

Pahl, Michael W. Review of Jon M. Isaak, *New Testament Theology: Extending the Table*. *Mennonite Brethren Herald* 50, no. 5 (2011): 36.

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**New Testament Theology: Extending the Table.**

Jon M. Isaak.  
Cascade Press, 2011.  
404 pages.

Jon Isaak has significant ministry experience in Mennonite Brethren circles, most recently as a New Testament professor at MB Biblical Seminary and Fresno Pacific University, and prior to that as a missionary with MB Mission and Service International (now MB Mission). This experience positions Isaak well to take on his new role as director of the Centre for MB Studies—and to write a book on New Testament theology.

Isaak's *New Testament Theology* is a book geared toward theology students, ideally suited as a textbook for an upper-level undergraduate or seminary course in New Testament introduction or biblical theology. It is clearly written and well organized, with helpful exercises for discussion and further study at the end of each chapter. But the book's textbook feel should not deter non-students from reading it, for the professor, pastor, or layperson will also benefit from Isaak's lucid and thoughtful presentation of New Testament theology in all its diversity and unity.

To engage this New Testament diversity and unity, Isaak uses G. B. Caird's metaphor of a conference table with the major New Testament authors as key conversation participants. As past CCMBC executive director David Wiebe notes in his blurb for the book, this approach "allows the text to function authoritatively while calling for the dynamics of the community hermeneutic valued in the Anabaptist movement."

Fellow Anabaptists will also appreciate Isaak's discussions of particular themes, such as Paul's perspective on baptism as a symbol of incorporated identity, Luke's focus on God's saving work on behalf of the poor and oppressed, Revelation's vision of non-violent resistance to evil powers, and 1 Peter's call to follow the redemptive pattern of the suffering Christ. After listening to each New Testament author's distinctive contribution, Isaak helpfully draws together key biblical themes around classic doctrinal categories such as Christology, theology, and ecclesiology.

Isaak concludes with a call to "extend the table," to continue the conversation about the meaning and significance of Jesus in a way which is both faithful to the ancient New Testament witnesses and faithful to God's call for us to live out the gospel in our own day. His book is a rich resource to that end. Highly recommended!

- Michael Pahl