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ONESIMUS *our brother: reading religion, race and culture in Philemon*; edited by Matthew V Johnson, James A Noel and Demetrius K Williams.

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Like the other volumes in the Paul in Critical Contexts series, *Onesimus our Brother* is a welcome addition to Pauline studies. The goal of this book is to free Paul's letter to Philemon from the 'white' lens through which it is often approached (even among African American interpreters) and to provide a voice to the powerless figure of Onesimus who has been silenced both within the epistle and throughout much of modern scholarship. To accomplish this aim, the book departs from the hegemonic influence of what it labels 'traditional biblical criticism', which is informed by Western modernity, and seeks instead to read the letter 'from the margins'. This approach is congruent with many of the newer ideological reading strategies that have developed within biblical studies in recent decades (e.g., postcolonial criticism, cultural studies, feminist biblical criticism, etc.), but it most closely resembles (and is said to be a continuation of) African American biblical interpretation. The essays included in the volume address the disadvantaged situation of Onesimus from a variety of different angles. Some space is devoted to questions of the historical meaning of the ancient text, but much more attention is given to the contemporary situation. In this way, the contributions often move beyond the traditional boundaries of New Testament scholarship by exploring questions of race and reconciliation in the modern world. As with any collection of essays, the contributed works represent varying levels of quality. But the volume as a whole makes an important contribution to the field, both as a commendable application of an ideological approach to the biblical text, in general, and as an innovative reading of Paul's letter to Philemon (or better yet, Paul's letter *about Onesimus*), in particular.

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