
This collection of essays on Evangelical theology edited by Tom Greggs, then professor of theology at the University of Chester and now at Aberdeen, is an attempt by a group of younger Evangelical theologians from both sides of the Atlantic to engage creatively with the Evangelical theological tradition, to respond to current theological challenges and to suggest new ways forward for Evangelical thinking.

As Greggs explains in his Introduction, the material that it contains is intended to form the ‘beginnings of an active and programmatic approach to evangelical theology’ (p. 1) and takes a deliberately provisional and open ended approach to the theological task. In Greggs’ words:

>This book does not provide the reader with a body of text which offers ‘the answer.’ Instead, this book contains theology which is in process, and the chapters proceed in the belief that theology is always engaging in the exercise of re-articulating and re-describing itself as it seeks better to speak of God to successive present generations. (p. 2)

This provisional approach to theology is rooted, says Gregg, in the conviction that theology should be continually improving as it moves forward into the future:

>This book believes that in its various and different contexts, theology tomorrow (using all the resources of past theology) should be better than theology today. To put it as Karl Barth did, the constructive programme of the theology contained within this book is in essence the belief that we should reflect on last Sunday’s sermon to make next Sunday’s better. This book wishes to serve theologians, preachers, ministers, pastors and church people by helping them to construct and form better theology for themselves. (p. 3)

The book is also intended to be a counter balance to what the authors see as an undue narrowing of Evangelicalism by conservative members of the Evangelical tradition, particularly in North America. To quote Greggs again:

>This book proceeds ... in the belief that evangelicalism should not be a movement that desires to be narrowing and self-limiting, but should be ever opening up while still retaining its distinctive emphases and piety. Less about
propositional truths or theological dogmatic statement, evangelicalism is understood by the authors of this book to be in part 'a piety cradled in a theology.' Furthermore, the authors consider dangerous the desire to close evangelicalism down to an ever smaller group of people who represent the true church or true believers over against the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. (p. 6)

Including the Introduction, there are fourteen essays in this collection. Following the Introduction the first essay is by Richard Briggs on the topic 'The Bible before us: Evangelical possibilities for taking Scripture seriously.' There are then three essays on topics to do with soteriology: Paul Nimmo on 'Election and evangelical thinking: Challenges to our way of conceiving the doctrine of God,' Paul Jones on 'The atonement: God's love in action' and George Bailey on 'Entire sanctification and theological method: A Wesleyan dynamic for discovering good news in every context.'

Next there is an essay by Simon Zahl on pneumatology 'Reformation pessimism: or Pietist personalism: The problem of the Holy Spirit in evangelical theology.' Following that there are three essays on ecclesiology: Ben Fulford on 'Feeding and forming the People of God: The Lord, his Supper and the Church in Calvin and I Corinthians 11:17-34,' Elizabeth Kent on 'Embodied evangelicalism: The body of Christ and the Christian body' and Donald MacFayden on 'Embodied Christianity: Practice illuminating a biblical ecclesiology.'

Following that, there is an essay by Jason Fout on the meaning of the glory of God and its relationship to human agency, 'From glory to glory: The transfiguration of honour and giving in the light of the glory of Christ,' and an essay by Tom Greggs on eschatology, ‘Beyond the binary: Forming evangelical eschatology.’ Finally, three essays look at different aspects of the modern world and Evangelical interaction with it. Andi Smith writes on ‘Evangelicalism and the political: Recovering the truth within,’ Sarah Snyder writes ‘A word about the Word: Building scriptural bridges with the Muslim community’ and Glenn Chesnutt writes about ‘The theological and political ramifications of a theology of Israel’

The collection is rounded off by a Postscript from Richard Hays which reflects on the approach taken by the essayists. Using terminology coined by Hans Frei he describes their approach as being characterised by a ‘generous orthodoxy’ (p. 217). There are two aspects of their approach which he highlights as being particularly helpful. The first is the authors’ willingness