
This volume will be welcomed by both teachers of ecclesiology and their students. There simply is no substitute for an engagement with the primary texts of the Christian tradition and contemporary theology, yet many of the texts that relate to the theology of the church are embedded in more general writings and are not easy to find or extract. Bryan Stone has performed a valuable service by putting together in one volume a comprehensive collection that begins with the New Testament and reaches as far as recent systematic, feminist and liberation theologians. It combines what one might call the ‘usual suspects’ of ecclesiology (Cyprian, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Hooker, Barth, de Lubac, etc.) with less expected voices like the medieval polymath Hildegard of Bingen or the Puritan Separatist John Smyth. There are nearly a hundred extracts from theologians and official sources, varying in length from a paragraph to (in the exceptional case of John Calvin) eight pages. Each is preceded by a brief explanatory note that sets it in context and followed by suggestions for further reading. At the end of the volume there is a more extensive reading list on ecclesiology.

How do you present a selection like this? We would all, I suspect, choose a slightly different method. Stone has gone for a pretty straightforward historical arrangement, beginning in the first century with biblical material and moving forward through eras broadly-defined as Early Church, Middle Ages and Reformation, The Modern Period and The Twentieth Century. Nearly half the material comes from the twentieth century, which gives the opportunity for a good spread of recent ecclesiologies, while the modern period occupies only twenty out of the 270 pages. This historical format has a number of advantages: entries are easy to find if you have a rough idea of the period from which they come and there is some sense of how ecclesiological thinking has developed over twenty centuries. On the other hand, there is less opportunity to explore particular themes in ecclesiology: mission, sacraments, authority, ministry, relationship to the Holy Spirit, the marks of the ‘one, holy catholic and apostolic Church’, and so on.

How long should the selected passages be? Few here are more than two or three pages long. That is realistic so far as the patience of most students is concerned, and for some authors it is all that is necessary, but there are occasions, particularly perhaps with the material from official bodies, when a more generous allowance of space would have been helpful. The main
exception to the brevity rule (apart from Calvin) is the very full extract from
the Second Vatican Council’s *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*.

How do you choose what to include and what to leave out? This is perhaps the most vexing question faced by compilers of theological anthologies. They have two thousand years to survey and the constraints of space and copyright permissions to negotiate. No-one will be totally content with Stone's final list and it would be unfair to criticize on the basis that his list is different from a reviewer’s. However, it is pertinent to point out a number of the characteristics of this selection and to suggest some of the issues that they provoke.

First, this collection is predominantly Western in that there is very little from the post-Chalcedonian East. Even those recent Orthodox theologians who are included (Schmemann and Zizioulas) have worked mainly in the West. Given the contributions that Orthodox theologians have made to the developing ecclesiology of the WCC Faith and Order Commission, it is important that we are helped to encounter that distinctive tradition.

Secondly, it is predominantly a northern hemisphere collection, at a time when the balance of world Christianity is shifting further and further South. While there are several extracts from the well-known South American liberation theologians of the 70s and 80s, there is only a tiny amount of material from Africa and Asia. It may well be that such material is more difficult to find and that when found it is not easily cropped to form a short extract. Nevertheless, the thinking of African, Asian and Oceanic theologians and church leaders is vital for the future, not only of ecclesiology as a subject, but of the Christian Church itself.

Thirdly, although the last word in the collection is given to the Pentecostal Amos Young, and although there is a fair smattering of Catholic feminist and liberation theologians, the centre of gravity from the Reformation onwards seems to be mainstream Protestantism. So, in the modern period, we have the Westminster Confession, but not Vatican I, Schleiermacher but not Möhler, Newman or Loisy. This is a question of balance and it could be argued that Protestants need to be encouraged to devote more energy to ecclesiology and that Protestant voices need to receive greater attention.

A final question concerns the kind of material included. Here, the emphasis is on the voices of individual church leaders and theologians, with a minority of entries coming from councils, confessions and ecumenical statements. I understand why this might be so: individual voices are often more pithy and memorable than corporate statements, but the ecclesiology generated through the World Council of Churches and the