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# Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel, by Sharyn Echols Dowd

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## Peer Reviewed

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mentary on William's doctrine of the soul's immateriality is indicative of this precision. Noting William's departure from Augustine's and Avic-ebron's view of the soul's materiality (19), he highlights the originality of William's position while reinforcing the extent of his own contribution to medieval studies in the English-speaking world.

Given the significance of William's departure from tradition, however, T.'s comment merits an explanatory note that provides a fuller account of the nuances associated with Augustine's and William's description of the soul. A note of this sort would clarify the apparent conflict between contemporary references to Augustine's doctrine of the soul's immateriality (found in the works of respected scholars such as Gerard O'Daly and Robert Markus) and T.'s contrast between William's nonhylomorphic conception of the soul as pure, immaterial form (86) and Augustine's insistence on the soul's incorporeality and materiality. To his credit, T. does touch on this subject later on (150 n. 3), but nevertheless omits relevant aspects that, were they present, would illuminate more fully the extent of his attentiveness to the Latin nuances of the text.

In the third and final section of the introduction T. focuses on sources and textual problems. He admits that it is difficult to identify all of William's sources, a "good number" of which (approximately 25) he confesses he could not find. At the same time, he remarks the "poor shape" of the text and, to overcome this limitation, on roughly 180 occasions he conjectures about the text's meaning and amends the Latin in the process. Despite the disclaimer that, given more time, he "would have obtained and collated a number of manuscripts," it is hard to quarrel with the translation, because the textual emendations he makes are plausible and of merit to the translation (37-38).

Enhancing the value of this volume is a bibliography that, T. insists, contains virtually everything published in this century that relates directly to William's thought (38). A series of notes at the end of each chapter and an index of names and terms accompanying the bibliography at the end of the translation round out an arduous work that fills an important gap in medieval studies and does so with extraordinary finesse.

*Canisius College, Buffalo, N.Y.*

MARIANNE DJUTH

## SHORTER NOTICES

READING MARK: A LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY ON THE SECOND GOSPEL. By Sharyn Echols Dowd. Reading the New Testament Series. Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000. Pp. xx + 171. \$19.

Sharyn Dowd's commentary is intended as a companion text to Mark's Gospel. Any reader will draw profit from D.'s wide reading (a nine-page list-

ing of secondary sources precedes the text), her attention to parallels to the Markan text found in Greco-Roman and Jewish culture and literature, and her (sometimes extensive) particular observations. She notes that her words "will make little sense unless the reader has an open Bible beside the commentary" (8).

D. consistently attends to Mark's literary structure, frequently pointing out

overlapping sections and chiasmic organization. She reports extensively on Greco-Roman rhetorical devices parallel to Mark (thereby providing a valuable hermeneutical tool) and elaborates Isaiah's influence on Mark's theology and presentation of Jesus. She sees Mark's audience as primarily Greek, familiar with Greco-Roman rhetoric and culture, who nevertheless, with explanation for some Jewish practices, are able to appreciate Jewish writers of the Septuagint.

Readers will especially profit from several focused discussions, among them the treatment of agricultural parables (40–48), divorce (98–103), death as a ransom (112–115), and prayer and the problem of theodicy (120–127). Women readers will perhaps find particularly attractive D.'s interpretation of the pericope of Jesus' anointing in Mark 14:3–9 (140–142) and the message to the women at the tomb in Mark 16:6–7 (169).

Overall, D. guides her readers both to a very good sense of how Mark's audience would have heard his narration and to lessons they can draw from it, for the task now, as then, is to "go and tell" what God has done through Jesus (171).

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**GOD DWELLS WITH US: TEMPLE SYMBOLISM IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.** By Mary L. Coloe. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2001. Pp. x + 252. \$24.95.

In approaching afresh this familiar Johannine theme, Coloe necessarily builds on the work of her predecessors, notably R. E. Brown, C. K. Barrett, R. Schnackenburg, D. Jucl, M. Stibbe, and her mentor, F. J. Moloney. But her work is far more than a rehearsal of past commentary. She advances the conversation about the Temple themes in John on several fronts: in her emphasis on Jesus as Temple builder, in her rich exposition of the Prologue (especially 1:14), in her crisp summary of the biblical and extrabiblical Temple traditions, in her exegesis of the Temple action and logion, in her interpretation of 7:37–38 as referring both to Jesus and to believ-

ers as sources of living water, in her explication of the royal and priestly dimensions of the passion account, and in her proposal that the "the Nazarene"—uniquely a Johannine title on the cross—alludes to Zechariah 6:12 combined with Isaiah 11:1 to proclaim Jesus as the royal/priestly end-time Temple builder.

The freshest part of the study is C.'s exegesis of John 14:2. Building on her explication of "my Father's house" in 2:16 and drawing upon the biblical and targummic background of the phrase, "prepare a place," she makes a convincing case that here "my Father's house-(hold)" (*oikia*) refers to the Christian community as new Temple, and the "many dwellings" are the indwellings in the believer of the Father, the Paraclete, and Jesus, as described in the rest of John 14. The "preparation" is the death and Resurrection of Jesus, which turn out to be the divine way of building the new Temple. This chapter is worth the price of the book.

I highly recommend the volume as a lucid exposition of a major New Testament theme and an excellent illustration of how narrative works as theology. No library supporting Gospel study should be without it.

DENNIS HAMM, S.J.

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**"A HARD SAYING": THE GOSPEL AND CULTURE.** By Francis J. Moloney. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2001. Pp. xiv + 297. \$29.95.

This volume gathers twelve articles written by Moloney over the past 20 years. Four cover topics from the Synoptics; four are on aspects of Johannine theology; and four deal with cultural issues: the Jesus of the New Testament as part of a religious culture, the Eucharist offered for broken members of society, the value of healing ministry in Christianity, and a hermeneutical article on M.'s faith journey. In the latter M. explains his move to autobiographical criticism and how he related to Nicodemus as he, M., moved from an early Catholic naïveté regarding Christian faith through historical critical analysis