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BOOK REVIEWS

Paul: Missionary of Jesus by Paul Barnett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. xvi + 240 pp. $16.00.

Barnett, former Anglican Bishop of North Sydney, is lecturer at Moore Theological College (Sydney, Australia) and teaching fellow in biblical studies at Regent College (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada). He has authored at least seventeen books since 1973, including *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT, 1997), *Jesus and the Logic of History* (1997), *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity* (1999), *First Corinthians* (2000), *Romans* (2003), *Is the New Testament History?* (rev. ed., 2004), and *The Shepherd-King: Reading John Today* (2005). He is currently finishing a trilogy entitled "After Jesus": (1) *The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years* (2005), (2) *Paul: Missionary of Jesus* (2008), and (3) *Finding the Historical Christ* (forthcoming).

The title of this second book in Barnett's trilogy expresses the book's thesis: Paul was a missionary of Jesus. This might appear to be a tame thesis, but it is a polemic against a view common among liberal Protestants. This liberal view, propagated by influential scholars such as Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), William Wrede (1859–1906), and Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976), claims that Paul became the second founder of Christianity by hijacking and altering Jesus' teaching and mission. Barnett, "with apologies to Malachi," summarizes this view as "Jesus have I loved and Paul I have hated" (p. 11). Barnett boldly challenges this view, and he convincingly demonstrates that Paul was true to Jesus' intentions, continuing and extending Jesus' teaching and mission.

People place a wall between Jesus and Paul for at least four reasons: (1) they fail to address how chronologically close Paul was to Jesus; (2) they incorrectly speculate that Paul was influenced more by Hellenism than a Palestinian ideology; and they draw wrong conclusions about Paul's (3) relative silence about the details of Jesus' life and (4) relatively infrequent references to Jesus' teachings (pp. 15–22).

After introducing this controversy in chapters 1–2, Barnett proceeds in chapters 3–12 to study Paul's life chronologically from his birth in about A.D. 5 to the end of his decade of missionary work in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia in about A.D. 57 (see chronologies on pp. 5, 136–37). Paul was born in Tarsus as a Roman citizen, nurtured in a conservative Jewish home, and educated in Jerusalem before becoming an eminent Pharisee with a scholarly grasp of the

Greek Old Testament; he was the Lord's "chosen instrument" (chap. 3). His teacher, Gamaliel, previously advised that Jews not persecute Christians (Acts 5:33–39), but Paul later acted contrary to this advice because after a large number of sacrificing priests became Christians (Acts 6:7), Stephen attacked the temple itself (chap. 4). Paul was both converted and called on the Damascus road (chap. 5). During Paul's so-called "unknown" years in the Levant (ca. 34–47), his basic theological convictions did not change, but his methodology for reaching Gentiles probably did, namely, he would not limit his preaching to the synagogues (chap. 6).

Paul was a true missionary of Jesus (chap. 7): "The risen Christ was proclaiming the light to Israel and the Gentiles *through* Paul" (p. 114); "Jesus of Nazareth had a two-stage Israel-to-nations agenda," and "Paul pursued the same order in his 'Jews first, and *also* Greeks' policy" (p. 116). Since Paul's Damascus event radically ended his previous work as a Pharisee and changed his view of the law, Terence L. Donaldson is wrong that Paul "practiced circumcision beforehand as a form of universal proselytism," and E. P. Sanders is wrong that Paul's "ministry to Gentiles post-Damascus was a kind of ongoing 'covenantal nomism'" (p. 133) (chap. 8). Paul's greatest challenge during his flurry of mission work from about 47 to 57 was dealing with Jewish opponents from Jerusalem who so fervently believed that Gentile Christians should be circumcised that they traveled where Paul did to counter his message; his major letters such as Galatians and Romans reflect this, and he may have collected the offering for poor Christians in Jerusalem partly to improve his relationship with the Jerusalem church (chap. 9).

Evidence that Paul was a true missionary of Jesus includes his difficult dealings with the church in Corinth (chap. 10) and his pastoral, apologetic, and polemical letter to the Romans, which is his comprehensive response to the Jewish-Christian countermission (chap. 11). Paul was remarkable for at least six achievements: gospel herald to the Greco-Roman world, exemplary missionary, iconic convert, missionary theologian, savior from Proto-Ebionism, and fulfiller of Jesus' vision (chap. 12).

While Barnett overwhelmingly succeeds at proving his thesis, a few comments such as the following are questionable: (1) Romans 15:7 "is likely [Paul's] key text in Romans." (p. 101). This seems to presuppose that Jew-Gentile unity is the theme of the letter. (2) "The verbal elements common between Matthew, Mark, and Luke relating to Gentile mission are entirely missing in the Gospel of John (p. 109). This contradicts Andreas J. Köstenberger's outstanding works on John and missions (see, for example, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel: With Implications for the Fourth Gospel's Purpose and the Mission of the Contemporary Church* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]). (3) Romans 6–8 teaches that "God delivers

Gentiles and Jews by faith in Christ from the power of sin, and he empowers them by the Holy Spirit *to fulfill the just requirement of the law*" (p. 187, emphasis added). My understanding is that Christ fulfilled the law in the place of Christians, not that the Spirit empowers Christians to fulfill it. Another relatively minor shortcoming is that Barnett does not clearly delineate his view on whether Paul was imprisoned twice at the end of his life and how the pastoral epistles fit into his timeline.

Paul: Missionary of Jesus is written in a clear, engaging manner that would not overwhelm a serious layperson. For example, he avoids technical jargon and voluminous footnotes. Barnett is to be commended for tackling a complicated issue in a concise, simple way without being simplistic. He skillfully corroborates primary sources (Paul's letters) with a contemporaneous secondary source (Luke's historically reliable Acts). The book's progression is logical, and summary paragraphs appear all along the way to underscore the main points relevant for advancing the book's thesis. Paul was indeed a missionary theologian, an instrument chosen by Jesus himself to herald the gospel before the Gentiles and kings and Jews (Acts 9:15).

Andrew David Naselli

The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism, by Garth Rosell. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 268 pp. $19.99.

The Surprising Work of God is a very sympathetic treatment of mid-twentieth century American evangelical history written by the son of one of the men who helped to shape the early movement. Garth M. Rosell, professor of Church History at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is the son of Merv Rosell, a Youth for Christ evangelist who was a contemporary and close colleague of Billy Graham. In fact, Garth's closeness to the story gives this book its most important quality as an insider's look at the history that it tells. While the main thrust of the work centers on Harold John Ockenga (1905–1985) and Billy Graham (b. 1918), Rosell weaves in the stories of numerous other key figures. Among these is his own father, whose personal papers were richly accessed in this chronicling of the birth of what started out as the *new evangelicalism.*

The book originated as a promise to Audrey Williamson Ockenga, the widow of Harold John, to use the vast legacy of her husband's personal papers, today housed at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.