

Book Reviews

Breneman, Mervin. *The New American Commentary: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. Vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993, 383 pp, cloth, \$26.95) reviewed by Steven C. Horine.

This is the most recent volume in the *New American Commentary* series. In keeping with the stated purpose of this series, this volume is up-to-date in accessing and incorporating the most recent scholarly contributions to the study of the books Ezra-Nehemiah (in the Hebrew Bible they are one book) and Esther. At the same time, the orientation of the book, and that of the series, is conservative and evangelical. The series is aimed primarily at meeting the exegetical needs of pastors, seminary students, and laymen. This book, as well as the series, so far, achieves its goals in superlative fashion. The style of the commentary may be described as concise yet comprehensive. The main body of the discussion is straight forward and non-technical. Technical discussion and documentation are facilitated by means of footnotes for those who desire more information or explanation.

The format of the commentary consists of a succinct yet comprehensive introduction, followed by the main body of the commentary which is divided according to the outline. The final section consists of Subject, Person (author), and Scripture indices. The introduction of Ezra-Nehemiah contains several sections. The first elaborates the historical context of the books. This is followed by sections discussing its relation to the book of Chronicles, as well as theories regarding sources and authorship. Historical questions are also addressed, such as the chronology of Ezra and Nehemiah, the identity of Sheshbazzar, Ezra's Book of the Law, as well as the relation of Ezra-Nehemiah to the

Apocryphal book of 1 Esdras. There is also a section which discusses the theology of Ezra-Nehemiah as a unit. This is followed by separate sections discussing the significance and unique contribution of each book.

Like Ezra-Nehemiah, the introduction to Esther also contains a section on historical context. It also includes sections on such topics as the historicity of Esther, the literary genre of Esther, literary features, the purpose of the book, authorship and date, the origin of the Feast of Purim, and the place of Esther in the canon. In addition, there are sections on the teaching of Esther, the texts and versions of Esther, and the Greek addition (i.e. the Septuagint contains 105 more verses than the Massoretic text).

The footnoting method greatly facilitates the discussion without having to flip pages looking for endnotes. However, this strength is also a weakness when trying to track down sources. Though the Person Index is designed to alleviate this problem, it would be helpful to have all the sources in one place, in a separate bibliography. This minor criticism of the series was noted in a previous review (*CBTJ* 9:1, pp. 72-73). However, I also concur with all of the positive statements made in that review regarding this series. I highly recommend this commentary, as well as the entire series, for all pastors, students, and laypersons desiring to understand God's Word more completely.

Dockery, David S., ed. *Holman Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992, 896 pp, cloth) reviewed by Charles E. McLain.

Holman's handbook is part of this publisher's latest offering of new and revised reference tools for the home or school. As the editor of this volume points out, this book is "not a commentary, an encyclopedia, an atlas, or a dictionary;" however, it still provides a variety of functions characteristic of each.

The first section of the handbook provides the reader with an overview of the Bible dealing with such topics as canonicity and inspiration. In the next section, the Bible's milieu is covered through discussions on topics such as history, culture, customs, archeology, and geography. In the third section an overview of the Bible in the church is given through discussions of manuscripts, translations, and methods of interpretation. The fourth and longest section deals with the message of the Bible by means of a book-by-book survey. The final section covers church history, the faith of the church, and missions.

The table of contents lists twenty-three maps and over one hundred feature articles to aid the reader in understanding God's Word. The list of contributors is impressive, including many recognized names in the field of biblical scholarship. The several maps, charts, pictures, diagrams, and reproductions are bold and clear, adding greatly to the effectiveness and clarity of the discussion. Only rarely does one come across a picture or illustration that appears to be more aesthetic than informative. The discussion of the biblical books is concise and informative and concludes with questions to reflect on as well as a thumbnail bibliography for further study.

The *Holman Bible Handbook* is an excellent tool for Bible study. It would make a profitable gift for the graduate, friend, or family member who desires to study the Bible in more depth for more understanding.

Ellingworth, Paul. *Commentary on Hebrews* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993, 864 pp, cloth, \$44.95) reviewed by Warren Vanhetloo.

Those who use this volume will be impressed with the amount of pertinent information so conveniently available. References cite textual sources, early literature, classic writers, numerous commentaries, and significant recent periodical studies. The assemblage is better than a computer printout.

Matters of authorship, composition, and early texts are extensive (pp. 3-85). True to the intent of the series, material is selected and arranged for the benefit of the student of Greek; that is, for the pastor or Christian worker who has a working appreciation of Greek syntax and structure. The value of the book is not limited to a few hundred experts.

The outline employed has been developed from the grammatical structure. Each section begins with an explanation of the grammatical structure followed by an analysis of the content. Genre patterns, literary devices, means of emphases, etc., are set forth clearly. Instead of full footnote references, a single name or abbreviation plus page(s) has been employed. Complete reference information is easily available in the foreword sections (x-xcviii). The book concludes with particularly helpful indexes of subjects, authors, and Greek words discussed (pp. 737-64).

The author recognizes the pastoral nature of the letter. Concentration is on the teaching of the Greek text, without development of the applications to modern life typical of a popular devotional. A pastor will reference this book for exegetical facts. It is on these facts that any homiletical development should then be built. Some will prefer studies which present easy solutions. This book sets forth the information important to reach conclusions. It is an exegetical tool, an aid to spiritual "cooks," not a fast food serving.

Exley, Richard, Mark Galli, and John Ortberg. *Dangers, Toils & Snares: Resisting the Hidden Temptations of Ministry* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1994, 172 pp, cloth, \$13.99) reviewed by Charles E. McLain.

This volume is the fifth and latest addition to Multnomah's series -- *Mastering Ministry's Pressure Points*. The authors' aim is to aid pastors in their survival of ministerial stress by helping in their individual preparation to face the pressure points of ministry.

Although the church is to influence the world in which it ministers, the church has not avoided the influence of the world. The world's influence affects both pew and pulpit. The focus of the authors is on the minister's need both to face and to overcome the world's influence on and temptation in his life.

This volume is composed of two major sections. In the first section entitled "Dangers of Pastoral Toil" the authors mainly address sins and hazards peculiar to pastoral ministry. They deal with sins such as ambition, anger, and laziness. They also discuss hazards such as professional holiness, addiction to approval, and fear of controversy. In the second section entitled "Sexual Snares" the authors not only deal with the issue of facing the temptations of sexual sins but also deal with the issue of recovering from the fall into sexual sins.

The book is not designed to be a theological or scriptural dissertation on the topics. Instead, the design of the book is more that of a discussion with an experienced pastor across his desk. Thus the book is composed primarily of quotations and personal anecdotes with only selected and occasional reference to Scripture.

This volume deals with topics that every pastor and pastor-to-be not only must admit are real threats to the ministry but also must personally face. I recommend the book, particularly the second section, to those practicing and preparing for ministry.

Hamilton, Donald L. *Homiletical Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992, 207 pp, paper, \$14.95) reviewed by Charles E. McLain.

The *Homiletical Handbook* is just what it claims to be, a "handbook" on homiletics. Hamilton's aim is not to "discuss everything relating to the preaching task" (p. v). The aim is to provide an introductory treatment of homiletics by reviewing definition, method, and application of principles for preaching.

As a handbook the material is broad enough to include a discussion on the importance of preaching (pp. 10f); the how-to of preparing various types of messages (pp. 32ff), and the

application of the how-to to various types of biblical literature (pp. 118ff). The discussion in each section is both clear and concise. The material of the content is evenly handled and well illustrated. The author has made good use of those who have gone before him and has well documented his work. The bibliography that concludes the work is not exhaustive but is extensive enough that the industrious student may, if he chooses, pursue his study of any area of homiletics further.

I recommend this book not only to any student who is in the process of studying and developing his preaching abilities, but also to any pastor who, having preached the Word for years, realizes that it is wise both to review what is known as well as to consider the necessity of improving on his presentation of God's sacred word.

Hicks, Robert. *The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1993, 203 pp, cloth, \$15.00) reviewed by Charles E. McLain.

Unlike other books on practical Christian living which this reviewer has read, Hicks' book does not presuppose principles founded in the world of business or sports or politics as its basis of content and structure. Nor is his structure based on his own understanding or personal logic. Perhaps the factor that struck me the most about this book is its biblical basis both for structure and for content. The heart of the book is built around six Hebrew terms that are used of men in the Old Testament (p. 19). The terms are taken to indicate six stages through which men travel on the road of life.

Hicks contends that "Manhood is reflected differently throughout the adult life cycle. There exist certain predictable eras in the male life cycle" (p. 19). His aim in detailing these six stages is not to be prescriptive but descriptive; this is not the only way to look at the male journey but "is one way of looking at the masculine journey" (p. 20). He explains that each stage, while "reflecting something about what it means to be masculine

at that stage of a man's life" (p. 21), is not necessarily a stage which is passed through and left behind (p. 28). Together, they "make up the normative masculine experience" (p. 21). Depending on the stage and season in the individual life, a man may find himself in multiple stages at one time.

The six stages which Hicks finds in God's word are: First, the creational stage. Each man is part of mankind and a product of the Creator. Second, the phallic stage. Each man is created as a sexual being. Third, the warrior stage. Each man has the warrior-instinct within which evidences itself in competition and combat. Fourth, the wounded stage. Each man has his frailty and respective needs which go with it. Fifth, the ruler stage. Each man stands in relationship to others. Finally, the sage or gray-headed stage. Each man who reaches maturity must account for what he has contributed to church, community and culture.

Although Hicks' interpretation and application might be stretched at times, I personally found the book to be very encouraging and beneficial. I would recommend it to any man at whatever stage he may be in on his journey through life. I believe any man will find this book rewarding and challenging.

Imbens, Annie and Ineke Jonker. *Christianity and Incest* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, 298 pp, paper, \$15.00) reviewed by Charles E. McLain.

As the title indicates incest is a plight of our society that has penetrated the church. It cannot be denied that incest is not limited by any socio-economic boundary. It is, however, equally true that incest is not limited by any theological-religious boundary -- it does occur within the church. Before the church can deal with this problem it must first admit the problem actually exists, and secondly it must educate itself concerning the problem and scriptural principles for dealing with it. Two factors severely restrict the benefit of this volume in addressing either need that exists in the church today.

First, the authors write from a definite and decided feminist perspective. This perspective is evident in their evaluation, in general, of Christianity as a movement and, in particular, of the role and function of men in Christianity. This feminist perspective is evidenced by a few statements from the book: "Church ideology . . . perpetuates a religious legitimacy of incest" (p. viii). Their book is considered to be "an indictment . . . of a sadistic god who lets children drift helplessly in their desolation and requires them to forgive their tormentors." (p. xii). The Bible is viewed as a tool "of authority . . . to support [men] when justifying his behavior toward women" (p. xv). Christian upbringing, it is claimed, simply makes "girls easy prey" (pp. xvi, 5). The authors view "the sexual abuse of girls within the family as the ultimate consequence of patriarchal thinking, of patriarchal theology, and of the patriarchal experience of Christianity" (pp. 5-6). One gets the feeling from the author's opening pages that Christianity at worst is an institutionalized form of incest and at best is an institutionalized protector of incest.

Secondly, the book is limited in the scope of the research on which it is based. The book is based on "research" which only included nineteen women (p. xii) and the body of the content focuses on interviews with only ten of these women (pp. 25-115). Of the nineteen women interviewed one was without religious background and seventeen of the remaining eighteen "have turned their back on the church." The base on which the study is founded is inordinately small and apparently skewed.

The authors' scope is also limited to the country of the Netherlands. Although the title purports to examine the relationship of the problem of incest within the realm of Christianity, the actual scope of the study is limited to the Netherlands. Due to the limited geographical scope, probably enhanced by the restricted number of women interviewed, the study is basically limited to two religious bodies: the Roman Catholic church and the Reformed Dutch Church (pp. 6, 14). The limited geographic and numeric scope of the study results in

a religious scope too restricted to claim to be representative of "Christianity."

For the pastor and/or church who are struggling to understand the nature and impact of abuse, better books are available. Whatever claims might be made to this being a representative study seem to be contradicted both by the scope of the study and by the perspective of the authors. However, for the person who denies that incest is a problem within the church this book not only documents its existence, but also reflects the extremes to which its effects still affect its victims.

Schooler, Jane E. *The Whole Life Adoption Book* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1993, 217 pp, paper, \$12.00) reviewed by Dean Kurtz.

The aim of this book is to present a realistic look into the adoption issues that face the family or individual seeking to create a healthy adopted family. The author discusses the similarities and differences that exist between permanent biological ties and permanent relationships of promise such as adoption and marriage. The book is divided into four sections -- Adoption: A Labor of Love, When the Child Comes Home, Communicating About Adoption, and Growing Up Adopted.

Although the author quotes some Bible verses, it is this reader's opinion that this book should be seen as a basically secular informational book. As with many such books it is quite insightful as to the problems, but seems to lack a solid biblical approach. Particularly insightful are the three approaches to adoption that are common among adoptive families. Adopted families have the choice either to reject the differences that exist, to overemphasize differences, or to acknowledge and accept the differences in each stage of their child's development.

Adoption must be entered into with honesty, information, and commitment. This book will be helpful for those counselors or pastors who are unfamiliar with the adoption issues facing those with whom they are working. It is also beneficial for those who have adopted or who are considering adoption and who need

to count the cost of this special and beautiful relationship of promise.

Smith, Ralph L. *Old Testament Theology* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 525 pp, cloth, \$32.99) reviewed by Warren Vanhetloo.

The author, professor emeritus at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, employed a subtitle, its history, method, and message. His stated purpose was to explore, not to argue or debate. His work was prepared "to provide university and seminary students . . . a partial report of what others have said and done." This he has done in concise fashion, incorporating sample quotations from pre-Wellhausen writers, German rationalism, continental, and American authors.

After a historical survey, Smith settles on six major possible models for development (p. 87). He then presents his model and treatment of some major themes (pp. 93-441): the knowledge of God, election and covenant, the nature of God, humanity, sin and redemption, worship, ethics, death, and national eschatology. The volume concludes with a full bibliography (brief notations are in the text, in parentheses), subject index, author index, Old Testament index, New Testament index, classic author index, early literature index, and a useful Hebrew word index. In keeping with the design and declared purpose of the author, the compendium has assembled views of various critics. The typical Sunday School teacher, pastor, or Bible student will find this work difficult to use and the effort of using it too often fruitless.

Snaith, John G., *Song of Songs* The New Century Bible Commentary, eds. Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993, 140 pp, paper, \$14.99) reviewed by Steven C. Horine.

The Song of Songs (Hebrew title of the book known as The Song of Solomon) has been misunderstood throughout much of church history. Having been interpreted allegorically, the book was often seen by Christians as representing the love between Christ and his bride the church, and by the Jews as the love between Yahweh and his people Israel. In the nineteenth century, the true nature of the genre of this book (i.e. love poetry) came to the fore, though there are some today who still interpret the book allegorically. The commentary by Snaith represents the view that this book is love poetry -- "the Song is unashamedly sexual" (p. 5), and that it illustrates the many different forms of human love.

In keeping with the format and intent of this series of commentaries, which follow the *Revised Standard Version*, this commentary is concise, yet it cogently deals with difficult critical issues and interpretive problems inherent with the study of this book. The commentaries in this series are designed to be clearly understood by "nonspecialists" and to be useful to ministers, teachers, and scholars as well. The commentaries are characterized by verse-by-verse exposition which reflect issues of contemporary debate.

In his commentary on the Song of Songs, Snaith's introduction deals with such issues as canonical status, allegorization, and origin; connections with fertility cults; literary structure; and authorship and date. Concerning canonical status, Snaith rightly rejects a popularly held view that "it was the allegorical interpretation that won the book its place in the canon" (p. 4). Rather, he suggests that the reason for its incorporation as a biblical book was its "non-mythological, non-cultic, non-idolatrous, outright, open celebration of God-given sexual love" (p. 5). These concepts of human sexuality, of

course, stand in strong opposition to those of Israel's pagan neighbors, especially to those of the Canaanites,

With respect to the Song's structure, Snaith sees the book "more as a well edited, carefully arranged sequence of poems than a real drama." Yet he argues for the unity of the book based upon its genre -- love poetry. Using Egyptian love poetry as the basis for comparison within the same literary genre, he sees the biblical book as being "much more uniform than those in the Egyptian collection" (p. 8). Unlike the extant Hebrew manuscripts which represent copies far removed from the original, it is easy to prove the unity of the Egyptian texts because they are inscribed on original, durable materials (stone sarcophagi, etc.). Thus, the Egyptian texts serve as an objective external basis in arguing for the unity of Song's text.

Snaith's approach to the text is characterized by careful scholarship and balance. He deals with the more difficult problems concerning Hebrew grammar, syntax, and word meaning, yet does so in a manner which reflects careful research. In his interpretations, he avoids the two extremes of the mundane and the bizarre which, at times, characterize other approaches. With respect to the former, in Song 1:9 Snaith correctly notes what is being suggested by the imagery in the verse -- "In a battle a single mare running loose [among Pharaoh's chariots] could cause havoc among otherwise reliable stallions [which are harnessed to the chariots]" (p. 21). That stallions were employed to pull the chariots is depicted in reliefs recovered from the ancient Near East.

On the other hand, Snaith avoids speculative interpretations. For instance, he notes that M. V. Fox (*The Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 1985) translates "Sustain me with raisins" (2:5) as "put me to bed (among the fruit clusters)," based upon a supposed connection to Mishnaic Hebrew. In this instance, Snaith notes "Jastrow's dictionary gives no such meaning as Fox claims. So we must reject Fox's suggestion, and see the girl as requesting some strengthening food" (p. 31).

Some perceived weaknesses of the book are: First, Snaith's rejection of Solomonic authorship, not only of the book as a whole, but also with respect to any consideration of its individual parts. "References to Solomon are irrelevant because of the fictional character he frequently assumes in the Old Testament" (p. 9). In this regard, he also does not consider as likely the possibility of earlier acceptance of Solomonic authorship as a reason for its acceptance into the canon (p. 5).

Second, there are times when he fails to exploit the imagery of the text. For example, in Song 4:12, the reference to "a locked garden" (*RSV* emends MT *gal* "fountain" to *gan*) is an allusion to the girl's virginity. This understanding of the expression as a metaphor is consistent with the biblical canon's prohibition of premarital sex. This is especially true if one sees within the Song a progression from courtship, to marriage, leading inevitably to nuptial consummation. However, in fairness to the commentator, in most places he does bring out erotic imagery as well as various *double entendre*.

Though one may not agree with some of the Snaith's conclusions with respect to the dating, nature of composition, or authorship of the Song, his position is more balanced and reserved than those of others within the world of scholarship. Overall, this commentary is a useful resource for anyone interested in a concise, up-to-date, yet substantive treatment of the Song of Solomon which deals with the Hebrew text and the contributions of comparative literary studies. The frequent comparisons to Egyptian love poetry are particularly helpful for understanding the background, imagery, metaphors and, ultimately, meaning of the text. This commentary comes highly recommended for anyone wanting such a concise yet in-depth treatment of the Song of Solomon.

Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, 456 pp, cloth, \$39.95) reviewed by Charles E. McLain.

Tov, a prominent scholar in the area of Septuagint studies, brings a wealth of knowledge to the area of textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. With the discovery and recent releases of Dead Sea Scroll materials and advances in methodologies and related disciplines, OT scholars and students alike realize the need for the scholarly updating of books in this area of study.

This volume manages to deal with the wealth of material incumbent in the topic both with breadth and depth. The discussion is both clear and readable. The material is well documented. The indices are thorough and beneficial. The text is clear and filled with very helpful examples both in the original languages and with translation. Though beyond the scope of the novice, Tov's contribution is a welcomed and timely addition to those who wish to look more closely at and into the Hebrew text.

Trull, Joe E., and James E. Carter. *Ministerial Ethics: Being a good minister in a not-so-good world* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993, 256 pp, \$14.99) reviewed by Charles E. McLain.

As reflected in the subtitle of this book, ministers live and work in a "not-so-good world." Unfortunately, more often than ministers care to admit, the influence of our "not-so-good" world is greater on them than they are on it. Trull and Cater write from a position reflecting over fifty-five years of ministerial experience in ministries of diverse geographic and demographic backgrounds. They write with the conviction that "ministers have a unique moral role in society." The impetus behind this book lies in two facts: first, the "rapidly changing culture" in which we minister and secondly, the "seeming increase of moral failures" we are experiencing. Their purpose is two-fold. First, to establish "the unique moral role of the minister and the ethical

responsibilities of that vocation" and further "to provide for new and established ministers a clear statement of the ethical obligations contemporary clergy should assume in their personal and professional life."

The authors develop their topic through three stages. First, they argue that the minister is a professional. As a professional, standards of education, competence, autonomy, service, dedication, and ethics are incumbent upon the minister. The call of God prevents the concept of a professional minister from deteriorating into a private affair. At the same time, "the recovery of the religious and social meaning of the clergy vocation and profession can revitalize the church as well as build a foundation for an ethical ministry" (p. 39).

Secondly, the authors deal with the minister's moral choices and varying relationships. In an age of moral uncertainty the authors claim not only that morals can and must be learned but also that the Bible is the "primary source of ethical guidelines" (p. 44). In the following discussion the authors relate the ethics of character, conduct, and integrity. Upon this foundation they consider the minister's relationship with himself, his congregation, his colleagues, and his community.

Thirdly, the authors provide instructions and guidance in the formulation of a code of ethics. Following a discussion of the benefits and purposes of an ethical code, the authors provide guidelines for the reader to draft his own code of ethics.

The authors have provided those in ministry with a well-written, much-needed volume. The discussion is clear, pointed and well organized. Each chapter is clearly endnoted and concludes with a brief but representative bibliography. The volume ends with four helpful appendices.

Weaknesses in the book have little bearing on the author's presentation. However, the discussion would be facilitated both by an index of terms and authors as well as by a complete bibliography.

This book should be required reading not only for those preparing for ministry but also for those who are actively ministering. What the authors have to say is well worth listening

to. The dangers of the moral morass of this world in which we minister is too great to deny or to ignore.

Strommen, Merton P. and A. Irene. *Five Cries of Parents*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985, 212 pp, \$14.95) reviewed by Kraig Keck.

Merton Strommen is a Lutheran minister and president of Search Institute of Minneapolis, a noted research company. Using the data compiled from a survey of 8,156 adolescents and 10,467 parents, the Strommens have written this book which should be a help to anyone considering youth ministry.

The Strommens conclude that the desires of parents concerning their teenagers can be categorized by five different cries: the cry for understanding, the cry for a close family, the cry for moral behavior, the cry for a shared faith, and the cry for outside help.

This book is not simply a dry recitation of raw data. Although the Strommens do support their views with the data of the survey, this book is full of practical advice. The statistics are used to confirm biblical principles of parenting. For example, a citation of a study by Benson and Williams (p. 117) is used to support the principle "that adolescents (as well as adults) who are helped to internalize moral beliefs and values, are likely to adopt behaviors compatible with these values."

The first cry is the cry for understanding which is composed of two parts: the cry for understanding yourself as a parent and the cry for understanding your adolescent. Both parents need to understand the forces from their past that shape the way they react today. These forces may be "wounded memories; unmet personal needs; feelings of failure; and reactions of anger" (p. 12). The Strommens contend that both parents must understand themselves before they can understand their adolescent. Most parents tend to minimize their own past difficulties. Consequently, they have trouble understanding their children's teenage years and actions.

Next, they describe the cry for a close family. Parental harmony, parent-youth communication, parental discipline or control, and parental nurturing are four elements of close family life according to the authors' definition. Clearly the authors advocate the establishing of biblical limits upon adolescents. Adolescents want and need discipline in their life. "Permissiveness seems to encourage a hedonistic and antisocial behavior that brings its own tragedies" (p. 90).

The third cry of parents is for moral behavior. In this chapter the Strommens help parents realize how values and beliefs are communicated. They contend that life is a reflection of what we believe, and we learn what we believe most powerfully from our parents. The authors claim that 75% of teens enjoy their parents at least as much as their friends (p.124). This is encouraging to the majority of parents since they have the major impact on their child's beliefs and values.

Closely related to this is the cry for a shared faith. Parents desire to have shared religious beliefs with their children, but often do not know how to accomplish this. Although 80% of mothers and 67% of fathers say religion is one of the most important influences in their life, only 13% of adolescents remember any spiritual conversation with a parent (pp. 131, 134). There is a clear difference between what parents want and what they do. The communication of one's faith is surely a needy area of parenting.

The final need of parents is the cry for outside help. Parents want help, but the Strommens show that they do not know where to get it. Encouraging to those in ministry is the fact that when parents need help, the clergy are more often the first place they turn (p. 162).

Over all, I found the Strommens' book helpful for my understanding of the needs of parents of adolescents. Backed as it is by a survey of thousands of parents, it makes compelling arguments for the five basic "cries" of parents.