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Review: The Fundamentals for the Twenty-First Century: Examining the Crucial Issues of the Christian Faith

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Acoemetæ, Bogomils, Malabar Christians, Ruthenian, and Zeon? These terms are taken from texts, events, or issues derived from Eastern Christianity. The dictionary shines here by providing access to terms that can no longer be neglected. The fall of the communist empire, the resultant growing awareness of and dialogue between evangelicals and the Eastern Orthodox, and the actual growth of Eastern Orthodoxy in the United States make the dictionary relevant. For evangelicals who do not know much about Roman Catholic liturgical and theological terms such as *forum internum* and *motu proprio* the book is also apropos. Because of these entries on Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, both the learning student and the learned scholar will benefit.

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The Fundamentals for the Twenty-First Century: Examining the Crucial Issues of the Christian Faith. By Mal Couch (ed.). Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000, 656 pp., \$29.99.

This collection of writings on theological themes is meant to do for the twenty-first century what *The Fundamentals*, edited by R. A. Torrey and A. C. Dixon, accomplished near the opening of the twentieth century. Subjects range from revelation, inspiration, hermeneutics, the fall, the Trinity, and the person and work of Christ to paganism, pluralism, missions, abortion, and eschatological areas.

Eminently readable single column paragraphs cover large white pages. Bold type sets off section headings, though textbook type numbering is only occasionally seen. Endnotes and three extensive helpful indices follow. Authors' pictures grace their chapters, and an introductory page lists contributors' positions and degrees without telling where the degrees were earned. Contrary to the publicist's claim of "34 of today's most recognizable Bible scholars and teachers," some are noticeably unrecognizable. Also strange is the "Abbreviations" page that features only four entries: BAGD, LXX, TDNT, and TWOT.

The collection begins in the theological categories of introduction and bibliology, mixed with theology proper. Attention is given to how one can know truth, then the concept that the written Word of God presents such truth, followed by the importance of hermeneutics. Unhappily, not much substantive hermeneutics can be discussed in twelve pages of summary.

After a challenging chapter on revelation, inspiration and inerrancy by Paige Patterson and Harold Foss, biblical creationism is defended by Jobe Martin, then Henry Morris covers man's fall and the consequent curse on creation. Robert Lightner next examines the doctrine of angels and demons, covering the topic well by using the biblical references, the only authoritative sources on the subject.

Two chapters—one by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the other by Thomas McCall—are dedicated to the topic of Israel. It is argued that literal Israel has a large place in God's covenant plans and that much of the OT promises made to Israel will be fulfilled for Jewish people who will yet come to faith in Christ. Premillennial eschatology is clearly espoused, but one wonders: Should this be a rallying point for twenty-first century orthodoxy? Interestingly, Fruchtenbaum argues that dispensationalism is inconsistent when it denies the continuity of circumcision for Jewish believers today. He holds that a distinction should be made between circumcision under the Abrahamic covenant and circumcision under the Mosaic Law. This chapter, however, is most disappointing. For example, no fewer than five lists are constructed—one fourteen points long—and they appear without much elaboration.

By contrast, some of the chapters are excellent. The better ones include Edward Hindson's historical introduction and his virgin birth chapter, Gary Habermas on the resurrection, Robert Lightner on the angelic realm, Thomas Edgar on spiritual truth, and Robert Gromacki on the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit. Chapters by Erwin Lutzer, Renald Showers, Wayne House, and John Walvoord are interesting but reprinted from previous works.

Tim and Beverly LaHaye each contribute chapters. Beverly's "The Christian Family in the Twenty-First Century" argues persuasively and biblically for complementary roles for men and women as God's design and presents practical descriptions of those roles as well as the role of the child. Tim exposes the spiritual and cultural warfare that engulfs today's world. Also dealing with divergent worldviews are Albert Platt, Gary Stewart, Thomas Ice, and David Noebel.

Several chapters are devoted to social issues—abortion (Showers), church and state in America (House), church and state in general (Paul Fink), and civil disobedience (Kerby Anderson). House's reprinted article traces American jurisprudence regarding *The Constitution's* "establishment of religion" clause, concluding that the present court narrowly favors cooperation between church and state rather than hostility, but noting that the future court makeup could alter that to favor a religion of secularism.

Most of the volume breaks no new ground but reiterates old truths. Some articles signal dangers in the church and secular trends that make these doctrines necessary for the twenty-first century. Though an attempt is made to pattern the volume after *The Fundamentals*, the influence of this latest work will not rival the former. The earlier writings were widely and freely (pun intended) circulated among thousands of missionaries and clergy and have been reprinted numerous times during the last century. Earlier writers included Benjamin Warfield, Campbell Morgan, James Orr, Reuben Torrey, Handley Moule, James Gray, Thomas Whitelaw, J. C. Ryle, and other extraordinary men from several continents. The present work, although containing some excellent scholars, does not rise to a level of greatness. Many of today's individual theologies are more complete and challenging than this work. The place for this product will be the homes of godly men and women who desire an easily understood theology that renews their thinking on the issues and challenges them to hold onto important beliefs.

Despite these reservations, I appreciated the generally thoughtful and well-written articles. Those who favor the pretribulation rapture, premillennial eschatology with the restoration of Israel, and a dispensationalism that distinguishes between the church and Israel, will find help. Recent creation, Noah's world-wide flood, evangelism and missions are espoused, while Lordship salvation, Hugh Ross's progressive creationism, and exercising gifts of healing and exorcism are opposed. Church ordinances and ecclesiology are ignored, but the work is eminently conservative. The most cited sources are Ryrie, Walvoord, Henry, Chafer, and Lightner.

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Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective. By William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton. Springfield: Logion, 1993, 304 pp., \$20.95. *Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. Edited by Stanley M. Horton. Springfield: Logion Press, 1995, 703 pp., \$34.99.

These two recently-reprinted volumes articulate the closest thing possible to official Assemblies of God (A/G) doctrine at the present time and as such are legitimate