

Regent's Reviews

April 2016
Edition 7.2

IN THIS ISSUE:

- *Covenant and Calling* , Robert Song
 - *Galations*, Peter Oakes
 - *Defending Substitution*, Simon Gathercole
- and many more...



Editorial	4
Robert Song, <i>Covenant and Calling: Towards a Theology of Same-Sex Relationships</i> (London: SCM Press, 2014), 110pp.	5
Marianne Meye Thompson, <i>John. A Commentary</i> (NTL series; Louisville: WJK, 2015) 532pp.	8
Peter Oakes, <i>Galatians</i> (Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament; Baker Academic, 2015), 240pp.....	11
Charles A. Wanamaker <i>The Epistles to the Thessalonians</i> (NIGTC; Eerdmans, 2015), 344pp.....	12
Michael Bird, <i>Romans. The Story of God Bible Commentary.</i> (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 576pp.	13
N. T. Wright, <i>Paul and his Recent Interpreters</i> (London: SPCK, 2015), 379pp.	16
N. T. Wright, <i>The Paul Debate</i> (London: SPCK, 2016), 110pp.....	16
Walter Brueggemann, <i>From Whom No Secrets Are Hid: Introducing the Psalms</i> , ed. by Brent A. Strawn. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 224pp.....	18
Stephen N Williams, <i>The Election of Grace: A Riddle without a resolution?</i> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 221pp.	20
Clifford B Anderson and Bruce L McCormack (eds.), <i>Karl Barth and the Making of Evangelical Theology</i> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 237pp.	22
John B Thompson, <i>Sharing Friendship: Exploring Anglican Character, Vocation, Witness and Mission</i> (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 198pp.....	24
Derek J. Tidball, Brian J. Harris and Jason S. Sexton (eds.), <i>Revisioning, Renewing, Rediscovering the Triune Center: Essays in Honor of Stanley J. Grenz</i> (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014), 460pp.	26
Daniel Castelo, <i>Pneumatology: A Guide for the Perplexed</i> (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015), 144pp.	27
Kelly Kapic (ed.), <i>Sanctification: Explorations in Theory and Practice</i> (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2014), 275pp.....	28
Jason A. Fout, <i>Fully Alive: The Glory of God and the Human Creature in Karl Barth, Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Theological Exegesis of Scripture</i> (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 222pp.....	29
Joshua McNall, <i>A Free Corrector: Colin Gunton and the Legacy of Augustine</i> (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 329pp.	33
Simon Gathercole, <i>Defending Substitution; An Essay on Atonement in Paul</i> (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 128pp	34
Stanley Hauerwas, <i>Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified</i> (New Ed., Cornerstone series; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016), 280pp.	36

Scott W. Bullard, <i>Re-membering the Body: The Lord's Supper and Ecclesial Unity in Free Church Traditions</i> (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 175pp.	37
Wesley Vander Lugt, <i>Living Theodrama: Reimagining Christian Ethics</i> (Ashgate, 2014), 241pp	39
Laurie Green, <i>Blessed are the poor? Urban poverty and the church</i> (London: SCM 2015), 240pp.	41
Lee Beach, <i>The Church in Exile: Living in hope after Christendom</i> (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 240pp.	42
Gene Green, Stephen Pardue, K.K. Yeo (eds.), <i>Jesus Without Borders, Christology in the Majority World</i> , (Grand Rapids, MA: Eerdmans, 2014), 193pp.....	44
Cathy Ross and Stephen B. Bevans (ed.), <i>Mission on the Road to Emmaus: Constants, Context and Prophetic Dialogue</i> (London: SCM, 2015), 280pp. ..	45
Grace Davie, <i>Religion in Britain: a persistent paradox</i> (2 nd Ed.; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 280pp.....	47
Eileen Bebbington, <i>A Patterned Life: Faith History and David Bebbington</i> (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 145pp.....	49
Stanley K. Fowler, <i>Rethinking Baptism: Some Baptist Reflections</i> (Eugene Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 62pp.....	50
Zoë Bennett, <i>Using the Bible in Practical Theology: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives</i> (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 150pp.....	51
Nigel Wright (ed.), <i>Truth That Never Dies: The Dr. G. R. Beasley-Memorial Lectures 2002-2012</i> (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 222pp.	52

Editorial

This edition of Regent's Reviews begins with a review of Robert Song's *Covenant and Calling*. With the question of how the church responds to same sex marriage still very much a pressing one, Song's book seeks to find a third way. For this reason it is worthy of our attention.

The rest of the edition offers once again a mixture of the most recent biblical, theological and pastoral scholarship.

Andy Goodliff
Editor

Robert Song, *Covenant and Calling: Towards a Theology of Same-Sex Relationships* (London: SCM Press, 2014), 110pp.

Of the writing of books there is no end, and the writing of books on the questions of human sexuality and the Christian faith contributes not insignificantly to that endless stream. This is hardly surprising since this has become one of the most challenging of conversations for the church in our day, and, at times, one of the least interesting and productive. I say that despite having chaired the Baptist Union's working group on human sexuality from its inception until it ended with something of a whimper having fulfilled at least some of its ambitions in producing the current training programme in human sexuality, and my continuing to deliver that programme a few times each year, the fruit of which has generally been reported to me as beneficial.

One reason for its challenge is the fact that in many ways this is not so much a conversation about same-sex relationships as one about hermeneutics. How are we to read Scripture, and what does it have to say about the kind of same-sex relationships that some in the church wish to affirm: that is, faithful, monogamous and loving—precisely those qualities that the church wishes to commend in marriage, but finds itself conflicted about when it comes to same-sex relationships? On the one hand there are those who privilege a 'plain' reading of Scripture, and interpret certain passages in the Old Testament (particularly in Leviticus) and a few in the writings of St Paul, that can, quite reasonably, be construed as referring to homosexual acts (albeit in euphemistic fashion), or, in St Paul's case, coining a Greek word to be a synonym for that same Levitical euphemism. That translators confidently translate those words or phrases as 'homosexual' confers on them, in the minds of the untutored, at least, a sense that this is without controversy: the matter is settled.

On the other hand, there are those (and I would count myself among them) who want to ask a few questions of that confident translation before commending it unreservedly. Even if the sense of the translation is acceptable (and I would suggest it is), are the activities whose meaning those words wish to convey, or the relationships that they describe, the same as the contemporary experience of those who contract faithful and loving same-sex partnerships? When Paul includes *arsenokoitai* and *malakoi* among those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9–10) does he have John and Jim or Jane and Jenny in mind, who are exclusively same-sex oriented, and who have found in each other a life-long and committed partner, expressing a loving relationship that mirrors the relationship of marriage as between a man and a woman? Or is Paul thinking of those Roman and Greek practices that all four individuals today would find as morally reprehensible as he did in the first century?

Into this contested ground steps Robert Song, Professor of Theological Ethics at Durham University, and a member of the Church of England House of Bishop's Working Group on Human Sexuality. He has wrestled with the questions around human sexuality not only in the academy, but also in the life of the church in its attempts to discern the meaning of Scripture, the limits of acceptable human conduct and the relationship between tradition and culture.

However, this is not simply a rehearsal of the arguments about hermeneutics, although he does review those in chapter 4, and there he confesses 'Nothing I am going to say depends on radically novel or unconventional exegeses of individual texts.' He is prepared to accept that 'whatever it was that biblical writers were referring to in relationship to same-sex sexuality, they took themselves to be opposed to it.' (62) He is, therefore, no advocate of either a radically revisionist reading of the texts, nor of a straightforward editing out of those texts from the arguments on the grounds that our culture finds them offensive. He takes Scripture seriously, but also wants to draw a 'contrast between the surface meaning of texts and the deeper structure of the biblical story.' (63) That story is one that he elaborates in the first three chapters of this book: a story of creation, covenant, Christ, resurrection, eschatology and ecclesiology.

So, what are those arguments? From Genesis' story of creation we discover the goods of faithfulness, permanence and procreation. Those goods found in marriage are ways in which 'human beings may reflect and participate in the divine life' (13) However, this created set of goods becomes redundant in the eschaton: if marriage is, in part, the answer to the problem that people die, in the resurrection, where there will be no more death, there is no longer the necessity for procreation, and so people 'in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage', or so says Jesus (Luke 20:34) This sets up a tension between the continuing goods of marriage in this age characterized by death, and the immortality of the age to come: so St Paul commends marriage, in the 'now', while clearly preferring celibacy in its pointing to the 'not yet' of the age to come. Procreation is a necessity in this age in a way it is not in the age to come (who knows, perhaps it is impossible?) 'The early post-apostolic Church thought that renunciation of marriage and the family was an eminently appropriate way of pointing to the radical nature of the new order instituted in the resurrection,' (19)—and note, the New Testament nowhere encourages having children, even if Jesus welcomes them.

So, while the New Testament does not abandon marriage, it hardly unequivocally celebrates it as the ideal human state. Song turns to the category of 'calling' to resolve the tension between the claims of marriage and those of celibacy. All Christians are called, or have a vocation, and some find that in marriage while others do so in a celibate life. The fact that our modern age finds the latter strange should not deter the church from arguing for its validity and its pointing towards the coming Kingdom. But, he asks, does it follow that those are the only two callings, or might there be a third?

Song argues for a third vocation, one marked by permanence, faithfulness and by kinds of fruitfulness other than biological procreation. Such relationships need not be homosexual, but in principle could be. He is cautious of attempts to escape the very material givenness of creation (as avowed by various gnostic and spiritualizing movements) by pointing to the instability of some sexual identities, because it does not do sufficient justice to the statement 'male and female he created them', among other grounds. In fact if we are to characterize same-sex relationships as simply analogous to marriage, but without the possibility of

procreation, then it gives considerable grounds for claiming that same-sex relationships are really second-class or illicit after all. Simply eliding the question of procreation does not resolve the matter.

So, Song argues that while same-sex relationships will share certain features with marriage, they are not, theologically speaking, the same thing at all. Incidentally, this is one reason why the Baptist Union in its submission to the Home Office consultation running up to the Same-sex marriage legislation's enactment opposed the idea of same-sex marriage. These are category errors. So, for childless couples, or those who marry late—beyond the woman's child-bearing years—then other goods of fruitfulness must be sought other than the birth of children. Those goods should be eschatologically-oriented, pointing in their very nature to the claims of the coming Kingdom—freed from the burdens of child-raising to be 'anxious about the affairs of the Lord', open to others and bearing especially the fruit of helping one another. Alternatively, while not giving rise to children born of their union, they might foster children, or shape their home life to the nurture of others' children. Such a covenant partnership would be a vocation, different to that of marriage where children issue, and also that of celibacy, but by no means inferior. The question this raises, of course, is whether same-sex couples might participate in this third vocation? 'Could they also bear eschatological witness to the goods of faithfulness, permanence and fruitfulness,' and thus participate in the vocation of bearing witness to 'creation's fulfilment in the coming Kingdom?' (36)

There follows, in his argument, two questions in chapter 3. What are the reasons for maintaining that marriage as a creation ordinance must be heterosexual, and secondly, must sex be always open to procreation, or might it be related to other goods. He affirms, in a densely argued chapter, that the goods of marriage are not inherently heterosexual, nor that sex is limited to the goods to which it contributes in procreation, thus contradicting, especially, Roman Catholic teaching. This raises the possibility that same-sex relationships might be a form of that third order of vocation for the Christian.

So, Song turns to Scripture, and the familiar arguments about Leviticus and Paul. He helpfully argues the biblical case not just from those Scriptures which seem explicit about sex, but from the arguments about war. Why is it that war, seemingly prohibited by the words of Jesus, 'love your enemies', has become acceptable, while same-sex relationships—which point more obviously to the question of who one may love, has not (at least to the conservative side of the debate)? What Song calls for (as I have sought whenever I have taught the Baptist course to churches) is one concession from those who maintain a conservative position, 'namely a recognition that those who are exploring alternative positions should not quickly be condemned for simple disobedience to the plain meaning of Scripture, but may themselves also be seeking to interpret Scripture in a way more faithful to the trajectory of the texts than traditional readings have allowed.' (80)

In the end, what is at stake is whether the church can reimagine the relation it bears to culture and retain its distinctive voice. Such re-imagination

‘emphatically does not mean endorsement of current trends’ (97), lest the reader sense some form of ‘selling out’ to the current sexual context. But ‘if the churches are to be heralds of good news in a changed world, their tone cannot be one of increasingly shrill and bitter denunciation.’ (98) Rather, the question is one of discerning what in the times might be of value. Let Song have a closing word before evaluating this contribution to the debate.

‘the Church only has one Lord and one Word of God, which it has to hear and which it has to trust and obey in life and death. But equally in the tasks of moral discernment to which we are called in our time and place, we are also required to test the spirits, to see which are of God. And that in turn requires an openness to being transformed, to the renewing of our minds as we present ourselves as offerings to God, members together of the body of Christ.’ (99)

This is an important contribution to the debate, and I find much in the arguments Song proposes that help us break out of the endless debates about this or that interpretation of this or that Scripture. Here are theological ethics, rightly informed by Scripture, but not held prisoner by the ‘concordance’ approach—one that attends primarily to those texts that are about homosexuality of an indeterminate character. This focuses not so much upon what certain people do with their genitalia, as what it means to live in relationships that are oriented to both creation and the eschaton. I wonder if in the end, for all the strident denunciation of same sex practice, and our claim, “Lord, Lord, did we not hold fast to truth for your name”, whether we stand in risk of hearing in response, “depart from me, you evil-doers. I never knew you.” In other words, we became so focused upon what human beings (especially those different to the majority) should not do, we entirely lost the vision of what intimate human relationships signify and mean. Listening carefully to the voice of the Spirit becomes the task at hand, as it ever was.

Paul Goodliff
Abingdon Baptist Church

Marianne Meye Thompson, *John. A Commentary* (NTL series; Louisville: WJK, 2015) 532pp.

There are more commentaries on the Gospel of John than any one of us needs to study it, at whatever point of entry we choose. I have a shelf full of 12 commentaries and about 20 monographs, and that excludes books I’ve borrowed from libraries over the years. And I am still intrigued by fresh work, new scholarship and all the undiscovered country of this familiar, strange, demanding and perplexingly profound book. Despite all the early scholarly ink and papyrus, the plethora of academic paper and print, the ocean of digital, electronic and online resources, the Fourth Gospel continues to speak deeply and clearly to

those who read John's Gospel itself with uncomplicated faith and readiness to listen.

This latest substantial commentary was published a few months ago and I read it each day Advent through Epiphany. It is readable, learned, thoughtful, written by an author who writes for church as well as academy, and does so out of her own confessional commitment to the Christian faith. That makes her no less a scholar with a critical mind, reverent and respectful of the text and therefore not prepared to short change this Gospel by foreclosing on problems, avoiding questions or claiming more interpretive authority than the evidence allows.

Marianne Meye Thomson has worked on this commentary for 17 years, which is a large chunk of her professional life. In an interview held at Fuller Theological Seminary where she is Professor of New Testament, she spoke openly about the joys, demands and disciplines of writing a commentary. Sometimes those who write commentaries are criticised for not covering all the issues of background, social context, textual developments and pre-history, rhetorical strategy, theology and reception history, while also interacting with the waterfall of monographs and other commentaries. In her interview Thompson conceded there would be those in the academy discontented that the commentary is not a *vade mecum* of recent scholarship; but her aim is to write for students and pastor-preachers while also making a contribution that other Johannine scholars will also appreciate.

Her approach is succinctly stated: 'I have not endeavoured to reconstruct or pass judgement on the historicity of events, words or accounts in John. John's Gospel is assuredly a selective, interpreted account of some of the things that Jesus said and did; it presents Jesus and his works and words to be the life giving deeds of the one God of Israel for all the world. The goal of the commentary is to illumine the witness of that narrative' (p.23).

This clarification is important, ensuring the reader is aware of the author's stated purposes and intentional omissions. Thompson makes no attempt to carry on a multi-sided dialogue with all the secondary exegetical and historical literature. She seldom engages in prolonged discussion with other commentators except where they add further interpretive clarity to the text in hand. Footnotes are rich in additional information and comment, and are the more valuable for being limited in number, reserved for the more important matters. That said, there are approximately 1100 footnotes, and she spoke ruefully of the large file of footnotes cut from the text to keep the volume within the publisher's word count! Some of us would like to see and follow those scholarly footprints! There are nine Excurses and each is a richly textured essays on crucial theological and historical issues in John, as for example the signs, the I am' sayings, faith and discipleship, and the one she confesses she struggled with most, "The Jews" in the Gospel of John. Reading the excurses is a mini course on Johannine theology and history. The Excursus on the woman taken in adultery is an exemplary piece of textual criticism in which the pericope is not seen as original, but is nevertheless expounded in an exercise of canonical exegesis. A 23 page Bibliography, and around 82 pages of indices enhance the usefulness of the

volume, pointing the reader to further resources and gathering page references to a host of subjects as they are treated throughout the commentary.

The water into wine pericope is a favourite of mine, and one I have preached on several times and studied and returned to ever since C K Barrett and Raymond Brown showed me what could be done by digging into the Old Testament texts and establishing bridges between John's storytelling and the Jewish and Greco-Roman world out of which such writing came. Her exegesis is laced with cross references to the OT and other Second Temple literature, is written in lucid and imaginative prose with an eye to the theological payload, so that she brings a freshness and, on occasion, a surprising light to bear on an already well worked text. Likewise her understanding of the story of the Temple cleansing is to respect John's chronology in placing it at the start of Jesus ministry, but also to acknowledge the Synoptic account may be the more historically plausible. Rather than seek to harmonise, she works at explaining what John was about, and why the Temple cleansing sets off foundation shaking Christological reverberations. These are two examples of her approach.

I had occasion to preach on John 14.7-11, a typical passage of Johannine theology suggestive of long rumination on the meaning of the Word made flesh, and how the one who was close to the heart of God is the only one who can make God known: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" is a statement that takes the reader to the highest ridges of Johannine Christology, and containing ideas far seeing in their suggestion of a nascent Trinitarianism. Thompson shirks none of the hard questions in exploring the identity of Jesus the Son and his relationship to God the Father. In a couple of paragraphs she unravels John's meanings with the clarity of a scholar who previously published two substantial monographs on God in John's Gospel. She is a reliable guide and a good commentator on the theological landscape of John.

The NTL commentary series is intended to be medium sized, mid range and deal with paragraphs and flow of thought rather than treating the text in the more atomistic, comprehensive and detailed analyses of larger scholarly commentaries, such as Keener, Michaels and from a previous generation Brown and Schnackenburg. This is a commentary which sits alongside its nearest competitors Lincoln, Beasley Murray, Ridderbos, Moloney, and Carson. I would compare it in quality, freshness and usefulness to Gail O'Day's fine work in the *New Interpreter's Bible*.

In her practice of exegesis Thompson has little interest in competing or arguing with other writers for the sake of showing her control of the field. Of course she is often in conversation with other scholars, and there is wide and deep learning informing this volume. Her concentration, however, is on the meaning of John's narrative and witness, which is unbroken throughout as she opens up the message of the Word made flesh, dwelling amongst humanity, and displaying the glory of God. The pivotal verse for her is, 'In him was life and the life was the light of all people.'

Her own translation (a feature of this series) is supported by textual notes, and in working at it she was aiming for idiomatic English, but staying as close to the actual text as possible. She is both modest and sensible in acknowledging that just as John had to select, choose and omit material, she had to do the same in order to keep the commentary within the parameters of the series. In doing so she has produced a commentary that will be of genuine usefulness and stimulus for preachers and students. Scholars will likewise encounter a commentary that has deep roots in both learning and faith, and which offers an engaged and energetic wrestling with this complex, infuriating, comforting, disturbing but intentionally tendentious text.

Thompson is cautious in the use of criticism but honest about wrestling with the text; ready to offer new conclusions but rarely speculative; her writing is readable, which is to say I am reading it through over several weeks, and at times have been drawn to read on further to follow the flow of a well written exegetical narrative. I've waited eagerly for this book since Thompson was announced as its author. This book was worth the wait. The time taken has resulted in a mature, lucid, authoritative commentary, qualitatively different because the writer has demonstrably lived with, and within, this text.

Jim Gordon
Aberdeen

Peter Oakes, *Galatians* (Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament; Baker Academic, 2015), 240pp.

Having appreciated Peter Oakes' incisive thinking in *Reading Romans in Pompeii*, where Oakes revealed his ability to ground the Pauline letters in the earthy reality of first century culture, I was looking forward to reading this commentary. I was not disappointed. Throughout this commentary it is perfectly obvious that he has paid careful attention to the features of the culture of Galatia. We thus become aware of the possible ways in which we might interpret the letter paying due consideration to these details. Moreover, as with *Reading Romans in Pompeii* Oakes argues that it is most unlikely that the readers in Galatia would be cognizant with the Hebrew scriptures and therefore one needs to understand that most likely Paul wrote with this in mind (14).

For Oakes, this letter is about unity (7) with the appeal for love and mutual support (8). In discussing the challenge to Peter and 'the truth of the gospel' (2:14) Oakes asserts 'In Galatians, unity in Christ is a crucial element in the idea of salvation' (77). The route to this unity is 'trust in Christ' (126) and 'the life of loving unity, is exemplified by Jews and gentiles eating together' (95).

Oakes engages in typically careful and extensive discussions on the key issues. So for example, when discussing the meaning of *Ioudaïamos* (1:13) he helpfully suggests that it is best understood as 'a way of life characterized by practices that Jews generally saw as being proper' (53). So the Judaizers (2:24) are 'asserting that the culmination of salvation...can only be attained if the excluded Christians

change to become like those who are excluding them' (80). Oakes brings his assessment right up to date with the critique, 'The church has constantly forgotten that Paul's vision is of gentiles as gentiles and Jews as Jews, united in allegiance to Christ' (163).

As we might expect there is a lengthy discussion on the meaning of *pistis Christou*. Oakes critiques Hay's view of *pistis Christou* as potentially the faith of Christ in God, with the assertion, 'in Galatians, Christ is not described as acting toward God' (89), and adds, '...*pistis Christou* is probably located in the sphere of the relationship between Christians and Christ.' 90. But, even more interestingly, Oakes speaks of *faith* as a reciprocal relationship (108); 'the idea of reciprocal fidelity between the believer and Christ/God is a powerful one' (88).

However, in affirming that Paul received his gospel 'directly from God' (57) and agreeing with Seyoon Kim that 'much of Paul's theology can be linked, one way or another, to that event' (93) a reference to the dramatic experience on the Damascus road, I don't think that Oakes anywhere pinned down and clearly articulated the details of Paul's gospel. Although Oakes does repeatedly and helpfully emphasises the theme of unity and love: 'Love is the virtue that seeks the kind of practical unity expressed in mutual concern and support in and among the house churches' (176).

This commentary is not a bland repetition of other scholars' views, far from it. Oakes makes clear what he thinks in challenging norms and traditions. 'My conclusion from research so far is that, however wonderful Paul's message may be in many ways, he ultimately takes a line that will remain divisive, except in any world that unanimously accepts the Christ-based path that he has marked out' (116) and 'it looks clear to me that Christianity is one religion among many, and that Pauline Christianity is one (key) version of that religion. Claiming otherwise is, in itself, a radical form of Christian exceptionalism' (98).

Ed Pillar
Evesham Baptist Church

Charles A. Wanamaker *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (NIGTC; Eerdmans, 2015), 344pp.

Today, perhaps more than ever, we need to pay attention to the letters to the Thessalonians, which as Wanamaker makes abundantly clear, has at its heart that clash of ideologies – Christian vs. Imperial. In the dedication Wanamaker states 'The Christians at Thessalonica chose Jesus as their Lord, not Caesar, and so paid the price for rejecting the ideology of the dominant culture.'

While Wanamaker may at times come across as conservative in his views, for example admitting favouring a 'more traditional understanding of Pauline chronology,' he follows T. W. Manson (St. Paul in Greece') in arguing for the priority of 2 Thessalonians. Wanamaker details his argument drawing on literary

arguments and rhetorical analysis in an excellent Introduction and suggests that the complexities of the relationship between the two letters can mostly be resolved if one asserts the priority of 2 Thessalonians. In making his case he step-by-step dismantles Robert Jewett's proposals (*Thessalonian Correspondence*) for an alternative case.

However, one of the most interesting and worthwhile features of this commentary is Wanamaker's focus of the socio-religious background against which the letters are set. As a result of the dearth of information regarding the congregational situation in Thessalonica we are best, says Wanamaker, to develop a renewed interest in the immediate first-century Greco-Roman world. Examples of a couple of passages, which benefits from this approach, are mentioned below but there is a caveat here. Wanamaker's interest, does not (in this reviewer's opinion) always come off well. An example of this would be the way in which he follows Jewett's proposal of similarities between the figure at the heart of the Cabirus cult and Paul's Christ (12). The reality is that scarcity of literary and archaeological evidence for the Cabirus cult should encourage greater caution.

One of the passages in Thessalonians that garners most attention is the controversial section regarding the persecution being experienced by the believers (2:14-16). Wanamaker does not shy away from acknowledging this as anti-Jewish rhetoric, but argues that this is an example of *vituperatio* – which expresses and reinforces difference (118). Nonetheless, Wanamaker makes clear that such rhetoric repeated today is a cause for shame (119).

Another challenging passage – 1 Thess. 4:13-15 – is seen primarily about consolation for a mainly pagan community who had been 'forced to assimilate an entirely new understanding of the world when they became Christians' (176). Although Wanamaker does then think it unlikely that having been 'caught up on clouds to meet the Lord' the believers will then return to earth. More likely these verses are referencing an assumption to heaven (175).

Readers who might be put off considering this commentary because it is the *Greek Testament Commentary* need not worry. Wanamaker (or perhaps a very thoughtful editor) brackets the English translation immediately following the Greek text that is being considered.

Ed Pillar
Evesham Baptist Church

Michael Bird, *Romans. The Story of God Bible Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 576pp.

As a child I roamed around my father's bookcase reading whatever was there. Around age 10 I found a book with the strange title, *Annapurna*, by a man with a strange name, Maurice Herzog. No I didn't read it cover to cover, I dipped in, read

paragraphs that were nail biting and downright terrifying about the dangers and exhilaration of mountaineering, survival by teamwork, and what it meant and felt like to tackle the glaring white precipices of an 8,000 metre peak in 1950 with nothing but rope, pitons and ice axes. It isn't a bad description of what it must feel like to stand before the glaring white precipices of Paul's letter to the Romans, and start writing a commentary.

That letter has provoked some of the greatest exegetical achievements in biblical scholarship, and has been a textual pivot on which the fate and future of the church has turned. From Augustine's impetus to conversion on hearing it read, to Luther's reorientation of conscience, theology and faith, to Wesley's heart strangely warmed and Barth's 'throwing the furniture around', and Kasemann's apocalyptic Gospel of the in-breaking God, Romans has been source and resource of the Church's renewal.

So there are shelves of commentaries, and in the past 30 years a veritable industry of Pauline exegesis has poured out monographs, essays and yet more commentaries. Cranfield and Dunn, Fitzmyer and Byrne, Moo and Schreiner, Jewett and Wright, Kruse and Witherington, Talbert and Matera, are a representative dozen which reflect Reformed, Catholic, Baptist and mainstream critical positions. So why more commentaries still forthcoming? Longenecker's long awaited study of the Greek text in *The New International Greek Testament* is due in May 2016, Paul Fiddes is scheduled to write the Blackwell commentary *Romans Through the Centuries*. And Michael Bird's volume just published, which is the subject of this review.

Writers of *The Story of God Bible Commentary* work with three overall aims: listen to the text, explain the text and live the text. Based on the 2011 NIV these commentaries intend to engage the reader by paying attention to the overarching story of God from creation to new creation, and placing each passage in the context of that theological narrative. What the text says, what it means in the light of its original meaning, and how this text is now to be lived in the performative activities of the people of God and the Body of Christ; these are the drivers of this particular commentary series. Writers work within these broad parameters but allowing for their own theological and scholarly freedom as they explore and explain the text.

Michael Bird is still a younger generation New Testament Scholar but with an already impressive publishing record, and much of it pertinent to the issues and interests of this New Testament Annapurna! His *The Saving Righteousness of God* is an important ground clearing and synthesising study of the old, new and post-new perspectives on Paul. The edited collection of essays on *The Faith of Jesus Christ* (on the contested translation of "pisteos Iesou Christou"), another area of controversy on Paul's theology, is the outcome of an invitation to a diverse range of scholars to air, argue and discuss their differences, refereed fairly by Bird himself. In articles and essays he has interacted with the very substantial players in the contemporary field of Pauline studies including Ed Sanders, J D G Dunn, N T Wright, Douglas Campbell and Francis Watson.

All of which means the reader can have considerable confidence that deep and articulate scholarship underpins this commentary. After reading chunks of it I can see the rationale for commentaries like this on a preacher's shelf. The threefold aims are well fulfilled, the commentary is by turns informative, provocative, fresh in argument and somewhere between formal and conversational in style. But the relaxed style notwithstanding, the seriousness of the scholarship, the alertness to theological concerns and implications of the text, the fairness of the presentation of other views and approaches, and in the living text sections, richly veined theological reflections; these are all features for which preachers will be grateful.

The exegesis is readable. This is not a banal or fatuous comment. A major strength of Bird's writing is its readability. Without sacrificing depth or complexity in his exegesis, Bird genuinely wrestles with the next stage of bringing this text into our time and place as a relevant and disruptive word from God. That doesn't mean I always agreed with the move from exegesis to application. On the issue of same sex relationships Bird does his best to be both traditional and pastorally sensitive but in the end I doubt if either side in this debate will be satisfied – but they will have been made to face the scandal of the text and the pressures of contemporary church life.

Romans 8.38-39 were the first verses I learned by heart, and in the AV! Bird's exposition of this chapter displays his exegetical skill and his own theological starting point. He is Reformed in his understanding of the unholy triumvirate of law-sin-death, and of the grace that reigns through Christ. As chapter eight moves to its climax God's saving work in Christ is rooted ever more deeply in grace, and then grows into a sanctified life by the energising and enlivening of the Spirit. Even in the face of persecution and threat of death 8.28 sounds God's overall providence which leads inexorably to 8.38-9 with its symphonic climax. Here is Bird in full flow as he explains Paul's argument:

The cluster of dichotomies that Paul constructs between sin and righteousness, laws and grace, and death and life, cannot go on forever in some kind of infinite theological tango. Paul's opening words, "Therefore there is now no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."From now on, the dominating point of view is what it looks like from the vantage point of Christ's death and the giving of the Spirit. (P. 256)

And so throughout the volume. On Romans 12.1-2 on non-conformity to the world, but conformity to Christ through a Christomorphic transformation both dynamic and decisive, Bird explains Paul's welding of theology and ethics into a life wholly given in holiness and worship.

On chapters 9-11 Bird is at his best; this is a mature, careful and serious piece of exegetical diplomacy, and diplomacy not in the sense of inconclusive niceties, but in the sense of one fully aware of the sensitivities of speaking truth that will change the way we think of ourselves and others from now on.

‘These three chapters form an olive grove chapel, bidding Christians to pray to God through the Messiah because of Israel and for Israel....God’s saving righteousness is for everyone, not despite Israel but precisely because of Israel.’ (304-5)

Aware of recent study of Paul and his relationship to, and attitude to, the Roman Empire, Bird senses in Paul an acknowledged and subtle tension between obedience and subversion. On the contested interpretations of 13.1-7 Bird reviews the options and concludes with John Stott, “Whenever laws are enacted which contradict God’s Law, civil disobedience becomes a Christian duty.” (450) However as a final example of Bird’s style of explication, here is the same thought in his own words:

Wherever a menacing empire casts its shadow – whether from the east or from the west – Christians have a responsibility to order their lives around the story and symbols of Jesus. We are to live our lives as exemplary citizens, and we must yet let it be known that our loyalty is owed first and foremost to the true Lord of the World. Christians are to make a nuisance of themselves by setting up a benevolent alternative society to the tyrannical one that surrounds them. (p, 449)

The footnotes indicate supplementary material, point to further resources, give voice to alternative viewpoints, and evidence the range of Bird’s travels in seeking exegetical options. There is a full Scripture Index and indices of subjects and modern authors. The Bibliography is brief and helpfully focused – a multitude of other bibliographic guidance is given in the footnotes, and therefore in the place where they are relevant and useful.

This is an enjoyable commentary to use. I wouldn’t want it to be the only commentary on Romans I used; some of those mentioned at the start of this review have equal claim to be read and consulted. But it is a commentary written by someone immersed in current Pauline studies, in conversation with the significant voices in contemporary NT scholarship, and written with verve and a spirited enjoyment. I still want Cranfield, Dunn, Fitzmyer and Wright at least – but Bird brings an unmistakable sense of excitement, even fun, to the hard work of exegesis on its way to exposition which aims at performative responsiveness to Paul’s greatest letter.

Jim Gordon
Aberdeen

N. T. Wright, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (London: SPCK, 2015), 379pp.

N. T. Wright, *The Paul Debate* (London: SPCK, 2016), 110pp.

Whilst writing his book 2-volume book on Paul (*Paul and the Faithfulness of God*), Wright also wrote *Paul and his Recent Interpreters*, which is his interpretation of other Paul interpreters. The other book under review here *The Paul Debate* is a

general response to the reviews of *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*. If you're counting, Wright has now written seven books on Paul's theology!

Paul and his Recent Interpreters sees Wright engage with all the major players of Pauline studies in the last 40 years – Sanders, Dunn, Hays, Watson, Käsemann, Beker, Martyn, De Boer, Campbell, Meeks and Horrell. The book is divided into three sections. The first section explores those who have explored Paul's theology through the lens of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. The second section explores those who see Paul as an apocalyptic thinker and the third section those who studied Paul in terms of his social world.

The most important section is Wright's engagement with the apocalyptic 'school' and in particular the two chapters on first J. Lou Martyn and Martinus De Boer and the second on the work of Douglas Campbell. I suggest this is the most important section because the current debate within Pauline scholarship is between Wright and the apocalyptics, focused primarily between Wright and Campbell, which is probably explains why Wright gives a whole chapter just to addressing Campbell. Incidentally this is the first time, Wright has specifically engaged with the apocalyptic school, and on that basis alone, this book is worth reading. (Although Martyn's famous commentary on Galatians came out in 1997, it is only with the likes of Campbell's *The Deliverance of God*, published in 2009, and also related works by Beverly Gaventa and Douglas Harink that a apocalyptic has become more mainstream and started to challenge more directly Wright.)

The debate is over how we read Paul. Broadly, Wright's work sees Jesus as the 'climax of the covenant' (to borrow a title of a earlier Wright book) and so tends to read forward from Israel to Jesus. Campbell and others argue that everything must start with Christ and the read outwards from there, they read backwards, or in Barthian language read 'after Christ.' The criticism of the apocalyptic school is they don't anything to say about Israel, the critic of Wright and the salvation history school is they don't have enough to say about Jesus. Another way of reading the debate is between history and theology and to which is given the most weight.

Wright's criticism in *Paul and the Recent Interpreters* of Martyn, de Boer and Campbell is a challenge of their historical account of Jewish apocalyptic literature and from this he thinks a lot of their readings unravel. It is a historical criticism. In terms of Campbell specifically, Wright claims he fails to make any historical case for is use of apocalyptic. Of course, Campbell would contend that the language of apocalyptic, as he and the others are using it, is primarily theological. On Campbell, Wright begins with a good joke, Campbell's *The Deliverance of God* is too short! (The book is over a 1000 pages long). The tone then changes to a much more heavily critical one. In fairness Campbell on Wright adopts a similar tone. Having said, I don't think we are yet to the level of the 'Barth Wars', between Bruce McCormack, Paul Molnar and George Hunsinger yet, which has become decidedly unfriendly.

I don't need to say that Wright is a good writer, a good story-teller, is many works bear testimony to that and so *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* gives the

Wright version of the story of Paul amongst Anglo-scholarship. He is a good guide and gives space to engage with all the big thinkers, to which they would all probably want to respond! The book is worth having to see where Wright both positions himself and how he reads his contemporaries in the field. There is a textbook feel in how he offers the overview, but this is no disinterested survey.

The shorter book *The Paul Debate* picks more clearly five areas in which Wright has been questioned in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God (PFG)* – Paul as Jewish thinker; Paul's divine Christology; the relationship between covenant and apocalyptic; justification; Paul and mission. Rather than offer a reply to each review, he writes this as a general response. Although the different reviews of *PFG* are listed at the end of the book, *The Paul Debate* has no footnotes and Wright does not highlight where he is responding to this or that particular review. This pitches the book at a broader audience than *PFG* – it is 10% of the length! In other words, for those for whom *PFG* is too daunting or for whom there are just not enough hours in day or years in a lifetime, *The Paul Debate* sets out the main ways Wright reads Paul and why.

Many who will read *The Paul Debate* will not get around to reading the reviews of *PFG* to which he is responding. Like Paul's letters, many will only read the Wright's response. On this score, I think those who are reading Paul apocalyptically should not so easily be dismissed, but this is simply to say the Paul debate will continue, as the forthcoming collection of essays from two SBL seminars in 2014 on *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination* (Fortress, 2016) with chapters by Wright, Campbell, Gaventa, de Boer and others, will surely demonstrate.

There is a generation of Christians, those in ministry and not, who are growing up on the scholarship of Tom Wright. Where previous generations looked to John Stott or William Barclay, we have been given Tom Wright. Much of this is all to the good, there is much to benefit from his enormous output. He has got people reading the Bible again, he has challenged popular evangelical ideas, revealing their lack of biblical support. Reading *The Paul Debate*, or the larger *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, will continue Wright's mission to see both academy and the church take seriously the interpretation of scripture. This is where *The Paul Debate* ends with a section where Wright argues for large bold hypothesis of how we read Paul, but they must be checked 'ruthlessly' against the 'raw data of the text' (p.105) – Wright believes he has succeeded in both.

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

Walter Brueggemann, *From Whom No Secrets Are Hid: Introducing the Psalms*, ed. by Brent A. Strawn. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 224pp.

Readers of Brueggemann have often first encountered his work through *The Message of the Psalms* and its cycle of orientation, disorientation and new orientation. However those who start and finish their encounter with Brueggemann and the Psalms with *The Message of the Psalms* miss a great opportunity to probe the contemporary potential of the Psalms through the breadth of Brueggemann's work on these texts. Brueggemann's writing on the Psalms is prolific, as is demonstrated by the comprehensive bibliography on the subject at the end of this volume. *From Whom No Secrets Are Hid* offers a next step into this subject, as it introduces his readers to many of the themes of his wider work on the Psalms and is intended to assist those who worship God as they explore the full repertoire of Psalms and human emotion: 'a voicing that is indispensable for the social and economic health of the body of faith and the body politic' (p.xi).

This countercultural action of uttering the secrets of the human heart in speech and song to God in the presence of the community is the focus of the volume, as suggested by the titular quotation of the Anglican collect for purity. The volume is introduced with a chapter on Frank Warren's PostSecret Project by the editor, which demonstrates the therapeutic potential of disclosing secrets in a broader context. It is followed by sixteen chapters by Brueggemann of varying lengths covering all the major genres of psalms, before concluding with a reprint of his 1980 article *Psalms and the Life of Faith*.

The volume's major themes and terms will be well known to those familiar with Brueggemann's work: poetic imagination and world making, psalms as protest, doxological abandonment, abrasive truth-telling, dependence on God and the importance of relationship. With a characteristic close attention to the biblical text, these themes are examined by means of a study of a wide range of psalms which offers a depth of insight that is greatly valuable either to personal study or public preaching and worship. The editorial choice to exclude footnotes, in favour of brief list of important books used or alluded to, prevents the reader from becoming distracted by the range of voices with which Brueggemann interacts. However, it may also dissuade the reader from delving more deeply into Brueggemann's sources and other works on specific points of interest derived from this volume.

Brueggemann invites his fellow interpreters to bring the text into conversation with their contemporary situation, encouraging them to subversive action as inspired here by the psalms which gives witness to a God who 'is not the benign object of custodial religion in which we specialize, but is a Character, an Agent, and a Force who operates in free ways that disturb and interrupt' (p.9). This is the God with whom the reader engages when interpreting the biblical text; the reminder of which is helpful when studying texts such as the Psalms that often lose their power through overfamiliarity.

This book's reminder of the frequently challenging nature of life in relationship with God and with other people, and of the importance of expressing the fullness of human experience in that relatedness through a careful engagement with the

biblical text is one that should challenge a range of readers; whether new to studying the Psalms or steeped in their poetry and potential.

Helen Dare
Broad Haven Baptist Church

Stephen N Williams, *The Election of Grace: A Riddle without a resolution?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 221pp.

Professor Williams spent a brief spell in Oxford prior to gaining his chair in systematic theology at Union Theological College, Belfast, where he has clearly thrived judging by the quality and regularity of his publications. These reveal the width of his interests and expertise, including volumes on John Locke's philosophical theology, Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, and others reflecting both philosophical and theological expertise. He has become a major British theological author, in particular in the Reformed tradition and very much from deep rooted Welsh Presbyterianism.

His latest book on election tackles a difficult question and manages to bring to bear a humane lightness of touch, a tone to match his message in many ways, avoiding rigidity in content and looking to connect the theme to particularity, the human predicament and privilege of faith.

I confess to forgetting the philosophical difference between a puzzle and a riddle, I seem to recall that one remained perplexing while the other had a solution, like Rubic's Cube perhaps. I have a feeling that the riddle remains puzzling, and that the puzzle can be 'worked out' however puzzling! Anyway, Williams' subtitle works well in deconstructing the notion that we can somehow get on top of the issue of divine election and work out a system of how 'it works'.

The book arose from a set of lectures the author gave and these have clearly been carefully crafted into this published form. The four chapters are 'Election in the Old Testament', 'New Testament Election', 'Dogmatic Limits' and 'Dogmatic Difficulties', with a fifth chapter, called an appendix, 'Karl Barth on Election'. The book is refreshing in its use and interpretation of Scripture, this is unashamedly theological, seeking to travel with great themes of the Bible and assuming the unity of the texts as a whole. Williams often refers to specialist biblical commenters but also to theologians and missiologists for their insights. Lesslie Newbigin plays quite a part in the chapter on the Old Testament theme of election, discussing election as responsibility and the nature of privilege. Individuals, tribes, Israel and nations are all object of election with differing dynamics each according to its kind, all entailing faith and obedience. Election is concrete and historical, not metaphysical or meta-creational. Williams wants to explore election along its narrative lines in Scripture, in the vast array of diversity. 'We do not help religious trade', says Williams, 'if we risk exchanging a sense of the privilege of special communion for a sense of the breadth of God's universal concerns. Each is too precious to be so commodified in theological barter'. The prophet Isaiah receives important attention, sovereignty and grace

being found at the heart of election. The OT needs to be understood on its own terms, not Christologically prematurely, keeping the tension alive for Israel and the nations. Notwithstanding this rejection of Barth's OT reading, Williams ends this chapter with Barth on the riddle of Israel as an eschatological riddle, pointing beyond itself. Williams does not venture into the poisoned waters of contemporary fear and loathing of the state of Israel, and fashionable 'anti-semitic anti-Zionism', perhaps wisely.

New Testament election contains an especially useful treatment of Pauline understanding of election, the mystery of Israel's rejection. Romans 9-11 of course gets particular focus and the discussion of God hardening the hearts of those who do not accept Christ as against this being a self-hardening, or indeed a mutual mapping of the two. The Lamb on the throne is the centre of all theological thinking here, he is the Lord and reveals God as light, in whom there is no darkness at all. All talk of election must never depart from this truth. Charles Simeon, a Cambridge vicar, is a very surprising figure in the dogmatic chapter, a contemporary of Wilberforce and the Anglican Evangelical movement, Simeon has long been a kind of worthy figure of the past for Anglican Evangelicals, but I have not seen his thought discussed in the contemporary era and am grateful to Stephen Williams for presenting this to us, a sign of his originality in research. Simeon distrusts systematisers and wishes to put Calvinist and Arminian together to show how each needs the other in the gospel. Williams has a page of imaginary conversation between Simeon and Wesley, demonstrating their oneness in the gospel and dependence on Christ for salvation. This really useful material should be made known to the Anglican theological colleges and courses, thanks to our Welsh Presbyterian Professor! We cannot grasp the truth of election as if solving Fermat's Theorem, the real is grasped in existential form, and in prayer, for Simeon, the diversity of our fragmented experiences is best pondered – though not as if in some infallibly clarifying method, we remain fallible 'Prayer is not the guaranteed secure place of theological insight. Yet, it is a place where the human spirit is most profoundly aware both of its responsibility and of God's sovereignty' – however little we know of how these interweave.

The book ends, prior to the intriguing appendix, with Luther and suffering as the true context for pondering election, and Williams soberly concludes that western Christianity is surely approaching this place, the place to relearn 'that we cannot think about election in the absence of suffering and the cross, for all our theological sophistication, only then will we learn to appropriate election existentially.

The appendix concerns Barth and his famous representation of election in Christ. Williams did his doctorate under Hans Frei, one of the great Barth scholars, and his long appendix is worth the price of the book. He engages Barth critically especially on his hermeneutic, that is his decision to read Scripture Christologically before gaining that mode of reading from Scripture itself. Also Williams rejects Barth's rejection of natural theology. But Williams' book contains many insights consonant with Barth and clearly accepts him as a fellow

Reformed theologian, while ending with a resounding rejection of Barth's judgement that 'the choice of godless man against God is void'.

Another fine volume from Williams, and certainly a must for ministers across the denominations.

Timothy Bradshaw
Regent's Park College, Oxford

Clifford B Anderson and Bruce L McCormack (eds.), *Karl Barth and the Making of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 237pp.

The title of this set of essays is explained by *Evangelical Theology*, which refers to the book arising from lectures Barth gave on his one visit to the USA in 1962, one of his late productions and highly valued as a way into his theology. The eleven authors take these American lectures as the trigger for exploring Barth's theology in several dimensions in a fifty year perspective.

The editors introduce the symposium with bang. Barth's post 1945 refusal to attack communism as he had Nazism did not play well in the USA. He refused to hitch the church to an anti communist bandwagon, and was seen by some in the USA as lacking in support for the persecuted churches in the communist bloc. The *New York Times* published an article critical of Barth entitled 'Swiss Theologian Assails the West'. Barth did not wish to be associated with Niebuhr and his political realism. The editors also note the bitter attacks on Barth theologically by Cornelius van Til – although he did attend Barth's 1962 lectures! The historical context of 1962 also has Barth's bitter disappointment that his successor at Basle was not Gollwitzer, who leaned to the political left, but Ott – after the former's candidacy had been questioned on political grounds. Barth took this as a 'dishonourable discharge' from his theological home base. This volume keeps the 1962 visit in focus, and includes his visit to three American prisons, Chicago, San Quentin and Rikers Island New York. Jessica DeCou writes of Barth's horror at the Chicago prison, admiration for some of the programmes at Rikers Island. Barth famously preached in Basel Prison regularly, and wanted to view American freedom from the social underside. This is an excellent probing of society, then and now, with American prison filled to overflowing: how should the gospel bear on this deep problem. 1962 in the USA was a time of theological liberalism, Tillich being the man of the moment. David Congdon's essay engages with Barth and his engagement with the existential tradition of Tillich and Bultmann, and suggests that Barth did not in fact fully overcome this tradition in his doctrine of election. Hans-Anton Drewes, a former directors of the Barth archives, suggests that a new look be taken at Barth's earlier work in relation to his late writings such as *Evangelical Theology*. The connections are stronger than is often thought, concepts he used in his early days were developed and made more Christologically concrete later, contrary to much receive opinion – but not of course to that of Bruce McCormack !

Kevin Hector from the University of Chicago asks whether Barth's need for prolegomena in his dogmatic works shows the difficulty of starting with 'content' without 'method'. He further suggests that this shows that he was less than totally opposed to Schleiermacher than he realised. Their mutual views of the theological task is less contradictory than we might think, and we should take another look at this pair of theological giants.

George Hunsinger probes Barth's theological anthropology in CD III/2 'The Phenomena of the Human'. Barth accepts that non theological philosophies can provide insights, and Hunsinger explores the criteria for such other ideologies as helpful. Gerald McKenny considers Barth's ethical teaching and the criticism that it is a command structure and not compatible with virtue ethics of being. McKenny finds that Barth's later writings get the balance of human and divine agency and merit just about right. Covenant makes possible divine and human agency as both fully authentic. Daniel Migliore from Princeton ponders Warfield and Barth on Scripture and presupposition, also on the value of other disciplines as supportive to theology.

Cambria Janae Kaltwasser describes Barth's friendship with John Mackay, a Scottish theologian who helped Barth with the English language and was a lifelong friend. He became principal of Princeton Reformed Seminary, and Kaltwasser detects Barthian tones in his work. Martin Luther King, pastor and civil rights organiser caught Barth's attention and admiration, and they fleetingly met during Barth's 1962 USA visit. Peter J Paris, who teaches social ethics at Princeton, ponders their theologies of prophetic church denunciation of injustice in an important new light.

Katherine Sonderegger, professor of theology at Virginia Seminary, considers the state of the church now in its apparent decline and weakness. While doctrine and demographics are significant factors, she echoes Barth's witness to God as judge and rejection of 'success' in worldly terms. The pastor's existence must focus on God rather than socio-psychological desperate ways of becoming fashionable. The symposium is concluded with an essay by Adam Neder, 'The Sun Behind the Clouds: some Barthian thoughts about teaching Christian theology'. The temptations of Christian teachers and lecturers are profound and subtle, and this is an excellent and astringent essay warning us against seeking what is not of the kingdom but rather using it for our own self publicity and gain, a kind of embezzlement of grace. The penultimate page is very interesting to a European reader. It has a photo of the Spanish soccer genius Andres Iniesta, the diminutive midfielder who won Spain the football world cup with his penalty. After that act he ripped off his shirt to show the words Dani Jarque always with us – a tribute to a team mate who had died the previous year. Professor Neder uses this sporting act to show that Iniesta pointed away from himself at this moment of supreme sporting glory, to his friend. Christian academics nota bene.

This is a readable book, with a genuinely new angle, and theology as related to the realities of Christian and social life. It strikes me as being in a similar category to a much earlier set of essays in a context: *On Reading Karl Barth in South Africa* 1988 by Charles Villa Vicencio, about the relevance of Barth in the

apartheid regime. His insistent Christological focus always proves itself deeply serious and deeply challenging.

Timothy Bradshaw
Regent's Park College, Oxford

John B Thompson, *Sharing Friendship: Exploring Anglican Character, Vocation, Witness and Mission* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 198pp.

Sharing friendship is a phrase which, perhaps deliberately, rather camouflages the content of the book which is really ecclesiology. It is in a series entitled 'Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology' leading me to anticipate a sociologically driven study of a typically liberal Anglican kind, especially on noting that the author is an Anglican bishop. But the book posts an endorsement by Stanley Hauerwas, and describes itself as a 'post liberal approach to ecclesiology', and my fears of yet more socio-psycho analysis of a post modern kind from Anglican dignitaries were fast being allayed. The preface encouraged this process of 'de-cynicification' – to coin a terrible phrase – as Thompson explains his own experience as a vicar, educator and trainer over twenty five years. He says that Anglicans have something distinctive to contribute, and that they have lost much confidence in their role and mode of being Christian, especially in the light of the draw of more immediate and direct ways of expressing the gospel to day. His thesis is that the Anglican way is a way of friendship to the stranger, and that this is a Jesus like mode of life towards the 'parishioner', the paroikos, who 'is literally the neighbour or wanderer we do not yet know or who has become estranged from us through past enmity, circumstance or illness.' Love for this stranger is, for Thompson, the Anglican distinctive for church and mission. I confess that I find this to be something of a shift of focus when looking into English Anglican history and the established church, although probably more convincing for Anglicanism anywhere else in the world where it is but another denomination. Richard Hooker's wonderful *Ecclesiastical Polity* and his efforts to articulate a non-sectarian vision of a broad room for the Church of England, home to the Calvinists and the Catholics, is really the same vision as a church on the look out the outsider, there was no outsider in Christendom – as the Jews discovered until Cromwell invited them back. But Thompson is working with ecclesiology as influenced by Hauerwas, and that is not easy to fit on top the classic Church of England foundations, or fit in with the Queen and Bishops in the Lords. The Salvation Army in fact has built up a deserved reputation for being open to the stranger, notably after 1939 when Jewish refugees from Hitler needed to be given jobs and sponsors as conditions of entry. But Thompson's vision, while hard to fit onto his desired Anglican history, is certainly attractive now – although may entail a need for some kind of disestablishment at the upper echelons if not the parish level. It might also be worth adding that love for the stranger does need a congregation to do the loving, it needs a converting imperative therefore if it is not to endorse the current image of waffly, aesthetic agnosticism. Thompson is not, I stress, encouraging this form of quasi faith, the fading smile on the face of the Cheshire

Cat. The substance of the book proves to be richly theological and deeply concerned with the gospel.

The book is divided into sections on practice, reflection, and challenge. Thompson engages with very important theologians in articulating the forms of friendship he detects in the Anglican way. Oliver O'Donovan, Anthony Thiselton, John Milbank, Rowan Williams, David Ford and Dan Hardy. Stanley Hauerwas and his focus on character as the base of Christian ethical behaviour comes in at the very start of the book. This list alone gives the feel of the quality of the discussion and the seriousness of the book. Thompson wants a narrative ecclesiology, putting us into the flow of the biblical life, and connects this to the major Anglican distinctive of reading scripture a lot in its public worship. The book closes on challenge, notably social friendship and fresh friendship with 'fresh expressions' as a form of mission. Pete Ward on celebrity and Graham Ward of Oxford on urbanisation. Kenneth Leech is cited arguing that the church is faced with the false polarities of ghetto or surrender, heroic sect of believers or vague woolly pseudo-community. Thompson's thesis is a kind of 'keep calm and carry on' being Anglican Christians, concerned for others, being hospitable and trusting that God will give faith to such strangers finding acceptance by the church congregation. My own pastoral experience has shown me that often this is the case: people who find no acceptance by society do find a place in church life and do thrive. In fact this has long been the evangelical Anglican model: a core of believers and a fringe of sympathetic folk and contacts who can be drawn to faith and friendship. I was not totally clear that the faith centre has sufficient place, or rather sufficient attention, in Thompson's vision. As David Martin says in his *Tongues of Fire* on the Latin American Pentecostal movement: 'The church has opted for the poor, but the poor have their own options', that is Liberation Theology has made this choice, but the poor have chosen in large numbers to take the route of commitment in faith, radical Pentecostalism.

Given how new the book is, I am a little surprised that more attention is not given to the multi-faith and multi-cultural dimension of British, especially English, society. Islam is clearly laying down its own legal, institutional, social and moral ways. Rowan Williams as Archbishop famously endorsed elements of Sharia Law. The established church is supposed to be the spiritual glue of the nation, and yet now it is clearly a minority with this grand but empty superstructure. And it is more and more playing the role, at central national level, of a kind of ministry of cults to use the French kind of language, fighting the corner of all the faiths. Perhaps Thompson's vision can take account of this dramatically changing socio-religious mores of England, but only at the price of becoming that ever fading smile with less and less Christian substance?

Timothy Bradshaw
Regent's Park College, Oxford

Derek J. Tidball, Brian J. Harris and Jason S. Sexton (eds.), *Revisioning, Renewing, Rediscovering the Triune Center: Essays in Honor of Stanley J. Grenz* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014), 460pp.

Stanley Grenz died in 2005 aged 55. He was a leading evangelical and Baptist theologian and author of numerous books and essays, amongst which his one volume systematic theology *Theology for the Community of God* is perhaps most well-known. This collection of essays have been gathered at what would have soon been his 65th birthday. The editors have gathered a suitable crowd of contributors including Stanley Hauerwas, Paul Fiddes, Ellen Charry, Kevin Vanhoozer, William Abraham, David Cunningham and Stephen Holmes, to honour and engage with the contribution Grenz made to the study and practice of theology. The book is organised a range of themes that Grenz gave attention to – the Trinity, community, eschatology, scripture, tradition and culture.

The most stand-out chapters included the editors theological biography of Grenz. Here he walked through his career, but also some of his key works, including why he went to Baylor and then left after a year; his relationship to Pannenberg; and his work of seeking to renew and revision evangelical theology. Vanhoozer's chapter offers a survey of different Trinitarian theologies, including his own and Grenz's. As a Baptist, the two chapters, by Fiddes and Holmes, grabbed my interest. Fiddes puts Baptist and Catholic koinonia ecclesiologies into conversation, in particular that of Joseph Ratzinger and Stanley Grenz and in the background are the recent BWA-Roman Catholic conversations, which Fiddes chaired. Holmes looks at Grenz's book on homosexuality, showing how Grenz was ahead of his time. At the same time, Holmes begins to offer, here fairly briefly, his own reading of the pressing questions of homosexuality and gender that the church faces. Holmes has another chapter length piece on the same issue in press to appear later this year. Jonathan Wilson engages with the growing work in apocalyptic theology in the context of mission. David Cunningham's chapter, like another book under review in this edition of *Regent's Reviews*, puts the doctrine of the church and revelation in conversation with drama and theatre. Finally, Derek Tidball explores the future of evangelical theology post-Grenz.

This is a somewhat uneven festschrift, which is not uncommon for the genre. A fair number of chapters I skimmed over. Its strength is to show that Grenz was a theologian, both evangelical and Baptist, who is worth engaging. The great sadness being that he was just beginning to engage in probably what was and would have been his most interesting work when he died. This book, alongside Jason Sexton's recent book on Grenz's trinitarian theology (reviewed in last issue of *Regent's Reviews*), will continue to make Grenz a theologian worth reading and helpful to the theological task, especially amongst those who identify as evangelical.

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

Daniel Castelo, *Pneumatology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015), 144pp.

This book is one of a series by Bloomsbury that offers 'clear, concise and accessible introductions' to a variety of thinkers and subjects. Daniel Castelo is the author for this book on pneumatology and rightfully highlights how deeply challenging any study is on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, seeing this book, not as an exhaustive account of pneumatology, but a collection of "working papers" that offers us a glimpse (at under 150 pages it can only be a glimpse) at what he sees to be 'the most pressing concerns associated with it.' (p xii)

The book is divided into seven chapters, the first seeking to highlight some of the challenges and expectations within this field of theological work. The following two chapters give us a Biblical and historical overview, exploring how the Holy Spirit has been understood from a Christian and Biblical perspective, giving examples from Scripture and the challenges faced with interpretation, and then highlighting how some of the Church Fathers approached pneumatology. The following three chapters examine, in Castelo's opinion, the main areas of theological challenge for the Church today in this 'sub-area within the doctrine of God' (p.5), and the final chapter seeks to help the reader in how we might live and be 'shaped by the Spirit to discern the ways of God' (p.134).

Castelo believes that, within Christian speech and thinking, particularly among the laity, the Church is 'pneumatologically anemic', and so this work is, in some way, to enable a 'greater appreciation and urgency' (p xiv) in our work, speech and study of the Spirit.

Many of the challenges faced today in the area of pneumatology is, Castelo thinks, related to Christology in that he believes we are much more interested in the Person and work of Jesus than we are of the Spirit. He believes that we have often favoured Christology over pneumatology because we can relate to Jesus as a human being like us. Castelo argues that pneumatology rather than Christology could be our most helpful resource in leading Christian communities in faithfulness and hopefulness and unexpected promise. He believes pneumatology offers us a 'grand Christian vision' (p 18) of lives lived and made possible in communion with God.

It is a book that I both enjoyed and got frustrated with as I often felt the focus was wrong (biblically, historically, theologically). Without doubt Castelo's desire to encourage us to engage more fully with pneumatology is one to be applauded, and certainly the book is not an attempt to cover everything, but is written to create greater awareness and desire to engage, and this it does well. But, because of Castelo's concerns over Christology, Jesus is very absent. Of course this is a work on pneumatology not Christology, but for Christian communities to be 'shaped by the Spirit' surely a Spirit shaped Jesus ethic should be approached in a work such as this to help us understand what that means? After all, Jesus said, 'The Spirit has anointed me to....'

In the acknowledgements Castelo pays tribute to a student of his who was shot dead by a gunman who opened fire at Seattle Pacific University. Through this tragedy Castelo was acutely aware of how the theme of this book gained greater significance as many of them learned to be a people of the Spirit in the midst of such pain. Jesus' ethic of peace and forgiveness, anointed by the Spirit to declare in word and deed, is missing from this book, and is a much needed pneumatological study, one that, in light of this tragedy, I hope Castelo is able to write about in the future.

Joe Hayward

This Hope Baptist Church, Newton-Abbot

Kelly Kaptic (ed.), *Sanctification: Explorations in Theory and Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2014), 275pp.

One essayist describes his contribution to this collection not as a 'destination' but as 'some crucial coordinates for the voyage.' (Horton, p.149). This sums up well the collection as a whole, which sets out not to offer firm conclusions or new schools of thought on this topic but rather to open it up for the purposes of further thought and discussion. As such it is a worthy and important contribution to a subject that can often be at worst overlooked by Christians or at least ill-defined and hazy in our understanding.

This collection is written largely from a Reformed perspective and is intended in part as a response to the dominance to the doctrine of justification amongst Protestant Christians, intending perhaps something of a recalibration of the relationship between justification and sanctification. Kaptic, in the introduction, also highlights the difficulty that many evangelical Christians have with sanctification, particularly in terms of human agency and divine grace. Indeed these two themes - the relationship between justification and sanctification, and the role of human and divine agency in sanctification - provide a significant focus in many of the contributions.

The book is divided into three sections, the first being very much in the territory of the theory of sanctification and by what means it occurs. As would be expected from a collection dominated by Reformed theology, God's gracious initiative and our response in faith are the major concepts here, but with some interesting nuances. The role of Christ in the work of sanctification and the relationship between Christ and the believer are explored in this section, along with the intriguing use of Barth and Wesley as conversation partners who, argues Bruce McCormack, converge in their understanding of sanctification in the idea of Christian Perfection as possible reality in the here and now.

In the second section of the book, which focuses upon sanctification and ethics, Michael Horton's essay explores the role of free will in sanctification, arguing against predestination and for God working with, rather than against, our creatureliness, through the Holy Spirit. The implication here is of a relationship

between Creator and created which echoes that of the Trinity - not a struggle between opposing entities in which one party is subject to what is done to them but a dynamic flow made possible because of the God-made-flesh reality of the Incarnation. We are not merely passive receivers of sanctification but participators in it. This idea of human agency within sanctification is also picked up in James Eglinton's essay, which uses the theology of Dutch neo-Calvinist Herman Bavinck as a lens for the relationship between sanctification and ethics.

The third and final section of this collection concerns the pastoral implications of sanctification. There are interesting reflections here on our participation in holiness during our earthly lives, unity with Christ and adoption, and the role of preaching as exhortation to holiness. Of particular interest in this section is Kopic's own contribution concerning the relationship between suffering and sanctification. This is perhaps the most 'practical' of offerings, beginning as it does with a personal account of a particular experience of suffering then opening out into a series of reflections on faith, hope and love within this context. Kopic points to the importance of the communal dimension at work in sanctification. This idea, a feature of other essays in the collection, is an important counterpoint to the concept of sanctification as an individual phenomenon rather than one intended for the Body of Christ.

This collection, helpfully grouped around three themes, is well worth the effort. If pushed to offer a criticism, it would be that practical theology perhaps remains the poor relation to theory and I was left with the sense that sanctification is more of an abstract concept than a lived reality. However, this book goes some way addressing our need to grapple with this complex doctrine and begins to explore its practical outworking.

Hannah Bucke
Southend-on-Sea

Jason A. Fout, *Fully Alive: The Glory of God and the Human Creature in Karl Barth, Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Theological Exegesis of Scripture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 222pp.

What on earth would persuade someone to engage with Karl Barth, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, and multiple biblical voices including the Exodus traditions, Paul and John, within the theologically contested fields of divine glory, human freedom and the relation of each to the other? It isn't often that a book attempts such an intriguing exploration of fundamental theology and ends up with significant pastoral and spiritually rewarding excursions and conclusions. Fout begins by acknowledging and in some senses revelling in the tension between the glory of God and human agency, divine power and human freedom. This prompts questions about how the sovereignty of God accommodates to a form of relatedness between eternal creator and temporal creature the divine purpose of such relatedness being the evocation of loving trust and grateful obedience. Behind these questions is the tension bluntly stated by Kathryn

Tanner in the title of her book, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* Is God's glory overpowering or empowering? Is God utterly other or relationally open? Is obedience grateful response to glory or linear non-negotiable submission to command?

While engaging with Barth and Von Balthasar as two exemplars of theologians who emphasise the glory of God as God's freedom, Fout intends a critique of their doxological theology and a restatement which is equally, and perhaps even more, congruent with the biblical witness. One long quotation from Fout exemplifies the theological intensity, conceptual playing field and pastorally focused anthropology which informs the entire volume:

I mean to argue that the fullness of human agency is made possible through the overflow of joy, love, honour, gift and grace that is God's glory. The fullness of agency may be characterised by discernment, judgement, faithful questioning, exploration of meanings and consideration of faithful means of performance; it will be marked by excess, overflow, creativity, eagerness and boldness. It is always aware of its own contingency and grateful for God's grace and gift, yet is not content in passivity or self-bracketing. Although human agency and being are radically contingent on God's prior and simultaneous gift and grace, this human agency in the light of God's glory may be considered dialogical, as God allows for creaturely response, leading to something like conversation with the creation (p.3).

Following a chapter reviewing current accounts of divine glory, including such unlikely sources as Tom Schreiner, John Piper, Wolfhart Pannenberg and Edmund Schlink, Fout has two chapters on the glory of God according to Barth. The complaint about Piper is the danger that God's glory is so emphasised and exclusive that it eclipses all other reasons for God's own freedom and agency in relation to creation. With Schlink the danger is that God's glory is so overwhelming that the human response is de-selfed, and the human "I" is negated. What Fout wants to argue is that the glory of God de-centres the human self but does not de-self the human person. Rather than the divine glory being so overpowering it dispenses with the human self, the divine glory is itself glorified in constituting a self which is capable of glorifying God.

The two chapters on Barth, examine closely Barth's treatment of two of the divine perfections, honour and glory, as these impinge on creation and the human person. Central to Fout's contention is the search for an account of divine glory that allows, indeed enables, a 'non-heteronomous dependence'. What Fout intends by that term is best explained in his own words:

I shall use heteronomous in a negative sense to refer to those notions of divine glory which are presented as excluding, bracketing out or overwhelming human agency., which therefore defeat the attempt to learn about learning. Against this, though I place not autonomy, but rather 'non-heteronomous dependence', a relationality which admits that the individual is not self-constituted but dependent on others (particularly

God) yet is constituted as a thinking and acting creature in that non heteronomous dependence.

The first Barth chapter is an engagement with Barth's treatment of the divine perfections in *Dogmatics* II.1, in particular his exposition of love and freedom, and his use of the biblical images of honour and light, and the extra-biblical concept of beauty. Fout's concern is that Barth so preserves the divine perfections that human creaturely responsiveness as a corresponding and valid desideratum of the Creator, is 'bracketed out' as likely to compromise the sovereign freedom and aseity of God. The second Barth chapter explores the divine glory as expounded, decades later, in IV.3.1. Here the glory of God is the overflowing of God's freedom and love, and Fout is deeply appreciative of Barth's dynamic vision of overflowing freedom and love, the inner joy of God, and the glad obedience of the creature: Fout celebrates a conception of "human obedience to the command of God [which] frees the creature, allows her to be who she is meant by God to be, and permits her to glorify God' (p.92).

But Fout discerns in that same generosity a theological scruple that retains the vocabulary of command, revelation as given and final and only to be repeated as given, not questioned by faithful questioning. While deeply appreciative of Barth's rich exposition of the glory of God in the love, freedom and joy of the Creator and Redeemer, Fout nevertheless strongly questions Barth's portrayal of human agency as inevitably over and against God. But is it not possible, he asks, to think of divine glory and human agency in a different way, construing the divine glory, in freedom and love, as enabling and establishing human agency that, in response to the divine glory, glorifies God in a reciprocal process of revelation and adoration?

"Why might not this human agency of faithful questioning, discernment, judgment and so forth be done specifically and intentionally *in* God, not apart from God but before the face of God and in the shadow of Scripture?...why must God's glory and the glorification of God only be seen as bracketing out this agency and not truly establishing it, not responding in a manner that accords with the overflow of God's glory?" (p.103)

And so to Von Balthasar. Fout builds on the early relationship of Barth and Von Balthasar, and the debt Von Balthasar's *Glory of the Lord* owes to Barth's volume II.1. Von Balthasar's embrace of the *analogia entis* allowed him to map a closer correspondence between earthly beauty and divine glory, and thus between the creature and the creator. In an insightful comment Fout helps explain the affinities and disparities between Barth and Von Balthasar, and suggests a clue to their lifelong profound respect for the work of each other:

Although both Barth and Von Balthasar see God's glory as expressing the identity of God, particularly conveyed by God's (mutually implied) freedom and love ...Von Balthasar tends to resolve this pair in favour of love, whereas Barth tended to favour freedom. (pp.142-3)

But Fout remains deeply critical of Von Balthasar's account of human agency in response to the divine glory. The form of Jesus Christ is the form God's glory has taken in the world and is described by Von Balthasar in terms of self-emptying, self-dispossession and obedience. His characteristic emphasis on kenosis is linked to Mary the model of human responsiveness, a bracketing out of common human agency; his view of sin as essentially human assertion and non-compliance with the command and call of God, in stark contrast to Mary, who is privileged in Von Balthasar's theology. Once again divine glory is made a barrier to a full and divinely intended human agency, which, for all their profound and persuasive theological accounting of freedom and love, leaves Fout theologically dissatisfied. Turning to the Bible he seeks

“the possibility of opening up these (mostly promising) accounts of divine glory to unbracketed human agency, in part through a greater emphasis on God's glory as God's honour and praiseworthiness, thus to show that the fullness of God's glory is not incompatible with a fullness of human agency.” (p.143)

The biblical texts (Exodus, 2 Corinthians, Gospel of John) are well chosen as dialogue partners. What is clear from Fout's examination of all three is the place of human agency when confronted by the divine glory. Far from overwhelming the creature, Fout finds that in these texts God's glory enables, transforms and establishes a responsiveness that glorifies God in the fulfilment of divine purposes for creation and creatures. “God's glory begets an analogous glory in creation.” This is not a human achievement, or a creaturely claim on divine blessing, but the glory of God working to fulfilment in calling and drawing disciples into a process of being conformed to the image and glory of Christ, in which human responsiveness and agency is brought to proper fruition in glorifying the freedom, love and mercy of God.

Human agency in light of God's glory is not straight line obedience but responsive and creative; that humanity before God's glory is not de-served but constituted to act in accord with God's glory; and that human agency, in God, is transformed according to the logic of God to overflow in love, honouring and glorifying others to the glory of God, and this in a relationship of non-heteronomous dependence on God. (pp.191-2)

After this sustained journey through Barth, Von Balthasar and Scripture, Fout is content to re-affirm the words of Irenaeus, “the glory of God is the living human, and the life of the human is the vision of God. And in that re-affirmation he seeks to correct perceived imbalances in the otherwise rich expositions of the glory of God to be found in two Swiss theologians whose accounts respectively of the Divine Perfections and the three Transcendentals are Alpine in scale and vision. The critique of Barth and Von Balthasar is pursued by Fout through a theological reading of Scripture, using those biblical traditions which, when read theologically, reveal a more dynamic, relational and permissive construal of the glory of God. Thus the divine glory overflows in the freedom of a love that evokes praise towards the one who is praiseworthy, and invites if not compels adoration

to the one whose glory draws from the human heart, mind and will, the obedience of faith and the service of love.

I found a number of typos throughout the text, mostly in footnotes. I will note these to the publisher for correction in any reprint, hopefully paperback and at a much more affordable price. This is a very worthwhile read, a book with a relevance and pastoral tone belied by a first encounter with the full title!

Jim Gordon
Aberdeen

Joshua McNall, *A Free Corrector: Colin Gunton and the Legacy of Augustine* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 329pp.

Colin Gunton had his reservations about St. Augustine's theology. For Gunton, Augustine overstated the divine unity and diminished the three persons; held that the timeless and the immaterial were somehow more real or more important than the time-bound and the physical; and displaced Spirit-enabled Christological mediation (essentially, the Father acts in the world by his 'two hands', the Son and the Holy Spirit) by positing a number of insubstantial intermediaries, including the divine will and the human soul. These alleged shortcomings found inevitable expression in Enlightenment and (post-) modernist thought, prompting Gunton to develop much of his own constructive theology in response. Thus Gunton was not so much concerned with Augustine's thought per se but with his 'afterlife' or legacy, the appropriation of Augustine's theology by later scholars.

Joshua McNall's *A Free Corrector* (the title borrows from Augustine's *The Trinity*), an expanded doctoral thesis, is a helpful contribution to a growing body of commentary on Gunton's theology taking issue with his often-glib analysis of Augustine. But McNall, perhaps recognising that drawing attention to Gunton's uncharitable take on Augustine is hardly innovative, distinguishes his account from others by contending that Gunton's readings were not completely inaccurate or unjustified. Of particular importance is McNall's observation that Augustine's decision to equate the *imago Dei* with the *imago Trinitatis*, and this with the human mind, did likely influence the individualism and rationalism fostered by René Descartes and so readily embraced by later thinkers. Here, McNall discloses something of how selectivity and contextualisation significantly affect the way a person's thought is filtered through subsequent traditions. When later scholars found themselves inspired by Augustine's earlier works, and especially the *Confessions*, they were more likely to propagate insufficiently theological ideas about God and the world. The problem with Gunton, McNall suggests, is that he was just as selective as others, choosing to contest the early Augustine while overlooking his mature positions. Moreover, as he tended not to examine Augustine as a child of his post-Arianist times, Gunton failed to appreciate the occasions behind Augustine's theology. Thus Gunton's selectivity and decontextualised evaluations of Augustine lie behind his reading of the

history of Western theology – although, as already stated, Gunton’s account of Augustine’s legacy was not entirely groundless.

This basic argument of *A Free Corrector* is developed over the course of eleven chapters, each relatively short but sharp in analysis. McNall covers a lot of ground: he outlines Gunton’s own theology and influences; summarises the issues some modern theologians have with Gunton’s interpretation of Augustine; identifies where Gunton’s analysis of Augustine was flawed and cautiously suggests where he was likely right; and explores Augustine’s reception in the thought of theologians ranging from Boethius and Gregory the Great to the aforementioned Descartes via Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and John Calvin. Two chapters also consider Gunton’s advocacy of Irenaeus of Lyons and the Cappadocian fathers as ‘antidotes’ to Augustine’s monistic and dualistic imbalances, though McNall is far less convinced than Gunton that the Cappadocians were sufficiently distanced (theologically speaking) from Augustine to be an effective corrective.

While not an exhaustive account, McNall’s research provides enough evidence to convince that Gunton did mishandle Augustine’s writings and the responses to them while seeking to prove a point. This mishandling arose from Gunton’s decision to focus on certain texts at the expense of others, and his failure to accommodate the contexts in which they were written. But McNall also provides evidence that such misconstruals helped Gunton to craft an Irenaean approach to a theology of creation that promises its own theological afterlife. So aside from its clear value to students of Gunton and Augustine, *A Free Corrector* may also be regarded more generally as an insightful case study on how to interpret responses to a person’s intellectual impact, and on how any misreadings (deliberate or otherwise) might still inspire and contribute to good theology. If so, then McNall’s study should lead its readers to a greater appreciation of the legacies of both Gunton and Augustine.

Terry J. Wright
Spurgeon’s College, London

Simon Gathercole, *Defending Substitution; An Essay on Atonement in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 128pp

We are all still arguing about Paul. He remains, for many of us, the authorized interpreter of the life and work of Jesus. Therefore our understanding of his letters is vital for the way we approach both discipleship and the formulation of doctrine. Paul’s writings are our touchstone. We defend our positions by expounding what we see as their correct interpretation, and we attack our opponents for offering misleading exegesis, flawed understanding of context and for unwittingly (perhaps) insisting on reading Paul through the lens of their traditional doctrinal positions. Yes, we have fun doing it, but for many of us this stuff really matters.

There are many areas of controversy but one of our favourites, for now at least, is the doctrine of atonement. Some of us want to defend the idea of penal substitution while others want to send it to Room 101 along with other failed ideas. Gathercole helpfully sticks a pin in the word *penal*, puts it to one side, and addresses the idea of *substitution*. The two are often discussed as though they were joined at the hip but this book helpfully reminds us that they can be considered separately from one another. Furthermore, the author refuses to allow the argument that we must choose between the idea that Christ died for us as our substitute and that he died as our representative; the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

In his introduction Gathercole, using clear, thoughtful language, helpfully defines the key terms and sets up the argument of the book. Then, in his opening chapter, he offers a helpful discussion of three approaches that challenge the view that Paul understands Jesus as a substitute. Each is treated fairly, with its strengths being acknowledged. However, each is shown to be dependent on the idea that Paul sees Jesus's death as having an effect on *Sin*, a power or a realm, in which humans as a whole are trapped, while downplaying any effect on *sins*, the wrong things that each human does. It is not that Gathercole thinks that Paul does not address the former; he clearly does. It is that Paul is also concerned with the impact of Christ's work on the latter.

The next two chapters offer exegesis of key texts that demonstrate the author's point. The first is 1 Corinthians 15.3 where Paul insists that he passed on, as of first importance, the truth that Christ died for our *sins*. Gathercole offers a robust and convincing defence of the view that Old Testament influence is at work here. Isaiah 53, with its references to vicarious death, is the decisive passage. The author then analyzes the presence of substitution in both texts. However, it is not only Jewish thought that Paul draws on. In the next chapter, Gathercole discusses Romans 5.6-8 and suggests that Greco-Roman stories of vicarious deaths, particularly that of Alcestis, lie behind Paul's argument. Paul is alluding to these stories to establish the idea that some people might die for those whom they love. The Apostle does this in order to demonstrate the exceptional generosity of the one who died for his enemies. The book ends with a brief conclusion that sums up its arguments.

This is a short book. It has one clear purpose. It accomplishes what it sets out to do. It is argued effectively and succinctly. If you are part of the continuing argument about Paul, or you enjoy listening in to the conversation; if you think that Paul helps us to understand what Jesus has accomplished and how he should be followed, then this significant contribution to the debate is definitely worth reading.

Stephen Finamore
Bristol Baptist College

Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (New Ed., Cornerstone series; London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016), 280pp.

Bloomsbury T & T Clark have initiated a new series which republishes significant volumes from their back catalogue, most with a new foreword. *Sanctify Them in the Truth* first appeared back in 1998, when T & T Clark was still a publisher in its own name. T & T Clark were publishing the Scottish Journal of Theology Lectures, which Hauerwas delivered in 1997. The book is one in which Hauerwas, in the new foreword, says he felt 'fell stillborn from the press.' Hauerwas has said this about several of his books, *Christian Existence Today* being another one. I'm not sure how true it is.

I do think this is one of Hauerwas' most interesting and important books, both to understand him and in terms of the arguments he makes. (I rate this book alongside *The Peaceable Kingdom*, *In Good Company*, *Approaching the End*, *The Work of Theology* as the books by Hauerwas everyone should read). Parts of the book are an early attempt by Hauerwas to try and understand himself, which is the focus of his most recent collection *Work of Theology*. In two essays he revisits his doctoral study *Character and the Christian Life*. In another chapter he reflects on a comment from Nigel Biggar back in 1986 at a conference on Barth, that in Hauerwas work God was strangely missing, which anticipates the criticisms more recently of Nicholas Healy's *Hauerwas A (Very) Critical Introduction* and Hauerwas' response in *The Work of Theology*. *Sanctify Them in the Truth* also addresses the relationship between doctrine and ethics, gay friendship, the handicapped (sic) in conversation with Jean Vanier and, in true Hauerwas-style an argument for non-violent terrorism.

The most interesting chapter is one in which he reflects on going to church, in this particular case Aldersgate Methodist Church. If the criticism is made that there is not enough God in Hauerwas' theology, it is surely also true that there is not enough church in a lot of other theology. The strength of Hauerwas' work, what makes it interesting and important, is it is grounded in practice: Christianity is something to be lived, not just thought about.

For the few ministers and theologians who have never read Hauerwas this book is a great place to start. For those who might have missed this book first time round simply because he publishes so much, you have missed a gem. Alongside the essays already mentioned the book ends with a set of sermons, something Hauerwas has continued published, including a excellent reflection on the practice of preaching.

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

Scott W. Bullard, *Re-membering the Body: The Lord's Supper and Ecclesial Unity in Free Church Traditions* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 175pp.

It is an oft-repeated criticism that Baptists have a practise but lack a theology when it comes to the Lord's Supper. To a degree the criticism is fair. There is certainly not a full-orbed Baptist engagement with the Lord's Supper that corresponds to the treatment given to Baptism by George Beasley-Murray. And yet I think it is becoming increasingly unfair to say that Baptists lack a theology of the Supper. It's just that our theological engagement is, to-date, more occasional and episodic than integrated.

Scott Bullard's book is an example of Baptist theological engagement with the Lord's Supper and in it he interacts with other Baptist writers, notably James McClendon and his students, who have similarly attempted to articulate a Baptist understanding of this crucial practise. The book is the second in a new series entitled *Free Church, Catholic Tradition* which attempts to 'reconnect believers in [the free churches] ... with the insights and wisdom of the church catholic.' (p. x) Bullard does this by bringing McClendon into conversation with Henri de Lubac (Roman Catholic) and Robert Jenson (Lutheran) and his aim is to allow these other writers to fill out McClendon's claim that the Lord's Supper is a 're-membering sign'. Bullard argues that while McClendon's writing has 'most of what is needed for an argument for Eucharistic unity', he skims over the unifying aspect or 'fails to fully capitalise upon his understanding of the Supper in calling the church to be "one".' (p.4) There is no sense that he means this in a disparaging way. Bullard believes that McClendon has done more than most Baptist writers to point the way forward but to realise his vision Baptists will need to see the Church as more than a voluntary society.

The book is divided into five chapters, the first of which is an introduction, with subsequent chapters dealing with McClendon, de Lubac, Jenson, and finally a selection of Baptist theologians who are attempting to build on McClendon's work. The chapter on McClendon is the longest and represents Bullard's attempt to engage fully with McClendon's sacramental understanding of the Lord's Supper. He identifies a number of dimensions to McClendon's thought. These include the significance of the Supper (i) in making Christ present, connecting Christians to the great narrative story of Scripture (p.30), and (ii) as a reconstituting practise, thus re-membering by bringing the church into the story, but also into one another (p.37). For McClendon the Lord's Supper is a 'powerful practise', meaning that it affects something, but he is clear it is more than just a means to an end. It is by sharing in the Supper that the Church is the Church (p.39). Bullard also notes McClendon's indebtedness to the Radical Reformation, which leads him (following Yoder) to a view of the Supper as one of the five practises of witness, by which the Church reveals the new humanity in the presence of the old (p.43). In criticism of McClendon's work, Bullard notes the observation of Dom Gregory Dix that by affirming the real presence of Jesus in other places, McClendon has reduced the Supper to duplicating 'the function of non-eucharistic worship.' (p.48) He makes other criticisms, notably that McClendon is ambiguous when it comes to agency (for Aquinas, Bullard writes, God is always the primary actor, using the sacrament as a means of grace, but

this is not clear in McClendon's thought), and concludes that McClendon has stopped short of affirming the Lord's Supper as the heart of the Church, settling for the idea that it extends the story, along with baptism and preaching, as a remembering sign (p.58).

In the third and fourth chapters, Bullard turns to de Lubac and Jenson, to show how by engaging with the historic tradition it is possible to develop a theology of the Supper as the essence of Church unity. De Lubac's crucial claim, according to Bullard, is that changes in Catholic thinking about the Eucharist led to a neglect of the Church as the true body of Christ, and the role of the Supper to affect this change 'by pulling her godward and together as the body of Christ.' (p. 82) Bullard explores how de Lubac understands the body of Christ to have 3 senses, the physical body of Jesus, the mystical body that is the Eucharist, and the true body that is the Church. Over-emphasis on the way in which Christ is present in the bread and wine, which led in the eleventh-century to the transubstantiation controversies and the Catholic teaching that in its practise the Church makes the Eucharist, took the emphasis off the way in which it is the Eucharist that makes the Church. This is the contention that de Lubac's work defends. In this third chapter, Bullard also helpfully introduces the work of William Cavanaugh, a student of de Lubac, and his work reflecting on the Catholic bishop's response to the torture practised by the Pinochet regime in Chile. Cavanaugh argues that by excluding the torturers from sharing the Eucharist, which would include sharing it with their victims, the bishops were simply stating by their practise the separation from the body of Christ that was true in fact. (As an aside, Cavanaugh's book *Torture and Eucharist* also comes highly recommended.) In Jenson, Bullard finds a Protestant interlocutor whose work illustrates what is possible for Baptist writers looking to explore the significance of the Supper for ecumenism. Jenson is particularly critical of the way that the western tendency towards privatising faith has made Church into something voluntary for Christians, with the result that we too easily marginalise others. As a result Jenson is very close to de Lubac when he says that it is the meal that makes the community. For just as in bread and wine, so in the bodies of his people, Christ is made available to the world (see pp.118-123).

The final chapter of Bullard's work then looks at how a group of "new Baptist sacramentalists" are taking the work of McClendon forwards in ways that resonate with the work of de Lubac and, although less so, Jenson. Although there are a number of writers he specifically engages with Curtis Freeman, Elizabeth Newman and Barry Harvey, and their writings in *Baptist Sacramentalism* and other places. Bullard notes that all three of these authors have been significantly influenced by McClendon and cite his works often and largely favourably. All three note that a sacramental view of the Supper has a long history in Baptist thinking, despite the predominant emphasis on it being mere symbol, but they attempt to argue for its legitimacy primarily on the grounds that this 'is faithful to Scripture and the breadth of the Christian tradition.' (p.133) Bullard notes that despite the strong influence of McClendon there is also disagreement with him. As an example, Harvey picks up the distinction made by Herbert McCabe between 'signs of' and 'signs for', and contends that while McClendon's remembering sign is an example of the former, his view is that the Eucharist is a

'sign for' ecclesial unity because sharing in the bread and wine constitutes the Church as the body of Christ. In this he is much closer to de Lubac's statement that the Eucharist makes the Church rather than simply extends the story of Christ into the present day (p.156).

British Baptists who have used *Gathering for Worship* will be familiar with the term 're-membling' (from one of the patterns for the Lord's Supper) and Bullard's book will give them an introduction to some of the theological thinking behind this idea. If they do they will be encouraged by the lengths to which all of Bullard's subjects have gone to ground their thinking in the Bible. I lost count of the number of times that 1 Corinthians 10.17 was referred to, although not cited as a proof text, but simply as a key idea to be brought into conversation with both Scripture and tradition. It will perhaps disappoint them, however, that Bullard has failed to engage any British Baptist writers, and in particular Paul Fiddes and John Colwell, because both have written helpfully and thoughtfully on this subject. In *Tracks and Traces*, for example, Fiddes writes at length on 'The Church as a Eucharistic Community: A Baptist Contribution' (pp.157-192). In this chapter Fiddes affirms two truths from a Baptist perspective: 'that the sacrament is a means of enabling the presence of Christ with his people, and that sharing in the table identifies the membership of the Church of Christ.' (*Tracks and Traces*, p.157). For Baptists engaged in ecumenical conversations this book will be particularly helpful, as it reminds us that we are part of the same body because we all share the bread and wine, and for those who are not, this book will challenge us to think about our relationships with others who also meet at the Lord's Table (despite our many differences). I am in no doubt that Baptists need to do more thinking about the Lord's Supper and its significance as a practise for Baptist churches here in Britain. Even without a full-orbed engagement, there are good resources available, and Bullard's book is definitely one worth spending both money and time on.

Ashley Lovett

Socketts Heath Baptist Church, Grays

Wesley Vander Lugt, *Living Theodrama: Reimagining Christian Ethics* (Ashgate, 2014), 241pp

In this book, originally a PhD completed at University of St Andrews, Vander Lugt sets out to explore the 'theatrical turn' within theology. Drawing on the work of Sam Wells (in particular his book *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics*) and Kevin Vanhoozer (and his work including *The Drama of Doctrine*) and with Hans Urs von Balthasar's multi-volume *The Theo-Drama* looming large in the background, Vander Lugt provides an exercise in what has been said in terms of a theatrical theology and how it might be developed further.

Following a prologue and a chapter that introduces the language of formation and performance, which I'll return to, Vander Lugt offers a systematic account of a theatrical theology with chapters on God, Bible, Tradition, Mission and Culture.

The discussion here is so rich and helpful. He suggests we think of God as playwright, protagonist and producer (he argues against director). He discusses the Bible as script or transcript and the church as a company of players. He views tradition as offering past performances, which allow for repetition and innovation. Mission is seen as offer a performance always with an audience in mind, which can be traditional, interactive or experimental, that is mission can be to, among or with an audience. Culture reminds us that all theology and any performance is contextual, its pays attention to place and environment.

Let me return to Vander Lugt engagement with formation and performance. These lie at the heart of life in the theatre. These two elements are the two movements that are always taking place. Formation requires a disponibility, which is a technical term which carries the notion of availability or readiness and openness. Vander Lugt will go on to explore to see this in a theodramatic as a person being open, ready and available to God, scripture, the church, tradition, unbelievers, and local contexts (p.44). The chapters that follow explore in each case what this might look like. Alongside formation as disponibility, Vander Lugt sees performance through fittingness. Fittingness is the notion of how an individual action connects with the whole, in terms of theodrama, this is played out (again) in terms of Christ, tradition, bible, context, mission and church.

This book demands rereading – a first reading overwhelms with the possibilities for understanding church and discipleship through the lens of theatre – subsequent readings will offer a chance to give attention to the careful argument, that is grounded in scripture and in conversation with others who have gone before him. As someone who has read Sam Wells' *Improvisation* and found it immensely helpful in seeking to frame and understand what ministry is trying to encourage and form in the church, Vander Lugt has provided a helpful development and extension of Wells' work. In the opening prologue Vander Lugt acknowledges the limits of any model, at the same time wondering if there is something about theatrical theology that is 'comprehensive enough to include all other models?' (p.27). Whether that is true, there is enough for the time being in the model of theodrama that can help a church seeking to find a language to understand itself.

The strength of theatrical theology is it begins to provide a means of helping Christians to see what it is to be Christian that is centred on performance in conversation with the Bible and tradition, requiring improvisation, that is ecclesial and before a watching world. Here is a way to talk about discipleship. Hopefully a future paperback version of *Living Theodrama* will help it reach a wider audience.

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

Laurie Green, *Blessed are the poor? Urban poverty and the church* (London: SCM 2015), 240pp.

A colleague undertakes missions in several developing countries. The events are well attended, heaving at the seams, and people are often healed almost incidentally of physical, spiritual and psychological problems. 'If I try this at home', he remarks, 'nothing happens'. At the ministers' meeting this phenomenon was turned over, analysed, wondered at. But once you've read Laurie Green's book, you'll understand why: God is especially present with the 'poor'.

Green, a retired Anglican bishop with a passion for the poor, is deeply committed to the practice of reflective theology (see his textbook, *Let's do theology*, for example): we start with human experience, identify the issues, and reflect on them in the light of the gospel. From this will emerge a godly vision for the next step, taking us deeper into our faith and practice. It is an incarnational method that can be practised competently by any Christian, not just trained theologians. Green uses this method to shape the book, whose structure falls naturally into four key movements: hearing the stories and setting the context; exploring the biblical themes; theological perspectives, and suggestions for action.

Green first gives us the historical context for the poor in the UK today, focusing on those who live on urban estates, but acknowledging that poverty is found elsewhere too. Why, we may ask, are there so many poor people on estates? Green tells the story, a sorry one of social, political and economic movements that have led to the degradation of strong working communities, fragmenting and marginalising them at the edges of affluent post-war British society. As industrialisation floundered and failed under global market pressures, so did the unions, social groups and *communitas* that gave poorer people a voice and an identity.

Green records conversations from the estates, letting the voices speak for themselves in these pages. What does it feel like to be part of a community where there is little work and little hope? Where gangs rule the night? Where you are blamed for being poor?

The biblical reflection comes initially through an exploration of the Lord's Prayer, which Green uses to expose the difference between 'kingdom' and 'opposing' values (many of the latter are endemic in modern culture). He then moves on to the challenge of the Beatitudes: what does it mean to be blessed, and what does it mean to be blessed *as the poor*? Green notes in particular the important fact that Jesus never speaks about the poor, but to them and with them, never commenting authoritatively on the situation of the poor from outside, but entering their life. Our God is a God who is *especially* present with the poor. Green stops short of naming the poor as sacramental, but there is an intuitive connection (see p.132).

Green then proceeds to the part of the discussion I personally found the most engaging: the practice of cultivating a hermeneutic of justice in place of the

church's existing tendency to a hermeneutic of order, quoting liberation theologian Bonino, 'The true question is not "What degree of justice (liberation of the poor) is compatible with the maintenance of the existing order?", but "*What kind of order is compatible with the exercise of justice (the right of the poor)?*".' Green argues that once we start to adopt this hermeneutic of justice, we must read the Bible in new ways.

The implications for the church and its structures, compromises, and values are huge. 'In the past the Church...has often delighted in expecting the privilege of power', comments Green, noting that in today's society the church is far less likely to be afforded that privilege - and perhaps that will be her salvation. He sees the growing distrust of the Christendom model as a *kairos* moment for the church, but notes that to abandon the past structures is an enormous challenge to those who have invested in them. He ends the book with some stories of small, incarnational expressions of church - not, perhaps, entirely new to us, but coming fresh after this helpful exploration.

Many of the ideas and changes Green identifies should not be a problem for Baptists - indeed, they should be in our DNA. We are already, ideologically, on the margins of the already marginal Christian church in the UK - for we are Dissenters. Yet how we wish to be big and important! We are already programmed to be a people of justice, yet how we love the hermeneutic of order, and our 'doing of good to' those 'less fortunate'. We are already those who respect the voice from the floor in our congregationalism, yet how we love to institute programmes of management and growth and strategy from the top.

It is costly to hear a prophetic word of revelation that comes from those we secretly relegate to the margins: the poor, the under-resourced, the poorly educated. To respond to such a challenge may mean giving ourselves away, and giving away church as we have known and loved it, for Jesus warns us that discipleship means losing everything we thought mattered, in order to gain that which really does.

Sally Nelson
Northern Baptist College

Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in hope after Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 240pp.

This work by Lee Beach offers two main arguments. The first is that both Old and New Testaments support the contention that 'exile' is a normative condition and experience for the people of God. Although Beach draws on wider social analysis, the bedrock of his argument is scripture and the applied theology arising from this.

He begins by describing and exploring a theology of exile. This is grounded in the stories of Esther, Daniel and Jonah and seen worked-out in Babylon and Persia. In each case, we are led to enquire what might be the signs – sometimes hidden – of the presence of God in the places wherever His people find themselves. These signs tend to steer God's people's sense of identity. We are then invited to consider what 'holiness' might appropriately look like in each circumstance. Finally, issues of mission and purpose are discussed, as they relate to the specific place and the people.

As well as reading the key passages, readers are invited to enter into the accounts in their imaginations, since the author argues that the experience of exile as 'displacement' for God's people may assist us to make greater sense of the cultural changes affecting the church in our days. In developing this theme, Beach turns to 1 Peter and considers the cultural pressures on the 1st Century church and the apostle's response. He suggests that the people of God are, by nature, exilic. This statement stands in contrast to one of the key themes of the Old Testament – that there is a Promised Land, where God's people have a permanent home. If they are exiled from the Promised Land, it is their dream of returning which moulds their identity, their holiness and their mission. This is the subject of the other central proposition made in this work. For some of the examples used by Beach are not simply from the time of exile but focus upon those who have settled and prospered in the lands of their conquerors. Both Esther and Daniel held positions of influence or responsibility and there seems little resonance, for them, in being pilgrims in foreign lands who await the return 'home'. They are, in effect, a diaspora – which is a key change of stance if the author invites the present-day church to overlay this experience and worldview on its situation. Exile may presuppose a return home; diaspora assumes that there will be no return to the known and safe and that a different identity will be required for people in their new homeland.

I often encounter, talking with Baptist and other Christian churches, views which reflect these two positions. On the one hand, there are those who look back on their experience of church being (or being seen to be) near the centre of civil society and western culture. This may be a memory inherited as much from their parents' or past generations. There is often both a nostalgia for a sense of something lost and a firm hope that the church will return to its Christendom 'home' before long – perhaps when what they understand by 'revival' comes about. The contrasting position is held by those who accept – reluctantly or with delight – that the church is now heading toward the margins of society. For them, the old identities and certainties need to be challenged; they cannot simply transfer to this wholly new circumstance. Beach leans upon the Acts 10-11 narrative to explore how Peter is led by the Spirit to discover ground-breaking (for an orthodox Jew) new understandings of identity, holiness and mission. For Peter, these are highly contextualised. The outcome of all this is that the 1st century church skids uncomfortably round a number of theological corners but stays on the tracks and continues forward.

It is for Christians that appreciate the need to discern a new identity, a new holiness and a new mission to fit their status as the diaspora on the edges of

society that this work will be most helpful. There is a typically insightful introduction by Walter Brueggemann, which is well worth reading before exploring this worthwhile, thought-provoking and practical work, which I commend.

Ivan King

Church from Scratch, Southend-on-Sea

Gene Green, Stephen Pardue, K.K. Yeo (eds.), *Jesus Without Borders, Christology in the Majority World*, (Grand Rapids, MA: Eerdmans, 2014), 193pp.

This book is the first to be published in the newly established Majority World Theology series published by Eerdmans. This book deals with the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, chosen by the editors because this subject is both easy and hard. The second book in the series considers the Trinity, published in 2015. The editors inform us that 70 percent of Christians live in the Majority World but that most theological literature does not reflect this. They are correct and I applaud this initiative. However, I was surprised and disappointed to note that 6 of the 11 contributors in this inaugural volume live in the West and only one is a woman! This really is shameful and is certainly not representative of the world church. I think we need to make some tough choices here. I have a male colleague who will not speak at a public event unless there are roughly an equivalent number of women's voices. In our teaching we try to ensure a good number of women writers on the subject – sometimes this is hard work because of the way the world, - and especially theology - is. So until editors and publishers insist on balance, things will not change; we will just continue to replicate and reinforce this injustice, imbalance and scandalous lack of representation. So I find it alarming and worrying that a new series proclaiming itself as a *Majority World Theology* series has less than half of its contributors from the Majority World and only one woman.

The book is divided into two sections: theological engagements and biblical explorations. Christology is explored from African, Asian, Palestinian, Latin American and North American perspectives. Oceania is missing – a common oversight in edited books of this nature and noticeable to this reviewer who is from Aotearoa/NZ. The authors of the book were asked what Christology looks like in their region and to do this they were to investigate the relationship between the Christology of the Chalcedonian definition and their own contextual Christological insights. This made for some fascinating reading and comparisons and I will briefly review two of the chapters. Timoteo Gener from the Philippines offers various names for Jesus that emerge out of Hindu and Buddhist settings such as Jesus as *Avatara* (incarnation), as *Eternal Om* (logos), as *Cit* (consciousness), as a poor monk. While these names are not free from critique, even within India, it alerts us to the importance of relating to Jesus in ways that emerge from the cultural context. In a similar vein, Professor John Mbiti of Kenya is collecting African names for Jesus and has over 300 so far that have come out

of the soils of Africa. In the Muslim context, Gener reminds us of living Christianly alongside Muslims and not only debating and conversing about Jesus and Islam. He claims that living Christianly among Muslims and therefore prompting them to ask questions is the most effective witness in this context. He also offers fresh insights on Pentecostalism and folk Catholicism in this illuminating chapter.

Aida Besançon Spencer who hails from the Dominican Republic and now is Professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, USA has written an intriguing chapter on veneration of Mary in the Latino/a context. She concludes that this veneration is partly due to an inadequate Christology where Jesus' divinity was overemphasised with the result that Mary becomes more approachable and sympathetic. She provides a survey of Latino/a views of Mary and explains that Mary is an important symbol for women and mothers in their daily lives in Latin America. She explains that the role of Mary is a problem for ministry in Latin America as it is a fine line between overemphasising her importance and diminishing or ignoring her. Besançon Spencer praises Mary's humility, her prayerfulness, her example as a disciple but believes that Mary herself would be horrified at the veneration she receives which is really due to her son, Jesus.

I find myself between a rock and a hard place. This book offers many interesting and important insights which have challenged me and I will probably use this book in my teaching. Of course, writers from the non-Majority World have insights and treasures to offer also. My discomfort arises from the self-proclaimed Majority Word emphasis of the series, which is only just true in this first volume and more particularly in the lamentable absence of women contributors.

Cathy Ross
Ripon College, Cuddesdon

Cathy Ross and Stephen B. Bevens (ed.), *Mission on the Road to Emmaus: Constants, Context and Prophetic Dialogue* (London: SCM, 2015), 280pp.

One of the great strengths of this collection of papers is the contribution of Roman Catholic theologians, of whom the widest known would be the co-editor, Stephen Bevens, and the way that this is accompanied by contributions from Anglicans (such as the other co-editor, and occasional Regent's Park tutor, Cathy Ross), Baptists (Jo Kapolyo is minister of Edmonton Baptist Church)—both of whom I count as friends—and Pentecostal, in the person of Kirsteen Kim, Professor at Leeds Trinity University and participant in WCC mission work. This is a thoroughly ecumenical exploration of mission in the 21st century.

The introduction sets the scene, as Ross and Bevens establish mission as prophetic dialogue, 'with a heart "so open", as African American novelist Alice Walker describes it, "that the wind blows through it." (xiv) This is a spiritual

discipline that discerns the difference between prophetic resistance to prevailing culture, or dialogue with it.

The opening chapter of part 1 by Vanthanh Nguyen views the prophetic ministry of Jesus, and calls for mission today to emulate the Luke 4:16–21 programme by (i) being led by the Spirit; (ii) by inaugurating the reign of God; and (iii) by conveying the good news of salvation to all. (16). Amos Yong follows this chapter with one that establishes a pneumatological approach to Christology, confirming both the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord, and the possibility of interfaith encounter. Dialogue in mission does not mean we compromise the basic Christological convictions of the Christian faith. Kirsteen Kim completes this first part with an exposition of the mission of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in Luke Acts, an area of enquiry that is particularly well-trodden by both Pentecostal scholars and others, such as Jimmy Dunn and Max Turner. For missiologists unaware of this discussion, Kim's chapter is a faithful summary and useful way in.

Parts 2–5 distinguish between ecclesiological concerns, eschatological, soteriological and anthropological ones. Emma Wild-Wood considers migration, and the kinds of churches that emerge from it. She favours intercultural church, where we all learn what it is to be resident aliens. Cathy Ross uses the metaphor of the church as a mother with an open heart to establish hospitality as a crucial mode of mission. I guess I am biased, but I found this one of the most stimulating contributions, not only because I know Cathy, but also because it has been such a strong theme of my doctoral supervisor, Luke Bretherton. With hospitable eyes we see the other, offer them nourishment, not just actually sharing meals, but also in the Eucharist, and create space for them. Dawn Nothwehr looks at ecojustice, rooted in covenant and sacrament (and turning to sources that I would never have imagined—Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, John Duns Scotus and the Franciscan traditions—but then, I am not Roman Catholic like Sister Dawn!); Tim Naish considers mission and issues of social justice; Robert Schreiter at possibilities of reconciliation, with the African experience uppermost; Mark Heim at salvation as communion, 'We cannot seek salvation apart from healing the broken relationships and structures that connect persons. The Trinitarian communion which is source and end for the Christian path is not an identity of isolation or contradiction but of reconciliation. This is the deep grammar by which prophesy and dialogue are necessarily written into the Christian mission' (p.148); Frances Adeney explores contemporary women's contribution to prophetic dialogue as mission; Maria Cimperman takes hope as her way into prophetic dialogue; and Jo Kapolyo looks at the human condition from the perspective of African anthropology—and especially that of the Bemba people of which Jo is a member.

The closing part draws these themes together, with Jonny Baker looking at pioneering in Britain and popular culture; and Roger Schroeder taking up one of the six theological constants that he and Stephen Bevans proposed in *Constants in Context*—namely, culture, 'from the perspective of interculturality (which moves multicultural co-existence to the more integrative intercultural, where mutuality of the process of cultural interaction is emphasized.) Finally, Stephen

Bevans picks up the threads of his significant contribution to missiology: contextual theology.

There is much in this collection to inform and stimulate contemporary mission, and, as a way into many of the themes of missiology today, some of the contributors provide what I might describe as the beginners' glimpse at much wider landscapes. Not so much full maps as an over-view of the territory sufficient to stimulate further exploration. I want to read more about interculturality and hospitality and the place of hope—this is a good place to start, though. So, thank you Ross and Bevans for editing a fascinating collection of papers that should be read by every ministerial student wanting to establish a missional edge to the heart of their ministry (yes, that should be all of us), and especially by those who engage with the messy, dynamic, thrilling context in which we exercise ministry today here in the United Kingdom.

Paul Goodliff
Abingdon Baptist Church

Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain: a persistent paradox* (2nd Ed.; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 280pp.

Grace Davie published her first survey of the British religious landscape in 1994 under the title, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without belonging* - the subtitle to which has now passed into general church phraseology as well as into sociological debate about religion. This new edition takes data from recent census and other surveys and offers much more than an update. Davie addresses many new developments in the British religious scene, as a much more consciously European, multicultural, pluralist and post-secular entity than the country of the first edition. It is a masterful survey and offers plenty of referenced material for readers to pursue.

In addition to the statistical data, a good proportion of the book's content addresses the many changes to the Christian 'infrastructure' of the UK. Although church attendance overall continues to decline, Davie explores the place that church still offers in national life: an historic architectural, legal and cultural background; a space for ritual moments; the shift to religion being a 'choice' and not a duty; and the impact of religious diversification, both as a result of immigration from non-Christian areas and the internal growth of alternative religious and spiritual options. The question: what is belief? runs as a subcurrent through the text.

One of the techniques Davie uses is to examine key memorable national events as revelatory of underlying social attitudes. One such example, Princess Diana's funeral, demonstrates the increasingly common desire for vicarious religion. Davie discusses the way in which a small group of active believers are perceived to 'hold' the faith for the rest, who may only access it at times of need such as birth and death - although there may also be a deep interest in the public

pronouncements of senior clergy, and an almost cynical interrogation of their conduct and personal principles simply because they are there as representatives of faith traditions (which the critical majority may not practise). The role of ministers in such a religious landscape is challenging to say the least. Other indicative events explored by Davie include the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of cultures; and the Rushdie affair over *The Satanic Verses*, demonstrating a new interest in religion (not necessarily emerging solely from Christianity).

An aspect of the discussion that I found both interesting and challenging was the well documented shift to 'market dominated' religious choice. Through case studies and survey data, Davie explores the enormous diversification of religious possibilities - not just within Christianity, but also other faiths and new spiritual and religious movements. We can certainly choose! Many of us will know anecdotally that cathedrals and charismatic churches often thrive, while more 'everyday' examples of church struggle on. Davie believes this is a market phenomenon, driven by the fact that both cathedral and charismatic offer more than a cerebral experience (cathedrals being beautiful, with music and liturgy to engage the eye and ear, while charismatic worship is about sensation and experience), but with other factors influencing their success. Cathedrals occupy the 'border between the religious and the secular', which permits the practice of vicarious religion described earlier. In both types the Sunday experience is aesthetically 'other'. Perhaps the very ordinariness for which many churches have striven is in fact a put-off factor for the unchurched majority.

One of Davie's interests, on which she has published elsewhere, is the relationship between gender and religion. It will not be a surprise that the statistics show that women are more active than men in the pursuit of religion in Britain. There are some interesting data on new spiritualities showing that middle aged women from the caring professions are particularly attracted to them. Davie suggests some theories: is it about self-indulgence? About combatting victimhood? About developing personal potential? What could churches, who often set women to work in children's ministries, pastoral care, and catering, learn from these statistics?

Baptists get a special, passing, mention as bucking the worst of the decline in church attendance when compared with other Free Church denominations (though still on a downward path). Davie believes this is because we bridge the gap between Old Dissent and new forms of church. Whether this is about transfer due to disillusionment, or true growth, is not clear.

The book draws to an end with a discussion of the interaction between politics and religion - no longer are they not mentioned in polite company! Many high profile figures admit to and even utilise personal religious belief to endorse policies or behaviours, something unthinkable in the mid-20th century. Davie concludes with some helpful comments on the nature of post-secular society: no longer can we escape the intrusion of religious issues into the agenda, even if personally we do not practise.

I would recommend this book as background reading for any reflective project or research on religion or Christian practice, apologetics or mission: 'A firm and necessary grasp of the sociological realities is but the beginning'. It would give a good overview of the 'state of the nation' from which further reflection can develop. The most disappointing aspect of the book was the difficulty of reading the statistical charts, colour coded in shades of indecipherable grey.

What about ministry, then? 'Working out appropriate ministerial strategies for this continually shifting and ill-defined context is the central and very demanding task of the religious professional', comments Davie. Quite.

Sally Nelson
Northern Baptist College

Eileen Bebbington, *A Patterned Life: Faith History and David Bebbington* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 145pp.

For most of his academic career David Bebbington has worked in the History Department of the University of Stirling, latterly as Professor. He is known to many of us as a distinguished and influential historian especially of evangelical and nonconformist history. His work on Victorian nonconformity and on William E Gladstone has been widely acclaimed. The 'Bebbington quadrilateral' that he used to define evangelicalism is now accepted as the most accurate descriptive framework in which to place the story of the evangelical movement. As a Baptist, David Bebbington has been played his part in the revival of Baptist historical studies, especially through the International Conferences of Baptist Studies, and the Scottish History Project. He has been an encourager and doctoral supervisor of several younger Baptist scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.

Eileen Bebbington's affectionate biography of her husband describes well all these aspects of a distinguished academic career. But as we might expect, it is also full of insight into the background and human qualities of the man behind the books and the lectures. She makes the point that the post-war access by means of local scholarships to top schools such as Nottingham High School, and the grants available for University study, Cambridge in this case, made the path of the gifted scholar from an 'ordinary' background perhaps easier than would be the case today.

Perhaps what impresses most of all in this portrait is its description of a life lived as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Whether through the concern to relate Christian faith to the academic study of history, or the preaching and other involvement in the life of the local church, David Bebbington emerges as someone who has actively sought to live out his faith in the 'patterns' of his life.

There are three short appendices of lectures and sermons by David Bebbington that illustrate these aspects. The final one uses Psalm 119 to reflect on 'The

Christian Scholar and the Scriptures'. The Christian scholar, he says, should be characterised by grace apologetics, communication, obedience, freedom, confidence, delight and meditation. 'If our scholarship bears these marks it will be truly Christian'. This book tells the story of one who has sought to be such a scholar.

Tony Peck
European Baptist Federation

Stanley K. Fowler, *Rethinking Baptism: Some Baptist Reflections* (Eugene Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 62pp.

This small book is basically a popular explanation of ideas concerning baptism as articulated more fully in Fowler's larger work, *More Than a Symbol* (Paternoster, 2002). Fowler begins by explaining his personal journey to a 'sacramental' view of believer's baptism. He explains, expands upon, and defends this view through a survey of explicit New Testament texts relating to baptism and to other New Testament allusions. Based upon this evidence he claims, 'baptism is the normative way in which faith comes to tangible expression, and salvation becomes an assured reality...God intends it to serve as a defining moment of conversion, the way in which the penitent sinner *formally* says yes to the gospel and receives the salvation offered by God through Christ.' (30). In the concluding chapter he raises and addresses a number of questions which he thinks that his perspective will raise. These include whether it denies that people are saved by grace alone, at what age a person should be baptised, and the significance of this view for church governance if it means that new believers will constitute the membership.

Fowler is willing to adopt the terminology of sacrament to describe his view although recognises that this is itself problematic and that it depends on the way in which one thinks that baptism acts as a sacrament. In terms of his own view he argues that baptism is the divinely appointed way in which people experience 'the salvation of the kingdom of God through repentance'. (13) In this respect 'faith and baptism are the inner and outer aspects of one reality'. (23) Accordingly, 'we get baptized because we are sinners seeking Christ' and with the faith that such requires 'union with Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Spirit' are 'benefits received through baptism'. (28) His is a 'Reformed Baptist sacramental understanding of the meaning of Christian baptism'. (56) The above statements may indeed raise a number of questions which Fowler goes on to try and answer. He is clear that salvation is not dependent on baptism and the use of the term 'normative' creates the space in which exemptions can be discussed. He makes much of baptism and clearly wants to bring it closer to the event of salvation while stressing that grace is not in the ritual apart from faith in the one seeking salvation.

In several places Fowler uses the term 'experience' to describe how baptism functions. I was not clear what he meant by that term in relation to peoples

appropriation of salvation at baptism or in the claim that symbols have the power 'to translate mental commitment into experience'. (38) In turn, I think that he struggled with always being consistent in holding a high view of baptism without making it in some way essential to saving faith. He is clearly thoughtful and gracious in many of his answers to the questions he poses. This said, I was left somewhat cold and suspicious to his suggestion that the way in which to address less mature members making up congregations is to push more decisions to the leadership. It is also clear that at times the audience he is addressing relates to a specific North American constituency and some of the arguments and responses are framed to address a particular approach to baptism which posits it as more of an 'afterthought' than an event of importance. I do not think that the latter is typical in many British Baptists contexts even those which may not hold to a 'sacramental' understanding. This notwithstanding, this small book invites some thought about the significance of baptism not least in relation to the biblical witness concerning the practice and its close relationship to conversion.

*Stuart Blythe,
International Baptist Theological Study Centre, Amsterdam*

Zoë Bennett, *Using the Bible in Practical Theology: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 150pp.

The Ashgate series 'Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology' offers a number of engaging volumes, and Zoë Bennett's contribution is a welcome one. In it she wrestles with the question of how the bible is to be used in practical theology, and she does so with an awareness of contemporary debates on theological method, her own changing experience as a bible reader over many years, and the insights of John Ruskin - the art critic and polymath - who proves an unlikely but fruitful partner in theological exploration.

This book is primarily a book about method, about where and how we begin when we think theologically *in medias res* - in the middle of things - as she puts it. Many of our evangelical instincts drive us to work deductively from Scripture (or Tradition, for some believers); some insist that we should always begin inductively with experience. Bennett both challenges this polarisation, and yet also subtly affirms the inductive approach. The challenge comes in the recognition that, on the one hand, we never come to the text of scripture without some pre-understanding, and without some life experience shaping our reading of the text; and on the other hand, nothing is experienced without some kind of assumed or adopted interpretive framework. Inevitably we begin, as it were, from both ends at once. Despite Bennett's recognition of this, she ends by affirming the inductive method as appropriate for practical theology. This apparent contradiction is allowable, I think, for two reasons. First, even though we appreciate that our 'starting point' is difficult to identify in any simple way, we can recognise that we have certain preferences in approach; second, to affirm

an inductive method, for Bennett, recognises that all theological work is contextual and biographical - it begins with us, where we are.

The biographical is an important element in this - and here her own story, and in particular her own encounters with the bible and the way it has been used (especially by others), is an important part of her identification of the issues and marshalling of argument. Reflection on our own 'biblical biography' is helpfully encouraged. But it also leads into a creative dialogue with the biography - the life and the thought - of John Ruskin, 1819-1900. Ruskin lived through a time of tumult for orthodox Christian faith, during which the nature of the bible's authority was a live issue. Ruskin's ability to 'see with the heart,' and his intuitive use of the bible he leant at his mother's knee, in relation to the social and intellectual issues of his day stimulates Bennett's own thinking.

But while this is a book about method, it is also very much earthed, practical. Three contemporary contexts allow us to see what this all 'means.' The 'Occupy' protests in the City of London, and Giles Fraser's resignation from St Paul's; the Palestinian Christians' *Kairos* document of 2009; and the author's own work of supervising DMin students doing practical theological reflection in their own context. This is a stimulating and recommended read.

Robert Ellis
Regent's Park College, Oxford

Nigel Wright (ed.), *Truth That Never Dies: The Dr. G. R. Beasley-Memorial Lectures 2002-2012* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 222pp.

This set of eleven lectures offers an excellent example of Baptist theology in honour of one of most revered theologians, George Beasley-Murray. Beasley-Murray was a former principal of Spurgeon's College and in response, under the auspices of the then principal Nigel Wright, arranged this set of lectures to reflect on Beasley-Murray's work for the present day. First delivered at the Baptist Assembly between 2002 and 2012, and subsequently some published in the *Baptist Quarterly* and elsewhere, it is good to all the lectures gathered together in one volume.

The lectures include Anthony Cross on baptism, arguing that Beasley-Murray was right then and still today to argue for the importance of baptism as an evangelical sacrament. David Coffey looks back on his tenure as General Secretary of the Baptist Union (1991-2006) and the move to see the Union as missionary body. John Colwell provides a discussion of Baptists and catholicity and confessionalism, discussing the Declaration of Principle, and Beasley-Murray's call for a new confession of faith. Stephen Holmes explores the relevancy of preaching. Ruth Gouldbourne asks what it means to be an incompetent minister. Brian Stanley assesses the place of mission in Baptist life. Nigel Wright takes the infamous incident of the Michael Taylor address at the

Baptist Assembly in 1971 to reflect on the importance of faithfulness and freedom in denominational life.

This kind of project, which reflects on the past – in this case the work of George Beasley-Murray – with a eye to the present remains a vital activity sorely needed amongst Baptists. If it was possible this is the book and others like it, should be at the centre of conversations among local ministers, within associations and the wider Union. Too often as Baptists we pay lip-service both to the past and to the task of theology. Gouldbourne's chapter anticipates much of the current Baptist Union Ignite report and would be a helpful means of reflecting on the issues. Wright's chapter could be helpful in the current discussion on how we handle our differences on gay and lesbian relationships, with its emphasis on faithfulness *and* freedom. Coffey's chapter and Stanley's chapter could be a place to ask if we are missionary Union and what it might mean to be one. This book could be a resource to our current conversations as Baptists and in this way I hope it gets widely read. I also hope it might stimulate Spurgeon's and the other colleges to invest in this kind of public lectures in the future.

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