

however, that the book is impeccable. It is accompanied by an outdated secondary literature (the author does not take into account the most recent developments, or works by Roger Haight, 2004, in ecclesiology, by Paul Valiere, 2000, Brandon Gallaher, 2012, etc., on sophiology, or Zizioulas' moderate account of the dialectic of nature and personhood, 2013, strongly criticised in this volume, and Vgenopoulos detailed analysis on primacy, 2013, etc.) and the numerous references from Greek translations, together with the particular style of prose, render its basic arguments difficult to follow. Apart from the style, one could also question the objective historical value of the proposed ecclesiological model. How could it be really justified on the ground of the self-awareness of cognising subjects, the historical members of the post-modern Orthodox Church? Moreover, one could also refer for instance to various details like his otherwise genuine counter-proposal of a bishop 'named not after a certain city' but after immigrants (pp. 124–5), which does not seem to achieve the goal of overcoming the nationalistic tendency exemplified by the Orthodox Churches in the West, while it appears to jeopardise 'locality', as a *sine qua non* aspect of ecclesiology.

On the whole, despite the few aforementioned shortcomings, Loudovikos' book makes a unique contribution towards a comprehensive and a more finely balanced understanding of the church's identity.

Nikolaos Asproulis

Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Melissatika, Volos 38001, Greece

asproulisnik@yahoo.gr

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Donald K. McKim, *The Church: Presbyterian Perspectives* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), pp. xii + 95. \$16.00/£13.00.

Those of us who teach in areas of the Reformed tradition will be familiar with the work of Donald McKim. This new book is slim and accessible; pitched as much as introduction for more general readers as for students in the academy. The chapters started life as presentations to Presbyterian lay and clergy conferences across the United States. Throughout, McKim's focus is deeply theological and profoundly practical: 'What does it mean to be part of the people of God, the body of Christ, and the community of the Holy Spirit?' (p. ix).

The book's structure, as its author graciously acknowledges, reflects something of its origins as individual presentations in different contexts. That gives it a less coherent feel overall. These are snapshots expressed in the colours of a very personal account. It is no less significant and valuable, but

readers will need to look elsewhere, not least in McKim's other works, for a systematic ecclesiology. The first two chapters explore being called to follow Jesus and the church being reformed according to God's word. Then come three meditations upon aspects of the creeds: belief in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints. A final chapter imagines the church as it might become.

I found McKim's reflections offering much from small starting points. The gospel narratives of call pitch us into the challenges of the radical immediacy of Jesus' demands; that taking hold of the whole of our lives. Discipleship is revealed as the deeply personal yielding of our agendas to the demands of following Christ together. And this following carries us boldly into the future rather than into the past. Throughout Calvin, Barth, Bonhoeffer and others play their part to bolster and extend the argument.

The second chapter opens with a brief framing of the classic Reformed motto of the church reformed and being reformed. McKim stresses the action of God revealed in scripture in this process; the church never reforms itself but tries to pay ever closer heed to the Spirit speaking in and through the Word. Nothing here is particularly exceptional, and there is the danger that the slogan sits far back from the messy reality of coaxing change and reform amongst us. But the threads are woven tightly and passionately and I can imagine this chapter evoking and provoking much discussion in seminar rooms and church meetings.

The next three reflections shine Reformed light upon creedal words. The Holy Spirit is appreciated as the one in whom scripture is inspired as written, read and lived out. We are taken through some important aspects of Calvin on the way, and the turn to preaching is thoughtful. Holiness and catholicity take us to important reflections upon the combination of goodness and sinfulness that exists across the church, and Calvin's understanding of their intermingling is drawn out in conversation with the Roman Catholic perspectives of Hans Küng on sanctification. The chapter on the Communion of Saints has a different feel, being a more systematic working through of Barth's writing on holiness. It offers a useful summary but with less of the direct attention to living out the consequences that previous chapters suggest.

The book ends by imaging the church. We are taken into explorations of providence, of the ongoing presence of Christ and of the power of the Spirit. It is a summing up and call to faithfulness. Throughout the book, uneven though it inevitably is, we encounter the sharp questions and rich resources the Reformed perspective can offer at its best. We read an author himself

passionately caught up in that tradition as home and school of faith. This small text will be a refreshing set of starting points for many.

Neil Thorogood

Westminster College, Cambridge, CB3 0AA, UK

nrt26@cam.ac.uk

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Esther E. Acolatse, *Powers, Principalities and the Spirit: Biblical Realism in Africa and the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2018), pp. xii + 243. \$32.00.

Christian unity is the concern that motivates this book on hermeneutics, spirits and the Spirit. Acolatse, who teaches at Knox College, University of Toronto, identifies profound differences in the way in which Christians across the globe understand spiritual beings mentioned in biblical texts. As Christianity has assumed the garb of the cultures and peoples it has impacted, a range of diverse views have emerged, all of which, Acolatse says, are flawed. Many in the Western world reduce the ‘powers and principalities’ to inner psychological states or super-structural evil, says Acolatse, whilst many Africans inflate the importance and presence of malign spirits and do not give enough attention to personal guilt and sin. Such differences have implications not only for theology and hermeneutics but for the way in which pastoral care is addressed. Acolatse aims to establish a balanced and biblical view that provides a platform for global, inter-Christian dialogue.

Starting with Kwesi Dickson’s hermeneutics that elucidates the Hebrew worldview by drawing parallels with African society and spirituality, Acolatse critiques Bultmann’s demythologising project. She then discusses Walter Wink’s theology of the powers. Wink’s approach, widely regarded as taking the influence of evil forces with great seriousness, is inadequate in Acolatse’s view, because he imposes a modern psychological reading on first-century biblical passages whose authors believed in otherworldly powers. She appeals to Karl Barth’s comprehension of the powers, evil and sin, and adds insights from theologians like Kwame Bediako and Amos Yong to provide a foundation for her own constructivist intervention. She turns to a range of Reformed interpretations of Ephesians 6:10–20 and shows how commentary was influenced by pastoral practice. In the final chapter she critiques John Levison’s pneumatology and returns to Dickson again, as a theologian who examines ‘spiritual reality’ by keeping ‘the whole biblical account of reality in view’ (p. 221).

Acolatse’s biblical realism promotes a high view of scripture, of the Holy Spirit and the spirits. Her critique of western theology and psychology is