

may have been to archive texts that might later be retrieved (e.g., the books of Ezra-Nehemiah). She argues that scribes used writing to replicate space that could be adapted to their needs. Shawna Dolansky, in “Rejecting ‘Patriarchy’: Reflections on Feminism, Biblical Scholarship, and Social Perspective” (133–48), contends that many feminist interpreters take an ahistorical approach to biblical texts by imposing the contemporary category of “patriarchy” on biblical texts.

In sum, each of these essays contributes important insights on the ways that ancient scribes created their identity through the practice of their art.

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*On the Way: Religious Experience and Common Life in the Gospels and Letters of Paul.* By Kevin B. McCrudden. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2020. 210 pages. \$19.95 (paper).  
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In a crowded market of New Testament introductions, *On the Way: Religious Experience and Common Life in the Gospels and Letters of Paul* attempts to prick the curiosity of students by introducing the New Testament through the twin lenses of religious experience and communal response. The author holds that “the writings of the New Testament ... offer resources for wrestling with the complexity of issues that impinge upon [the students’] lives” (9) and desires to demonstrate “the relevance of the study of the New Testament for lived experience” (10).

To that end, McCrudden focuses on the canonical gospels and the undisputed Pauline letters, suggesting that both offer “different windows” into early Christian understanding of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The author does not explain why he begins with the Gospel of Mark, rather than the letters of Paul, which he acknowledges predate the Gospels, and therefore reflect the earliest Christian reflection on religious experience. But this placement may be due to his desire to focus on Paul’s contribution to the transformation and renewal of common life (193).

The book opens with a “Preface for Teachers,” which articulates the author’s motivation and goal for the work. In “Chapter 1: Religious Experience and the Common Life,” McCrudden discusses how religious experience is variously defined, the role of creativity and culture in interpretation, and the significance of the communal life, particularly in the first century. He does make a rather sweeping statement about American individualism in comparison to the communal sensibilities of the New Testament authors.

Given the increasing percentage of undergraduates from ethnic/cultural communities that uphold collectivist values, a more nuanced statement would better speak to a diverse audience.

The second through fifth chapters explore the Gospels, highlighting the evangelists' unique interpretation of the experience of Jesus. Each chapter contains well-footnoted historical background and provides discussion questions and suggestions for further reading at the end. Given the twin concerns of religious experience and communal life, McCrudden then chooses specific pericopes that explore these topics in detail.

In the second chapter, the author presents the actions and attitudes of Martin Luther King as a modern example of the Marcan Jesus' recognition that a life of service frequently leads to suffering. In the third chapter, "Encountering Matthew," a sidebar introduces Bonhoeffer, though a direct link is not made in the body of the text between the Matthean Jesus and this example. In the following chapters, no further examples are provided. This seems a missed opportunity that could have helped students more readily see the relevance of the gospel in the twenty-first century.

Whereas the gospel chapters are general introductions exploring the religious experience as recounted by the evangelists, the last three chapters turn to Paul and the undisputed Pauline letters. After "Encountering Paul: Reflections on Reconstructing the Historical Apostle," chapters 7 and 8, "Religious Experience and Common Life in the Letters of Paul: Participation in Christ and Ethical Transformation" and "Common Life in Crisis: Paul's Response in Letters to the Corinthians and Romans," focus more fully on the common life of early Christianity. Curiously, chapter 8 is the last word, since McCrudden didn't include a conclusion to his book. Perhaps because resources for further reading are presented at the conclusion of each chapter, there is no bibliography, but the book does include a helpful index.

Attending to visual learners, *On the Way* has numerous images and charts that illustrate the content. It would have been helpful to have the charts referenced in the body of the text so that readers could more easily align the information in the charts with the topic in the text.

McCrudden envisioned his monograph as a text for undergraduates, and his writing is clear, concise, and free from abstruse jargon. But his fulsome footnotes and additional references make the book useful for a seminary or lower-level graduate course. The text's readability also makes it accessible and interesting to the adult learner or Bible study group.

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