

manifeste aucune connaissance de la recherche récente en Russie même. Il considère les aspects positifs de l'orthodoxie orientale et l'on peut regretter qu'il n'en relève pas les côtés plus sombres.

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'Russia is endless and Moscow far. Who is able to grasp our history and culture, our Orthodox faith and the faithless praxis of our pseudo-religious life?' These words of a good Russian Orthodox friend in Moscow set the parameters for anyone interested to write on any aspect of Russian Orthodox past and present. Thomas Bremer, a recognized German specialist on Ecumenical theology from the Roman-Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Münster wrote his *Brief History of the Orthodox Church in Russia* originally in 2007 in German. The book has been translated into a number of Eastern-European languages and appears now surprisingly unchanged in English.

After a short Introduction, the author covers thematically historical, structural and theological issues of Russian Orthodox Christianity through centuries of history. In brief chapters he divides the history of the ROC into five epochs (chapter 2), names the missionary expansion (chapter 3), discusses the ecclesiastical structure and the relationship of the church to the state (chapters 4-5), theological developments in the church (chapter 6), monasticism and spirituality (chapter 7-8) and closes his book with a chapter on the relationship of the church to the West and the history of dissent and splits (chapter 9-10). This thematic rather than chronological approach is highly interesting and helpful for what the author offers. The reader screens Russian Orthodoxy again and again with each new theme. In this regard the short introduction to the five epochs in chapter 2 is most helpful. The informed reader will, however, ask why these five epochs and not others; the divisions seem somewhat artificial, probably due to the brevity of the book.

The shortness of the book limits the author to a very broad introduction to the themes, which allows him to underline basics and to highlight a few historical figures and events. No in-depth discussions are given. Some paragraphs come across as impulses inviting to study more. The author seems first and foremost interested in providing an overview. He does his work well, but only for those less informed about the subject. The book does not offer anything new or raise any questions for ongoing discussion. Academic discourse is widely avoided; where it appears, it follows the pattern of older German scholarship. Contemporary historical research from Russia is nowhere mentioned. The publications cited cover knowledge available before the turn of the last millennium. This is the greatest disappointment with this book. Russian historians and church historians in other Orthodox countries have just started to recover the ecclesiastical memory of their church; significant research has been done since the year 2000 but none of this is reflected in the book. A revision of the first

German edition, which was published in 2007, would have been very helpful.

Writing from a non-Orthodox perspective, Bremer seeks to cover the positive sides of the well-known history. Tensions and splits are mentioned, but in such a way that the overarching positive impression stays with the reader from the beginning to the end. Laudable as such an approach might be, readers in Russia and elsewhere who discover the very complex history of the ROC with her heroic and dark sides may find such praises shallow and superficial. Russia and its church face enormous challenges. What they need is less repetition of the known facts, but a discussion of the hidden ones, uncovered and unjustifiably glorified. Bremer seldom points to the problems of Orthodox historiography with its immanent tendency of sacralisation on the one hand and forgery on the other. But if the project of recovering of memory in the ROC is to be successful, historians will have to ask deeper questions than Bremer does. The ROC seeks her future and the last chapter shall never be on splits and religious dissenters. This is how the first millennium of the ROC ended, but there are new signs on the horizon. This chapter of reform and revival, and of recovery of the beauty of her Trinitarian theology, must be added to Bremer's book. The book as written offers an easy read, but leaves the reader with many unanswered questions.

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Christology and Evil in Ghana: Towards a Pentecostal Public Theology

Joseph Quayesi-Amakye

Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2013; xi + 363 pp.,
€ 80.00; ISBN 978-90-420-3753-3

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dies ist die veröffentlichte Dissertation eines pfingstkirchlichen Theologen, der christologische Ansätze innerhalb der Pfingstkirche in Ghana im Umgang mit dem Bösen untersucht. Der Autor steht seiner eigenen Tradition nahe und zeigt, wie die Kirche in Ghana zum Wohlergehen der Nation beitragen kann. Europäische Leser seines Buches werden ein tieferes Verständnis gewinnen für das Denken der zahlreichen Christen aus Ghana in unserer Mitte.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici la thèse de doctorat d'un théologien pentecôtiste, qui traite des approches christologiques de la question du mal dans les Églises pentecôtistes du Ghana. L'auteur a une perception positive de cette tradition et tente de montrer comment les Églises ghanéennes peuvent contribuer au bien-être de leur pays. Les lecteurs européens acquerront une meilleure compréhension de la pensée de nombreux chrétiens ghanéens présents parmi nous.

SUMMARY

This is the published dissertation of a Pentecostal theologian, who studies Christological approaches to evil within the Pentecostal Church in Ghana. The author is sympathetic to his tradition and shows how the church in Ghana can contribute to the welfare of the nation. European readers of his book will gain a deeper understanding of the thinking of the many Ghanaian Christians among us.

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This book is the product of sustained PhD research into the themes of Christological approaches to evil within the tradition of the Pentecostal Church in Ghana. Later, it focuses on what this study may contribute to the development of what is, at present, a nascent public theology. The author, Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, writes from within the Pentecostal tradition and his research reveals that he is both sympathetic to the tradition and a constructive critic of it.

The book is generally well written and is certainly readable. At points, I must confess, I found the transitions somewhat repetitive and strained, and in the process of editing I think this could certainly have been redacted; however, the consistency and clarity of thought is helpful and sustained my interest throughout.

As someone within the field of practical theology, Quayesi-Amakye has adopted an intentionally practical theological approach and this seems sound, although I found the hymnody and interviews that he used as his main sources somewhat limited. The thrust of the material at points seems to lean towards the anecdotal, and yet there are strong themes that present themselves and are vitally important to the global church. What is the meaning of suffering? What does suffering reveal of the nature of God? Who is the author of suffering? (See page 162, for example.) How are poverty and suffering interpreted in a world where both are manifest? Is there a way of engaging with the demonising of poverty and the sense that poverty can be unmerited or merited?

The ideas of universalising understandings of healing, health, identity and the nature of change, redemption and restoration are also significant and the author wrestles with that from within an African context.

It is in this area, contextualising, that some of the strengths of the work emerge. The focus on Ghana is significant – and the author does not claim to be speaking for the wider African community. The deep engagement with indigenous ideas, religion and practices of religion is interesting and insightful. It is also, as far as I am aware, quite unique in its attempt to explore the development of a Pentecostal theology of the soil alongside engaging with the contribution and otherness of indigenous Ghanaian religious culture to traditional, more European Christological perspectives.

I do not think that the public theology dynamic promised in the title fully emerges – as I read it, it seemed much more the embryonic stage of a Ghanaian

Pentecostal theological approach to the public. However, there are clear insights into the significant contribution the church can, should and must make to the future of a nation and the various spheres – business, politics, economics, education, media and the arts – that must be engaged with for the church to take its place as a Christ-centred participant in the world for the sake of the Kingdom.

A particularly welcome element of the book from my perspective is the insights it also offers for people within my setting (European non Pentecostal) in understanding some of the emphases that increasingly appear from African churches within a British context. The tendency towards expressions of faith that are related to healing, prospering, prophecy, leadership and culture are insightful and challenging – not least because (at least in the UK) these evangelical and Pentecostal churches are clearly making inroads into communities and lives that other evangelical churches are struggling to meet.

There are enormous questions that continue to linger after a first reading: is the leadership model sufficiently critiqued? To what extent can the leaders be seen as representative of the wider congregational understandings? Is the liturgical consideration offered deep enough to truly demonstrate a genuine Christological understanding? Is there sufficient evidence to support the claims made in the book?

Certainly I would argue that this book is a helpful contribution to those people seeking to understand the Pentecostal church at large alongside offering insights into its Ghanaian expression.

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Nationhood, Providence, and Witness. Israel in Protestant Theology and Social Theory

Carys Moseley

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SUMMARY

This book is a plea for a positive 'theology of nationhood'. The author argues that anti-Zionism is often due to a negative theology of nationhood, which is why a rethinking is necessary. Four major theologians, Reinhold Niebuhr, Rowan Williams, John Milbank and Karl Barth, are discussed very critically in relation to this subject.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch ist ein Plädoyer für eine positive „Theologie der Nation“. Die Autorin argumentiert, dass Antizionismus in vielen Fällen auf eine negative „Theologie der Nation“ zurückzuführen ist. Aus diesem Grund ist ein Umdenken erforderlich. Die vier bedeutende Theologen Reinhold Niebuhr, Rowan Williams, John Milbank und Karl Barth werden zu diesem Thema sehr kritisch befragt.