second blessing, even though those aspects were prominent in the earliest phases of the Keswick movement. Under the influence of key leader Graham Scroggie, Keswick underwent a paradigm shift by the 1930s, focusing on the lordship of Christ rather than on a baptism of the Spirit. The legacy was a widening gap between the two approaches.

Reading this book repeatedly left me with the sense, if only these groups had cross-fertilised each other. None had a truth monopoly and all had strengths from which the others could have drawn. Randall suggests that it took the charismatic 'cocktail' movement in the 1960s to achieve this intermixture: 'a pan-denominational spirituality of the kind pioneered by Keswick but incorporating some aspects of Brethren ecclesiology, embracing a modified Pentecostal pneumatology and exhibiting the cultural relevance of the Oxford Group' (p.278). Was this, however, altogether true? Or did the Charismatic Movement also largely retreat from the world, putting it into the too-hard basket?

I would like to have seen more analysis of social and ecclesiastical context in Randall's book. At the same time I found the work personally gripping. It provoked in me a question for 2000: how does a church find or maintain its vitality at a time of social and spiritual downturn?

Laurie Guy

Grady C. Cothen and James M. Dunn, *Soul freedom* . (Macon, Georgia: Smith and Helwys Publishing, 2000) pp. 129.

'Baptists are a funny breed, a churchly crowd without a creed.' That's the way it is, and that's the way it ought to be, say Cothen and Dunn. Both authors are as Southern as Kentucky Fried Chicken and as Baptist as the Smith and Helwys title of

their publishing house. Both have held significant office in the Southern Baptist Convention. Yet it is with deep sorrow and distress that they write of their denomination.

Over the last two decades the Southern Baptist Convention has undergone a cultural revolution in the form of a 'conservative resurgence'. Believing that the denominational leaders, and in particular the faculties of the six Southern Baptist seminaries were "liberal", fundamentalists began a deliberate grab for power in 1979 that has seen them successfully take over the entire denominational structure.

Out of this revolution comes the central issue of the book: What is the locus of authority in the church? The traditional Baptist answer has been 'the Bible'. For the fundamentalists however, this is inadequate. It leads, in their opinion, to subjectivism and 'anything goes'. In the matter of authority therefore, it is not enough to say 'the Bible', it must be 'the Bible as rightly understood', that is, understood in the way we understand it. Any other view is intolerable. This creed, say Cothen and Dunn, is the new Southern Baptist authority, not the Bible, but 'cocoons of conclusions' about the Bible. This 'flight to creedalism' means nothing less than the 'debaptistification' of the Southern Baptist Convention. The foundational Baptist principle of soul freedom, or soul competence before God, is lost, the authors contend, if there is a creed that must be subscribed to.

This is a book about a palace revolution, albeit one with deep theological implications. The machiavellian politics of Southern Baptist life leave the New Zealander bewildered and bemused. How these Christians love one another! But there are lessons for us. By all means let our authority be the Bible, but let us make sure that our principle for interpreting the Word is *the* Word, Jesus Christ, not a set of propositions, however 'orthodox', about what the Bible says.

The book is an easy read, if a bit preachy in parts. Occasionally sentences appear without context giving the reader a curious sense of dislocation. There are a few typographical glitches (the American Baptist Churches is a '1.5 member

convention'), and the relatively few quotations are referenced only by the title of their source. That said, this book stands as cautionary tale, a reminder to Baptists everywhere.

Brian Smith

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