
The Rivers of Paradise: Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad as Religious Founders. Edited by David Noel Freedman and Michael J McClymond. Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2001. ISBN 0-8028-4540-1. Pp.ix+702.

The Rivers of Paradise is a wonderful book by any standard. It brings together serious scholarship from a variety of different fields in Religious Studies, and weaves them together in a fluid and elegant piece of work. David Noel Freedman has outdone himself again.

The book opens with an excellent forward by Hans Kung, in which he makes a very strong political statement about the need for world peace via peace among the religions of the world. This seems to be the motivation behind *The Rivers of Paradise*. It is a dialogue between Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity and Islam, and the conversation centers around the founders of these traditions. It thus begins the dialogue with the beginning: the men who were the primal forces behind these monumental movements.

David Noel Freedman then gives an excellent introduction in which he explains and justifies his choice of founders for this book. He explains why Jesus is relevant for example, and yet Zoroaster is not, or why there is no figure representing Hinduism. He argues that he wanted to discuss the founders of traditions that continue to generate significant amounts of followers. Although Zoroaster may be a founder in every sense of the word, Zoroastrianism has dwindled into a tiny community without a significant following today. There is no founder for Hinduism on the other hand, because Hinduism in general does not revolve around any one religious figure. Thus, he only chose those founders which continue to generate interest today in a significant way, and who can really be said to be central to the tradition. Freedman also makes reference to the "impressive" 600 year cycle of these religious founders, and this is the source of my only criticism of his introduction. He states, and he is not the first to do so, that religious founders tend to appear in the world in cycles of 600 years, but he fails to note that the dates of each and every one of these founders is extensively contested in their respective scholarship. Although such a sweeping statement is certainly impressive at first glance, it is the result of being highly selective and arbitrary with the dates one assigns to each founder. Freedman closes beautifully however, as he emphasizes once again the moving force behind the book which is to promote peace among the nations and the nations' religions.

The bulk of the book consists of thorough discussions of each of these five figures, namely Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus and Muhammad, by excellent scholars and writers. Each scholar addresses the question of the historicism of the founder, and then moves onto an exploration of the life of that founder as presented by the primary material. The articles are thorough, well-written and present very critical scholarship. Carl S. Ehrlich does an excellent piece on the life of Moses, with consistent footnotes and bibliographical refer-

ences which are very useful for the reader. Richard S. Cohen examines the life of the Buddha from a particularly Mahayanist perspective, and offers some very interesting insights into the differences between Buddha and the other figures discussed in the book insofar as their title "founder" is concerned. Mark Csikszentmihalyi gives a very interesting and analytical account of the life of Confucius. Michael J. McClymond does an excellent survey of the life of Jesus and the many trends of interpretation of his life—a miraculous feat given the staggering quantity of material available. Finally, Daniel C. Peterson discusses the life of Muhammad. He too, does a wonderful job of presenting the modern trends regarding Muhammad's life, and then himself discusses this prophet's life with an excellent mix of empathy and professional scholarship. All the contributors in this book provide thorough accounts of the lives of these important founders of today's religions.

Michael J. McClymond concludes this survey with what is perhaps the most important contribution to this book, namely a discussion of the appropriateness and applicability of term "founder." Were all these men, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus and Muhammad, truly founders, or were they something else? McClymond argues that it is time to move beyond the Weberian categories, and to consider the possibility that there is no such thing as a founder of a religion, for the beginnings of religion are always more complicated than the work or experiences of one man. He argues that we need to redefine the concept of religious founder, and suggests that we think of these men as men who *reaffirmed* the religions of their own past, and yet *radicalized* and *re-ritualized* these traditions by re-interpreting the rituals already instituted, and then who engaged in mutual *responsiveness* with their communities—rather than having orchestrated everything on their own. With these concluding remarks, and a series of responses to these remarks from each of the contributors, the reader is taken full circle, and is left with many new and exciting ideas about religious heroes and their status in world religions.

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Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson. Edited by Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjar-dins ESCJ 9. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 2000. ISBN 0-88920-356-3. Pp. xvi + 612.

Peter Richardson, professor of religious studies at the University of Toronto, has been a leading voice in the field of Christian origins, and a guiding influence within the Canadian sphere. This collection of essays, presented to him on the occasion of his 65th birthday, both honours his contribution to the field as well as challenges readers to reflect upon the methodological approaches regnant within New Testament studies. A key methodological challenge that Richardson has raised over the past few decades has been the need to move