Although McIntosh clearly articulates the problem throughout the book while offering helpful solutions, he fails to provide sufficient support for the thesis that social justice, the proclamation of the gospel, and discipleship are all forms of evangelism. Describing the connection of social justice and discipleship with the word preached would seem to be a better-suited analogy. The three-tiered nature of it (social justice, then proclamation, then discipleship) seems ad hoc, as well. This places discipleship at a greater importance than social justice without a clear justification. If my church has the option of sending a doctor on a medical mission to Ramadi, should I tell him that his work is a lower level (but still necessary) form of evangelism than my Sunday morning message? This is where I think it would be helpful if McIntosh restricted this dynamic so that evangelism only refers to the verbal proclamation of the gospel, while social justice and discipleship are distinct from, yet intimately related to, evangelism. This would emphasize McIntosh's main points while avoiding the ad hoc hierarchical dynamic.

Despite this weakness, McIntosh still accomplishes his goal of relocating the gospel and its proclamation to the center of the life of the church. The principles at the end of each section are extremely applicable for pastors, church staff, and laypersons alike. They illustrate specific examples and give particular advice—avoiding the common trap of offering overly broad advice that somehow simultaneously applies to everything and nothing.

McIntosh's *Growing God's Church* accomplishes the retrieval of evangelism from the realm of ancillary, optional activity and returns it to the core of the life of the local church, and his method is convincing. Anyone who reads this and applies the principles to his church will likely see results due to the specific, practical, gospel-centered, and relevant nature of the advice. This is equally relevant to pastors, church staff, and laypersons, but the bulk of its applicability will resonate with a pastor and evangelist.

Dreher, Rod. *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation.* New York: Sentinel, 2017. 262 pp. $15.00.

Reviewed by April Berg. April is an MA in Missiology student at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She seeks to see peoples across the continent of Asia come to know Christ as Savior and Lord and to be taught the Scriptures within the community of faith, both present and past. She earned her BA from North Greenville University.

Due to technological innovations and globalization, the world today is in constant flux. U.S. culture in particular is shifting, becoming more relativistic and anarchistic. How are Christians to respond to the culture? How are we to maintain our Christian identity, raise up the next generation, and engage the lost, all at the same time? Dreher proposes that Christians learn from the Rule of Saint Benedict, applying his principles in Christ-focused communities

that are grounded in the traditions of the faith and engaging the world, not with worldly methods, but with consistent countercultural witness to Christ in daily life. He notes that "instead of looking to prop up the current order, [Christians] have recognized that the kingdom of which they are citizens is not of this world and have decided not to compromise that citizenship" (18).

Dreher begins by setting up the problem, namely that Christianity is disappearing in the West (8), and even within the churches, a "mushy psuedoreligion the researchers deemed Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD)" has spread (10). This context of societal collapse is remarkably similar to the end of the Roman Empire, the time of Saint Benedict and barbarian control (12–17). The move away from early orthodox Christianity began in the fourteenth century and continues to the present. Dreher examines the historical movements that changed the West, including the rise of nominalism, the Reformation that ended ecclesiastical authority, the Enlightenment and Modernity, capitalism, and the Sexual Revolution (23). Dreher believes that the best method of addressing all these historical changes, to draw us back to biblical belief, is through the principles in Benedict's Rule, "disciplining one's life to live a life to glorify God and help others" (54). Dreher then applies the principles he draws out from the Rule to the areas of politics, church, community and family, education, work, sexuality, and technology. This Benedict Option, pulling away to focus on Christ and ordering our lives under his lordship before going out to show love in the world, is "a call to undertaking the long and patient work of reclaiming the real world from the artifice, alienation, and atomization of modern life" (236).

Dreher makes a clear case for why methods we have used for so long as American Christians to try to keep Christian values as the mainline of U.S. society will no longer work. He notes that politics is no longer a viable option because neither major party is Christian in its morality and beliefs (80); nor will political leaders be able to end "cultural forces that have been separating the West from God for centuries . . . by a single election, or any election at all" (99). He also argues that both parties are based on an anthropology opposite to that of the Bible (90). Likewise, public education fails to correct the cultural pitfalls because at its core, it promotes liberalism and nihilism (145). Instead of allowing children to stay in schools that want only for the students to earn good incomes, make excellent grades, or tow the social line (Dreher goes into some detail here about the LBGT ideals promoted in public schools now) (155–160), he proposes beginning classical Christian schools that "provide them with an education that is rightly ordered—that is, one based on the premise that there is a God-given, unified structure to reality and that it is discoverable" (146). Christians find themselves unable to trust in the government, the schools, or even technological innovations to help raise their children in the faith. Christians are now the minority in the U.S. (99), an idea which is stated in the book with seriousness but without inducing panic.

The positive proposals offered in each applicative area are based on the Rule and are doable. The classical Christian schools mentioned above are possible to start and already have a growing reputation for producing excellent thinkers. Dreher offers practical advice for applying the Rule in each chapter along with examples of people doing so. For example, in the technology chapter, he suggests people limit online activity after a certain point in the day and instead do something with their hands that restores "our sense of connection with the real world" (233). The group Reboot participates in a "digital Sabbath" with the same concept, except they set aside a whole day to be without technology (228). Dreher succeeds in making the complex concepts of combatting Western anti-Christian sentiments with Benedictine ideals approachable for the average Christian layperson.

Dreher emphasizes correct doctrine, historical patterns, and faith traditions as means of ordering our life under Christ in a way that strengthens us to withstand the cultural changes. However, this mixture of history and faith concepts sometimes confuses his objective. Is he trying to keep Christianity afloat, or is he trying to keep the West afloat? He is just as quick to suggest studying the Greek heroes as the Scriptures and saints (160). The book is heavily reliant on U.S. and Italian examples, so how far does its use extend to the rest of Europe? Furthermore, what about the East—does that hemisphere not have challenges to Christianity from liberalization and globalization? These questions are not sufficiently addressed in the book, although his argument is excellent for specifically U.S. Christianity and civic awareness.

Dreher also at times seems to renege on his positions. For example, throughout the book, he condemns the growth of the LBGT movement among youth. He notes that the idea of gender as a choice is taught in media and the classroom (156). However, towards the end of the book, he discusses gay Christians as a valid group in the church. Given, he does say that this group should practice chastity and should not have the option of marriage (213), but his sudden inclusion of homosexuals is a strange backtracking. One supposes that he could mean Christians who struggle with homosexual attraction, but this definition is not clear. Nor is his position clear on whether or not homosexuality is a part of a person or a culturally induced concept, a position that would explain any presuppositions in the writing about this topic.

Finally, Dreher ensures that no one considers the Benedict Option to be a means of withdrawing into the wilderness with no evangelism possible. He notes that the Option "still less is . . . a plan for constructing communities of the pure, cut off from the real world" (236). The original Benedictine communities on which the Option is based did not forsake evangelism: "These monasteries kept faith and learning alive within their walls, evangelized barbarian peoples, and taught them how to pray, to read, to plant crops, and to build things" (15). One of the principles in the Rule is that of hospi-

tality. This principle is for the monks to invite the world into the monastery, where they are strong in Christ, in prayer, and in community, and to share their peace and hope with the strangers (72–73). They are called to invite people alongside them in their withdrawal (living incarnationally) and to share Christ. The idea is that while the cultural majority raves around us, we stand strong in Christ and locally share who he is and what he does for us. Our lives ordered to God will attract the lost and reveal the futility of their lifestyles. Then they will come to Christ and possibly start new communities (and churches?) in their places of life.

The Benedict Option is not an outdated rehashing of an ancient monastic system, nor is it a doomsday crier book about the end times signaled by cultural collapse. Instead, this Option is a means of engaging the world with Christ by living out a consistent lifestyle centered on prayer and the Scriptures. Dreher hopes that when Christians know who they are and where they have come from, and live out this information every day, slowly culture will be affected for the better, and more people will come to know Christ.

Paas, Stefan. *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 316 pp. $34.00.

Reviewed by John P. Thompson, D.S.L., Assistant Professor of Missiology & Leadership and Director of the DMin Program at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He planted a church in Tulsa before joining the faculty at ORU. He also leads Global Equip, a ministry training leaders overseas.

In an attempt to bolster Christianity in the West, most denominations have placed great emphasis on church planting. Stefan Paas brings a powerful, critical evaluation of our contemporary, popular beliefs about and motives for church planting. His context and focus is on the secular regions of Europe, especially in the northwest and historically Protestant quadrant of the continent. However, his analysis has relevant application throughout the Western world that is marked by a Christian heritage. Paas is a self-described "skeptical advocate" of church planting. He believes in the enterprise but confronts the theological underpinnings, proof-texting, and current statistics in much of the current rhetoric used to advance the cause. This book is a healthy counterweight to the plethora of church planting literature.

Stefan Paas writes as a church planting insider and scholar immersed in both the experience of church planting and in the academic study of evangelism and church planting. He participated in two church plants in The Netherlands, leads church planter assessments, supervises students desiring to church plant, serves in several church planting networks, and consults with denominations. He is the J.H. Bavinck Professor of Church Planting and Church Renewal at VU University Amsterdam. Furthermore, he has been an integral member of an ecumenical dialogue on evangelism in