

theological sensitivity. Porter's interpretation offers a more sympathetic view of missionary labor than most recent historiography, but none can question its validity. Christian universities would do well to consider assigning such work in history and religion courses as a model to students. Besides providing a nearly exhaustive account of the history of the Protestant missionary movement and a vigorous refutation of the notion that missionaries always "colonized" their converts, it shows young Christian scholars that religious belief can inform our professional work. If crafted with the rigor Porter exemplifies, such scholarship can also command the respect of our profession.

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Pazmiño, Robert W. *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 304 pp., paperback, \$26.99.

Review by Matthew Emile Vaughan

Robert W. Pazmiño's *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective* was rereleased in 2008, twenty years after its original publication in 1988. Pazmiño structures the book around seven "foundational issues" facing the modern American Christian educator. I follow Robert Drov Dahl's lead in outlining the book: Drov Dahl argues that the sections on Biblical, theological and philosophical considerations (chapters 1-3) offer "transcultural" insights informing Pazmiño's view of education; the historical, sociological, and psychological chapters (4-6) offer "contextual/cultural insight into Christian education"; and Pazmiño's section dealing with curriculum offers direction for the content of education.⁶⁶ The whole book, therefore, is one large enumeration of "Points to Ponder" (which is the title he gives the discussion questions posed at the end of each chapter of the third edition). Of all of the foundations, questions regarding the primacy of the biblical text itself were most central to his overarching structure.

⁶⁶ See Robert Drov Dahl, review of *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*, by Robert W. Pazmiño, *Christian Scholar's Review* 19 (S 1989): 101-2. His was the most helpful of the reviews that the first edition received.

The 2008 edition is the third edition of this text, and some of the material has been updated.⁶⁷ The main contribution of the third edition is the pair of short (about ten pages each) appendices that conclude the book. These appendices deal with the issue of postmodernism in the American church.

Pazmiño begins the book with a chapter articulating a biblical rationale for including education as part of the evangelical agenda. Beginning with a lengthy reading of the *shema*, he presents a Christocentric reading of the Bible as a model for the function and content of Christian education. The most unique aspect of this section is his insistence upon placing worship as the central "hub" of his Biblical rationale for Christian education. Throughout the book, he frequently links education and worship: in his mind education leads to worship, and education is accomplished through worship. Pazmiño argues that an evangelical theology of education must be based on four key "elements": "[B]iblical authority, the necessity of conversion, the redemptive work of Jesus, and personal piety." He argues that the Apostles' Creed should be a model for systematically articulating a theology of education. Pazmiño also introduces the reader to many of the myriad philosophical issues that Christian educators must consider as they appropriate education in their contexts. He argues that all evangelical theological educators must embrace a Christian epistemology that sees knowledge first through the lens of the Bible.

In the second set of chapters, Pazmiño exonerates history, extolling its potential benefits as an entity that can put views, practices, and possibilities in conversation. He then moves into a generalized introduction to and commentary on some of the major evangelical theorists of recent times (Gaebelein, LeBar, Richards, and Getz). The chapter on sociology (his best) includes a lengthy discussion of the educational implications of contextualization and decontextualization in modern American culture. The section on sociology also presents classic examples of Pazmiño doing an evangelical reading of other scholars' theories (see below). The chapter on psychology is particularly dense, dealing with insights from developmental psychology and several prominent modern psychologists (Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, and Fowler, among others).

The section dealing with curriculum is the weakest in the book. Once Pazmiño enumerates (but does not answer) several of what he sees to be the various "basic" curricular questions (who/what/where to teach, etc.), he

⁶⁷ The first two editions were in 1988 and 1997, also by Baker.

interprets the educational process through three possible metaphors: production, growth, and pilgrimage. However, he never fully embraces any of them. He concludes with a cursory reading of Titus 2:1-15.

Pazmiño concludes the book with two appendices dealing with the issue of postmodernity in America, an ideology he interprets as being inconsistent with evangelicalism. The first appendix primarily presents Christian educators with the task of "proclaiming" the truth of Christ in a cultural and intellectual milieu that, as he sees it, rejects truth. The second appendix encourages the reader to consider several issues related to "crossing over" into postmodernity: the role of relationship and community within current society, the potentials associated with service for the "common good," and the use of narrative and worship as a bridge to the minds of people today.

The book is thoroughly evangelical: evangelism, God's role in the educational life of the church, and the divine nature of truth play a central role in all of Pazmiño's proposals. Frequently his critiques have to do with the failure of non-evangelicals to address the issues (such as the implications of sin in the world) that are foundational to evangelical thought. For example, his section dealing with Jürgen Habermas's sociology of knowledge⁶⁸ provides a fascinating look at his evangelical reading methodology: he argues that evangelical educators should reinterpret Habermas's emphasis on sociological autonomy as "theonomy"—a communal dependence on God alone.

Pazmiño's writing is quite clear and concise (albeit a bit dry), and he includes a number of helpful charts and graphs throughout the work. He cites a myriad of sources, but he often does so quite superficially—referencing one or two pages of a particular book in order to supplement his thesis. He is, however, humble: never does he speak pejoratively of the scholars to whom he reacts. He does tend to cite outdated (older than thirty years old) sources, though. And he cites himself a great deal (Pazmiño is quite prolific).

There were a few aspects of the book with which I took issue. This book (especially the appendices) encourages the reader to embrace the absolutes of evangelicalism in the face of a postmodern America. What it should be dealing with, as a fundamental issue, is what new forms education is taking as a result of this intellectual landscape. How can these new models be reinterpreted to fit the evangelical point of view? How is evangelical

theological education going to look now that church attendance is declining in many mainline denominations?

Pazmiño frequently revisits the idea that Christian education is "preparadigmatic" in nature (an argument that has resulted in high praise from reviewers; see Drov Dahl), and by that he means that Christian education has yet to reach its final "paradigmatic" form. This insightful thesis informs several ideas throughout the rest of the book. My only critique is that Christian education is not *preparadigmatic*; it is *aparadigmatic*. It has always been in flux, and it always will be.

I cannot help but wonder why Pazmiño waited until 2008 to include the sections on postmodernism; these chapters would have been equally appropriate in 1988. Also, he never defines postmodernity as anything but the tendency to reject truth. This type of generalized description is neither helpful nor consistent with the careful scholarship in the rest of the book. These appendices were too brief to provide a helpful introduction to the cultural and ideological shifts that have changed the landscape of American churches in recent years.

Also, the lines between evangelical theological education (what he calls "Christian education"⁶⁹) and education are deeply blurred in this book. He alternates between talking about each in unclear ways. Perhaps this is intentional—subtly expressing his desire for his readership to see the two as being intrinsically linked—or perhaps it is simply a failure to limit the scope of the book clearly.

Pazmiño wrote the book for an evangelical audience in upper-level undergraduate and seminary classrooms. Despite the weaknesses of the third edition, in this context his book will indeed continue to be a useful starting point for discussions of the various issues related to Christian education. The problem is that, for the purpose of classroom discussion, Pazmiño leaves the reader no choice but to supplement his work with further reading on postmodernism.

⁶⁹ I take issue with that troublesome terminology. What Pazmiño terms "Christian education" is often evangelical catechesis. Consider the number of Christian schools, universities, and institutions that teach through a Christian worldview, but do not teach theological content. Is this not still Christian education? I propose "evangelical theological educator" and "evangelical theological education" as clearer terms for what Pazmiño calls "Christian educator" and "Christian education." Pazmiño does, from time to time, use the term "evangelical educator," which is a more appropriate term.

⁶⁸ In this section (pp. 179-180), Pazmiño specifically reacts to Habermas's *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon, 1971).

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Lynch, Joseph. *Early Christianity: A Brief History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 288 pp., paperback, \$29.95.

Review by Paul D. Haynie

This text was sent to this reviewer unsolicited and almost ended up in his automatic reject pile. Something, though, drew him to read a chapter, and he was captured. Lynch does the seemingly impossible, reigniting interest and offering fresh insights into a subject area which this professor has trudged through for many years using too many stifling texts.

It was with a certain sense of resentment that this reviewer pored over these clear, no-nonsense chapters, wishing all along he had had such a readable, understandable text when he was laboring among the stacks of his graduate school library. (Graduate and under-graduate church history students everywhere should rejoice if they have the good fortune to be assigned this stimulating and informative text.) There might also have lingered within this reader a modicum of envy of Lynch's ability to present complicated and typically dry topics with such an off-handed ease, blinding clarity, and common sense approach.

This impressive accomplishment assuredly reflects a profound knowledge of the subject and period achieved only through years of Lynch's study and contemplation of the many thorny issues and convoluted events. Only one who has trodden these historic paths often and with sensitivity could produce such a superior, meaningful, and all around excellent guide through the heresies, theologies, and daily devotions of early Christianity.

Lynch is matter of fact in his style, and this reviewer could detect no grinding of axes or hobbies he was riding. This alone was very refreshing. The material presented is crisp and unvarnished, leaving the reader to do his or her own assessments.

If there is any quibble, it is sadly that on some subjects, Lynch does not give us enough! For example, his treatment of Augustine, while good, left much unsaid. Realizing the text is titled "A Brief History" accounts for some of this, and it is only a small quibble, and one which demonstrates his envious talent, for he leaves his reader wanting more.

Tragically, Professor Lynch died unexpectedly in December 2008. The field of church history has lost a master communicator. While reading this text,

this reviewer hoped Lynch would next turn his abilities to a history of the Reformation. Regrettably, this will not be possible; however, Lynch does have in print *The Medieval Church: A Brief History*, a text this reviewer has on order and relishes with anticipation reading and reviewing in the future.

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