

John J. Pilch, *The Cultural Life Setting of the Proverbs*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press (www.fortresspress.com), 2016. Pages, 234. Paper, \$29.00.

For several years Pilch has been providing us rich insights into the social worlds behind the writings of the New Testament. Here he turns his trained eye to an Old Testament book. While his commentary is insightful, it is his discussion of various “scenarios” or themes throwing light on some of the fundamental social realities of the ancient Near East that makes his study unique. When an interesting cultural theme appears in the biblical text, he highlights that theme. This technique refers the reader to a section further in the book where these scenarios are explained. The scenarios include issues such as collectivistic society, the evil eye, honor and shame, hospitality, and kinship. Thus a better grasp of the cultural background throws light on the meaning of the message. Pilch’s understanding of the biblical text is profound, his writing is reader friendly, and his insights are engaging. This is a fine tool for study.