

# Reviews

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## Editorial

The long-awaited fourth volume of N. T. Wright's *Christian Origins and the Question of God* is about to be published. More importantly this is Wright's volume on the theology of Paul. It is so big it will be published in two volumes, another doorstopper to go with Douglas Campbell's *The Deliverance of God*. If that is not enough, two more books, one a collection of essays on Paul, and another engaging with recent interpreters, like Campbell, are also being published.

In the area of systematic theology, Sarah Coakley, Professor at Cambridge University has recently published the first of a projected four volumes of a systematic theology. This is a systematic theology with a difference as each volume will engage with worship and a public issue, alongside doctrine. So volume one, *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity* is on the doctrine of the Trinity but through conversation on issues of sexuality and the discipline of prayer.

A third book to note is also Paul Fiddes' *Seeing the World and Knowing God*, which is his an expanded version of 2005 Bampton Lectures. The book looks to offer a theology of Christian wisdom in conversation with the biblical wisdom literature (which was the topic of Paul's unpublished doctoral thesis), Christian doctrine and post-modern philosophy. Currently published in hardback, Paul has informed me that there will be a paperback version to follow. Of course the paperback version, although cheaper, won't be any easier to read!

All these books, demonstrate English theology is producing some interesting and creative work, although in a distinctive English style. Look out for reviews of all the books mentioned in future editions of this journal.

In this present edition there is still much to chew on, with a wide variety of books covering preaching, economics, leadership, mission and discipleship and more.

*Andy Goodliff*  
*Editor*

*October 2013*

**John Goldingay, *Job for Everyone* (SPCK, 2012), 256pp.**

The first thing which struck me about *Job for Everyone* when it arrived, was its size. I was told that I would be reviewing a kind of biblical commentary, and I had been having nervous flashbacks to the backbreaking tomes in my old college library. The 'For Everyone', I predicted, must be a marketing trick. However, when the book arrived, it was scarcely bigger than a Penguin paperback with just over 200 pages. And no micro-print, either. So I began this book from a place of relief.

After the usual booky bits – title page, copyright blurb, contents pages – are a couple of maps: one of the Ancient Near East, showing the various regions referred to in the book of Job, and one more detailed view of the lands in and immediately near to Canaan. After the Acknowledgements, we have a very short Introduction to the book of Job, including its context within the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament (the order of books varies between the Jewish and Christian canon) and then the commentary begins, following the order of the text of Job.

One very helpful feature of this book, particularly given that most of my reading of it was done on trains, is that it includes, at the start of each section of commentary, the text to be commented on, meaning that you do not need to have a copy of the Bible with you to make use of this book.

After the relevant 'chunk' of Job – often, though not always, a chapter or pericope – follows the commentary. Many of the commentaries begin anecdotally, and begin with phrases like 'This morning in chapel...' and 'Yesterday in class...' which, if you are reading in 100 page stints on a train, might give the impression that the author has an almost incredibly busy and profound life, until one remembers that books take far longer to write than to read. And yet, even read in such a way, the anecdotes never cease to be at once both illuminating on the text and engaging on a personal level.

Reading this book is not so very much like reading a biblical commentary, then, but much more like hearing a well informed and talented preacher blend together personal story, biblical story and theology so seamlessly that we come away feeling engaged, perhaps even entertained, and only later realise we have also learnt something deeply important.

With masterful skill, *Job for Everyone* tells us a lot about Job and the themes his book explores – profound personal suffering, the human relationship with God, God's role in human suffering, our place in the universe, and how not to be a friend – without giving us every single possible scrap of information about the text. A good example of this can be seen in the commentary to Job 3:1-26. Following an illuminating anecdote featuring two of Goldingay's uncles, he says of Job's lamentations: "For the most part you do not need me to explain it, as will be the case with much of his protesting through the book. You need to read it, and read it again, and read it again. Maybe I just need to comment on Leviathan..."

By focusing on illuminating the broad and important themes of the text, and giving the reader just that information which will be necessary to understand what is going on, or explaining words or concepts the lay person is unlikely to have come across before, this is a book which remains, from start to finish, eminently readable. Not, in my view, like most other commentaries I have encountered, but more enjoyable for that, and perhaps more useful to the majority of people who are not intending to write academic papers about the subtleties of the text which is, after all, what most commentaries are for. And so the title of the book seems to me right on – everyone could read this book, and hopefully many people will.

*Ashley Beck*  
*London*

**Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically* (Studies in Theological Interpretation; Baker Academic / SPCK, 2012), 256pp.**

Gordon Wenham's service of church and academy is rightly well-known. This latest publication reflects these twin concerns. In recent years, he has been examining the ethical dimensions of Old Testament texts falling outside the genre of 'law'. The firstfruits were published in *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically*. In this new volume, the Psalms have become the object of study as ethical texts. The book is well-written, very accessible to the working minister, and serves to give a good introduction to scholarship on the Psalms while, at the same time, advancing clearly Wenham's argument. I would summarise this as: psalms, since they are spoken (even memorised) by the worshipper, have a unique ethical authority because they become embedded in the worshipper's internal world, thereby affecting attitudes and actions.

The book is divided into two halves. The first four chapters are concerned with summarising scholarship on the Psalms and laying the foundations of the argument, while the latter six chapters examine the ethics of the Psalms, in relation to the rest of the biblical canon.

Chapter 1 observes the importance of the Psalms in public worship, in the OT, Jewish synagogues, and in the Christian church. Chapter 2 further embraces their use in personal devotion, and includes a brief overview of the history of modern scholarship. Most attention is paid to canonical criticism as this is Wenham's approach in this book. Chapter 3 notes that the role of texts in an ancient oral culture was to ensure the correct memorisation of cultural traditions for the sake of continuity. Like similar texts, the Psalms were written to be memorised, Wenham argues. He adds that such memorised texts, 'have a peculiarly character-forming effect on the memorizer' (p.53), which is a critical to their ethical value.

Chapter 4 provides an important hinge to the second half of the book, with the strong statement that '[the ethics of liturgy] makes a stronger claim on the believer than either law, wisdom, or story, which are simply subject to

passive reception: one can listen to a proverb or a story and then take it or leave it, but if you pray ethically, you commit yourself to a path of action' (p.57). This central idea is backed up by consideration of reader-response and speech-act theory. This is a novel and interesting approach, worthy of more space than has been given. However, the chapter seems to miss the obvious means of supporting the argument with practical evidence: since the Psalms are *still* memorised and used in public and private worship, research could be done to see whether the theory is functionally true. More than anecdotal evidence is needed to demonstrate that worshippers find liturgical worship to be ethically demanding. In particular, the repeated example of the Lord's prayer – that forgiveness from God is dependent on our prior forgiveness of others – is a mixed example; in spite of the daily repetition of this prayer by many Christians, it is not evident from my pastoral experience that these pray-ers lives are particularly marked by increased forgiveness (including my own). On the other hand, if the prayer had the form of law rather than liturgy (e.g. 'Forgive or you will not be forgiven'), I could imagine a greater ethical response, but the book does not address this possibility.

The second half of the book opens with a survey of the concept of 'law' in the Psalms, spending time in Psalm 119 especially and noting the sense of law beyond rules as the 'whole of God's revelation' (p.88). Wenham observes that the psalmists reflect both an ideal love of God's law, while also a humble realism concerning their own response to it. Chapters 6 and 7 move from the discussion of law to connections with individual laws and the 'narrative law' of the Pentateuch, noting, for example, that, 'There is plenty of evidence that the psalmists know the Ten Commandments and put them at the heart of their ethical thinking' (p.109). Violence is one category cited, although there is little attempt to deal with the complexity of the Psalms' portrayal of this topic, however, which could be considered problematic for the use of the Psalms as an ethical corpus (these so-called imprecatory psalms are helpfully dealt with in Chapter 9, although their supposedly positive theological contribution seems overdrawn). Chapter 8 explores the internal ethical system of the Psalms, concluding that a fundamental feature is the imitation of God and rejection of the attitudes and actions of the 'wicked'.

Chapter 10 moves into the New Testament, observing that the frequent use of quotations from and allusions to the Psalms, is both to be expected from their liturgical use, and often revolves around ethical issues (e.g. the suffering of the righteous). This chapter provides a taster, but would merit a further volume as it could offer strong support to the central thesis. The book finishes with a brief but helpful concluding chapter.

Wenham does an excellent job of presenting a scholarly argument that will be accessible to a wider Christian audience: it is both relatively brief (207 pages of text) and written in an engaging style which does not get waylaid by distractions. Yet this brevity is also a limitation, for this reader at least, who felt that the core thesis needed further justification and supporting evidence, as mentioned above. I also remain unconvinced that Torah, in the title, is necessarily the right description of the Psalter. These criticisms notwithstanding, this book usefully and creatively gives fresh insights into

reading, praying, and preaching the Psalms. Wenham concludes by asking, 'whether neglect of the psalms has not impoverished the church's witness both to its own member and to the wider world' (p.207). Reading this book will certainly encourage reflection on this important question.

*Ed Kaneen*  
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**Zoë Bennett and David B. Gowler (eds.), *Radical Christian Voices and Practice: Essays in Honour of Christopher Rowland* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 318pp.**

In addition to possessing possibly the most convoluted professorial title in the country (*Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford*), Christopher Rowland is also one of the most interesting and influential biblical scholars of the current era. His interests have ranged far and wide over the years; from his ground-breaking study on Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity (*The Open Heaven* - published more than thirty years ago!), to his work on radical and liberationist biblical interpreters; from his interest in the reception history of the Book of Revelation, to his recent monograph on William Blake and the Bible. This diversity is reflected in this collection of essays produced in his honour. They are an eclectic read unless you know Chris, at which point they cease to be eclectic and become a fitting engagement with the breadth of his interests.

Bennett and Gowler's book contains sixteen chapters by a fine collection of scholars, arranged in three sections which reflect aspects of Chris Rowland's interests: I – the Bible and Radicalism; II – Reception History: The Appropriation of the Biblical Text in the Radical Tradition; and III – Radical Christian Voices Today. It will not be possible to provide a detailed interaction with each chapter in a short review such as this, so some snapshots will have to suffice.

Ched Myers offers a fascinating re-reading of the Lukan parable of the unjust steward, or the 'manager of injustice' as he re-frames it. Myers sets this notoriously complex parable against a contemporary context of the need for a different economic narrative to the dominant model of capitalism. Myers proposes the 'hero' of Luke's parable as an archetype for those in the contemporary world who are ensnared in a toxic and oppressive economic system; concluding that the call is to be like the manager who, realising that he is economically trapped and compromised, takes action to subvert the dominant economic system where wealth is owned by the few, using the money in his control to establish an ethos of 'generalised reciprocity' and mutual aid (p.62). Myers says, 'Jesus has spun a tale about the rapacious, predatory world of ancient commodity managing' (p. 63) and suggests that this parable has 'the power to deconstruct and reconstruct our consciousness around money' (p. 66).

Rowan Williams offers a reflection on radicalism and orthodoxy in the work of William Blake. He begins by exploring the themes of mercy, pity, peace,



and terror in Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, showing how Blake's 'divine image' is the realisation of imaginative action in a world of limits. Williams then moves on to a consideration of Blake's tour-de-force *Jerusalem, the emanation of the Giant Albion*, where the divine form, named as Jesus, is presented as the sum of human resistance to evil; Jesus is the one who through death identifies the incarnate divine with the suffering of humanity. Ultimately, Williams concludes that for Blake, the divine image is to be found in 'the imaginative fusion and freshness that keeps the "excess of being" moving forward in creativity' (p. 163). This challenges those cultures of materialism (be they 19<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century) where the material world is reduced to a commodity and so loses its ability to stir the imagination towards the divine.

Jane Shaw's contribution, *A Modern Millenarian Prophet's Bible*, enters the slightly strange world of the Panacea Society in Bedford, something of particular interest to this reviewer whose great-aunt was a member of the Society. A Southcottian millenarian group focussed around the female messiah-figure Mabel Bartrop, the Society has some continuing influence although their heyday was in the 1920s and 1930s. They believed that the Godhead was four-fold rather than Trinitarian, consisting of God as Father, Mother, Son, and Daughter (Bartrop herself). Much of the Society's theology derives from a reading of the Book of Revelation, and Shaw has obtained access to Bartrop's personal Bible which sheds fascinating light on how she interpreted the biblical text to arrive at her 'bold and heterodox theological vision' (p. 166).

The concluding chapter in the volume is by Christopher Rowland himself, and he takes the opportunity to reflect on the nature of Christian radicalism through engagement with the various essays that comprise the overall book. With typically gracious humility, Rowland observes that, 'complexity in human motives only reminds us that we should take care not to be too quick in judging, either ourselves or our predecessors, for what seem to be deeds of excess and self-gratification' (p. 260).

This is a fascinating volume, which pays fitting tribute to a great scholar and teacher who has inspired so many to look afresh at the lesser-told stories and characters of Christian radicalism. Christopher Rowland's enthusiasm for, and encouragement of, 'interesting' scholarship has placed a great many people in his debt (and here I include myself – having been inspired by him for many years, it was an honour to have him as my doctoral examiner), and the breadth and quality of contributors to this volume is testimony to his influence and the gratitude with which he is regarded. It is a book that will repay time spent wrestling with its chapters, and will spur further engagement with the 'interesting' topics it explores.

*Simon Woodman*  
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**Medi Ann Volpe, *Rethinking Christian Identity: Doctrine and Discipleship* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 263pp.**

What does it mean to be formed in the Christian tradition as a disciple of Jesus Christ? This is the question posed by Medi Ann Volpe in this re-writing of her doctoral dissertation. She has taken a work that is essentially academic, and re-formed it to give it considerable pastoral application.

The main thrust of the book is to critique three contemporary theologians' descriptions of Christian identity: those of Kathryn Tanner, Rowan Williams and John Milbank. In each she finds something lacking, especially in their failure to give an adequate account of Christian formation. To answer this question of formation she looks to Gregory of Nyssa for an account of those practices that re-orientate desire, which, she identifies in her discussion of Williams, is the crux of Christian identity.

Volpe takes as her starting point the post-liberal theology of George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine*. Lindbeck describes two opposing approaches to being religious: the cognitive and the experiential-expressive, and finds neither adequate. The first, where propositions determined the meaning of Christian doctrine, was too rigid, while the second, an expressive approach, lacked the necessary connection between a doctrine and its meaning. He replaced both with a cultural-linguistic approach to Christian doctrine that he likened to learning a language, 'to interiorize a set of skills by practice and training.' It is not learning about a religion that is the primary knowledge, nor 'that the religion teaches such and such, but rather *how* to be religious in such and such ways.' Thus, to the telling of the gospel story is added the power and meaning 'as it is embodied in the total gestalt of community life and action.' Learning this language brings with it the ability to discriminate intuitively, rather like the grammatical or rhetorical knowledge of the poet. Thus Christian formation is the learning of the skills and language of a new culture, practicing new modes of behaviour, not just the acknowledgement of a new set of propositional realities. This habituation, learning the way to live Christianly in the world, involves the skills of narration and imagination: attention to God and the following of Jesus Christ.

Volpe criticises Lindbeck precisely at this point. His scheme seems to suggest that the acquisition of new skills and language that enables the person to become habituated to the way of being Christian fills an empty vacuum, a vacant 'centre', but for the ancient catechists this was not the case. They understood that the soul was already habituated to a different way of life: sinful and defective, the soul was not ordered towards desire for God, but elsewhere. Thus becoming a disciple involves a 'restructuring of the soul's desire,' and the recognition that the formation of disciples takes place within a secular culture that continues to socialize and shape the developing believer, even as the story and practices of the faith continue to run counter to it. Volpe argues that attention to the role of desire is vital if Christian formation is to be understood, and criticises Tanner at this point for her failure to address this question.

For Kathryn Tanner and for Rowan Williams Christian practice is a form of improvisational performance, and the individual disciple, in Tanner's account, listens respectively to the accounts given around the table, where the voices from present and past are heard, then comes to her own

conclusion. What is lacking is any notion of a Magisterium, a teaching office that carries authority, and while this is inimical to Tanner's approach, Volpe argues that it is necessary, and turns to Alasdair MacIntyre to show how an account of tradition helps. Discipleship, as ministry, is not a matter of choosing from a range of practices and beliefs and individually creating something that somehow coheres, but locating oneself in a tradition. It involves not simply discrimination, but also obedience.

Where Tanner sees Christian tradition as something that arises from cultural materials, and free from the authority of the community of practice, MacIntyre conceives of tradition as an inheritance that is passed on as its practitioners participate in the practices of that tradition. It is as they share in those practices that desire is formed, expressed in the virtues. Volpe argues that Tanner's failure to give an account of Christian formation fatally injures her account of what it is to live as a Christian.

'It is not merely a matter of learning the story, but learning how to live in the light of that story, coming to understand its significance for us and for the world. .... Making the kinds of judgements Tanner sees as indispensable for Christian faith depends on knowing one's place in the story and being able to discern the meaning of the narrative for our thinking and action' (p.51).

Turning to Rowan Williams, Volpe shows how he presents a more effective description of what it is to be formed as a Christian, and central to that vision is the notion of taking time, and that we understand who we are as Christians (our identity) only provisionally: our identity is always under construction as we attempt to 'make sense' of who or what we are. This making sense is offered in a community of common interest, and is about learning to direct oneself towards God. The results are transformed social relationships, and a love that does not seek its own good but the well-being of others. This is precisely and most fully seen in Christ, and thus one follows Christ as one is drawn into God's love.

For Williams, the performance of Christian identity is, first, narration of the story that finds its richest description in the Eucharist. Here we understand that God's grace is gift, and so we seek to transform the world into a community of gift and sharing. The identities of both individual Christians and the community they inhabit come together here. It is secondly, a response to God's initiative, through human participation in God. It is as we take time and make sense that we grow in Christian discipleship, and grow into the image of Christ. The process of growth in likeness to Christ that Williams identifies, and which Volpe approves of, is traced by Williams in *The Wound of Knowledge*. This is the conversion of desire, a process that is also shaped by the reality of sin. Desiring God involves an opening up to the Other, of taking a risk, of being receptive to the object of desire.

Volpe's third conversation partner in her attempt to articulate what it is to be a disciple is John Milbank. His contribution, she argues, is the greater attention to the God-giveness of Christian identity. Although Milbank does not articulate an account of formation, his complex account of the nature of

the Christian life provides some hints. Milbank's thoroughly post-modern theology rejects Kantian epistemology, with its refusal to accept there is any possibility of knowledge about God, and develops a notion of living by participation in God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Milbank contrasts the ontology of peace with the ontology of violence, the way of God and the way of the world. The ontological priority we presume, be it peace or violence, will inform our imagination and our practice. As we narrate the story of peace, instantiated by forgiveness, we re-imagine our place in the universe and develop responses appropriate to that place. '*Poesis* is the work of (re)narrating and constructing the counter-history and in so doing performing the counter-ethics and thereby instantiating the counter-ontology' (p.114). Volpe finds once again, as with Tanner and with Williams, that Milbank pays insufficient attention to the question of the formation of the Christian. In order to rectify this lack, she turns to Gregory of Nyssa.

Simply put, Gregory describes the soul as linking memory and imagination to the body. The soul requires shaping and purification, and for Gregory ascetic practice trains humans for participation in God. This endless movement into the divine is situated on a broader horizon than catechesis, as formation continues throughout the life of the individual. The soul is intended to reflect the divine brightness, to reflect God, and so, empowered by the indwelling Spirit, we tend the soul so that it performs this function.

Without asceticism, the constant discipline of resisting the passions, and the grace of God, we are subject to sinful passivity. Gregory pays attention to the quality of those activities that enable us to properly receive the grace of God (whereas Milbank focuses on the active receptivity to the gift of God.) Sin affects the ability of the soul to reflect God's activity, so ascetic practice is required to clear the soul to function as a mirror to God's glory, while it is the work of the Holy Spirit to re-orientate the soul towards God. It is likened to a mirror: the Spirit orientates the mirror towards its object, God, and the practices shine the surface, so that it properly reflects the light.

The process of attention to the things of God, to beauty, increases perception and draws the soul to participate in that beauty, and thus increases the desire to attend to God. The practices (for Gregory, ascetical practices, such as abstaining from sexual activity, or fasting,) increase the desire, and thus, to use other spiritual language, 'the soul ascends.' 'Imitation, learning Scripture, and participating in the practices of the community are essential to the display of divine life commensurate with being in the image of God' (p.160). This process of 'deification' is an infinite one, the desire that is rightly orientated towards God is never satisfied, as each insight into God's beauty incites the desire for more. In Gregory's thought, ascetical practices, attention to Scripture and, thirdly, the formation of a Christian imagination that contemplates God through understanding the doctrine of God.

While this book portrays all the signs of its origins as a PhD thesis, it is a more developed work than its origins suggest. In the closing section Volpe develops her own account of what it is to be formed as a Christian disciple, noting how discipleship is a concept widely used in pastoral and practical theology, but little used in systematic theology. Discipleship, as a concept, allows Volpe to fill a gap in Gregory of Nyssa's account of Christian identity: the difficulty in grasping the relationship between divine and human agency. The ascent of the soul seems at once entirely a divine work of grace and entirely a human act. The key element here is the way in which discipleship is formed, taking the reality of sin seriously, as also the demands of grasping the doctrines of the faith. With Gregory she also understands that the example of the saints, those who help us remember Jesus faithfully, (since they reflect the life of Jesus) provide us with examples to follow.

This is a substantial work that explores a considerable gap in the literature of discipleship, conversing as it does with three of the most significant contemporary theologians (unlike much literature on discipleship which ignores theology altogether.) If there are lacunae in the understanding of what faithful discipleship looks like, then these would be in the area of three matters that are of particular interest to Baptists: community, witness and baptism. While there is an important corporate dimension to discipleship in Volpe's conception, it lacks a focus. We can no more be disciples in isolation from other believers than we can attain to the beatific vision without the gift of the Spirit's illumination. And there is, I think, insufficient attention paid to the significance of witnessing to Christ. Jesus' admonition to the disciples is to go and make some more, baptizing them in the Triune name. Which brings me to the final area that would have been worth developing further in this book (while having, I presume, no place in her doctoral thesis, with its more limited purpose,) and that is the significance of what Anthony Cross has described as 'the Evangelical sacrament', baptism. Baptism is really only discussed in the light of Gregory's conviction that if it only really enacts of what it speaks when the baptised person acknowledges the divinity of Father, Son and Spirit. While this is of course a very welcome confession, she says in her introduction that she has been challenged to see everything differently in the light of the limitations imposed upon her daughter, Anna, by Down Syndrome. The efficacy of baptism, I suggest, is not simply triggered by the cognitive acknowledgement of the full divinity of the three persons of the Trinity. This is reflective of Gregory's concerns, of course, but baptism in this conception only gains transformative power in relation to an act of cognition. This raises questions of the depth of understanding required for salvation, and I think I would rather emphasise the way of life that follows baptism rather than the cognitive ability that precedes it.

Academic libraries will want this book, and those interested in a way of integrating systematics and practical theology, but whether they can afford to do so is another matter (25 pence per page seems rather expensive to me, even if this hardback binding is as robust as any.) It has caused me to return to Milbank and Williams, and to explore Tanner afresh, but more significantly, to read Gregory. For that alone I am grateful to Volpe.

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Baptist Union of Great Britain

**Tom Greggs, Rachel Muers and Simeon Zahl (eds.), *The Vocation of Theology Today: A Festschrift for David Ford* (Cascade, 2013), 409pp.**

Some theologians create a community around them, which goes on to shape something of the theological landscape (Colin Gunton, Stanley Hauerwas are two examples). David Ford is that kind of theologian. Alongside the important work he has done (think *Jubilate!*, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*, *Self and Salvation* and *Christian Wisdom*), Ford has generated a new approach to the discipline of theology and its place in the university (for a description see particularly his manifesto *The Future of Christian Theology*), from which numerous students have emerged, many in this festschrift in his honour. Ford's students can be found across UK universities – Tom Greggs in Aberdeen, Rachel Muers in Leeds, Susannah Ticciati, Paul Janz and Ben Quash at King's College London, Simeon Zahl in Oxford, Michael Barnes at Heythrop London, Mike Higon (recently arriving) and Paul Murray in Durham, and Nick Adams in Edinburgh. Alongside these students is the impact of Ford's friendships, in the likes of Peter Ochs, Dan Hardy, Frances Young, Micheal O'Siadhail, Jean Vanier and current colleagues Sarah Coakley, Janet Martin Soskice, Timothy Jenkins and now also Rowan Williams. All of these (apart from Dan Hardy, Ford's father-in-law and theological collaborator, who died in 2009), and others, feature in this wide-ranging festschrift, demonstrating Ford's extensive theological interests.

The book is divided into seven parts, each reflecting a theme or conversation that Ford has been or is a part of: Conversing with Theologians (notably for Ford, Barth and Bonhoeffer), Attending to Scripture (see Ford's engagements in his monographs with 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Job, and recently in John's gospel – with a commentary being prepared), In and For the Church (see Ford's various contributions to the Anglican Communion and the likes of his 1997 Archbishop of Canterbury Lent book, *The Shape of Living*), Reasoning Between the Faiths (a major part of Ford's career has been in the Scriptural Reasoning Project and the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme), Speaking and Listening in Public (Ford understands theology as being a 'broker' of other disciplines), Theology and the University (since his 1991 inaugural lecture as Regius Professor at Cambridge Ford has been reflecting on the place and the importance of theology and religious studies in the university) and Theology and the Face (Ford explores the 'face' and 'facing' in his monograph *Self and Salvation*). Some essays in the different parts explore Ford's contribution in these areas, others seek to make their own contributions.

I always find the most interesting essays in a festschrift the ones that explore the thought of the one being honoured, particularly in this collection are the essays by Ben Quash on Ford's pneumatology, Alistair McFayden on the theologian's vocation, Micheal O'Siadhail on his long

friendship with Ford, and Deborah Hardy Ford (David Ford's wife) on theme of the 'face'.

David Ford is one of our most interesting theologians. *Self and Salvation* and *Christian Wisdom* are two books that open wonderful and thought-provoking theological vistas. This festschrift from his friends is a good introduction and testament to why Ford is a theologian in the university and in the church.

*Andy Goodliff*  
*Belle Vue Baptist Church, Southend-on-Sea*

**Jason Goroncy, *Hallowed Be Thy Name: The Sanctification of All in the Soteriology of P.T. Forsyth* (Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 291pp.**

It is unusual to find a book which is both theologically astute and beautifully written. Jason Goroncy has crafted a work of fine prose and strong theological scholarship which deserves to gain a readership well beyond the confines of specialist theologians. It is indeed rare to find a doctoral thesis written in such erudite yet accessible language.

The popularity of the theology of P.T. Forsyth waxed and waned throughout the twentieth century; in the current century it seems, once again, to have been largely overlooked, perhaps disregarded as quaintly out of touch with modern realities. Goroncy's work serves us well in reminding us of the greatness of Forsyth's theological vision.

Goroncy aims to explore Forsyth's theology through the lens of the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. In particular, it is asked whether Forsyth's emphasis on God's holy love necessarily implies dogmatic universal salvation. The question of universalism in Forsyth has been raised before; what is new here is an approach to the question through Forsyth's own doctrine of sanctification. The opening of the Lord's prayer, for Forsyth, finds fulfilment in Jesus Christ who is holiness incarnate, the fully obedient Son who confesses holiness from the side of human sinfulness, bears judgement against sin and creates the possibility of a new humanity. Having expounded Forsyth's christological perspective on the hallowing of God's name, Goroncy then offers a careful examination of Forsyth's moral anthropology; humanity is created, elected and sanctified to reflect the holy love of God within creation. The final chapter argues that Forsyth's theology of holiness logically leads to dogmatic universalism, a conclusion which Forsyth himself did not follow through.

The detailed argument here is worked through with meticulous attention to Forsyth's own reticence with regard to universalism. Goroncy shows that Forsyth consistently rejects limited atonement, double predestination and annihilation. Instead, Forsyth articulates a threefold doctrine of election, located firstly in Christ, then in the community of the church and finally in the individual. When the focus of election shifts to the person of Christ, the question of universalism is often raised. If the whole human race is elect in

Christ soteriological universalism seems to be a logical outcome. That argument has been played out with regard to Barth, with several rejoinders being made. Forsyth offers several qualifications to the universalist thrust of his theology. Firstly, he holds out the possibility of final rejection by God. Jesus Christ exercises faithfulness on behalf of all, but also has faith that each person will choose life and not death; a final 'no' is possible, and Forsyth argues that no individual is finally deprived of their own freely chosen fate. Goroncy suggests that this is ultimately incoherent, leaving open the possibility that holiness might be other than that revealed in Christ. Ultimately Forsyth's theology protests in two directions: he is clearly set against a systematised doctrine of universalism, yet he does not repudiate universalism. For Goroncy this is unsustainable.

Forsyth's second caveat relates to the possibility of final judgement. Judgement is always understood as a word of mercy and restorative in nature. Towards the end of his career Forsyth memorably conjured up the possibility that the doctrine of purgatory may not be wholly wrong, offering the possibility of post-mortem conversion. Yet even here, it is argued, Forsyth is reluctant to follow these thoughts through in a consistent way. Finally, Goroncy criticises Forsyth's reticence on the grounds that he affirms that Christ has fulfilled the demands of God's holiness on behalf of racial humanity; Christ offered himself in racial solidarity with the whole of humanity. The theological consequence – salvation for all – is hard to escape.

Not all will agree with the conclusions to this book. There are Forsyth scholars who take a different view, though this is the first to explore his theology through the lens of hallowing. In particular the passion with which T.F. Torrance argued that Barth's doctrine of election did not logically imply universalism could be applied here. Whether one agrees with the conclusion or not, we are indebted to Goroncy for a theologically generous and beautifully crafted piece of Forsyth scholarship. It is to be hoped that this book will inspire others to engage with the extraordinarily rich and practically relevant theology of one of the truly great British theologians.

*Graham Watts*  
*Spurgeon's College, London*

**Rowan Williams and Benedicta Ward, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History: an Introduction and Selection* (Bloomsbury, 2012), 174pp.**

Somehow the age of the Anglo Saxons has gained a high profile in the past few years, perhaps because of some excellent TV programmes giving us more information, and certainly in the light of archaeological finds such as the treasures found near Tamworth, recently, now in the Birmingham museum. That reminded us of the different power bases and territories in the British isles, including the Vikings and their Danelaw. Perhaps also the prospect of Scotland breaking off from the UK in 2015, and rising sense of Welsh identity and history, brings this era to life in a new way as we read of alliances between the various power blocks on our islands. And our experience of the steep decline of Christianity as a public ethos compares



poignantly with its power as an imperative helping to reconcile the Welsh, Scottish, Pictish and Anglo Saxon kings before the onset of the terrible Norman conquest. This book is an excellent small volume of selections from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, written in Latin by Bede, a scholar monk of Wearmouth, in 731 and here translated by Sr Benedicta Ward. Rowan Williams provides an incisive introduction, with a focus on the difficulties faced by Bede and Christianity in those times of war, invasion, the need for reconciliation, and Bede's vision of a unity of the English kingdoms which has been formative for the English psyche.

Bede's history has a definite 'spin', and that includes the notion of a special calling for the English Christians as the Anglian *gens* or people, using the analogy of Israel in the Old Testament, and also obedient to revelation. 'A great deal of nonsense', says Rowan Williams in his bracing introductory essay, 'has been written about "Celtic Christianity", as if this were an intelligible designation for some self-contained variant of catholic orthodoxy in the early Middle Ages, a variant more attuned to the sacredness of nature and less obsessed with institutional discipline'. Williams, himself deeply committed to Welsh culture and language, agrees with Sr Ward that 'Celtic Christianity' was not an autonomous entity but was thoroughly integrated into western Christianity and thought of itself as such. Many of the English and Welsh kings went to Rome in their last months of life, as they point out, and they wrote in Latin. The notion that there was a wholly separate line of church life, cut off from the mainstream, according to our authors, is mistaken. Ironically however Bede is partly responsible for this false impression, with his concern to paint a particular calling for the English and their church life – an irony as Bede is also very keen to emphasise the links with Rome. Bede is called on at the Reformation by both sides, such is the ambivalence of his message.

The selections of text are of course judicious and interesting, and Sr Benedicta's translation clear and direct. We gain a picture of the life of Christians in England under constant disruption and invasion after the Roman legions left, leaving southern Britain destitute military capacity and stripped of its young men, taken by Rome for its armies. The 'British', writes Bede, 'suffered for many years under two very savage foreign nations, the Irish from the West and the Picts from the North.' Then by sea came the predatory Angles, Saxons and Jutes: not a happy time for the Britons, and the history as told by Bede, political, military and ecclesiastical, is delightfully told in excerpts, carrying the reader along very easily. While this looks like a slim volume externally, it is of the highest quality within, rich fare indeed, and in a time of church decline in Britain also of direct relevance to Christians today, sensing difficulty and ambivalence.

*Timothy Bradshaw*  
*Regent's Park College, Oxford*

**Alister McGrath, *Faith and the Creeds*. Christian Belief for Everyone Vol.1 (SPCK, 2012), 115pp.**

This book came at just the right time for me as a preacher as I had just decided to do a sermon series on the Creed!

This book is the first volume in *The Christian Belief for Everyone* series which will comprise five guides to the basic ideas of the Christian faith. This book lays the foundations for four subsequent volumes to follow: The Living God, Lord and Saviour - Jesus of Nazareth, Spirit of the Living God and The Christian Life and Hope.

Alister McGrath is a name well known, for his introductory textbooks on Christian Theology, and many and varied theological writings. This series continues the trend set by Tom Wright in his *For Everyone* series by making good scholarship understandable for the non-academic Christian who nevertheless wants to expand their understanding of the Christian faith.

The introduction states:

‘What do Christians believe? Why do they believe this? And what difference does it make? In the *Christian belief for Everyone* series, I aim to explore the basic themes of a simple and genuinely Christian faith.’

This slim volume does exactly what it says on the tin: it is full of stories and helpful illustrations and that make this accessible but also genuinely useful. The approach adopted is non-denominational which I found refreshing.

The book examines why Christians believe what they do; how we can best understand these ideas, and the difference they make to the way we think about ourselves and our world. For some nonconformists, who have little contact with the creeds, McGrath offers a reason for their creation and continuing use today:

‘The creeds were a way in which Christian identity could be affirmed, maintained and safeguarded. Reciting the creed was way of ensuring the individual believers and their communities were different. The creeds remind believers of their real identity and goal.’

This first volume, *Faith and the Creeds*, concentrates on the nature of faith and the history and relevance of the Creeds, reflecting on what we really mean when we say 'I believe'. He reminds us that when we recite the creeds we are reminded of the 'big picture' that underlies our faith, and that we are affirming that we are part of a believing community, and that we are declaring our willingness to explore what we have not yet encountered, and affirm what we have not yet understood. He views the creeds as aspirational, setting out a vision that we are invited to share in,

even while we explore that vision, reminding us that what we believe *always* changes how we The book is arranged in five chapters: *The Journey, The Map, Words and Stories, The Creeds, and I believe*. He helpfully traces the history of how the Christian faith gradually came to be expressed in the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed.

At a time when Christians are often seen denouncing one another because they aren't *true Christians* (or 'Evangelicals') because they don't agree 'our' specific theological slant McGrath reminds us that the creeds remind us of the foundational beliefs that unites us together and calls us to see beyond our own "tribes" and survey the people of faith joined by these powerful words.

This slim volume is good value and worth having on a minister's shelf, or in a church library, so it is accessible by all, because as McGrath himself comments: the Creeds are 'verbal vessels containing the treasure of the Gospel' even for those who do not use them week by week as part of their liturgy.

*Julie Aylward*  
*Borstal Baptist Church*

**Oliver Crisp Gavin D'Costa, Mervyn Davies and Peter Hampson (eds.), *Christianity and the Disciplines: The Transformation of the University* (T & T Clark, 2012), 286pp.**

This is volume in T & T Clark's 'Religion and University' series, and I begin with the confession that I have not read volume 1, but happily sinners are saved by grace and this appears in the form of a page by the editors explaining the purpose of the series. It does help me avoid a criticism or question I would have raised in this review, that is the absence of philosophy as a discipline, but this was covered in volume 1. This second volume 'seeks to facilitate a critical and positive relationship between Christianity and the wide variety of intellectual disciplines.' The overall aim of the series is to revitalise Christian culture through university education, demonstrating the creative and imaginative role for the Christian theological perspective within the university setting. The common assumptions driving the first two volumes are significant. First it is assumed that theology operates within an ecclesial context, accountable to the community of faith within the rigours of reason informed by faith. Second, philosophy is assumed to operate within a limited autonomy accountable to the community of faith as well as to the wider profession. Third, philosophy is the handmaiden of theology, and they form together a bridge to relate to the other sciences and disciplines. Fourth, the many disciplines have been shaped by the university culture and they can be hostile to Christian faith. Fifth, Christians in the secular academy, or Christian colleges, have the task of uncovering these issues and showing positive and creative links to the Christian vision. Sixth, the idea of a Christian university should be viewed positively. We will comment on this splendid menu later, at least from the angle of UK experience.

Rowan Williams' foreword is as penetrating as, while being much shorter than, anything else in the collection of essays. He appeals to serious clarity by theology in engaging with the disciplines, and in particular attention to the nature of what we mean by 'truth' in theology. Theology can slip into sentimental and impressionistic mode, taking refuge in the 'poetic' and poorly examined metaphor: theology needs to watch its language and reference.

The symposium comprises seventeen essays of some fifteen to twenty pages each, plus an introduction by the editors. Mervyn Davies sets the tone with a contribution on Newman's view of a university, an important figure in any discussion of Christianity and learning, with Newman's basic view that good learning requires a Christian presuppositional base to make sense of the good life. He feared for the slide into utilitarianism and a dehumanising effect that would bring. Newman wanted the disciplines to relate to each other in universities, and have a vision for the pursuit of truth, this should produce an educated laity and sustain the social good. Davies urges the reader, notwithstanding the doomsday feeling now commonly befogging our culture, to have faith and take the long view, as did Augustine.

The remainder of the essays are subdivided into three parts, natural and life sciences, human and social sciences, and humanities. Part one offers essays on maths, physics, biology, environment, and medicine, all of course with a Christian angle. Michael Heller packs a lot into his piece on mathematics and Christianity, pondering the structure of the world being revealed through maths, making the scientific enterprise possible as resting on a secure framework, and yet this law-like appearance of reality is balanced with a contingency and randomness. The blueprint of the universe mirrors the divine act of creation and mind. Alister McGrath has a fine essay on biology and Darwinism, exploring the need for direction in the process of evolution. This is a rich discussion, and would be worth putting on your theological bibliography. Celia Deane Drummond discusses the broad range of environmental sciences, including reference to the controversial 'climate change' issue, which raises the question of the politicisation of science and need for minority voices to be heard and not suppressed, if the discipline is to avoid returning to a secular Galileo situation! John Polkinghorne writes judiciously on physics and fine-tuning. Andrew Sloane writes on medicine, surely one of the disciplines now under intense and growing secular pressure, as one can see from the drastic secularisation of the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, for example. Sloane argues for personhood and medicine as a moral practice.

James Sweeney opens part two on the social sciences, probing human freedom, intentionality and purpose. For the Christian, God is real and that is the primary ontology behind all else, and sociology assumes some sort of social order rather than chaos, thus being compatible with the Christian vision of things. Being forced to bracket out God's grace from consideration of society opens up a dichotomy or asymmetry between the sacred and secular sociologies. The following chapters, by Peter Hampson and Steven Sandage call for basically acceptance of humane approaches to the disciplines of psychology and psychotherapy, desiring the

categories of human meaning, relationship and virtue in the interplay of theology and the 'secular' disciplines. The model of forgiveness is fruitfully deployed by Sandage.

Law comes into this second part, and again readers will feel that here is a God-free zone in today's western culture, but Julian Rivers refuses to be cast out and argues for a theology of legal education, placed in a dialectic of 'fallen' and 'redeemed' law. He hopes that the model of a Christian law school may take root, as part of the postmodern mix of approaches to law. Politics and economics follow, through essays by Nicholas Rengger then William Cavanaugh. Politics really is now a church free zone, although it can hardly be deemed an Islam free zone, as its political movements remind us from London to Nairbobi to Manhattan. Rengger urges further attempts by Christian theologians to engage creatively with today's political movements, pointing to the likes of O'Donovan, Hauerwas, Millbank and the recent popes. Cavanaugh on economics raises the issues of educational policy and social shaping of opinion, including faith communities, since economic policy can determine life or death and is a first order spiritual issue and must be given this ethical context rather than being seen as an autonomous discipline. Cavanaugh writes engagingly and interestingly, for example he cites Goodchild on the 'transcendent value of money', it is of supreme value, the norm for all other social values and so it 'occupies the place of God' with debt as kind of religion underpinned by trust. We need a return to God to rescue 'value' from the rich over those without access to cash, those in debt – and here in passing we must pay tribute to Archbishop Welby for his well-aimed remarks at Wonga! But Cavanaugh calls for real economic argument and debate, in which theology will want to participate.

Part three, the humanities, literature and history naturally can point to their historic Christian origins, and lament at the secularising impetus succeeding very well at ignoring and uprooting these. Richard Finn of Blackfriars Oxford writes a historical reflection of Oxford's classics and theological faculty as it moved from church to Enlightenment loyalites. The acceptance of non Anglican colleges and scholars gains an honourable mention (p.255), including Wheeler Robinson and Regents Park College, Robinson becoming the first non Anglican to chair the theology faculty in 1937. Finn is keen to discuss the interplay of Classics and Theology. He laments with MacIntyre that the secular way of conducting study at university now drives God from the consideration of the student and so prevents disciplines from being allowed to explore the question of meaning, to make sense of our world. Theology is a place where such first order issues should be explored, religious studies a different place where religions are described from the outside, from the edge of the pool observing those doing the swimming: theology calls us to jump in and splash about. An essay on religious studies, or a theology of religion, might have been useful – perhaps that awaits us in subsequent volumes. Part three ends with an interesting chapter on sacred music.

In conclusion we have a solid set of essays, with a few really fine ones. I wonder if the editors underestimate the depth of the secularisation now embedded in university departments up and down the UK. Christianity in

many, across all disciplines, has a particularly tainted status and is off limits as associated with post-colonial guilt, 'homophobia', slavery, suppression of women and all things nasty. A kind of neo Marxist criticism has become normal, and the fact of Christianity underpinning all of western civilization, is covered up or regarded as a piece of broken antique furniture. Church of England colleges have all but given up on presenting the Christian mind, with honourable exceptions. And what of the 'disciplines' now firmly in the steel and glass university sector? Nursing, for example, was shifted out of the ward based apprenticeship model, grounded as it was very firmly in the Christian ethical tradition, and moved into the context of secularist seminar rooms controlled by the educational professoriat. *The Francis Report* may be said to be a comment on this revolution, a comment no one wishes to read, notwithstanding its horrific accounts of even fatal neglect in NHS beds. Scan the academic nursing journals for any engagement with Francis, and readers will find only denial that the values of care lost their priority in the new system of training. In other words, the values embedded in university courses can indeed a matter of life and death. And the value of free critical debate, essential to 'the open society' as Popper told us in 1945, needs very robust defence indeed, and there are some worrying signs in university culture that total freedom to raise any question at all is suffering from a chill factor, notably in religious studies.

I wonder whether the editors realise also that formal intellectual loyalty to the church community by academics in universities is unlikely to help career progress – unless perhaps the relevant church community can offer generous funding for posts. For myself, I would have liked to see the Barth-Harnack debate revisited: a truly classic disagreement on what is acceptable to the academy and to the church of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, many theologians now seem quite content to adopt a Hegelian view of development of the disciplines including theology, that progress is inevitably happening in the Spirit, and dialogue with traditional Christianity is a dated concept; there is no such thing as 'secular'. That is clearly contrary to the purpose of this series, which assumes a Christian ontology deep down things. Pannenberg's voice would be very apt for such a volume, with his immensely learned efforts to show the significance of Christian truth for the sciences and the arts. A curious typo appears on the spine of the book, unless it is a deliberate post-modern tease, it reads 'Christianity and the Disciplinaes'. But this book seeks to engage with a really important issue for Christianity in the UK: I fear it is rather too optimistic about the situation as it stands.

*Timothy Bradshaw*  
*Regent's Park College, Oxford*

**Bonnie J Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice: Discovering a Discipline* (Eerdmans, 2012), 336pp.**

Bonnie Miller McLemore is a respected American theologian, who has written widely on issues of pastoral and practical theology for academic and wider church readerships, speaking with clarity and insight out of her own context as scholar, teacher and mother. This book is a collection of her previously published essays and articles written over a twenty year period, drawn together here for a postgraduate readership in theology's many branches, to (a) chart the history of the development of pastoral and practical theology [she carefully distinguishes between the two linked disciplines]; (b) validate their place in the academy, and (c) advocate more inter-disciplinary work by scholars, with the aim of breaking down the perceived hierarchical divide between the theologies of university and seminary, systematic versus pastoral/practical. She rightly describes the latter as offering 'expanded subject matter', 'alternative ways of knowing' and 'richer terms for analysis'. Writing openly as ever from her personal context, Miller-McLemore includes within the collection essays which represent the defining feature of her work, the contribution of experiences and perspectives 'from the edge' (primarily those of women, and people of colour) to the task of pastoral theology.

The book's twelve chapters are divided equally between three sections, thematic not chronological. Introducing each chapter, Miller-McLemore locates its origin and place in her own story, and reflects on and evaluates its content in the light of subsequent developments in her own thinking and in the field. She asserts the validity of including essays now 'dated', as an historical record for its scholarly readership.

The link between the chapters in the first section is the 'living human web', a concept she proposed out of her critique of Boisen's earlier individualistic 'living human document' metaphor: through this she draws attention to the relational nature of human stories which are the starting point for pastoral theology. The second section, entitled *Practical Wisdom: A Way of Knowing* contains what is arguably her most creative theological contribution, an inclusive 'maternal feminist epistemology', consistent with post-modernism, which challenges still extant norms of both knowledge creation and care across a wide spectrum of society, a theme she develops throughout her work. Although for section three she claims gender as 'a key category of analysis', its chapters cover wider ground, reiterating much of her earlier material. In practice, the section divisions appear somewhat arbitrary as her key themes interweave the whole.

Herein lies my problem with the collection: her thinking itself resembles a web, threads encircling a core theme and linked to particular desired outcomes clearly articulated, but in such a way that the same material, resources and arguments appear repeatedly so the content of the later chapters becomes wearily predictable.

Although aware of some significant work in practical theology in the UK through her association with Elaine Graham (now at Chester University),

Miller-McLemore is writing within and for the US context where ministerial formation seems to place less emphasis on contextual (placement) learning than in our UK, particularly Baptist, setting. Hence theological reflection on experience (which she dismisses while proposing something which looks very similar) may be more practised here, rendering some of her chapters less relevant to a UK readership. This is not to say there is no perceived hierarchy here between systematic and pastoral or practical theology, and the strength of her argument validating these are helpful contributions to that on-going debate.

Miller-McLemore admits that in re-visiting her earlier work, she felt but resisted the urge to write a new book. I hope she will succumb to that prompting: a fresh contribution from a skilled and experienced pastoral theologian would be a welcome addition to theological conversation.

*Anne Phillips*  
*Manchester*

**Kelly M. Kopic and Bruce L. McCormack, *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction* (Baker Academic / SPCK, 2012), 421pp.**

*Mapping Modern Theology* is a collection of essays around the traditional theological loci of Trinity, scripture, creation, Christ, atonement, pneumatology, eschatology, etc. What makes it distinctive is it aims to provide an introduction to how these doctrines have been articulated and discussed in the last two hundred years, what is termed as 'modern theology'. The big theological names under discussion here are Kant, Schleiermacher, Hegel and then later Barth, Rahner, Moltmann, Pannenberg, and to a lesser extent Dorner, Ritschl, Tillich and Jenson. They can all be found in David Ford's *The Modern Theologians* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), but what is offered by *Mapping Modern Theology* is how each doctrine was shaped and developed by these and other thinkers. Amongst the chapters are those also on Christian ethics and practical theology, which demonstrate how these areas developed in ways independent of doctrine, to become disciplines in their own right. Before modern theology there was no 'Christian ethics' or 'practical theology'. The book offers the argument that 'Modern Theology' has given rise to a new way of doing theology different from that which came before.

Kopic and McCormack have gathered some excellent contributors in the likes of John Webster, Kevin Vanhoozer, Brian Brock, Daniel Treier, Fred Sanders and even a Baptist in Steve Holmes, amongst others.

The book is presented as a textbook for students, but some chapters are a demanding read and some knowledge of theological discourse and terminology is needed to grasp all the discussion. Having said that some chapters provide an excellent and helpful



overview of a doctrine, Vanhoozer on the atonement stands out, demonstrating the shifts and turns in the doctrine over the last two hundred years. In addition, Treier's chapter on pneumatology is also notable for presenting a more global account on how the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has flourished outside of the Western academy.

*Andy Goodliff*  
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**Graham Cray, Ian Mobsby and Aaron Kennedy (eds.), *Fresh Expressions of Church and The Kingdom of God* (Canterbury Press, 2012), 179pp.**

One of the questions appropriate to any consideration of emerging churches and pioneering mission concerns their theological basis. This book seeks to offer opportunities to explore two aspects. Firstly, those who hold to a certain type of ecclesiology will affirm the church as God's vehicle for mission. Others will state that God is not limited to operating within the church and that the Kingdom of God and the church are neither synonymous nor coterminous. This collection of essays, informed mainly from an Anglican perspective, explores the tension between these two standpoints and the various intermediate positions between them.

Secondly, this work identifies tensions between the rootedness of pioneering mission in an existing (and worldly) context and contrasts this with a church that holds to Kingdom values and is in the world but not of it. Indeed, under this latter position, the church should be counter-cultural rather than accommodating to it.

Among those who have contributed essays to this book are some very familiar names. Rowan Williams, Graham Cray, Phyllis Tickle and Samuel Wells are all respected thinkers, movers and shakers in exploring new forms of mission and the theology that underpins them. These are people whose opinions are always worth hearing even if you find you cannot always affirm every point. The list of contributors also includes some practitioners, again largely rooted in the Anglican world, from the UK, US and Northern Ireland. This blend of theologians and practitioners is an approach favoured by the "Ancient faith, future mission" series, of which this is the third to be published. There are brief biographical statements about the contributors at the beginning. One is described as having "sleeve tattoos and swearing like a truck driver." Perhaps this goes to establish her contextual credibility? And no, it's not Dr Williams (perhaps wisely, this book remains silent both on his tattoos and his grasp of the intricacies of teamster-style abuse).

Each of these essays is readable and self-contained. Many helpfully employ stories, either as the basis from which theological assertions can be made or to ground points in practicality. The Anglican focus does not limit the book's validity nor applicability within other traditions and streams.

Are the questions asked here – about the tension between kingdom and church and a personal journey vs. a Kingdom community – worth asking? Given that one's stance on these will determine approaches and tactics for mission, then the answer has to be yes. To be sure, there is nothing here that is profound or groundbreaking, just a canter round the issues inviting the reader to reconsider their views in the light of intelligent questioning. Scripture, culture and human reasoning are brought together, largely coherently and in a readable style. It seems to me that the format of the work – short essays – means that they are most likely to stimulate thinking among busy practitioners keen to touch base with theological principles.

*Ivan King*  
*Church from Scratch, Southend-on-Sea*

**David Goodhew, Michael Volland and Andrew Roberts, *Fresh! An Introduction to Fresh Expressions of Church and Pioneer Ministry* (SCM, 2012), 220pp.**

This book does what it says. It seeks to offer an entry-level insight to the world of pioneer ministry. Fresh is clearly written by three people who are immersed in their topic. Their insights and stories and the comments they include from other contributors make this an easy read and a helpful contribution to understanding the “new” thing which is happening.

They start with a helpful section on theology and church history. They explain why fresh expressions and pioneers are not only needed at this time, but are part of the rich history of the church. They attempt the tricky issue of trying to define what and what is not a fresh expression.

Then they have a section about what is needed to be a pioneer, this is one of the strongest parts of the book and would be a helpful start for the follower of Jesus thinking they are called to this type of ministry. They also acknowledge the need to be in it for the long haul. One of my concerns, within the context of our own Baptist Union is that there does not seem enough grace extended to pioneer and fresh expressions of church. We seem keen to see ‘results’ quickly. This section indicates the types of resources needed for the long haul.

This book is said to be a resource to all church denominations, but it is strongly from an Anglican perspective. They do however include a page about Baptist church planting (p.62), which is very positive and in the main inaccurate.

They assert that churches of the Baptist Union have held there attendance numbers better than other denominations, but I'm not sure that their analysis of why is robust enough. They also list the numbers of church plants that have taken place in the last 25 years, but do not say or ask how many of these are mother daughter churches and how many are ‘fresh expressions’ of church. If you were to read page 62 you might be led to think we are the model denomination on church planting and that we have it all sorted!

This book indicates that we as Baptists are way behind our Anglican brothers and sisters in this area. The encouragement and long term support of pioneer ways of doing church is part of the Union, but it is still under resourced both nationally and locally. This book would be a good read to help dispel some of the myths and to give inspiration to those who are still unsure about what pioneer church and ministry is all about.

*Rich Shorter*  
*Harold Hill, Romford*

**Graeme Fancourt, *Brand New Church: The Church and the Postmodern Condition* (SPCK, 2013), 176pp.**

In 1987 *The Independent* carried an article on postmodernism which contained the following advice for readers: 'This word has no meaning. Use it as often as possible.'

For many of us, 16 years on, the task of defining postmodernism and providing a considered response to it, in terms of both thinking and practice, remains as challenging as ever. It's this question which Graeme Fancourt attempts to address in *Brand New Church*.

Fancourt's book begins with introductions to postmodernism and the emerging church, preparing the ground for the discussion which follows. He then provides an overview of the work of several different writers who have critiqued the emerging church, and also transcriptions of interviews with American and British church leaders who offer their insights on the significance of the changes that we are living through.

Fancourt goes on to 'map' the church in the postmodern condition, using the categories of 'church-in-conflict' (e.g. Stanley Hauerwas and NT Wright) and 'church-in-dialogue' (e.g. David Brown), before concluding the book with his own reasons for preferring the dialogue model. Whether or not you agree with Fancourt's verdict will depend on your own views on these responses. My biggest concern with his approach is the use of the word 'conflict,' which seems to put an excessively negative spin on Hauerwas and Wright's insistence on the distinctiveness of the Christian vision. The suggestion that 'The church-in-conflict despairingly offers the world and the church something it cannot deliver: a brand new alternative' (p112), provides a good example of the perspective Fancourt offers.

*Brand New Church* has much to commend it, providing a concise and readable overview of the wide variety of responses generated by the Emerging Church, with an extensive bibliography for those keen to pursue further some of the ideas it presents. Ultimately, however, I was left with the feeling that Fancourt's determination to resist the perspectives of the 'church-in-conflict' closed down the possibility of a more balanced conclusion. Readers who are keen to explore postmodernism's impact on the church will also find helpful Doug Gay's *Remixing the Church* (which I reviewed in *Regent's Reviews* 3.2, April 2012), which reaches back further

into church history and accordingly offers a more complete and considered exploration of the major issues in this debate.

*Trevor Neill*  
*Yardley Wood Baptist Church, Birmingham*

**David Bebbington and Martin Sutherland (eds.), *Interfaces: Baptists and Others: International Baptist Studies (Studies in Baptist History and Thought; Paternoster, 2013) 404pp.***

In responding to the age-old human question and challenge as to how to accept and relate to the different 'other', Baptists might be said to have got off to a good start with their understanding of the necessity of religious freedom for all. However the annals of Baptist history are full of the challenges of living with diversity and plurality, whether among Baptists themselves, or in relating to other Christian traditions, or in engaging with other cultures, ethnicities, and faiths.

Despite its somewhat unprepossessing title, this substantial volume of 21 papers delivered at the fifth triennial meeting of the International Conference on Baptist Studies held in Melbourne, Australia in 2009, proves to be a series of fascinating case studies from history and contemporary life as to how Baptists have wrestled with the challenges and questions from being at these various 'interfaces'. These are drawn from the British, American, African and South Asian experiences, and a little under half the essays reflect the life of Australian and New Zealand Baptists, stories probably unknown to UK Baptists. .

On the whole the quality and depth of these essays are excellent. Inevitably a short review can only draw attention to some highlights.

The much-debated question of Anabaptist influences on Baptists is seen by Brian Brewer through the rather surprising lens of Anabaptist 'sacramentalism' and its relevance for current debates among Baptists is explored. An eighteenth century example of Baptists making common cause with others is highlighted in Timothy Whelan 's excellent paper on correspondence between the evangelical Anglican reformer William Wilberforce and the Baptist John Ryland of Bristol, their growing friendship allowing them to deal not only with their shared opposition to the slave trade, but also other issues do with the BMS and the situation of English Dissenters at that time.

Relationships with other Christian traditions are highlighted in several papers both negatively (Terry Carter on Roman Catholics in the United States in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and in more positive attempts to achieve pan -evangelical unity and at the same time to respond to the 'Uniting Churches' initiatives in Canada and Australia. Brian Talbot contributes a very useful review of Baptist and ecumenical initiatives around the world in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The interface between church, society, and the state is well explored in several essays, one of the most interesting being the account by Graham Paulson, (the first Aboriginal Australian Baptist to be ordained), of Australian Baptist attitudes towards Indigenous Australians in their mission. There is a fascinating cameo by Laurie Guy of the New Zealander J J Doke, his commitment to pacifism and his friendship with Ghandi in South Africa.

Finally, this reviewer was grateful for the inclusion of the last two essays, one by Matthews Ojo dealing with the significant influence of new Christian movements on West African Baptists; and the other being the only paper exploring the interface with those of other faiths, as Samuel Ngun Ling charts the encounter between Baptist and Buddhism in Burma in a way which deals well with the colonial and post-colonial issues involved.

Taken together, these case studies form a rich seam of insights into contemporary challenges facing Baptists all around the world. For those Baptists like myself who still wrestle with diversity, plurality, and that fundamental human question of the Other who is different, I thoroughly recommend this volume.

*Tony Peck*  
*European Baptist Federation*

**Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (Brazos Press / SPCK, 2011), 174pp.**

This slim volume (just seven substantive chapters) is more than its subtitle suggests, since it is not simply a book of Christian social ethics, but rather a manifesto for Christian engagement with the world. The introduction makes reference to Niebuhr's influential *Christ and Culture*, and in many ways we might see this as attempting a similar task for a new generation, negotiating a middle way between the opposite errors of what Volf terms 'idleness' and 'coerciveness'.

Volf calls for an engaged faith, that is, a faith which is involved appropriately with the world because it is deeply rooted in the sources and resources of the Christian tradition as put into practice by the believing community. The contrast he employs here is between what he characterises as 'thick' and 'thin' readings of Christianity. He is using this language not in the ethnographic meaning popularised by Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (itself based on the earlier usage of Gilbert Ryle), but more in the fashion of Michael Walzer's *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, in that Volf wants us to engage with the richness and depth of the tradition. Moreover he argues that where Christianity has fallen into the sins of either idleness or coercion, what Volf terms the 'malfunctions of faith', it is because of a 'thin' and superficial grasp of Christianity. This in turn leads to a failure to embrace in any adequate sense the Christian vision for human flourishing, rooted as it is in encounter with the God of love revealed in Jesus Christ, rather than in the contemporary quest for satisfaction or 'happiness'.

Part II of the volume, consisting of the final three chapters, explores the characteristics of such an 'engaged faith', through the notions of 'Identity and Difference' and 'Sharing Wisdom', which culminate in 'Public Engagement'. What Volf hopes to do is to dispel the current sense of crisis in western Christianity, which struggles to come to terms with its loss of influence (or rather its loss of privilege and prestige), and help contemporary western Christians become more comfortable, or at least adjusted to, a place on the margins, and the role of simply being one voice among many in our present-day plural societies. Wherever we may find ourselves the task remains to 'promote human flourishing and the common good'. The historic distinction made by such as Weber and Troeltsch between church and sect is no longer plausible, with their relative positions at the centre or on the margins respectively, and becomes meaningless in a world that no longer has any 'centre of power' to be respectively part of or distanced from. We must thus content ourselves with working (vigorously no doubt) for limited change rather than wholesale revolution.

And Christians must do this from a position Volf describes as 'internal difference' trying to find a middle way between assimilation and isolation with their twin perils of idleness and coercion. This will be achieved not by worrying about what is 'other', those cultural visions and practices which lie beyond, and perhaps challenge, the Christian community, but rather in celebrating what Christianity has at its centre, the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. In other words 'Christian identity is not reactive but positive', and its relations with that which lies beyond must always be characterised by that love with which God engaged with the world beyond Godself.

This is the paradigm for all Christian public engagement, and the book's final two chapters offer 'worked examples' of this process in witness to non-Christians, where Christians have an obligation to share their wisdom, and through participation in political life, confident to speak in our own 'religious voice'. But each in our own distinctive voice shares the common mission 'to make plausible in contemporary culture that human beings will flourish only when the love of pleasure ... gives way to the pleasure of love.'

Cogently argued and clearly expressed, this is a relatively accessible book which deals with vital matters to all people of faith and goodwill in our society. Well worth a discussion in your book group or for an inter-faith gathering?

*Nick Wood*  
*Regent's Park College, Oxford*

**Steven Croft and Paula Gooder (eds.), *Women and Men in Scripture and the Church: A Guide to the Key Issues* (Canterbury Press, 2013), 120pp.**

All too often discussions about women and men in scripture and the church focus around one issue and three texts; namely the issue of whether a woman can occupy a position of leadership, and the texts that can seem to support the restriction of women's ministry. Whilst this discussion is not ignored in this excellent study-book (with Ian Paul offering a helpful chapter on 'Women, teaching and authority'), neither does it dominate the discussion. There is so much more to say, so much more to think about. This book addresses issues including the place of women within society and the family, as well as within the church. As the back cover puts it: 'The heart of the question is not whether women should exercise a particular ministry. It is about how we view each other as sisters and brothers within the Body of Christ, how we structure our family lives, and how we relate to the wider world.'

Helpfully structured around six chapters, this book would make an ideal accompaniment for a small-group series on the roles of women and men. Each chapter invites prayerful reflection on a biblical passage, whilst offering concise comments to bring relevant insights from academic scholarship to bear on the topic. This is followed by a longer reflection on the passage, questions for discussion, suggestions for application, and closing prayers. The topics covered by the chapters give an snapshot of the breadth of this short book: 'Women and Men in the Creation and Fall Stories', 'Humanity redeemed in Christ', 'The Women of the Early Church', 'Women, Teaching and Authority', 'Women and Men in Family Life', 'Women and Men in Ministry Today'. The theological agenda of the book is not simply one of restoring unequal power between the genders. Rather it is one of restoring humanity to God-given completeness through Christ.

As one might expect of a book from the Canterbury Press stable and edited by a bishop and a member of the General Synod, there is a strong 'Anglican flavour' to the discussions, with the concluding account of the recognition of the ministry of women in the Church of England likely to be of limited interest to Baptists. But this is not to detract from the value of this book beyond its primary Anglican audience. The final appendix is a collection of 'Frequently Asked Questions', which addresses head-on some of the often-voiced concerns about moving to a more affirming position on women in leadership, including whether such a move

involves 'watering down' the word of God, disregarding the authority of the Bible, or becoming a 'liberal' on human sexuality as well.

*Simon Woodman*  
*Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, London*

**Justin Lewis-Anthony, *You are The Messiah and I Should Know: Why Leadership is a Myth (and probably a heresy)* (Bloomsbury, 2013) 296pp.**

As the title will suggest (at least to some) this is a book about leadership and about films. The unusual title is a slightly altered quote from the Monty Python film *The Life of Brian*, which references several places in the film, most significantly the conversation when Brian declares 'I am NOT the Messiah!' and Arthur replies 'I say you are Lord, and I should know. I've followed a few.' This takes us to the heart of Lewis-Anthony's concern which prompted the book, and with which it begins, and that is that leadership is an unclear and contested issue. Many write and talk about it, assuming that leadership language is simply understood by everyone, and so never offering a clear and precise explanation of what is at stake.

So Lewis-Anthony proceeds to offer his own take on the way understandings of leadership have developed and taken hold. His bold and provocative central thesis is that there has developed over recent decades specifically Christian views of leadership (which he calls *Missionary-Leadership*) in parallel to and feeding of the development of secular modern leadership models (*Management-Leadership*) But behind both stands *Mythological Leadership*. This is promoted and conveyed through cultural means, at the centre of which stands the predominant modern medium of film. Since Hollywood has had, and still has, such momentous influence no western films, what is conveyed most through films is an American myth of leadership. Lewis-Anthony therefore argues that behind and deeply, if implicitly shaping, all the contemporary expressions of leadership are particular American ideals presented in terms of the frontier and the West and the 'American Adam'.

The long central section of the book (divided into three parts) is then an exploration of a variety of films which promote or undercut this ideal, which tends to focus on war films and westerns with John Wayne as a key figure, but includes a wide range of others, such as those by Stanley Kubrick and of course *The Life of Brian*. Lewis-Anthony argues that the myth of leadership presented here is of the lone heroic leader who through redemptive violence is able to bring hope and salvation. It is, he suggests these tendencies to both the lone heroic figure, the 'great men' view of history, and to redemptive violence which have been so significant in shaping modern views of leadership in society and church – to the point that the myth has left the church looking for the kind of approach to leadership at odds with the biblical mandate, and so heretical. Critiquing such views Lewis-Anthony argues that the central Gospel motif of discipleship and so all being followers should, instead, shape the church's practice of leadership, so that we journey together rather than invest some



with mythic status. In the run up to the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury earlier this year, Lewis-Anthony rehearsed the same argument very briefly in the Guardian, especially given some the criticisms of Rowan Williams and the expectations on Justin Welby. He calls for the new Archbishop to be a disciple rather than a leader.

As someone with significant concerns about the way leadership has become such a central concept for the church, Lewis-Anthony's argument is fascinating and insightful, not prepared to locate the influence in culture more generally but able specifically to trace the influence to fundamental American experiences mediated through film. My sense is that not all will be presided by his argument, and that may largely depend on the presuppositions to leadership which we bring!

This book is stimulating and insightful, although at times also a little frustrating. It is more complex and demanding than the glossy cover suggests. It began as a PhD thesis and there are clear signs of this in the book. For example, the main section on film draws on the significant academic discipline of film studies and film theory, and those readers new to this area will need read those chapters very carefully to follow the argument. Despite the author saying that one of the main differences is removing lots of references, much of what the books offers is a close reading of others texts, both books and films. This is particularly frustrating in the final section which brings the argument back together and into church life, which offers a correlation of the disciples of Jesus with social organisations and a close reading of Bonhoeffer, when this reader looked for the author to develop their own argument more fully and its implications for church life. There is also some sense that attention to the sources leaves the argument a little dis-jointed.

This is a book that will appeal and be helpful for a variety of people. Those who are interested more generally in theology and film will find much detailed discussion of a ranger of film genres and some of the theological readings of these films. Those with similar questions about the modern hopes of leadership will find here a careful argument that seeks to expose some of the origins of these practices and support for seeking a different path. Those who want to embrace leadership much more positively and champion its place in the church will find a challenge that needs to be heard and thought through. If Lewis-Anthony is right, that the wider western cultural attitude and expectations of leadership have been deeply shaped by specific aspects of American culture and experience mediated through film, then the church must stop and think and read Scripture again.

*Anthony Clarke*  
*Regent's Park College, Oxford*

**Brian Harris, *The Tortoise Usually Wins: Biblical Reflections on Quiet Leadership for Reluctant Leaders* (Paternoster, 2013) 199pp.**

The title suggests that this is going to be an unusual book. It begins, and takes its title, with the old fable from Aesop about the tortoise and the hare, in which the tortoise by its persistent plodding overtakes the fast dynamic hare and eventually wins. This is certainly the intention of the author who is concerned to write for the many who find themselves in positions of leadership but who feel they are not a natural, charismatic leader. This is a very welcome perspective from which to write on leadership and the book has much which is good and helpful, although ultimately, in the opinion of this reviewer, is only partially successful in offering this different perspective.

It begins with a chapter which explores some of the normal alternative theories and experiences of leadership before discussing the idea of quiet leadership, drawing here and through the book on the work Joseph Badaracco and his book *Leading Quietly*. This is followed by the most explicitly biblical chapter which explores the biblical metaphors of servant, shepherd and steward to construct a theology of quiet leadership. Recognising the importance of decision making, chapter 3 offers a helpful introduction to various approaches to decision making, particularly deontological (based on rules) and teleological (based on outcomes) before arguing for a virtue-ethics approach, based on the virtues of modesty, tenacity, restraint, interdependence and other-centredness. Having established these foundations there follow chapters on developing your own voice and character, getting results, casting vision, enabling others, facilitating teams and the old chestnut of leadership or management.

Part of the core structure of the book is that each chapter ends with an interview of someone in a leadership position who is asked questions that connect back to the subject of the chapter. Harris is an Australian Baptist who combines being a Seminary Principal and a Senior-Pastor in Perth Australia, and a number of those interviews are Australian Baptists. But the first two interviewed are Nigel Wright and Derek Tidball and Scot McKnight, David Crutchely and Bridget Aitchison from USA also figure. Harris is keen through to earth all he says in the narrative of his own experience and that of others around him.

There is much that is helpful and insightful about the book. It debunks some of the favourite leadership mantras, such as the good is the enemy of the best, arguing for a realistic and holistic sense of leadership. The virtues of leadership, which is a strong chapter, are refreshingly different from those which are often supposed of good leaders, and there seems a genuine understanding and call for servanthood and vulnerability based on the ministry of Jesus.

There were some frustrations with the book, mainly in what it did not go on to say, and at times the more radical perspective it offers in the opening

chapters could be pursued throughout the book! So some of the later chapters seem to slip much more simply into the arena of very standard Christian and secular books on leadership about issues such as teams and vision. It tends to assume that leaders set vision and followers follow leaders, rather than exploring more radically what it might mean to be disciples together. There are times the book does repeat the leadership platitudes – make the main thing the main thing or when leaders are around things tend to happen. The chapters tend to start with a simply phrase about leaders – all leaders have to make decisions, leaders help to shape the stories of others, character is tested in leadership – which on the one hand are stating the obvious, but could be read with the implication that leaders have to do this in the way others do not. Being a Christian disciple is about making decisions, shaping the lives of others as, to use an old and well-worn Baptist phrase, we walk together and watch over each other, and having character tested and refined. So what do those things really mean for the few, who have been given particular responsibilities by the community, as well as the many who walk the path of discipleship? The particular understanding of the fundamental relationship between the few and the many which shapes much of the way we approach leadership could be explored further along the lines of the more radical approach suggested in the early part of the book.

Clearly one of the aims of the author, and a very important and helpful one, is to address Christians as they live and work in many different contexts. It is not simply a book about church leaders and many of the examples offered come from the context of schools or colleges or para-church organisations. It would be helpful though to have some further reflection on what this might mean for a church context, especially from this author, a Baptist context, working not with paid staff, but volunteers, and not with a simple hierarchy but a more complex structure. Ultimately in church contexts it is, to a significant degree, ecclesiology which drives approaches to leadership, and given all of Harris' background it seems a shame not to have more reflection on what quiet leadership might look like in a community shaped by Baptist ecclesiology of the gathered church which discerns the mind of Christ.

Finally, there is a fundamental issue which did not convince this reviewer, especially in the light of the book which is reviewed above. Harris' conviction, repeated on several occasions, is that he is not wanting to downplay the natural charismatic leaders, but to write for those who are just not like that. However in some of the biblical reflections which explore virtues of modesty and other-centredness or the importance of servanthood and vulnerability, Harris repeatedly uses the phrase that 'quiet leaders' should be like this. But surely this should be true of all leaders, not just quiet ones, if it is biblical reflection rather than personality traits. It may be, of course, that 'quiet leaders' more naturally follow such patterns, in which case they have much to teach others. If we were to follow the argument of Lewis-Anthony (above) then this might lead us to do the very thing which Harris seeks to avoid, and deliberately contrast the way that some natural charismatic leaders approach leadership. All disciples have to wrestle with the way their personalities help and hinder

them in their disciples and this is true of leaders both as disciples and as those who encourage and teach discipleship. Ultimately, while saying yes and amen to much which is in the book it points us to a much more radical approach which is needed, not for quiet leadership and for reluctant leadership but for all who have responsibility and follow Christ!

*Anthony Clarke*  
*Regent's Park College, Oxford*

**Jessica Rose, *Psychology for Pastoral Contexts: A Handbook (SCM, 2013), 242pp.***

Jessica Rose has written a most helpful handbook for pastoral contexts covering what psychological knowledge might assist its practitioners. This is not a full-blown handbook on psychology, nor a 'how-to-offer-pastoral-care' manual, but delivers to the pastoral practitioner that level of psychological insight that will enable better understanding of the human person.

It uses examples liberally, is clearly aimed at the church context, and would be a very appropriate book to use with pastoral carers or those being trained for pastoral ministry. Indeed, I suspect that much of the content has been used with ordinands at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, where Rose lectured in pastoral psychology in the 1990s.

Beginning with a brief overview of the development of pastoral practice (I think this might have helpfully been expanded to explore the revolution on pastoral practice since the widespread adoption of psychological and psychotherapeutic underpinnings to much pastoral practice,) the first section considers some 'building blocks in psychology'. Nurture, attachment theory, sexuality and loss are all covered. Transference, a Freudian construction of the personality, the work of Bowlby and Winnecot on attachment theory, and the ghost of Kubler-Ross on stages of grief are all present, although every aspect of this might be contested. This is not the book to justify why those approaches are offered, but it assumes they are normative.

The second section looks at four issues in mental health: depression, addiction, eating disorders and schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. I think I might have wanted a stronger warning on page 143 about the absolute necessity of referral to mental health professionals, although it is there to a degree, and repeated on pages 162-3 in the context of depression, with its risks of suicide. The danger of a little knowledge and assuming that the Christian faith has the answers (which is not what Rose believes) is that naïve practitioners of pastoral care get swiftly out of their depth. Their role is support, whether welcomed by mental health professionals or not.

The final chapter is on betrayal and forgiveness, which functions rather like an extended integration of pastoral practice and Christian belief. It might have benefitted from a reflection on the place of shame in this

conversation, but then, I am rather biased when it comes to the absence of understanding about of shame in pastoral practice! There is a final appendix on reflecting upon pastoral practice.

This is a book I would give to a pastoral carer, or a first year ordinand: it covers the basics. There are others too in this market, but not many, so this addition is welcome. For those who wish to develop their pastoral practice beyond this level, then additional work, reading and reflection will be necessary, which is not to belittle this helpful contribution, but to recognise its proper and intended place.

*Paul Goodliff*  
*Baptist Union of Great Britain*

**Maxwell E. Johnson, *Sacraments and Worship: Key Readings in the History and Theology of Christian Worship from the New Testament to the Present* (SPCK, 2012), 408pp.**

Through the key lenses of history and geography, this volume seeks to trace the development of liturgy from the early church through to the contemporary age. Each chapter traces that journey through distinctive areas, namely, Sacraments and Sacramental Theology, Liturgical Theology, Sacraments and Rites of Christian Initiation, the Eucharist, Liturgies of the Word, Occasional Sacraments and Services, and Liturgy and Time.

There is a healthy mix of key texts from Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Anabaptist and post-modern writers. This mix works very well in the chapter on Liturgical Theology where a number of contemporary writers reflect on how the worship of the church shapes its belief, values and wider life. It works less well in other chapters, but each one, through well-chosen texts, are sharp and rich in what they offer. The use of the church's story and geographical context root the development of the sacraments and worship in life lived. The diversity of experience is celebrated – whilst making a clear case for common key practices, particularly baptism, the eucharist and the proclamation of good news, wherever the church was found.

Some of the writings of the church fathers will not be new to many – but to have them together in this volume is very helpful indeed. Luther, Calvin and Zwingli are given due prominence along with texts from the Catholic Reformation. The inclusion of writers with thoughtful reflections on contemporary worship demonstrates again how the early story continues to unfold, with wisdom from the past informing but not constraining insights from the present. For example, of particular interest to this readership might be the inclusion of the viewpoint of Roman Catholic liturgical scholar Aidan Kavanagh:

[T]he days of baptism in infancy and confirmation in adolescence as our norm are numbered; that the days of evangelization by initiating youths into “appropriate” civil structures are numbered; that the days

of catechizing solely in school classrooms are numbered; that the days in which we regard a man's or woman's entry into novitiate or seminary as their "entry into the Church" are numbered; that the days of our practical equation of Church and civil society are over.'

The book raises some very good questions for the church in our time. The chapter on Liturgy and Time has a section on Daily Prayer which is deeply challenging. When we consider that the church, wherever it was, had a daily pattern of praying three times or five times, or eight times a day, among other permutations, we cannot escape the fact that focussed, disciplined daily prayer was the normative experience. True, this usually happened in a corporate context, but the Reformation re-working of the pattern to regular morning and evening prayer is now the domain of the few rather than the many. This is one instance where wisdom from the past calls us to reflect on current practice and, whilst not seeking a straight duplication, invites us to consider how we pattern our praying both as individuals and as churches.

I found myself asking a number of similar questions as I read through the book. As with any single volume there are aspects which could have been better. In some sub-chapters the argument seems to stop with Catholic thinking or at the Reformation. Whilst there's a good attempt to include a number of women writers who feature, in particular, in the contemporary sections, more voices would have been valuable. More texts from the world church would have enriched the volume immensely.

This is a good primer for key texts throughout the ages, and a book that will be valuable in teaching. It is a very helpful reference book for any Minister keen to learn more of the tradition and to teach their congregation how to ask good, informed questions about the current worshipping life of the church. Recommended.

*Sian Murray-Williams*  
*Bristol Baptist College*

**Karen Smith and Simon Woodman (eds.), *Prayers of the People* (Centre for Baptist History and Heritage / South Wales Baptist College, 2011), 238pp.**

This book is a most unusual compilation of prayers because it is a collection of prayers entirely written by Baptists! Its occasion is to honour John Weaver on his retirement as Principal of South Wales Baptist College. The evangelical notion that true prayer can only be extemporary prayer has plagued our tradition making us lazy in our use of language and complacent about the sloppy "we just want to ..." prayers so frequently used in worship. Private and corporate devotional life within the Baptist tradition has been inexorably impoverished because we do not benefit from the richness of prayers written by others past and present. If this book can initiate a new era in which written prayer along with conceived and extemporary prayer go side by side it will be a watershed moment and will make this a remarkable publication.

A real bonus to this impressive collection is the introduction by Prof Paul Fiddes which offers an historical critical overview of public prayer in the Baptist tradition. He traces how worship has always been understood by Baptists as a divine human dialogue characterised by revelation and response and where different moments require different types of prayer. Prayer is conceived not just as dialogue but also a dance. Because we are not spectators but active participants in the life of the Trinity, prayer becomes both a structured dialogue (revelation and response) and spontaneous dance (spirit filled and free).

The collection is organised in a way that is sensitive to the dialogical shape of prayer: revelation and response and to the perichoretic pattern of prayer: gathering and sending. The prayers are categorised according to the different types of prayer that exist at different moments in worship, and as such the book can function as a valuable primer for those learning to lead prayer in corporate worship.

The careful acknowledgement of the authorship of the prayers would not always have happened in past generations but reflects the trend in recent times to accept that prayers, just like song and hymn texts, are no less spiritual for the author being named. On the contrary, listing an author is a way of thanking and affirming them for the gifts they share. Listing authors in addition makes transparent the wide range of sources – male, female, lay and ordained - and allows us to celebrate this diversity.

If I have a critical comment it would be to observe how lengthy and wordy our style of praying as Baptists is. The temptation exists to say everything in every prayer or to use many words when a few would serve the purpose better. Embracing the principle of small is beautiful or succinct is best might help us to correct this excess, and move in the direction of a more balanced diet of prayers with some prayers being more poetic and collect-sized. Shorter less wordy prayers have the advantage that they allow more space for silence to surround the thoughts and for one idea rather than many to focus the mind and heart of the worshipper. The test of a written prayer or hymn texts is surely whether it stands the test of time. Where a prayer is short balanced and poetic in style it is, I would suggest, more likely to be used and cherished from one generation to the next.

It would be very good to see more books of this kind reach publication in the coming years.

*Myra Blyth*  
*Regent's Park College, Oxford*

**Samuel Wells, *Learning to Dream Again: Rediscovering the Heart of God* (Canterbury Press, 2013), 214pp.**

The problem with reading Sam Wells is the temptation to the sin of envy! This is a third collection of sermons from Wells time as Dean of Duke Divinity Chapel (following *Speaking the Truth* and *Be Not Afraid*). Wells is simply a master craftsman when it comes to listening to the text of scripture and to the text of the world, of the Christian life. These sermons, like his others, seek to engage the intellect, the gut, the heart and the hand, what together we might call 'wisdom'. A wisdom says Wells that comes as an earthly humility, a shameful suffering and a effervescent joy. Earthly humility is a sign that our wisdom comes from God, and also that we are beings with bodies and so are limited. Shameful suffering is a sign that we cannot avoid suffering and wisdom must address our suffering and our shame. Effervescent joy is alongside suffering there is joy and a joy that overflows and comes to us as gift.

In six chapters (each containing five or six sermons), Wells offers reflections on learning to love again, to live again, to think again, to read again, to feel again and to dream again. For Wells, the sermon is a place to learn and to dream and hopefully both at the same time. In the different chapters, Wells reflects theologically on some of the great cultural forces (arts, science, medicine, sport), some of the great ethical issues of our day (torture, abortion, taxation, justice, hunger) and some of our great pastoral challenges (marriage and divorce, death and envy). For Wells, there is nothing that the sermon cannot address – no topic or issue or question and that these come in the context of worship rather than the lecture hall says that our worship must address the whole of life, not just our beliefs, but our ethics, politics, economics, relationships and pastimes.

Well's has a gift of making the Christian life possible, without being easy. If you want to see how to preach well, or you want to see how to preach about topics and issues that often seem impossible address, or if you just want to stretch your faith, read this book. I am certain you will not be disappointed.

*Andy Goodliff*  
*Belle Vue Baptist Church, Southend-on-Sea*



**Bruce Ellis Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life: Embodying the Arts in Christian Worship* (Baker Academic / SPCK, 2013), 160pp.**

The request to review this book came as I was enjoying a glass of red wine with lunch, overlooking the Umbrian countryside in Italy on holiday. Though this may have been an unwelcome intrusion for some, for me it came with a frisson of excitement! This was a book that played to my interests and held promise. And when I came to read it in the more ordinary setting of Milton Keynes along with a cup of tea, I wasn't disappointed! I've read it twice, and consider it a valuable addition to the small but growing corpus of literature on faith and the arts.

Bruce Ellis Benson is a philosopher, theologian and musician, and not unknown to me. I've read his contributions in two other books on music and theology, in which he plays with the notion of improvisation, a core element of this book. In this relatively slim volume, he says a lot, but in a highly accessible way, drawing on sources from across the breadth of church history and including a wide range of artistic expressions. *Liturgy as a Way of Life* is part of a series of books on 'The Church and Postmodern Culture' and this is a particular focus which is informed and engaging.

In summary, the author's premise is that there is nothing more basic to human existence than the call and response structure: it's the structure of our lives. This 'call and response can rightly be considered artistic in that we are – in our being – God's works of art.' We participate with God in developing ourselves because of our call to be living works of art. And the way that we live our lives, is as liturgical beings who worship God in all that we do.

Everyone, in this basic way, is an artist, yet from this fundamental position, Bruce Ellis Benson develops his understanding that art is not simply an add-on that we indulge when we have the time and money, but is central to who we are as human beings. It is imperative therefore that art is re-envisioned in such a way as 'to gain a sense of the communal nature of art, to reclaim art as a vehicle for truth, and to view it as something of which we are all a part.'

He writes with imagination on beauty and the call to live artistically. And with insight as he engages with the 'Modern' or 'Romantic' understanding of art, the status of the artist, the authority of the art world, art 'experts', and what's highbrow and lowbrow. At various points in the book, he provides a perspective that comes not just from reflection but practice as a jazz musician. In a chapter 'Improvising Like Jazz' he looks at Genesis 1 and enquires what it means to create, for God, and for human beings made in God's image, culminating in a challenge to live improvisationally.

A chapter with the provocative title, 'On Not Being an Artistic Whore', takes Chaim Potok's book, 'My Name Is Asher Lev' as a basis for seeking to understand religion's relationship with art, and the art world's relationship

with religion, offering some hope in postmodernism's fascination with spirituality, while recognising that there is still substantial division.

In a section with the heading, 'Making the World Pretty', he looks at the artistic responsibility to respond to an audience's needs by not necessarily giving them what they want. He speaks of the 'Chekhovian Christian' who takes seriously the tragic conditions that we find ourselves in, giving as an example Shostakovich's symphonies, which are not 'pretty', but give faithful witness to the horror of his time, portraying 'a broken beauty'.

The book concludes with the challenge to become living works of art, practising both 'intensive liturgy', what happens when Christians assemble to worship God, and 'extensive liturgy', what happens when we leave the assembly to conduct our daily lives. He acknowledges a kind of play between the two, each leading us back to the other. And throughout the book there are many encouragements and examples of a diverse range of churches employing the arts imaginatively in worship and into the whole of life.

At one point Bruce Ellis Benson writes of 'Christian artists experiencing not just "alienation as artist" but also "the seeming ambivalence of their church."' And while church culture, especially in the part of the church that we as Baptists inhabit, may be more open to the arts than in our recent history, they frequently remain a means to an end or an add-on.

*Liturgy as a Way of Life* is an insightful, creative, absorbing treatment of important issues which would be of interest to anyone who has some interest in the arts in any of its many genres and wants to explore how these and the life of faith might be more integrated.

*Geoffrey Colmer*  
*Central Baptist Association*

**William John Lyons and Isabella Sandwell (eds.), *Delivering the Word: Preaching and Exegesis in the Western Tradition* (Equinox, 2012), 254pp.**

One of the primary places in which biblical exegesis is performed is in the act of preaching. This performance involves the interaction between preacher, text, context and listeners. The nature of this dynamic in the 'Western Tradition' is the subject of this series of twelve essays. The essays are written by a variety of scholars from different traditions.

The period of interest ranges from the preaching of the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 3:7-18 to an Anglican preacher in Sheffield in 1990. In-between these two bookmarks there are chapters which focus on some of the important usual suspects in preaching: Origen, Chrysostom, Hildegard of Bingen, and Jonathan Edwards. Yet a number of lesser well known figures at least in preaching histories also make an appearance and their distinctive preaching emphases discussed. These include: the seventeenth century Baptist preacher Hanserd Knollys who was 'stoned out of his pulpit'; the preaching to soldiers during the First World War of military chaplain

Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy (Woodbine Wullie); and the radio preaching of Aimee Semple McPherson in the early twentieth century.

As indicated above, therefore this study concentrates on particular preachers and particular sermons. As such, as Sandwell rightly suggests, this study is complimentary to wider ranging and more detailed recent studies of the history of preaching such as those offered by O.C. Edwards and Hughes Oliphant Old. A strength of these studies is that they are concerned not simply with the preacher but with issues of reception. The attendant 'weakness' is that such reception given the nature of the source material will necessarily be a matter of some conjecture. This said the various authors seek to make this conjecture with appropriate attention to scholarship related to their own particular fields of study and interest.

One way in which the book can be read is chronologically noting general common themes. Helpfully Sandwell flags up some of these themes in her introduction. That common themes can be found is hardly surprising in that all of the studies are concerned with those who are engaging in the same task of preaching albeit in different contexts. Another difficulty in this chronological approach is that not all readers may equally resonate with the subject matter or the particular interest and style of particular chapters. An alternative approach as indeed is suggested by the editors is for readers to read the chapters that most pique their interest. This was my own approach. As someone who has read some of the histories of preaching I started with the more non-typical chapters as mentioned above. What this did, however, was highlight the fascinating insights that can be gained through exploring specific examples of preaching in relation to the wider socio-political and personal contexts of preachers and listeners. This encouraged me in turn to read other chapters that had not initially gained my attention.

This book is quite scholarly and demanding. Yet, it certainly makes an important, distinct, and in places fascinating contribution to the history of preaching.

*Stuart Blythe*  
*Scottish Baptist College, Glasgow*

**E. Philip Davis, *The Crisis and the Kingdom: Economics, Scripture and the Global Financial Crisis* (Cascade, 2012), 160pp.**

It's five years since the world was engulfed in the worst financial crisis since the thirties, five years since household names from the world of finance spectacularly crashed and burned – Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Bank America, AIG, Royal Bank of Scotland, Halifax Bank of Scotland all foundered or survived only because of government support.

The aftermath has been painful across the developed world: Governments, having moved swiftly to rescue failing banks, prop up the system and attempt a massive stimulus package to assuage the worst effects of recession, switched to austerity policies targeted at driving down

deficits and rebalancing national budgets. The pain of this is felt in rising unemployment, lengthening queues at food banks and the biggest squeeze on living standards for more than 100 years.

The story of the meltdown has been told many times in accounts by journalists and economists. But what has been lacking is a robust theological account of these events. It is still lacking despite this, in places helpful, reflection on the crisis by a financial economist and Baptist minister. Davis is a Senior Research Fellow at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Associate Professor of Economics and Finance at Brunel University and the author of a number of studies on international banking.

Following an outline of the events of the financial crisis, his analysis examines three sectors – banking/finance, households and governments – from two perspectives, the economic and the theological. His outline of the events since 2007 is necessarily brief in so short a book and so it needs to be supplemented by the work of others. Among the best of these are Gillian Tett's *Fool's Gold*, Thomas Friedman's *Hot, Flat & Crowded* and Paul Mason's *Meltdown*.

Reading these other accounts exposes one of the weaknesses of Davis' account, namely that he seems wedded to a free market liberal view of economics, the so called neo-classical model. This colours his telling of the story and, more importantly, his explanation of it. It also influences his theology. To be fair, he focuses on the neo-classical model because it is the 'leading approach' (p.14) but he offers little critique of it from within the world of economics itself which means that when he comes to his theological critique, what he offers amounts to little more than a softening of neo-classical economics with a smattering of Christian morality.

For a primer on the economic causes and consequences of the crisis, it would have been good to have analyses created by other economic models such as those found in the work of Joseph Stiglitz, Steve Keen and even *The Renegade Economist* (aka Mark Braund and Ross Ashcroft).

Davis also offers a scriptural, theological angle on the crisis; indeed each of the three main chapters tackles the subject from an economics perspective and a theological perspective before suggesting ways forward. There is merit in this approach as it enables him to lay out an economic explanation of the crisis before reflecting on it theologically

But the greatest weakness of the book is Davis' theological method. He suggests that he follows the approach of the Old Testament's wisdom tradition in seeking a dialogue between secular economic thought and what he calls 'the fundamental truth of the gospel' (p.xix). A little later he describes the Bible as 'God's "maker's manual" for human life (p.xx). So what he tends to serve up in the theological sections are strings of biblical texts applied directly to the subject being explored, whether that be contemporary international banking, household indebtedness or government deficits. It is not to say that he does not make a lot of very useful observations, but it does not come close to a theological critique or

response to the crisis. Rather, he seems to suggest that if all the players simply did what the Bible says everything would be a lot better.

The most egregious example of this comes on p.57 where he suggests that the reason HSBC fared better in the meltdown than other UK banks is that it's chairman through the crisis, Stephen Green, was a Christian whose approach was 'clearly a more prudent one than that of his contemporaries'. He suggests that Green was 'salt and light' in the sector, 'working for the Lord and not for men'. Sadly, it has emerged that Green was in charge in HSBC when the bank was flouting money laundering regulations to such an extent that it only avoided criminal prosecution and losing its US banking licence on payment of an agreed fine of \$1.9bn. At the very least, this should make us cautious about claiming hero status for Christians in the sector!

Another pertinent example is in his use of Romans 13 to say that we should support government and in particular pay our taxes. He applies this to individuals but says nothing about tax avoidance or evasion at a corporate or personal level which costs the exchequer billions in lost revenue and contributed to the structural deficit we are now struggling to reduce. Neither does he talk about the low wages paid by large UK employers (who enjoy low rates of corporation taxes) leaving the government to pick up the bill through tax credits and housing benefit. These things, as much as government overspending, contributed to the deficit over the last decade or more but there is no critique of it from either an economic or theological perspective.

I also wonder if he missed an opportunity to explore in more depth what would happen if we applied the biblical idea of jubilee to the current debts with which corporations, private individuals and governments are saddled. It is something mooted by such secular commentators as Keen and Graeber; strange that a Christian commentator does not make more of it.

So while the book has undoubted strengths as an introduction to the mechanics of the crisis and is very strong on banks and banking reform, it disappoints in the area of theology. The *Kingdom* of the title barely appears in the text and certainly not as the hermeneutical tool with which Davis dissects the crisis and its aftermath and points to a more sustainable future.

*Simon Jones*  
*Bromley Baptist Church*

### **Steve Griffiths *Models for Youth Ministry* (SPCK, 2013), 144pp.**

I was recently told by a student in ministerial training that the problem with youth workers is that they don't have enough theology to back up their practice. If this student is correct in his assertion this book would go some way towards addressing it. Even if he isn't, Steve Griffith has offered some helpful Christological standpoints from which to reflect on youth work practice.

Starting from a place of frustration with how short a time youth workers have to work with young people, because they tend to only remain in the same post for around three years, Griffiths suggests a different approach to time that focuses on *kairos* time rather than *chronos* time. He returns to this motif throughout the book, suggesting that if youth workers focus more on the quality and purpose of the moments they have with young people, rather than their quantity, they might be more fruitful in their work. He asks the question 'What does incarnational youth ministry look like when it is a spiritual practice rather than a methodology?' (p.39).

I have to say that whilst Griffiths' response to the shortness of youth work jobs is based in pragmatism, I would want to argue that the solution to that problem is to suggest that youth workers remain longer in post (although funding sometimes makes this difficult). I also note that the book often seems to assume that the only person making a difference in the young person's life is the youth worker, rather than acknowledging interactions with the rest of the faith community. Also, I would have preferred that the bible passages used had a more inclusive approach to language, particularly since I observe they are the author's own.

Despite these reservations the book offers some real theological depth for youth workers to explore, whilst not losing a connection with real life practice. Each chapter looks at a different aspect of Christ, beginning with incarnation and moving through crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, eschatology and kingdom. In each case the theology is worked through thoroughly with connections made to how the approach might apply in practical terms. In some cases the practical examples he discusses give some quite hefty challenges to current models of youth work; he critiques the individualistic emphasis on personal salvation at the expense of community wholeness, and has some strong views about ministry to the poor that is based on singing praise songs at them without offering any practical help. In the chapter on resurrection ministry he challenges our need to offer glib answers to the sadness and despair many young people feel, suggesting that acceptance of our own weakness in the light of the resurrection leads us to a more empathetic and subtle approach.

In "An Ascended Ministry" Griffiths challenges the notion that Jesus is present with us at all times, making the point that, by ascending, Jesus was no longer present but that this fact gives hope rather than removing it, since it gives dignity and worth to the human condition for all. The final two chapters focus on the hope found in an eschatological framework for ministry, and its outworking in the kingdom of God, Griffiths suggesting that it is hope that young people are looking for more than anything else. He returns to the *kairos* motif, suggesting that 'Hope is only found when life takes on meaning. Meaning is only achieved when *chronos* is inhabited by *kairos*.'

Despite the depth of theological approach, the book is very accessible and would be easily readable by someone without theological training. If you are a generous minister or church leader and wanted to get your youth worker a present that would stimulate their thinking and add richness to their youth work practice this would be a good book to go for. It might also

be a good book for volunteer youth teams to read and reflect on, but it might also provide some interesting perspectives on ministry more generally.

*Sarah Fegredo*  
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**Roger Standing, *As a Fire by Burning: Mission as the Life of the Local Congregation* (SCM Press, 2013), 292pp.**

‘The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no Church...’ (Emil Brunner)

This significant new book from Roger Standing, newly inducted as Principal of Spurgeon’s College, London, might cheekily be described in footballing terms as a game of two halves. Following a brief introduction and important scene-setting chapter on Missional Church, the main body of the book consists of two contrasting but complementary sections which unpack this theme. This is a book about mission that rightly returns the local church to the heart of the conversation. Standing’s Missional Church chapter concludes with Lesslie Newbigin’s famous comment that, ‘The only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.’

Part 1 Mission in Context opens with a further contribution from the author under the heading of Mission and Locality, before gathering together brief chapters from 16 different authors which help to highlight something of the complexity and diversity of mission contexts and approaches in contemporary England. The overall impact of this section is greater than the sum of its parts. The individual authors write in very different styles, and some communicate more effectively than others their shared passion for Christ’s mission in their context. Mission in an Urban Context (Juliet Kilpin) was a highlight, particularly with her emphasis on shared values, as was Mission in a Large-Church Context (Simon Jones) with his emphasis on parties! The range of contexts explored is broad enough to feel comprehensive, including rural, small-church, city-centre, cathedral, multi-cultural, youth, fresh expression, although ultimately every church’s context will have unique features.

David Kerrigan contributes the final chapter of this section, Mission in a Global Context, exploring how BMS World Mission is involved in ‘bringing back home the insights gained in world mission to strengthen the local church in its outreach.’ Kerrigan keeps us firmly focussed on mission as the responsibility of the local church to be incarnational. ‘The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us (John 1.14, NIV) is not an incidental detail in the Christmas story. It is a paradigmatic demonstration of God’s entry into our experience of humanity and the cultural realities, whereby we experience the world around us.’ However, Kerrigan also goes on to demonstrate how the gospel, always capable of appropriate cultural expression, is also able to challenge cultures as flawed human constructs. A fascinating observation at the mid-point of this book.

Part 2 Mission and the Local Congregation is Roger Standing's own sustained reflection on his theme. He opens the second half of the book with a chapter on Mission and Context. Clearly (and helpfully) influenced by the thinking of Newbigin, Standing considers the emergence of the idea of contextualization and then explores its implications for the local church. His wariness of 'off-the-shelf' solutions and programmes is spot on, as is his warning against becoming our community's eccentric maiden aunt!

This second half of the book is a good balance of the general and particular, always maintaining an emphasis on the practical and experiential. Chapters include discussion of our Cultural Landscape, Evangelism, Worship, Disciple-Making, Leadership, Organizing for Mission, as well as asking Whose Mission? It concludes with helpful reflections on Mission and Third-Agers and Mission and the Occasional Offices.

This book will be useful for students of mission and ministry, and will no doubt be on lots of college reading lists in the near future. But it is primarily a book for local churches and for those women and men who seek to lead and inspire them in mission. A number of chapters would work very well as stand-alone reading projects for diaconates and leadership teams to explore together the essence and essentials of mission in the local church. Some books inform, and some books inspire, but the best manage to combine both information and inspiration in a meaningful and accessible way. In my opinion, Roger Standing's *As A Fire By Burning* manages this difficult balance, and while some chapters will date more quickly than others (the perils of contextualisation...) I believe it will be used and useful for years to come.

*John Goddard*  
*Saffron Walden Baptist Church*

**Juliet Kiplin, *Urban To the Core: Motives for Incarnational Mission* (Matador, 2013), 220pp.**

Urban Expression celebrated its fifteen birthday in 2012 and so *Urban To the Core* by Juliet Kilpin, one of the founders and co-ordinators of this urban church planting collective is a welcome reflection on its ecclesiology (this is my word not Kilpin's). In the book, Kilpin weaves together the voices and stories of those involved in Urban Expression (past and present) to unpack their shared commitments and values. Pope Francis has spoken of wanting 'a poor church for the poor', Urban Expression is one example of what it might look like in the UK.

There is nothing deeply original in the commitments and values that Urban Expression expound, save perhaps the commitment to plant church in the urban areas of the inner city. This is an urban ecclesiology for the inner city, where there are more closed churches than open ones, where apart from a few exceptions, Christian witness is hard to find. By suggesting that the commitments and values of Urban Expression are not original, I indicated that hopefully most churches would agree and aspire to them.



The difference between Urban Expression “churches” and other local Baptist churches is Urban Expression seek to make the commitments and values they name a reality and not something just frame and put on the wall. In this lies why this book is an important read. It is not an abstract theory-driven account – this is no ‘blue-print ecclesiology’ to quote Nicholas Healy – but a concrete (and being in the inner city there is lots of concrete!) tangible account of church planting.

*Urban to the Core* will hopefully inspire many others to join Urban Expression in being part of humble, relational and creative missionary ecclesiology in our cities. I hope also that it might remind and encourage churches in all forms to be a much more ‘uncluttered’ church, in and for their local community. As Baptists I hope we continue to make it a priority to support financially Urban Expression, both for what they are doing and for what they are learning which will benefit the church catholic.

*Andy Goodliff*  
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**Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *The Awakening of Hope: Why we Practice a Common Faith* (Zondervan, 2012), 244pp.**

This book offers an insight to the reasons why the author lives as part of Rutba House in what is commonly referred to as an expression of New Monasticism. The intention of the book, is to explain why they live the way they live and it does this well. Those who've found Shane Claiborne's writing stimulating will likely find much to fuel their thoughts and inspire their thinking within this short book. Indeed, Shane offers the foreword and there are echoes of a Shane in the journey Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove tells. In seeking to explain their way of life Jonathan presents the Christian faith as no-compromise approach that shapes every aspect of their lives. The book consists of eight chapters, seven of which are given to explaining the ‘Why’ of their way of life. These are Why..... we eat together, we fast, we make promises, it matters where we live, we live together, we would rather die than kill and we share the good news. The author paints a clear picture of the reasons and identifying their clear theological and scriptural roots. The style of writing makes this a book accessible to all and this is certainly one of its strengths.

For those interested in New Monasticism this book offers a useful outline of the basis for key practices commonly adopted. As such it acts as a tool to explore New Monasticism and the helpful study guide at the back would aid discussion amongst groups & communities considering New Monasticism. The study guide is worth a further comment, for at 43 pages it forms a substantial part of the book and the correlation to the chapters makes it highly suitable as a basis for a group study.

The author's line of argument occasionally spills over into tangential points. On these a very brief viewpoint of a large topic is offered, but without pausing to acknowledge the multiplicity of nuances that have been overlooked. Some acknowledgement of the potential for diversity of interpretation and application would have been appreciated by this reader.

Although recognising that this book is not trying to be evaluative or reflective of their practice but merely present it helps to overlook these minor irritations.

This is not an objective critique of New Monasticism, instead it is the telling of why they live like they live, told by one who is living this way. As such it offers a useful and interesting perspective from within. I think I found it most helpful to view this as a primary historical source of a current movement within the church, and as such it is helpful insight to the reasoning behind New Monasticism.

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