

Muller's arguments I am still not entirely convinced. Despite his protestations to the contrary Muller tends to flatten out the diverse thinkers and their theologies into neatly packaged categories. While he dismisses Armstrong's thesis outright, Armstrong does show how diverse Reformed thinkers are not cut from the same cloth and do in fact differ over essential theological points. Muller's claim that these are merely cosmetic differences is not true enough to the case. A second concern relates to Muller's repeated claim that method does not affect content. While this may be true it is not a necessary truth, each case in point has to be evaluated on its own merits. Muller simply assumes his point and then seeks evidence to illustrate it rather than entertaining a genuine historical inquiry to see if his point is true or not. In this regard Muller does not appear to critique his own subjective presuppositions sufficiently. A final concern relates to this point; when one reads Calvin's *Institutes*, Beza's *Tabula praedestinationis*, or Perkins' *A Golden Chaine* one gets a very clear sense of the differences between Calvin and the Reformed scholasticism of Beza and Perkins; and this strikes me as more than merely cosmetic. There are substantial differences of doctrine. Whether the divine decree is singular or plural makes a huge difference materially to soteriology not to mention proclamation and worship. These differences have been played out in the rejection of Barth's doctrine of election by federal Calvinists, for instance. Clearly they recognise doctrinal difference and not merely cosmetic masking, so much so that federal Calvinists refer to Barth's theology as 'neo-orthodox'. Would Muller's method extend to this debate as well? One thinks not. Perhaps Marshall McLuhan's adage, 'the medium is the message' holds true here, more so than Muller is willing to concede. These and other concerns remain over Muller's thesis, despite its undoubted value to scholarship.

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***Global Dictionary of Theology*. Eds. William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen. Downers Grove: IVP, 2008. (xxviii + 996 pp.) [ISBN: 978-1-84474-350-6]**

The *Global Dictionary of Theology* (GDT) is a major new venture which represents the first reference work of its kind. From the Introduction we read that it 'was conceived to provide a general overview of theological reflection and practice throughout the world' (p. vii). The editors have

invited authors from around the globe to write entries from their own contextual perspectives. While broadly evangelical and ecumenical, the *GDT* reflects a rich and diverse variety of styles and perspectives on theological topics. For a number of entries more than one author was invited to write and the multiple perspectives are included in the one article as a form of dialogue or, even, contrast.

The choice of authors is discussed by the editors in the Introduction. What they wanted were theologians from around the globe, largely less well known, including 'newly minted PhDs and young scholars in the beginning stages of their career' (p. xi), in addition to a number of senior, world-class academicians. This is achieved handsomely as unknown scholars rub shoulders with familiar names in their respective fields. Included amongst the honour roll is Mark Baker, Henri Blocher, Simon Chan, Roland Chia, Frank Macchia, Nancey Murphy, and Jürgen Moltmann. Care is taken to ensure contributions are included from men and women, from the Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa, and even the Pacific.

A number of unusual features characterise the *GDT*: It does not include entries on any individuals, favouring themes and doctrinal topics instead; short entries were discouraged in favour of solid and weighty entries, sometimes the length of full journal articles; and a diversity of approaches and theologies was actively arranged across the entries and in many cases, within specific entries themselves, as for example when more than one author contributed to an entry. What has been paramount in the editor's work is to get 'contextual' theology, by which they mean a theology which self-consciously works out of and within a particular context. To achieve this goal the editors state that they had to send articles back to be rewritten or rejected entries on the basis that they were not 'contextual' enough. As an example they cite non-western authors supplying entries on theological topics that read as if they could have been written by western theologians. The editors did not consider this to be contextual enough and thus commissioned new entries on occasion to achieve their goal.

A closer look at several entries in the *GDT* proves illustrative of its contents. The entry on 'Theological Method' (pp. 889-898) was written by three theologians in two parts. In the first half, 'A Global Orientation,' Gener and Bautista (from the Philippines) provide a brief history of theological method in the west ('euro-American') and outside the west and emphasize the polycentric world within which theology is done. Next follows a discussion on the Bible and theological methods in which a variety of perspectives are surveyed, ranging from the work of

John Goldingay to Kwame Bediako. What comes through in this half-entry is consistent with the entire tenor of the *GDT* and is captured in the summary, 'Thus a global orientation in theology is ultimately pastoral and missiological...the story of the church in local situations reveals both the liberating power of the gospel and its cultural domestication...' (p. 894). In the second half, Kevin Vanhoozer from the USA presents a summary of his well-known theodrama in which he asks a number of pertinent questions relevant to the book as whole, namely, 'should theological method be local?' (p. 895). You will have to read his entry to see what he says. Together the entry on theological method is a stimulating one which provides a variety of perspectives from a range of voices and concludes with a useful select bibliography.

The second entry will be of interest to readers of *PJBR* – it is on 'Pacific Island Theology' (pp. 624-626) and is written by the well-known New Zealand Roman Catholic theologian, Neil Darragh, lecturer in theology, University of Auckland. I was interested to see how theology is done from our Pacific context, what marks it off from other theologies, and what continuities may be present. Darragh defines the geographical locale he represents as 'the islands of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia...the larger island groups of Papua New Guinea and Aotearoa New Zealand' (p. 624). Already from such a broad swathe of the Pacific one wonders how a theology could typify this diverse region. It is not at all common thinking that Cook Islanders and New Zealanders, for instance, share a common cultural or theological outlook. The one uniting factor Darragh points out is colonisation by the British Empire which brought Christianity with it. Given this diversity Darragh isolates three themes in his article: 1) localisation, 2) public engagement, and 3) ecclesiology.

Reading Darragh's entry as one who lives in this region highlights both the attractiveness of the *GDT* and its major shortcomings. Darragh manages to capture something of the general feel and concerns shared by Pacific Christians and this allows the reader to bring this perspective into dialogue with voices from across the world. In this sense the global dimension of the *GDT* is achieved, and admirably so. The shortcomings of this approach is that I am not sure how accurate Darragh's description of theology done down here is. Darragh does not represent anything like evangelicalism, the largest Christian movement in the Pacific, and thus his seems more caricature than accurate description. And perhaps that is the failing of all contextual theologies, as perceived by the *GDT*. While context is undoubtedly important, and influential, it may just be that the continuities between global perspectives is what is actually unique about Christian theology.

My students are already using the *GDT* and are enjoying it. It is bringing a breadth to their studies and introducing them to a wider range of voices and perspectives than most western dictionaries do. For that this work will prove to be of enduring value. However, many of my students are not supplementing the *GDT* with other more standard dictionaries and studies, and that is skewing their perspectives and work (much like Wikipedia does), this too may be one of the enduring affects of the *GDT*. Either way, it is a major resource and a creative one at that which should find a place in any theological library.

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***Essential IVP Reference Collection CD-ROM Version 3.*
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Specifications: System Requirements: 500mhz Pentium III processor (1 GHz Pentium III recommended), CD/DVD-ROM drive. Operating System: Microsoft Windows 98 or later. Software: Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or later. Memory: 192MB RAM (512MB recommended). Hard Drive: 550 MB hard drive space.

This is the third edition of the well known and well used IVP Reference Collection. Version three includes seventeen books including: twelve dictionaries, three commentaries, one Bible atlas, and a topical book. The 'big black IVP dictionaries' of the New Testament are included but, unfortunately a separate disc must be purchased to get the Old Testament Dictionaries. It is a shame that version 3 did not include the Old Testament Dictionaries as well as this would have made the package that much more attractive and saved the hassle of having to purchase two separate discs. Scholars using this resource would appreciate the inclusion of both Testaments at an additional cost. Included in version 3 is the new Logos Bible Software 3 engine, and an unlockable copy of Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*.

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