

idea of narrative, the self, and his “little ethics” in *Oneself as Another*. The conclusive third section addresses a “Chalcedonian hermeneutics” found between Barth and Ricoeur; previously, both have been saddled with an inadequate philosophy and theology, respectively. Boydell argues for a more nuanced, engaged relationship between philosophy and theology. This relationship importantly places theology into a new relationship with its role in the academy, while also remaining fully committed to its task in the church. Because he is concerned with Ricoeur, the discussion of Barth warrants more conversation. In its clear, thoughtful style, however, Boydell’s book is a valuable addition to the literature on Ricoeur. It will be of interest to theologians concerned with the methods of theology, philosophical hermeneutics, or the place of theology in the academy.

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FORTRESS INTRODUCTION TO SALVATION AND THE CROSS. By David A. Brondos. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 220. \$21.00.

Brondos’s book provides a basic introduction to several major themes, concepts, and figures in soteriology and stauology, from the Hebrew Scriptures to contemporary feminism. The fifteen chapters (including introduction and conclusion) survey biblical (Isaiah, Luke, and Paul), patristic (Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa), medieval (Anselm), Reformation (Luther and Calvin), liberal (Ritschl), twentieth-century (Barth and Bultmann), and liberationist (Sobrinho and Ruether) sources. Brondos includes a timeline, a glossary, and discussion questions that will be of assistance to the beginning students for whom this volume is intended. The work will be especially helpful for seminary students. Each chapter focuses on the dominant themes in the work of a single author or text, places them in a broader historical context, and concludes with a brief evaluation. Despite Brondos’s stated preference for descriptive over prescriptive analysis, in the book he clearly takes aim at the traditional soteriological themes of substitutionary atonement, retributive justice, and legal or metaphysical abstractions. He sees the cross as “fitting” rather than necessary for redemption, and he views salvation as primarily a matter of establishing the church. Though careful to find positive themes in each thinker, Brondos’s analysis of each of these themes often neglects their subtleties, nuances, and ironies. In his treatment of Luke, for example, the cross appears as almost ancillary to the founding of the church. Brondos is more probing when dealing with the importance of the objective and subjective dimensions of redemption.

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REDEEMING THE GOSPEL: THE CHRISTIAN FAITH RECONSIDERED. By David A. Brondos. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011. Pp. viii + 250. \$32.00.

Brondos takes up the challenge(s) of the gospel’s seeming irrelevancy today. He traces this state of crisis, even among Christians in general, to changes that have rendered the biblical story incomprehensible in the “modern scientific worldview” and to contemporary scripture interpretation that has, for example, called into question “Luther’s Paul” along with scores of other traditional Christian interpretations. Brondos wants to see the gospel itself redeemed, suggesting that some defenders have left it not only irrelevant but also unhealthy. He sets out his work in six compact chapters that echo a number of Lutheran confessional *loci*. Central to his reconsideration is the new covenant community of the church in which the gospel is embodied. The being-saved-in-the-world community of faith is the locus of the gospel’s redemption. Brondos forwards a holistic understanding of redemption—forgiveness, human transformation, and a relational ethic of righteousness and justice. Whether his call for a radical transformation of Christian tradition will allow this vision of wholeness and healing to renew the gospel remains to be considered. This book also takes its place within a growing conversation about the renewal of Lutheran theology (e.g., the New Interpretation and several recent essays by V.-M. Kärkkäinen on the Lutheran doctrine of justification in global context) and will be appreciated by many already so engaged and by all within ecumenical dialogue.

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ALMOST CHRISTIAN: WHAT THE FAITH OF OUR TEENAGERS IS TELLING THE AMERICAN CHURCH. By Kenda Dean. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. x + 253. \$24.95.

With the passion and insight that characterizes her previous books, Dean explores what the National Survey on Youth and Religion, a large sociological study, says about contemporary youth and ministry. She argues that youth reflect their parents’ religious values. She finds that mainline Protestants instill values necessary for economic success in American society, such as niceness and self-discipline. Mormons, and more evangelical youth, seem more willing to take risks in faith and articulate their reasoning for doing so. Dean notes that these are important values, but that they do not embody the radical self-giving love of Christ as portrayed in the Gospels. The problem with these values, Dean argues, is that churches have failed to connect them to the radical life of Jesus and ways that that faith might unsettle contemporary American values and life paths. She offers practical suggestions to congregations on ways their practices might help youth become more articulate about how they connect their faith to their life and embody a more radical but ultimately more life-giving discipleship.

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