

church for giving allegiance to a Roman heritage and for neglecting its Israelite heritage. Although such a finale may sound rather unecumenical, it is not completely out of place given the dual-faith nature of the volume. Regardless of these editorial decisions, this book is both interesting and valuable: it is successful both in raising important issues for textual studies and hermeneutics, and in alerting readers to the inevitable links between texts, religions and politics in ancient and modern contexts.

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***Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography.* By John Dominic Crossan. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994. ISBN 0-061669-5. Pp. xiv+209.**

***Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus & The Heart of Contemporary Faith.* By Marcus J. Borg. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994. ISBN 0-06-060916-8. Pp. ix+150.**

One of the central debates of New Testament biblical studies and Christology over the last two centuries has centered on two questions of faith. First, to what extent can we "know" the historical Jesus of Nazareth? Second, paraphrasing Martin Kähler, what is the relationship between the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of faith"? Attempts to answer these questions have given birth to multiple "waves" of scholarly studies commonly known as "Quest[s] for the Historical Jesus" and counter-movements rejecting the legitimacy of these attempts.

The first wave of the Quest, characterized by the work of Reimarus and D.F. Strauss, assumed that one could discover the historical Jesus within biblical literature and, in answer to the second question, argued that one could prove or disprove faith based upon this historical research. This position was rejected by thinkers such as Kähler, Bultmann, Barth and Tillich on both historical and theological grounds. In answer to the first question of faith, these thinkers argued that one could not penetrate behind the *kerygma* of the early Church to discover the "real" historical Jesus. Instead, answering the second question, one discovers the Christ of faith within the *kerygma*. A second wave of the Quest then arose in the 1950s, lead, ironically, by a number of Bultmann's students (e.g. Bornkamm, Käsemann and Fuchs) arguing that one could discern the historical Jesus based on the fact that the historical record indicates a continuity between the *kerygmatic* Christ and the Jesus of history. The attempt, as argued by Ernst Käsemann, was to answer the second question by emphasizing the importance of both the historical and the kerygmatic.

It has been suggested that we now live within the third (or fourth) wave of the Quest. Two of its most prominent proponents are John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg. It seems appropriate to consider their most recent books as illustrative of the most current approaches to the two questions of historical faith.

Crossan's *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, is a "popular version" of his longer, more scholarly 1991 book, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish*

Peasant. In general form, this book is indistinguishable from the biographies of Jesus written during the first quest for the historical Jesus. What one discovers is a very human Jesus in which all miracles are explained away as non-historical fictions or myths. These include a denial of the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke, the miracles (including the "healing" and exorcism miracles which many scholars accept as likely) and the resurrection. Methodologically, Crossan answers the first question of faith by arguing that he can discern the real historical Jesus through a lens created by the intersection of three "vectors": (1) the findings of cross-cultural anthropology; (2) Greco-Roman and especially Jewish History; and (3) literary or textual studies of biblical and apocryphal literature (including in particular the Gospel of Thomas) (xii-xiii).

In response to the second question of faith, Crossan asserts that "Christian belief is (1) an act of faith (2) in the historical Jesus (3) as the manifestation of God" (200). While this response posits a significant security in our historical understanding of Jesus, Crossan qualifies it slightly by noting the existence of many different interpretations of Jesus throughout history, and by arguing that "Christianity must repeatedly, generation after generation, make its best historical judgement about who *Jesus was then* and, on that basis, decide what that reconstruction means as *Christ now*" (200). In both formulations, this approach rejects doctrine and dogma as a source of faith and the understanding of Jesus' offices (such as the Savior, the Son of God, etc.) found within those traditions. The emphasis is on Jesus as exemplar, or manifestation, of God on Earth. Equally, Crossan's approach implicitly rejects the use of the official biblical cannon except as one of many historical sources of research.

Marcus Borg's *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, as suggested in its subtitle, is a document of faith. Indeed, in many places it is a personal statement of faith. It is not a biography (though it contains much biographical material) so much as it is an effort to identify how a person of faith can utilize the findings of historical research, to which Borg refers as "images of Jesus," to flesh out their Christian lives. "Images of Jesus matter," Borg argues. "[T]here is a strong connection between images of Jesus and images of the Christian life." They can give "shape to the Christian life" and "can make Christianity credible or incredible" (1-2).

Like Crossan, Borg rejects tradition, dogma and doctrine as significant sources of faith. He too answers the first question of faith with emphatic self-assurance that we can indeed "know" the historical Jesus based upon available historical sources. And, as illustrated in the above quotation, he answers the second question by asserting a close relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. However, while Crossan makes this link absolute based upon a direct act of faith, Borg suggests, but does not adequately explore, the idea that the Christ experience rests in our present experiences of "sacred mystery" (14). Based upon his own personal spiritual journey, Borg argues that we discover God through ecstatic mystical experiences which establish God as "no longer a concept or an article of belief, but...[as] an element of experience" (15). While he identifies the *post-Easter Jesus* (a term he prefers to the more common "Christ of faith") as a source of this experience of God, in his own personal statement of his spiritual journey he appears to deny Jesus any role within this experience.

Instead, he focuses upon the *pre-Easter Jesus* (again, his preferred term to the more common "historical Jesus") as providing a model for the interpretation and understanding of this experience. Here, the pre-Easter Jesus gives dogmatic shape to Christian faith based upon Jesus as a "spirit person," someone with, as Schleiermacher described it, a pervasive "God consciousness" that can exemplify such experiences to us. By taking us within this new reality, Jesus created a paradigmatic relationship with the world which Christians are to adopt.

There are problems with both of these works. Crossan's *Jesus*, while easier to read than his *The Historical Jesus*, concomitantly lacks the detailed arguments of the later book. Given its intended audience of general readers, this might mislead them as to the nature and the reliability of Crossan's historical research. Borg's book is equally lacking in detailed arguments in support of his historical conclusions. While one cannot criticize him for this, in that that is not the intention of the book itself, one can critique his misstatements regarding the Jesus Seminar (of which both he and Crossan were prominent members). Specifically, Borg misstates the circumstances and the findings of the Jesus Seminar as reflecting a "consensus" among biblical scholars, whereas in fact, the seminar's findings reflect the majority position (taken by vote) among a self-selected, limited group of biblical scholars both from within and without the academy. This distinction is particularly important where, as is the case with Borg, the book is intended for the general populace.

On the positive side, both of these books present strong images of Jesus in the context of faith. That is to say, both provide a historically plausible portrait of the *pre-Easter Jesus* and a context within which that portrait may be incorporated within an individual's understanding of the Christian faith.

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Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam. By Talal Asad. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8018-4631-5. Pp. 335.

Genealogies of Religion may prove to be an important book for theological discussion even though, strictly speaking, it is anthropology. Talal Asad has offered a critical and much needed discussion on the development of religious practices within the setting of culturally specific norms and relationships of power. He does this by concentrating, in a section entitled "Archaisms," on practices of pain, discipline, and truth in medieval monasticism. The specificity of his examples has the consequence of offering the reader a well-argued and precise exposition of religious "truth" fabricated within social practices of power. It is a perspective that cannot be allowed to escape the imagination of religious thinkers. Though it will be interesting to see the reaction of Islamic scholars, this review will confine its comments to the Christian side.

Asad is first critical of Clifford Geertz's well known article, "Religion as a