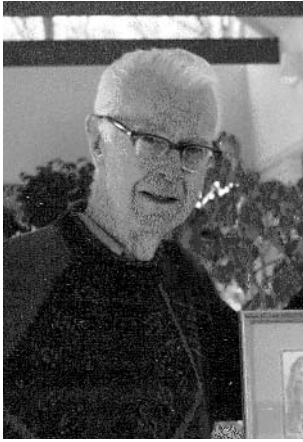


Presenting the Issue

A Season for Thanks Giving

Roland Murphy stood tall, like biblical Saul, head and shoulders above his peers. His affable demeanor disguised a penetrating mind that deftly chiseled insights as if they were shaping the obvious. His command of languages broadened and enlightened his theological understanding. He confidently knew whereof he spoke and was always pleased to share his views, characteristically blending the core religious tradition with current critical scholarship.



In recent years, Roland called me each year to announce that he was sending an article for BTB. He believed in BTB and was eager for it to succeed as a journal combining critical biblical scholarship with appropriate theological reflection. He was impatient with what he regarded as upstart methods, as he was put-off by fads. At a time when jogging became the rage and smoking not, Roland reputedly sported a sign on his desk reading, “Thank you for not jogging.” As a long-distance academic runner, he worked at his desk to the end, gifting BTB readers with three final articles, published posthumously, which he’d proofed and approved in stated sequence. He didn’t live to see even the first of these final three published, in August 2002. He died on July 20, 2002, the day after his 85th birthday.

Expert in biblical Wisdom Literature, he was

among the translators for the New American Bible and the New Revised Standard Version. Co-editor of the Jerome Biblical Commentary (1968) and the New Jerome Biblical Commentary (1990), he wrote in addition more than 230 books and articles and over 300 book reviews.

He began classroom instruction in 1948 in Semitic Languages at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. In 1971 he became the George Washington Ivey professor of Biblical Studies at Duke University, Durham, NC, a Methodist university, a position he cherished until he retired at the age of 70 in 1986. He served as well as President of the Catholic Biblical Association in 1968 and of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1984. In addition, he served as a vigorous Associate Editor of *BIBLICAL THEOLOGY BULLETIN* from 1986 to the time of his death.

Notable among his articles are those published in *BIBLICAL THEOLOGY BULLETIN*:

- BTB 16 (1986), 87–91, *History of Exegesis as a Hermeneutical Tool: The Song of Songs.*
- BTB 21 (1991), 30–33, *Qoheleth and Theology?*
- BTB 24 (1994), 4–7, *Wisdom Literature and Biblical Theology.*
- BTB 26 (1996), 79–81, *Reflections on ‘Actualization’ of the Bible.*
- BTB 28 (1998), 112–19, *What Is Catholic about Catholic Biblical Scholarship?—Revisited.*
- BTB 29 (1999), 112–17, *The Testament(s): Continuities and Discontinuities.*
- BTB 30 (2000), 81–89, *Questions Concerning Biblical Theology.*
- BTB 31 (2001), 85–89, *Once Again—The ‘Center’ of the Old Testament.*
- BTB 32 (2002), 145–49, *The Biblical Commission, the Jews, and Scripture.*

BTB 32 (2002), 163–67, *Theologies of the Old Testament*.
 BTB 33 (2003), 21–27, *When Is Theology “Biblical”? Some Reflections*.

The current issue of BTB, dedicated in grateful memory, contains articles written by both students and admirers of Roland Murphy. A student of Roland Murphy, **J. Clinton McCann, Jr.**, expounds upon a set of theses modeled on his mentor’s essay, *Wisdom—Theses and Hypotheses*. McCann, in his article, *Isaiah—Theses and Hypotheses*, argues for the unity of the Book of Isaiah, a canonical re-integration which acknowledges a series of editings. He further hypothesizes an expansive biblical theology of God’s calling upon his people to witness and proclaim justice for all.

John E. O’Grady, in *Postmodernism and the Interpretation of Biblical Texts for Behavior*, thickens the plot as he adds a postmodernist note, focusing on present efforts to bridge the gap between “the classic and contemporary reality,” allowing for differences in understanding the classical. Following upon Roland Murphy’s admonition to “pay attention to your audi-

ence,” O’Grady incorporates a recognition of the lived experience of the biblical readers.

Amy-Jill Levine offers a dynamic critique in Roland Murphy, *The Pontifical Biblical Commission, Jews, and the Bible* (see Murphy, BTB 32: 145–49). As a Jewish New Testament scholar, A.-J. Levine affirms Murphy’s critique of the Pontifical Biblical Commission’s report and suggests how Murphy’s insights, based upon his theological and historical-critical analysis, would have improved the document.

Carole R. Fontaine reflects on Roland Murphy from her student days at Duke University, in a touching tribute, *Roland E. Murphy, Feminist Mentor: Rightly Did the Maidens Love Him*.

We trust that these efforts to honor the memory of our esteemed Associate Editor, Roland E. Murphy, will be taken as a token of gratitude for his many contributions to his field, this journal, and the expansive community of biblical believers he so deeply cherished.

David M. Bossman
 Editor

