



Volume 60 | Issue 1

Article 23

4-2017


Wilken's "The Christian roots of religious freedom" (Book Review)

Paul Hartog

Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, hartogp@faith.edu

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Recommended Citation

Hartog, Paul (2017) "Wilken's "The Christian roots of religious freedom" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 60 : Iss. 1 , Article 23.

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Miller, K. C. (2016). *Choices of the heart*. Atlanta, GA: Elk Lake Publishing. 122 pp. \$9.95. ISBN 1942513909

Author and speaker, Kathy Collard Miller, has written over 50 books during her 30 year career. Her works include Bible studies, commentaries and Christian living.

Choices of the heart is an expanded and revised book from her *Daughters Of the King Bible Series* of twelve previously-published volumes. Originally published by David C. Cook, the series sold 100,000 books. This is the first volume in the series originally released in 1984. This updated book is a 10-lesson Bible study. Each chapter pairs the biblical accounts of two women as they address a common choice. For example, the first lesson examines how Rebekah and Rahab faced believing God's sovereignty. The choices faced by Deborah, Naomi, Sarah, Lydia, and the unnamed forgiven, Samaritan, and Shunem women, amongst others, are choices that modern women continue to struggle with and face in our daily lives. Each pair of biblical examples examines issues like trust, obedience, power, prayer, honesty, temptation, jealousy, and discontent. The narrative of each chapter combines the biblical account with scripture citations and questions along with questions for the reader making application to contemporary context and daily life.

These lessons give examples of both good and bad decisions made by these women of the Bible. The author varies her lessons sometimes including fill-ins or tables. The pairings of biblical characters may surprise the reader. We may think of Rebecca, the Israelite, as the good girl and Rahab, the prostitute, as a bad girl. In the context of trusting the sovereignty of God, Rahab sets the example of faith. Each chapter ends with a letter from God, the King, to His princesses and daughters. The theme of each lesson is summarized in this letter format.

Choices of the Heart is suitable for individual or small group Bible study.

Reviewer

Noelle C. Keller, Adrian College

Wilken, R.L. (2014). *The Christian roots of religious freedom*. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press. 55 pp. \$15.00. ISBN 9780874625006

The topic of "religious liberty" has recently inundated socio-political discourse. Although many assume that the notion is rooted in the Enlightenment, this small volume seeks to construct an alternative framework. "In truth the roots of religious freedom in the west are to be found centuries earlier in the writings of Christian

apologists, who, in the face of persecution, wrote to defend their right to practice the religion they wished without coercion” (pp. 11–12). As a veteran patristic scholar, Robert Louis Wilken is eminently qualified for this investigative task. Wilken culls relevant quotations from Tertullian, who coined the phrase “religious liberty.” He also highlights the role of Lactantius, a Christian author who influenced the composition of the “Edict of Milan,” which promulgated religious toleration throughout the Roman Empire in 313. After a sweeping overview of the Middle Ages, Wilken focuses upon “religious liberty” within early modernity, including the works of John Murton, Roger Williams, and William Penn. With this background in place, Wilken builds a specific argument concerning John Locke’s *Letter on Toleration* (1689). “Though the idiom of Locke’s thought is different from that of Penn and Williams, his work is saturated with Christian assumptions drawn from the Scriptures and Christian tradition” (pp. 38–39). The “Epilogue” relates a fascinating discovery. Wilken found Tertullian’s *Ad Scapulam* 2 written out in Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781) in the Special Collections Library of the University of Virginia. Based on this evidence, Wilken requested access to Jefferson’s personal copy of Tertullian’s writings at the Library of Congress. There he discovered that Jefferson had underlined the passage on religious freedom in *Ad Scapulam*, and he had placed an “X” in the margin. Thus library research in two special collections provided proof that the church fathers influenced America’s founding fathers concerning “religious liberty.”

Reviewer

Paul Hartog, Faith Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary

Cortez, M. (2016). *Christological anthropology in historical perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 264 pp. \$ 27.99. ISBN 9780310516422

Marc Cortez, associate professor of theology at Wheaton College, wrote *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective* to advance the discussion concerning the effect of Christology on the vast field of anthropology. This collection of academic essays on the subject highlights several historical church figures whose work displayed their perspective answers to the questions posed by Christ’s incarnation, views which radically shaped the outworking of their faith. In the author’s own words, “a *minimally* Christological anthropology is one in which (1) Christology warrants important claims about what it means to be human and (2) the scope of those claims goes beyond issues like the image of God and ethics” (pp. 22); however, this does not mean that every difference in anthropological perspective should be attributed to a differing Christology (pp. 219). It is important to understand when reading this work that the authorial intent is not to offer a precise answer to the above mentioned fluctuating definition, nor to discuss their potential for application, but