with established Human Rights policy', whereas 'Conservative religious leaders and organizations constitute an especially ardent counter-force to equal rights for women [by which Stensvold means abortion], a modern concept of family and LGBT rights' (p 186). At another point Stensvold refers to 'the UN's hero worship of Pope Francis' (p 95) and states that the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not a Catholic document, as illustrated by the Declaration's clause on gender equality – a position which the Catholic Church is adamantly against' (p 105). Other authors make similar statements: according to Vik and Endresen, 'One main obstacle' to 'women's reproductive health' is 'fundamentalists' who seek 'the control of women's sexuality' (p 179); according to Marshall, who has two chapters, problems are caused by religiously inspired actors who seek to limit the inclusion of references to 'LGBTQ rights and gay marriage [and] abortion' within various UN texts. They are said to 'color … the image of religious groups' and contribute to a 'dilution of the commitment to universal human rights' (p 24). In sum, religious groups that support the views of the authors are described as 'positive and deeply engaged' and those that do not are described as 'hostile and contentious' (p 25). Such characterisations are unfortunate and detract from the book's otherwise useful research.

It would surely have been more beneficial to discover why the Catholic Church and other 'conservative' religious actors truly believe they are supporting human rights – including 'women's rights' and 'reproductive health' – rather than portray human rights as a Nordically understood concept that you are either for, in the case of liberal religious actors (and the authors), or 'adamantly against', as in the Catholic Church.

This reviewer leads an international NGO which is engaged with the UN on a daily basis and which would no doubt be categorised by Stensvold as 'religious' and 'conservative', and I come away from the book thinking 'This was an interesting read but you really don't understand us, nor have you tried to.' For that reason, the book was enjoyable and frustrating in equal measure.

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Theology Reforming Society: Revisiting Anglican Social Theology

Edited by Stephen Spencer
CSM Press, London, 2017, xvi + 188 pp (paperback £35.00)
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This is a good book on an important subject. It is concerned with Anglican social theology but has important repercussions for the whole Christian community.

This is a theme that has been seriously neglected by the formal corporate life of the Church of England at a time when the wider community are crying out for help in understanding our changing social order and seeking new ways for the future life of our communities and our planet.

Stephen Spencer and Susan Lucas have contributed substantive reflections on William Temple and his legacy as it might affect the challenges we face today. Jeremy Morris and Alison Milbank have done the same at the outset of the book on F D Maurice. Wedged between is an interesting article on the work of Octavia Hill and a typically thorough piece of theological history by Paul Avis on Westcott, Scott Holland and Gore, filling in the gap between Maurice and Temple. There is a typically thought-provoking piece by Malcolm Brown on the possible direction of Anglican social theology for our time, a very interesting essay from Matthew Bullimore on the choice and balance between public and ecclesial theology as the appropriate route in for such thought, and a final piece by Peter Manley Scott on where we might be going in all of this.

This last piece is the least satisfactory of the essays because it is obvious that no one has a clue where the Church is going. Why is it that we still cannot get beyond Temple or, if I might add, people like Reinhold Niebuhr and R H Tawney? All were giants of the twentieth century who had a profound influence on public life and those caught up in the politics of the mid-twentieth century. The reason they had such an impact is because they addressed the central challenges of their time in a way which communicated both with people in public life and with the aspirations and concerns of the wider community. Temple not only held a position that opened the door for serious leadership in this field but he had a great gift in bringing people together to think and work and hammer out common themes. Niebuhr, facing the challenge of power in the heart of the twentieth century, provided an ethical and spiritual structure for democracy and the principled control of the institutions of power. Tawney helped shape the Labour Party's manifesto and thinking while it was still in the wilderness in the 1930s. Who is doing this work in the context of our own very different time? Why is the Church not encouraging such work and promoting it? Until we prioritise this work, it will do us no good fussing about the number of bums on pews.

I hope these essays might stir up the inner life of the Church. In these dangerous, exciting and confusing times we need to build our witness on these principled foundations.

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