

Roll call

Books in the [May 2, 2006](#) issue

In Review



Against the Grain: Unconventional Wisdom from Ecclesiastes

Ray Waddle
Upper Room



Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture CD-ROM, Vol. 1

Thomas C. Oden, ed.
InterVarsity

Many Christians find the book of Ecclesiastes troubling and therefore choose to ignore it. Ray Waddle asks provocatively what a Church of Ecclesiastes might look like. He suggests that each week it would express “reverence for God, gratitude for creation, and pleas for forgiveness of vanities and injustices enacted during the week.” This church would challenge “fame, workaholism, stinginess, political oppression and compulsive talking.” And then it would serve a sumptuous dinner. *Against the Grain* is a good resource for an adult Christian education setting. Waddle, a lifelong journalist, stands between the text and our contemporary context, just as a good preacher would, but he doesn’t give a close reading of the book. For that, Ellen F. Davis’s *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs* (Westminster John Knox) serves as a wise yet accessible companion.

The *Ancient Christian Commentary* series, which draws on the scripture commentaries of the early church fathers, has been available heretofore only in book form. Now the publisher is making it available in digital form. The set of CDs seems expensive until you consider the cost of buying the individual volumes in the series, and it is available at the publisher's Web site for a 20 percent discount. The first CD volume includes the Pentateuch, the Twelve Prophets, the synoptic Gospels and the Pauline corpus. Contemporary Christians would do well to draw the hermeneutical circle broadly enough to include not only cross-cultural voices from around the world but also the voices to be found in the *Ancient Christian Commentary* series. This is an excellent sermon-preparation resource for pastors.