

Article review written by: Peder Borgen

The author observes that many Christians are regrettably uninformed concerning the roots of Christianity in Hebrew soil. Christian educational institutions have been largely responsible for this lack. Thus, the primary objective of the book is to serve as text for Christian seminarians and collegians, clergy and church leaders, and lay persons who are serious students of Scripture, theology and history. The author has defined and translated the Hebrew terms, and has given study and discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

The book is divided into five main sections. Section one, "A New People: Abraham's Spiritual Children," clarifies what it means for Gentiles to be spiritual Semites. Section two focuses on Christian-Jewish relations throughout two thousand years of history. In section three the author seeks to establish the importance of the Old Testament for understanding the New Testament. Section four deals more fully with areas in which Hebrew heritage should be rediscovered by the Church. Finally, section five points to practical ways which Christians can follow to become more firmly attached to their Jewish roots and cultivate fruitful relations with the Jewish community of today.

Although portions of the book were previously published, and reflect research done by other scholars, it has a unity and wholeness of its own. Its aim is important and relevant: the Church needs to rediscover more fully its Hebrew roots. The author rightly points to the Jewishness of Jesus as he was preaching to his fellow Jews that the kingdom was at hand. However, he might have entered more deeply into a discussion of how far ancient Judaism itself was part of Hellenism.

The author makes the important distinction between the New Testament time when the *adversus Judaeos* polemic as "an intra-family device" used by Jews to win other Jews to the Christian faith, and the second century and onward when such polemic often turned anti-Semitic. Then throughout the centuries anti-Semitic rhetoric and persecutions have played a tragic part, and Christians have time and again blamed the Jews as a collective for the death of Jesus. Wilson indicates that we have to do away with the idea of a never-ending collective guilt. Thus, children do not automatically share the guilt for misdeeds done by their parents.

The author's discussion of Jews, Christians and the Land is excellent. He states that Christian solidarity with Israel does not imply the negation of Palestinian Arabs. Moreover, dialogues face to face between Jews and Christians are to be encouraged. The wide diversity among the Jews and within Judaism, deserved a fuller treatment, since it was the case already in the Second Temple period.

Wilson's book is helpful, rich, stimulating and challenging. The reviewer recommended it as a text book, and also hopes that it will reach a wide group of readers, both Christians and Jews. All will learn and benefit from it.

A new book by Marvin R. Wilson, Harold J. Ockenga
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