
Accessible books by leading academic theologians are not as common as they should be, so this volume, by one of the most influential systematic theologians writing today, is especially welcome. Readers from a variety of backgrounds will find here plenty to stimulate their thinking.

Tom Greggs holds the Marischal Chair of Divinity at Aberdeen. A Methodist Local Preacher, he is formed by the Wesleyan tradition, but his writing reflects his commitment to evangelical Protestantism. His style, exemplified by the recent Dogmatic Ecclesiology, Volume One, The Priestly Character of the Church (Baker Academic, 2019), could be described as architectonic: complex structures, carefully thought-through, and often with extraordinary detail. The Breadth of Salvation is on a much smaller scale than his ecclesiology. It is almost as if an architect famous for designing grand public buildings were employed to plan a garden summerhouse. The result could be a building admirably fit for purpose, small and simple but nonetheless displaying the character and quality of the architect. This is a short book (little more than a hundred pages) with a simple structure (there are very few footnotes, for example), but running through its pages is the author’s passionate conviction that Christian faith and action are deepened and extended through closer attention to the content of Christian belief. Doctrine matters, in other words.

It is the doctrine of salvation that is under discussion here, and Greggs gives us four chapters that he hopes will broaden our understanding of what it means to participate in the effect of God's love of Jesus Christ. He begins by inviting us to broaden our biblical reading and to look at the wide range of metaphors and images that express Christ's work of salvation. We should avoid being too focussed on the traditional 'theories of the atonement' so common in theological textbooks, and we should certainly avoid making any one of them (penal substitution, for example) a shibboleth to test the orthodoxy of our fellow Christians. A renewed focus on the human story of Jesus' passion and death and what that says about the way in which God's love transforms us will be most beneficial.

The next chapter takes us to the question of the scope of salvation: is it (as evangelical Christianity sometimes implies) simply a matter of human individuals finding salvation in Christ? To this, Greggs gives an emphatic 'no'. Here we encounter Gregg's core conviction that the Church is not simply a gathering of transformed individuals, but is itself a transformation of sinful human society, a transformation that is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is important. As Gregg says, if salvation means the renewal and restoration of our true humanity, that must be a social rather than an individual reality.

From the Church to the world. Chapter 3 reminds us that the Holy Spirit is not confined to the Church or to those who identify as Christian. Both sin and salvation have a breadth that Christians find uncomfortable. The final chapter ('The Breadth of Repentance') looks at what it means to turn to Christ and urges us to rethink the identity of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in relation to Christ. Although Greggs does not mention recent Christian debates on sexuality, his plea for radical inclusivity surely challenges those who would exclude those whom they believe to have a lifestyle that is unchristian.

Greggs is writing primarily for an evangelical readership. This is a tradition with which he identifies without embarrassment, yet he is constantly pushing his readers to expand their horizons, to re-examine their assumptions, and to be more open to others. He can quote from Wesley, Luther, and Barth, but there are also hints of his...
background in patristic studies. I suspect that his vision for the breadth of salvation owes a good deal to the way the doctrine developed in the eastern fathers. For those, like this reviewer, who do not entirely share Gregg’s evangelical perspective, his open and non-polemical style encourages us to engage more seriously with that tradition.

The European tradition of systematic theology that Greggs represents has come under considerable critique in recent years from feminism and post-colonialism – to name only two of many perspectives. But while it is right that European figures and European pre-occupations no longer dominate the global theological agenda, Greggs does demonstrate that this is still a living theological tradition with plenty to contribute to the ongoing global conversation.

Teachers, preachers, and those who want to think through their Christian faith will find this a challenging and encouraging read.

Richard Clutterbuck, Wesley House, Cambridge.

A few years ago, I was once challenged by a well-known Pacific theologian to explain what ‘public theology’ had to do with the Pacific context. I wish I could have pointed him to this groundbreaking book. Monographs in Pacific theology are rare, and this is a unique contribution to both public theology and Pacific theology due to its being the first book-length study of Samoan public theology and touching on the sensitive topics of bringing faith into public life and domestic violence. The author is a Samoan Methodist laywoman who teaches at Piula Theological College in the Methodist Church of Samoa. This book is based on her PhD in public theology at the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago, which she followed up with a related bible studies project to help prevent domestic violence.

The book begins with a brief primer on public theology which contextualises Samoan public theology in relation to other scholars of public theology. Said scholars are mostly Western anglophone theologians struggling for credibility in largely secular societies where, unlike in Samoa, women have more or less full access to political and church positions. With Christian adherence in Samoa being more than 95%, and with the national Constitution beginning with the statement that ‘Samoa is a Christian nation founded on God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’, it could be said that Christendom is alive and well in Samoa. Yet, part of the challenge for public theology to be heard in Samoa is that Christianity is still seen as a private matter and politics is still seen as a public matter standing separate from Church life and influence.

The basis for public theology in Samoa presented here is the publicly shared values of Samoan culture (fa’asamoa) and Christianity, derived from its qualitative (talanoa) methodology. The common ground between Christian values and humanistic values that are not necessarily Christian but have credibility in Samoa through the backing of both culture and Christianity. But this work is no mere apologia for Samoan culture in an idealised form. The reader must wait a long time for the big unstartling reveal: Samoans do not (like any people) live out their best ideals and values. Culture (often described in Samoa as sacred and beyond question) appears here to be both the problem and the solution, albeit in an idealised form, which somehow overcomes culture’s shortcomings.

Ah Siu-Maliko makes several recommendations from the implications of public theology, notably in theological education and for clergy to be trained in public policy and media. Other values are also needed, according to Ah Siu-Maliko, such as clergy humility. Whether such proposals can overcome the inherent conservatism of Samoan culture remains to be seen, as those with power never give it up easily.

The case study used in the final chapter deals with domestic violence, one of the most entrenched problems in Samoa. More than half of all adult Samoan women experience physical abuse in their lives. One prays this thought-provoking work initiates a much-needed revolution of lived values in Samoa as Ah Siu-Maliko bravely suggests is needed.

Richard A. Davis, Wesley House, Cambridge

John Henry Newman was a remarkable writer who has contributed widely across a range of disciplines. His range gives the Newman scholar great scope in tracing his sources, influences, and places where Newman has a unique contribution to make or his viewpoint has been poorly understood. Daniel's work is a tour de force of Newman's writings on epistemology — the field of philosophy that is concerned with 'how we know what we think we know', and with what kind of certainty we can be said to know it.

As with many academic theses that become books, there is a lot of detailed research to wade through, and a particular 'academese' which at times for this reviewer obscures the central argument. There is a goldmine of references that can be pounced on and chewed by a specialist. There are masterly summaries of previous writers in this field, each analysing and posing counterarguments. No one could accuse Daniel of a lack of scholarly research. He takes particular issue with Maddox (Certain Knowledge, 2007), arguing persuasively, contra Maddox, that Newman is an 'epistemological particularist'. Daniel notes Newman's influence on the late William J. Abraham, a Methodist Minister and Outler Professor of Wesley Studies at Perkins School of Theology. In common with Newman and (this reviewer would suggest) John Wesley, Abraham is a proponent of 'ressourcement' — looking to the ancient fathers (from the East, in particular) for sources of Christian theology and teaching. I think such a journey warms Morris-Chapman's heart too!

I believe the most interesting part for the general reader who might be dipping into this work begins at Chapter 3. Here where we learn what particularism is and why it matters. Personally, as a keen disciple of Newman, I found Chapter 4 really interesting and potentially useful as chasing down and providing evidence for many of the sources Newman used and demonstrating the gradual development of his thinking over time. A more general reader might skip past that to Chapters 5 & 6 where there is clear and concise exposition of Newman's philosophical argument in the Grammar of Assent and how this is echoed in the work of Abraham.

This book is a masterly sweep of the field of battle in epistemology, centred on but by no means limited to Newman and Abraham. The question of how we claim to know what we know remains a pertinent one. The epistemological foundation of our faith in God remains reasonable and credible and can be defended against attack from 'epistemological Methodists' (pp. 59–62) such as Hume, who is the unseen protagonist in much of Newman's work. There are moments when the preacher in Newman is echoed by the preacher in Daniel, and we are challenged to reconsider our own potential or actual 'liberalism' by several of the points he makes. That for me is the 'so what' of this text and why it is of interest to specialist and generalist alike.
Paul Wesley Chilcote’s *Singing the Faith* is essential reading for all who feel passionately about expressing faith with integrity. The term ‘Lyrical Theology’ may be unfamiliar. In his Introduction, Chilcote traces it to the work of his fellow-American hymnologist S. T. Kimbrough Jr., who, in 1984, published a seminal study on the specific ‘lyricism’ of Charles Wesley’s theology. Chilcote uses it to explore what is theologically distinctive about Wesleyan hymnody.

The opening chapter is devoted to Charles Wesley’s pervasive emphasis on the perfect love of God. Chilcote cites Schubert Ogden to show how Wesley’s poetic lyricism gives a voice to corporate worshippers, enabling them to express the core tenet of Christian faith.

Chapter 2 treats especially John Wesley’s translations of German hymns, again stressing the boundless and unfathomable Love of God. Here is much useful historical detail. We come to realise, from an aesthetic viewpoint, that John Wesley’s contact with the Moravians, especially in their singing, played a central role in the formation of what emerged as distinctive Wesleyan theology.

Other chapters are particularly notable for two reasons. Firstly, Chilcote supplies a comprehensive survey of many well-known (and not so well-known) hymn-writers after the time of the Wesleys who are rooted in the Methodist tradition. Secondly, he supplies a clear global and universal context, along with a powerful celebration of cultural diversity, which places the main Methodist doctrinal emphases firmly alongside the universal Church’s commission to bear witness to the Gospel for all.

The treatments of Fred Pratt Green, Fanny Crosby, Phoebe Palmer, Charles A Tindley are particularly enlightening and engaging. In introducing such writers as Tzu Chen Chao (from China), Patrick Matsikenriyi (from Zimbabwe), John Thornburg (USA), Louisa Stead (USA, but born in UK), Chilcote supplies a flash of light upon the ever-expanding cosmos of lyrical theology. His knowledge is encyclopaedic, and truly comprehensive. He singles out the Presbyterian I-to Loh for particular praise, but otherwise his writers are drawn from the broadly Methodist family. He reminds us how many popular hymns, unexpectedly and surprisingly, have their roots in Wesley’s theology.

The chapter ‘Fresh Expressions: British and American Lyrical Theology Today’ has little connection with the Fresh Expression ‘movement’ of recent years. Rather, it strikes a refreshing and balancing note over against (in Chilcote’s terms) the plethora of unworthy gospel songs and ‘ditties’ which flood the church music market of today. The appendix is excellent; it lists all of the most significant hymns mentioned in the text and emphasises the eclectic range of diverse global styles of the Wesleyan corpus.

Chilcote’s book concerns the lyricism of the hymn-texts. The nuances of the ‘sound’ of the lyrics is a neglected component. There are many recent and groundbreaking studies which embrace musicology and theology (e.g. Jeremy Begbie, Don E. Saliers, etc). A considered appraisal of aural matters alongside this lyrical theology would be welcome.

However, this does not detract from Paul Chilcote’s monumental contribution. He places the distinctive global significance of the Methodist way of doing theology firmly on the agenda of the universal Church and its very ‘raison d’etre’.

*Harvey Richardson, Dover, UK.*

The context of this book is the introduction of structured supervision for ministers in the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB). Jane Leach has played a leading role in introducing and promoting the practice. Here she lays out her rationale and introduces a detailed outline of how it should work. It is rooted in personal experience. Her development of reflective supervision has roots in her early years in ministry. She found her relationships with ministerial colleagues were often superficial and competitive (Anglicans may recognise a parallel experience when Deanery clergy are together). Meanwhile she was driving herself hard in what seemed like an emotional and spiritual vacuum. She came to realise not only what a huge personal burden lies on individual ministers, but how the whole Church is impoverished by a lack of supportive, structured, one-to-one conversation.

Supervision is not a word everyone finds easy. It can suggest to some a ‘checking up’ that is intrusive and even threatening. But the primary emphasis this work is on support and the enrichment of ministerial life and practice. None of this is to say that supervision might not sometimes be an intense and challenging experience, but the emphasis is on building up the body and enabling different parts of the Christian Church to be in healthy alignment. Ministers are asked to ‘hold’ many things for other people and to ‘hold’ complexity within themselves. It makes sense that they should also be ‘held’, that there should be an opportunity to consider their experiences in the presence of a trained guide and in the light of their developing ministerial vocation. The Methodist Ordinal hints at the importance of this: ‘These things are your common duty and delight. In them you are to watch over one another in love’. As an Anglican, I have always felt that Methodist ministers are less prone to pomposity and obsequiousness towards authority, and I valued the warm but realistic tone of Jane Leach’s writing. What she is commending is not spiritual direction, but it is closer to that than the supervision an Anglican curate, for example, might have with a training incumbent or a diocesan coach. This is partly because of the importance given to the idea that vocation unfolds over time, and that the personal and spiritual experience of the individual minister is a gift to the whole Church. Jane Leach credits Michael Paterson with initially helping her develop training programmes for Methodist students at Wesley House, Cambridge. It is no accident that Michael Paterson was once a Jesuit and that he is an experienced psychotherapist. Supervision needs to be focused Godward, as in the teaching of Ignatius Loyola, but it also needs to take psychology into account at the very least to spot when destructive dynamics are at work. This is an inspiring read for anyone involved in or taking up a Christian ministry.

Angela Tilby, Canon of Honour, Portsmouth Cathedral

Lineage is important, both in the Book of Ruth and in the cultures of the South Pacific, so it is worth noting that Jione Havea is the son of the late Sione Amanaki Havea, a pioneer of oceanic contextual theology. Jione Havea is himself an established practitioner of post-colonial hermeneutics, a discipline gaining ground in the Pacific region. A Tongan based in Auckland, he is an Old Testament scholar and the author of the recent Earth Bible Commentary on Jonah.

*Losing Ground* is not a commentary in the sense of a verse-by-verse exposition of the text. Havea is sharply critical of a ‘commentary business’ that closes meaning rather than opening it up. Instead, Ruth prompts a conversation between the Bible and Pacific cultures. Although Havea is not shy of introducing his own reflections on the text or sharing his expertise on the Hebrew language biblical interpretation, he wants the main interpreters to be ‘normal people’, who come to the text without training or expertise. Thus, the central chapters of the book are based on a project called *Pasifika Bible Studies* which gathered groups on islands across the region, as well as from the Pacific Island diaspora. The aim is to enable these ‘normal readers’ to engage with the text by asking questions arising from their own context. Readers are given hints for this, including ‘takeaway questions’ to prompt further reflections. These chapters go through Ruth section by section, identifying themes that link Ruth to the culture and experience of Pasifika readers. An introductory section introduces us to Ruth’s context in the Jewish and Christian canons, and to the readers’ context in the islands.

The key word for Havea’s project is *talanoa*, a word present in many Pacific languages, meaning ‘storytelling’ and ‘conversation’. Ruth is a ‘big talanoa’, embracing a number of shorter *talanoa*, and the Pasifika Bible Study groups are themselves places of *talanoa*, with stories told and ideas shared. As we go through the text we pick up on many resonances with Pacific history and experience: migration, loss of sovereignty and cultural identity, climate change, family and clan relationships, and the place (and exploitation) of women. Each chapter ends with a section on ‘Pasifikation’, linking the history of the Pacific region to the text and giving questions for further thought.

What emerges is a kaleidoscope of images and lines of thought. Contributions from PBS members often deal with the sexual undercurrent of Ruth’s story – reflected in earthy Oceanic humour. This is interspersed with autobiographical insights from Havea, allusions to post-colonial authors, comments on the Hebrew text, and critiques of colonial and church authorities. Aspects of Ruth’s story feed into the metaphors of interpretation. For example, Ruth gleaning in the fields of Boaz links with the gleaning of meaning in reading the text. Although Havea identifies himself as a Christian reader of Ruth, he is determined to free the biblical text from a ‘scripturalization’ that closes the narrative and fixes its meaning. *Talanoa* does not end but extends through the storytelling of ordinary communities.

This is an accessible yet deceptively sophisticated book. It is recommended for those with an interest in the Book of Ruth, in post-colonial interpretation, and in Oceanic Christianity. Reading it will provide insights into the story of Ruth and deepen understanding of the richness of Pacific cultures. Not everyone will agree with Havea’s methodology and analysis, but all will learn something of post-colonial hermeneutics and the tension between ‘academic’ and ‘grass-roots’ interpretation.

Reviewers

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