

and interaction between Jesus and the people, in the central section, Mark 8:27–10:52, the attention shifts to the disciples. The so-called messianic secret is more a reflection of this shift in focus than a denial of Jesus' status as Messiah. At times R. makes too much of the data. For example, it is hardly surprising that 153 of the 202 occurrences of the verb λέγω are on the lips of Jesus, given that he is the story's protagonist. The discussion of the phrase "Son of Man" is fairly standard, though R.'s passing reference to a connection between the Son of Man and Isaiah's Suffering Servant needs more justification. More illuminating is his interpretation of the reference to "men" in Mark 9:31 as a sign that it is not just the Sanhedrin, but human beings in general that oppose God/the Son of Man. Mark thus sets up a conflict between "men" and the "Son of Man." R. rightly notes that Mark's picture of the disciples is more nuanced than many recognize. For all their faults, the disciples also demonstrate admirable qualities, and their silence and fear reflect the scandalous nature of Jesus' mission.

In the book's part R. helpfully situates the text in its immediate and broader contexts. The themes of death, resurrection, and the failure of the disciples fit with the exorcism story in Mark 9:14–29. The disciples' failure to exorcise the demon is tied to their unbelief, the very cause of their fear and silence after Jesus' second Passion prediction. The subsequent passage (Mk 9:33–37) interprets Jesus' Passion in terms of service offered for the benefit of humanity. Thus, Jesus' call implies service to others. In the broader sweep of Mark's narrative, earlier texts foreshadowing Jesus' death prepare the reader for the Passion predictions. Mark presents Jesus as the teacher par excellence, and central to his teaching is the call to suffering and death. One can learn from Jesus only if one follows him as a disciple, as one can see by the way the Passion predictions form the backbone of Mark's central section on discipleship. The placement of the shortest prediction in the middle is no accident. Mark 9:30–32 serves as a bridge between the two outer predictions and thematically summarizes the key elements of Jesus' teaching, pointing backward to the first prediction and forward to the third.

R.'s narrative approach makes illuminating connections across the Gospel and offers a compelling explanation of the order of the Passion predictions, though not all aspects of the methodology are equally helpful. The introduction of Greimas diagrams in the concluding chapter feels like something of an afterthought and does not add much to the fine exegetical work that precedes it. Nevertheless, this is a worthy study of a central theme in Mark's Gospel.

*Isaac Augustine Morales, O.P.*  
*Dominican House of Studies, Washington*

*God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology.* By Frank J. Matera. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. Pp. xvi + 267. \$28.

*Individual and Community in Paul's Letter to the Romans.* By Ben C. Dunson. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012. Pp. xii + 217. €59.

*Paul, Founder of Churches: A Study in Light of the Evidence for the Role of "Founder-Figures" in the Hellenistic-Roman Period.* By James Constantine Hanges. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 292.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012. Pp. xxiii + 550. €129.

*Paul the Apostle: His Life and Legacy in Their Roman Context.* By J. Albert Harrill. New York: Cambridge University, 2012. Pp. xv + 207. \$25.99.

Ongoing interest in Paul and his writings is evident in the appearance each year of dozens of new monographs. The four under review here are representative of the wide-ranging scope of such works: a Pauline theology, a book on Paul's life and legacy, and two works that bring various aspects of the Greco-Roman world to bear on Paul's self-understanding and missionary strategy.

Matera's *God's Saving Grace* is an outstanding example of biblical theology. Indeed, much of M.'s work in recent years has been done with an eye toward bridging the wide gap that exists between biblical exegesis and theology. M. differentiates between "a theology of Paul"—one that focuses on the historical figure—and "a Pauline theology." The latter is what M. sets forth to produce here. Thus, in addition to attending to historical and theological concerns, he treats literary and canonical issues. All 13 letters attributed to Paul are taken into account. To be sure, M. is aware of differences between, say, the Pastoral Epistles and the undisputed letters. He is careful not to force an artificial synthesis onto the Pauline corpus. Rather, he seeks to find coherence and meaning in what the Pauline letters say about God, Christ, the community of believers, and so forth. In fact, the closing section of each chapter is labeled "Coherence and Meaning of [the topic treated]."

M. begins with Paul's conversion and call, the moment when he dramatically experienced God's saving grace. Although M. contends that Paul's understanding of the Christ event likely developed over time, the Damascus road Christophany remained foundational for him. Paul's gospel proclamation of God's grace as revealed through Jesus was grounded on his own personal encounter with grace. With this foundation in place, M.'s treatment proceeds as follows: Christology (since God revealed himself to Paul through the risen Jesus); soteriology (because Paul's concern is what God has done through Christ for salvation); ecclesiology (since the gospel calls into being a community of Jewish and Gentile believers); ethics (because this people is empowered by the Spirit to a certain way of living); eschatology (while the Christ event has inaugurated God's intervention for salvation, the community of believers lives in anticipation of the final appearance of God's saving grace, when God will be "all in all"); and, finally, theology (because everything, for Paul, begins and ends with God). M.'s presentation of Pauline theology thereby has a logical flow.

It is no accident that, following his treatment of Paul's foundational experience, M.'s analysis of Pauline theology is bracketed by Christology and theology proper (that is, what Paul says about God). With reference to Rudolf Bultmann's famous assessment that Paul's theology is anthropology and vice versa, M. contends that, for the Apostle, "every assertion about God is simultaneously an assertion about *Christ*,

and vice versa. For this reason and in this sense Paul's theology is, at the same time, *Christology*" (217, emphasis original). But M. is also clear that the God who revealed himself through Christ (and the Spirit) is also the God of Israel. In this connection, M. offers a crucially important explanation of the relationship between Israel (as God's people) and the church: "As the eschatological people of God, the church is closely related to Israel, but it is not a new Israel, nor does it supplant historic Israel, which remains God's people" (157). This interpretation has significant implications for Jewish-Christian relations. If I were to find anything to criticize, it would be that M. could be accused of shortchanging Paul's Pneumatology. To be fair, however, I must point out that M. has sections on the Spirit in the chapters on Christian life and on God. Moreover, given his organization of topics, these placements make sense.

M.'s Pauline theology is the work of an accomplished scholar. A distillation of many years of studying, teaching, and writing about Paul, the book is a model of erudition made accessible to nonspecialists. Substantive in scope, it does not succumb to the recent tendency of such monographs to become so lengthy as to be relegated to the status of a reference book—one that readers rarely, if ever, engage from cover to cover. I can give no higher recommendation than to say that I have recently used this book with great profit in my course on Paul and his writings.

On the other end of the career spectrum, Dunson's *Individual and Community in Paul's Letter to the Romans* is his slightly revised doctoral dissertation, directed by Francis Watson at the University of Durham (2011). D. proposes his thesis at the outset: "The individual and the community belong together in Paul's theology; there is no Pauline individual outside of community, just as there is no community without individuals at the heart of its ongoing life" (1). D. sets his work in the context of the famous debate between Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann over the status of the individual in Paul's theology. I have already alluded to Bultmann's anthropological, individually oriented reading of Paul. Käsemann criticized this interpretation, focusing instead on the cosmic dimension of Jesus' lordship. And in light of Käsemann's critique, the scholarly pendulum has swung to what D. dubs an "all-controlling communal concern in Pauline theology." In particular, social-scientific analysis has argued against imposing an anachronistic understanding of the individual onto the first-century Mediterranean world, while the "new perspective" on Paul has highlighted his communal emphasis (e.g., how Gentiles are incorporated into the new covenant community).

D. attempts to reclaim the importance of the individual for Paul. It is individuals who are in need of salvation; and it is as individuals that people receive the gift of righteousness through belief in the gospel proclamation. D. analyzes the writings of Epictetus, a near contemporary of Paul, to demonstrate that the former's moral program was focused on the transformation of the individual. D. makes a good case that Epictetus's writings call into question the social-scientific characterization of the "dyadic first-century Mediterranean person." D. then turns to Paul's letter to the Romans and, in the course of analyzing a number of passages, offers a "typology" of eight ways in which the Apostle emphasizes individuals. It does not take much reading between the lines to see where D.'s real concerns lie, as he offers a

traditional Reformation reading of *dikaiosynē theou*—the “righteousness of God,” understood as God’s gift of righteousness to recipients of the gospel—and of *pistis Christou*, understood as an objective genitive phrase, referring to individuals’ faith in Christ.

To my mind, D.’s basic thesis has merit. Some interpretations *have* overstated Paul’s communal emphasis at the expense of the individual. But as often happens when one attempts to push back against a scholarly consensus, D. overstates his case. Only at the end of his monograph does he set forth what he calls “the somatic individual,” which refers to Paul’s insistence that a Christ-believer does not exist in isolation but is a member of a community, baptized into the body of Christ. This important datum, however, receives scant treatment (five pages) in comparison to the other seven aspects of Paul’s understanding of the individual. D. proffers a tortuous argument for reading Romans 7:7–25 as autobiographical, describing Paul’s self-assessment of his preconversion and call experience (rather than the majority interpretation, which reads the conflicted “I” as representing all those who are not in Christ). D. submits that Paul presents himself here as a negative example “in order to dissuade the Jewish members of his audience from seeking to find freedom from slavery to sin under the Law, or for those Gentiles who would ‘overhear’ this section, to convince them not to turn to the Law for freedom in the first place” (165). One is hard-pressed to find these purposes expressed in Romans; indeed, the comment about Gentiles suggests that D. reads issues from Galatians into this text.

In the end, D. is correct to reclaim some space for Paul’s concern for the individual within the context of the community. Nevertheless, his argument at times offsets the balance between individual and community he claims to want to maintain.

Hanges’s *Paul, Founder of Churches* is also a revised dissertation (1999, under the direction of Hans Dieter Betz at the University of Chicago). However, this work has been substantially bolstered by “a potent theoretical discourse” (v), one based on postcolonial studies and contemporary debate about cultural encounter. As such, this monograph is a significant revision by a scholar who has produced many other works. Employing epigraphic and literary descriptions, H. discerns from Greek cultic texts what he calls “the paradigm of the founder-figure,” and then argues both that Paul conceived his missionary work within this paradigm (largely for apologetic reasons) and that his contemporaries would have perceived him in this context.

A significant portion of this monograph is H.’s extended analyses of texts that function to legitimize “founders” in the processes of transferring a cult to another city, of moving a cult from the private to the public sphere, and/or of setting forth the founder’s authority and organizational responsibilities. The main feature of this paradigm is the oracular call of the founder by the deity (e.g., the priest Apollonius’s call from Serapion, in a dream, to build a temple in Delos). By virtue of the divine selection of foundational activity, the founder retains certain rights and privileges (including the selection of successors) and is responsible for the cultic institution. Such responsibility involves issues such as membership, ritual purity, vesture, and the moral standards of members, including sexual fidelity.

In his final chapter H. argues that Paul fits into this cultural paradigm as he in effect brought a new cult into the Aegean arena. To be sure, it is striking how frequently and for what purposes Paul insists on his call and commission received from the risen Lord (e.g., Gal 1:15–16; 1 Cor 9:1). Moreover, his letters certainly bear evidence of concern for sexual purity (e.g., 1 Thess 4:1–8; 1 Cor 5:1–5; 6:12–20). The enigmatic passage about women’s hairstyles (1 Cor 11:2–15) is illuminated within this paradigm. In short, H. makes a number of intriguing connections with Paul, and brings to life cultural realities and expectations involving cultic foundations. Not all, however, will be convinced by H.’s claim that Paul’s use of Scripture does not function to explain how the Christ event culminates in God’s covenant faithfulness; rather, according to H., “the apostle counted on the fact that his converts were incapable of a critical response to his use of scripture” (401). Paul’s purpose in citing Scripture, H. argues, was to demonstrate that his cultic innovation was grounded in a long-standing religious tradition (since innovation was regarded with suspicion in the ancient world). H. also argues (as he has done elsewhere) that the phrase *ha gegraptai* in 1 Corinthians 4:6 refers to Paul’s prior written instructions to the community—in effect, to his *lex sacra* that sets forth various cultic and community regulations analogous to the cultic texts analyzed earlier. This is an intriguing suggestion, but it begs for an explanation of why Paul’s letters were valued and preserved, while these reputed documents were not kept.

H.’s study is worthy of careful consideration. He presents, in effect, a nuanced version of the approach of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*. While not denying unique features of Christianity, he insists that its spread in the Mediterranean world was rooted in and interacted with various cultural influences, including the founder-figure paradigm. In other words, H.’s book proposes an incarnational understanding of the spread of Christianity. He also challenges a reading of Paul that insists that the latter’s foundations were purely charismatic, eschewing the importance of authority and regulations. H. thereby suggests that Paul himself played a significant role in the development of what has been dubbed *Frühkatholizismus*.

H.’s *Paul the Apostle*—as his subtitle suggests—is also concerned with placing Paul in the larger cultural context. H. expresses at the outset his frustration with the popular depiction of Paul as *the* most important early church leader, as well as with the scholarly portrayal of the Apostle as set over and against Roman culture. Another concern that emerges is Paul’s legacy that presents him as the prototypical religious convert whose encounter with the risen Jesus saved him from his miserable, guilt-ridden life. Writing as a historian, H. sets out to produce what he calls an “antibiography,” one that “abandons the traditional quest for the essential self in a linear chronology . . . in favor of decentering the subject into multiple selves and developing more open-ending [*sic*] narrative structures” (3).

H.’s volume has a number of salutary qualities. He illustrates well the paucity of data by which to offer a historical reconstruction of Paul’s entire life. Indeed, only two of the six chapters are dedicated to that reconstruction, focusing mostly on the period of Paul’s

activity that can be gleaned from the undisputed letters. I appreciate the way H. sets forth Paul's Jewishness (rather than being a "convert" to Christianity) that was lived within the Roman context. H. also portrays the social context of Paul's ministry—the workshop—that many newcomers to Pauline studies find surprising. And, although portrayed in a skewed and narrow manner, H. rightly contests the portrait of "the apostle of an introspective conscience."

H.'s treatment of the Roman context of Paul is largely confined to an analysis of his use of the discourse of *auctoritas*. H. questions whether Paul's proclamation of Jesus as "Lord" was subversive of Roman imperialism. He argues that *kyrios* was a common epithet for deities and, moreover, was used routinely by people to refer to their "social betters." But Paul insists that there is only *one* "Lord" (1 Cor 8:6). Moreover, Acts 17:7 gives evidence of accusations against Paul to the effect that he advocated acting against Caesar's decrees and claimed Jesus as "king" (and given Luke's intent to portray Christianity as nonthreatening to the Empire, this detail is striking). In reference to 1 Thessalonians 5:3–10, H. claims that Paul "emphasized the psychological terror of witnessing catastrophe—global slaughter by God's weapons of mass destruction. . . . Paul's apocalyptic imagery of peace was culturally Roman in its valorization of war" (90). To the contrary, Paul's images derive from Jewish apocalyptic, which insisted on the stark contrast between God's kingdom and the use of power and violence by worldly powers. In addition, given the prominence of the cross in Paul's writings and self-understanding, I found it disappointing that H. did not treat the Romans' use of crucifixion as punishment and deterrent. Last, H.'s insistence on relativizing Paul's importance during his lifetime needs to be reconciled with his undisputed impact and legacy, beginning immediately after his death.

As I noted above, H.'s treatment of Paul's legacy is not without merit. It loses some credibility, however, because H.'s rehearsal is at times tendentious. Two examples: he reduces the letter to the Colossians (regarded as deutero-Pauline) in effect to the Christianization of Aristotle; and he characterizes Irenaeus's use of the "rule of faith" as saving Irenaeus "the trouble of struggling intellectually with the full text before him" (131). In the end, H. claims that "the West got Paul wrong" (138). Although this book is engaging to read, I would not use it as a textbook to introduce Paul (which, I take it, is one of H.'s goals in writing it). I agree that Paul's interpreters have often gotten him wrong (or at least distorted aspects of his teaching), but I fear that H.'s portrayal of the apostle likewise fits that description.

As should be evident from the preceding, the world of Pauline studies is alive and well. The very nature of the Pauline corpus, not to mention factors such as the religious convictions and the various agendas of those who study Paul, assures that the volumes will keep coming.

Thomas D. Stegman, S.J.  
Boston College School of Theology and Ministry