

Latimer Trust

Monthly Reading List – July 2019

This is a summary of recent books read by Martin Davie, compiling his evaluations and the commendations of others.

In this edition:

Author	Title	Martin's opinion
Joe Aldred (ed)	<i>Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain: An Anthology</i>	Both those approaching the study of British Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity for the first time and those who want to refresh their understanding of this topic will find much to help them in this collection.
Graeme Goldsworthy	<i>Homeward Bound: A Sabbath Rest for the People of God</i>	This is an excellent, thought provoking, study that helps us to understand how the idea of the Sabbath rest relates to the overall witness of Scripture.
David Hohne	<i>The Last Things</i>	Hohne's work is an illuminating study that shows how the Lord's Prayer provides the basis for our understanding of what we should pray for in terms of the coming of God's kingdom.
Anthony Priddis	<i>Forgiveness: A Practical and Pastoral Companion</i>	Priddis' book explores in detail what forgiveness involves and can therefore be highly recommended as a book which all Christians should read.
Mark Scarlata	<i>Sabbath Rest: The Beauty of God's Rhythm for a Digital Age</i>	The book will be helpful for individual Christians wanting to understand better the importance of the Sabbath, but it would also make a good basis for group study or for a sermon series.
Nigel Scotland	<i>George Whitefield: The First Transatlantic Revivalist</i>	Scotland draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources and engages with the thinking of contemporary scholarship regarding Whitefield, but he does so in a way that is accessible to the non-specialist reader. If there is one modern biography of Whitefield people most ought to buy, this is probably it.
Martyn Snow	<i>Anglican Evangelists: Identifying and Training a New Generation</i>	Not everyone will agree with all that is said in the essays, but everyone who reads the book will have been pushed to think harder about what our evangelists should be doing, how they should be doing it, and what sort of training they require.
Brian Stanley	<i>Christianity in the Twentieth Century</i>	A thorough exploration of how twentieth-century Christianity was shaped by its interaction with a range of social, cultural and political forces.
Dan Strange	<i>Plugged In: Connecting your Faith with Everything you Watch, Read, and Play</i>	This book is a very important resource that is useful for individual study, but would also be useful for study in a home group, or as the basis for a sermon series.
Jackson W	<i>Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission</i>	This is not a book for those starting their study of Romans, but it is a book that more advanced students will find stimulating and enriching.

Joe Aldred (ed), *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, SCM Press, ISBN 978-0-33405-711-6, £30.00 (e edition also available).

Overview:

This new book from SCM Press, edited by the Pentecostal Bishop, writer and broadcaster, Dr Joe Aldred, is a collection of thirteen essays by twelve writers looking at the history and nature of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Britain.

The book has emerged out of the work of the Pentecostal Leaders Forum of Churches Together in England, a group which serves as a meeting point for Pentecostal and Charismatic church leaders in this country. As Aldred explains in his Introduction to the book, the Forum organised its first two theological symposiums in the autumn of 2016 and the spring of 2018 and out of these two meetings the idea emerged of a collection of essays that would make 'a significant contribution to public awareness of Pentecostal and Charismatic religious traditions in Britain.' *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain* is that collection.

As Aldred goes on to explain, the collection:

... seeks to debunk the folklore of Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain as primarily an African and Caribbean religious expression that was brought to Britain by *Windrush* migrants. What will emerge instead is that Pentecostals and Charismatics are an ethnically and denominationally diverse faith expression that dates back to the early twentieth century and is now nationally and internationally among the fastest growing religious groupings. By delineating the contours of key areas of Pentecostal and Charismatic life and belief in an academic yet accessible way, this anthology aims to help to demythologize this religious expression and to challenge its anti-intellectual label.

He goes on to say that the collection allows those within the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions to tell their own stories and 'puts into the public domain theological and sociological literature' which reflects 'contemporary thinking in key areas of British Pentecostal and charismatic thought.'

The book is divided into four parts.

Part one looks at 'Pentecostal and Charismatic History' and includes essays by Andrew Davies on 'Heritage and Hope: A Story of British Pentecostalism' and Roger Forster on 'The Rise of the Charismatic Movement in the UK.'

Part two considers 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Diversity' and includes essays by Daniel Akhazemea on 'Pentecostal Diversity in England and the Wider UK' and Dionne Lamont on 'Women in Ministry and British Pentecostalism.'

Part three explores 'Pentecostal and Charismatic and Mainstream Christianity' and includes essays by David Hilborn on 'Anglicans, Pentecostals and Ecumenism: Bilateral Dynamics and Broader Resonances' and Allan Anderson on 'The European Protestant Reformation and Global Pentecostalism.'

Part four is concerned with 'Pentecostal and Charismatic and Socio-Political Issues' and includes essays by Mark Sturge on 'Pentecostalism and Prosperity Theology: A Call for Reappraisal of Acceptance and Rejection' and David Muir on 'Pentecostalism and Political Engagement.'

Martin's opinion:

Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity is an increasingly important element in the Christian scene in this country, as it is around the world. Anyone who wants to understand contemporary British Christianity therefore needs to understand the history and nature of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements and this collection of essays is an invaluable resource for anyone seeking such understanding. The essays are well researched, up-to-date and accessible to the non-expert. Both those approaching the study of British Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity for the first time and those who want to refresh their understanding of this topic will find much to help them in this collection.

Commendations:

Mark Cartledge has written:

This book contains the most up-to-date set of essays on the subject of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Britain today. It is an important resource for anyone wishing to understand one of the most influential expressions of Christianity globally. The essays in this book are written in a lucid and accessible manner, wide-ranging in content, and full of knowledge and insight. It is an important text that will be a reference point for scholars and students for many years.

Graeme Goldsworthy, *Homeward Bound: A Sabbath Rest for the People of God*, Authentic Media, ISBN 978-1-78893-027-7, £9.99 (e edition also available).

Overview:

The veteran Evangelical biblical scholar Graeme Goldsworthy is a visiting lecturer in Old Testament, biblical theology, and hermeneutics at Moore College, Sydney.

As he explains in his Introduction, his new book on the theme of the Sabbath rest for the people of God:

... is intended as a contribution to our appreciation of the biblical theme of 'rest,' and how this theme should impinge upon our understanding of faith and life. We all need to learn how to deal with the fact that the entire Bible consists of the one word of God, about the one way of salvation through the one Saviour Christ. In this study, I will consider the central theme of the Sabbath rest along with some related themes but help us to assess the meaning of that central theme for twenty-first century Christians. While it is easy to say that the early church adopted Sunday, the Lord's day, as its Sabbath, a biblical-theological study of the themes I have chosen in this investigation suggest that the truth is not only more complex than that simple solution but also more edifying for our Christian living.

In his book he explores three key themes 'related to the ultimate biblical idea of rest.'

The first theme is that of 'exile and homelessness.' According to the Bible, he says, we are exiles from Eden, but Christ has come into our place of exile to bring us home again to God's place of rest.

Jesus meets us in the world outside Eden that he might bring us with all his people into the paradise of God. After Pentecost Jesus is absent from us in heaven, but remains present with us by his word and his Spirit. His promises to take his people to his home to be with him and the Father point to the eschatological hope that we expect to be fulfilled when we die or when Jesus returns, whichever comes first.

The second theme is that of the 'city.' According to Goldsworthy, in the Bible the city is depicted as the place where humanity makes a futile attempt to find rest without God, and yet the images of the holy city and its temple, together with the related image of the land, are also used to point to the ultimate eschatological place of rest, the New Jerusalem depicted in Revelation.

What we are shown in the New Testament is the fulfilling in Christ of the central Old Testament images of city and temple. Israel is redeemed from slavery and exile in Egypt and given the promised land. God's chosen messianic King, David, transforms the godless Jebusite city of Jerusalem into the city of God. God's messianic son, Solomon, is gifted to build the dwelling place for God, the temple. The three concentric circles – land, city and temple – express the presence of God dwelling with his people. All are fulfilled in Christ.

The third theme is that of Sabbath rest itself. Goldsworthy argues that from the perspective of biblical theology:

The Sabbath law is not a direction concerning what to do, and what not to do, on Sunday. Rather it is the essence of the eschatological hope of eternal rest. On the seventh day of creation God rested in the sense that he had achieved his goal of a perfect universe with humankind at its centre. His rest signified that the creation was very good. Everything had been done to ensure that the creation was cared for and nurtured, and the humanity had all that it needed for a full and meaningful existence before God. There was a divine equilibrium in all creation: everything was as it should be. For us, the Sabbath rest speaks of a similar perfection that is to come. It speaks of a new creation that is the fulfilment of Eden and the promised land, and is the realm of eternal life.

These three themes each contribute:

...to our understanding of what it means to be at home with the Lord, to rest from our labours; to flee the evil of the godless city; to find rest with God's Christ in the holy city of God, the new Jerusalem from heaven. Thus, we can be encouraged in our quest to live godly lives in an alien world with full confidence in the grace

of perseverance and our final arrival in the place where all the ills caused by human rebellion against God are healed.

Martin's opinion:

This is an excellent, thought provoking, study that helps us to understand how the idea of the Sabbath rest relates to the overall witness of Scripture. Anyone who reads this book will gain a deeper appreciation of what the Bible teaches us about the human situation, both as it is now and as it will be when Christ comes again in glory. It is a masterclass in biblical theology that will be of value to clergy, students and ordinary lay Christians alike and that would make an excellent basis for a sermon series or for study in home group setting.

Commendations:

Paul Williamson has written:

In keeping with his previous publications, Graeme Goldsworthy's latest volume is a biblical-theological tour de force. Rather than laboriously working through the usual proof texts in the perennial Christian debate concerning Sabbath rest, the author examines this topic within its broader biblical theological context, masterfully demonstrating how the prospect of rest with God finds its eschatological fulfilment. Readers are thus helped to think carefully about the topic in a biblically-informed manner. This stimulating and pastorally encouraging discussion will surely enrich the spiritual lives of us all.

David Hohne, *The Last Things*, IVP, ISBN 978-1-78359-664-5, £15.99 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Dr David Hohne is Lecturer in Theology and Philosophy at Moore Theological College in Sydney. His new book is the final volume in IVP's 'Contours of Christian Theology' series and is (appropriately) about eschatology ('The Last Things').

In his introduction Hohne notes that:

While there is no shortage of books on 'the end times,' too few combine systematic theology with a theological interpretation of Scripture and Christian living. Regrettably, many books on the subject arise out of incoherent or superficial readings of the Bible that detract from, or even ignore, the 'once for all' achievements of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The cost to the church is an eschatology that is insufficiently Christian despite its claim to be 'biblical.' Alternatively, many books on the subject fail to consider how God reveals himself through the Lord Jesus and by the power of his Spirit and therefore not genuinely Christian, despite the claim to be 'theological.' Sadly, too many books on the subject fail to distinguish between the hope provided by the gospel and the superficial aspirations of a culture that is shaped by the tenets of free-market capitalism and Western political liberalism.

In order to try to avoid these errors Hohne approaches eschatology using the Lord's Prayer as a theological framework. As he sees it, doing this has a number of advantages.

First 'its eschatological tone is well recognized, and as a coherent collection of theological themes, it is not alien to the Scriptures themselves.'

Secondly:

...as a biblical system, it is embedded within the apostolic reflection on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that we can expect the themes represented in the various petitions to align perfectly with the apostolic (dominical even) practice of reading the Old Testament in the light of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly:

.... taken together, the various requests outline the Lord's expectation for the fatherhood of God on earth to correspond to what it is in heaven. From this perspective, the Prayer is intensely theological because each invocation gives us insight into the being and act of God in the economy of salvation.

Finally, approaching eschatology on the basis of the Lord's Prayer 'locates our theological reflection in the context of discipleship at its most basic level – responding to God's word in prayer.

As Hohne goes on to explain, his approach to using the Lord's Prayer as a theological framework involves:

...using each of the Prayer's petitions to clarify a specific divine promise to be explored throughout the canon of Scripture. Furthermore, since we are seeking to look over the shoulders of the apostles as we read the Bible, we shall first link the petition with a specific eschatologically oriented New Testament passage in order to establish a firm exegetical foundation for it. So, for example, in order to explore the hallowing of the Father's name on earth as it is in heaven, we shall begin with Paul's words to the Philippians in chapter 2, where he looks forward to every creature 'in heaven, on earth and under the earth' confessing about the name of the Lord has been given to Jesus the Christ (Phil 2:10-11). We shall then look back into the Old Testament narrative through the lens of Philippians to grasp the eschatological significance of Christ Jesus' being worshipped with this name in terms of the fulfilment of God's promises concerning his name. The same pattern will be repeated in chapters 3- 8 according to the ordering of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer with a purpose of understanding what we can hope for when the fatherhood of God on earth corresponds to what it is in heaven.

The way that Hohne's study is structured is that the introduction is followed by two chapters that look at the nature of the Christian life as 'life in the middle' between 'the ascension of Christ in the power of the Spirit and his return to perfect the Father's will for creation' and at what it means to pray that the Lord's coming will bring to perfection this life in the middle. Chapters three to eight then work systematically through the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, following the approach outlined above of using a specific New Testament passage as a key for exploring how a particular petition relates to the testimony of the Bible as whole.

Throughout his study Hohne constantly interacts with the work of other theologians, particularly Karl Barth, Jurgen Moltmann and John Calvin, but also Patristic writers such as Athanasius, Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa.

Martin's opinion:

Hohne's work is an illuminating study that shows how the Lord's Prayer (understood in light of the witness of the Bible as whole) provides the basis for our understanding of what we should pray for in terms of the coming of God's kingdom and hence the perfection of our own individual lives and the fulfilment of God's good purposes for the whole of creation. His work is not for beginners in theology. It contains lots of quite dense biblical exegesis and detailed interaction with the thought of other scholars and beginners will find all this hard to follow. However, those who have got a good grounding in Scripture and in the Christian theological tradition will find that they come to understand the petitions of the Lord's Prayer in a fresh light and reach a deeper understanding of how the biblical witness to what God has already done and what God will yet do forms a coherent whole. Strongly recommended.

Anthony Priddis, *Forgiveness: A Practical and Pastoral Companion*, Canterbury Press, ISBN 978-1-78622-138-4, £16.99 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Anthony Priddis is the former Bishop of Hereford. He begins his new book on the subject of forgiveness by recounting the following conversation between three former POWs standing in front of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC:

‘Have you forgiven your captors yet?’

‘No. Never.’

‘Then it seems like they still have you in prison, don’t they?’

This conversation, he writes, is one that all of us need to hear:

... because it applies to all situations, not just the horror of having been a prisoner of war or suffering the nightmare of torture. Not forgiving keeps us locked in prison. We need a way out and forgiveness is that way.

We may think, he says, that forgiveness is primarily for the benefit of those who have caused harm to others, but in fact:

... it is also for the person offended and hurt. The one who has suffered needs to be able to forgive, just as the one who has caused the suffering needs to be forgiven. Both are vital. We offer forgiveness to one another because we need to, not just because the other person needs to receive it. If, like the soldier, we don’t offer forgiveness then we stay imprisoned by our revenge and bitterness. If we don’t receive forgiveness for harm we have caused and for which we are responsible then we stay imprisoned by our guilt. We want and need to be out of prison, both prisons. We need both to forgive and to be forgiven. It is essential for our own sake, not just for the sake of the other who has harmed us, or we have harmed.

Furthermore, he argues, forgiveness cannot be something that just applies in situations in which there has been major harm. Forgiveness is something that needs to apply at every level of our lives:

St Francis de Sales used to teach people that they needed to guard against gnats and not just hornets. Some who came to him for advice thought that, while they were quite ready to ward off the threat of much larger and more dangerous hornets, they could ignore the gnats, but St Francis taught them differently. He said that if they did not learn how to be watchful and avoid the little temptations then they would not know how to avoid the bigger ones.

The same truth applies to forgiving. We need to learn to forgive the little acts against us and then we shall be more likely to be able to forgive bigger acts if and when they happen. If we have learnt to develop and practise an attitude and way of forgiveness throughout our lives, then it will stand us in good stead whenever the need arises in the future, whether it be for smaller or larger issues. This highlights the need for children, especially, to learn such a path as well as the rest of us. Clearly, what we learn, absorb and practise when young stays with us and helps form and shape who we are and who we are becoming. We are all ‘work in progress’, responding to and maybe learning from what we see and hear and do. If we have learnt and practised the need and way of forgiveness as a child, we are far more likely to put it into use regularly in adulthood.

Starting from this understanding of the importance of forgiveness, Priddis’ book is designed to accompany those who are engaged in a personal or communal journey of forgiveness. The book begins, as we have noted, by explaining why forgiveness is important. It then goes on to look at the nature of forgiveness, who can forgive, what is involved in the offering and receiving of forgiveness, how communities respond to tragedy and, most importantly of all, the forgiveness that God offers us through Jesus Christ.

Martin's opinion:

This book will be an important resource for individuals who want to think more deeply about what forgiveness needs to mean in their own particular situation. In addition, it is a book that offers timely help for those walking with others who need to learn to forgive, including members of the clergy, counsellors and spiritual directors. From a Christian perspective forgiveness is indispensable, because if we refuse to forgive others, we close ourselves off from the forgiveness we ourselves need to receive from God (Matthew 6:14–15). Priddis' book explores in detail what forgiveness involves and can therefore be highly recommended as a book which all Christians should read.

Commendations:

Justin Welby comments:

Forgiveness is at the heart of the Christian faith. It is at the heart of God's relationship to human beings, and at the heart of being human together. Anthony Priddis explores forgiveness in warm, practical and deeply moving ways. This is a book to ponder, a book to challenge, a book to change us if we listen to God's deep call to live a life directed towards forgiveness.

Mark Scarlata, *Sabbath Rest: The Beauty of God's Rhythm for a Digital Age*, SCM Press, ISBN 978-0-33405-806-9, £12.99 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Dr Mark Scarlata is Tutor and Lecturer in Old Testament Studies at St Mellitus College, London. The starting point for his new book from SCM on the biblical teaching regarding the Sabbath is the conviction that the Sabbath matters. This is because:

The Sabbath is the gift of rest for the community of creation, the community of Israel, the community of the Church and the community of all humanity. It brings release and restoration to all levels of society. The Sabbath is as much about political and economic freedom as it is about physical and spiritual rest. Sabbath restores families and communities and ushers in a time of *shalom*, that wonderful Hebrew word that conveys the sense of justice, peace, and joy existing in every human relationship and in our relationship with God. The gift of the Sabbath is God's invitation to us to enter into communion with him, to experience the holiness of his time, and to dwell in his presence.

In the Preface to his book, Scarlata explains how he came to understand the significance of the Sabbath while writing his commentary on the Book of Exodus.

The more that I studied and recognized the importance of the Sabbath in the Pentateuch, the prophets and the second temple period, the more I realized that as a Christian I had largely disregarded the command to rest. In some ways I had relegated the Sabbath to a matter of legalistic dispute between Christ and the Pharisees in the New Testament that had little to do with the life of faith. Either that or I thought the Sabbath had been spiritualized through Christ and was now just another way to speak about the rest that Christians experience through the Holy Spirit. Yet the more that I researched, the more it became abundantly clear that the Sabbath was a sign of God's movement in creation towards wholeness and rest that was central to the flourishing of Israel and to the mission of the Church.

As result of realising the importance of the Sabbath, he writes, he began to set aside a 24 hour period from sunset to sunset each week in order to test whether having a Sabbath rest was really important for his life as a Christian. This experiment in Sabbath keeping then changed his life:

What began as a short journey has turned into a long pilgrimage that continues to lead me to places I never expected. The Sabbath has opened up and deepened family relationships, church relationships and the desire to bring liberation to the oppressed and to the land.

He also discovered that:

... one of the greatest hindrances to my own Sabbath rest was my own inability to detach from digital devices for a 24-hour period. It took some time before I realized that for many (myself included) putting down our work means disconnecting from the digital world and reconnecting with those around us.

Scarlata's book on Sabbath rest is, he says:

...reflections not from an expert but from a fellow pilgrim on a journey home to the Father's rest. I offer some practical suggestions for maintaining the Sabbath, but mostly I have tried to explore the biblical texts to offer a compelling case for why the Sabbath remains critical to the life and witness of God's people today.

Martin's opinion:

The book is in five chapters which look in turn at 'The beauty of the Sabbath,' 'The beauty of creation,' 'The beauty of liberation,' 'The rhythm of grace and trust' and 'The Sabbath community.' The book will be helpful for individual Christians wanting to understand better the importance of the Sabbath, but it would also make a good basis for group study or for a sermon series. The need for Sabbath observance is something that is neglected not only in wider society which encourages us to live within a 24/7 culture, but also within the Church. Scarlata's book is a persuasive account of why this should not be the case. It deserves to be widely read.

Commendations:

Sarah Mullally writes:

Mark Scarlata is offering us something beautiful. By practicing Sabbath, we find more than respite from work, but a way to infuse our work with peace and expectation. We not only follow the pattern of our creator, but experience a foretaste of our redemption. I encourage you to let him help you disconnect from the noise of our 24/7 lifestyle and connect afresh to the symphony of salvation.

Nigel Scotland, *George Whitefield: The First Transatlantic Revivalist*, Lion Books, ISBN 978-0745980287, £12.99 (Hardback and e editions also available).

Overview:

George Whitefield is often overshadowed by his eighteenth-century contemporaries John and Charles Wesley, but he is an enormously important figure in the history of Evangelical Christianity on both sides of the Atlantic.

As the blurb from Lion for this new biography of Whitefield by Dr Nigel Scotland explains:

George Whitefield proclaimed the Christian message to more people in history than anyone else, before or since, who spoke with an unaided voice. A preacher of revival almost from his childhood, when he prophesied his own destiny, he had a profound impact on the social, religious and political life of both Britain and America. He crossed the Atlantic thirteen times, and emerged as a celebrity figure, whose message captivated both rich and poor alike. Whitefield heralded a new kind of revival that was both spiritually powerful and entertaining at the same time. He was also a man of contradictions. He loved the Anglican liturgy but would happily break canon law. He was a devoted Puritan yet he was also able to befriend those with more liberal morals. Above all, Whitefield was a driven man, and his overwhelming passion was to preach New Birth in Christ – the theme he was to speak on over a thousand times. He valued education, opposed slavery, cared for orphan children and changed the course of both British and American history.

Martin's opinion:

Scotland, who is based at the University of Gloucestershire, is a highly regarded church historian and his new biography of Whitefield can be highly recommended both to those studying Whitefield for the first time and for those who want to refresh or deepen their understanding of him. Although it is relatively short at 336 pages, it is comprehensive in its coverage. It not only tells the story of Whitefield's life and ministry, but also explores the contradictions noted above, shows how Whitefield fits into the wider history of eighteenth-century Evangelicalism, and explains why Whitefield remains significant for Christians today.

Scotland draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources and engages with the thinking of contemporary scholarship regarding Whitefield, but he does so in a way that is accessible to the non-specialist reader. If there is one modern biography of Whitefield people most ought to buy, this is probably it.

Commendations:

Ian Maddock comments:

An engaging introduction to the life and ministry of one of the most influential eighteenth-century revivalists. While Whitefield was undoubtedly a man of action – justifiably famous for his dramatic, extempore preaching – Nigel Scotland helpfully presents 'the Grand Itinerant' as an astute, practical theologian. This book is a valuable resource for anyone wishing to become better acquainted with one of evangelicalism's 'founding Fathers.'

Martyn Snow, Anglican Evangelists: Identifying and Training a New Generation, SPCK, ISBN 978-0-28108-364-0, £14.99 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Ever since the time of the ministry of Philip recorded in the Book of Acts (Acts 8:4–40, 21:8) it has been recognised that there are some individuals who have been gifted and called by God to be evangelists and for the past twenty years the Archbishops' College of Evangelists has affirmed and supported evangelists in the Church of England whose work has been either national or regional (i.e. covering more than one diocese).

As Bishop Martyn Snow, the Chair of the College, explains in his Preface to this new book from SPCK on Anglican Evangelists, in the autumn of this year the College will be re-launched:

...with more of a focus on identifying and training new evangelists. Members will still be experienced evangelists whose ministry is recognized by the national church, but they will covenant to give time and energy to an emerging generation of new evangelists.

The book is intended to mark this change in the College's work. As Snow further explains, the book is a collection of essays by thirteen authors who 'work in a range of contexts and come from different traditions within the church.' In line with the College's new concentration on identifying and supporting the next generation of evangelists, the focus of their essays:

... is less on the nature of evangelism, and more on the calling and gifting of the evangelist. In different ways they reflect on the questions: what is an evangelist? How should the church identify and affirm evangelists? How do we train evangelists? How do we enable evangelists to equip all God's people to witness to the kingdom of God?

After the Preface by Martyn Snow, the book is divided into three main parts, each of which contains four essays.

Part 1 looks at 'What is an Evangelist?' Dave Male writes on 'A vision for 1000 new evangelists.' Jenny Moby writes on 'The character and spirituality of the evangelist: busting some myths.' Steve Hollinghurst writes on 'The evangelist and social transformation.' Finally, Damian Feeney writes on 'Evangelists in Catholic parishes.'

Part 2 considers 'Training Evangelists?' John McGinley writes on 'Training evangelists in the local church.' Jane Truman writes on 'Training evangelists to reach the parts the Church doesn't often reach.' Greg Downes considers the question 'Can theological colleges train evangelists?' Finally, Lusa Nenga-Noy writes on 'Evangelism across cultures.'

Part 3 addresses the issue of 'The Evangelist and the witness of the whole Church.' Margaret Cave writes on 'The evangelist in the parish church: enabling all baptized Christians to be witnesses.' Ed Olsworth Peter writes on 'The pioneer evangelist: when and how to speak of Christ.' Stephen Hance writes on 'The evangelist in the cathedral: speaking of Christ with gentleness and wisdom.' Finally Adrian Harris considers 'The evangelist in the digital world: telling stories to those who know little of Jesus.'

An afterword looks at the issue of 'confidence' in the work of evangelists in the Church of England.

As Snow notes in his Preface, the essayists take arrange of different approaches:

Some take a deeply biblical and theological approach. Others reflect on their personal journey and learning. Others offer personal insights and a helpful reframing of the initial question.

However, all of them are: '...fervent in their plea to the church to recognize the unique calling and gifting of the evangelist and reflect on how this gift is received and passed on in the church.'

Martin's opinion:

This book is an important resource for those who want to think more deeply about the work of evangelists in the life of the Church of England and how evangelists should be trained. Not everyone will agree with all that is said in the essays, but everyone who reads the book will have been pushed to think harder about what our evangelists should

be doing, how they should be doing it, and what sort of training they require. This is a book that deserves to be widely read and pondered not just by a select group of evangelism enthusiasts, but by anyone concerned with the future vitality of the Church of England. We need evangelists and they in turn need to know their work is understood and supported by the church. This book will help to ensure that this understanding and support is in place.

Brian Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton University Press, ISBN 978-0691157108, £27.00 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Brian Stanley is Professor of World Christianity and Director for the Centre for the Study of World Christianity at the School of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. His new book from Princeton University Press is a study of how Christianity developed across the world during the course of the twentieth century.

As he explains in his introduction, his book provides:

...a historian's perspective on the multiple and complex ways in which the Christian religion and its institutional embodiment in the Christian churches have interacted with the changing social, political and cultural environment of the twentieth century.

The central purpose of his book, he says, is to:

...enable serious readers – whether or not they consider themselves Christians – to understand how the churches of the world got to be the way they were in specific geographical locations at crucial turning points in the course of the century.

Furthermore the book also aims to explain how the churches got to be the way they are today. As Stanley sees it, the twentieth century 'has suffered comparative neglect at the hands of modern Western historians of Christianity' who have tended to be more interested in how the European churches reacted to the intellectual and social challenges of the nineteenth century. However, this neglect is a mistake because:

...it was the twentieth century that shaped the contours of the Christian faith as it is now, a culturally plural and geographically polycentric religion clustered around a number of new metropolitan loci in the non-European world, from Seoul to Sao Paulo. The majority of its rapidly growing number of adherents found the post-Enlightenment questions that preoccupied the churches of the North and West to be remote from their pressing everyday concerns of life and death, sickness and healing, justice and poverty. In Islamic regions of Africa and in almost all of Asia they were also intimately concerned with the problems of living in a context dominated by the majority religious tradition, as chapter 8 expounds with reference to Egypt and Indonesia. Their theological priorities and ethical perspectives differed accordingly from those of Christians in the North. The twentieth century thus set the agenda for the theological and ethical issues that now constitute the fault lines dividing Christians and churches from each other – fault lines that are significantly different from those inherited from the European religious past and that still determined the denominational geography of Christianity in 1900. The twentieth century has thus made it necessary to redraw the map of Christian unity and disunity, as chapter 6 explains. This history therefore has a contemporary purpose as well as a more strictly historical one. It is concerned with enabling us to understand how the churches got to be the way they are *now*. For that reason, while its formal chronological endpoint is the close of the twentieth century rather than the present day, it will from time to time take brief note of events and developments that have occurred since the turn of the twenty-first century.

The form of the book is 'neither a comprehensive region-by-region survey nor a straightforward chronological narrative. Instead Stanley has chosen to focus on:

... fifteen themes that are of preeminent importance for understanding the global dimensions of contemporary Christianity and analyzing the various ways in which Christians have responded to some of the most important social, cultural, and political trends of the twentieth century. Each theme is introduced and then illustrated by two geographical case studies, mostly taken from different continents.

Examples of these themes are 'Holy Nations? Uneasy Marriages between Christianity and Nationalism' (illustrated by Protestant Nationalism in Korea and Catholic nationalism in Poland), 'Contrasting Patterns of Belonging and Believing; Scandinavia and the United States,' 'Aliens in a Strange Land? Living in an Islamic Context in Egypt and Indonesia,' and 'A Noise of War in the Camp: Human Rights, Gender and Sexuality' (illustrated by reference to the

debates about the ordination of women in Australian Anglicanism and the debates about Gay rights in the churches in America).

Martin's opinion:

This is a detailed and comprehensive study of the history of Christianity in the twentieth century from one of today's leading Christian historians. It is quite specifically not a book about the development of Christian doctrine during the twentieth century (for that you will need to look elsewhere). What it is, is a thorough exploration of how twentieth-century Christianity was shaped by its interaction with a range of social, cultural and political forces in different places around the globe and how this interaction explains the shape of world Christianity today. Inevitably people will disagree with Stanley's interpretation of the evidence and will feel that there are important elements of the story which he has left out, but no one will come away from reading this book without feeling that they have grown greatly in their understanding of what happen to Christianity in the last century and why this is important for Christians today.

Commendations:

Mark Noll has written:

An absolutely superb book. *Christianity in the Twentieth Century* succeeds admirably in illuminating an extremely complex historical phenomenon.

Dan Strange, *Plugged In: Connecting your Faith with Everything you Watch, Read, and Play*, Good Book Company, ISBN 978-1-90991-941-9, £7.99 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Dr Dan Strange is College Director at Oak Hill Theological College in London, where he lectures on Culture, Religion and Public Theology. His new book published by the Good Book Company is about how Christians can engage with constructively with contemporary culture.

In his Introduction Strange notes that ‘many Christians respond to culture in one of three ways (and the rest of us respond in a mixture of all three).’

Some of us, he says:

...just want to ‘*look in.*’ We stick our heads in the sand, get into our holy huddle and Christian bubble, and hang on for dear life. We put our fingers in our ears so that we can’t hear the noise outside, while at the same time signing loudly to one another about Jesus coming back soon when all the outside stuff will go away. Until then, we keep ourselves safe by only ever reading Amish romance novels or the latest release from our favourite celebrity pastor. If we were in therapy this would be called our sanctified ‘flight’ response.

Others of us:

...instinctively ‘*lash out.*’ This is our sanctified ‘fight’ response. We get all huffy, red-faced and finger-pointy at the culture around us. Or we just tut and roll our eyes at sex scenes in films or the bad language on TV. At its worst, our healthy belief in judgement turns into an ugly judgmentalism. Our proclamation of the good news of Jesus is heard as a rant on morality. And then we wonder why people ‘out there’ don’t want to come and be with us ‘in here.’

Finally, some of us:

... end up ‘*looking like.*’ Whatever the motivation, our lives – and our cultural diets – are indistinguishable from the neighbour’s next door, and our churches end up looking not much different from the local sports club. ...We have become experts at conforming ‘to the pattern of this world’ when we’ve expressly been told not to (Romans 12:2).

The argument Strange then puts forward is that there another way to respond. It is, he writes:

...possible to be truly ‘in’ the world instead of ‘looking in’ - without being ‘of’ the world and looking like it.

It’s possible to engage with culture in a way that’s truthful and gracious, not angry and self-righteous.

It’s possible to consume culture without either being bewitched by it – buying into everything it tells us – or bewildered by it.

It’s possible to watch TV and read novels and play video games in a way that actually feeds our faith rather than withers it.

It’s even possible for you – yes, you – to be that person who starts off talking to a mate about last night’s football and ends up taking about Jesus.

It is this, he says, that his book is designed to equip its readers to do:

It will help you to process the cultural stories you hear every day. I want to give you confidence to think about and speak about culture in a way that points people to a bigger and better reality: the story of King Jesus and his cosmic plan for this world.

Because you can’t escape culture. But you can engage culture.

In the remainder of his book Strange explains in more detail how culture works by telling a story about the nature of the world and our place in it. He then develops the idea of 'subversive fulfilment'. This is an approach which aims to keep us from simply compromising with the culture on the one hand simply condemning everything as bad on the other. It holds that the gospel perfectly fulfils the desires our culture expresses for meaning, identity, significant work and fulfilment as created beings, but it always does so subversively, by exposing and undermining the idols which fallen human beings constantly set up for themselves.

Strange sets out a four step process, based on Paul's approach in Acts 17, which allows us to engage in subversive fulfilment. We are, he suggests, called to 'enter' (by listening to the story being told), to 'explore' (look for genuine reflections of God's grace and distortions of it in idolatry), 'expose' (by exposing the hollow promises of idolatry) and to 'evangelise' (by talking about the good news of a God who can really deliver what the idol only promises).

Martin's opinion:

All of us who are Christians need to think about how we can engage with culture in a constructive way. We cannot avoid culture, any more than we can avoid the air we breathe, but we can engage with it in better or worse ways. What Strange shows us is how to engage with it in a way that furthers the proclamation of the gospel. He provides us with both the theoretical tools for understanding culture and the practical tools for using culture as a starting point to talk to people about Jesus. This book is a very important resource that is useful for individual study, but would also be useful for study in a home group, or as the basis for a sermon series.

Commendations:

William Edgar Comments:

In this gem of a book seasoned author Daniel Strange manages what few people could do. He pre-digests the unwieldy and complex realm of culture studies and makes it unaffectedly clear. He also helps Christians know how to navigate in a world where culture appears out of control. He connects the decisions we must make to biblical texts, and to robust doctrines all along. Most of all he tells us why we should care about engaging culture and he makes crucial suggestions for how to do that. All of it is in a writing style that is full of imagination, enviably lucid, down-home without being folksy. This will be the go-to text for years, even decades to come.

Jackson W, Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission, Inter-Varsity Press, ISBN 978-0-83085-223-9, £16.05 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Jackson W (a pseudonym) has lived and worked in East Asia for almost two decades and serves on the Asian/Asian-American Theology steering committee of the Evangelical Theological Society. Although not Chinese, he teaches theology and missiology for Chinese pastors at a seminary in Asia.

In his new book, which combines his own experience of living and working in East Asia with the work of other Asian scholars he offers a fresh reading of Romans from the perspective of East Asian culture with its emphasis on notions of honour and shame.

His starting point is the conviction that:

By reading Romans with Eastern eyes we can discern key ideas and applications often overlooked or underemphasized by Western interpreters. An Eastern lens equips readers to see the significance of honour and shame in Paul's message and mission.

Eastern perspectives are not necessarily superior, just as not all Western views are mistaken. Any monocultural lens is myopic. However, a crosscultural reading of Romans helps recover key insights that are often overlooked or underemphasized.

The purpose of the book is to consider:

...how Paul's gospel exposed cultural blind spots and challenged many problems facing the Roman church. His adroit use of honour and shame reoriented the values and assumptions of his readers. We will consider the significance of these themes for Paul's message and the church's ongoing mission.

Today, we struggle with issues that are similar to those addressed in Paul's letter. How do we motivate churches to join in God's mission to all nations despite apathy and feelings of cultural superiority? How might we challenge almost-imperceptible forces that divide churches, including economics, gender, political affiliation, ethnicity and tradition? Even for those outside traditional 'honour-shame' cultures, the proliferation of social media in the West creates a 'fame-shame' culture. Studies show that people's strong desires for recognition or feelings of disconnection have increased levels of social media use, yet the chase for fame often exacerbates their problems.

The book is not a commentary on Romans, instead Jackson W says:

...it makes a modest scholarly contribution by considering how East Asian culture can help us interpret Romans. I focus on ways that Romans both reflects and remains significant for cultures that emphasize honour, shame, collective identity and hierarchy among other related themes. Rather than debate whether Paul's letter and theology have a 'center' – justification, God's righteousness, or something else, this study explores Paul's message from an honour-shame perspective. How did Paul's theology serve the purpose of his mission within an honour-shame context?

An example of how his approach work can be seen in his discussion of Romans 1-4 in chapter three to six of his book. As he explains:

Chapter three shows why Paul's view of sin carries far more honour-shame overtones than is often recognized. Chapter four highlights the importance of collective identity for understanding Paul's letter and the problems that confront both Jews and the Roman church. In chapter five we explore why God's reputation is at stake in Paul's letter: If Christ did not die, God would be dishonoured. Chapter six suggests that Paul in Roman's 4 primarily answers the question, Who are Abraham's offspring? And secondarily, How is one justified? By reading Romans this way, we can better understand the relationship between the gospel and justification.

As already noted, Jackson W does not offer us a verse by verse exegetical commentary on Romans. What he does instead is to offer an overall reading of Romans from an East Asian perspective, looking at how issues of honour, shame, and community identity, lie at the heart of what Paul has to say. For him Paul's message in Romans is about how God's honour is restored through Christ in the face of the shame caused by sin and about how a proper understanding of this truth helps the Church to become a harmonious society comprising both Jews and Gentiles to the glory of God.

Martin's opinion:

This book will be of interest to anyone who wants to be pushed to think more deeply about what Paul is saying in Romans. It is not a substitute for conventional Western commentaries on Romans. Rather it supplements them by offering a fresh approach to understanding Paul's message in its first-century context. It is not a book for those starting their study of Romans, but it is a book that more advanced students will find stimulating and enriching.

Commendations:

Benjamin Shin has written:

Jackson W's work *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes* provides a long overdue contribution to Pauline theology and biblical studies. Blending the first century cultural dynamics of honor and shame, patronage and collectivism alongside traditional understandings of Romans, Jackson unpacks the importance of a comprehensive interpretation of this fundamental book of the faith. He brings a sensitivity to the many issues that strikes at the heart of the global majority while highlighting the latest in new Testament studies. This is an indispensable read for any pastor, scholar, or Christian who desires to have a deeper grasp of the apostle Paul's magnum opus.