



extent to which they exemplify the eight characteristics listed above as providing the respective answers.

Obviously, all of these claims deserve closer scrutiny, and there were places where I wanted to nuance or reframe MacDougall's account. But overall I greatly appreciated this text and highly recommend it as a valuable introduction to the contested and complicated nature of Anglican theology.

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## Michael W. Goheen and Timothy M. Sheridan, *Becoming a Missionary Church: Lesslie Newbigin and Contemporary Church Movements*

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The goal of *Becoming a Missionary Church* is 'to deepen our understanding of what it means to become a missionary church' and to 'preserve Lesslie Newbigin's theological legacy' (p. 253). For this task, Goheen and Sheridan are well qualified academically and pastorally. The authors' aim is to stimulate commitment to the church's missionary identity and calling amongst pastors, who are the intended readership.

*Becoming a Missionary Church* brings three modern missionary church movements into conversation with Newbigin's thought (Goheen and Sheridan's earlier work *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology* (2018) is a companion volume and is recommended pre-reading). Prior to embarking on that conversation, however, the authors use Part 1 of the book to explain the historical development of the missionary church. Chapters 2 and 3 centre around two meetings of the International Missionary Council: at Tambaram, India, in 1938; and at Willingen, Germany, in 1952. Key ideas that emerged include a church-centred missiology, and locating mission within the *missio trinitatis Dei*.

In chapter 4, Goheen and Sheridan follow the historical development of the *missio Dei* into two competing missiological visions: one Christ- and church-centred, the other world-centred. In chapter 5, the authors introduce Newbigin's missionary ecclesiology, including his clarion call for missionary engagement with western culture. They also show how *Missional Church* (ed. Darrell Guder, 1998) retrieved and appropriated Newbigin's missiology for north America and missional ecclesiology more broadly.

In Part 2, Goheen and Sheridan scrutinise the Missional Church Conversation (MCC), probing 'where Newbigin's missionary ecclesiology might critique and enrich the current conversation' (p. 88). Each of this part's three chapters focuses, consecutively, on 'the theological basis for the missionary church, the missionary congregation, and Western culture as a mission field' (p. 88).

The authors praise the MCC for spelling out the structure of the missionary congregation and its leadership in a way that surpasses previous contributions. At the same

time, the MCC is admonished for overlooking the fundamental category of *story* for elucidating the *missio trinitatis Dei*, and for omitting global missions, due to the North American focus. The authors take to task the MCC's anti-institutional tendency, and for neglecting the church's history and tradition in pursuit of the novel. 'To dismiss seventeen hundred years of church history is to lose many resources that could enable us to become a more faithful missionary church today' (p. 126).

In Part 3, the shortest section, Goheen and Sheridan critically appraise the Emergent Church Conversation (ECC) in relation to Newbigin. The authors endorse the ECC's prophetic critique of modernity, a critique which they fear evangelicals overlook. They welcome the ECC's rejection of the sacred–secular dichotomy and its emphasis on church unity. However, they express concern over the ECC's omission of a parallel critique of postmodernity. 'It may be', they warn, 'that as the house is swept clean from the demon of modernity, seven more postmodern spirits have filled its place (see Luke 11:24–26)' (p. 147). They are further concerned with the ECC's liberal theological trajectory: 'What began as a search for a "generous orthodoxy" has become, for the most part, simply generous' (p. 143). Newbigin's writings are commended to address the perceived biblical and theological waywardness.

Part 4 is unique for engaging with only one figure, Tim Keller; a decision justified by Keller's influence and achievements. In chapters 11 and 12, the authors appreciate numerous aspects of Keller's missiology, including: his public apologetic, the championing of faith and work, practising a counter-catechesis and his use of subversive fulfilment. By contrast, chapter 13 is chiefly critical of Keller. The criticism centres on Keller's depicting truth in primarily propositional rather than narrative terms. 'Only the power of a comprehensive narrative can withstand the power of the cultural narrative', warn Goheen and Sheridan. 'Truths and teachings will be discrete bits that will be swept along by the powerful streams of the broader cultural story' (p. 198). As a consequence of an overly rationalist gospel, they argue, Keller subjects the gospel *story* to *truths* of the gospel, leading to their bold claim that Keller 'does not offer an integral gospel' (p. 230). They defend this claim persuasively, and further argue that 'Keller's view of the atonement is reductionist' (p. 239). This criticism aims to be constructive: ensuring that in contextualising the gospel for western people, which Keller does so well, core elements are not sacrificed in the process.

*Becoming a Missionary Church* successfully discusses the landscape of contemporary missional ecclesiology in dialogue with Newbigin's thought. Goheen and Sheridan make explicit their goal to 'preserve Lesslie Newbigin's theological legacy' (p. 253). While this can appear partisan, their conviction is that Newbigin's writings remain significant and useful for the church's missionary encounter with western culture. The authors do successfully convey Newbigin's voice. Following Newbigin, Goheen and Sheridan are concerned that the western church is 'predisposed to turn the story of Scripture into the timeless statements of systematic theology' (p. 247). For me as a systematic theologian, this was a timely reminder. Rediscovering the Bible as the world's true story, they argue, is essential to becoming a missionary church.

The book's tone is even-handed, blending appreciation with critical appraisal. The strength of the book is the breadth of primary literature covered. The corresponding weakness is a lack of engagement with relevant secondary literature. For example, apart from referring to their own work, the authors barely engage with the growing corpus of secondary literature on Newbigin.

Goheen and Sheridan warn 'If the church does not encounter modernity, the future is grim' (p. 161). *Becoming a Missionary Church* helps with this encounter. As a

theologian this helps reorient my mind. As a pastor I am left searching for ideas regarding implementation. Perhaps, Goheen and Sheridan might follow this with a more praxis-oriented publication for pastors seeking practical assistance in this urgent missionary encounter.

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**David M. Moffitt, *Rethinking the Atonement: New Perspectives on Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022), pp. xvii + 298. \$35.00**

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Having greatly appreciated David Moffitt's first book, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Brill, 2011), I was eager to read this second volume. Comprised mostly of previously published articles and chapters further developing Moffitt's central thesis, the book argues for the centrality of Jesus' resurrection and ascension in the letter to the Hebrews, while considering its exegetical and theological implications. The details of the argument will perhaps best be explored in journals more focused on biblical studies. For the purpose of this journal, I will attend to the theological claims, implications and possibilities raised by the biblical arguments.

Moffitt's central thesis is that the death of Jesus is not the focus of the Letter to the Hebrews when it comes to the atonement. Rather, the atonement is a rich event, having to do with the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Hebrews in particular, with its consistent and thorough engagement with the Pentateuchal sacrificial system, is more interested in the manipulation of the blood than it is in the death of the sacrificial victim. The death, of course, is a necessary prerequisite – but the manipulation of the blood is what actually does the cleansing of priests, garments, the altar, tabernacle and people as a whole. And the manipulation of the blood, according to Hebrews, occurs as the risen Jesus enters the heavenly temple, equipped with his own blood.

My question, going into this book, was whether Moffitt was going to use this thesis to develop a comprehensive systematic account which would, in effect, minimise the death of Jesus in important ways, or whether he would choose to develop his insight as an important aspect of the work of Christ, highlighting the role of the resurrection and ascension in the atonement, while allowing other aspects of Christ's saving work to play their respective role. And the answer is abundantly clear: without a doubt, Moffitt favours the latter approach, in which he draws consistent and clear distinctions between the sacrificial elements of Christ's work, and other extra-sacrificial elements, in which Jesus' death or resurrection may play a more central role (cf. chapter 4, for instance). In other words, Moffitt advances a rigorous and biblically nuanced argument for one aspect of the atoning work of Christ, meant to be fully compatible with a richer and fuller account.