Smith's book represents excellent research that every Christian leader should contemplate. He does achieve the correct solution to the modern *zeitgeist*, which this reviewer believes, is for believers to once again be the church, returning to the mission given by Christ. As opposed to mission drift, God's church should proclaim the truth that never changes, as given in Scripture.

— Gary E. Gilley
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Acts 1–9:42 (Word Biblical Commentary) by Steve Walton. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024. 697 pp., cloth, $72.99.

The Word Biblical Commentary series was inaugurated in 1982. The issuing of revised or second editions began when Thomas Nelson publishers acquired Word Books, the originator of the series, in 1992. The series has been published by Zondervan Academic since 2012; yet, the New Testament part of the series is still lacking certain volumes. A projected three-volume commentary on Acts by Steve Walton has been announced, and the first volume, on Acts 1–9:42, has now been released. Walton is senior research fellow in New Testament at Trinity College, Bristol, and a former secretary of the British New Testament Society. He is a noted Acts and New Testament scholar, and previously authored *Reading Acts Theologically* (Bloomsbury: T&T Clark, 2022), a collection of his previously published essays on Acts with the addition of an opening essay on reading Acts theologically. Readers should find it relevant that Walton is a priest in the Church of England, as is his wife.

The format of the commentary duplicates the format of the other volumes in the series. Prior to the commentary proper, there are brief prefaces by the editor and the author, a list of abbreviations, a general bibliography, and an introduction that (in this case) addresses "What kind of commentary is this?" and "The text of Acts." Readers will be disappointed, as was this reviewer, that Walton delayed exploring questions regarding "authorship, date, theology, etc." until the end of his "third volume on Acts" (p. 88). However, it is evident from the commentary that Walton accepts the historicity of Acts and Luke as the author.

The commentary section is organized in typical series format: each segment to receive comment begins with an extensive bibliography followed by the author's translation and textual notes, and then three

sections: form/structure/setting, comment, and explanation. The volume concludes with Scripture and extrabiblical, subject, and author indexes. Walton encouraged his readers to read the explanation section first. He based his commentary on "the text edited in NA[28]/UBS[5] as modified in ECM [Editio Critica Major]" although without "slavishly following those editions" where he believes "the combination of external and internal evidence points to a different reading" (p. 99)..

Pleasantly, Walton said that he intends "that this is a commentary on Acts, not a commentary on the commentaries of Acts" (p. 87). He did reference or quote from modern commentaries on Acts hundreds of times, but without violating his intention. Walton's work will inevitably be compared to C. K. Barrett's two-volume on Acts in the International Critical Commentary series and Craig Keener's massive four-volume commentary on Acts published by Baker. Walton cited Barrett numerous times, more than any other commentator, but surprisingly only referenced Keener approximately 20 times. Walton is superior to the more critical Barrett in terms of exegesis. Keener is in a class by himself.

Walton's exegesis is exceptional, just as one would expect from an Acts scholar writing a volume in the Word Biblical Commentary series. However, readers of this journal should not expect a discussion or even a mention of anything relating to dispensationalism. Aside from those wanting to add another volume to their collection, this first of three volumes on Acts is a valuable resource to those preaching through Acts or doing some in-depth study.

— Laurence M. Vance
Vance Publications (Orlando, FL)

Growth and Change: The Danger and Necessity of a Passion for Church Growth by Andrew Heard with Geoff Robson. Sydney, Australia: Matthias Media, 2024. 264 pp., paper, $19.99.

Andrew Heard is the founding pastor of the megachurch EV Church on the Central Coast of Australia. His overall thesis in *Growth and Change* is that pastors and church leaders spend more effort on input rather than on output (p. 179). In other words, much energy is expended maintaining the church structure — including the essentials such as preaching, prayer, and doctrinal correctness — but not enough attention is given to output, whether pastoral methods are achieving the intended goals. Significant