

with hate against ‘the Jews,’ even if he left us a work where a distinction between the Jewish people as a whole and the decisive group of its leaders could still be observed” (75). To use “hate” here seems to imply an attitude of extreme and undeserved negative emotion. I do not see that in the Gospel. Rather it seems to me that the attitude of the author is one of utter bafflement that the authoritative Jewish view could be one of rejection. The reader must also take into account John 16:2–3 (“But an hour is coming in which those who kill you will think they are giving worship to God. And they will do these things because they did not know the Father or me”). Such an attitude would be in keeping with the repeated assertions in the Jewish canon itself that Israel did not “know” Yahweh (e.g., Isa 1:2–4 says: “The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand”).

B. goes on to wrestle with the question of how to handle the ambiguous texts within the church today. However, B. (in my mind, rightly) insists that, while misinterpretation is all too easy, the text of the Gospel itself in its original meaning is not at fault, and the Gospel cannot be excluded from either the canon or from usage. Rather it must be explained properly as it would have been understood by the original reader and as intended by the original author in his historical context.

This review reflects just a sampling of B.’s contributions in the volume. If there is a shortcoming, it is that because some of the articles were written for dictionaries, we are not supplied with the depth of discussion or documentation that we might like and that we find in his the other studies. Also, it is an unfortunate reality that, because so many articles are in German, the appeal to some readers, at least among a more general readership, will be limited.

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SYDNEY ANGLICANS AND THE THREAT TO WORLD ANGLICANISM: THE SYDNEY EXPERIMENT. By Muriel Porter. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. Pp. xvi + 173. \$39.95.

Muriel Porter does not write from a disinterested point of view. Indeed, she clearly has an ax to grind, and even confesses that she is “obviously not able to report on Sydney objectively and even-handedly” (xv). Though a professional academic of the University of Melbourne, she has also for many years represented the Diocese of Melbourne on the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia and its Standing Committee (which transacts the business of the national Church between Synod sittings). Given that this book traces the recent history of the engagement of the other 22 dioceses of the Australian Church with the Diocese of Sydney,

particularly as they have struggled to handle a series of confronting challenges that P. believes pose a threat to Anglican identity and unity, this means that the author has herself unavoidably been a key player in the saga she narrates.

Furthermore, as one of the leading proponents of the ordination of women in Australia, P. has had to battle head on with the Diocese of Sydney, the most intransigent of opponents of this measure. A clear autobiographical element is apparent in her telling of the story. Given the open acknowledgement of her perspective, this is more of a plus than a minus. She provides a firsthand take both on what is distinctive and defining about “the Sydney mind-set,” and on what she believes is so potentially destructive about it.

The volume is a reworking and updating of her earlier *The New Puritans: The Rise of Fundamentalism in the Anglican Church* (2007), in which “Sydney Anglicans” are characterized as modern-day equivalents of the English Puritans. However, for her, “Puritanism” is not just a matter of simplicity and austerity of worship and lifestyle of the benign kind we might associate with John Bunyan or the Puritans who migrated to New England. What she describes is an uncompromising biblical conservatism to the point of fundamentalism that brings with it a complete disinterest in liturgical worship of the kind that appeals to most Anglicans, plus an uncompromising and aggressive evangelical zeal. Add to this a somewhat frightening sense of their own infallibility, and the resulting cocktail becomes dangerously lethal.

The outcome is (to P.’s mind) an arrogant brashness that is prepared to walk roughshod over the sensibilities of fellow Anglicans in other parts of Australia, and an almost obsessive determination to get its own way, come what may. One recent expression of this is Sydney’s program of “church planting,” involving the uninvited setting up and funding of like-minded groups of worshippers in other dioceses around Australia. Even more astonishing is the decision to press on unilaterally with a plan to allow laypeople and deacons to preside at the Eucharist, the norms of catholic Christendom notwithstanding. Though this has actually been judged to be unconstitutional by the Appellate Tribunal, the Australian Church’s highest legal authority, the Diocese of Sydney has deemed the Tribunal’s view to be only “an opinion” and has indicated that it plans to go it alone regardless.

For many decades the Diocese of Sydney was regarded within Australia, and indeed within the wider Anglican Communion, merely as an eccentric oddity. Its idiosyncratic points of view were accommodated under the broad umbrella of “Anglican inclusiveness.” This meant that the rest of Australia’s Anglican community tended to tiptoe around Sydney, or even to bend over backward to ensure that the Sydney voice was heard, even if few agreed with it. However, P.’s thesis is that in recent decades, and particularly under the leadership of the present archbishop (Peter Jensen)

and his brother (Phillip Jensen), who is the dean of Sydney, a somewhat more sinister and alarming political agenda has taken over as the motivating force within this maverick expression of Anglicanism. A hardening of attitude in Sydney over issues of human sexuality, particularly homosexuality, has made for an even more sect-like mentality. This has triggered a frightening determination by Sydney to promote its views elsewhere in Australia and overseas, irrespective of the usual courtesies that govern interdiocesan and interprovincial relationships.

However, at the end of the day, P. labels all this merely “the Sydney experiment,” as though it may yet be a passing phenomenon. And despite her concern to alert her readers to its potential as a threat to Anglican unity and identity, P. discerns a ray of hope, for in practical terms things do not appear to be going all that well in Sydney. Not least among its problems, the global financial crisis of 2008–2009 deleted more than \$200 million from diocesan coffers, thus curbing its capacity to pursue uninvited incursions elsewhere. Moreover, the first of the much-maligned Jensen brothers is soon to retire, and a succession plan to guarantee a like-minded in-house replacement is not clearly in place.

Perhaps in God’s good purposes the Sydney experiment is not much of a threat after all, but the story makes for an interesting read.

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RELIGION IN HUMAN EVOLUTION: FROM THE PALEOLITHIC TO THE AXIAL AGE. By Robert N. Bellah. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2011. Pp. xxvii + 746. \$39.95.

Bellah’s magnum opus cries out for adjectives such as magisterial. This book is nearly breathtaking in its scope. Because of this book, many now compare B., America’s preeminent sociologist of religion, to Max Weber. Drawing on a vast range of biological, anthropological, and historical studies in the pursuit of his ambitious project, he both locates religion in the cosmic evolutionary process and places the origin of religion in primordial play. For B. ritual (a kind of performative set of practices) predates myth. Practice is prior to belief. He links human initial religions to some emergent properties (for B., evolution is about emergent properties) in humans but carefully also shows overlapping continuities with higher mammals (e.g., in extended child-rearing practices, grooming behavior, and play). B. tries throughout to link emergent new properties of religion to social structural shifts. In his understanding of the pattern of the cultural evolution of religion he postulates a sequence that moves—borrowing language from Merlin Donald—from the mimetic, to the mythic, and then to theoretic culture. B. asserts that these movements can be ranged