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Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning (Book Review)

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be hard-pressed to find many of these entries at all, or would have to search out several entries before finding the definitions for some of these terms. This could have been remedied by including an index or a more complete cross-referencing system to assist the uninformed. Many theological, worship, and polity principles are alluded to in various entries, but they are not fully explained even there.

The weaknesses are not simply organizational. Many of the omissions seem related to the editors' overall understanding of what the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition includes and does not include. As I noted before, the editors claim that this dictionary "is about Calvinists on their feet, at repose, at work, at play and in worship" (xiv). They also claim an effort "to do full justice to the pluriformity of the Reformed tradition in North America" (vii). Yet they also state that "our first decision was to highlight individuals and communions while neglecting institutions. Though schools, publications, seminaries and parachurch agencies have been very influential, we believe the lives of individuals and the histories of churches offer a better barometer for reading what it means to be Reformed than do the activities of religious organizations" (viii).

Omitting discussions of institutions such as colleges and seminaries and identifying them as "religious organizations" ignores a significant component of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition while placing the editors in a different branch. Many Reformed and Presbyterian individuals, as Calvinists, have expanded their vision of what it means to be a Christian. One movement "neo-Calvinism" gets some coverage (for example, entries on Abraham Kuyper and Herman Dooyeweerd), but it is largely ignored because of the editors' apparently more narrow view, which defines Reformed or Presbyterian in largely ecclesiastical terms. For example, there is no recognition in this volume of the Christian day-school movement (including such institutions as Christian Schools

International), or its related higher education equivalent in the founding of such schools as Calvin, Dordt, Kings, Redeemer, and Trinity Christian Colleges, or the Institute for Christian Studies. Another significant area of Calvinist involvement largely excluded from this book is politics and labor. In Canada, Neo-Calvinists have created a Christian labor union. Both Canadians and Americans have developed political organizations, such as the Center for Public Justice. The Presbyterian and Reformed tradition has also given rise to a significant and active publishing industry, perhaps most notably the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, but neither the founder nor the publishing house is included in the volume. Finally, the editors have largely excluded scholars and academicians (other than theologians) as somehow not reflecting the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition (an ironic twist given the very scholarly emphasis of the work).

In retrospect, while I found much of value in this book, I kept asking myself how the editors defined the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition and where I and my own experience fit in it. Growing up and being involved in a variety of reformed institutions, I found that my experience is only partly reflected by this volume, and therefore the volume is incomplete. While such an analysis is obviously subjective, it should be clear from the examples I have provided here that much is missing which could be included in the work. Other examples could be added. As a thorough-going reference tool on Calvinists in North America, the volume remains lacking. I still value the volume, but my own knowledge and experience make it more accessible to me than other readers. Those on the periphery of the tradition or within the tradition but less familiar with its history than I am may not find the answers to their questions on a number of the topics that form a part of the rich and varied Presbyterian and Reformed tradition in America.

The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning, by David I. Smith and Barbara Carvill (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000). xv + 233 pages, paperback, \$15.00 [U.K.£9.99]. Reviewed by John Struyk, Emeritus Professor of Foreign Languages.

Very few (Christian) colleges require the study of a foreign language as an integral part of the general education curriculum. In *The Gift of the Stranger*, Carvill and Smith demonstrate that the study of a foreign language can help the student grow in her preparation for useful Kingdom citizenship. The book is divided into three sections that are entitled "Background, setting the stage," "Aims, embracing the stranger," and "Practice, implications for the classroom." Its basic tenet is that the study of a foreign language has the potential to make one a better host or guest to the speakers of that language, to those who can be considered strangers.

This goal is developed in contrast with other goals in the chapter "For Profit, Pleasure, and Power?" Smith works with three questions for determining the motives for foreign language education: 1) What kind of person should the student become?

2) What kind of relationship with the members of the target language is presumed? 3) Is the speaker of the target language viewed as an image bearer of God, "one who hopes, thinks, suffers, trusts, and weeps, and whose sighs and laughter are just as audible to God as our own?" (107). In other words, one should not study a foreign language merely for economic motivations, nor only for persuasive reasons (although telling others about the truth of the Gospel is a very good reason for studying a foreign language). Seeking inner enrichment or an emotional and cultural high is another inappropriate central motive for studying a foreign language. Most foreign language textbooks consider students as prospective tourists, which is one reason why the texts very often emphasize the ordering of food, a room, and a ticket, as well as asking directions (what the foreign language profession often refers to as culture with a small "c",

which is certainly useful when traveling is the objective). Smith and Carvill want to go beyond these mundane reasons for studying a foreign language: "The callings to be a gracious host and a sensitive stranger point us beyond profit, pleasure, and power, while not canceling them out" (122).

A very interesting and worthwhile chapter in part one is entitled "From Babel to Pentecost." The authors develop the thesis that the existence of many languages in the world reflects God's interest in diversity and is not a curse on sin. God spoke and there was. But man was also given a voice so that he could be heard. So the Lord brought His creatures to the man "to see what he would name them" (Gen 2:19), and the Lord accepted the man's naming. Then God blessed mankind and gave the command to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1:28). Humans were given a lot of responsibility but could not handle it. Instead, they wanted things their way and stuck together, vowing that they would "make a name for [themselves] and not be scattered over the face of the earth" (Gen 11:4). If man would have obeyed the Lord and filled the earth, Carvill and Smith show, God's love for diversity would have manifested itself (among other ways) in the development of many different languages. God had promised Noah never to destroy the earth by means of a flood again, so at Babel "God intervenes in a way that not only judges and disrupts the empire building project, but also pushes the builders back onto the path God had originally set before them" (8).

The refrain at the end of each letter to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, namely that "he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," reflects a theme developed throughout Scripture. Pharaoh did not listen to the strangers in the land and was drowned in the Red Sea. Hearing the voice of the alien, the widow, the disenfranchised is interpreted both in the Old and New Testaments as loving our neighbor as ourselves. Smith and Carvill draw this logical conclusion: "Hearing the voice of the other takes time, commitment, sensitivity, vulnerability. When the other is a stranger, it might even involve learning the other's language" (10). However, before God's face there is no alien, there is no language in which people do not communicate effectively, and no language is more important than another. This, then, is one of the chief challenges for language teachers: to show that all nations, all languages, are equal before God. The authors of the book make the point this way: "Here, in broad outline, is a guiding vision for Christian foreign language educators working in a context of simultaneously increasing globalization and deepening pluralism" (17).

I found the last chapter of the book especially helpful for the teaching of Foreign Languages. Here Smith describes examples from the Charis Project of the United Kingdom. The British government wants to promote the moral and spiritual dimensions of education, and "in this context the Charis Project has been developing Christian resources across the curriculum"

(191). The aim of the material is to develop the whole person, the whole student. Smith evaluates and discusses this material in light of how the learner is being prepared to interact with the stranger.

The Gift's discussion of "The White Rose," a resistance-to-Hitler movement during WW II, is very good. Smith demonstrates convincingly that beginning German students need to meet not only Germans in their textbooks who work, shop, play and count numbers, but also people who believe in something so strongly that their faith commands them to give their life for the cause. Smith shows that even beginning foreign language students can deal with deep spiritual issues in simple and concrete language. He says, "Dreams, allegories, proverbs, fairy tales, and poems can all provide this combination of simple language with depth of meaning" (195). In a similar vein, the unit on the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is particularly helpful for the teacher, especially the example of the poem "Wer bin ich?" (Who am I?) Not only does the learner compose a poem in German, but at the same time the sense of the humanity of the stranger in prison is reinforced.

In this chapter the authors succeed eminently in having the students face several moral and spiritual themes. At the same time, the message, the leitmotif of the book, that one studies a foreign language to become a better host and a better guest, is emphasized very strongly. Even though this is not a methodology book, in this chapter the teacher will find many helpful hints that will enrich class material and help him or her to approach the teaching of a foreign language Christianly.

In the epilogue, the authors emphasize that they have not given the definitive answers to foreign language education: "This book has been more an attempt to reflect on what our faith requires of us language teachers, and it is written from the standpoint of still being very much on a journey rather than from one of having already arrived" (207). The authors try to deal with so many aspects of foreign language education (as shown in the section titles above) that sometimes the gaps become too large. They undertake a huge program for a slim volume, and at times it shows. For example, I was somewhat taken by surprise when there was a sudden jump from a discussion of the contributions to foreign language education of Comenius in the seventeenth century directly to the contemporary calling of foreign language educators to embrace the stranger. Has foreign language education been at a standstill during the last two centuries?

This book is written mainly for Christian foreign language educators. Good use can be made of the book if it is read and discussed chapter by chapter or section by section. The authors have done a great service to the foreign language teaching profession by publishing this material. It should be a frequent reference for teachers who are preparing syllabi. Administrators also ought to use this book when deciding what emphasis is to be placed in the curriculum on foreign language education.