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## Arnold's "Christ as the Telos of Life" (Book Review)

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**Christ as the Telos of Life,**

by Bradley Arnold. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. 259 pp. \$119.00.  
ISBN 9783161533266

*Reviewed by Heather Hicks, Technical Services Librarian,  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX*

This text is a thorough exegetical analysis of Paul's epistle to the Philippians using the historical context of the Greco-Roman culture as a framework for interpretation. The subject of this work comes from the doctoral dissertation of the author, Arnold Bradley, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Exeter as well as a M.Div. from George W. Truett Theological Seminary.

Bradley begins by evaluating the current prominent views for interpreting Philippians and then explains the research concentration of this work, an in-depth study of three historic elements present in the Greco-Roman culture when Paul composed the epistle: ancient moral philosophy, athletic imagery, and vivid speech.

The concept of *telos* is introduced through contemporary ancient moral philosophies such as Aristotelianism, Epicureanism, and Stoicism which view life as a whole, lived in order to attain one goal, which in Greek is the term τέλος (*telos*). For example, Aristotelian philosophy posits happiness as the *telos* of life where Epicurean philosophy posits pleasure as the *telos* of life, while Stoic philosophy posits virtue as the *telos* of life. Next, Bradley looks to the nature of athletic events noting they were open to the public and highly esteemed in the Greco-Roman culture. The prevalence and popularity of athletics provided common imagery to employ when communicating concepts such as virtues to the general populace. Finally, the ancient rhetorical device of vivid speech used by orators is explained as a verbal description of an image that conceptualizes the message and persuades the audience to concur with the argument.

Combining ancient moral philosophy, athletic imagery, and vivid speech, Bradley constructs an exegetical framework with which to illuminate the structure within Paul's letter. As ancient moral philosophy posits life should be lived with one goal or *telos*, Paul argues that Christians should live with Christ as the *telos* of life. As athletic imagery was used to relate virtues to the common man, Paul uses the athletic imagery of a race to convey the virtues necessary to run the race successfully such as strength and perseverance. As vivid speech was used to conceptualize an argument, Paul uses a runner as a visual metaphor representing the Christian. These analogies serve as a summation of Paul's argument illustrating in a powerful and persuasive way to the Philippians how to live with Christ as the *telos* of life.

Presented in a detailed and systematic manner, the text is well cited with a bibliography of primary and secondary sources as well as an index locum. Throughout the text, key Greek terms are used in place of their English equivalents. This is a critical resource for scholars researching Philippians and is therefore highly recommended for any institution awarding post-graduate degrees inclusive of this subject.

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**Christian Bioethics: A Guide for Pastors,  
Health Care Professionals, and Families,**

by C. Ben Mitchell & D. Joy Riley. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014. 207 pp.  
\$24.99. ISBN 9781433671142

*Reviewed by Becky Fisher, MLS, AHIP, Adventist University of Health Sciences,  
Orlando, FL*

*Christian Bioethics* discusses and analyzes difficult issues in bioethics. This book is part of a Christian ethics series (*B&H Studies in Christian Ethics*), and is written by an expert in moral philosophy, C. Ben Mitchell, Ph.D., and an expert in bioethics, D. Joy Riley, M.D. Both authors are committed Christians, and bring their faith and expertise to this work. Each chapter begins with a real case, and then offers the reader questions for reflection. Next, the authors question each other, and offer answers from medical and ethical points of view. This text is well cited, with references at the bottom of many pages, and each chapter ends with additional resources for further study.

*Christian Bioethics* is organized according to the bioethical design of theologian Nigel Cameron, with sections called “Taking Life,” “Making Life,” and “Remaking Life.” A “Process for Medical Ethical Decision Making” (p. 41), is offered in the introductory section. Abortion, euthanasia, infertility, and organ donation are addressed in the “Taking Life” and “Making Life” sections. Cloning and life-extending technologies are discussed in the “Remaking Life” section. Individual chapters can easily stand alone as a supplement for a course or as guide for discussion.

All who avow a Christian worldview will find this resource very helpful when facing bioethical challenges. The design of this book, with the real cases, questions and discussion, makes difficult subjects accessible. In the introduction the authors state, “The resources God has supplied give us access to right, wrong, good, and bad ways of dealing with ethical questions in medicine and patient care” (p. 5). Mitchell and Riley use scripture wisely throughout the text as they confront the difficult decisions that arise in the current state of medical care.