

emphasis was upon Christian 'stewardship': all property belongs to God and human beings simply steward it on God's behalf. Therefore, when donating to Anglican mission they were giving God's money not their own. This theology often led to extravagant and spontaneous giving. By the 1860s it had been replaced, however, with an emphasis on systematic and proportional giving. The interdenominational Systematic Benevolence Society encouraged Christians to give a tenth of their income to the church as the basic minimum. The problem was that it led to an assumption that when you had given a tenth to God you had given enough and could spend the rest.

As fund-raising flagged, new secular techniques were adopted from the 1870s, focused on entertainment and social events in an attempt to persuade the Anglican laity to open their wallets. Charity bazaars, sales of work, concerts and recitals became popular, but were also a sign of financial desperation and loss of confidence. In place of stewardship and systematic giving, Anglicans now increasingly expected to receive something back in return for their donations. And the fund-raisers conspired with this theology. J.P. Foster's *Fancy Fair Religion* (1888) assailed the new approach, complaining that Christians were now being exhorted not to support the church on principle but 'enticed to do so through pleasure' (p. 119). Almost all the Anglican organizations in Flew's study were experiencing financial hardship by the start of the twentieth century. The passing of the Victorian age brought with it the 'loss of the paternalists' (p. 133), replaced by a new Anglican generation who had to be coaxed to give money to mission. She argues that this loss of financial obligation signals a deeper malaise, a loss of commitment to the Church of England itself. Religion had become a commodity, 'just one more leisure product on the market' (p. 140).

This stimulating study opens new avenues of enquiry for historians of the church, and is proof positive that the interdisciplinary gulf can be bridged. Sarah Flew successfully demonstrates that, for those with eyes to see, account books can be remarkably revealing.

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Phil Groves and Angharad Parry Jones, *Living Reconciliation* (London: SPCK, 2014), pp. xxii + 170. ISBN 978 0 281 07226 2.
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In the context of a Communion that (mostly) seeks to try and preserve its unity, despite its great diversity, it is perhaps not surprising that a book that grows out of an official Communion-wide reconciliation project should be trying hard to be all things to all Anglicans. But despite questions concerning how much this resource will resonate in the non-Western contexts of most Anglican churches, this deliberately accessible guide to the importance of reconciliation considers important themes with intelligence and candour.

Living Reconciliation was inspired by the Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon at the landmark Faith in Conflict conference held at Coventry Cathedral in 2013 – and the Archbishop's foreword to the book is a helpful distillation of his profound concern for reconciliation among Christians. Welby writes, 'I believe that living reconciliation can transform our world. Indeed, I dream that it may become the hallmark of Anglicans. Given the cultural diversity of the 165 countries in which the Anglican Communion across 38 provinces exists, I believe that Anglican Christians bear remarkable testimony to the unifying power of the Holy Spirit of God in his Church' (p. ix).

Welby calls for Anglican Christians to take seriously the notion of being one body in Christ. He wants each Anglican 'to take full account of the way in which decisions in one province echo around the world' (p. xi) and makes a frank plea against fracturing and schism: 'we do not have the option, if we love one another in the way that Jesus instructs us, simply to ditch those with whom we disagree. You do not chuck out members of the family: you love them and seek their well-being, even when you argue. Good and loving disagreement is a potential gift to a world of bitter and divisive conflict' (p. xiii).

The challenge when reading Welby's foreword is to map his compelling vision onto twin realities in the contemporary life of the Communion: a Covenant process that appears to have stalled, and moves towards the redefinition of traditional marriage in a number of provinces. It may be that learning to disagree more humanely and lovingly is a noble aim within the context of a seemingly fracturing Communion, but how the noble aims and lived reality interact remains unclear.

There is also an area of theological concern in relation to an understanding of the ministry of reconciliation to which Christians are called. This reader was never entirely convinced that a clear theological justification was made for a leap from reconciliation by God in Christ (2 Cor. 5.17-20) to a more specific ministry of reconciliation understood as peace-building within the church. Indeed, very little distinction is made between that rather specific theological understanding of God's reconciling work in Christ, and the way that reconciliation is defined more widely in broad relational terms. The book assumes that 'living reconciliation' means the transformation of conflict within the church and the potential witness that such a process might offer to the world; that is surely some distance from the message of reconciliation entrusted to the 'ambassadors for Christ' of 2 Cor. 5.20, called to reconcile people to God.

Such questions are then brought into focus in some of the personal examples explored. We read of an engagement process between the dioceses of California, Gloucester and Western Tanganyika which includes some moving accounts of the significance of strangers becoming friends before difference can be faced fruitfully. The establishment of meaningful relationships meant one American participant was eventually able to acknowledge openly his homosexuality without immediately alienating his African partners in dialogue. We read that the Tanzanians present 'did not "change their minds" on the legitimacy of gay unions. They were not converted by the story, but they began to understand that they had a brother, who was gay, walking with Christ' (pp. 112-13).

The authors recognize that this book, built largely on the anecdotal experiences of the 'Continuing Indaba' project alongside some biblical reflection, is not alone going

to transform the Anglican Communion's fortunes. But perhaps especially through its use of personal testimony, *Living Reconciliation* gently challenges its reader, whatever their prior theological convictions, to recognize the value of Anglicans meeting across their varied divides not merely for the good of the Communion but in response to God's reconciling call.

A nagging question remains, however, about who exactly this book is aimed towards: Anglicans, certainly – but probably not those in search of vigorous theological engagement with themes of reconciliation. The presence of 'questions to think about' at the end of each chapter, plus an accompanying website – <http://living-reconciliation.org/> – promotes the potential for group study and debate at a parish level. The banner headline to the website, 'A book and a Bible study guide for transforming conflicts' perhaps offers a better description of the project's aims than 'living reconciliation'. No one would wish to disagree with the laudable aims of this project, including its determination to make its content widely accessible; and this book inevitably forms part of a much wider process. But Anglicans will need robust theological reflection as well as warmer human relationships if the further fracturing of their Communion is to be avoided, and this text only really advances the latter of those requirements.

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Christopher Brittain, *A Plague on Both their Houses: Liberal vs. Conservative Christians and the Divorce of the Episcopal Church USA* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), pp. 280. ISBN 978-0567658456.
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Within three years of the confirmation of the election of Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church USA (TEC) in 2003, all attempts to construct a confessional movement of North American Anglicans centred on the Windsor Process had foundered. As conservative parishes and dioceses increasingly sought an exit strategy from the denomination, leaders of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh in southwestern Pennsylvania, whose bishop, Robert Duncan, would later be elected the first archbishop of a new denomination, the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA), played a leading role in that secession.

With *A Plague on Both their Houses*, Chris Brittain has provided the first of what will undoubtedly be many scholarly studies of the process of Anglican realignment in the Global North. Combining grassroots ethnography with practical and pastoral theology, Brittain's study, informed by no fewer than 53 face-to-face interviews with clergy and laypeople (including this reviewer), represents a valiant attempt to go beyond the public rhetoric of ecclesiastical confrontation and engage with the 'lived' embodied practices of ordinary believers. (For a study so dependent on the anonymity of its sources, it is unfortunate that the pseudonymous parishes and