

**THE TYRANNY OF RESOLUTION: 1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-24.** By Brad Ronnell Braxton. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000. Pp. xi + 302. \$49.95, ISBN 0-88414-031-8.

This book is based upon a dissertation completed at Emory University and directed by Carl R. Holladay. Braxton's thesis is that ambiguity is an irreducible feature of 1 Cor 7:17-24. He first explores the text from a lexical, semantic and argumentative standpoint and highlights the resulting polyvalence. He concludes that in his notion of calling, Paul may still be working out the ramifications of the cross. In chapter two he explores ethnicity and social status in the ancient world as well as Paul's own social identity. In chapter three he alleges that circumcision evokes ethnic issues that turn out to be very complex, insofar as the term may involve an allegorical or metaphorical sense. The fourth chapter—on slavery—investigates social status. Braxton suggests that circumcision and slavery may be real concerns for Paul because of competing claims by the gymnasium and synagogue. Slavery possibly opened doors for upward mobility, but by and large it brought about "social death." In the final chapter he pursues a postmodern scrutiny of nineteenth-century American ideological use of the text. Braxton has engaged recent literature on all the phases of his topic in a thorough and helpful manner. The argument running throughout the book is cogent and is an exemplary instance of what a dissertation should accomplish.

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