

lished. In the introduction a list is given of the standard abbreviations of certain words called *nomina sacra*, including 'God', 'Christ', and others; and there are notes on other abbreviations and how scribes made corrections, and the Greek letters used as numerals (pp. 34-35).

An important feature is the comment on the textual affinity of each manuscript (except for the few whose text is too limited to ascertain the affinity). These earliest manuscripts give small comfort to those who claim that the Greek text that in general underlies the King James and New King James versions of the New Testament, the so-called Majority Text (since it is found in most later manuscripts), is the most faithful to the original New Testament text. None of these earliest manuscripts support this text, and the large majority support in general the form of the text found in the UBS Greek text and the NIV and NRSV (see pp. 27-29). Likewise, this volume can be used to show the falsehood of claims by followers of some sects and religions that the original text of the New Testament has been lost or falsified through the centuries.

The inclusion of photographs of a majority of the manuscripts enables the reader to obtain a very informative idea of the manuscripts and their style of handwriting. The Introduction includes a discussion of the four types of uncial handwriting (pp. 24-27). Following a common practice, in the printed text letters that are uncertain have a dot placed beneath them, and text that is missing but presumed to have been in the text is enclosed in square brackets. The text is printed with lines matching the format of the text in each manuscript.

In this book textual students and scholars have a wealth of information available. But persons who are merely curious to know what ancient manuscripts of the New Testament looked like will be rewarded by looking at the book's many photographs. Editors Comfort and Barrett are to be commended for their labors that have produced this volume.

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Anatolios, Khaled. *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

As the title indicates, this book describes the theology of Athanasius of Alexandria as a coherent system. What may be surprising to many readers is that a book-length treatment of Athanasian theology does not already exist. But while his historical importance is widely recognized, Athanasius has remained largely the property of patristics scholars until recently. The great merit of Anatolios' book, a revision of his 1997 Boston College dissertation, is that he has identified this lacuna and undertaken to fill it with a monograph that draws out the "implied systematic framework" underlying Athanasius' scattered, ad hoc, and mostly polemical writings. Anatolios intends for his book to do three things: offer a comprehensive, organic interpretation of Athanasius' writings; refute several current misunderstandings of Athanasius' work by showing that they rest on partial interpretations

rather than a total view; and introduce the theology of Athanasius as a credible dialogue partner for contemporary theology.

The great danger in this undertaking, Anatolios admits, is that of imposing a systematic framework from later ages onto the fourth-century bishop. Instead, the proper procedure is to pay close attention to the terms and rhetorical moves in the writings themselves, and thereby to identify the intrinsic center of coherence in Athanasius' theology. The central theme he selects is not at first sight an especially promising one for focusing the investigation: it is "the distinction, and simultaneous relation, between God and the world." But in four chapters, Anatolios traces this "systematic insistence on the simultaneity of divine transcendence and nearness to the world" through Athanasius' writings before, during, and after the Arian crisis, as well as in its application to the Christian life.

Anatolios sets his chosen theme against a broad horizon of pre-Christian thought, surveying Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic models of the God-world relationship. But his main interest is in tracing the history of Christian ideas about God's relation to the world. Anatolios tells a fairly familiar story in which the second-century apologists, seduced by the philosophical problem of transcendence (questions such as "how can the one bring forth the many," and "how can the timeless have contact with the temporal"), veered toward abstract ideas of God. Irenaeus emerges as the hero in this account, coming to the rescue with a more biblical theology which sees God's transcendence as inclusive of an immediate presence to creation via the fully divine Son and Spirit. Athanasius stands in this tradition, restating the Irenaean theology in his fourth-century Alexandrian context.

Adolf Harnack famously argued that Athanasius was a soteriological thinker to the exclusion of any discernible philosophical interest, but Anatolios marshals evidence from more recent scholarship to show that Athanasius had a lively sense of the metaphysical claims demanded by his account of salvation. Much of Anatolios' book proceeds by way of lengthy quotations from Athanasius, followed by commentary designed to show how his biblical theology served as the guide for his judicious philosophical eclecticism. The exposition alternates between close attention to Athanasius' distinctive vocabulary ("participation," "appropriation," and a range of words connoting "interiorization,") and some rather sweeping abstract summaries: "Salvation-history is preconfigured by ontological polarities." It is a helpful combination, swinging the reader's attention back and forth from close contact with the text to expansive views of its implications. Anatolios is a sympathetic listener who goes to great lengths to give Athanasius the benefit of any doubt. His reading of Athanasius is almost belligerently loyal.

Nowhere is Anatolios's hermeneutic of charity more evident than in his treatment of Athanasian christology. The influential distinction made by Aloys Grillmeier between Logos-Sarx and Word-Man models of patristic christology may have great explanatory power, but it has long been invoked to sideline Athanasius as a church father having nothing more than a "space-suit christology" in the words of one recent critic. Anatolios undertakes to rehabilitate Athanasius' reputation by paying close attention to his characteristic vocabulary. Though it is true that he described Christ's human body as the "instrument" of the Word, the main emphasis for Athanasius was always on the fact of this body's "appropriation" by the Son of God. The Son of God made this human body completely and properly his own, so that while the subject of the incarnate experiences was

the Word, the body was in no way external to the Word's subjectivity.

In an imaginative effort to let Athanasius respond to his modern critics, Anatolios takes the offensive by using Athanasian categories to critique later christological assumptions. In his view, it is fundamentally wrongheaded to juxtapose the human and the divine in Christ as two natures facing each other in a static configuration. Rather than a "composition christology" concerned to describe the coexistence of two natures, Athanasius operated with a teleological conception oriented toward the dynamic intervention of God to save the human race. Anatolios calls this way of thinking a "*hina* christology," a christology of the purpose clause. This is why Athanasius is never content to say flatly that Christ suffered: he must immediately go on to add the "in order that" clause, to show that Christ suffered as one who mastered suffering in the very act of undergoing it on our behalf. The threat of apparent docetism dissolves into the promise of pervasive soteriology.

This suggestion for an Athanasian christology (with the emphasis on the transformative purpose, the incarnation) is perhaps the most controversial element in Anatolios' book, chiefly because he does not spell out the implications of this laudable fourth-century way of thinking for the more rigorous conciliar christology of the next hundred years culminating at Chalcedon. In a footnote, he drops a hint that the later Egyptian rejection of Chalcedonian thought may in fact be based on the an Athanasian mindset which sees Chalcedonian christology as static, non-teleological and non-transformative. It is a provocative and stimulating section of the book, raising far more questions than it can possibly settle.

Rather than pursuing these questions, Anatolios makes a deft transition to his next discussion: the life of grace which follows from a transformative christology. Athanasius' hagiography of the monk Antony is the primary text here, and two related themes emerge from it: First, Antony's life of holiness is offered as evidence that Christ is risen and active in the world, overthrowing wickedness; and second, Antony is described as Christ's co-worker. Anatolios offers a careful description of this synergistic life of grace, showing how Antony's labor is dependent on, derivative from, and directed toward the work of Christ. Antony's balance between patiently waiting on deliverance from God on the one hand and passionately striving and battling against evil on the other hand is a good reminder of why John Wesley was drawn to the spirituality embodied here. Perhaps the chief merit of Anatolios' book is that he shows how the broad outline of the theology of Athanasius serves to underwrite this spirituality.

By way of conclusion, Anatolios attempts a direct comparison of the Athanasian view of the God-world relation with the views of two modern theologians: Schleiermacher and Barth. The result is little more than a puppet show, with Schleiermacher standing in for one-sided pantheistic immanentism and Barth representing the one-sided transcendence of a God who is wholly other. This is not quite fair to either thinker, but it is an especially rough handling of Barth. After Anatolios has done so much careful work in bringing out the lines of Athanasian theology, it is a shame that he resorts to such a facile maneuver at the end. He has argued strenuously for Athanasius as the classic proponent of a distinctively Christian understanding of the convergence of God's immanence and transcendence, and this should have enabled him to engage the nature-grace discussion in twentieth century Roman Catholic theology, or at the very least to have interacted with Kathryn

Tanner's celebrated thesis regarding the "non-contrastive" view of transcendence in Christian theology. In spite of this disappointing final section, Anatolios' book does succeed in its stated aim of setting the theology of Athanasius before us as a systematic whole, and as a viable dialogue partner for contemporary theology.

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Black, Kathy. *Worship Across Cultures: A Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Kathy Black's *Worship Across Cultures* is a useful examination of United Methodist worship practices across twenty-one cultural groups in America. The author, professor of Homiletics and Liturgics at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, Calif., has provided brief, clear descriptions of worship in these various groups, arranging the information by a recurring set of categories. Black's use of these categories allows comparison across cultural groups. She organizes the information on each group under the larger categories of Word, sacramental practices, and rituals of passage and, within these, under more specific issues like language, time, space, prayer, music, preaching, baptism, Communion, weddings, and funerals.

Black developed her book's findings by a process of clergy interviews and written questionnaires. If appropriate (in the case of large groups or groups with generational differences), she interviewed more than one representative from each group.

Each cultural group gets its own chapter. The twenty-one cultural groups represent those cultures that have established United Methodist congregations pastored by ministers of that culture in the native language(s). (The book's cultural groupings do not necessarily reflect all cultures represented by *individual* United Methodists.) Some group identifiers are large and not-unexpected, e.g., Euro-American and African-American, whereas many represent groups often overlooked or forgotten, e.g., Hmong-American, Laotian-American, and Ghanaian-American. Asian or Pacific islander cultures make up fourteen of the twenty-one groups. Black provides two appendices (one on names for God, Jesus Christ, and church in the various languages and one on calendars) and a glossary of worship-related terms from the various cultures.

The book is a unique contribution to descriptions of current Methodist worship. While there are, for example, single volumes which look at worship in a Hispanic or African-American context, I know of no similar study that examines United Methodist worship across such a wide range of ethnic and cultural groups. In particular, Black's desire to provide a format by which comparison can be made across the different groups on specific issues is especially helpful.

The subtitle gives a hint as to the best use of this book: it is a handbook aimed at providing introductory, condensed information about cultural distinctives in worship. Thus, someone asked to lead worship in a culture different than her/his first culture would benefit from reading the appropriate section of this book. I have also used the book as a sup-