

BOOK REVIEWS

AS CHRIST SUBMITS TO THE CHURCH: A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP AND MUTUAL SUBMISSION. By Alan G. Padgett. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011. Pp. xviii + 151. \$19.99.

Padgett here presents a Christocentric ethic of servant leadership and mutual submission, and then draws out its implications for the question of gender roles and leadership within the church and family. While the concerns of this book should resonate with a wide readership, the primary context of the discussion is the current debate over gender roles within Evangelicalism. Within this context, P.'s book offers a distinctive critique of the complementarian perspective and a novel word of support for the egalitarian view.

Chapter 1 sets the context for the investigation. A brief survey of the debate within Evangelicalism is followed by a methodological reflection on the appropriate use of Scripture within the discussion. Here, P. proposes a "threefold sense of scripture for evangelical theology," namely, the "conventional sense," the "canonical sense," and the "contemporary sense" (18). In seeking to avoid the twin ditches of a rigid literalism and an untamed allegorical approach, P. proposes a strongly Christocentric hermeneutic: "Jesus as the living Word constitutes the controlling center of any properly Christian biblical interpretation" (27). For P. this leads to a very practical hermeneutical conclusion: "a portion of the Bible is authoritative for today only when particular texts pass through the Christ-centered, canonical layer of meaning" (29). Jesus' example of leadership among his disciples as presented in the Gospels now becomes the interpretive lens through which we must understand the biblical teachings on gender roles and leadership within the church and family.

Chapter 2 offers a Christocentric perspective on the correlative themes of servant leadership and mutual submission. Here, mutual submission is understood as "a voluntary taking up of the role of a servant or slave in relation to another" (34), while servant leadership is viewed as one *form* that mutual submission can take. One's idea of "submission" becomes all-important here. P. points out two distinct types of submission. "Type I submission" is the one human beings are all too familiar with, namely, "involuntary obedience to an external authority" (38). But it is "type II submission" that P. is concerned with: "the voluntary submission to another person out of humility, compassion, or love" (39). P. claims that type II submission is a core ethical teaching of the New Testament, and that it is typically "mutual" in nature (i.e., it applies equally to every member of the body of Christ). Specifically, mutual submission is a central teaching within

Paul's letters (e.g., Rom 15:1–3; 1 Cor 7:3–4; Gal 5:13; Eph 5:21; Phil 2:6–11). P. argues that this emphasis in Paul is understandable in that it stems directly from Jesus' teachings and, importantly, from Jesus' own life example (e.g., from washing his disciples' feet to dying for them). At this point P. makes explicit a key claim of this book: "*Yes, Christ did submit to the church. In his earthly ministry, humiliation, passion, and crucifixion, Christ voluntarily gave up power in order to take the role of a slave, so as to serve the needs of his disciples. . . . Servant leadership is simply type II submission for those in leadership roles*" (55).

The next three chapters explore various NT passages that commonly arise in discussions around gender roles and leadership within the church and family (e.g., Eph 5:18–33; 1 Tim 2:8–15; 1 Cor 11:2–16), while using Jesus' own example of mutual submission/servant leadership as an interpretive key. A brief concluding chapter considers the implications of this study for the question of submission within church and marriage today. P. emphasizes that the ethic of mutual submission does not stand alone, but is grounded in a larger ethic of the love of God. Here wisdom is required as one strives to balance "love of self, love for the neighbor, and the quest for justice" (131).

This book offers a truly distinctive contribution to the conversation on gender roles and leadership within church and family. Complementarians no doubt will take issue with various aspects of P.'s treatment of the common sites of exegetical skirmish. But that is not where the real force of this book lies. Rather, it is the combination of a robust Christocentric hermeneutical method with the claim that Jesus explicitly lived out an ethic of mutual submission toward his disciples that presents a unique challenge to the complementarian perspective. And so, it is at the levels of hermeneutical method and christological ramification that this book should be appreciated and engaged.

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THE DEATH OF SCRIPTURE AND THE RISE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES. By Michael C. Legaspi. New York: Oxford University, 2010. Pp. xv + 222. \$74.

Legaspi tells a story of the decline of the Bible as a text meant for worship in the hands of an ecclesial community, and of the rise of Scripture as texts meant for poking and prodding by university professors, who, in 18th-century Germany, were the equivalent of state bureaucrats. The first three chapters outline the post-Reformation environment that paved the way for the replacement of *lectio divina* with oriental philology. In the wake of religious wars, emerging nation-states created modern universities whose goal, says L., "was and is irenicism" (7). Beginning with Erasmus,