victory song" is tantalizing, especially because it provides a literary explanation for Yahweh's obscure role within the text. However, reflections on the poem as offering a window into the social context out of which Judges 5 may have emerged are less convincing. Given recent deliberations over the historicity of the book of Judges, it seems doubtful that it is possible to identify exactly when and to whom the Song might have first been sung as specifically as Echols maintains. Though it is likely that the book of Judges contains kernels of historical veracity, this possibility can neither be confirmed nor disproven. The strength of Echols's work lies not in his attempt to pinpoint the historical context of the Song, but rather in his thorough attention to detail, his excellent engagement with previous work on Judg 5, and his proposal of a new genre within the Hebrew Bible.

Gods in the Global Village

Lester B. Kurtz, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2007.
ISBN: 1-4129-2715-3. Pp. 352

Reviewed by Nathan Loewen, McGill University

Lester B. Kurtz is known for his writings on conflict and religion. They could be characterized as "critical sociology". While *Gods in the Global Village* presents an introduction to the sociology of religion, it is more a vehicle for Kurtz's assessment of the role of the world's religions in constructing a global community. Since Kurtz's writing is carried by his vision of global unity, the unpleasantly dull nature of the "introduction to ... " the textbook is avoided. This same drive leads Kurtz to cursorily run through major themes and developments in the sociology of religion. If used as a textbook, however, these points are occasions for further research.

Kurtz's accomplishment is to synthesize existing sociological investigations of religion into a discourse on how the world's societies are re-organizing their daily lives relative to the conditions of globalization and the continuing structural differentiation of societies. The discourse takes a macro perspective, primarily studying five of the world's religious traditions—Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Islamic-as points of reference which organize its analyses and hypotheses. Popularized analytical metaphors are used to good effect: sacred canopy (Peter Berger), religious marketplace (Rodney Stark), and elective affinities (Max Weber). Kurtz's hypotheses, discussed below, modulate the discipline's consensus on secularization.

Kurtz depicts the worlds' situation as one of "common crisis" (Kurtz 2007, ix): the threat of nuclear war is augmented by the actions of irregular militias and terrorists, and, the last 50 years of global economic development have brought about

social deracinations. Kurtz adopts Jürgen Habermas theory (1987), that the world's population faces a political crisis brought about by the reorganization of all social and economic lifeworlds into a world system. He also accepts Habermas' proposed solution: the establishment of a world social order. "The future of the global human community depends in large measure on the ability of humanity to forge a common ethos out of current competing traditions" (123). Kurtz then departs from Habermas, claiming that religions ought to play a role. The book's thesis is that the sociological study of religion provides the means to determine religions' potential contributions to this project.

At first glance, it seems Kurtz sympathetically wishes to preserve the world's religions as a common global inheritance. The first chapter overviews major introduces the sociology of religion, where second and third chapters provide sociological "tours" of "Eastern" and "Western" religions. Religion *per se* is explained as a dynamic process of world construction that creates social phenomena of rituals, institutions and morality. Kurtz relies most heavily upon Berger's metaphor: "Since the advent of the modern era, the shift from isolated society each with a single dominant sacred canopy to an increasingly cosmopolitan global religious market-place has produced contradictory trends within religious traditions" (137). Impossible today (189) in the face of scientific criticism and cultural pluralism (174), "sacred canopies" cannot be seamless or actual (13). Further, each's contingencies and contradictions risk legitimizing social exploitation (190). In the midst of the "common crisis", however, Kurtz proposes to create, as it were, a certain canopy.

Ultimately Kurtz argues that sociologists should direct their studies of religions towards secularization. This can be said on the basis of his three concluding prescriptions: for a secularized political order to allow for the peaceful sharing of the planet, for secular conflict resolution techniques legitimized by ecumenical religious rhetoric to demilitarize conflicts, and, for the application of ethical standards to daily life and human institutions that are both legitimated by all religious traditions though "codified in secular media" (276).

The last four chapters orient this task through the topics of ethos, multiculturalism, new religious movements, and social conflict. Kurtz synthesizes an array of sources towards two arguments. Firstly, the basic norm of compassion for others is a common religious denominator which is challenged by variance of interpretation and enforcement (170). Secondly, religions can unanimously favour non-violence by elevating certain aspects of each to dominance. Sociologists can explain how conventional religious criteria criticize contemporary warfare, how violent mythology is spiritualized into pacifist parables, how religions mobilize publics to promote non-violence, and how religious morals can be diffused into broader culture. The challenge goes unmentioned: sociologists can analyze but cannot effect religious affinities.

Potential for violence is thus diminished by neutralizing religions' capacities to highlight social differences and justify combative politics (255). Kurtz hopes this will enable new permutations and forms of religious life that facilitate constructive conflict (242). This proposal is a double-bind, since the advocacy of openness to invention accompanies an unqualified imperative for secularization. This book will comfortably stimulate students and scholars. Assessing its global potential, however, is beyond the scope of this review.

Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts

Matt Jackson-McCabe, ed. Augsburg Fortress, MN: Fortress Press, 2007.
ISBN: 978-0-8006-3865-8. Pp. 400.
Reviewed by Meredith Warren, McGill University

Jewish Christianity Reconsidered is a good introduction to the complex problems surrounding the subject of Jewish Christianity or Christian Judaism. As a collection of articles, the book presents its readers with varying opinions on the current state of research. While many scholars included in this volume have similar views, the occasional dissonance allows for a dialogue to occur, which is precisely what is needed, in my view, to move forward on the subject of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity at this early time. The book is divided into two sections, the first dealing with religious groups, and the second with texts, although there is some overlap, as is to be expected. Each essay deals with a different topic, evaluating the content of a text or the descriptions of a group in other works in order to tease out its contributions to the scholarly debate. The groups include the Jerusalem church, the Christ-believing Jews whom Paul opposes, the Johannine community, the Ebionites, and the Nazarenes. The texts include Q, Matthew, James, Revelation, the *Didache*, and the Pseudo-Clementines. In each case, the author defines what is meant for Jewish-Christianity and then analyses the evidence to determine what can be said about a particular text or community.

One main focus of the volume is the terminology around Early Judaism and Christianity. The problems of terminology for Jewish Christianity are legion. First there is the question of what Jewish Christianity denotes. Second, whether Judaism and Christianity at this point are distinguished enough from each other to warrant a special designation for those branches of Christianity which seem "more" Jewish. Third, there is the question of what actually makes something Jewish, or Christian, or one of these things as opposed to the other. While the first essay in this volume, "What's in a Name" by Matt Jackson-McCabe, gives a good introduction to the