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Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), pp. 212. \$25.00 (hbk).

Of all the theological fields, southern Christianity's growth is making the greatest methodological impact on the study of church history. Noll presents his work as an attempt to mediate between the older and newer histories, that is, between histories concentrated on Europe and America and histories concentrated on the non-Western world. Noll agrees with the relativisation of histories which depict a direct (read: imperial) influence, but holds that future lessons for world Christianity might be learnt from the American past. 'American Christian experience is most important for the world not so much as a direct influence but as a template for recent Christian history' (p. 116).

Noll initiates this discussion by contrasting European and American forms of Christian faith. Insofar as European Christianity formed in relation to the 'instincts of ancient Christendom' (p. 114), it remains characterised by immobile forms. Insofar as the formation of American society meant the rise of a 'more fluid type of faith' compared to 'centralized, strongly denominational and carefully structured forms of Christianity' (p. 92), this form lends itself to indigenous expression. American missionaries have thus promoted a form of Christianity more likely to promote indigenous adaptation.

This 'historical continuity' approach, however, is secondary to the 'heuristic model' thesis basic to his work. Many places within the world are assuming 'patterns that resemble in crucial ways what North American believers had earlier experienced'. As this context and associated ecclesial forms belong to the American past, so the American experiment becomes a model. Global Christianity shares a correlative or analogous relationship to American Christian experience.

Here one must enquire as to the gains which accrue from this thesis. Noll draws only modest conclusions, and this is perhaps the source of some confusion. The language of 'model' suggests a strong claim. The American context perhaps foreshadows and provides insight for ongoing developments in global Christianity. Noll's own conclusions leave something of a gap filled by statements like 'American Experience as Template'. It is hard not to sense a 'what of America?' sentiment running through the piece. If Christianity is truly global then it is 'possible to think again about the American place in world Christianity' (p.197). The argument seems to function as a loose apology for retaining a place for America within the global story of Christianity.

If the positive gains of this argument sometimes appear muted, the negative consequences emerge in the three case studies which conclude

the work. These share in the general vagueness concerning the import of the central thesis. Of particular note is the chapter on 'What Korean Believers can Learn from American Evangelical History' because Noll is here clearest concerning the implications. Though there is much to contend, one may illustrate the central concern via Noll's warning against 'individualism'. This cautionary tale from the American experience is seemingly evident in historical phenomena like personality disputes, stylistic preferences and eccentric biblical interpretation. While such things occur within Korean Christianity, one must ask whether they result from excessive individualism or from the Confucian ordering of society and thus its relational character. This is the downside of Noll's thesis: even a weak correlative model interprets experiences through a filter derived from prior experience. Similar facades are read in terms of a familiar causality. This softens the sharp differences which require the greatest attention.

Much more work needs to be done on this most complex of subjects, a point aptly made by Noll's work.

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Celia Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom* (London: SCM and Canterbury Press, 2009), pp. xx+300. £30.00 (pbk.).

On hearing the word 'evolution' one probably thinks 'Richard Dawkins'. And Richard Dawkins is forcing the church to revisit the 150-year-old debate (*Origins of the Species* was published in 1859) over the compatibility of evolution with Christian belief. So it is a real pleasure to welcome this major, substantial and pioneering study which moves beyond the endless, tired arguments over evolution to a place which explores the implications of evolution for doctrine. In this book Celia Deane-Drummond has brought the place of evolution and, more broadly, science into the centre of systematic study. It is a fine and pioneering work.

Deane-Drummond has the capacity to live in a variety of very contrasting worlds. Helped by the fact that she has earned doctorates in both biology and theology, she is able to converse with exceptional competence with both evolutionary psychology as well as the details of orthodox theology. She has learned several contrasting languages (in terms of subjects) and speaks them extremely well.

The basic argument is compelling. Inspired, perhaps rather surprisingly, by Sergii Bulgakov and Hans Urs von Balthasar, she argues for a version of a