

ar's task as a "two-stage process" (pp. 165, 171). We must attend to semantic possibilities before truth questions. Even when the goal is theological, this first step is an independent work, propaedeutic to interpretation. But this does not exclude a second operation that seeks to be of "value in communicating the Christian gospel to ordinary people" (p. 190). Barton admits, "This has happened patchily, but still to a significant extent, in biblical studies" (pp. 177, 180). In a challenge for the future, he writes, "My own conviction is that this is because hardly anyone has ever tried" (p. 190).

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Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement. By Kathy Ehrensperger. New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2007. Pp. xiv + 235. Cloth, \$140.00.

This book argues that Paul approached power in a differentiated manner, one that should not be subsumed under the rubric of domination or power-over. Kathy Ehrensperger provides a contextually sensitive reading of Paul's power discourse in order to provide insights into how authority was deployed within the early Christ-movement.

Chapter One serves as an introduction to the book and orients the reader to previous studies on Paul and power (e.g. Schütz, Holmberg, Kittredge, and Polaski), and Ehrensperger's presuppositions, which include Paul's Jewish embeddedness and the Roman empire as his primary interlocutor. These guide her exegetical choices throughout the book, e.g. Paul's approach to argumentation is sourced in the Jewish

symbolic universe, and the domination of the Roman empire serves as a key reason why Paul chose not to seek to dominate members of the early Christ-movement. Ehrensperger's approach to Paul and power is examined as his extant letters are interpreted in a dialectic between his epistolary discourse and contemporary power theories (e.g., Weber, Foucault, Arendt, Wartenberg, and Allen). Chapter Two surveys these approaches to power, provides an explanatory rationale for her study, and argues that a binary understanding of power in Paul is unwarranted and that he deployed power for empowerment and not for domination. Thus, Paul's approach to power was strategic, situationally determined, and combined aspects of "power-over, power-to, and power-with" (p. 34) in order to establish stable communities of Christ-followers throughout the Mediterranean basin.

Chapter Three extends Ehrensperger's argument by explaining how communication occurred within the Pauline communities. Paul is understood as part of a network of leaders working together to establish communities of Christ-followers by means of letters that relied on the resources of kinship language to establish their social identity in Christ. Ehrensperger's contrapuntal reading is evident as she understands that Paul was in a hierarchically-defined, asymmetrical relationship with his addressees, but that this relationship was temporary and that planned obsolescence, similar to Wartenberg's concept of "transformative power" (p. 61), describes accurately Paul's application of power. Chapter Four addresses Paul's discourse of grace, not as a hidden discourse of power but as an other-centered discourse of empowerment sourced in Israel's Scriptures.

Chapters Five and Six focus on the

interaction of identity, power, and culture within the Christ-movement in light of the Roman Empire. The subversive nature of the apostolic message as an "alternative value system" (p. 97) to Roman elitism is discussed as the leaders of the Christ-movement are understood to be re-socializing key components of Roman social identity within the constraints placed upon them by the empire. Chapters Seven and Eight argue that Paul's approach to communal formation was thoroughly Jewish in its orientation. Paul's epistolary discourse is understood in the context of Jewish pedagogical practices, a procedure that allows Ehrensperger to uncover analogs for Paul's discourse primarily in the Jewish Scriptures and not in Greco-Roman moral philosophers. Paul functions as a group prototype or exemplar in his letters, and Ehrensperger discusses mimesis as an implicit critique of Roman imperial ideology and a call to follow those who "embody the message of the gospel and its alternative values" (p. 154). Chapter Nine argues that Paul was seeking to transform communal life within the Christ-movement based on a prior relationship of trust between Paul and his audience, and that if Paul's goal was to dominate the group, letters would be an inefficient way to accomplish that. Chapter Ten concludes by arguing that Paul exercised power in a transformative manner and that he would not exercise it in a manner similar to the Roman empire, since that would be inconsistent with the message of Israel's Scriptures and Christ crucified.

Ehrensperger has produced an excellent monograph that provides a fine example of how contemporary social-scientific theories can interact with ancient texts. One slight concern: 1 Corinthians 4:21 is rightly noted as a counter-example of

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transformative power...that...will be addressed in section "10.4" (179 n. 2). When one reads that section, however, one finds only a general discussion about how the leaders in the Christ-movement did not always live up to the standards of the gospel. A discussion of how this key verse on Paul and power is to be understood in the context of transformative power would have been helpful. That slight concern aside, this monograph deserves a wide reading from Pauline scholars, graduate students looking for an excellent example of clear argumentation, and practitioners in ministry who will find in it timely insights into how to apply Paul's theologizing to concrete ministry settings.

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