

striking and Tucker has a sure touch in placing these developments in context. These chapters offer a convincing interpretation of the changes that have come in New Zealand Baptist life during these decades.

The concluding chapter reviews Baptist attitudes during the 'New Right Revolution' 1990–98. His basic conclusion is that Baptists had become "uninformed, unconcerned and uninvolved" in the crucial issues of society. The Public Questions Committee and its experienced chairman Angus Macleod despaired of any real interest, judging that the Assembly had become more of an inspirational type of gathering and that no questions of a deliberative or divisive nature were welcomed. Political conservatism led to a relegation of religion to a purely private sphere. The charismatic renewal movement and the emphasis on American pragmatism such as in Church Growth principles led to "the demise of the Baptist social conscience." By the end of the century, Tucker concludes, social services conducted by the denomination and community ministries by local congregations had "all but supplanted social action and public debate" (p. 335).

For this reader the Australian references were of great interest and prompts (again) the reflection that Baptist scholars across the Tasman have much to share and learn from each other. This volume is one of a series of contributions by Baptist scholars under the editorship of Keith Dyer of Whitley College, Melbourne and the publishers are to be congratulated for this initiative. Several individual Baptists have exercised considerable influence in both countries and common problems have prompted similar developments. Tucker's critique of how New Zealand Baptists have changed extends to more than public issues and should also prompt critical questioning by Australian leaders of developments in their various states.

*SILENT WITNESSES: LESSONS ON THEOLOGY, LIFE AND THE CHURCH FROM CHRISTIANS OF THE PAST.* BY GARRY J. WILLIAMS. EDINBURGH: BANNER OF TRUTH, 2013. (264 PP.) [ISBN: 978-1848712171]

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Dr Garry Williams (Director, The John Owen Centre, London Theological Seminary) explains on the book sleeve that "... (this) book tells the story of a selection of figures from the Christian past, witnesses whose lips have now fallen silent, but who yet speak through their writings and their stirring stories of their lives." With Church history a growing academic discipline, and many evangelical pastors seeking to reconnect with divines from earlier periods, this is a timely addition to the bookshelf. Williams is passionate about Church history and has a strong desire to communicate this passion to all Christians, regardless of whether they are pastors, academics or lay believers.

It is interesting to note that the author acknowledges that not everyone will be enthused by the studying of historical figures and that many people's perceptions of history are coloured by experiences of

school lessons. However, in a skilful attempt to overcome potential scepticism on behalf of some readers, he uses a fascinating argument to try and convince such readers of the benefits of studying Church history by arguing that reading Church history is effectively finding out about one's own ancestors, one's own family. After all, Christians living in the twenty-first century are spiritually untied with believers of the past, however long ago they may have walked the earth. As a Baptist historian I do not need to be convinced myself, but hopefully this excellent argument will win over doubters and I commend Williams for using it.

When looking to learn lessons from notable Christian figures of the past, there is always a danger of looking at them as 'superhuman', infallible people, and any associated publication merely becoming a hagiography. The author deserves credit for reminding readers that all who are featured in the book, however prominent they may be in the annals of Church history, were sinners just like the rest of humanity. He is not shy from showing readers the humanity and the failings of these illustrious figures. John Calvin, who features in three separate chapters (the author noting on p. 113 that he is a Calvinist), and is often placed on a pedestal by Calvinist theologians, is portrayed as very godly but sickly man who struggled with trials and tribulations, and was concerned about death being around every corner. Similarly, there are descriptions of periods where Martin Luther was greatly disheartened by the ingratitude of his congregation. Preaching, in the view of Williams, was a "hardship" for Luther, who "felt the oppressive work of the world and the devil in the way his preaching was received" (p. 191). As a final aid to help readers avoid idolatry and hero worship, the author emphasises that they are not called to be the people who are featured in the book, but are called to be the people God wants them to be.

The book itself is divided into three main sections, entitled "On the Essentials," "On the Christian Life," and "Primarily for Pastors and Elders." Each section contains a small number of chapters where important issues or doctrines are examined, and lessons drawn from the lives of key Christian figures of the past. This structure ensures clarity and will help those who feel only specific sections are of benefit to them, or those who wish to dip 'in and out' of the book.

The first section, entitled "On the Essentials" examines the key doctrines of the Christian faith and how these were arrived at by Fathers of the Church. Doctrines and themes which are examined include the cross and the person of Christ and importance of the Word of God. It can be easy for us, living in the twenty-first century, to take key tenets of the faith for granted, but this book is a helpful reminder that many of them had to be fought for against a swathe of heresies and confusion. The Council of Chalcedon (the subject of Chapter Two) is a key example of this; where the great thinkers of the day sat down to resolve the fundamental debate between the thinkers of Alexandria and Antioch as to who exactly Jesus Christ is.

The second of the three sections, "On the Christian Life," is a helpful attempt to draw lessons from the everyday lives of believers. It is particularly interesting to note Chapter Ten, which gives an overview of the life of businessman John Laing—a far less famous name than the other subjects of the book. Laing worked hard to instil a strong Christian ethos into his construction company, which still thrives today over thirty years since his death. He was extremely generous to his employees and to various charitable causes and, despite all his work commitments, was actively involved in the leadership of the

church he attended and in evangelistic endeavours. How Christians act in the workplace has become quite a big topic over the last decade with numerous books and Bible studies written on the subject. Those interested in the subject could do a lot worse than examine the life of John Laing.

The final section is entitled, “Primarily for Pastors and Elders.” Here Williams looks to draw lessons for modern pastors and elders from the pastoral, preaching and church leadership experiences of Calvin, Luther and Nicholas Ridley. What shines through from these men is their godliness, their forensically thorough knowledge of the Bible and their incredible hard work. Luther’s opinion that only those who can understand the original languages of the Bible should be allowed to preach will jar with some readers, as will Williams’ discussion of worship styles in Chapter Eleven, “Priorities for the Church,” however it is good that these potentially controversial issues are not glossed over.

Sadly there is no Baptist presence in this publication, which is a shame. Perhaps had a section on ‘mission’ been included, which would have added another interesting dimension to the book, then William Carey, as founder of the first Baptist Missionary Society, would have been a clear choice for inclusion, or maybe Billy Graham for the impact he made taking “the Word” to the world.

Whilst the book is written in a fairly informal and at times conversational style, it is certainly not a lightweight publication. Chapter Seven, “Loving God with all your heart: The Puritan Psychology”, is a complicated read and requires a great deal of patience and perseverance, but overall, Dr Williams deserves credit for compiling this interesting little book which gives a good insight into some key figures in Church history, the lives they lived and the battles they fought.

SUE PATTERSON. WORD, WORDS AND WORLD: HOW A WITTGENSTEINIAN PERSPECTIVE ON METAPHOR-MAKING REVEALS THE THEO-LOGIC OF REALITY. BERN: PETER LANG, 2013. (251 PP. + X.) [ISBN 978-3-0343-0230-2; DIGITAL 978-3-0353-0516-6].

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Sue Patterson is an astute philosophically minded theologian. Her latest book displays an intelligence that is alert to the usefulness of a Wittgensteinian paradigm for a deeply *theological* account of reality. Indeed, metaphorising as understood within a language-game theology becomes that “by which we come to know new aspects of reality” as “seen to be revelatory” (p. 234). Patterson demonstrates how linguistic meaning as a product of use informs our knowledge of reality, especially with regard to how knowledge of reality is enhanced by an account of metaphorical truth.

The metaphorical character of truth—moving with and beyond Eberhard Jüngel—is, in Patterson’s hands, developed in a metaphysically fruitful way. This is arguably the most important point her book makes. Her insistence at every major juncture of the argument that “no perspective is exempt