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## Schreiner's "Commentary on Hebrews: Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation" (Book Review)

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**College and University Chaplaincy in the 21st Century,**

edited by Dr. Lucy A. Forster-Smith. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing,  
2013. 330 pp. \$40.00. ISBN: 9781594735165

*Reviewed by Erin H. McCoy, Librarian for Instruction and Digital Media,  
Eastern Nazarene College, Quincy, MA*

“Diverse” is the single word to describe this collection of essays put together by Dr. Forster-Smith. The authors – all practicing university chaplains – offer a range of perspectives and experience based on institutional affiliation, religious affiliation, and gender. There is an essay from Reverend Gail Bowman (Dillard University) about how to “chaplain” during a time of true crisis and displacement from Hurricane Katrina. There is a section of four essays to explore how to connect with college students in a multi-faith context and how to balance assumptions about students’ faith journeys. Throughout all 17 essays is the constant refrain of defining what a chaplain is and does, on any campus and in any context. The book provides a glimpse into the lives and work of an office on campus whose entire existence is focused on service, understanding and guidance.

The essays themselves are grouped into five sections: Chaplaincy and the Changing World; Multifaith Chaplains, Multifaith Campuses; A Heart for the Community; Caring at the Crossroads; and The Chaplain and the Secular. This collection offers a unique look into world of higher education, a world where incoming students tend to identify as “spiritual” but not “religious,” and is a valuable addition to any library’s higher education collection.

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**Commentary on Hebrews: Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation,**

by Thomas R. Schreiner. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2015. 539 pp. \$38.99.  
ISBN 9780805496130

*Reviewed by Mark Sloneker, Associate Library Director, Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO*

Thomas Schreiner, a professor and associate dean of the School of Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, should be a familiar name among students of theology and Christianity.

Schreiner states that his purpose in writing the commentary is: “to focus on the letter’s biblical theology. The emphasis on biblical theology shows up especially in the introduction and conclusion of this commentary where I consider theological

structures and themes” (p. 1). An added feature to the commentary which reflects the author’s purpose for it is a discussion of some of the major theological themes in Hebrews. The author proposes that there are four different structures that are woven into the entire letter. These are: “(1) promise/fulfillment; (2) eschatology; (3) typology; and (4) spatial orientation (which can also be described as the relationship between heaven and earth in the letter)” (p. 1).

The commentary features the text of Hebrews in the HCSB version followed by a verse-by-verse commentary. Each section begins with an outline of the passage to be covered, the biblical text, and then comments. Those familiar with Schreiner will not be surprised at the thoroughness of the comments which are thoughtful and scholarly yet not of tedious or overwhelming verbiage. In short, the commentary is scholarly yet readable. Schreiner is a conservative scholar in the best sense of the word. While discussing some different takes on established orthodox thinking, he maintains the ability to allow the text of Hebrews to speak for itself. An example of this can be seen in the discussion of “falling away” in 6:4-8. While presenting several differing beliefs about who can fall away and if falling away is possible for a true believer, he maintains that the author of Hebrews was clearly speaking to Christians who could fall away from the faith if they continued on the course they were headed. They were not “wannabe” Christians or those who had never really been a part of the faith, but those who in fact were members of the body of Christ in danger of falling away.

Schreiner handles the introductory material to Hebrews in a similar fashion. Anyone familiar with Hebrews is aware of the 2000-year-old question of authorship. Schreiner goes through the most often mentioned possibilities of Paul, Luke, Barnabas, and Apollos before agreeing with some of the early church fathers who said that “only God knows.” So those wishing for him to come down firmly for one choice will be disappointed.

This commentary would be a good addition to any library and one suspects that it may become the text of choice for undergraduate courses. While not necessarily adding any new information, the emphasis on letting the letter’s theology speak for itself is a different approach. There is an excellent bibliography as well as good footnotes. The outline for each section is helpful and practical, and the section on biblical and theological themes contains numerous charts which are also helpful. Schreiner writes from an evangelical conservative theological position which in this day is clearly a plus. If the other volumes in this series (*Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation*) are of the same caliber, this will be a great addition to any library – personal or academic.