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Betz's "Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians" (Book Review)

Acie Rist

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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The Star Book for Ministers,

by Edward T. Hiscox. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2014. 224 pp. \$14.99.

ISBN 9780817017484

Reviewed by Shelia Gaines, Head of Circulation, University Of Memphis, Memphis, TN

This third revised edition, which includes a copy of prefaces to both previous editions, could be described as an updated classic. The first section, *On Being a Pastor*, includes not only clear sections on entering the Christian ministry and preaching the gospel, but also pastoral care, wedding, funerals and church administrations.

The bulk of the text is in part two: *Selections from the Sacred Scriptures*. It contains brief sections on twenty-nine aspects of the pastorate and Christian living that include salvation, invitation to discipleship, good works, faith and trust in God, readings for the sick and shut-in, praise and thanksgiving, and the resurrection of Christ.

Sections three and four are basic instructional guidelines for traditional marriage and funeral services and some suggested sermon texts.

The final section, parts five and six, is comprised of parliamentary considerations for churches and ecclesiastical forms and blanks.

This handy, pocket-size reference should be especially useful for new ministers and experienced Christians alike.

Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians,

by Hans Dieter Betz, Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. 200 pp.

\$135.00. ISBN 9783161531194

Reviewed by Acie Rist, Student, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX

Considering the common opinion among New Testament students that Paul's letter to the Philippians is the most difficult to interpret, Betz aims, in his work *Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, to "present further investigations regarding specific passages or problems [within Philippians] yet unresolved or even undiscovered" (p. 1). Over the course of his work, Betz employs philological and historical methods in his investigation of five critical text segments that contribute to his interpretation. As part of his investigation of the five passages, Betz compares Paul's use of literary methods with the literary methods of his historical contemporaries, such as Plato, Epicurus, Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca. Betz also considers Paul's immediate historical context to develop his interpretation of the problem passages. This is

accomplished by investigating Paul's imprisonment, as well as his relationship and contractual agreement with the Philippians. Due to his thorough research, Betz can provide a plausible interpretation to the problem passages.

Because Betz is only concerned with investigating five problem passages in Paul's letter, he distinguishes his work from typical biblical commentaries that examine the letter passage by passage. The corpus of Betz's scholarly work clearly follows his thesis in an organized and well-documented manner.

Table Grace: The Role of Hospitality in the Christian Life,

by D. Webster. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2011. 160 pp.

\$14.99. ISBN 9781845507527

Reviewed by Lisa B. Hayes, Librarian, Indianan Wesleyan University

"The promise of the Gospel was meant to be shared around the table," (p. 47).

How many times did Jesus gather His disciples together with food and drink and talk to them? By sharing a meal He helped them physically to maintain their strength, but the spiritual nourishment of the meal was by far more important. As He "nourished" His disciples with His words, they grew stronger in faith and clearer in understanding of His great love.

This book calls us to use our own homes and meals to extend hospitality to those who are seeking as well as to fellow believers that we might help each other to grow in faith. With examples from the Bible of how God used the simple mealtime of everyday people to foster greater understanding of His Son, this book provides a "lesson" in biblical hospitality.

Each chapter lends itself to a week's study in a discipleship group or Sunday school class, though there is no accompanying leader's guide or video series. There are a few discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

This would be an ideal study for the renewal of a church's food service ministry team or for those feeding the homeless. Ordinary Sunday school classes or small groups could use this to reach out to neighbors, co-workers, or potential new church members or new group members. Parenting classes could draw from it to show the importance of mealtimes in disciplining children.