

*Jesus Now and Then.* By Richard A. Burridge and Graham Gould. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. xii + 215 pages. \$16 pb.

In a little over two hundred pages, Richard Burridge and Graham Gould provide sensible, balanced summaries of a series of views of Jesus, from those in the New Testament to those of our contemporaries. The writers have combined insights from a number of disciplines—most notably New Testament criticism and church history—in a way that ought to be understandable for college students, beginning seminarians, and any interested nonspecialist. The written style is, overall, clear and readable. Technical terms are not entirely avoided—that would evidently not be possible if the text were to do its job, which is to introduce its readers to the fields of discourse—but such terms are explained clearly. This is a useful text, and an excellent addition to teaching resources. I intend to commend it to my beginning students in New Testament.

—*Christopher Bryan*

*What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography.* By Richard A. Burridge. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. xiv + 366 pages. \$34.

I thought at first that this was merely a reprint of Richard Burridge's monograph, originally published in 1992. If that had been the case, publishing it would still have been a worthwhile enterprise. *What Are the Gospels?* deserves to be out in paperback, and available to a wider audience. Prior to its publication, very few scholars were speaking of the Gospels in terms of Greco-Roman lives (David Aune deserves honorable mention as one who did), and none (not even Aune) with the understanding of genre, the academic rigor, and the detailed argument necessary to establish such a claim over against the then general consensus, which continued either to talk of the Gospels as *sui generis* or to ignore the question of genre altogether. With the publication of Burridge's book, a new situation was created. It is an extraordinary achievement to have influenced the course of a major element in New Testament studies, but that is what Burridge did. His great strengths were, and remain, his understanding of the nature of genre, his knowledge of ancient literature other than the New Testament, and his detailed and meticulous use of that knowledge.

All that said, Eerdmans has in fact given us considerably more than merely a reprint. Burridge has added a substantial new chapter (over fifty pages) on "Reactions and Developments," which brings the discussions up to date. I found this fascinating (and not only because I actually feature in it myself a couple of times!). There is also, in an appendix, a further useful essay on "Gospel Genre,

Christological Controversy, and the Absence of Rabbinic Biography.” The bibliography includes publications since 1992.

The only valid reason for affirming Burrige’s view of the Gospels’ genre (or indeed any academic hypothesis) is, of course, that one believes it to be correct. Nevertheless, the claim that the Gospels should be seen as Greco-Roman lives does also have theological implications. Near to the end of his essay on “The Absence of Rabbinic Biography,” Burrige makes the point that

in concentrating the reader’s attention on the person of Jesus through writing a biography, the early Christian gospel writers were asserting something which was never said of a rabbi—that he was centre stage as the embodiment, or even replacement of Torah, a unique individual revealing God in his deeds and words, life, death, and resurrection. (340)

Precisely! Genre is invariably an instrument of meaning, and that is why those who ignore it do so at their peril—a peril classically illustrated by Rudolf Bultmann’s well-known comment on the Fourth Gospel: “Thus it turns out in the end that Jesus as the Revealer of God *reveals nothing but that he is the Revealer*. And that amounts to saying that it is he for whom the world is waiting. . . . John, that is, in his Gospel presents only the fact (*das Dass*) of the Revelation without describing its content (*ihr Was*)” [*Theology of the New Testament*, 2.66]. Yes, Bultmann was correct to some extent, but what he failed to reckon with was precisely the fact that the Fourth Evangelist had chosen to present Jesus by means of *a life*: which is to say, by telling us not only what Jesus said but also what he did and how he died. Indeed, on several occasions the Evangelist went out of his way, in effect, to remind us that this is what he had done (5:36; 10:32; 14:11; 15:22–24; 19:30; 20:30). Why? Because in ancient understanding, *what you did and how you died revealed who you were*. We remain in Burrige’s debt for reminding us of this.

—Christopher Bryan

*Priesthood in a New Millennium: Toward an Understanding of Anglican Presbyterate in the Twenty-First Century*. By R. David Cox. New York: Church Publishing, 2004. xxii + 473 pages. \$39.

R. David Cox has made a major contribution to the church’s understanding of holy orders in this thoroughly researched yet highly readable volume. While Cox’s stated topic is the “Anglican presbyterate” of the last one hundred fifty years, he traces equally the notion of the “priesthood of all Christians” and its concomitant ministry. Indeed, a constant theme throughout his long study is