

Gockel highlights how Barth and Schleiermacher are close together in their appeal to a single divine decree, and in other ways, although Gockel is careful not to flatten out the differences that do remain. The essential claim is that Barth's doctrine of election is not yet christocentric: this, argues Gockel, only really comes to light in the exposition of election in the *Church Dogmatics* where,

‘...Barth's approach...at once preserves and christologically sharpens the teleological understanding of reprobation and election in his earlier position. The theocentric emphasis of Schleiermacher's and his own earlier revision of the doctrine is replaced by a christocentric emphasis: Jesus Christ not only reveals but also constitutes God's gracious choice as the self-determination to be God for His people and the determination of humankind to be the people of God’ (p. 169).

Gockel's study is well researched and written and provides a very good overview of the issues from a unique standpoint – Barth's doctrine of election in dialogue with Schleiermacher. As already indicated, the thesis that Barth substantially changed his mind on the doctrine of election is contested but this work provides an indispensable voice in the ongoing debate, one not to be missed when trying to work out for oneself what Barth said, let alone what he meant.

Myk Habets

Steven M Studebaker, editor. *Defining Issues in Pentecostalism: Classical and Emergent*. Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2008. (xiv + 207 pp.) [ISBN: 978-1-55635-843-2]

In February, 2007 McMaster Divinity College convened the first Pentecostal Forum, bringing together respected Pentecostal scholars from North America to present papers and engage in critical dialogue. This work represents the published papers of that forum, consisting of an introduction, seven substantial chapters, and an epilogue by Clark Pinnock. Respected heavyweights within Pentecostal scholarship are represented by Frank Macchia, Roger Stronstad and

Martin Mittlestadt, while emerging and younger scholars include Steven Studebaker, Amos Yong, and Andrew Gabriel. One non-Pentecostal, Cynthia Long Westfall is also included. This is an important work from some of the best and most creative Pentecostal scholars working today. For that alone it deserves careful attention.

The seven essays included here are all of an extremely high quality, provide largely original contributions to Pentecostal theology, and each of them is eminently readable. The essays have not been so heavily edited from their oral presentations that they lack the pace and voice of the author. Rather, these are lively pieces, that reflect in scholarly ways some of the Pentecostal spirit for which the movement as a whole is well known. As such this slim volume offers a substantial and enjoyable view of the landscape of current North American Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism is not, despite its distinguishing features, a monolithic tradition, as this volume highlights. Various contributors take issue with other contributors over some very important issues. For instance, the doctrine of subsequence (that baptism in/with the Spirit is subsequent to conversion) is a staple of Pentecostal theology; in fact it is one of its defining points. However, Macchia (in a summary of his major work *Baptized in the Spirit*) argues it is better to speak of 'Pentecostalsisms' and the doctrine of subsequence is not a *sine quo non*. Roger Stronstad takes exceptions to all such attempts as Macchia's and in a rather trenchant contribution presents a sophisticated exegesis and theology of the doctrine of subsequence in Luke-Acts.

Other essays represent directions in which Pentecostal theology is moving. Studebaker offers a constructive theological proposal for Pentecostals which seeks to redress the subordination of the Spirit which he sees evident within traditional theologies, including Pentecostalism. He builds upon the earlier work of David Coffey to develop a Pentecostal theology of trinitarian grace. In doing so he constructs a Spirit-oriented view of the Trinity and a Spirit-Christology to good effect. Amos Yong furthers his long-standing project to construct a theology of religions around the mission of the Spirit and Andrew Gabriel attempts to outline what a theology proper may look like when the Holy Spirit is taken seriously so that the divine attributes are built upon the revelation of God as three persons rather than according to Greek metaphysics.

In a volume such as this one is bound to want more – more detail, more justification, and more substantial engagement with

Scripture and the tradition. But that is a strength, not just a weakness of the work. Pentecostal theology is alive and well and with scholarship such as this, one can be sure that Pentecostal theology has much yet to offer the wider church in many areas, not just in pneumatology. This is an important contribution to contemporary theology and I can think of no better start than this to the McMaster Theological Studies Series.

Myk Habets

Francesca Aran Murphy. *God is Not a Story: Realism Revisited*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. (356 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-19-921928-5]

This work is a challenging critique of narrative theologies, including the works of George Lindbeck, Robert Jenson, and Herbert McCabe. Murphy argues that the use of the concept of story or narrative in theology is circular and self-referential, and that the widespread notion that the role of the theologian is to 'tell God's story' has not helped theology to advance the reality of its doctrine. As the subtitle indicates – God is not a story. If God is a story, argues Murphy, then he is an idea, a character, and thus utterly dispensable. She believes that God is not a story, he is a reality. Murphy contends that the scriptural revelation on which Christian theology depends is not a story or a plot but a dramatic encounter between mysterious, free, and unpredictable persons. She offers her own alternative approach, making use of cinema and film theory, and engaging in particular in a dialogue with the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar to highlight the weakness of narrative theologies and the superiority of a Christian form of realism.

Murphy (Reader in Systematic Theology, University of Aberdeen) specialises in the relation of aesthetics and the arts to theology. She uses drama, film and literature in her undergraduate teaching on philosophy of religion and contemporary theology and this explains the appeal of film over narrative in this work. Her academic writing has centred on theological aesthetics, especially von Balthasar and Etienne Gilson. Aesthetics is that branch of philosophy which examines the idea and function of beauty. Unfortunately, this