race of ETAs, ought not be a notion too quickly dismissed (162). While he spends about a page and a half trying to present Thomas Aquinas as a theological ally in this endeavor, even the author admits that much more constructive work would need to be done on this point (165). I, for one, concur.

Baker Academic's, *Cosmology in Theological Perspective,* is a dense but worthwhile read. In Lewisian fashion, Dr. Olli-Pekka Vainio implores us to engage our imagination in some of these speculative discussions about the nature of the cosmos and humanity's unique, or not so unique, relation to it. He argues in his conclusion, along with Lewis, that:

> It would be foolish, and obviously false, to think that Christian faith has sailed smoothly through history without ever encountering serious objections and challenges. However, it is equally foolish to think that science and new discoveries somehow necessarily, like a tide, force the Sea of Faith to withdraw from these shores. (180)

Readers will be hard-pressed to disagree.

The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity
Second Edition
Roger E. Olson
Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic
2016, 396 pp., paper, $37.99
ISBN: 978-0-8308-5125-6

Reviewed by J. Russell Frazier- Nairobi, Kenya

Roger Olson (Ph.D., Rice University) is Foy Valentine Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University. He has served as the president of the American Theological Society (Midwest Division) and co-chair of the Evangelical Theology Group of the American Academy of Religion. He is a prolific writer, having authored or co-authored over 20 books and numerous journal articles and other publications. He is well qualified to write a book of this nature. *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity*

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and Diversity was first published in 2002; the work under review is the second edition of this work. The author describes the word "mosaic" as "a metaphor for this mediating approach that seeks to emphasize both Christian unity and Christian diversity in terms of belief" (12).

Olson sets out the aim for this work in the introduction entitled "The Need for a 'Both-And' Theology." His work is characterized by mediating theology, which attempts to reflect the consensual tradition as reflected in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant branches of the Church. His goal is stated as follows: "to explain to uninitiated readers what that common tradition includes in terms of unity, what it allows in terms of diversity and what it excludes in terms of heresies…" (12). Another characteristic is that Olson's project is intended to express "the best of evangelical Christianity" (13) and by this, he means a gospel which is centered upon the grace of God. His project makes an attempt to be "irenic in spirit and tone" (14). Olson identifies his work as non-speculative; he purposes not to speculate about controversial doctrinal matters but keep the focus on "the rough unity and colorful diversity of Christian belief" (16). The last characteristic is that of simplicity for the novice (17). With these characteristics, Olson attempts to counter the folk theology and to provide a balance between believing and experiencing within a post-modern culture that has leaned to a subjective spirituality. Olson's antidote is to develop a "both-and" theology, which avoids the errors of the pendulum swing effect rather than an "either-or" theology (23). Olson admits of several influences. He is a Baptist in the "broader evangelical free-church tradition" but has been "spiritually and theologically nurtured" by Pentecostals and Pietists (27). Yet, he learned to value "the wider catholic tradition" of the early church fathers and self-identifies as a progressive evangelical and ecumenicist that respects "his own tradition's distinctives" (28).

Chapter one of Olson's work is entitled "Christian Belief: Unity and Diversity" in which he further reveals the agenda for his project. Against the meaninglessness of an indefinite definition, Olson proposes the identification of "the core of essential Christian beliefs that all mature, capable Christians must affirm in order to be considered truly Christian" (30). Yet, Olson wants to avoid an intolerant dogmatism. The criterion for discerning this core of Christian beliefs is expressed in the Vincentian Canon: "What has been believed by everyone (Christians) everywhere at all times" (34). Olson further clarifies that the Great Tradition entails the agreed upon beliefs of the early church fathers as well as the sixteenth-century

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Reformers (36). Though recognized as a secondary, relative authority, the Great Tradition "deserves great respect and should be ignored only with fear and trembling" (44). Olson differentiates between the following three categories: 1) dogmas that he considers essential to the Christian faith; 2) doctrines that are distinctive of a particular faith community; and, 3) opinions that tend to be the reflections of Christians about which there is no consensus (45). Having set out his agenda, Olson proceeds in the remaining chapters of the book to articulate the various theological categories of the Christian faith.

In the remaining chapters of the book, Olson presents a polarity in each chapter. The chapter titles reveal the polarity. Chapter 2 is entitled "Sources and Norms of Christian Belief: *One and Many*." He identifies scripture as "the major source and norm" of authority for the Christian faith (51); the many sources include tradition, reason and experience. Chapter Three is entitled "Divine Revelation: *Universal and Particular*." Olson attempts to achieve a balanced view between the two polarities; however, he may be too Barthian for some readers. "Christian Scripture: *Divine Word and Human Words*" is the title of the fourth chapter. Olson attempts to maintain a balance between the polarities of divine word and human words. Along the way, he discusses themes of inerrancy, infallibility, and inspiration. In the fifth chapter, Olson argues for a balanced view between the transcendence and immanence of God. The chapter is entitled: "God: *Great and Good*." Chapter six is entitled: "God: *One and Three*." Therein, Olson argues with classic Christianity as the subtitle suggests that God is one substance and three persons.

Olson in his chapter on "Creation: *Good and Fallen*" endeavors to avoid certain issues within the theological currents of the day: "…our theme [in this chapter] will be that Christian belief about creation has little to do with specific scientific theories about the age of the earth and the natural processes that led to the emergence of life" (158-159). The fallenness of creation is emphasized, while one side of the polarity is not given equal treatment in this chapter. In chapter 8, Oden discusses the doctrine of providence and his polarities are "*Limited and Detailed*." He affirms that God is in charge of nature and history, but raises questions about the extent of the providence, particularly in the light of evil. In the section on the diverse Christian visions of God's providence, he discusses meticulous providence, limited providence, and open theism (193-199). He doesn't consider open theism heterodox as many theologians have (199), but holds

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that some view of limited providence holds the most promise for the unity of the Christian faith.

Chapter 9 is entitled "Humanity: *Essentially Good and Existentially Estranged*." Olson attempts in this chapter to balance the Christian idea of the value and dignity of human beings with the fallen nature of humanity. The author attempts to provide a unifying Christian perspective and finds hope in Emil Brunner's distinction between the "formal image" and the "material image;" the former defines the image of God within terms of "responsible freedom," and the latter is humanity's righteousness before God (224-5). The polarities of Christian belief about Jesus Christ are the subject of the next chapter. Olson articulates the Chalcedon faith, that is the union of the two distinct natures – human and divine – in one eternal, hypostatic union.

"The Holy Spirit: *Divine Person and Power*" is the title of chapter 11. The crucial issue here is that most Christians in their practice emphasize either that the Holy Spirit is a divine person or a divine power (251). The disagreements about the doctrine of the Spirit center around either the status of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity, or the operations of the Spirit within the Church today. Olson appeals for the Church to maintain "and even strengthen" its belief in the personhood of the Holy Spirit and the equality of the Holy Spirit with the other two persons of the Trinity (271). He also calls for greater stress upon the activity of the Holy Spirit without falling into fanaticism. The next two chapters, twelve and thirteen, both deal with the doctrine of salvation. Chapter 12 focuses on the objective and subjective aspects of the atoning work of Christ. Olson expresses concerns for views of the atonement that overstress the polarities and asserts, "*No one explanation does justice to all that happened on the cross*" (emphasis of the original retained, 292). The next chapter discusses salvation as gift and task. Olson argues that salvation is both a gift of divine grace and, at the same time, entails human agency.

The Church is the subject of Olson's chapter 14, which is both visible and invisible. Olson employs the four universal marks of the Church as the unifying consensus on the doctrine of the Church; he discusses in this chapter the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. The fifteenth chapter is entitled "Life Beyond Death: *Continuity and Discontinuity*." Olson points the direction in the balance between continuity and discontinuity with the present life and the life to come; however, he acknowledges much work to be done on this doctrine to reaching a consensus (360-1). The last chapter

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addresses an eschatological theme: "The Kingdom of God: *Already and Not Yet*." Here Olson attempts to navigate between the extremes of radical realized eschatology and of adventism.

Olson's work represents a solid introduction to consensual theology or a paleo-orthodox theology that places great emphasis on the theology of the first five centuries of the early Church. His work of course differs from paleo-orthodoxy in that he holds in high regard the magisterial Reformers of the Church. *The Mosaic of Christian Belief* provides a good, solid introduction to Christian theology and would serve well as a textbook for a course in the field. Olson doesn't allow his focus on the consensus to cause him to have myopic vision; he recognizes the on-going tensions and disagreements among theologians in the Church. However, he attempts to point the way forward to consensual thought when possible. The issue with developing a consensual theology is that the author has the responsibility of choosing the polarities. When the polarities are ill chosen, the attempt to balance the polarities is ill conceived. However, Olson has done the Church a service in developing a consensual theology that is well balanced. However, one wonders if the consensus would satisfy those of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions.

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Books Received

The following books were received by the editor's office since the last issue of *The Asbury Journal*. The editor is seeking people interested in writing book reviews on these or other relevant books for publication in future issues of *The Asbury Journal*. Please contact the editor (Robert.danielson@asburyseminary.edu) if you are interested in reviewing a particular title. Reviews will be assigned on a first come basis.

Ashford, Bruce Riley and Heath A. Thomas
2019 *The Gospel of Our King: Bible, Worldview, and The Mission of Every Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4903-3. Price: $22.99

Bevans, Winfield
2019 *Marks of a Movement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective. ISBN: 978-0-310-09835-5. Price: $17.99.

Bouma-Prediger, Steven
2019 *Earthkeeping and Character: Exploring a Christian Ecological Virtue Ethic*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9884-0. Price: $24.99.

Brown, Sherri and Francis J. Moloney, SDB
2019 *Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7519-8. Price: $25.00.

Campbell, Douglas A.
2020 *Pauline Dogmatics: The Triumph of God's Love*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7564-8. Price: $64.99.

Chatraw, Joshua D. and Karen Swallow Prior
2019 *Cultural Engagement: A Crash Course in Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-53457-0. Price: $29.99.

Chilcote, Paul W.
2019 *Active Faith: Resisting Four Dangerous Ideologies with the Wesleyan Way*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-1-7910-0172-8. Price: $13.99.

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Colyer, Elmer M.
2019 *The Trinitarian Dimension of John Wesley's Theology.* Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3544-2. Price: $44.99.

Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays
2019 *God's Relational Presence: The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4959-0. Price: $34.99.

Ensminger, Charles D.
2019 *Crafting the Sermon: A Beginner's Guide to Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundery Books. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3560-2. Price: $16.99.

Gehring, Michael J., Andrew D. Kinsey, and Vaughn W. Baker, eds.
2019 *The Logic of Evangelism Revisited*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications. ISBN: 978-1-5326-0456-0. Price: $23.00.

Georges, Jayson
2019 *Ministering in Patronage Cultures: Biblical Models and Missional Implications*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5247-5. Price: $22.00.

Gorman, Michael J.
2019 *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul's Theology and Spirituality.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-1-5409-6036-8. Price: $30.00.

Gupta, Nijay K.
2019 *1 & 2 Thessalonians*. Zondervan Critical Introductions to the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-51871-6. Price: $44.99.

Gupta, Nijay K.
2020 *Paul and the Language of Faith.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7343-9. Price: $34.99.

Hardy, H. H., II
2019 *Exegetical Gems from Biblical Hebrew: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9876-5. Price: $19.99.

Heetland, David L.
2019 *Happy Surprises: Helping Others Discover the Joy of Giving*. Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundery Books. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3557-2. Price: $18.99.

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Holtzen, Wm. Curtis
2019 *The God Who Trusts: A Relational Theology of Divine Faith, Hope, and Love*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5255-0. Price: $28.00.

Johnson, Adam J. and Stanley N. Gundry, eds.
2019 *Five Views on the Extent of the Atonement*. Counterpoints in Bible and Theology Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-52771-8. Price: $22.99.

Keener, Craig
2019 *Christobiography: Memories, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7675-1. Price: $54.99.

King, Roberta R.
2019 *Global Arts and Christian Witness*. Mission in Global Community Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9885-7. Price: $26.99.

Kirkham, Donald Henry
2019 *Outside Looking In: Early Methodism as Viewed by its Critics*. Nashville, TN: New Room Books. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3543-5. Price: $49.99.

Kreider, Glenn R. and Michael J. Svigel
2019 *A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, his Works, and his Ways*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-58880-1. Price: $16.99.

Long, D. Stephen
2019 *Truth Telling in a Post-Truth World*. Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundery Books. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3550-3. Price: $28.99.

McNall, Joshua M.
2019 *The Mosaic of Atonement: An Integrated Approach to Christ's Work*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-09764-8. Price: $34.99.

Merkle, Benjamin J.
2019 *Exegetical Gems from Biblical Greek: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9877-2. Price: $19.99.

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Ott, Craig
2019 *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation Among All People*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-1-5409-6088-7. Price: $19.99.

Ovey, Michael J.
2019 *The Feasts of Repentance: From Luke-Acts to Systematic and Pastoral Theology*. New Studies in Biblical Theology Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-2662-9. Price: $16.84.

Parker, Margaret Adams and Katherine Sonderegger
2019 *Praying the Stations of the Cross: Finding Hope in a Weary Land*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7664-5. Price: $21.99.

Rhodes, Ben and Martin Westerholm, eds.
2019 *Freedom Under the Word: Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9881-9. Price: $45.00.

Robert, Dana L.
2019 *Faithful Friendships: Embracing Diversity in Christian Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-2571-1. Price: $19.00.

Sider, Ronald J.
2019 *If Jesus is Lord: Loving Our Enemies in an Age of Violence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3628-6. Price: $24.99.

Treier, Daniel J.
2019 *Introducing Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9769-0. Price: $29.99.

Tyson, John R.
2019 *Praying with the Wesleys: Foundations of Methodist Spirituality*. Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundery Books. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3554-1. Price: $18.99.

Volf, Miroslav
2019 *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Revised and Expanded. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-1-5018-6107-9. Price: $32.99.

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W., Jackson (pseudonym)
2018 *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5223-9. Price: $20.00.

Walker, Andrew G.
2015 *Notes from a Wayward Son: A Miscellany*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books. ISBN: 978-1-62564-161-8. Price: $41.20.

Waltke, Bruce K. and James M. Houston
2019 *The Psalms as Christian Praise: A Historical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7702-4. Price: $36.00.

Wray Beal, Lissa M.
2019 *Joshua*. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-49083-8. Price: $49.99.

Wright, N.T. and Michael F. Bird
2019 *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-49930-5. Price: $59.99.

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