

the work of Russell and Polkinghorne on this subject. Crucial issues about the eschatological transformation of living things such that there will be 'no more crying' seemed to me to be skated over here, as was the New Testament's emphasis on waiting for the culminating initiative of God.

However, these are small points in what is a bold and extremely stimulating piece of theological thinking, which I warmly recommend.

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doi:10.1017/S0036930611000354

Donald Le Roy Stults, *Grasping Truth and Reality: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Mission to the Western World* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2009), pp. x+295. £25.00/\$52.00.

Stults' analysis of Newbigin's theological approach to mission in the West begins with a survey of Newbigin's life and ministry, moving quickly to a discussion of how he 'grasped truth and reality'. The operative assumption of the author's approach is that Newbigin's 'view of revelation and his view of God and reality' constitute the 'two fundamental areas' which 'set the tone for the rest of his theological thinking' (p. 94). The author seeks to demonstrate that thesis as he surveys Newbigin's discussion of 'humanity's need for salvation and the call for radical conversion' (pp. 96ff.), his 'critique of western culture' (pp. 123ff.) and his 'response to western culture's crisis' (pp. 154ff.). There is much useful summarising and analysing here based on broad reading both in Newbigin and the secondary literature (the bibliography of the book is very extensive – one wishes that the editing of the text were as thorough!). The attempts to track the influences on Newbigin's thought are intriguing, sometimes plausible, but ultimately difficult, partly because Newbigin often did not follow academic conventions in referencing his very diverse sources. Halfway through the book, the reader might well begin to wonder what the actual contribution of this particular scholarly survey might be, given the work of Geoffrey Wainwright, George Hunsberger and Michael Goheen, which has covered so much of this territory already – and to which Stults does refer, especially Wainwright.

Well before the rather extensive critique which concludes the book, the author begins to plant the seeds of that critique. He complains that Newbigin 'tends to overemphasize the historical and collective understanding of salvation at the expense of the subjective and individual salvation', while recognising that Newbigin 'makes a necessary correction to an over-emphasis on the subjective character of salvation at the expense of a clear understanding

of the role of history in salvation' (p. 77). Has Stults failed to see that Newbigin's concern is not so much about 'the role of history in salvation' as it is the reality and meaning of salvation in history! He does show a helpful even-handedness at times, in particular in his exposition of Newbigin's theology of the human dilemma and radical conversion. 'His view of salvation includes individual salvation but also extends to cosmic redemption as well' (pp. 121–2). And yet, in his view, Newbigin 'fails to give enough consideration to the moral dimension of conversion' (p. 117).

When he turns to 'putting Newbigin in perspective' (p. 231), he finds much to commend, but more to criticise – certainly he does not agree with Wainwright that Newbigin should be regarded as a 'father of the church'. He regards Newbigin's radical critique of Western Christianity's captivity to the assumptions and reductionisms of the Enlightenment as a failure to contextualise properly. 'Another possible reason for Newbigin's attitude toward contextualization is his theological over-emphasis on the responsibility of God and minimizing the role of the Christian . . . Newbigin minimizes the role of humanity to mere witness rather than that of utilizing a well-informed apologetic, which would require some utilization of the rationality of culture' (p. 248). Has the author really understood Newbigin's theology of the power of the Word of God forming the Christian person and community for the vocation of witness as first fruits, signs and instruments of the Gospel? One who did would probably not speak of 'just witness' and 'mere witness'. Stult's insistence on human cooperation in God's saving work, and on the priority of individual salvation over God's redemption work on behalf of all creation, reflect a Pelagian tendency which, regrettably but understandably, rejects Newbigin's ecumenically open but undiluted commitment to a Reformed theology of God's sovereign grace and human dependence upon God's 'yes' intervening in rebellious lives.

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doi:10.1017/S0036930611000470

Melanie C. Ross and Simon Jones (eds), *The Serious Business of Worship: Essays in Honour of Bryan D. Spinks* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), pp. 256. £65.00.

The festschrift contributors, many of whom have been students and colleagues of Spinks, attest to the intensity and breadth of Bryan Spinks as a scholar and teacher. The articles are arranged historically, gathered into three sections: (1) Early Church and Eastern Traditions, (2) Patristic and