The issue of identity concerns all traditions of the worldwide Church. Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans and Orthodox wrestle with the twin questions ‘Who are we?’ and ‘What do we stand for?’ *Reformed Theology – Identity and Ecumenicity* is a collection of essays by theologians from the Reformed tradition, which addresses these twin questions from a Reformed perspective in the context of the ecumenical movement.

The collection originated in a consultation involving Reformed systematic theologians from around the world that was organised by the Center for Theological Inquiry at Princeton University and met in Heidelberg in 1999 in order to identify current trends and motifs in Reformed thought, to mine that tradition for resources that might enrich the church ecumenical, and to foster friendship and collegiality among and between theologians of the Reformed tradition throughout the world (p. ix). The collection is divided into five parts. Each contains a number of different essays and for reasons of space it is not possible to survey them all in this review. The essays noted below, however, give a flavour of the collection as whole.

Part I, ‘Reformed Identity in Historical Continuity and Contextual Awareness,’ looks at how the historical resources of the Reformed tradition can be brought to bear on the issues facing the Reformed churches in our present context. For example, Jan Rohls’ essay ‘Reformed Theology – Past and Future’ argues that the historic confessional pluralism of the Reformed tradition is a great advantage in terms of Reformed involvement in the ecumenical movement. This is because ecumenism ‘cannot mean the total unity of doctrine’, but rather the ‘acceptance of different confessional and theological traditions as legitimate expressions of the Christian faith’ (p. 38) and, in Rohls’ view, the fact that: ‘the Reformed tradition is so manifold’ means that ‘it should be easier for Reformed churches to accept confessional pluralism in general, over against churches with a common doctrinal basis’ (p. 39). Rohls also argues that the affirmation of natural theology within the Reformed tradition provides a basis for a positive Reformed engagement with inter-religious dialogue and philosophy and that the Reformed emphasis on the importance of sanctification and the co-operation of the authorities in Church and state provides a basis for positive Reformed engagement with culture and politics.

Rohls’s essay is critical of the influence of Karl Barth within the Reformed tradition. By contrast, Bruce McCormack’s essay “The End of Reformed
theology? – The Voice of Karl Barth in the Doctrinal Chaos of the Present’ argues that Barth’s teaching on the real but limited authority of the Church and the importance of paying attention to the Church’s confession of faith is of vital importance in addressing two opposite but equally damaging tendencies amongst Reformed theologians: to give too much weight to the traditions of the church as if these possessed an absolute authority and to disregard the traditions of the Church altogether in favour of the beliefs and experience of the individual theologian.

Part II, ‘How to Shape Reformed Ecclesiology’, is concerned with the development of a Reformed ecclesiology. For example, Margit Ernst’s essay ‘We Believe the One Holy and Catholic Church … Reformed Identity and the Unity of the Church’ responds to the tension between Reformed involvement in ecumenism and the desire to maintain a distinctive Reformed identity by arguing that Reformed Christians should not engage in ecumenical dialogue specifically as Reformed, but simply as representatives of the once Church of Jesus Christ: ‘If we keep talking about special teachings, a special Reformed identity, while at the same time insisting on making a contribution to the ecumenical dialogue, we actually recite a monologue’ (pp. 95-96).

By contrast, Peter McEnhill’s essay is a self-consciously Reformed response to the ‘radical orthodoxy’ of the Anglo-Catholic John Milbank. Drawing on St. Augustine, ‘classical Reformed thinking’ and the development of the Reformed approach by Barth, McEnhill argues that we should resist Millbank’s pessimistic view of the State as ‘a sphere of sin from which little is to be hoped’ (p. 138). In the face of what he calls: ‘the hazardous and deleterious effects of a lack of society, a lack of social order’ McEnhill suggests instead that ‘the conviction that the gospel has transformative implications for all social and political life has always been, and remains, a vital part of Reformed and indeed Christian identity’ (p. 139).

Part III, ‘Spirit and Covenant: Reformed Pneumatology in Very Different Contexts,’ contains two essays that are concerned specifically with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The remaining four look at various different aspects of what it means to live as Reformed Christians in different parts of the world. The essay ‘Reformed Pneumatology and Pentecostal Pneumatology’ by the Korean scholar Myung Yong Kim is one of the two that deal with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It compares and contrasts Reformed and Pentecostal Pneumatology and concludes that what is needed is ‘a holistic pneumatology’ in which ‘neither individual salvation nor social salvation’ is excluded from the work of the Holy Spirit who ‘aims at the universal fulfilment of God’s will of cosmic salvation’ (pp. 181-2).