

Shorter Notices

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Coping with Violence in the New Testament. Edited by Pieter G. R. de Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten. *Studies in Theology and Religion*. Boston: Brill, 2012. Pp. x + 305. \$135.

This volume contains 12 papers delivered at a 2008 conference on violence in the NT. The conference was held in Stellenbosch, South Africa, and gathered scholars from the Netherlands, Belgium, and South Africa. Three essays address general topics such as the relationships between religion, the Bible, and violence (Jan Willem van Henten), the connections between violence in the NT and the Roman Empire (Jeremy Punt), and the hermeneutical perspectives on violence in the NT (de Villiers). The remaining essays examine specific sections of the NT: Romans and 1 Thessalonians (Andries van Aarde), Galatians (François Tolmie), the Pastoral Letters (Rob van Houwelingen), Mark and the *Gospel of Thomas* (Ernest van Eck), the *pericope adulterae* (Wim Weren), and John in general (Jan van der Watt and Jacobus Kok). Three contributions explore Revelation: de Villiers on Rev 18, Tobias Nicklas on Rev 19, and Paul B. Decock on the whole book.

This collection is to be commended for several reasons. First, almost all the essays exhibit much methodological sophistication and display extensive knowledge of theories on violence and of previous works that address violence in the NT. Most essays aptly summarize and critically engage such works. Second, several essays bring their reflection on biblical texts to bear on the context of violence in contemporary societies, especially South Africa, which one essay describes as one of the most unsafe countries in the world (151). Finally, most of the essays thoroughly identify and describe the instances, contexts, and functions of violent language in the NT.

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Ephrem, a “Jewish” Sage: A Comparison of the Exegetical Writings of St. Ephrem the Syrian and Jewish Traditions. By Elena Narinskaya. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010. Pp. xix + 357. \$102.

The book sets out to defend Ephrem against the charge of “anti-Judaism.” Narinskaya undertakes this by comparing Ephrem’s exegetical and hermeneutical strategies to those