BOOK REVIEWS


Reviewed by Th. van der Zee, Nijmegen

Lynne Cameron did a thorough investigation of metaphor in educational discourse. Her study in applied linguistics seeks to find out how metaphors are used in classrooms, how students learn to understand the metaphors they encounter and how metaphors can contribute to learning. Taking a socio-cultural perspective, the study affords fresh insight into the significant role of metaphors in learning and understanding concepts. Metaphors play an important role in educational contexts by inducting students into various learning communities and academic disciplines. In this respect Cameron’s study is relevant to empirical theology as well. Religious traditions often use metaphors or metaphorical language to relate the human world to the reality of the transcendent Other. So far theologians have mainly studied the nature of this relationship. How students learn to understand the relationship has received only limited attention from researchers. Cameron’s study provides new information that will enhance theological research in this field.

Taking a discourse perspective, Cameron sees metaphor as a multifaceted linguistic tool and locates it not in the head but in the ongoing dynamics of talking-and-thinking. While the cognitive perspective (Lakoff & Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, 1980) regards metaphor as a mental operation whereby people understand the world through mapping from known to unknown domains, the socio-cultural perspective sees them as a phenomenon of language in use for mental as well as interpersonal action. Following Vygotsky & Wertsch (*Mind as action*, 1998), Cameron states that metaphors are better understood as a technique or means of using the tool of language. In order to enhance student’s learning, metaphors may act as attractors that help crystallise interim understanding and facilitate the interaction of thinking and talking between teacher (expert) and student (novice). In addition metaphors are not just linguistic devices to help understand concepts, but actually structure the concepts themselves.

In this theoretical framework Cameron examines the use of metaphors in classroom discourse and the way students learn to understand them. Data were collected from students aged between 9 and 11 in the third class of a primary school in a rural northern county of the United Kingdom. Cameron gives an excellent account of her data collection and qualitative analysis. Her study shows that teachers use various metaphors to manage and reduce the gap between initial and explicit knowledge in discourse. Metaphors create interim stability in the developing discourse that gradually brings the teacher’s and the students’ understanding closer together. Teachers make differential use of metaphors, for example agenda management, evaluative feedback, exemplification and checking on understanding. Regarding students’ understanding of metaphors, the study shows that knowledge about the lexical phrase (vehicle) and knowledge about the content of the ongoing discourse (topic) are equally important to make sense of metaphor in the discourse context. Students have to signal incongruity and prompt metaphorical processing, identify key properties and relations to transfer from vehicle to topic, and provide sufficient transferable properties and relational connections.

I think *Metaphor in educational discourse* is challenging for an understanding of the use and appropriation of religious narratives such as parables. A socio-cultural perspective can...
complement the cognitive perspective and explain how students learn religious narratives by participating in the discourse practices of religious communities. Reitering Cameron’s point, these narratives may play an important role in educational contexts by inducting students into various communities and can mediate the interaction of thinking and talking between the teacher as an expert and the student as a novice. They can be seen as tools for managing the alterity of the religious discourse and concepts. This management affords insight into the distinctive nature of religious practices and the expertise of those engaged in them. Put differently, metaphors can further understanding of what people mean when they claim to believe in the kingdom of God. With respect to students’ understanding, Cameron rightly points out the intricate and supportive patterns of talk: “The discourse appears to be finely tuned to the students’ needs through the teacher’s lexical and grammatical choices, intonation and pausing, questioning, topic movement between topic and vehicle domains, and the gradual building and development of ideational content” (108).

Cameron’s study has only a few shortcomings. Inducting students into learning communities or academic disciplines involves not only conceptual transformation but affective and motivational aspects as well. I think the latter are equally important for metaphors and religious narratives, both of which refer to value-laden concepts of communities or disciplines. Cameron deals with these aspects only in passing. As for students’ understanding, Cameron does not offer conclusions for students’ mutual interaction, but only for the interaction between teacher and students.

In general, this study is important for linguistic theory and empirical research, but also as a challenge to empirical theology.


Reviewed by L.J. Francis, Bangor

This collection of 20 essays was generated from the fifth biennial meeting of the International Academy of Practical Theology held in South Africa in April 2001. The contributors include an impressive catalogue of established international scholars in practical theology from Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland, South Africa, United States of America and Wales. The topics covered include affluence, alcohol abuse, decadence, domestic violence, economics, globalisation, health, HIV and AIDS, inequality, pastoral care, politics and poverty. Special consideration is given to children, youth and women. A variety of theological methods of enquiry are displayed. The rich diversity of the collection is best illustrated by reference to seven key chapters.

Bernard J. Lee (Loyola University, New Orleans) takes the view that practical theology is not a branch of theology but a form of theological reflection, with the human sciences as ancillary. Well grounded in Aristotelian philosophy and New Testament Greek, he proposes a philosophical and biblical anthropology that eliminates the delay between theory and application.

Paul Ballard (University of Wales, Cardiff) takes an historical perspective on the industrial, social and economic changes in Wales since the 1960s and reflects on the practical involvement of the churches (denominationally and ecumenically) in facilitating response to such changes. In particular he identifies the three activities of advocacy, community service, and community development.

Drawing on the traditions of empirical theology, Johannes A. van der Ven (Nijmegen), and Jaco S. Dreyer (Pretoria) discuss empirical research on the Church and HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Their new research data examine the tendency of students to stigmatis
people living with HIV/AIDS and the extent to which this tendency is related to ecclesial attitudes.

Duncan B. Forrester (Scotland) examines evidence generated by medical sociology which demonstrates the link between inequality and poor levels of health. He concludes that these data on health and inequality provide empirical confirmation of Christian emphases on equality and understanding of community.

Against a background shaped by secularisation theories and the role of women in the workplace, Claire Wolfteich (Boston) examines women’s changing economic roles as a practical theological challenge. Her data, focusing particularly on Roman Catholic women in the United States from 1940, suggest that religion does not necessarily hold women back in the workplace, and that women’s growing workforce participation does not generally lead to religious alienation.

Dan Schipani (Mennonite Biblical Seminary), Richard Osmer (Princeton) and Friedrich Schweitzer (Tübingen) provide preliminary insights from a multi-national research project concerned with the effects of globalisation on adolescent faith, including participation from India, Japan, Germany, United States of America, Russia, Ghana, South Africa, Argentina and Paraguay. They argue that practical theology needs to address the challenges and opportunities posed by globalisation, both theoretically and practically.

Drawing on case study methodology and the theology of liberation, Valburga Schmiedt Streek (Brazil) identifies the role of alcohol abuse in domestic violence and demonstrates the therapeutic contribution of social and pastoral practices.

Overall this collection of 20 essays makes it clear that practical theologians do have something clear and distinctive to say about the experiences and problems of living in the contemporary world, confronting poverty, suffering and disease. What they have to say not only provides an informed critique but also offers theological insights and rationale for building bridges across social, racial, gender and economic boundaries.


Reviewed by F. Jespers, Nijmegen

This book is a reprint of a lengthy ‘trend report’ by Karel Dobbelaere, first published in 1981 (145 pp.), with a supplement (30 pp.) added to the 2002 edition. In 1981 this Belgian sociologist (now emeritus professor of the Universities of Louvain and Antwerp) published ‘Secularization: a multi-dimensional concept’ in Current Sociology (vol. 29). His conclusion in that report was that secularisation should be studied and empirically researched on three levels: those of society and the state, ecclesiastic organisations, and the individual. “To make empirical falsification possible, secularization theory must be cast in terms of clear concepts, must operationalise these concepts in a valid way, and must propose testable hypotheses” (103). In the supplement to this ‘new’ book the author sticks to this conclusion, now using the terms ‘macro-, meso- and micro-level’. This terminology is reflected in the title of this book.

The author’s aim is to develop his secularisation theory further. In his 1981 text he analysed and criticised the latest sociological studies at that time – those of P.L. Berger, R. Bellah, D. Martin, T. Luckmann, J. Yinger, B. Wilson and many others. Some key issues were: the author’s preference for a substantive definition of religion (as a transcendent reality), civil religion, pillarisation, invisible religion, and sects and cults. He noted various approaches and presuppositions, as well as alternative theories: the rise of evangelicalism and New Religious Movements. He concluded, that secularisation is not an irreversible, mechanical social or cultural process. Individual persons or groups can decide to re-sacralise their lives.

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JET 18,2, 266-267
or society, which calls for empirical research. This research can only produce explanations if the three levels of society, church and the individual (and also their interrelations) are clearly conceptualised.

In the supplement to the 2002 edition the author deals with some recent literature on the conceptual development of secularisation theory. On the macro-level of society Dobbelaere tries to compile ‘secularisation indexes’ for each European country, for example by using per capita Gross Domestic Product. These in fact reveal an inverse relation to church commitment. He calls the effect of low commitment on Europeans compartmentalisation. The challenge is to discover the causes for these relations. On the individual level the author sees religion as transforming in the direction of spirituality, centring on the self. Evangelicals and New Religious Movements are effecting a re-sacralisation, but only as ‘religions of immanence’. The author devotes two pages (194-195) to rational choice theory, maintaining that it is only applicable to the USA.

Dobbelaere does not deal in depth with important alternatives to the now controversial secularisation theory published after 1981 – e.g. post-materialism, politicisation, de-privatisation. The works of P. Beyer, J. Casanova, R. Inglehart, R. Finke, J. Hall, P. Heelas, H. McLeod, C. Smith, R. Williams and many others are not discussed or even mentioned in his new text. Neither does he discuss any studies of Eastern Europe or non-Christian religions. As a result, while the 1981 report offered a fine survey – although even this new edition still lacks an index, the supplement merely adds some more or less arbitrary continuations of secularisation theory.


Reviewed by M. Riegger, Augsburg

What drives a sociologist to present a theological dissertation at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau? – *The civilisation of God . . . shows an example of how to combine these two professions this way. If we look at the scientific work and publications of Michael N. Ebertz, professor at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences Freiburg and a senior lecturer (PD) at the Institute of Sociology at the University of Konstanz, we find articles and books close to the theological area. The leap between the two areas is not as great as it might seem. Ebertz’ sociological background is evident in his research interest, which combines the history of Christian dogma and kerygma relating to ‘notions of the hereafter’ (Jenseitsvorstellungen) with social history.

After initial thoughts on the importance of looking at the historical and social contexts to identify forces and possibilities for communicating the eschatological tradition from a theological and sociological point of view, Ebertz goes on in the following chapters to set out his historical and empirical research questions. The approach he takes, which he calls ‘time hopping’, is to select statements and commentary by a variety of authors from a variety of historical periods.

In chapters two to four, the author develops the basic thesis that the history of theology and eschatological proclamation unfolded between at least two poles or boundaries (Origenes and Augustinus) and that it tends – at least partially – toward universal reconciliation. On this basis he elaborates his main thesis: that in the course of history there has been a ‘civilizing’ (through demystification) of the image of God in theology and preaching.

These are the conditions under which Ebertz proceeds with his empirical research question in chapter five. He takes a detailed look at the use of dogmatic eschatological belief by representatives of the church and relates this to the changes in society since the middle
of the 19th century by drawing on written texts taken from preaching journals. The selected journals will be well known to those familiar with preaching journals in Germany: *Prediger und Katechet*, *Chrysologus* and *Pradica Verbum* (formerly *Ambrosius*). A sample of 20 texts – ten from *Prediger und Katechet* and ten from the other two journals – was taken every ten years from 1860/61 to 1990 for a total of 280 texts. Quantitative evidence of the decline in the use of the words ‘purgatory’ and ‘hell’ since 1920 and 1940 respectively is presented in chapter six. Ebertz sees this decline not only as an ‘emaciation’ (Abmagerung) but as a ‘circumcision’ (Beschneidung) in the sense of R. Barthes, meaning that important textual elements are dropped and therefore the whole structure and the message are changed.

The following chapter presents a qualitative content analysis using the method of syntactic-semantic analysis of words, word compounds and themes as developed in particular by Merten and Mayering. Using primarily summaries, explications and structuralisation, Ebertz shows that the traditional ecclesiastical notions of the hereafter contain God’s justification with an accent on punishment and retaliation. In chapter eight he demonstrates how, as a result of the nearly exclusive emphasis on divine mercy and compassion, divine justice has been largely forgotten. For this he sums up [trans.] “If (there is) death, then (there is) heaven” (345). The author rounds out his dissertation with suggestions for proclamation as it relates to eschatology.

Ebertz, well known for his insightful analysis of church and religion, offers a sociological account of changes in eschatology. He is thoroughly familiar with previous research in the field, for example in France, and his book is a window on methods and assumptions of sociological description of concepts of the hereafter.

Without doubt, each reader will find stimulating ideas within the socio-historical approach. The book is a big step toward integrating sociology into theology. Ebertz presents empirically based evidence why religious education should proclaim not only God’s mercy but also God’s justice. At the same time, though, we must be aware that there was a time when this proclamation produced fear.

In addition to the aforementioned positive aspects of approaching theology from the socio-historical perspective, I wish that the author had included a discussion of the convergent and divergent aspects of the relationship between sociology and (pastoral) theology, as posited by N. Mette or K.E. Nipkow. The result of such a discussion could be to emphasize sociology as a reference discipline of theology while also raising the profile of pastoral theology and theology in general. For this I look forward to future publications by this author.


Reviewed by E. Stoddart, Edinburgh

Feinberg aims to show that many different Christian theologies committed to divine omnipotence and benevolence can solve the many problems that evil poses for them. He articulates and defends seven theses viz.: (i) there is not such thing as the problem of evil, (ii) discussion of problems of evil must be of those within that particular system’s accounts of God and evil, (iii) there are many forms of theism that can solve their logical problem of evil, (iv) many theistic systems can solve their evidential problem of evil, (v) systems can be internally consistent but otherwise theologically unacceptable, (vi) the problems of hell can be handled, and (vii) the religious problems of evil are of a different kind requiring their own treatment. By far the greatest proportion of the more than 500 pages is devoted to a discussion of the logical and evidential problems of evil. Within the former, Feinberg explores theonomy, its radical opposite Leibnizian Rationalism and Modified Rationalist
Theologies including Schlesinger (Greatest Happiness), Yandell (Greater Good), Hick (Soul-building) and Adams (Redemptive Suffering). Feinberg’s own proposal is a Modified Rationalist one (there is no best possible world and some things are known only by divine revelation), based around a nonconsequentialist ethic. He differs from theonomy in significant regards; acts are right because God prescribes them (but not arbitrarily), God’s moral law reflects God’s character or nature. What emerges is a moderate form of Calvinism, reflecting Feinberg’s compatibilistic account of free will.

In tackling the evidential problems he offers extensive discussion of Rowe’s challenge and Plantinga’s defense including key interlocutors such as Swinburne, Reichenbach and Peterson. Feinberg interrogates the inductive method and the nature of probability arguments finding it doubtful that atheists can launch a successful attack on evidential grounds. The problem of hell is treated in a distinct, third, section where he argues that, subject to modifications, both Hick’s and Talbott’s universalist positions can become logically consistent. This is argued similarly for some forms of annihilation and conditional immortality. Because Feinberg is unwilling to adopt either of these theologies on grounds of biblical interpretation he presents a case for a traditional view of hell. He offers a defense to handle the question of whether God has a morally sufficient reason for not removing hell and explains (by relying on a theology of revelation) why it is a just punishment for those who reject God.

In a final section, significantly shorter than the first two, Feinberg tackles the religious problems of evil through personal testimony (of what proved helpful and unhelpful in his own experience) and a biblical exposition of how God might use suffering, e.g. in manifesting God’s power or removing a cause of boasting.

This is a revised and expanded third edition that explicitly limits itself to the problems of evil as they are handled by traditional forms of Christian theism. The major discussions of the logical and evidential problems are well connected and treated to a detailed and sophisticated analysis. The religious problem, on the other hand, floats adrift in such a way that the reader collides with it. Precisely because the problems of evil hit most of us primarily as a series of experiences and only secondarily as an intellectual challenge it is a pity that Feinberg’s testimony is relegated to the concluding pages of the text. Had it been placed at the head it would likely have generated a quite different volume; without any diminution of intellectual rigour but enhanced as a piece of theological reflection. This might have resolved some of the jarring within the main discussions where Feinberg introduces his quite conservative biblical arguments for rejecting systems he has otherwise demonstrated to be logically consistent. It could also have positioned this work more clearly whereas it falls somewhere amidst systematic, biblical and practical theology. Nevertheless, it is a robust and technically highly articulate exploration of a vital dimension of human experience.

Reviewed by D. Nauer, Tilburg

To mark the occasion of W. Fürst’s 60th birthday, twenty theologians accepted the challenge of reconstructing practical theology from a pastoral aesthetic viewpoint. This book will be of particular significance to those interested in empirical issues, since the concept of pastoral aesthetics is expressly described as a paradigm shift analogous to the empirical paradigm shift of the 1960s (17).

This volume is by no means an easy read. The foundational articles – ‘building blocks’ (Baugesteine), ‘objections’ (Einreden), and ‘outlines’ (Aufrisse), which together with the three introductory contributions (Witthahn/Feeser-Lichterfeld, Schroer, Fürst) are described as [trans.] “epistemological preliminaria” (164), demand a willingness to immerse oneself not
only in the historical course of the uncovering of aesthetic questions in practical theology, but also in the linguistic play of aesthetics, hermeneutics, culture theory and semiotics. Interestingly, though, pastoral theology (Stenger, Fuchs, Meyer-Blank, Fürst) is not the first discipline to be heard from. It is preceded by two systematic contributions (Wohlmuth, Höhn). This approach is nevertheless plausible in that it embeds the aesthetic discourse within a context of theological and philosophical history, while also clearly marking the ambivalence of aesthetics, perception and symbol.

The debate over the relationship between aesthetic theory and critical action theory is taken up and pursued in greater depth by both Fürst and Fuchs, who arrive at similar conclusions. On the basis of a semiotically and theologically charged concept of aesthetics, Fuchs, with recourse to Mette, advocates that the aesthetic approach be understood as a provocation and an opportunity to more adequately appraise and correct the deficits that evidently go hand in hand with a definition of practical theology as critical action theory. Citing the call of the Second Vatican Council to perceive the signs of the times from the perspective of the Kingdom of God and to interpret them from an interdisciplinary point of view, Fuchs therefore calls for a fundamental understanding of pastoral aesthetics as “perceiving the signs of the times” (Fuchs, 114). Only thus, he argues, can we avoid the risk of practical theology falling victim to a naïve aestheticism that uncritically reinforces societal tendencies and does further harm to those already suffering. The potential strength of practical theology, according to Fuchs, is its ability to reveal the trivial aesthetics of cult and adventure, thereby doing a life-affirming service to society as a whole as to the Christian churches by exposing false gods. Both Fuchs and Fürst argue on the basis of a broad concept of aesthetics. Both conceive of aesthetics as the theory and practice of perception in the physical and sensory sense. If pastoral action is to be continuously updated and renewed, and if the symbolic-sensory dimension is considered important in this process, then the pastoral actors need to demonstrate not only action competence, but also a symbolic-sensitive competence of perception, evaluation and creation. Against this background, Fürst defines pastoral aesthetics as the “scientific thematisation... [and] practical means of realization of the critical perception and creation of form in Christian-ecclesial pastoral work and praxis” (Fürst, 33). The programmatic of pastoral aesthetics can therefore be distilled into the following basic principles: “The art of pastoral care, the art of celebrating the service, and indeed the art of forming the church in a way that is true to the Gospel and appropriate to the situation – all of this demands, along with action competence, a specific sensibility and creativity and an aesthetic judgment inspired by faith in perception and creation. To make a contribution in this regard is the purpose and the goal of the pastoral aesthetics proposed here” (Fürst, 165).

How this aesthetic competence can be realized in concrete terms is the question tackled by six articles that were written with a view to everyday practice. With a focus on liturgical performance, the nature of the Christian liturgy as a system of temporo-spatial realization is explored with a view to its aesthetic potential. Along with the call to the stronger perception of verbal and non-verbal expressions and their connection with the reality of contemporary life, there is a warning against the arbitrary modification of liturgical forms (Gerhards). By turning attention to gesture as a practical-theological category of holistic perception (Feiter), the search moves beyond the liturgical sphere. Forms of Christian community-formation in evolved modernity (Blasberg-Kuhnke) and the conceptual justification of Christian pastoral care in general (Wahl). The last of these six articles, finally, leads to a rethinking of the ‘Professio fidei’ formula (Heinemann).

In the third part of the book the practical-theological discourse is expanded in the direction of an interdisciplinary perspective. First, two pastoral psychologists (Witrathm, Reuter), independently of one another, call for a dialectic dialogue that would contribute to an enrichment of the theory and practice of pastoral psychology as well as pastoral aesthetics. From the
perspective of organizational development (Ernsberger, Severin), it is noted that pastoral aesthetics can act as an aid to discernment and criteriology in the analysis of parish events (Ernsberger, 279). Pastoral processes, too, are ultimately aesthetically qualified dynamic processes, that need to be perceived and formed accordingly. Intercultural impulses (Lutz), collected in the course of an analysis of “small Christian communities” in the United States, appear to confirm this thesis. Here too it is seen that classic parish forms are in flux, that parish members seek to be perceived in new ways and to develop new forms of celebration. Finally, articles that draw on the social sciences and the closely related empirical theology open the door to the necessary discussion of the repertoire of methods of modern pastoral aesthetics (Feess-Lichterfeld, Kläden). It is only in the last two papers, which focus on film and art (Kroll, Sorace), however, that an attempt to define the concepts of aesthetics and specifically pastoral aesthetics is undertaken.

This *Pastoral Aesthetics* is indeed a courageous book (Schroer, 15). It sets out to add a building block to the discussion around the paradigmatic basis of practical theology. It is provocative and at the same time sensitive and reserved. It marks out a course to be followed but makes no claims to exclusiveness. It is imbued with an ecumenical spirit and yet leaves room for denominational viewpoints and differences. That the term “pastoral aesthetics” is currently not a fitting subject of compromise to Protestant ears is logical given the denotative differences in the meaning attached to ‘pastoral’ (Meyer-Blank, 120). The fact that the book is a compendium of 22 authors operating with divergent concepts of aesthetics does nothing to diminish its value, but rather provides an incentive to clarify these issues by means of fundamental research and reflection. Along with the needed conceptual clarification, the criteriology of pastoral aesthetics and the development of a symbol-critical methodology are areas ripe for further exploration.


 Reviewed by E. Hauschildt, Bonn

The author wants the title of his book to be understood in a programmatic sense. The Protestant ‘side’ needs to learn from Catholic trends towards ‘social pastorate’ in the sense of participation-oriented, solitary Christian social involvement with a clear option for others and the poor. Social pastorate is regarded as [trans.] “a category for a diaconal qualification of the diaconal practice of faith” (41, cf. the subtitle of the book). The extensive introductory remarks (12-41) explain the role of the concept in the Catholic debate and make the programmatic claim. In subsequent chapters, however, the term hardly ever appears, and when it does, only in introductory or concluding contexts. There are chapters on historical developments in the 19th century (42-112); others deal with the diaconal profession (as a ministry of the church, its necessary pastoral competences, training for diaconal professions; 113-194). Another group of studies deals with aspects of Christian pre-schools and their function for the church and the local community (212-277). Finally there is a set of studies of the relation between diaconal work and pastoral care, aspects of clinical pastoral education, of systemic therapy and pastoral care, and of Christian crisis telephone services (278-357). A short concluding section offers [trans.] “conclusions, visions and options for action” (358-376). It repeats ten pairs of oppositions, which the author developed at the end of the introduction to the book and now links to results from the other chapters. These chapters are regarded as exemplifying a ‘diaconal qualification’ of Christian practice of faith. Diaconal quality seems to be measured in terms of conformity with the concept of social pastorate. The ten opposing pairs are [trans.]: (i) ‘concern’ – ‘recruiting’, (ii)

Empirical data and their interpretation play only a minor role in this book. There is a short summary of the results of two German surveys about the attitudes of diaconal workers to the ideals of the diaconate and the church (165-167). Only one chapter focuses on empirical research (326-334). The author condenses the results of six empirical surveys of acceptance of pastoral care in clinical systems. Of these, two were conducted in the USA in 1967 and 1977, others are German studies dating to the late 1970s and the mid-1980s; only one is from the mid-1990s. The results presented are not very specific. From these data the author concludes that both the institutions and their patients want pastoral care; some have more general psychosocial expectations, some more religious.

In spite of attempts at cohesion, in my view the book remains a collection of separate studies. The author does not develop a strong basic theory. Instead the concept of Protestant social pastorate represents a certain theological tendency: option for the poor, integration of social work in the life of the congregation as the ideal, as opposed to excessive secularisation of Christian social work (cf. especially the chapter on the diaconal church, 196-211). The emphasis is on goodwill, strong convictions and balanced practice, rather than on clear-cut, scientific argument.


Reviewed by M.J. Cartledge, Lampeter

In this book Chris Hermans aims to provide foundations for the study of religious education. He does this by exploring six key concepts in depth. These are religion in a globalizing society, religious tradition, religion, the religious self, learning through participation and inter-religious learning. In so doing he intends to provide a ‘critical conceptual framework’ enabling the various theories of religion to be analyzed and utilized in relation to educational theory and the task of religious education.

Certainly this book is an extremely rich theoretical work that advocates a particular form of participatory learning theory aiming to develop the religious self in the context of inter-religious dialogue. The argument for this approach to religious education begins by examining the context of dialogue within a fragmented globalized society by means of an ‘open’ approach to tradition as the intersection of time (past/future coordinates) and space (inner/outer coordinates) with respect to icons of (or windows onto) God, especially at the margins. Drawing on a cultural-institutional theory of religion the author focuses on religious practices as disclosive of intentional rule-governed meaning to participants. Placing himself within the social constructivist tradition in psychology, he explores the meaning of religiosity for the formation of the religious self as a polyphonic self (that is internally dialogical, social, spatially located and evolving). Through participation in religious practices the self develops a certain set of expertise, which can be shared with others in a mutually enriching manner. With these conceptual frameworks in place the structure of religious education is addressed. Participatory learning is described by means of developmental, social, mediated and meaningful categories of learning. Finally, Hermans brings all the strands of
his argument together in addressing religious education in a religiously pluralistic context and it here that all his commitments can be seen to cohere. He proposes a learning theory that takes seriously the sociological context of contemporary society, the nature of religious traditions and the psychological development of the self for formal religious education.

It is clear to me that Hermans has given us a piece of original research that demands to be taken extremely seriously. It opens up new horizons and pushes us in different directions than those previous charted by religious educators. For these reasons I hope it will be read widely and discussed by both academics and practitioners. However, I do believe that there are some issues surrounding his thesis. I am not convinced at times by the conceptual weight that is given to a cluster of notions driving the project and the justification given for them. These include: secularization, uncertainty (axiomatic for him?), marginality, transcendence-immanence, silence and sacramentalism. These notions appear to reflect the disposition of the writer in the context of the contemporary Netherlands; and I do not think that they are representative of other multi-religious contexts. The philosophical commitments standing behind the construct reflect a particular approach to religious pluralism, which is certainly open to debate. Of course, no theological work can be divorced from the presuppositions of its author and this book is no different. Nevertheless, despite these comments, I enjoyed reading the book immensely and was intellectually stretched and challenged by its content, and for this I am extremely grateful.


Reviewed by M. Robbins, Bangor

John Inge’s book is based on his premise that the church has lost sight of a sense of place, and that place has lost out to space and time. Through this book he establishes the importance for Christian theology to regain an understanding of the centrality of place to faith and practice.

The first chapter reviews current Christian thinking on place and finds it wanting. Inge demonstrates that theology has followed society in losing a sense of place and that this loss has impacted faith and practice. The following three chapters set out to redress this balance through biblical exegesis, sacramental theology, and pilgrimage in the Christian tradition.

In his exegesis of the Old Testament Inge focuses on the people of God linked to the land through passages such as the significance of the Garden of Eden and the exodus from Egypt for the Promised Land. Through exploring these passages he examines the links between God, the people of God and the land. The exegesis of the New Testament takes a different perspective through looking at the symbolic associations of place, for example in the relationship between the city of Jerusalem, Judaism and Christianity as reflected by the Gospels and the letters of Paul. This exegesis demonstrates the importance of place to the biblical narrative.

Chapter three explores sacramental encounters with an emphasis on mystical experiences, which are often associated with particular places. The work of the Alister Hardy group is used to demonstrate that such encounters are perhaps more common than is assumed. This association between religious experiences and place leads to the definition of holy places and pilgrimage to these places in chapter four.

Inge documents the re-emergence of the shrine as a holy place and suggests how churches should be seen as shrines and used as a method of outreach. It would have been interesting to hear Inge’s views on church tourism within this context.

Inge sets out to convince us that the theology of place is (and has always been) an important underpinning to Christianity, albeit under-valued and under-appreciated. Inge’s methodology to achieve this aim is of the historian and biblical scholar. He touches on empirical

Reviewed by E. Hense, Nijmegen

Josuttis focuses on religion as a craft practised by a minister or a parish. What he proposes is the recovery and revaluation of the wide range of religious acts and perceptions as spiritual ‘methods’. This underlines the importance of intentional spiritual acts and perceptions as matters for theological reflection. The question is what professional training is needed to become an expert in spiritual ‘methods’.

The general theme is outlined in four introductory chapters summarising problems relating to these spiritual ‘methods’ in the following areas: (i) contemporary theology, (ii) Protestant theology in particular, (iii) religious studies, and (iv) accommodating spiritual ‘methods’ in different frameworks of reality.

The main part of the book comprises six chapters on spiritual acts: (v) fasting, (vi) prayer, (vii) consecration, (viii) sacrificing, (ix) blessing and (x) healing; plus three chapters on spiritual perceptions: (xi) hearing, (xii) dreaming, and (xiii) seeing. The spiritual acts and the spiritual perceptions are described within their biblical, ecclesiastic or broad religious tradition. Secondly, they are discussed in terms of psychological or phenomenological approaches, and finally their execution is reconstructed, concentrating on corporal processes as much as on external influences.

Josuttis links up with the well-known study, *Christian spirituality,* edited by B. McGinn, J. Meyendorff & J. Leclerq (1985), in that he takes the broad definition of spirituality in the introduction to that study (21) as his starting point: spirituality concerns those human acts which are directly and exclusively oriented to God. Jossuttis adds that spiritual acts cannot be performed arbitrarily and that they cannot be invented by human beings but can only be discovered by those who are open to divine influence.

The typical logic of spiritual acts and spiritual perceptions becomes clear when one realises that they are not practised because people are already spiritual beings but because people want to become spiritual beings. Theological reflection on spiritual acts and spiritual perceptions is meant to protect them against legalistic distortion, emotional overload and profane attenuation.

Like many other theologians today, Josuttis follows the contemporary trend towards increasing interest in spirituality. Still working within the framework of his own discipline, pastoral studies, he deals with his research subject: spiritual ‘methods’. This makes the book interesting for students and practitioners of pastoral care.


Reviewed by Th. Quartier, Nijmegen

When the series *Life passages* started in 2000 with the volume: *Deeply into the bone. Re-inventing rites of passage* by Ronald L. Grimes, many scholarly and non-scholarly readers
expected a new, different view on the somewhat old-fashioned concept of rites of passage. As many life passages appeared to be fuzzy and ritually impoverished, the series seemed to offer a goldmine of thoughts and narratives from many different cultural contexts about possible ritualisation of life passages. What Grimes’s volume promised and realised certainly also applies to this latest, third volume in the series: Robert Kastenbaum’s investigation of rituals and ritualisation at the end of life – dying and death.

A noted author on death for many years, Kastenbaum offers a fresh exploration of the final passage from life and through death. Drawing on a remarkable range of observations from psychology, anthropology, religion, biology and personal experience, the author re-imagines the progression of life, from early childhood bedtime rituals to the many small rehearsals people stage for their final departure. An important assumption in this regard is that human finitude, which is present throughout the lifespan of a human person, entails life, death and afterlife.

This means that when one thinks about death, it is necessary to start with life. In the first part of his book this is one of the major sources for Kastenbaum’s investigations. In the first chapter he explains the function of ritual in human life, which is especially urgent when “something happens” in the sense that somebody dies. Then ritual can embody the final passage. In the second chapter the author explains that death is rehearsed during people’s lifetime in everyday rituals. The bedtime rituals of small children are one example of a very early ‘rehearsal of death’. Another example is opening and closing a door. Although the author’s ideas might be a bit farfetched, this chapter can still sensitise readers to death’s presence in life.

The next two chapters are devoted to what a good death might be. Here the tradition of the *ars moriendi* is described. Kastenbaum shows that the circumstances for a ‘good death’ have changed drastically in recent times, for instance as a result of rapid advances in medical science. This means that we live in a time of new ritualisation of death and dying: there are still many gaps but also many opportunities.

Kastenbaum then elaborates on specific topics and practical historical examples in connection with the final passage from life to death. In the fifth chapter he talks about becoming a ‘corpsed person’, in the sixth about abusing and eating the dead, and in the seventh chapter about the plague. Although these chapters contain mainly historical descriptions, they are very informative and sometimes thought provoking when one thinks about the way death is handled in present-day societies. In the eighth chapter this becomes particularly clear, when the author presents profound and multifaceted material on burials and cremations, a topic that is still highly relevant in present-day care for the dead.

The last two chapters of Kastenbaum’s book deal with key images that play a role when people think about death, taking care of the dead, and perhaps their own death. The first image is the ‘journey of the dead’ and the second the image of an afterlife, which is not easy to find in modern society, as Kastenbaum makes clear. Eternity comes in very different shapes and modes, especially in modern times and modern Western societies, as is evident, for example, in the individualised practice of funerals in a religious or non-religious context where various images of eternity can play a role.

This book is what the series promised and what was also said about the first volume a few years ago: a ‘goldmine’ for people who are looking for possible rituals or ritual traditions in connection with death. One of the book’s greatest achievements is that it broadens the reader’s perspective on life in a very consistent way and that it offers many unusual examples of ritualisation. This applies also to scholars of ritual studies, liturgical studies, religious studies, et cetera: the book makes you find the final passage in a new way and in unexpected places. Sometimes those places are too far out, but sometimes they help you find your way. Empirically the volume offers a good starting point, triggering intuitions that can be inspiring for different theoretical and methodological approaches. This is a task for empirical scholars, and their work can be a good complement to Kastenbaum’s brilliant work.
Reviewed by G. Goosen, Sydney

This is a well-presented book which provides the reader with some primary texts that deal with Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement. The editors have done much research in tracking down suitable writings for this book. In the first instance, it is an anthology of writings for students who would like to study the early and subsequent sources of Pentecostalism. It covers the period from the late nineteenth century into the late twentieth century, and includes British and American sources. All the selected extracts are short, most being around two to three pages with five being the exception, and the contents is conveniently arranged in four parts which deal with history, theology, theology in practice and issues. Among the issues, for example, topics such as pacifism, ecumenism, women and morality are as topical now as they were then. Each part in turn has subheadings which on the one hand, are convenient if one is searching for a particular aspect of Pentecostalism, but on the other, tend to fragment the presentation. Some of the parts and some of the subsections have useful introductions by one or other of the editors.

It is interesting to note the great variety of the kind of sources used. Some are from books, others from church newspapers or bulletins, history books, diaries and memoirs, conference papers and even an extract from the Executive Council of the American Assemblies of God dealing with the fall-out from the disgrace of the televangelist Jim Bakker.

There are a number of good publications giving the history and theology of Pentecostalism in general. There are Hollenweger’s magisterial volumes on Pentecostalism but not everyone has the time to wade through them, least of all undergraduate students. There are other valuable sources, such as those of Allan Anderson, An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity (2004), and Vinson Synan, The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal (2001), which could supplement this volume. Then, if it is a dictionary one is looking for, there is Stanley M. Burgess’ The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (2002). However, this reader is different in that it allows the student to consult primary sources and, furthermore, it has the virtues of being accessible, user-friendly and written in a style that is easy enough to follow.

However, given the variety of the kind of sources used in this book, the student will be hard pressed to evaluate the reliability and accuracy of the sources. Guidance will be needed. The entries are all fairly short and there is not a whole lot of detail in the extracts. The entries are also of uneven length. For example, under the subheading, ‘Pentecostal eschatology’ there are eight extracts covering twenty-one pages; ‘generations’ has only one extract of three pages, and ‘women’ two extracts (both male authors?) of a total of three pages. The names of some of the authors are given with full first names, others with only the initials, so it is impossible to gauge the male/female ratio. Consistency would have helped in this case. The book has a useful glossary and timeline of events as well as an index of Subjects and Names. Inexplicably there was no entry for ‘glossolalia’ in the subject index.

Overall it needs to be acknowledged that, although this reader was produced to meet the specific needs of the students at Bangor, Wales, it has a more general application. It is a valuable resource for all those who wish to study something about Pentecostalism from primary writings, and secondly, it alerts students and scholars as to the available primary sources for further research.

Reviewed by S. Gärtner, Tilburg

By discussing the individual as a subject (that is as a confident, self-referential and responsible actor) theology in particular, and Christianity generally, try to keep up with a development that began in the Age of Enlightenment. Currently this development has led to a fundamental approach to individual identity and is one to which the Catholic Church could only react defensively. Karl Rahner, among others, tried to overcome the negative implications of this reaction. According to Rahner theology cannot talk about God without simultaneously talking about humans. His transcendental theology method inspired the anthropological trend in modern theology, which is echoed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Via this method Rahner continues to be a major influence on practical theology in Germany, evident in the way this theology focuses on the individual as subject.

In this approach the main aim of religious practice is to encourage people increasingly to direct their own lives. Ironically, this modern vision of humans as subjects is under fire today, mainly in postmodern philosophy, which could be superficially interpreted as its death-knell. However, these critics are really rejecting any purely idealistic vision of humans as subjects only when it is seen as crucial for the generation of reality, knowledge and truth. Michel Foucault showed the flaws in this vision by exposing its dependence on concrete historical circumstances. Interestingly, this led to the suspicion that his approach, too, conflicted with the basic tenets of the Enlightenment.

Rahner and Foucault are the two antagonists in the research presented here, based on a thesis at the University of Bonn. The author initiates a dialogue between these two contradictory thinkers and in so doing broadens the practical-theological understanding of humans as subjects. Thus the area of research is a general reflection on the foundation of practical theology, with strong systematic-theological links. Although the author claims to focus primarily on the theory of religious education, the core of her research comprises two extensive analyses of the works of Foucault and Rahner, after which their ideas are synthesised.

After outlining the relatively incoherent debate about Foucault in German philosophy and theology, the author gives an in-depth analysis of his thinking in chapter 2, following the chronology of his works. The focus on humans as subjects reveals a certain development in Foucault’s thinking. In his early work Foucault concentrated on ‘destruction’ of the concrete circumstances that enable individuals to become subjects, using his so-called genealogical method. He shows the naivety of taking the individual as subject, because the individual is actually a heteronymous and disciplined ‘sujet’. In later life Foucault developed a terminology for ‘constructing’ a new kind of approach to humans as subjects, but certainly without reference to transcendence.

By contrast, transcendence is Rahner’s point of departure (presented in chapter 3). In his early philosophical works – *Geist in Welt* (1939, 1957) and *Hörer des Wortes* (1941, 1963) – humans are presented as essentially open to a higher reality. Later Rahner combined this with his theology of grace – God’s self-revelation as an act of freedom and love for the benefit of humankind. Fundamentally, therefore, humans as subjects are transcendently grounded, which in its turn has to be interpreted as God’s gift to enable them to answer his call. That is the basis of human identity, thus combining theocentrism and anthropocentrism. This brings Kolf-van Melis back to the question of humans as subjects.

In the concluding chapter the differences between Foucault’s and Rahner’s approaches become clear: methods of deconstructing humans as subjects as opposed to ways of giving them a transcendental foundation; the radical immanence of humanity as opposed to immanence as the starting point of belief; and genealogical research as opposed to metaphysical
speculation. However, the author does not interpret this opposition as a contradiction but sees the methodologies as convergent (especially in the problem of power) and ultimately complementing one another. Using this approach, she is able to show the general consequences of both approaches for practical theology.

Even readers who don’t find the interpretation reasonable can read the book as a penetrating introduction to either Foucault’s or Rahner’s thinking. Such broad analyses seem to be a typically German theological approach. In addition the conclusions help to correct any naive ideas about ‘humans as subjects’ in practical theology. A further merit of this book is that it advances the debate on Foucault’s works, which so far has concentrated mainly on the question of pastoral power. Overall the research is an important contribution to contemporary general practical theology.


In her dissertation “I wish I believed – I think” Approaches to Religion and Religiosity in the Lifestyles of Late Modernity, which was accepted by the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Münster, Judith Könemann sets out first of all to discover patterns of attitudes and behaviour in the ways in which people meet the challenges arising from the conditions of late modernity (including pluralisation, individualisation, etc.) Among the patterns of meaning that emerge as significant, Könemann counts religion. As a result, her second specific question is directed at the function of religion that becomes apparent in the patterns of behaviour. The author elaborates her theoretical assumptions and the study design from the perspective of practical theology and sociology of religion. The volume follows a classic structure: Part I sets out the theoretical foundations and methodological considerations, Part II describes the empirical analysis, and Part III is devoted to the interpretation of the results.

In the first part (120 pages), the theoretical framework is laid out. Könemann begins with a discussion of the concept of modernity/postmodernity, referring particularly to authors like Beck, Habermas and Lyotard. In this context she places the question of religion in modernity. The concepts of religious individualisation (drawing on Luckmann and Gabriel) and secularisation (with reference to Pollack) are described in detail and the relationships between them critically illuminated. One of the desiderata of this theoretical analysis is the indeterminacy of the concept of religion or religiosity. In particular, the structure theory of religion as developed by Oevermann and the functional theory of religion as put forward by Kaufmann and Luhmann are used to more closely define the concept of religion with which Könemann intends to work. This part also represents a comprehensive and sophisticated analysis of the relevant German-language literature in this area at this time. Since some gaps remain in the sociological determination of the concept of religion from a theological viewpoint, the author follows with reflections on the theology of religion, which she places in a prophetic-political context. The general analysis of religion and modernity now moves into an analysis of the active subject, by way of an examination of the implementation of religion in the late-modern biography. In the second chapter of Part I Könemann elucidates the methodology of the empirical study. She justifies the qualitative empirical approach and the use of methods of structural hermeneutics, as developed by Oevermann. Why Könemann feels compelled to reinforce this justification by negatively contrasting it with a supposed quantitative positivist approach is not clear. The author reports having carried out eleven interviews, although only three are used in the empirical part.
Part II (150 pages) documents the analysis of the three interviews. Oevermann calls his method, somewhat ambiguously, objective hermeneutics, meaning essentially a method of understanding that is not content with an intuitive interpretation of the content of texts, but requires the interpreter to develop several different readings and to analyse them in relation to each other. This method is time-consuming and necessarily produces a great deal of text and at times produces quite a long-winded impression. The advantage doubtless lies in the depth of the insight into the structures of people’s thought and behaviour, though it requires special skill to keep sight of the forest for the trees.

In Part III of the study, Könemann evaluates the analyses in light of the reconstruction of the three cases. She inquires into the generalisability of the particular findings and seeks to identify theological consequences. In the reconstruction of the cases, it seems to me that Könemann stays very close to the data descriptions. A new theoretical concept, namely Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, is introduced, and seems to be more important in realizing the goals of the final evaluation, namely to develop theoretical constructs or at least models, than are the data. One wonders why Bourdieu was not introduced earlier, during the discussion of the constitution of biography in modernity, since this concept is not developed from the data but is presented as an explanatory, underlying theory. At this point it would be worthwhile reflecting on the relation between theory and empirical data in objective hermeneutics. In a short section, Könemann addresses the question of the general in the particular, developing ten perspectives which she calls ‘theses’. If ‘thesis’ is translated as claim, then the term is appropriate if not entirely happy, for after 350 pages the reader expects findings and conclusions, not new claims about possible facts. But perhaps this approach is predicated on a certain reticence on the part of the author to establish a universal theory on the basis of n = 3. The substance of what Könemann presents could probably be largely confirmed in relation to other studies on religiosity (for example the autonomy claim of religious expression). In a third evaluation, the author draws some practical theological consequences for a subject-oriented theology that, as is always the case in more fundamental empirical studies, must remain general in nature. Overall the study is described very precisely; the linguistic, theoretical and empirical level is very high, and the work provides another element to understanding the religious situation of our time. Könemann clearly shows that religious self-image is influenced by environmental conditions, but that form and content ultimately are determined by the subject itself, perhaps even with a certain immunity to outside (i.e. ecclesial) dogmatic determinations.


Reviewed by F. Jespers, Nijmegen

For some decades there has been no new comprehensive reader in the anthropology of religion; we had to make do with the last edition (1979) of the famous Lessa-Vogt. Michael Lambek, professor of anthropology at the University of Toronto, has produced a new reader: a major guide (620 pp.) to both the history of the anthropology of religion and new trends in research.

Apart from an important general introduction, the book contains five parts. The last part consists of research tools: a lengthy bibliography (28 pp.), two guides to this literature (geographical and topical), and an index. The four main parts comprise 38 selected articles by leading authors to explain the key issues. Part I is entitled “The context of understanding and debate”. Four classical authors (E. Tylor, E. Durkheim, M. Weber, C. Geertz) get four ‘skeptical rejoinders’ from L. Wittgenstein, W. Stanner, M. Ruel and T. Asad; the names give some idea of the selection process. Part II is devoted to “Poesis: the composition of
religious worlds”. It comprises four chapters containing fourteen essays on focal subjects: signs and symbols; structure, function and interpretation (myth, rules); moral inversions; and cosmology. Part III is on “Praxis: religious action”: nine articles on rituals, experiences and social order. Part IV presents six essays on “Historical dynamics: power, modernity, and change”.

Both the structure and the general introduction are indicative of Lambek’s own position. He explains religion as a cultural system intrinsically related to other cultural fields like politics and the economy. Religious themes like myth, shamanism and asceticism cannot be studied and understood on their own, nor should they be reduced to social or psychic epiphenomena. “What is advocated is not the discovery of more precise definitions but the acknowledgement of the contingency, provisionality, and implications of any definitions we choose to deploy” (12). So the editor does not avoid definitions but places them in a theoretical framework, a field of discussion. What he wants to avoid is to measure religious phenomena “by norms established via the monotheistic Judeo-Christian-Islamic lineage” (12). He himself adopts a cautious position between M. Spiro’s classical view (“religion is an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated super-human beings”, 10) and the critical approach of R. Rappaport and T. Asad, who regard religion as mechanisms of world construction. This position accounts for the structure (four parts, etc.) of this reader.

Lambek has compiled an excellent anthology on the anthropology of religion. He admirably demonstrates the development from classical studies of tribal, non-Western religions to critical hermeneutics of the constitution of worldviews around the globe. He invokes very different writers, from early ones like Tylor to contemporary scholars like Anne Vallely. Most of the articles are beautifully written, with fine and detailed descriptions of rituals – first class ethnography. Most authors give theoretical accounts as well, so we can always read at two levels. At the start of each part, chapter and article Lambek makes an insightful commentary, giving a valuable overview of the text that follows and some relevant literature. The editor pays attention to classical methods, but also to structuralism and critical hermeneutics. There are some minor weaknesses. Most of the articles are by North American and British anthropologists, creating the impression that the most important research and theory building are done there. Secondly, he does not pay any attention to the cognitive anthropology of scientists like P. Boyer or I. Pyysiäinen. All things considered, however, Lambek offers a good overview of the anthropology of religion and the current debate in this field.


It goes without saying that Gerben Heitink, the well-known Dutch practical theologian, was presented with a festschrift when he retired from his post at the Free University in Amsterdam. The book deals with an interesting leitmotiv in Heitink’s work, the theme of compassion (ontferming) in pastoral theology. In line with his work, which always relates theology to society, the authors were asked to link their contributions to some artwork. Some incorporated it into their articles, others did so on the accompanying CD-ROM. This accounts for the title: The art of compassion.

In the introduction [trans.], “About bridges”, Jelle van Nijen sketches a portrait of Heitink, who lived in towns with many bridges like Paris, Kampen, Arnhem and Amsterdam. A fine drawing by Jur Thomas illustrates the introduction. Van Nijen also gives an etymological overview of the biblical use of ontfermen and synonyms. The book is divided into
four parts: the concept of compassion, and compassion and the individual, the community and culture respectively.

Fittingly Hans van der Ven is the first contributor with a clear outline of the power inherent in compassion. Compassion may start with arousal of emotion, but it is directed to a certain practice, especially a sense of a fellowship of the weak. While relating compassion to mercy and – both distributive and communicative (justice, he stresses the need for self-knowledge on the part of the helper. “I will give, for I have been given” (do quia mihi datur). One should not dwell on one’s own troubles but, emptied of narcissism, should grow in compassion. Then, together with the sufferer, one can say a prayer of surrender to God, being both simul dives et pauper. In an evocative systematic approach to empathy Aad van Egmond relates this concept to traditional ideas about the divine foreknowledge of Jesus Christ, and even about the trinity, justification (here I would have stressed sanctification) and eschatology. Hyme Stoffels investigates compassion from a sociological standpoint. According to research church-going Christians – compared with other people – score positively on participation in welfare work. Joke van Saane writes from the perspective of a psychologist of religion: “Compassion unmasked?”

The second part contains Alma Lanser’s “Compassion in supervision”, Yolanda Dreyer’s “Internarrativity in pastoral care”, Corja Menken-Bekius’ “Working with images of pastors in the professional biography of the pastor”, and Jasper Vree’s “Insight into the religious life of P. Hofstede de Groot”.

In the third part Jan Hendriks writes about community building, Niek Schuman about the Kyrie Eleison, Cas Vos about the liturgy as a creative process, Jan Veenhof about faith healing and Sake Stoppels about ‘Thomas worship’.

In the last part, Frits de Lange deals with “Visual art as a hermeneutics of the Christian ethos’ and Hans de Wit with intercultural hermeneutics: “They are drumming for compassion”. Hans Alma discusses “Compassion in the life and work of Vincent van Gogh”. She and Maarten den Dulk, in “The preaching pillar of Hildesheim”, succeed best in relating compassion to art. Den Dulk discusses the 11th century Bernward pillar in the cathedral of Hildesheim. This bronze statue is reminiscent of the famous war victory columns in olden times. But it illustrates biblical stories about the King of kings, woven spirally around a ‘messianic tree’, from Jesus’ baptism up to his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Den Dulk distinguishes between two different kinds of scenes: before and after the transfiguration of Christ. The first part shows the conquest of divine love (castitas), the second the battle against the exclusion of the poor. Convincingly he argues that the general theme of both parts is compassion. Jesus brings the world under new management. So ‘Jesus is victor’, as J. Chr. Blumhardt and Karl Barth – and apparently many others! – knew.

As a rule a valedictory volume is a rather dull collection of too short, unrelated articles. In this book, by contrast, most articles put the subject of compassion in a new light. As usual, it is a pity that the book is written in Dutch, for it contains many articles of interest to a broader public than Dutch speakers.
“The life world of today’s young people is very much a media world.” This thesis is the starting point of the two volumes, both of which focus on the socialising impact of communication media on (young) people. It has provided a research basis for several empirical studies that are documented in the publications under review, raising questions such as the following: Are there any connections between the use of media and the religiosity or religious convictions of consumers? Is there a phenomenon that could be called ‘religious socialisation through media’ (religiöse Mediensozialisation), and if so, how common is it? Both studies focus on religious education (RE) theory and practice, the aim being to gain insight into, and perspectives on, approaches to teaching RE at school and in Christian parishes.

Religiöse Mediensozialisation? . . . (Pirner 2004) starts with an overview of the debate between theories of media education and RE since the 1980s. He also refers to empirical studies of the influence of communication media – TV, internet etc. – on the religiosity of media users. Pirner concludes that more empirical research is needed to investigate the connection between media experience and religious thinking. The author conducted two empirical studies, one among pupils aged, on average, fourteen; and one among RE teachers at public schools. Both studies used a quantitative research design. In the first study 302 pupils (approx. 50% male, 50% female) at different schools in Germany were asked to complete a questionnaire with items concerning time per week spent watching TV, use of computers, favourite TV programmes, et cetera (40ff). Pupils’ answers to these questions were correlated with their answers to questions on religious beliefs and religious attitudes – e.g. [trans.]: “Do you believe in supernatural phenomena? . . . in angels? . . . in reincarnation? . . . in God?” or “How often do you pray?” The following were among the results obtained: no correlation was found between the amount of time spent watching TV and religiosity, whereas there were several significant correlations between preferences of TV series and religious thinking. Thus the basic hypothesis that there is a connection between media use and religious thinking was confirmed. Gender was found to be a relevant variable in the observed correlations, with girls’ answers yielding far more correlations than boys’. However, basic religious beliefs yielded no correlations – belief in Jesus Christ; picture of God as just, almighty, gracious, etc. The author assumes that ‘strong’ religious convictions are not affected by media use.

In the second study (75ff) Pirner analysed 286 questionnaires completed by Protestant and Roman Catholic RE teachers. The main question was whether teachers perceive or assume that communication media influence the religious thinking of their pupils in class. It was found that teachers perceive strong influence on views about supernatural phenomena and ethical issues, but little or no influence on beliefs and basic religious attitudes. These results largely coincide with the results of the student study. One of the conclusions is that RE teachers should be trained much more thoroughly in media education.

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contributions from various authors. Part one deals with the importance of media for socialisation in general and for religious socialisation in particular. In many respects the mass media have taken over the role of religion (11f), that is (i) functionally – e.g. identity and/or community formation, search for meaning and orientation; (ii) structurally – e.g. rituals like shows or rock concerts; and (iii) content-wise – e.g. struggle of good versus evil, messianic heroes, search for salvation, apocalyptic themes. For this reason the authors advocate close interaction between media education and RE in order to help people understand the role of media in our life world and gain media competence. Media competence includes (31f) the ability to: (i) select specific media products from known alternatives; (ii) personally create media contributions; (iii) understand and evaluate media products; (iv) be aware of the influence of media on users; (v) know and evaluate the conditions of media productions – e.g. commercial interests.

The contributions in part one of the volume illustrate that these competencies are also desirable with respect to religious elements in the mass media. Here they should include the ability to perceive and understand religious elements; awareness of the various symbols that are often implicitly religious; and understanding of their function in the media. Thus, in both theory and practice, RE should deal with religious symbols in the context of media education, and vice versa (82-114).

Part two of the volume (117ff) presents four empirical studies of media impact on young people: (i) how children respond to religious TV programmes – video analysis of watching the programme, group discussions on the topics, interpretation of children’s paintings in response to watching the programme; (ii) how and with which effects young people use computers – phenomenological approach, qualitative interviews, interpretation within the theoretical framework of identity theory; and (iii) how young people play computer games that explicitly and implicitly use religious elements – phenomenological approach. Finally Pirner’s own empirical studies are presented (cf. the review of the first volume). These research projects use a wide range of empirical methods and illustrate how young people are influenced by, and actively respond to, religious elements in various communication media.

Part three provides fascinating ideas for, and detailed insight into, practical work with different media in RE classes – e.g. how to train students’ perception of religion by analysing classical movies; possibilities of working with the internet, video clips and multi-media software in RE classes. The multi-perspective approach and methodological variety in this volume are very enriching and stimulating. RE should allow for the influence of media on (young) users in both theory and practice. Further theoretical and empirical research along the lines of these studies will shed more light on the issue of religious socialisation through media.

Reviewed by W. Smeets, Nijmegen

The author of this book aims at an integrative approach to pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, in which psychological, spiritual and moral perspectives are combined. He starts with a critical description of current models for pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, describing the trends towards professionalization and psychologization and the theories of ‘imago Dei’ (Rizutto), moral development (Kohlberg), faith development (Fowler), self-development (Kegan), psychological types (the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator, Enneagram) and self-transcendence (Conn). The effects of these tendencies and theories on pastoral counseling and spiritual direction include reductionism and individualism. Clients are categorized and influenced in the image of those specific theories and practice directives. Spiritual development is reduced to the psychological stages of the individual. Pastoral coun-
Selors and spiritual directors are reluctant or unwilling to deal with their clients’ moral and ethical issues, which are taken over by philosophical counselors. Pastoral counseling and spiritual direction are separated completely, although both deal with life experiences, with healing and wholeness.

Sperry develops a model that meets three criteria for a holistic approach, formulated by Gratton: the model should be multi-disciplinary, inclusive and should integrate the full spectrum of human experience. Central to his holistic model is the concept of personal and social transformation. Transformation is defined as a change in various dimensions of existence (religious, affective, moral, intellectual, socio-political and somatic), which reflect a radical new self-understanding and world view. Sperry combines a ‘spiritual perspective’ (spiritual practices), a ‘moral perspective’ (character and virtue) and a ‘psychological perspective’ (self and self-capacities):

The spiritual domain includes all religious and spiritual experiences, feelings, beliefs, rituals and spiritual practices. The spiritual perspective on transformation is illustrated by a taxonomy of practices from Walsh: (i) purify motivation, (ii) cultivate emotional wisdom, (iii) live ethically, (iv) develop a peaceful mind, (v) cultivate wisdom and spiritual intelligence, (vi) recognize the sacred in all and engage in the service of others.

The moral domain includes ethical thinking, decision making and actions involving relationships with oneself, family, peers, community, work and society. The moral perspective on transformation is connected with a taxonomy of virtues, which Sperry derives from different authors: (i) charity and holiness, (ii) prudence, (iii) self-care and compassion, (iv) trustworthiness, (v) fidelity, (vi) justice, (vii) fortitude and courage, (viii) temperance and physical fitness.

The psychological domain includes emotional and cognitive abilities and functioning; a typical theory in this domain is the theory of the self. The psychological perspective on transformation is connected with Masterson’s taxonomy of self-capacities: (i) self-mastery, (ii) spontaneity, (iii) self-activation, (vi) self-acknowledgment, (vii) self-soothing, (viii) self-continuity, (ix) commitment, (x) creativity, (xi) intimacy, (xii) autonomy and – with reference to spiritual transformation in particular – (xiii) critical reflection, (xiv) critical social consciousness, and (xv) self-surrender.

Sperry’s integrative model correlates and specifies relationships between these taxonomies and the dimensions of transformation. He ascribes a conceptual and a practical value to his model. In practical terms, the author offers a protocol and practical guidelines for assessing client needs and functioning, selecting goals and a focus, planning interventions and monitoring progress. The model is illustrated by a case study of spiritual direction and one of pastoral care.

Sperry, a professor of psychiatry, author and practitioner of psychotherapy, pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, has fulfilled his aim. The book not only offers a practical framework for understanding both of these important aspects of pastoral work, it also shows how this model works out in practice. For this reason the book is especially interesting for professionals in pastoral care and spiritual direction. A particular strength of the book is the way Sperry relates ‘common presenting concerns’ of clients with the different kinds of guidance: pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, philosophical counseling and psychotherapy. The reader should however be wary of Sperry’s analysis of current theories on pastoral counseling and spiritual direction: he puts scientific and non-scientific approaches in one box, dismissing them as reductionism. Yet it has been demonstrated by Andriessen that developmental stage theories, for example, can be integrated in a well-balanced model of spiritual direction. Sperry’s description of the taxonomies of spiritual, moral and psychological transformation is also very short and lacks conceptual differentiation. Although Sperry describes the integrative model in eight tables, an all-encompassing synthesis is missing.

Reviewed by S. Fuhrmann, Mainz

This volume by Jörg Strübing, a senior lecturer at the University of Tübingen, closes a gap in the existing literature by examining Grounded Theory from the perspective of the philosophy of science. Following the theories of Charles S. Peirce (40-46, 52, 54), John Dewey (40-42, 60), and George H. Mead (38, 47), Strübing presents the epistemological model and follows up the traces that this model has left in the justification of the method of Grounded Theory.

In the framework of this concise portrayal of about 90 pages, the author introduces the main features of the Grounded Theory process. He defines fundamental terms such as ‘coding’ (19-22), ‘dimensions’ (22-26), and ‘theoretical sampling’ (29-32). Referring to social philosophic theories, Strübing explains the coherence of reality and theory and prepares the reader for the discussion about quality assurance and quality criteria of Grounded Theory that follows in Chapter 5. Methodological elements are further delineated by explaining the relationship between induction, abduction, and deduction (44-48, Chapter 3). In this way Grounded Theory is distinguished from other theories, and the correlations between reality and theory are characterized. The problem of previous knowledge is also addressed. Strübing also introduces the philosophy-of-science and social philosophical bases of Grounded Theory in order to illustrate the theoretical background of Strauss’ position. By examining Glaser’s criticism of Strauss’ approach, Strübing draws attention to the divergences between the two theoretical approaches. From the epistemological perspective (Chapter 4), he emphasizes these theoretical contradictions which can hardly be found in their methodology. In the final part, Strübing foregoes devoting an entire chapter to quality criteria, and instead, following Strauss, puts forward his own concept of the validity claim and the definition of quality standards within Grounded Theory.

Strübing organizes the methodological steps concisely and illustratively in good pragmatist form, and helps the reader achieve a deeper understanding of the operationalisations of the theory. The examination of the dispute between Glaser and Strauss on the line of scientific theory is very helpful in this regard. As the author remarks several times, this book is not intended as a basic introduction or as a “how-to” book; however, it is if anything too short and condensed, without illustrations or practice-related examples. Despite the use of a large number of technical words – and the presence, incidentally, of numerous spelling mistakes – the text provides useful explanations in its epistemological approach. Although it is not a book for beginners, it will be indispensable for anyone seeking to understand Grounded Theory and use its methods, because basic techniques are well explained from the epistemological point of view. In addition to that, the methodological problems of defining and guaranteeing quality standards – a matter that everyone working with Grounded Theory must confront – are discussed in detail. It is a pity that this book was not planned as a basic introduction to the subject. Nevertheless, the hope remains that in the near future, based on this volume, the author may put together an epistemologically founded introduction to the methods of Grounded Theory, including examples from practice.

Correlation has been a key concept in the academic discourse of religious education since the 1970s. It tried to reconcile tradition and human experience, both of which used to be the – more or less exclusive – focuses in didactics of religion. Correlational didactics argues that the two aspects refer to each other and can’t be separated from each other in religious education. Thus religious tradition and human experience are correlates. This concept was based on a theology found in Schillebeeckx’s writings. However there has been some criticism because its application in textbooks, syllabi and classroom communication was considered superficial or simplistic. It was said that correlation was often pursued for its own sake. At a very early stage, moreover, Englert, one of the contributors to this volume, raised the question if there was enough knowledge or implementation of tradition amongst pupils to make correlation feasible.

Ziebertz, Heil and Prokopf do not solve the dilemma of correlation didactics but present a theory which claims to offer a basis for the analysis of interview material and for improving professional religious teaching attitudes. They pick up the central issue of the relation between religious tradition and human experience, particularly that of children and young people, and propose a way to disclose new aspects of correlation. Logically correlation can be approached deductively or inductively. Abduction, based on Peirce’s semiotic pragmatism, is seen as the new way.

This volume not only presents the basic concept of abduction but also highlights an interdisciplinary and critical discussion of the issue that clearly outlines the potential of the concept, particularly for research, without concealing questionable aspects.

Identification of religious communication has become more difficult because of religious individualisation and an eclectic attitude towards religion. On the other hand it would seem that religious questioning remains important in our societies and people still draw on a pool of religious ideas and symbols.

Classical correlation has often failed to be helpful in this regard, because it produces circular knowledge rather than new insight. According to Peirce, abduction is necessary to create so-called risky hypotheses which can explain surprising or even irritating phenomena. Following Peirce, abduction is considered a form of logic, which is necessary for creative thinking and finding new solutions or explanations. So is abduction an alternative to classical correlation? Englert suggests that it can only be a supplement, because correlation always includes an element of reconstruction. Reichertz points out that abduction are not a means to find the old (tradition) in the new (experience). This is true in spite of the fact that Christian tradition itself is based on abduction, but it is not an acceptable way to pass on tradition. Englert also questions whether abduction is a wide enough concept for a systematic approach to didactics. Other contributors like Popp-Baier and Hoffmann point out that abduction is part of everyday thinking and acting and thus seems difficult to accommodate in a systematic approach.

The underlying assumption is that religious education is aimed at Christian belief, which is the situation in Germany and Austria. This differs from the point made by the authors in their first contribution, namely that the aim is to equip pupils for religious communication in society. Simon, referring to the situation in eastern Germany, observes not only a unique situation of a-religiosity, in which the absence of religious questioning is not considered a deprivation, but also a lack of cultural and religious knowledge. So knowledge may well turn out to be the first key. Also it could be that there is no religious interest at all.

Probably the most important aspect of abduction for the editors themselves is to be found in the second part of the book. Here it serves as a means of interpretation in an empirical
setting. The example of an excerpt from the Claudia interview shows that abduction can generate a variety of hypotheses which can be validated by means of induction and deduction. Popp-Baier emphasises the category of biography for an approach to religious experience as found in interviews, because otherwise one can easily confuse religious semantics with religious experience. With regard to professional attitudes the question is in how far the ability to decipher pupils’ statements is a key competence for teachers. Bauer points out the importance of self-directed and dialogic learning for creative thinking.

On the whole, the contributors appreciate the potential of abductive correlation, but there is still some need to prove the surplus value of the concept for interpretation and to substantiate its usefulness for didactics and professional training.

Translations and corrections: Barbara Schultz and Marcelle Manley