



Latimer Trust Monthly Reading List - November 2017

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
Tawa J Anderson, W Michael Clark, and David K Naugle	<i>An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World</i>	It will be invaluable for those training for ministry and for any Christian who wants to better understand the Christian view of the world.
Samuel Burgess	<i>Edmund Burke's Battle with Liberalism: His Christian Philosophy and Why it Matters Today</i>	This book provides anyone who wants to understand Burke better with a scholarly yet accessible introduction to his political philosophy and to the central place of the Christian religion within it. Anyone who wants to understand the two major traditions of British political thought from a Christian standpoint will benefit from reading this book.
Averil Cameron	<i>Byzantine Christianity: A Very Brief History</i>	This book is an excellent brief introduction to its subject matter. It is written by an expert so what it says is accurate and reflects up to date scholarship, but it is also written in a very readable style that makes it easily accessible to those approaching Byzantine Christianity for the first time.
Lee Gatiss	<i>Cornerstones of Salvation</i>	This is a highly stimulating collection of papers that will be of great value to anyone interested in the history of Reformed and Evangelical theology. An excellent and accessible collection that deserves to be widely read.
James K A Smith	<i>Awaiting the King (Cultural Liturgies): Reforming Public Theology</i>	This is an academic book, but also an accessible one. It should be read by anyone who wants to think in an informed fashion about how Christians should live in the earthly city as citizens of the heavenly city and contribute to its well-being as instruments of the common good.
Bryan D Spinks	<i>The Rise and Fall of the Incomparable Liturgy: The Book Of Common Prayer</i>	It is a scholarly study, but one that is accessible to the non-expert, and it provides essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the liturgical history of the Church of England. It should be required reading for those training for ministry in the Church of England.
Kenneth J Stewart	<i>In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past and The Evangelical Identity Crisis</i>	This book is a robust and detailed defence of the 'ancient roots' of evangelical Christianity which shows very clearly why evangelicalism has a legitimate place within the wider Christian tradition.
Graham Tomlin	<i>Bound to be Free: The Paradox of Freedom</i>	This will be very useful to anyone who wants to understand better what freedom means from a Christian perspective so that they can make a properly informed Christian contribution to the discussion of this topic.
Graham Tomlin	<i>Luther's Gospel: Reimagining the World</i>	This book is an excellent introduction to Luther for anyone approaching Luther for the first time or wishing to refresh their memory of what he stood for.
Steve Walton, Paul Trebilco, and David W J Gill (eds)	<i>The Urban World and the First Christians</i>	For those who are capable of, and prepared for, the necessary intellectual hard work, these essays provide a rich range of important insights on how the first Christians related to the cities of their day, insights which are very useful for stimulating reflection on how we should now relate to the cities of our day.

Tawa J Anderson, W Michael Clark and David K Naugle, *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World*, Apollos, ISBN 978-1-78359-597-6, £24.99 (e edition also available).

Martin's opinion:

An Introduction to Christian Worldview is a well-organised and clearly written textbook that will be of great help to anyone who is seeking to understand what a worldview is, what a Christian worldview looks like, and how a Christian worldview relates to other contemporary philosophical and religious views of the world. It will be invaluable for those training for ministry and for any Christian who wants to better understand the Christian view of the world either in order to clarify their own thinking, or in order to be better equipped to explain it to others. It is an engaging, readable and practical introduction to its subject matter and deserves to be very widely used.

Overview:

This book by three American Baptist writers starts from the conviction that everyone has a worldview, which is to say, a perspective consisting of both beliefs and stories through which we interpret the world and our place in it. It is our worldview that gives us answers to the big questions of life: What is our nature? What is our world? What is our problem? What is our End?

Furthermore as the authors point out, it is not only human beings that have a worldview. God has a 'true, reliable and trustworthy' perspective on the world he has made and the place of his human creatures within it. As the authors go on to explain 'The goal of the thoughtful Christian is to pursue God's perspective – that is, to intentionally and consciously cultivate a Christian worldview. Our goal of becoming Christlike includes our goal of embracing God's perspective, seeing the world the way God sees the world.'

The purpose of the book is to help people to embrace God's worldview so that they can live by it.

Part 1 'Introducing worldview' is written by Tawa Anderson. It focuses on the concept of worldview and the basic components and core questions that structure worldview thinking. It defines a worldview as 'the conceptual lens through which we see, understand, and interpret the world and our place in it' and goes on to argue that at the heart of every worldview are the four core questions noted above (1) What is our nature? (2) What is our world? (3) What is our problem? (4) What is our end?

Part 2, 'Contours of a Christian worldview,' is written by David Naugle. It sets out the contours of a Christian worldview, arguing that at the heart of a Christian worldview is a narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and glorification. The Christian worldview is looked at in terms of the four key world view questions and is tested for its internal, external, and existential consistency

Part 3, 'Analyzing worldviews,' is written by Michael Clark. It engages in comparative worldview analysis, exploring both Western philosophical worldviews (deism, naturalism, and postmodernism) and two alternative religious worldviews (Hinduism and Islam).

Finally the conclusion contains 'reflections on pursuing and living out a Christian worldview, God's perspective, in our complex pluralistic world.

Each chapter includes a series of reflection questions to help readers to interact with the material and concludes with a "Mastering the Material" section, which includes learning objectives, a glossary of terms, possible paper topics related to the material, and a select bibliography for further reading. There are also the sidebar sections consisting of (1) scenic view (contemporary culture worldview meditations) and (2) stop & pause (biblical worldview insights). These sidebars are designed to help readers connect the material to real-world examples and the teaching of Scripture.

Commendations:

James Sire comments:

'It's all here: a stellar introduction to (1) the concept of worldview, (2) the contour, content, and defense of the Christian worldview, and (3) explanation and critique of alternate secular and religious worldviews. There is little new here, but new notions of basic Christian belief and practice are often misleading and sometimes profoundly false. Here the truths of Christian faith gleam with clarity and conviction. I'm impressed.'

Samuel Burgess, *Edmund Burke's Battle with Liberalism: His Christian Philosophy and Why it Matters Today*, Wilberforce Publications, ISBN 978-0-99568-323-5 £9.99 (e edition also available).

Martin's opinion:

This book provides anyone who wants to understand Burke better with a scholarly yet accessible introduction to his political philosophy and to the central place of the Christian religion within it. It also helpfully brings out the philosophical and theological differences between Burke's conservatism and the liberal contractarian approach which dominates political thinking in this country today and explains why for a Christian a Burkean approach is preferable. Anyone who wants to understand the two major traditions of British political thought from a Christian standpoint will benefit from reading this book. Not everyone will agree with Burgess's criticisms of Locke, but those who want to defend a Lockean approach will need henceforth to take Burgess's critique into account.

Overview:

Edmund Burke (1730–1797) was an Irish Statesman and writer whose best known work is his critique of the French Revolution, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. He has come to be regarded as the philosophical father of modern conservatism and in this new study of his thought the American writer Dr Samuel Burgess explores the Christian basis of his political philosophy, contrasting it with the liberal political approach espoused by the revolutionaries in France in Burke's day and in our day by John Rawls, an approach which he traces back to the thought of the English philosopher John Locke and particularly to his *Second Treatise on Government* published in 1690.

Burgess contends that both Locke and Burke were 'religious men who sought toleration for religious dissenters and both were seemingly animated by a desire for peace, justice and civil concord.' Where they were in fundamental disagreement was in their conception of Man and their political methodologies. In Burgess's words:

...one corollary of Burke's affirmation of the Christian religion as the ground of the state was a belief in the incremental development of state in accordance with the natural law. We saw that for Burke, this law was operative in the moral instincts and prudential reason of men. By contrast, Locke believed the state emerged from man's volition. Similarly Locke's conception of man was not rooted in substantive religious doctrines but in the idea of man in the state of nature endowed with subjectively held rights. As we have seen, the Supreme Being of the *Second Treatise* was incidental enough to Locke's political project that the liberal tradition was able to sever God entirely in subsequent formulations of liberal political thought.

Burgess further argues that the 'liberal contractarian tradition' going back to Locke:

...is an anthropology and an account of secular authority which sits uneasily alongside Christian doctrine, as well as a methodological approach to politics which elevates human reason to the detriment of a more expansive theological account of human sociability. As such, the liberal tradition is one which, at its best, has sincerely sought peace and justice but, at its worst, has assumed an ideological form which has sought to denounce and displace the Christian faith. The conservatism of Edmund Burke provides a more realistic and compassionate approach to human nature, society and therefore politics. In his substantive claims about the nature of humankind, and in the methodological approach to politics which follows from this claims, Burke offers us an old way of approaching new political challenges.

According to Burgess, for Christians who stand in the tradition of Burke:

....the normative standard of freedom and equality is not to be found in an idealized form of man's own reflection, but in the image of Christ. Christians would say that the divine natural law, the revelation of the Bible and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are accessible and can be realised in our flawed human condition. Characteristics of Christ's coming rule are thus appropriated to our own concrete circumstances in just laws and cultures which concede that the final rule is Christ's alone. In this view, tyranny and human suffering are deposed, not on the basis of inherent rights, but on the basis of the divine requirement for justice and human dignity. Yet, as Burke well understood, the admission that we still occupy a fallen world necessitates a sensitivity to circumstance, context and prudential judgements in seeking to appropriate right order to our own contexts.

Commendations:

Nigel Biggar writes:

'In his important book, Samuel Burgess performs the signal service of discovering the Christian roots of Burke's compassionate conservatism – especially those running through common law. In doing so, he supplies Christians today with a rich intellectual resource as they strive to get the measure of the anti-patriotic, multicultural, cosmopolitan, and secularist assumptions of the liberalism that now prevails among us.'

Averil Cameron, *Byzantine Christianity: A Very Brief History*, SPCK, ISBN 978-0-28107-613-0, £7.99 (e edition also available).

Martin's opinion:

This book is an excellent brief introduction to its subject matter. It is written by an expert so what it says is accurate and reflects up to date scholarship, but it is also written in a very readable style that makes it easily accessible to those approaching Byzantine Christianity for the first time. Anyone who wants to understand either the history of Christianity or the politics and culture of the contemporary world needs to understand the story of Byzantium and its continuing legacy and this book will enable its readers to begin to understand both. If someone asks 'how do I begin to understand Eastern Christianity?' the answer is now 'read this book.'

Overview:

Professor Averil Cameron is the former Warden of Keble College Oxford and an authority on late Roman antiquity and Byzantium. As she explains in her Preface, the aim of her new book in the SPCK very brief history series 'is to make Byzantine Christianity and its legacy better understood.'

By Byzantine Christianity she means that form of Christianity that developed in the eastern Roman Empire with its capital at Constantinople (also known as Byzantium – hence 'Byzantine') from the fourth century until the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

As Cameron notes, the history of the Byzantine Empire and the distinctive form of Christianity to which it gave birth 'is often ignored in favour of a narrative focused on western Europe.' However, she argues, in reality 'neither the history of Europe nor that of the Mediterranean and the Middle East can be understood without it.' As she goes on to say, 'Much of what we take for granted in Christian thought and experience was formed in the eastern context rather than in the Latin west.' In addition 'The inheritance of Byzantine Christianity has directly shaped the religious and in many ways also the political framework of a large group of countries in which Orthodoxy is the main form of Christian expression, and in the conditions of post-communist Europe its influence is rapidly growing.'

In order to explain the history of Byzantine Christianity and its continuing influence Cameron divides her book into two parts.

Part 1, 'The History,' traces the story of Byzantine Christianity from the foundation of Constantinople by Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, in 330 until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. It explores the key components of Byzantine Christianity, including the development of monasticism, icons and iconoclasm, the role of the Emperor in relation to church councils and the development of orthodox theology, the difficult relationship between Eastern Christianity and the Papacy and the lasting impact of the Crusades.

Part 2 'The Legacy' surveys the intellectual and cultural 'afterlife' of Byzantine Christianity, exploring the ways in which its impact has lasted even though the Byzantine Empire itself has not. It looks at the various different ways in which its legacy continues to influence the world today, spiritually, culturally, and politically, and also considers what aspects of its legacy are likely to endure into the future.

The book also has a brief chronology at the front plus a glossary of key terms and a list of further reading at the back.

Commendations:

Gillian Clark declares :

'Averil Cameron's work has transformed our understanding of Byzantium, and here she offers an authoritative survey of its history and legacy . . . This is a lucid, informative and impressively wide-ranging brief history.'

Lee Gatiss, *Cornerstones of Salvation*, Evangelical Press, ISBN 978-1-78397-195-4, £10.99.

Martin's opinion:

This is a highly stimulating collection of papers that will be of great value to anyone interested in the history of Reformed and Evangelical theology. Gatiss' s scholarship is first class, but it is deployed in a highly accessible manner. Those who are familiar with the subjects he writes about will gain new knowledge and fresh insight and those unfamiliar with them will find these papers an excellent introduction. An excellent collection that deserves to be widely read.

Overview:

Dr Lee Gatiss is a Church of England minister who is the Director of Church Society. He teaches church history at Wales Evangelical School of Theology and in Cambridge.

As he explains in the Preface to his new book, it is a study of various aspects of the reformed tradition. In his words:

In the chapters which follow I explore some of the foundational teachings and debates in the Reformed tradition, particularly around the subject of salvation. I have found over the years that there is an astonishing ignorance about what people such as Luther, Calvin, Owen and Wesley actually taught, even among those who claim to be Reformation Christians. The following chapters were originally researched and written to fill in the gaps in my own knowledge, and I hope they will be useful to others too.

The book consists of eight papers which were originally published or delivered separately.

The first paper is 'The Manifesto of the Reformation: Luther vs Erasmus on Free Will.' In this paper Gatiss looks at the clash between Martin Luther and Desiderius Erasmus on the subject of free will and the lessons it has for us today. He argues that what the clash between them teaches us is that:

We must be wary then, of confusing 'the big issue' of the day with the gospel. Erasmus and Luther both stood against abuses in the church, but for fundamentally different reasons and in a way that eventually saw them poles apart theologically. We must be alert to the danger that we may be losing our grip on the gospel if the name 'orthodox' becomes the label we use merely for those who happen to agree with us on, say, issues of human sexuality, while issues of human salvation are side lined and neglected.

The second paper is 'The Inexhaustible Fountain of All Good Things: Union with Christ in Calvin on Ephesians.' In it Gatiss contends that:

While not everything can be squeezed into this mould, Calvin's use of the doctrine of union with Christ shows it can be an immensely rich and fruitful way of expressing the truths of the gospel and working through theological problems.

The third paper is 'Justified Hesitation? J.D.G. Dunn and the Protestant doctrine of Justification.' In this paper Gatiss explores Professor's Dunn's rejection of the Reformers' understanding of St. Paul's teaching on justification. His conclusion is that 'His indictment of Luther and 'all subsequent Protestants' for misunderstanding Paul's theology of justification has been demonstrated to rely on second-hand evidence and (in places) fallacious logic and exegetical technique.' It follows that 'there is no need to hesitate on Dunn's account in preaching the gospel of justification alone as we have received it.'

The fourth paper is 'The Ordinary Instrument of Salvation: Edmund Grindal on Preaching.' In this paper Gatiss recounts the story of the clash between Archbishop Edmund Grindal and Queen Elizabeth I on the importance of preaching and whether ministers should be permitted to gather together in so called 'exercises of prophesying' to encourage the development of their skills in this area. His take away from this story is that we should pray 'in days when the preaching of God's word is downplayed and the evangelisation of our nation remains as urgent and difficult as ever, that we may be blessed with Grindals, who will grind away to prosecute a clear agenda of biblical teaching and reform wherever the Lord may place them.'

The fifth and sixth papers are 'Shades of Opinion within a Generic Calvinism: The particular Redemption Debate at the Westminster Assembly' and 'A deceptive Clarity? Particular Redemption in the Westminster Standards.' In these papers Gatiss argues that: 'Reformed theology as presented by the Westminster divines was far from monochrome. There was consensus that questions about the limitations of the atonement were important and needed addressing, but there were at least a handful of recognisably different opinions.' As a result there is 'the potential for intra-Reformed unity in the end-product of the deliberations at Westminster.'

The seventh paper is 'From Life's First Cry: John Owen on Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation.' In this paper explores

how Owen expounds:

... the doctrine of infant baptism in a way that pays attention to the whole unified sweep of biblical revelation from creation to consummation, in order to demonstrate that Jesus does indeed secure and command the destiny of his children from life's first cry until their final breath.

The eighth and final paper is 'Strangely Warmed: John Wesley's Arminian campaigns.' This looks at the campaigns waged by John Wesley on behalf of Arminianism against the Calvinism of George Whitefield and Augustus Toplady. He draws two conclusions. Firstly, that the differences between Calvinists and Arminians 'are too often evaded for the sake of unity and peace so that someone who dredges them up is considered factious and unnecessarily combative' whereas in fact 'questioning someone's teaching on predestination, justification and sanctification is hardly the equivalent to arguing about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. They are the cornerstones of salvation.' Secondly, Wesley's aggressive 'behaviour and tone' during his anti-Calvinist campaigns 'have too often been excused or covered up' and this 'has sometimes led to something of a whitewash.'

Commendations:

Ashley Null has written:

'Lee Gatiss' *Cornerstones of Salvation* is a model for historical theology done in service of the church. The scholarship is penetrating in its depth, yet written in an engaging manner able to speak to the general reader. Indeed, the historical questions have been aptly chosen for their clear relevance to the needs of the Reformed community today. What are the fundamentals of saving doctrine essential for contemporary audiences to hear? In the light of the New Perspective, can we still preach justification by faith? In fact, in an age of sound bites and video clips, should local congregational preaching still be the top priority? How should Christian parents present the faith to their children, assuming they are outside of the faith being beckoned in, or are they inside the faith being nurtured to grow? With contemporary culture demanding inclusion, is there room for some degree of doctrinal diversity amongst today's adherents of the Westminster Confession? With calls for unity in the face of Christianity's minority status in contemporary Western society, are there limits to making common cause with Protestants from other traditions? In short, *Cornerstones of Salvation* shrewdly mines the Christian past for helpful insights on essential issues facing the Reformed tradition today. Readers will be well rewarded by reading it cover to cover. '

James K A Smith, *Awaiting the King (Cultural Liturgies): Reforming Public Theology*, ISBN 978-0-80103-579-1, £20.99 (e edition also available).

Martin's opinion:

This is an academic book, but also an accessible one. It establishes Smith as a Christian political thinker on the same level as writers such as Oliver O'Donovan, Nicholas Wolterstorff and Stanley Hauerwas. It should be read by anyone who wants to think in an informed fashion about how Christians, shaped by the worship of the one true God, should live in the earthly city as citizens of the heavenly city and contribute to its well-being as instruments of the common good.

Overview:

James K. A. Smith is Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he also holds the Gary and Henrietta Byker Chair in Applied Reformed Theology and Worldview. *Awaiting the King* is the third volume in his widely read and highly acclaimed 'Cultural Liturgies' project in which he explores different aspects of Christian life and faith through the lens of liturgy.

In this third volume he examines politics through the lens of liturgy. His starting point is the truth taught by St. Augustine that the citizen of the city of God 'will always find herself thrown into a situation of being a resident alien in some outpost of the earthly city.' This means, Smith says, that for Christians it's 'not just a question of *whether* to be "resident aliens," but how.'

He offers his new book as:

.... a foray into thinking about the *how*. As such, this book is most concerned with the cultivation of a posture, not the recommendation of specific policies. While the church has spent a generation wrangling about what views we hold and what positions we should advance, we have lost our footing, slouching toward relevance or digging in our heels in defense. In the meantime, we've ceded our imaginations to the earthly city and forgotten the posture that should characterize citizens of the heavenly city. To worship Christ the King is to be a people with a kingdom-oriented stance, which will sometimes look aloof and will at other times pitch us into the fray. The posture of heavenly citizenship is a posture of uplift, tethered by hope to a coming King. As Paul reminds us, it is those whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20) who are called to shine like stars in the sky (2:15). *Awaiting the King* is an exercise in posture correction: part diagnosis and part prescription, it is, I hope, a way of reframing the liturgical heritage of the church as a resource for the Spirit to shape a peculiar people for the common good.

The central question he explores in his book is what difference it would make if we understood that citizens are not only thinkers or believers but also lovers? How would our analysis of political institutions look different if we viewed them as incubators of love-shaping practices--not merely governing us but forming what we love? How would our political engagement change if we weren't simply looking for permission to express our 'views' in the political sphere but actually hoped to shape the ethos of a nation, a state, or a municipality to foster a way of life that bends toward shalom, the peace that comes from God?

What this book offers is a well-rounded public theology which offers a wider alternative to the narrowness of contemporary debates about politics. In the words of the Introduction, Smith seeks to encourage Christians:

... to overcome a narrow fixation on certain modes of electoral politics and realize that much of what constitutes the life of the polis is modes of 'life in common' that fall outside the narrow interests of state and government--and certainly well beyond the purview of the cable news fixation of presidential politics. So a Christian account of our shared social-economic-political life might be described more properly as a 'public' theology--an account of how to live in common with neighbors who don't believe what we believe, don't love what we love, don't hope for what we await."

In line with his focus on liturgy, Smith also focuses on the religious nature of politics and the political nature of Christian worship, looking at how the worship of the church propels us to be invested in forging the common good. This book creatively merges theological and philosophical reflection with illustrations from film, novels, and music and includes helpful exposition and contemporary commentary on key figures in political theology.

Commendations:

Stanley Hauerwas comments:

'Negotiating his way through the mass of confusions known as political theology, Smith has written a superb book that develops a constructive and nuanced position in the Reformed tradition. He has done so, moreover, by engaging in conversations with Oliver O'Donovan and Jeff Stout. This is a book that should be read widely by anyone interested in addressing the fundamental questions of church and politics.'

Bryan D Spinks, *The Rise and Fall of the Incomparable Liturgy: The Book Of Common Prayer, 1559–1906*, SPCK, ISBN 978-0-28107-605-5, £19.99 (e edition also available).

Martin's opinion:

This is the most up to date and comprehensive account currently available of how the Book of Common Prayer became the accepted liturgy of the Church of England and how and why its liturgical authority began to be challenged during the course of the 19th century. It is a scholarly study, but one that is accessible to the non-expert, and it provides essential background reading for anyone who wants to understand the liturgical history of the Church of England and the back story behind the liturgical plurality that exists within the Church of England today. For this reason it should be required reading for those training for ordained and licensed lay ministry in the Church of England.

Overview:

Professor Bryan Spinks is an eminent liturgical scholar who is Professor of Liturgical Studies and Pastoral Theology at Yale Divinity School in the United States. He is a former consultant to the Church of England Liturgical Commission and president emeritus of the Church Service Society of the Church of Scotland.

He has written extensively on the history of the *Book of Common Prayer* and in his new book he has: 're-arranged, expanded and in places précised' this previous work to form a single continuous account of the development and reception of the *Book of Common Prayer* from the Elizabethan settlement of religion in 1559 until the report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline in 1906.

Most histories of the *Book of Common Prayer* start with the two English Prayer Books issued in 1549 and 1552 during the reign of Edward VI. Spinks argues, however, that both of these liturgies were extremely short-lived, and the real history of the *Book of Common Prayer* as the liturgy of the Church of England begins with the Elizabethan Settlement in 1559, and a long tenure of the Elizabethan Prayer Book liturgy that followed from it.

As Spinks puts it:

It was with the Elizabethan Settlement and the relatively long and stable reign of Elizabeth that the Church of England as a reformed episcopal church with a Book of Common Prayer became firmly established and its liturgy became part of the national identity. For this reason, this study of the Book of Common Prayer begins with the introduction of what was the third edition/recension, namely that of 1559 by Queen Elizabeth I.

Spinks' study finishes with the 1906 report because in his view this report 'set the scene in England for the eventual move towards alternative forms for worship other than the Book of Common Prayer.'

His study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 looks at the Elizabethan settlement, the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* and worship of the Elizabethan Church.

Chapter 2 covers the religious settlement that followed the accession of James I and the consequent minor revisions of the *Book of Common Prayer* that were introduced in 1604.

Chapter 3 explores the history of the Prayer Book during the reign of Charles I, the Civil War and the Commonwealth. It explains how additional ceremonial came to be added to the Prayer Book services by High Churchmen, how a revision of the Prayer Book was produced for the Church of Scotland and how the Prayer Book was prescribed under the Commonwealth.

Chapter 4 describes the revision of the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1662 that followed on from the restoration of the monarch under Charles II and produced the version of the Prayer Book we have today. It then traces the place of the 1662 version in the life of the Church of England until the time of the production of the American Prayer Book of 1789 after the American War of Independence.

Kenneth J Stewart, *In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past and The Evangelical Identity Crisis*, 978-1-78359-607-2, £17.99 (e edition also available). Apollos, ISBN

Martin's opinion:

This book is a robust and detailed defence of the 'ancient roots' of evangelical Christianity which shows very clearly why evangelicalism has a legitimate place within the wider Christian tradition. It will prove very useful to ministers in training who want to understand where evangelicalism sits within the wider Christian spectrum, to those giving an account of evangelicalism in the context of evangelical dialogue, and to those counselling evangelicals who have lost confidence in their own tradition. A very useful resource.

Overview:

Dr Kenneth Stewart is Professor of theological studies and former chair of the department of biblical and theological studies at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia in the United States.

The starting point for his new book is the observation that Western evangelicalism is going through an era of 'increasing introspection and self-doubt.' As evangelicals lose contact with the churches and traditions descending from the Reformation, and as relations with Roman Catholicism continue to thaw, it becomes harder for them to explain why one should remain committed to the Reformation in the face of perceived deficits and theological challenges with the Protestant tradition.

In particular it is contended that Protestant evangelical churches descended from the Reformation can be seen to be disconnected from early Christianity whereas Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy can be seen to have maintained a strong connection to it. As a result a number of younger Protestants in recent years have abandoned evangelicalism, and have either converted to Catholicism and Orthodoxy or have sought to appropriate aspects of these traditions that appear rooted in the teaching and practice of the early church.

In *In Search of Ancient Roots* Stewart examines this evangelical crisis of confidence and argues that evangelicals do not need to view their tradition as theologically and spiritually impoverished or as lacking deep roots in the Christian tradition. Christian antiquity is, he says, the heritage of all orthodox Christians (evangelicals included), and evangelicals have the resources in their history to claim their place at the ecumenical table.

In particular Stewart contends, firstly, that evangelicals have failed to understand that evangelicalism is not a recent phenomenon, but is instead a perennial and recurring feature of the history of Christianity:

Evangelical Christian churches and movements could decide today to merge with other expressions of Christianity and yet emerge again within a very short time. This recurrence of evangelical tendencies would happen because evangelical movements have always been those that sought *more* in the way of the call to conversion, *more* honoring of Jesus Christ, *more* holiness of life, and more Bible knowledge than what prevails in the Christian mainstream. I acknowledge that such a claim is easier made than supported: yet I *will* aim to support it. If evangelical Christianity's existence were to be accepted as something perennial and recurring we would feel less inclined to apologize for its continued existence and expansion.

He also contends, secondly, that evangelicals have traditionally seen the appropriation of aspects of pre-Reformation Christianity as both acceptable and welcome, providing this appropriation takes place according to some properly agreed principle:

I can assure readers that there has been no evangelical 'cover-up' no conspiracy to deflect curious evangelical believers away from 'neutral' pre-Reformation liturgies, devotional practices, and form of discipleship. What there has been is a range of approaches (some much more defensible than others) by which pre-Reformation Christianity was 'weighed' on scales that yielded the judgement that some elements of earlier Christianity were defective. Readers will be impressed, I think, to learn just how very familiar, how adept, and how well-versed numerous evangelical Christians of past centuries were at assessing earlier Christianity.

What Stewart thinks evangelicals need to recall in order to understand why their ancestors judged some forms of earlier Christianity as defective is that evangelicals:

... had learned to consciously 'stand apart' from the Christian mainstream just because they were upholding a conviction not universally shared: that Jesus fully intended to guide his church by the Holy Spirit speaking in Scriptures entrusted to the whole people of God.

It is this basic issue of authority that provides the touchstone for a properly evangelical assessment of pre-Reformation Christianity.

In order to explain this point further, Stewart looks in detail at the 'standards by which pre-Reformation Christianity has been and still needs to be evaluated' and how one determines whether developments of Christian doctrine are 'legitimate or illegitimate.'

He then goes on to consider examples 'of skilful Protestant interaction with and appropriation of the pre-Reformation Christian past' and conversely examples of 'evangelical gullibility,' that is, 'the too quick embracing of points of view that suppose evangelical Christianity to have been foolish or misguided.'

Finally, Stewart explores three 'weighty, lingering questions that require our further attention.' These questions are 'Is Christian unity dependent on a central Bishop of Rome?' 'Is justification as Protestants teach it the historic faith of the Church?' and 'Why are younger Evangelicals turning to Catholicism and Orthodoxy?' He argues that 'resolution will be found to these questions by the application of our two foundational principles: the perennial character of evangelical movements and the evangelical understanding of supreme authority.'

Commendations:

Andrew Atherstone has written:

'This book shakes us free from naïve and romantic notions that Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy are the best expressions of early Christianity. For evangelicals attracted by this fantasy, it is an urgent wake-up call to examine the full facts and re-discover the deep historic roots and special riches of our own tradition.'

Graham Tomlin, *Bound to be Free: The Paradox of Freedom*, Bloomsbury, ISBN 978-147293-950-0, £12.99 (e edition also available).

Martin's opinion:

This book is a helpful introduction to the importance of the concept of freedom in the contemporary world. It explains how the prevailing Western view of freedom developed, and why a Christian idea of freedom offers a better alternative to it. It will be very useful to anyone who wants to understand better what freedom means from a Christian perspective so that they can make a properly informed Christian contribution to the discussion of this topic and explain why the freedom that Jesus provides surpasses anything the world has to offer.

Overview:

Graham Tomlin is the Bishop of Kensington and President of St. Mellitus College. In his new book he explores the issue of freedom from a Christian perspective.

Tomlin begins his book by noting that freedom: 'is one of the most commonly invoked ideas in contemporary life. In a cynical age, it is one of the few ideas that inspire devotion, energy, even sacrifice. Freedom is undoubtedly A Good Thing.'

However, he says, the value given to freedom in the modern world leaves us with the larger question: 'what kind of freedom do we want? Or better, what kind of freedom do we need? What vision of freedom gives us the best opportunity to thrive as human beings in the world?'

In his book Tomlin seeks to answer these questions by giving: 'a brief, and hopefully accessible, intellectual history of the concept of freedom.'

His account begins by 'giving an overview of the importance of the idea of freedom in Western culture, on both sides of the Atlantic.' It then looks at the ideas of three of the key architects of our contemporary ideas of freedom John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill, before going on to look at 'some more recent figures who offer alternative perspectives on freedom, opening out our understanding of the notion and the various ways of looking at it.'

Having surveyed the development of secular thinking about freedom, Tomlin then looks at the development of the idea of freedom in Christian thought. He looks at a variety of different Christian understanding of freedom, but focuses in particular on the Christian understandings of freedom put forward by St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther. He argues that: 'although their theologies differ in a number of respects, their approaches to the idea of freedom have a kind of family resemblance and a common understanding.'

The penultimate chapter of the book then considers the concept of human rights and 'how useful that is as a basis for freedom in personal and social life.'

The final chapter of the books draws the threads of the discussion together and sets out the case for 'a Christian notion of freedom that enables people to flourish better than some of the secular, libertarian models that were explored earlier in the book.'

Commendations:

Andrew Dilnot writes:

'Thinking about freedom has been going on for a long time, and Graham Tomlin does a wonderful job of engaging with the long tradition of secular and sacred consideration of the idea. These are weighty and important matters, and this new book is a valuable guide to how we got to our current understanding, and where we might want to go next.'

Graham Tomlin, *Luther's Gospel: Reimagining the World*, Bloomsbury T & T Clark, ISBN 978-0-56767-739-6, £16.99 (e edition also available).

Martin's opinion:

This book is an excellent introduction to Luther for anyone approaching Luther for the first time or wishing to refresh their memory of what he stood for. It draws on the best of contemporary Luther scholarship, but it is written in a way that makes it accessible to the non-specialist. It shows very clearly how Luther's theology related to his original late medieval context, but still has the capacity to speak meaningfully to us today. Luther has things to say we still need to hear and Tomlin helps us to hear them.

Overview:

This year marks the five hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation and at the heart of this anniversary lies the celebration of the life and thought of Martin Luther, the man who instigated the start of the Reformation and profoundly shaped its subsequent character. As Graham Tomlin notes in his new book on Luther:

Luther cannot claim credit for the whole of whatever became Protestantism, but as one who played a critical role in the emergence of a new church and new way of life for millions of people, the influence of his actions and beliefs on the past five hundred years has been incalculable. The modern world can barely be understood without them.

Tomlin's book is an attempt to present afresh the heart of Luther's theology and as he explains in the Preface, it argues:

... that there is a simple insight at the heart of Luther's thought that dominated everything else: the idea that we are justified, or put right, not by any internal quality we may possess, but by something outside ourselves altogether – the goodness or righteousness of Christ. Our identity, our sense of worth, is therefore not self-defined or self-constructed, but is given to us by God in Christ, a realization that relieves us of the great burden of having to construct our rickety sense of self in competition with others. This insight is then worked through in Luther's subsequent thought into a whole series of other areas of life and thought – issues such as prayer, marriage, pilgrimage or freedom, to give some examples. This book traces how this insight affects a kind of reimagining or redefinition of life.

As Tomlin goes on to explain, the book is in three parts consisting of three chapters each.

It starts with three chapters analysing Luther's understanding of the gospel, rooted in his reading of the Scriptures. It proceeds with three more chapters that examine how his understanding of the gospel led him to a transformation of late medieval patterns of Christian life, in particular, meditation on the passion of Christ, the practice of pilgrimage, and personal prayer. The last three chapters look at his practical and theological teaching on three topics of medieval and modern interest – sex and marriage, the devil and freedom.

Commendations:

David F. Ford declares:

'Combining theological perception, historical sensitivity, and a gift for explaining complex ideas and events, Tomlin not only draws the reader into the heart of Luther's understanding of Jesus Christ and Christian life, he also makes lively connections with our twenty-first century world. He shows the continuing generative power of the Reformation on one topic after another, faces difficult issues, and sounds the depths of suffering, sin and death; grace and faith; freedom, delight and love.'

Steve Walton, Paul Trebilco, and David W J Gill (eds), *The Urban World and the First Christians*, Eerdmans, ISBN 978-0-80287-451-1, £39.99.

Martin's opinion:

The essays in this collection reflect first rate, cutting edge, scholarship. Unfortunately, this means that they may prove rather demanding for those who are not experts in the fields of study which they represent. However, for those who are capable of, and prepared for, the necessary intellectual hard work, these essays provide a rich range of important insights on how the first Christians related to the cities of their day, insights which are very useful for stimulating reflection on how we should now relate to the cities of our day.

Overview:

As the Editors note in their Introduction to this new collection of essays published by Eerdmans 'Cities were key places in the establishment, growth, and development of earliest Christianity.' That is why, for example, many of the letters in the New Testament were written to Christians living in cities such as Rome, Corinth and Ephesus.

Like the earlier work by Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, this collection 'seeks to explore the relationship between the earliest Christian believers and the city environment.' It does so focussing on two areas. First, 'how the urban environments of the ancient Mediterranean basin affected the ways in which early Christianity progressed' and second 'how the earliest Christians thought and theologized in their engagement with cities and urban environments, which could be challenging and difficult as well as open and receptive.'

The eighteen essays in the collection, which were originally presented at a multidisciplinary conference of geographers, classicists and New Testament scholars held at St. Mary's University, Twickenham, in May 2015, are grouped under two headings which reflect the twin foci just noted.

The first heading is 'Early Christianity in its Ancient Urban Settings (s).' There are twelve essays under this heading. These includes essays by Matthew Sleeman on St. Paul's final visit to Jerusalem in Acts 21, by Joan Taylor on how what we know about Caesarea Matima as a city that 'performed Rome' and how this illuminate the narrative in Acts and by Volker Rabens on 'how Paul approached his mission, to make Christ known, in the urban settings of the first-century Roman Empire.'

The second heading is 'Early Christian Thinking about Cities.' The six essays under this heading include essays by Paul Cloke on how St. Paul offers in Colossians an alternative 'spiritual landscape' challenging the imperial ideology by which Rome maintained its control over the city, by Wei Hsien Wan on how 1 Peter resists the 'Romanization of space' and relocates its readers 'in a new spatial reality as a dwelling place for the Spirit' and by Ian Paul on how Revelation sees life in the seven cities of Asia Minor as 'the arena of discipleship' while also contrasting Babylon and New Jerusalem as two cities 'making mutually incompatible claims on people's loyalties.'

Commendations:

Peter Oakes writes:

'This book brings together an excellent collection of New Testament experts and historians to make fruitful inroads into a range of significant issues in the study of the urban context of early Christianity. Especially valuable is the juxtaposition of studies of particular cities and texts with studies of the idea of city among early Christians and their contemporaries. This will undoubtedly be a key resource in the field.'