valedictory style is influenced by this aesthetic.

In conclusion, I hope that I have expressed sufficiently the immense importance of this book from the point of view of a genuinely positive relationship between theology and the Church. Whilst in terms of the broad sweep of Rowan Williams' own work, these essays are perhaps sparsely spread, their true strength resides in their attempt to take Williams' theology and apply it to their own ecclesiological situation. Thus, for any minister, church leader or pastor who is interested to know how theology fits into the broader work of the Church, this book is invaluable: a concrete example of putting into practice that which is preached. Furthermore, if this were not enough, the bibliography pertaining to the incalculable material produced by Williams' is arguably worth the price of the whole book!

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Public Theology in Cultural Engagement, ed. Stephen R. Holmes, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008, pp. xiv, 196 ISBN 978-1842275429. £19.99

Answers are increasingly sought and given for the relentless onslaught of problems in the world. But what voice should Christians – unashamedly committed to the Bible's authority – have in this arena? Rather than shying away from culture into separatist isolationism, as sometimes marks the Christian position; and rather than resigning itself to a feeble neutralized assessment of world phenomena, this volume displays a serious 'theological' engagement with culture. It asserts that Christian theology, which is 'universally – and so publicly – true', is competent to engage with all creation. Unlike some studies, this volume has no intention of 'working on the interface between theology and sociology, cultural studies, social anthropology, or any other field' since it intends to give 'not a vaguely Christian form of sociology, but a thoroughly theological and biblical analysis.' (x–xi) As Holmes asserts in the introduction, 'Christian theology must have the confidence to be what it is: a coherent account of all created

realities in relation to God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and of the God to whom we are thus related.' (xi)

This volume is the result of a partnership between the Research Institute in Systematic Theology at King's College London and the British and Foreign Bible Society. Stephen Holmes has brought together essays from five authors beside himself: Colin J. D. Greene, Robert Jenson, Colin Gunton, Luke Bretherton, and Brian Horne. These are well-known in the British theological arena as some of its sharpest minds, which here engage with key issues facing one of the most culturally vibrant places in the world – twenty-first century Britain.

Setting the tone of the book, Steve Holmes posits, "Can theology engage with culture?" Rather than a yes/no answer, his agenda is to explain not only why theology *should* so engage, but also why it *must*. Christian theology, deemed liberative and able to establish proper humanity for all people, is identified by its link to the Bible. It is also presupposed that 'God speaks in Scripture, and that God speaks truth,' which means that Scripture must have a 'central place' in public discourse. (2) Contrary to some views, this volume considers culture to be essential to the created order as something good, observed in humanity's need for companionship and community. Nevertheless, some cultural features contain certain dangers.

After surveying several options at the beginning of chapter 2, Colin Greene ultimately selects Pannenberg's Christology as source for his Christological account of culture. (43) Jesus' essential unity with the Father, his continuity with humanity, and the necessary conflict found between humans and the Creator, 'are consummated through Jesus' death and resurrection'. (46) Greene considers the cultural implications of humanity's election for participation in the shared life of the Trinity. He argues that the culture needs to hear afresh how the Gospel of God in Christ is reconciling the world to himself and so declaring human culture 'ontologically reconstituted and reinstated as that which can once again glorify the triune God.' (47)

Robert Jenson's essay (chapter 3) considers the relationship between divine election (and the election of a culture, Israel) and the outside culture from which people are joined to the redeemed community. Not unrelated, in "Torah, Christ and Culture" (chapter

4), Stephen Holmes shows how the Torah displays God's design to create a culture, which never quite happened as it should have, but which was fulfilled by the coming of Christ. This indicates that while culture matters – and the Hebrew Bible has a rich story to tell about the interchange between Pentateuchal culture and 'outside' culture – the Church does not fit easily into any culture. Indeed, the Church must necessarily transform culture. The essay by the late Colin Gunton (chapter 5) is also similar to the previous two, considering here how different theologians in history understood the implementation of the Gen. 1:28 cultural mandate: "Fill the earth and subdue it." Looking mainly to Luther and Calvin, he sees each as wanting because they are working with a dialectical account of culture instead of a Trinitarian one. In his opinion, a Trinitarian account of culture would give a far better description of personhood for the realization of the creation mandate according to a Christologically-conceived understanding of the *imago dei.*

A personal highlight was the excellent chapter by Luke Bretherton (chapter 6), "Consuming the Body: Contemporary Patterns of Drug Use and Theological Anthropology," which looked at the deceptive role that the 'technocratic' phenomenon of drugs plays in today's context. Brian Greene (chapter 7) then highlights the 'bleak' scenario inherited from the modern critique of religion, and the postmodern rejoinder, which yields a prevalent pluralism that Christianity must now publicly challenge. Brian Horne's essay (chapter 8) considers the tragic legacy of Romanticism, which he sees as having left a deadly trail that often failed to recognize that religion and art, while having an inextricable and intimate relationship, are not to be confused. The volume then closes with Bretherton's second essay (chapter 9) presenting a theological view of a 'nation' in light of cultural trends that end up in nationalism and other programmes.

A topical index could have been included for the researcher, and while these authors are fairly well-known, a description of each might have benefited some readers. Those aware of the resurgence in 'public theology' or its place in history may wonder why this volume engages no other works on the topic, or why, while Pannenberg receives some attention, notable public theologians (e.g., Abraham Kuyper, and other contemporaries) are left out. Nevertheless, the work makes no claim

to be a comprehensive treatment of the topic, but rather a moment of *engagement* between public theology and culture. It is not unlike the collection of essays in the *festschrift* for Duncan Forrester, *Public Theology for the 21st Century*[2] Like that earlier volume, the present one is acutely British. As such, it is an important book for pastors and others desiring to engage theologically with British culture in an increasingly secularized and pluralistic situation. The excellent essays here provide skillful and thought-provoking models for how this might be done. Meanwhile, their publication in one volume offers a helpful stimulus for the Gospel's future proclamation in Britain, suggesting a theme this book hopes to cultivate – that British culture must again reckon with a robust and public Christian theology that intends to shape her once more.

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Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth, Bruce L. McCormack, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008, pp. 317, ISBN 978-0801035821. £18.00

Back in 1995 Bruce L. McCormack's reworked doctoral thesis was published under the rather daunting title, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909–1936*.[3] This book marked something of a revolution in Barth studies, to the extent that its central thesis has since largely been accepted as authoritative: that there was in fact no 'turn to analogy' in Barth's theology after *Fides Quaerens Intellectum,* his 1931 book on Anselm, but that he remained a dialectical theologian throughout. Certainly, the comprehensiveness of the biographical and theological detail, and the insistence on the point, make it hard to dispute, and so the

[2] William Storrar and Andrew Morton, eds, *Public Theology for the 21st Century* (T. & T. Clark, 2004).
[3] Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909–1936* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).