Book Reviews

Mark Safstrom, assistant professor of Scandinavian studies, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois

Elizabeth Pierre, assistant professor of pastoral care and counseling and counseling psychology, North Park Theological Seminary and North Park University School of Professional Studies, Chicago, Illinois

Philip J. Anderson, emeritus professor of church history, North Park Theological Seminary, Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota

Dominique DuBois Gilliard, *Rethinking Incarceration: Advocating for a Justice that Restores* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2018), 230 pages, $18.

Dominique Gilliard's book came to my attention through the *Covenant Companion* when I was searching for books to assign in my Christian Theology course. Later, a colleague and I, who had both assigned this book, invited Gilliard to campus to speak to our students. Many were from Christian backgrounds (Catholics, Lutherans, and evangelicals), but there were also unaffiliated students, atheists, and Hindus. The students' reception of this book was overwhelmingly positive. Though certain theological concepts were perplexing for some (particularly penal substitutionary atonement theory), most students expressed that they had never considered how extensive the mass incarceration crisis was.

Given this book's intended practical application, it is worth foregrounding this review by observing its successful reception in the classroom. Its hybrid character of societal critique, applied theology, and personal reflection was a good fit for a diverse group of students. In terms of the book's engagement with the Bible, students resonated most with Gilliard's

highlighting how so many of the disciples, the authors of the books of the Bible, and Jesus himself were at one point incarcerated unjustly. This was among the author's most clearly received messages: "The great irony in that is that Christianity revolves around Jesus, a falsely convicted criminal who was falsely charged, punitively convicted, mercilessly tortured, and unjustly sentenced to death. Given this, I would think the church would understand the necessity of thinking more restoratively about criminal justice" (p. 148). This helped some students engage with the Bible for the first time in their lives. The book worked for our purposes on this and other points precisely because of its interdisciplinary character: it is part academic research, part sermon, part personal testimony, and part engagement in a relevant issue.

The book has two sections. The first recounts the history of mass incarceration and its current state. The second addresses the historical relationship between the Christian church and the justice system, the theology behind it, and the potential of Christians to work toward reform.

Chapter 1 identifies the "war on drugs" as having played a role in accelerating the rate of incarceration, beginning in 1971. Several vignettes are included, such as the story of ninety-two-year-old Kathryn Johnson who was murdered in a botched drug raid. (Gilliard shared with our students that this tragedy was a turning point for his becoming involved in this issue.) Chapter 2 gives a longer historical perspective, drawing a straight line from the end of slavery, through the black codes and Jim Crow laws, to contemporary incarceration. This framework establishes mass incarceration as a continuation of slavery. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 identify the ways in which the justice system obfuscates and exacerbates the crisis, as well as four systemic "pipelines" that feed the ballooning prison population: the mental health system, private prisons, immigration law, and the school-to-prison pipeline.

In the second part of the book, Chapters 6 and 7 give a historical theological perspective on how Christian pastors have preached about justice and served as prison chaplains. This is a mixed legacy, with some examples of activism and reform, but more often complicit support of the system. On balance, it appears prison chaplains have seen prison's role in transforming and redeeming incarcerated persons as a necessary "furnace of affliction," with only few advocating restorative justice as an alternative (p. 106). Chapters 8 and 9 identify penal substitution theory as a problematic default position of American Christianity, and the chief culprit in fostering a theological worldview that disproportionally empha-

sizes God's wrath. "…[P]enal substitution is most problematic because it makes God's response to sin too much like our own.…Restorative justice must be the aim of God's people. God's intent to restore all things and all people must inform and transform our understanding and pursuit of justice" (p. 160). Chapters 10 and 11 point toward restorative justice as the solution to the crisis and call Christians to move from a complicit posture to engagement in dismantling the system. The book ends by highlighting some Christian educational programs engaged in incarceration reform; the work of North Park Theological Seminary and Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom are among these examples (p. 193).

Evangelicals are Gilliard's primary audience. This is his ministry context but also the group identified as the most urgent to reach with his message: in polls, white evangelicals are among the most likely to advocate the harshest sentencing as well as the death penalty (p. 58). The approach the author takes to correct this view is to make a case that "our theology must be historically rooted" (p. 198). An issue like mass incarceration must be seen across the various historical contexts in which theology has been formed and must reckon with the influence of sexism, racism, and classicism.

While Gilliard makes a convincing case that penal substitution theory has contributed to a "warped" understanding of justice among American Christians, he acknowledges that this does not establish a causal connection, merely a congruent one (p. 158). For instance, the book identifies the British origins of both the American justice system and of Anglo-American Christian theology, yet it does not account for why the British justice system evolved in a different direction and is not experiencing the same incarceration crisis as the US. (One might speculate that decreased spirituality overall in Britain is related, but this is not explored; that would also raise problematic implications for contemporary Christianity.)

A notable omission is that while penal substitution and satisfaction theories are identified as problematic and explained at length, alternatives to those views among American Christian groups are not as fully explained. Intriguingly absent are references to the Mission Covenant tradition, which has traditionally discouraged penal substitution theory throughout its history, dating back to the 1870s as propounded in the theology of one of its founders, Paul Peter Waldenström. This is Gilliard's own denominational affiliation. Similarly absent is engagement with the "third function" of the law in Lutheran theology or Catholic views of the atonement. While the Evangelical Covenant Church represents a

minority Pietist theological tradition, this was as good an opportunity as any to name and define its continued relevance to American Christianity. Perhaps the author will consider doing this in a future *Covenant Quarterly* article? It would serve a valuable need.

For Covenanters, the theology of John Calvin is of only indirect significance in the formation of its ideas about the atonement and punishment in the justice system; rather, the church's specific theological heritage is from the Lutheran side of Christian history, not the Reformed. While general American Christianity has had this influence in heavy doses, Covenant theology has been shaped by this secondarily through its exposure and participation in mainstream American Christianity, particularly evangelicalism. All this is to say that the project of discarding the warped views on the atonement that Gilliard hopes readers will do should theoretically be easier for Covenanters than perhaps for other evangelical groups. Or at least interrogating Calvin's views would be less relevant than responding to Luther, Spener, Francke, Zinzendorf, Rosenius, or Waldenström's views. This would take time but would be well worth the author's effort in the future.

This is a convicting and heavy book. Yet, it is ultimately about inspiring Christians to ask tough questions about some common and fundamental assumptions that many people have about theology and justice. This is hard work, but one rises from the reading of this book convinced it is essential. As Gilliard writes, "The church has misused theology to legitimate racial violence (genocide, slavery, internment, segregation, and mass incarceration). But within every race a remnant has understood that Scripture consistently speaks of God's people actively participating in the ministry of reconciliation" (p. 164).

MARK SAFSTROM

Boaz Johnson, *The Marys of the Bible: The Original #MeToo Movement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018), 182 pages, $23.

The #MeToo movement emerged three years ago after renowned movie producer Harvey Weinstein was accused of sexually abusing multiple women. It is a movement that decries the atrocity of sexual violence and seeks justice for the millions of women around the world who have experienced such brutality. The #MeToo movement also includes boys and men who have been abused. However, research indicates that sexual violence tends to happen to the most vulnerable and marginal-

ized: girls and women. Hence the movement's focus is on this particular population.

In *The Marys of the Bible: The Original #MeToo Movement*, Boaz Johnson explains that the #MeToo movement is not a recent phenomenon; the abuse of women has occurred throughout the centuries, including against women of the Bible, and there has always been resistance to this violence, particularly from women (p. 11). Although Johnson's book is brief in length, there is depth to each chapter, as he peels back layer after layer to grasp the deeper meaning of the biblical text. Johnson examines Hebrew and Greek terms and the social contexts of biblical women to challenge the reader to engage the text deeply.

While the name Mary may be common to us, Johnson explains that parents in the Old Testament world did not blithely give it to their daughters. Naming one's daughter Mary was intentional because Mary, "Marah" in Hebrew, means "bitter" (p. 15). Why would parents choose such a name for their child? Johnson illuminates us:

> ...[T]he Egyptians during the time of Moses, and Romans during the time of Jesus, employed the raping of girls as a tool of war and subjugation. So, little girls were called Mary or bitter. The parents mourned when a little baby girl was born, and they said, "I am so sorry you were born a girl." (p. 15)

This is the main premise on which Johnson builds his argument. The lives of girls and women were bitter because of violence perpetrated against them.

The first half of Johnson's book is dedicated to Old Testament women whose lives were made bitter by abuse. They are Hagar, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, just to name a few. At a glance these women and their stories are familiar. However, Johnson provides a rich context that illustrates how other religions and the chosen people of God contributed to these women's vulnerability. The second half the book is devoted to the Marys of the New Testament: Jesus's mother, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the Mary at the cross. These women are familiar to readers, but on closer analysis Johnson reveals the depth of their abuse and marginalization in their communities. He compares women of both Testaments to the women suffering today and persuasively argues that the answer to this suffering is still the same—Yeshua, Jesus.

> It becomes clear the Marys and the Hannahs of the world have deep faith in the God of the Bible. They see all the injustices in the world against the weak and marginalized. However, in a profound attitude of defiance, they look to God, and know that he is salvation, Yeshua…these women are able to do this knowing that the God of the Bible will remember them.… Those people who have endured much hardship and enslavement will experience the Yeshua, the salvation. This was the hope and faith of the Hannahs, Tamars, Rahabs, Bathshebas, and Marys of that time. This will be the hope and faith of the Hannahs, Tamars, Bathshebas, and Marys of today. (p. 123)

This little but powerful books should be in every pastor's library. The abuse of women and children continues to be an issue rarely addressed, despite the awareness raised by the #MeToo movement. Johnson's book succinctly captures why this can no longer be the case, especially for followers of Christ. *The Marys of the Bible* serves as an important resource to pastors for preaching, pastoral care, and, bearing witness to God's heart for the healing, justice, and flourishing of the Marys in their congregation and throughout the world.

ELIZABETH PIERRE

Bryce Nelson and Bonnie Nelson, *Cascades Camp and Conference Center: A Century of Covenant Camps in the Pacific Northwest* (Yelm, WA: Cascades Camp and Conference Center, 2018), 197 pages, $30.

This is an attractive and engaging book—well researched, elegantly written, creatively designed, and beautifully illustrated. Its topic, over the span of a century, is compelling on local, regional, and national levels in the life and ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church. While a particular institutional narrative of three camps becoming one, it is illustrative as well of the larger experience of Covenant camping ministries in each conference, spanning the eras of large Bible conference grounds and privately owned cabins; gatherings for young people into their early thirties; post-WWII programs focused on children and youth; and eventually physical and programmatic expansion to year-round family camps and retreat conference centers, replete with professional management and staff. This is the fascinating story of congregational and conference lead-

ers guiding—often with great difficulty—the establishment of separate, independently owned camps, beginning in 1919, finally to be sold in the mid-1980s to purchase and develop the North Pacific Conference's (now Pacific Northwest Conference) singular Cascades Camp and Conference Center in Yelm, Washington. Each era also represents a window into American evangelical culture and generational change among Swedish Americans and their descendants.

The first generation of Covenant Bible camps was represented by Swedish immigrants and their children, rooted in the pietistic Mission Friend threefold emphases on conversion as the experience of new life in Christ, Christian nurture through scriptural study and personal relationships with peers and guides, and a resulting support and commitment to Covenant institutions of mission, education, and benevolence. Lake Sammamish Bible Camp was purchased in 1919 by leaders in the Seattle Swedish Tabernacle as a location for summer Bible conferences away from the city and post-WWI challenges, and as an opportunity for some to own and build cottages. While not having a direct Swedish parallel with their firsthand experience of outdoor mission meetings, in continuity it represented a reflection of contemporary American revivalism and biblical prophecy conferences to which they had been exposed—and for some immersed—since the 1870s. Those patterns of Fundamentalism became stronger when camp support shifted to the more independent Emmanuel Tabernacle in Seattle.

Camping became a critical component in the 1920s and 1930s as a means to retain the second generation, who were more Americanized and pressed for English-language transition and greater cultural openness. Covenant Beach Bible Camp came about in 1931 through joint leadership of the tabernacles in Seattle and Tacoma, in response to the changes and growing independency at Lake Sammamish, purchasing property near Des Moines (which included an old dancehall!) on Puget Sound. It garnered the loyalty of many congregations and people, which connected organically to the mission of the conference and the larger Mission Covenant; it strengthened even as Swedishness declined markedly before and after the Second World War. Its long-term challenge would encompass financial support and location, where it increasingly became enveloped by urban sprawl and marked by periodic vandalism. It was not a camp that enfolded nature, solitude, and wilderness values so essential to American camping in general.

To meet those needs, the Circle C Ranch was established in 1966

through the initiative of the North Pacific Covenant Men (formed in 1956), who raised money to purchase land in the foothills of the Cascades. Its focus would be more directly on summer youth experiences, especially involving horses, trails, and the outdoors. It too had deep connections and loyalties, and competition with Covenant Beach became inevitable. It represented the further decentralization of conference camps. There was too little money for two camps when Circle C Ranch was plagued by water shortages and a mortgage, and Covenant Beach (whose land was paid for and valuable) was burdened by demographics, maintenance, and pressures from the surrounding community. Both camps also accepted the need to extend beyond children and youth to year-round facilities for retreats and family camps as well. These challenges were exacerbated further when in 1979 Driftwood Point, fifty-five acres southwest of Tacoma, was purchased as undeveloped land for a future camp. It also had passionate supporters, including the conference superintendent, and with three camps the conference was "land rich and cash poor." Moreover, the conference fully embraced the denomination's initiatives in church growth and planting, and with the financial constraints of multiple camps and the starting of new churches and paying developer pastors, this naturally aroused serious tension.

Following studies, reports, and competing recommendations, a "Task Force of Camping Ministries" met in 1985–1986 and recommended to the conference annual meeting selling the three camps and purchasing property for development from the Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Company at Elbow Lake in Yelm, Washington. This was approved after much discussion. Over time, the new venture has rallied significant support and enthusiasm as the Pacific Northwest Conference's only camp, incorporating children, youth, families, retreats, and conferences, as well as horses, trails, and waterfront. The challenges continue to involve the wide geographic spread of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana, and distance coupled with congregational and cultural independency, often supporting camps closer to home.

A brief book review, of course, cannot do justice to the layers and complexities of this story, so ably told by Bonnie Nelson and Bryce Nelson, veterans themselves the nurture of Covenant camps in the Northwest (Bonnie from Salem Covenant in northeast Minneapolis) and Pacific Northwest (Bryce from First Covenant, Seattle) Conferences. Together as a family they represent decades of experience in North Pacific camping ministries. One must instead "take up and read" and delight in the book's

crafting and production, beautifully designed with quality by Sandy Nelson. The volume is arranged in ten chronological chapters tracing the three-camps-into-one, with extended coverage of Cascades Camp and Conference Center, followed by another ten appendices, including a glossary, property acquisitions, map, list of staff and speakers, and a helpful delineation of the dual focus of conversion and nurture, which Covenant camp leaders have thoughtfully addressed for some years. Cascades is faithful to the threefold emphases of its Covenant forebears. Covenanters are justifiably proud of their camps, and there are more stories that await telling. The Nelsons have set the bar high indeed.

PHILIP J. ANDERSON