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Review: Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14

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larger text is left unattended. Carson is a model of how to raise the issue, show its relevance to the text as a whole, provide a succinct interpretation, and then move on to the rest of the text; see e.g. his treatment of the structural and literary difficulties of Matthew 10 (p. 118) and the interpretation of 10:23 (p. 150). (6) His illustrations are timely and relevant. They appropriately illumine the Biblical text and bring it to modern application. He has a fine blend of personal and storied illustrations. (7) He treats controversial issues firmly yet fairly, openly yet sensitively. His tone is one of respect for those with whom he disagrees (e.g. the treatment of J. Wimber, pp. 120 ff.) without being wishy-washy. (8) His use of language is masterful. He has a classic British style, employing vocabulary, syntax, and turns of phrases in a disciplined yet unstilted manner.

Only minor items were distracting. For example, he uses extended poems and hymns throughout the book. They may be a blessing to some audiences but perhaps not to most contemporary churches. Such merely indicate personal preference and style. Indeed they indicate that Carson's personality comes through in real expositional ministry to a real congregation he loves.

If one is looking for a new commentary on the text of Matthew, one should look elsewhere. There is nothing really new in this book, except for what is always new: a fresh examination of the Biblical text in the light of the modern Church. Carson's purpose was not to provide new exegetical insight. That was undertaken primarily in his commentary on Matthew. His purpose was to provide relevant exposition based upon careful exegesis. This he accomplished masterfully.

I laud Carson's dual emphasis upon careful exegesis and relevant exposition. Rare are those who attempt to combine them. Perhaps the rarity is due to interest; perhaps it is due to ability. Whatever the case, Carson's attempt is significant. He is a leading figure in the evangelical scholarly community, and his emphasis upon communication to the broader world of the Church should encourage many more to address "one of the great needs of the church: the need to read the Bible in a way that simultaneously understands what the text is saying, and applies it fairly and closely to our own lives and to the world around us. If we lose the first of these two poles, we never hear the Word of God; if we lose the second, the Word never sings or stings" (p. 10). I will encourage my exegesis students to read this book as an example of balance in the ministry of the Word.

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Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14. By D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987, 220 pp., \$12.95 paper.

This recent work had its origin as the Moore College (Sydney, Australia) Lectures of 1985. It stands alongside Carson's earlier volume on 2 Corinthians 10-13, *From Triumphalism to Maturity* (Baker, 1984), as a significant contribution to the available literature on two notably difficult sections of Paul's Corinthian correspondence.

The book's stated intent is to address the thorny set of issues centering on 1 Corinthians 12-14 in connection with the charismatic movement, which is having a major (sometimes divisive) impact in many parts of the world and in various wings of Christendom (p. 11). The methodology employed is legitimately expositional while also theological in two different senses. It moves through 1 Corinthians 12-14 in four chapters (pp. 15-136), explaining the text and focusing

discussion on key ideas and issues. But Carson also provides more than enough logical and theological interaction with other doctrines and numerous other writers (both scholars and practitioners) to make it clear that "a theological exposition" is an appropriate subtitle for this work. Further, the final chapter of "reflections" (pp. 137-188) of a theologically integrative and pastoral nature is a most helpful, thought-provoking capstone to the presentation.

There is much to commend Carson's treatment to all wings of evangelicalism. Insightful exegetical discussion and tracing of wider ramifications of viewpoints, as well as (frequently comprehensive) awareness of and interaction with the relevant literature, characterize the book. Also, in an arena where there is frequently more (emotional) heat than (exegetical) light, most of the critiquing of views and conclusions presented have a notably even-handed, irenic tone. Further, the "Select Bibliography" (pp. 189-216) is complete enough to serve as a very helpful guide to the mountain of publications on 1 Corinthians 12-14. Combine all of this with Carson's probing but readable literary style, and the end result is a most effective package.

Unfortunately such obvious strengths do not guarantee that the book will be well received in many parts of the evangelical sector. If anything, not a few charismatics and noncharismatics alike will find it alternately laudable and troubling. Each will heartily agree at certain points and disagree (perhaps with great force) at others. Having staked out an exegetical and practical "middle ground" position on the controversial charismatic issues, Carson will likely get shot at by both charismatics and noncharismatics.

For example, it is doubtful that consensus (other than agreeing to disagree) will develop around either of the following statements. At the end of his exposition of 1 Corinthians 12 Carson writes: "If the charismatic movement would firmly renounce, on biblical grounds, not the gift of tongues but the idea that tongues constitute a special sign of a second blessing, a very substantial part of the wall between charismatics and noncharismatics would come crashing down" (p. 50). Certainly Carson is correct, but charismatics will view this suggestion as giving away too much and noncharismatics as not enough. Again, after speaking of the tendency of the Church to either intellectualize or emotionalize the faith, Carson concludes: "Noncharismatic evangelicals *tend* toward the former stereotype; charismatics *tend* toward the latter. Both have their dangers" (p. 106). Unfortunately, many from both camps will respond with "what you say has merit, but . . ." instead of allowing such perspective to help us all with a "wholistic [*sic*] integration of the two" (p. 106).

The book exhibits no glaring weaknesses. Two characteristics, however, could almost as easily be construed in a negative light as a positive one. The first has to do with Carson's extensive running interaction with the views of W. Grudem and M. M. B. Turner. While the views of both are incisive and obviously have impacted Carson, the dialogue may be disproportionate in an arena in which so much has been published. Second, while the pastoral reflections from Carson's own personal ministry (pp. 185-188) are helpful, the account of the incident could be taken as saying: "I've got it all together. What about you?"

In conclusion, it should be noted that the present reviewer approaches Carson's book from a noncharismatic perspective, one that differs from charismatics not on the need for the power of the Holy Spirit but rather on potential manifestations. From such a frame of reference this volume is highly recommended as either a primary text for specialized study in 1 Corinthians 12-14, as valuable collateral or reference material, or simply as "must" reading for evangelicals of all persuasions. It will prove thought-provoking on all those fronts. It should foster fresh discussion

among those of differing opinions on the charismatic issues. It must point the way toward the kind of humble forbearance by all that serves to promote "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:2-3).

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians. NICNT. By Gordon D. Fee. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, xxiv + 880 pp., \$27.95.

Fee has given us a paradigm of what a commentary should be. Even where one might disagree, no one—layperson, pastor, scholar or student—will find Fee's volume a disappointment.

Several significant features stand out. Fee's book consistently shows how the historical context in the Corinthian church (as he understands it) informs as well as grows out of the interpretation of individual passages. This in itself is a major value of the commentary. He regularly explains Greek grammar without building more on it than is warranted. Fee has few sacred cows and is not averse to opposing the majority of interpreters when he believes their case is not proven (e.g. he doubts that Paul's statement "you were washed" [6:11] is a baptismal allusion). For the nonscholar, Fee consistently explains in parentheses the technical terms he employs (e.g. he explains "anacolouthon" as "it doesn't follow grammatically" [p. 576]). He makes pointed and practical application of Paul's theology to the contemporary Church. Here Fee's heart as a churchman shines through, for he demonstrates that theology must be lived out today. Though he frequently decries how the historical Church has misapplied Paul's intentions, he forbids the Church today simply to sidestep or dismiss them.

Fee challenges the common view that in 1 Corinthians Paul is only informing and correcting the Corinthians in their deficiencies and that the major problem is their division into parties. Indeed he refutes the existence of parties at all. Rather, the letter is a frontal attack against the position of the Corinthians. Thus Fee sees the basic historical situation as "one of conflict between the church and its founder" (p. 6). Specifically, according to Fee, some in the community were leading the church in opposition to Paul's view of things. The letter's goals are to reassert Paul's authority and to convince them of the correctness of his theology and their need to conform their behavior to it. What was the theological division between Paul and the Corinthians? Fee's answer: what it means to be *pneumatikos*. The Corinthians are convinced that they are and that Paul is not. Glossolalia was the basic criterion for understanding spirituality. They had it, and they doubted Paul did. Against this backdrop Fee sets out to explain each passage. His case is thorough, persuasive and probably correct.

Fee's rigor and exegetical honesty demolish some pet interpretations and popular theology. A small sample must suffice. He rightly explains the building metaphor in 3:10-15 in terms of church leaders' work at building the corporate body, not individual, personal piety. In 5:5 he objects to the popular interpretation that the punishment of the incestuous man is physical suffering and even death. Instead Fee contends that the man's excommunication would result in the destruction of what was carnal in him so that he could experience eschatological salvation. The Corinthian slogan of 7:1 ("It is good not to touch a woman") indicates their position that sexual relations were out of place for spiritual people. Thus Paul's defense of marriage is not condescension to those who cannot control themselves