Wosh, Peter J.: **Spreading the Word: The Bible Business in Nineteenth-Century America.** Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press 1994. xii, 271 pp. + illustrations, index.

Spreading the Word focuses on the history of the American Bible Society, where the author was until recently Director of Archives and Library Services, from its beginnings through 1890. It presents chapters in the history of an institution, but it is not an institutional history. The reader will not find here a blow-by-blow account of the actions of the American Bible Society Board of Managers, a chronicle of annual fluctuations in Bible production and sales, or detailed analyses of the antebellum New York book trade. Instead, the author uses a wealth of historical detail to show the transformation of the American Bible Society in response to fundamental changes in American society from a genteel moral agency to a national nonprofit corporate bureaucracy. He uses developments in the wider political, economic, social, and religious arenas to explain changes in the nature of the Bible Society. Changing patterns of social and geographic mobility and educational levels, for example, are quickly reflected in the composition and activities of the ABS work force.

Wosh also uses the transformation of the American Bible Society to illuminate the broader metamorphosis of American culture from the cohesive provincialism of the Federal period to the bureaucratic industrial mass society of the Progressive Era. Changes in the composition of the ABS Board of Managers, the evolution and bureaucratization of the Bible agent system, and the Bible Society's efforts in the South before, during, and after the Civil War in Wosh's analysis shed a unique light on the course of organizational development, democratization, church/state and race relations in nineteenth-century America. In this book even the architecture of the American Bible Society's successive buildings in New York City and its lack of success among such distinct minorities as seamen and Roman Catholics are given significance. We come to know not only the American Bible Society, but the city, the nation, and the world in which it grew.

Spreading the Word combines the rich detail of an institutional history with the broad sweep of more general historical scholarship. Wosh is not afraid to analyze and generalize, but this book is not just a dry socio-historical treatise. Dozens of mini-biographies lend a warm human touch to this book. Colorful portraits of ABS managers, employees, agents, and missionaries make the names on the institutional rosters come alive as real people and help us see why they acted as they did.

Wosh's writing style is clear and concise. His documentation shows mastery of both primary sources (private and official correspondence, Society minutes, contemporary newspapers, religious pamphlets, and tourist guidebooks) and the vast secondary literature of American religious, political, social, and organizational history.

In his introduction Wosh states his three analytical themes: "an effort to link the development of the American Bible Society with developments in other sectors of social action, an attempt to dissect the internal relationships within the institution to discern specific historical shifts, and sensitivity to the ways the organization transformed itself in order to survive" (6). He accomplishes what he sets out to do in a book that is both informative and interesting. Readers interested in the history

of nineteenth-century American society, missions, evangelistic work, church/state relations, organizational development, and even New York local history will find much of value in *Spreading the Word.*

TERRY M. HEISEY

Wright, N.T.: **The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology.** Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press 1992 (T. & T. Clark 1991). xiii + 316 pp. ISBN 0-8006-2632-X. No price stated.

N.T. Wright wishes to sketch out a new and synthetic view of Pauline theology, and to do so by carefully exegeting two groups of texts that reveal Paul's understanding of Christ and Torah. The first group includes the Christ-Adam passages in 1 Cor 15.20-57 and Rom 5.12-21, together with the Christ hymns in Col 1.15-20 and Phil 2.5-11. To the second group belong Gal 3.10-20, 2 Cor 3, and Rom 8.1-11.

Summarizing his view on Christ and the Law in Pauline theology, Wright says:

> I have argued in this book that Paul's Christology can be understood in terms partly of an incorporative idea of Messiahship and partly in terms of a redefinition of monotheism itself. That is, Paul's view of Jesus of Nazareth is directly, and apparently causally, linked to his major redefinition of the twin Jewish doctrines, election and monotheism. I have argued, further, that his view of the Jewish law was nuanced and carefully balanced, correlating closely with this redefinition of monotheism and election. It forms part of his complex critique of Israel, which is itself carefully balanced and nuanced. Underneath all this is the argument, which I have advanced at various stages, that Paul's whole view of Christ and the law can be understood in terms of the story of God and the people of God... (258)

With regard to Pauline studies in general, this synthetic view of Pauline theology contrasts with other recent studies in Pauline theology that prefer to work out Paul's inconsistencies as a theologian, for instance, H. Raisanen, *Paul and the Law.* Philadelphia: Fortress 1986, and E.P. Sanders, *Paul.* Past Masters. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991. On the other hand, Wright opens a lively dialog with Richard Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1989) in an effort to determine more exactly how Paul integrates Torah into his theology.

Two aspects of Wright's book commend themselves especially to translators working on texts or notes for Paul's letters.

Translators who are looking to apply relevance theory to their work will find Wright's synthesis of Paul a useful tool in working out in actual translation or supporting notes what relevance theory calls the informative intention and contextual knowledge needed to understand ancient authors and translate them meaningfully for modern readers of Paul. According to E.-A Gutt (*Relevance Theory: A Guide to Successful Communication in Translation.* Dallas and New York: Summer Institute of Linguistics and United Bible Societies 1992, 35), "whether or not an informative intention can be communicated to an audience depends on the contextual knowledge available to them."