

Book Reviews

Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ by Trevor McIlwain with Nancy Everson, New Tribes Mission, \$25.00. Catalogue available from New Tribes Mission Bookroom, 1000 E. First St., Sanford, FL 32771-1487, USA.

McIlwain's "Chronological approach" has been mentioned before in Seedbed. This book is based on his series of eight textbooks, and is in the form of material for adult study groups and Sunday schools. Part one is a summary of the approach. Part two contains detailed advice on how to use the material. Part three consists of fifty lessons, from creation through to the promise of Christ's return. The presentation of each lesson includes lesson goals, outlines, and supplementary material for the teacher. The 582 page book comes with several excellent maps and charts (which are available separately, and a special edition without words, so that someone can write in the words in the local language). Also published are a set of over 100 drawings, available as black and white line drawings or as full colour pictures, and supplied in a range of sizes, or as colour slides, or on disk. The drawings I found to be too few to be of much use in a teaching programme (which I reckon would need at least ten pictures per session to be effective), but could be used by children for colouring. A students' book is available separately, and the material is being translated into many other languages. There is also a five volume edition for children of third and fourth grade (9-11 years).

I was greatly disappointed by this book. I write as one who has enthusiastically embraced and practiced the approach of teaching Scripture chronologically from the time of first contact with someone who shows interest. The quality of the material is excellent, but the book is a denial of the principles of the chronological approach. The book sets out to be "chronological", but includes a lot of extra verses in each lesson in order to support the point being made. There are so many that the lessons are a series of verse studies which are used with little reference to their original context. While it is acceptable to quote and refer back to what has already been studied, surely it is unacceptable in the chronological approach, especially with those studying it for the first time, to do a lot of jumping around the Bible. It is also unacceptable to quote verses out of context. In using the chronological approach we are also teaching students to consider whole passages in their historical context and genre. This book fails to do that.

The main approach of the book is to provide material for exposition by a teacher. If someone is expecting to find questions that can be used to teach the material inductively, they will be disappointed. The questions section is short, with frequent use of pedagogically unsound, yes/no questions.

The book lacks some basic tools, essential for a book of this size, such as an index of Scriptures, and an index of topics. I was also amazed to find that Isaiah 53, this key passage that pre-

prepares students to understand the necessity for a sinless Messiah to come and die for our sins, did not get a lesson. Once unbelievers grasp the need for a Saviour, they are more willing to consider the Scriptures explaining Christ's death. Finally, the book lacks a framework, such as the covenants.

In short, this book might give good outlines for the preacher, provided the cross references are rigorously trimmed, but is a poor application of the principles of the Chronological approach. Buy the charts, but not the book.

Reviewed by I.L.

Knowing and Doing the Will of God by Blackaby T & King CV, 1990, Lifeway Press. Available in English (and Arabic???)

This book was enthusiastically recommended to me as a course for intermediate believers. It consists of a thirteen week course, combining individual and group study, and by study, this means several hours of hard work. Daily passages are set, with questions and a detailed exposition of the theme. The theme is expounded using propositions, backed up by illustrations and evidence from Scripture, and other material such as the experience of other Christians. The book is strong on application and open-ended questions encouraging reflection.

If you are looking for a book that explains propositions and arguments, and stops to consider biblical material, (instead of just giving references) then the book makes an excellent change. But because the book sets out to be a

course of instruction in the Bible, the chosen format is misleading. It is NOT a Bible study course as I know it. Instead, it is yet another book that perpetuates the approach to Scripture in which isolated verses and passages are used to support arguments, instead of deriving propositions from the text. There probably is a very limited place for this approach. But we who teach others must get away from the "proof-text" approach to teaching. Unfortunately, too much material being made available in Arabic seems to use this approach. This fatal flaw renders the book almost unusable, except perhaps as a resource book, especially for the application questions.

Reviewed by I.L.

Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues by Hiebert, Paul G., Baker Books, Grand Rapids MI 49516-6287, USA, 1994, pp. 272.

"Reflections" is an apt phrase to describe the contents of this book. Little new material is presented, as concerns either anthropology or missiology. Rather, the author, both an anthropologist and a missiologist, reflects on materials presented by him and others in those fields in recent years and then applies his conclusions to missions and the church.

The book is divided into three main sections: Epistemological Foundations, Planting Churches, and Spiritual Encounters.

The first section traces the development of epistemological positions from "naive realism" to either "idealism" or "critical realism. In relating this development to missions, he traces the