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Akin's "A Theology for the Church" (Book Review)

Charles Huckaby

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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The book is well written and clearly laid out. At the outset, Estep sets forth the main idea and gives a clear outline of all that is to come. Then, he and his coauthors follow through and deliver what they promised. It sounds simple enough, but the result is profound. The authors' entire premise is that if we believe what we say we believe, it should affect not just what we teach, but how we teach it. They maintain that we should not teach Christian theology in a purely secular way, but that the content of our theology should cause us to teach in a distinctively Christian way. That may not jump off the page at you as being extraordinarily revolutionary until you consider the possible applications involved. For example, the authors contend that your eschatology, rightly understood, should effect how you teach as opposed to being mere fodder for an academic conversation. Your understanding of the depravity of humanity should rightly affect your views of the end goal of your teaching and the potential of your students. Each section concludes with questions designed to help you understand the ramifications of the chapter at this level.

The authors are to be commended not only for pure text, but also for the additional aids and resources included. They document themselves well and direct the reader to other supporting and contrasting resources. Unsurprising for a book by educators about education, the multitude of charts, diagrams, and figures elucidate the text magnificently and make it even more accessible. For any institution – primary, secondary, or graduate level – serious about applying scripture not only to the content of their teaching but also to their method of teaching, *A Theology for Christian Education* is worthy of consideration and application.

A Theology for the Church,

edited by Daniel L. Akin, Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014. 770 pp. \$54.99.

ISBN 9781433682131

*Reviewed by Charles Huckaby, Assistant, Technical Services Department,
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX*

Danny Akin's *A Theology for the Church* was a welcome addition to the study of systematic theology when first released in 2007, and the revised edition is just as welcome. Akin, along with associate editors Bruce Riley Ashford and Kenneth Keathley, took on the formidable task of assembling fifteen scholars in the Baptist tradition and creating a unique examination of systematic theology. In order to preserve structure among the various writing styles and personalities of the contributors, each topic answers four questions: What does the Bible say? What has the church believed? How does it all fit together? How does this doctrine impact the church today? The result is an academic systematic theology that will challenge

and encourage any seminarian but that is accessible to the earnest Baptist church member who is unafraid to dig deeper and work harder in their biblical studies.

Because the original essays have had multiple examinations and reviews since publication, I will focus on the contents unique to this revised edition. This revised edition keeps the structural form of each essay, but the physical book has been redesigned as a larger book with fewer pages in an effort, I suspect, to make the book look slightly less overwhelming. It still contains the scholarship of leading Baptist thinkers Paige Patterson, Albert Mohler, Timothy George, and Mark Dever, among others, but this revised edition contains two new essays and two updated ones. Bruce Riley Ashford and Keith Whitfield open this revised edition with an essay devoted to theological method, thereby setting the stage for the rest of the volume. Chad Brand contributes an essay devoted to the doctrine of creation, providence, and Sabbath, which should prove clarifying for many church members bogged down in the popular mire of creation versus evolution among other things. David Dockery has made a few revisions to his chapter on special revelation while John Hammett has done likewise with his essay on human nature. While the first three sections of each essay are typically well-written and convincingly presented, the final section tying it all together will prove especially helpful to the lay reader who wants to move from comprehending the knowledge presented to action based on those beliefs. It functions as a “bottom line” of sorts.

A review of a volume of this magnitude can just not be accomplished in these few words. Each essay deserves its own review, but the conclusion for the parts and the whole will certainly be positive. To the acquisitions librarian, buy it. To the professor, teach it. To the student, read it. To the church member, analyze it and begin to see God’s Word in a brand new way. I cannot recommend the book more strongly.

**Therapeutic Expedition: Equipping the Christian Counselor
for the Journey,**

by John C. Thomas and Lisa Sosin. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011. 634 pp.
\$49.99. ISBN 9781433672361

Reviewed by Gary R. Averill, Librarian, Spiritual Life Bible College, Minneapolis, MN

This is a very comprehensive book providing an introduction to counseling. It is based on biblical teachings but is also strong in the area of time-tested counseling techniques which do not conflict with biblical teachings. The authors have been teaching and counseling for a combined 50 years. The book has a lot of references but this is more of a practical book. One interesting technique used in this book is mnemonics.