

Percy has a keen eye on the world and his reflections bring in such topics as the Obama presidency and the Northern Ireland peace process. Elsewhere, he speaks of 'Balkanisation' (dividing places and people into smaller autonomous self-governing entities, creating third provinces, exclusions and so forth) and how Anglicanism is resistant to this, knowing in its soul that the sum is greater than the parts.

The author's use of language is careful, and at times in itself thought provoking. He talks of the crucial need for the church to distinguish between dilemmas and problems facing Anglican polity - 'A problem is something that can be solved. Dilemmas are, however, arenas where issues and values can only be balanced.' Reference is made to the Anglican value of 'undecideability', seeing this as 'procrastination with purpose', where extreme patience means politics can wrestle with high levels of seemingly unresolvable tension. Process is key, and means matter more than ends.

It is over to the reader to decide whether the chapters offer a starting point to consider specific issues faced by Anglicanism in more depth, or the opportunity to reflect on the common threads raised through the book, or both. Percy himself recognizes one key thread flowing through the volume - that the church is an institution as opposed to an organization. Organizations exist for utilitarian purposes and when fulfilled become expendable, whereas institutions are natural communities with historic roots that are embedded in the fabric of society and need leadership that has sufficient awareness to know what can be changed and what needs to be retained and safeguarded.

He stresses the importance of blessing (of comprehensive praise and thanks that returns all reality to God) and believes this should be the starting place for a theology of leadership in the Anglican communion, which he clearly wants to see as a living organism. Anglican bishops (and leaders in other churches) need a leadership of discernment and poise, a deep appreciation of the actuality of the church and a focus on evangelism rather than the inner workings of the church.

Percy's work will help people do what he endeavours to do - not only to surf the waves, but also to read the cultural tides that buffet our age. For Anglicanism, the seas ahead may be rough, but Percy's insights into the tensions that exist in the Anglican Communion, their root causes and the qualities needed by its leaders, encourage confidence and offer hope. I look forward to the insights offered by Percy's *Greatest Hits Volume 2*, should he choose to offer it, after another decade of his ministry.

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Sidney L. Green, *Beating the Bounds: A Symphonic Approach to Orthodoxy in the Anglican Communion* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), pp. xxx+250, ISBN 978-1-62032-651-0

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The former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams once wrote, 'we have, sadly, come to think of orthodox belief as a set of obligations to sign up to, rather

than a landscape to inhabit with constant amazement and delight'. The passage serves as an epigraph for Sidney Green's *Beating the Bounds* and it captures Green's approach to his topic. Throughout this consideration of the role of orthodoxy in the Anglican Communion, Green constantly presses his readers to broaden their understanding of what is meant by 'orthodoxy'.

Green is a retired priest now living in Australia. But he trained as a musician and sets his study in musical terms. Each section and chapter of the book mirrors the movements of a symphony. In the first movement, Green considers the history of conflict in the church and the central role afforded to 'orthodoxy'. Here he argues for the first time that rather than seeing orthodoxy as a fixed entity, it is best seen as a 'process of ongoing development ... that is continually at work in the church' (p. 15).

In the second movement, Green looks at ways the church has dealt with conflict in the past, focusing on Donatism, the Reformation and the contemporary emerging church movement. Throughout, he asks how Christians can best encounter other Christians who interpret Scripture in 'radically' different ways. He argues in favour of a 'gentler, more loving perspective' that enables us to remain in fellowship with those of differing views while at the same time remaining 'open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit might be trying to teach us something new we need to learn' (p. 51). The history of the church, he concludes, demonstrates that 'unity is the fundamental attribute of the church with holiness clearly held subordinate' (p. 94).

Thus, when Green turns to consider the Anglican Communion in the lengthy third movement, it should come as no surprise that he sharply differentiates himself from the Global Anglican Futures Conference and Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. GAFCON/FCA, he argues, is trying to 'impose the wider acceptance [of] their views on orthodoxy throughout the Anglican Communion ... by undertaking quite dramatic shifts away from traditional Anglican ecclesiology' (p. 154). He critiques GAFCON's perceived rigidity in doctrine and ethics and says its leaders do not understand that they can no longer adhere to a Reformation mentality when the world – and church – have changed.

The short fourth movement and finale consider various options for the future of the Anglican Communion, including the proposed covenant. But it is in the coda that he presents his own solution: just as the rigid structure of a symphony has been overtaken by jazz, so too must Anglicans remember that *agape* is always central to Christian relations: 'sometimes it is better to accept the discomfort of a little heresy rather than allow the great pain of schism' (p. 217).

GAFCON's 2008 emergence provided the spark for this book and Green repeatedly makes his view of the movement clear, calling it 'rigid, dogmatic, and doctrinally and ethically circumscribed' (p. 34). But it is not clear that he is entirely fair. He reduces the GAFCON/FCA position to opposition to acceptance of homosexuality in the church. There is, of course, truth in this but Green never truly lets the GAFCON leaders speak for themselves. For instance, he criticizes some bishops for breaking their oaths by exercising jurisdiction in other dioceses and countries. But he does not address the GAFCON argument that the current situation is of a gravity to warrant such measures. Green may, as many do, disagree with these arguments but they must at least be addressed or else he risks arguing with a straw man.

Green's argument is not unfamiliar to many Anglicans. Indeed, the book is heavily reliant on the writings of others. At times, his chapters seem to be a series of quotations from the truly wide range of authors he has consulted in the course of his research but without the analytic rigour that tells the reader why such voices should be credited. As a reader, I found myself wanting Green to spend more time arguing in his own authorial voice. The overall quality of the book is also lessened by the large number of proofreading errors.

Given the familiarity of the argument, it comes as something of a surprise to learn that Green is a self-described 'conservative evangelical' who once had views not that different from those he critiques in GAFCON. This is a helpful reminder that the conflict in the Anglican Communion is more complex than a monolithic conservative bloc opposing an equally undifferentiated liberal bloc. On both sides, there is depth and nuance which are frequently missed. Green's book is valuable in showing us some of the diversity of opinion which exists in the Communion.

Green writes briefly at the end about his own development and the way in which the research for this book – which began as a doctoral dissertation undertaken in retirement – altered his own perceptions of orthodoxy, broadening his horizons in a way he had not once thought possible. That experience alone might be the best testament to the argument that Green is trying to make. When we are open to God's transforming love – in ourselves as much as in our relationships with others – we can come to see others in a new light in the 'landscape' of orthodoxy.

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Jane Shaw, *Octavia Daughter of God: The Story of a Female Messiah and her Followers* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2011), pp. xvii + 397.
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This detailed study presents the story of one of the more extraordinary new religious movements of the early twentieth century, the Panacea Society, which was established by a vicar's widow called Mabel Bartorp, who claimed to be the Messiah in the form of Shiloh, the child promised to Joanna Southcott, the apocalyptic prophet from a hundred years before. Given that Mabel was an unlikely messianic name, the Lord decided that she should be known as Octavia, rather less Hebrew-sounding than earlier Messiahs. It was also fortunate for her that God had revealed to her that her deceased husband was Jesus, which would be an unusual domestic job-share at the second coming. The movement was based in Bedford, which, perhaps unexpectedly given the part it had played earlier in the history of salvation, was to be 'the place of God's glory'. The new Garden of Eden was to extend for a three-mile radius around the chapel in the main community house in Albany Road.

The Society has virtually all the characteristics of (benign) religious fanaticism – people claiming to be the Messiah (alongside Mabel was a Divine Mother, Emily