America*. Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2009.

Caruso is an Old Catholic priest in one of the many jurisdictions in the United States. His critical assessment of the American scene is deserved. One may differ with him on how we address the problems (as the compiler of this bibliography does), but the dialogue is useful.

John P. Plummer, *The Many Paths of the Independent Sacramental Movement: A Study of Its Liturgy, Doctrine and Leadership in America*. Dallas: Newt Books, 2004; reprinted by Apocryphile Press, 2006.

This is a study of the more esoteric branches of the Old Catholic successions, such as the Liberal Catholic Church and various Gnostic bodies.

John P. Plummer and John R. Mabry, *Who are the Independent Catholics? An Introduction to the Independent and Old Catholic Churches*. Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2006.

This is a useful brief overview of the multifaceted world of Old Catholic / “Independent” Catholic bodies in the United States. That having been said, read this with a critical eye and explore further. For example, there is no discussion of Carfora in the historical chapter, and the brief statement on Protestant views of the Eucharist ignore Calvin’s variation on “Real Presence” and the wide-spread renewal of sacramental theology in the United Methodist Church.

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