



Fraser Prize essay 2016

## Where have all the poets gone?

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*Where have all the poets gone?* asks Sook-Yin Lee in a documentary aired recently by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>1</sup> If cultural analysts are asking such questions of society generally, it should come as no surprise that poetry occupies an increasingly diminutive role in contemporary church life. More than sixty years ago the poet-theologian Amos Wilder lamented that Main Street religion had taken on the ‘unlovely aesthetic expression’ of Main Street values.<sup>2</sup> Some forty years ago Erwin Lueker noted that sermons were no longer characterized by quotations of hymnic and popular poetry.<sup>3</sup> Church life in the twenty-first century would then appear to be following a trajectory set many decades ago, a trajectory that is simply tracking that of its surrounding culture. But if poetry no longer features as prominently in Western churches’ life and worship as it once did, the question we must ask ourselves is whether we are any richer or poorer for this loss. In what follows I’d like to briefly trace the theological contours of poetic expression before reflecting on how churches might respond in the absence of poets.



### **The sanctification of poetry to revelatory purpose**

Irrespective of the value a particular culture or church may or may not place on poetry, it is of irreducible significance that God has sanctified poetry to revelatory purpose. Alongside the various genres of prose one encounters in the pages of Holy Scripture, one also encounters poetic texts. That God has thus deemed poetry a fit vehicle for divine revelation therefore, qualifies the nature of the knowledge God seeks to convey to his creatures. In the very first place it shows us that the knowledge God seeks to communicate exceeds mere abstraction.

Knowledge, in the biblical conception of the term, is communicated in personal relation (John 17:3, 26).<sup>4</sup> While this is evident already in the Old Testament's descriptions of Adam's knowledge of Eve (Gen 4:1) and God's electing knowledge of his people (Hos 13:5), it comes to fullest expression in the New Testament where it is disclosed that the knowledge God seeks to communicate to his creatures is knowledge in Christ (Col 2:3). The content of this knowledge is of course capable of being communicated in intelligible propositions to those beyond the bounds of the covenantal union of Christ and his Church, yet not without remainder. The knowledge of God is a knowledge of personal communion. Biblical narrative, prophetic discourse, and apostolic testimony bear witness to this, yet it is the poetic texts of Holy Scripture that offer a profound and unique insight into the existential dimension of the knowledge of God.

While the legal code of the Pentateuch prescribed the moral and sacramental conditions of Israel's fellowship with the living God, the poetry of the Psalter describes this fellowship itself; it is a quenching of clear waters (Ps 42:1–2; 63:1–2). While prophetic injunctions warned Israel of the consequences of the loss of this fellowship, the Psalter describes the experience of this loss; it is as being overwhelmed by the waves of the sea (Ps 88:7). In this way, the poetic texts penetrate deeper into the human consciousness in both their portrayal of God and of our creaturely dependence upon Him. God is a rock (Ps 18:2), a sun (Ps 67:1), a shield (Ps 28:7), a cup (Ps 16:5), and a shepherd (Ps 23:1). Poetic description is not, however, limited to the formally poetic texts of the Psalter. Beyond the Psalter, God is described as a bridegroom (Isa 62:5), a doctor (Exod 15:26), and even a potter (Jer 18:6). Such descriptions juxtapose the transcendence of God with the immanence of his grace by means of familiar and even everyday imagery and in so doing demonstrate the sheer folly of Sir Francis Bacon's pronouncement that the ornaments of speech are mere 'emptinesses', which ought to be utterly dismissed.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, 'the glory of God and the plight of the human [...] can be talked about more rationally, exegetically, and systematically but hardly with the same power and certainly not in the same way.'<sup>6</sup> Poetic texts communicate a dimension of the knowledge of God which would otherwise remain undisclosed, were the biblical witness restricted to prosaic genres.

In Scripture we see that God sanctifies poetry to revelatory purpose and in so doing graces the biblical witness with an unique medium of self-communication. Yet it is because of the literarily composite character of the biblical witness that it becomes necessary to consider carefully the precise relation between poetic texts and their prose counterparts. Does the meaning of the prose passages depend on or derive from the poetic texts of Holy Scripture, or are the prose passages in some sense hermeneutically basic with the poetic texts functioning as a kind of commentary that gilds all objects but alters none? It is here perhaps that theological debate over the status of poetry reaches widest divergence.

At one end of the spectrum, poetry is viewed as entirely independent of prose. During the 1960s, perhaps in response to the dwindling interest in poetry among churches, theo-poetics arose as an iconoclastic movement mounting a radical challenge to traditional religious discourse and understanding.<sup>7</sup> Strongly influenced by the account of *poiesis* in Martin Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*,<sup>8</sup> theo-poetics represents an exercise in religious imagination in the absence of a concept of God, whereby poetic speech is regarded as the quintessential instance of authentic language.<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that even within the theo-poetics movement some would identify the radical subjectivism of the Orphic voice as a potential liability. Nathan Scott, for one, maintains the view that theo-poetics must dwell within the dialogical, historical reality for it to be capable of communicating transcendent reality.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, for those who remain unconvinced by the Nietzschean proclamation that God is dead, a radicalized poetics in the face of nothingness offers little assistance for collocating the hermeneutic significance of the poetic and prosaic texts of Scripture. If the *Aufklärung* was mistaken to allow reason to declare war on the imagination, the post-modernism of theo-poetics is equally mistaken in provoking the imagination to declare war on reason. Its affirmation of the capacity of poetic texts to generate meaning is certainly commendable, but as a theological methodology theo-poetics can only be rejected for the simple fact that this affirmation comes at the expense of other ways of knowing.

At the other end of the spectrum, poetic texts are regarded as entirely dependent upon prose texts, merely illuminating the edges

of what they disclose.<sup>11</sup> On this way of thinking, the basic distinction drawn by C. S. Lewis between theology and poetry is (more or less) allowed to stand and the poetic texts are viewed as embellishing our understanding of reality, rather than substantially modifying our understanding of reality.<sup>12</sup> This too would appear to be mistaken, simply by virtue of the wariness with which poet-theologians have practised their craft. Gregory of Nazianzus would regard metaphors that were not drawn from Scripture with great suspicion.<sup>13</sup> George Herbert (1593–1633) would experience anxiety over ‘the dangers of presumptuously rewriting the Word’ in verse,<sup>14</sup> precisely because poetic language not only illumines, but also generates, meaning. In affirming poetry’s generative capacity it is, nonetheless, entirely unnecessary to abandon the notion that prose also enjoys this capacity. It is also unnecessary to abandon the possibility that the meaning that prose texts generate may even play an epistemologically qualifying role in the appropriation of poetry. Arguably, the peculiarly multivalent or open-ended characteristic of poetic texts attests to poetry’s need for such qualification, if it is to be in any way ‘meaningful’. In this sense the poetic texts must stand in a certain reliance upon their prosaic counterparts. Nevertheless, when biblical texts are read as Christian Scripture, this reliance is revealed to be mutual.<sup>15</sup>

The sanctification of poetry for the purpose of divine revelation in Holy Scripture thus qualifies the nature of the knowledge God seeks to convey to his creatures. The knowledge God seeks to communicate is a personal knowledge and the poetic texts are uniquely suited to conveying the existential dimension of this knowledge, enriching and extending the panorama of biblical prose. The sanctification of poetry to revelatory purpose, however, also qualifies the subjective reception of the knowledge of God and it is this qualification of the reception of the knowledge of God which points to the significance poetry holds for the life of the Church.



## **Poetry and the sanctification of the Church to doxological purpose**

What is intended in the distinction between the poetic texts’ qualification of the nature of the knowledge of God and their qualification of the reception of the knowledge of God is a distinction

between the objectivity and subjectivity of the knowledge of God. Poetry qualifies the knowledge of God both objectively by virtue of the fact that it generates and illuminates meaning, yet the aesthetic properties of poetic texts also qualify the response of the knowing subject to this content. In order to identify this effect, it is worthwhile to first briefly give an account of these aesthetic properties.

Poetry is a literary art, yet in poetry words are used to invoke visual, aural, and even olfactory sensation. At its best, poetry is capable of effecting a kind of literary synaesthesia. In their invocation of the aural, poetic texts may employ various effects, such as assonance or consonance. Such effects may then be redoubled by the use of rhyme and metre. In addition, many of the biblical poems were originally set to music. As song, poetry realizes even further acoustic possibilities. To cite just one example, words such as ‘high’ and ‘low’ or ‘up’ and ‘down’ readily lend themselves to imitation through ascending and descending musical phrases.

In its invocation of the visual, poetry makes considerable use of metaphor. While metaphors and similes need not always be visual, visual metaphors predominate in biblical and religious poetry for the simple reason that often it is the invisible that is being depicted. George Herbert’s memorable description of prayer as an ‘Engine against th’ Almighty, sinners’ tower’<sup>16</sup> epitomizes this application of visual imagery to immaterial entities. The juxtaposition of the violence of a siege engine with the feebleness of our prayers not only gives powerful expression to the potency of prayer, but conjures further secondary imagery. By portraying prayer as a siege tower Herbert ingeniously captures the experience of the believer struggling in prayer in the image of a wounded and exhausted soldier of the church militant.

In poetry’s invocation of the olfactory, a further excellent example is to be found in Herbert’s “Prayer”. At the very beginning of the poem, prayer is described as ‘the Church’s banquet, Angel’s age’.<sup>17</sup> There is much to meditate on in this portrayal of prayer as a foretaste of the communion with God the believer will experience when supping with Abraham at the eschatological banquet, but this metaphor more immediately engages the imagination. Who has tasted the wine of angels? Herbert uses this technique once more later in this same poem with imagery of ‘Exalted manna’ and ‘The land of spices’, further

stretching the boundaries of the imaginable. Who has ever tasted manna? Who could imagine the scents of heaven?

The aesthetic properties of poetry elevate knowledge beyond mere noesis. Thus, the object represented by the poet's words is intended not merely to be apprehended, but enjoyed. Such enjoyment constitutes a heightening of the subjectivity of knowing, yet in religious poetry this enjoyment surpasses merely the affective or sensory, reaching into the hidden recesses of our consciousness. The enjoyment religious poetry evokes may occasion exuberance, but it is also an enjoyment that elicits praise amidst tears and praise in the midst of suffering. The philosopher Helmut Kuhn (1899–1991) was right to remark that poetry here achieves what metaphysics strives after in vain: a convincing theodicy.<sup>18</sup> The solemn lament of Job, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21), bears witness to the way poetry can kindle and rekindle the worship of Christ's Church even in the darkness of loss and grief. Nowhere is this more clearly to be seen than in the *Tehillim* of Israel, replete with their psalms of imprecation, but it is also reflected in the New Testament. We have significantly fewer examples of the worship of the early Church, yet we have the magnificent Christ hymns of Paul's epistles to the Philippians and Colossians (Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:15–20), in which the sorrow of Good Friday yields to the ecstatic joy of the resurrection.

What is unique to poetry therefore, is not just its peculiar capacity for generating meaning but also its peculiar capacity for eliciting enjoyment in what it represents, an enjoyment which then gives rise to praise. If the theological significance of poetry is its sanctification to revelatory purpose, its profound ecclesial significance lies in its capacity to summon God's people to praise.<sup>19</sup> Poetic texts both in the history of Israel and the apostolic era have formed the wellspring of worship and from Cynewulf's *Dream of the Rood*, to the holy sonnets of John Donne, to T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* poetry has continued to fulfil this vocation to the present day. Whether as the expression of private or corporate devotion, poetry has provided an ongoing sustenance for the life of worship of God's people. Under both the Old and New Covenant and in both its biblical and extra-biblical instantiations, poetry has sanctified the church of Christ to doxological purpose.



## In the absence of poets

If in Holy Scripture poetry is sanctified to revelatory purpose and if in the Church poetic texts sanctify God's people to doxological purpose, one can only conclude that both the private and corporate devotional life of churches would be all the poorer in the absence of poets. Poetry represents a beautification of knowledge, an adornment of noetic content that stimulates an enjoyment of that which is apprehended. Poetry may not be the only means by which the Church adorns its knowledge of the Gospel, yet where the Church no longer make use of poetic texts in their private and common worship it risks two possible outcomes.

First, an absence of poetic texts in Church life provides fertile ground for an arid rationalism. Rationalism has less to do with a strenuous exertion of the intellect in the knowledge of God, but rather more to do with the uncoupling of the imagination and affections from the knowledge of God. Where the imagination and the affections are no longer engaged, faith is reduced to the assent of the intellect and an exertion of the will. The exultation of the song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55) or the affective fullness for which Paul prays (Eph 3:18–19) gradually becomes experientially unfamiliar. Faith's firm and certain knowledge slowly becomes estranged from its most natural response, a doxological reciprocation of the love revealed in Christ Jesus. What God has joined together let not man separate. The intellect, the affections, and the imagination are distinct, yet they each have a role to play in the knowledge of God. It goes without saying that poetic texts are not the only means by which the imagination and affections may be engaged, but they are uniquely suited to this end and, as we have seen, God has sanctified their peculiar properties to this end. Poetic texts thus have their part to play in the renewal of the mind that gives rise to the Church's λογική λατρεία and a role to play in preserving the Church from the autarchy of reason. In the absence of poetic texts the Church will only become more vulnerable to the ever-present threat of reason's totalizing tendencies.

Second, an absence of poetic texts in the Church can contribute to a sidelining of aesthetics and a resultant dichotomizing of the sacred and secular. Dichotomization is inevitable because wherever

the aesthetic dimension of creaturely existence is subtly suppressed, it never disappears altogether. It is simply evacuated to the secular domain. On this point, we would do well to remember, that, in the words of C. S. Lewis, ‘Man is a poetical animal and touches nothing which he does not adorn.’<sup>20</sup> Man is indeed a poetical animal; the appreciation of beauty is metaphysically basic to the human condition. If the poetic is evacuated from churches, it won’t be simply forgotten. The aesthetic impulse will seek gratification elsewhere. This relegation of the aesthetic to the secular domain is a regrettable and, in many ways, an ironic outcome of the Protestant Reformation. Its leading theologians have powerfully and eloquently articulated the holiness of the everyday, repudiating metaphysical dualism, acknowledging only an ethical dualism.<sup>21</sup> The beautiful ought not to be rejected, if it is received with thanksgiving, yet aesthetics has often eluded the Protestant religious imagination. With notable exceptions,<sup>22</sup> beauty has not flourished within the walls of the churches of Protestant Europe in the way it has without. This is regrettable, primarily because the evacuation of any aspect of our creaturely existence to a ‘secular’ domain invariably precipitates a desacralizing of that aspect of creaturely existence, not merely in the life of the individual, but in that of society as a whole. The Gospel thus remains a pearl (Matt 13:45–6), but fails to come into its own as a leaven (Matt 13:33). Where the sacred and secular is thus dichotomized, the ethically regenerative effects of the Holy Spirit risk being suspended, never touching on the full range of activity of the members of Christ’s body. The churchly presence of the poetic, however, reminds believers that the lordship of Christ extends over every facet of their lives. A steadfast refusal to sideline this aspect of creaturely existence militates against the tendency towards dichotomization within Protestantism.

If then an absence of poetry is undesirable, how might clergy and laity address the diminishing role that poetic texts, both biblical and non-biblical, play in Church life? Although every situation will bear its own particularities and possibilities, it is worthwhile attending to the dynamics of the most common instance of the recession of poetry in the life of the Church, namely, the obsolescence of the Psalter.

The older Protestant liturgies enshrined the presence of psalms in common worship. Whether read, sung, or chanted, psalms have



played a prominent role in common worship for centuries (indeed, for millennia), yet the absence of psalms in contemporary Sunday services is increasingly widespread, particularly among more progressive, innovative congregations. In part, this may be attributed to the perceived awkwardness congregation members encounter both in the psalms' archaic expression and the occasional strangeness of their theology.<sup>23</sup> Difficulty with the Psalter on these fronts is, however, hardly a recent phenomenon. These same issues were precisely what prompted the poetical labours of Isaac Watts (1674–1748).

Watts held that the words of the psalms required modification for use in Christian rather than Israelite worship.<sup>24</sup> Watts also oriented the subtle resetting of these texts, as well as the numerous hymns which flowed from his pen, toward a clarity of sense and simplicity of metaphor that would serve the congregation's worshipful edification.<sup>25</sup> If psalms may be slipping out of circulation for these reasons, churches would do well to reacquaint themselves with the principles behind this particular poet's ingenious Christological reappropriation and modernization of the Psalter. To that end, contemporary lyricists might avail themselves of a recent publication of the founder and director of the Harbor Institute for Faith and Culture, Mike Cosper. In his book, *Rhythms of Grace*, Cosper provides the kind of accessible summary of Watts' principles with suggestions for possible implementation.<sup>26</sup> Cosper also directly addresses the use of the Psalter beyond its function in congregational singing, offering very helpful advice for the incorporation of psalms in prayers and scriptural readings. The great strength of Cosper's book is that it addresses the needs of the present day, while keeping an eye to the witness of church tradition down through the centuries. While it may not hold the answers for every setting, the prudence of Cosper's suggestions commends itself to wide circulation.

The recession of the Psalter bears special significance in the life of the Church, how best to promote the composition of new poetry that reflects the impulses of contemporary Christian life and how best to promote private devotional use of poetry are also subjects that clergy and laity might well reflect upon. While there are at present a number of initiatives being undertaken at an institutional level,<sup>27</sup> in order to foster contemporary religious poetry, arguably the most effective

means of rekindling a love of the poetic remains the simple word of recommendation. One wonders how many readers of *The Guardian* could be found reading a poem of George Herbert, having read Miranda Threlfell-Holmes' column from 17th February, 2014. With all the vivid descriptive powers of a poet, Threlfell-Holmes herself writes that the poems of George Herbert 'left me with the sense that I was standing on a cliff, staring out to sea, hearing marvellous tales of lands beyond the horizon and wondering if they were, after all, just fairy tales or whether the intensity with which the tales were told was evidence that the teller had indeed seen a barely imagined kingdom.'<sup>28</sup> Who, having never read any of the poetry of George Herbert, would not be at least casually moved to seek out the poem that worked such a powerful effect, especially as Threlfell-Holmes explains the way in which Herbert's poems had turned her unbelieving heart to Christ? A testimony like Threlfell-Holmes' reflects the great truth that religious poetry is never admired merely for its literary qualities, but for its portrayal of the One whom its words adorn. It is not merely the image of George Herbert that Threlfell-Holmes beheld in his poems, but that of his Lord. Indeed, just as the Samaritan villagers followed the woman who told them to come and see a man who told her everything she ever did, people today will also follow recommendations that are as startlingly honest as those of Threlfell-Holmes. The simple word of commendation of one person to another is therefore, likely not only to be the most effective way of rekindling an interest in poetry where its favours have fallen foul, but also a most effective way of igniting faith where its embers have grown cold.



## Conclusion

While it would be grossly overstating the case to describe poetry as of the *esse* of the Church, poetry is certainly of the Church's *bene esse*. God has sanctified poetry to revelatory purpose in the pages of Holy Scripture and uses both biblical and non-biblical poetry to sanctify his people to doxological purpose. Poetry is a blessing to the Church and the Church of God can only be the poorer for overlooking this blessing. But as to where the Church's poets have gone, it may just be possible that they have not gone anywhere. Poets may not be

quite as cherished now as they were in former days, but the poets of the Church are where they have always been. They gather within its walls, awaiting the arrival of the bridegroom, and they linger beyond its walls, awaiting to be summoned to the banquet. Is not the Spirit of the bridegroom yet able to kindle their imagination?

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. [www.cbc.ca/books/2016/03/where-have-all-the-poets-gone-a-documentary-by-sook-yin-lee.html](http://www.cbc.ca/books/2016/03/where-have-all-the-poets-gone-a-documentary-by-sook-yin-lee.html) [accessed 21 November 2016].
- <sup>2</sup> Amos N. Wilder, “The Protestant Witness in Contemporary Poetry”, *Theology Today* 6 (1949):198.
- <sup>3</sup> Erwin L. Lueker, “Theology–Philosophy–Poetry: Toward a Synopsis”, *Concordia Theological Monthly* 42 (1971):432.
- <sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most influential accounts of the personal dimension of the knowledge of God may be found in Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/1 (ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance; London: T&T Clark, 1957) and T. F. Torrance, *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1980). Conceptually, however, the notion of personal encounter was present in the older Protestant theology under the notion of *unio mystica*.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon* (ed. J. M. Robertson; London: Routledge, 1905), 403.
- <sup>6</sup> Patrick Miller, “Poetry and Theology”, *Theology Today* 52 (1995):310.
- <sup>7</sup> A circle of religious scholars and poets including Amos Wilder, Paul Tillich, W. H. Auden and Stanley Hopper began meeting in the Upper East Side of New York City to explore a transition from theology to mythopoetics. Wilder, Hopper, and David Miller have made the most explicit use of the category of theopoetics. Cf. Scott Holland, “Theopoetics is the Rage”, *The Conrad Grebel Review* 31 (2013):121.

- <sup>8</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000). For an excellent examination of Heidegger’s conception of *poiesis* see Alexander Ferrari Di Pippo, “The Concept of Poiesis in Heidegger’s *An Introduction to Metaphysics*” in *Thinking Fundamentals, IWM Junior Visiting Fellows Conferences*, vol. 9 (Vienna, 2000), 2f.
- <sup>9</sup> Cf. David L. Miller, “Theopoetry or Theopoetics?”, *CrossCurrents* 60 (2010):6–23.
- <sup>10</sup> Scott in particular questions the radically individualist subjectivism of imagination lost in the poetic *Welteinnenraum*. The reason for this is that the ‘wholly other’ of transcendent reality must be mediated by the *polis*. Thus, the poet realizes her true function as priest of the *polis*, providing hints of the deepest things within us. Cf. Nathan A. Scott, “Eliot and the Orphic Way”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42 (1974):203–31. The Hegelian impulse in this conception of religion is unmistakable.
- <sup>11</sup> Anthony D. Baker, “Our Grass-Stained Wings: An Essay on Poetry and Theology”, *Anglican Theological Review* 94 (2012): 510.
- <sup>12</sup> See C. S. Lewis, *Is Theology Poetry?* (Québec: Samizdat University Press, 2014).
- <sup>13</sup> Frederick W. Norris, “Gregory Nazianzus’ *Poemata Arcana*: A Poetic, Musical Catechism?”, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 63 (2012): 70.
- <sup>14</sup> Bruce A. Johnson, “‘To Love the Strife’: George Herbert’s Struggle for His Poetry”, *Renascence* 46 (1994):105.
- <sup>15</sup> Perhaps one of the most intriguing examples of this mutual dependence can be seen in allegorical readings of the Song of Songs.
- <sup>16</sup> George Herbert, “Prayer (I)”, in *The Complete English Poems* (ed. John Tobin; London: Penguin, 1991), 45.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Helmut Kuhn, “True Poetry Is Praise”, *Theology Today* 4 (1947):254.
- <sup>19</sup> Kuhn would go so far as to claim that the doxological function of poetry is intrinsic, see *ibid.*, 241.

- <sup>20</sup> Lewis, *Is Theology Poetry?*, 7.
- <sup>21</sup> The classic text is Martin Luther, “Treatise on Good Works, 1520”, in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 44 (ed. J. Atkinson; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 15–121. In more recent times these themes have been developed in the thought of the Dutch Neo-Calvinists. The highly-nuanced account of Herman Bavinck repays close study, see “Herman Bavinck’s ‘Common Grace,’ a Translation by Raymond C. Van Leeuwen”, *Calvin Theological Journal* 24 (1989):35–65.
- <sup>22</sup> One’s mind immediately turns to the altarpieces of Grünewald and the Cranachs, the cantatas of J. S. Bach.
- <sup>23</sup> What congregation has never baulked at the 137th Psalm’s prayer for the dashing of Babylonian infants?
- <sup>24</sup> See Isaac Watts, “A Short Essay Toward the Improvement of Psalmody”, in *The Works of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D. in Nine Volumes* (Leeds: Edward Baines, 1813), vol. 9:1–26.
- <sup>25</sup> See Stephen A. Marini, *Sacred Song in America: Religion, Music, and Public Culture* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 75f. Watts was certainly mounting a clear challenge to the regulative principle of the Puritans, but his principled approach to contemporizing the Psalter was entirely in keeping with the broad ecclesiological convictions of the Reformation.
- <sup>26</sup> Mike Cospser in his *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church’s Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2013), 170ff.
- <sup>27</sup> Such as Manchester Cathedral’s annual poetry prize, [www.manchestercathedral.org/poetry](http://www.manchestercathedral.org/poetry) [accessed 21 November 2016].
- <sup>28</sup> Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, “George Herbert: The Man Who Converted Me from Atheism”, [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2014/feb/17/george-herbert-dangerous-challenge-atheism](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2014/feb/17/george-herbert-dangerous-challenge-atheism) [accessed 21 November 2016].