



## Editorial

The first three papers in this issue have been generated by a Continuing Education Conference held in New College, Edinburgh earlier this year. On that occasion Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, both of the University of Lancaster, presented papers outlining empirical research carried out by them and colleagues in the Cumbrian town of Kendal and newly published in their book *The Spiritual Revolution*. Subtitled *Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, this research provides at least some data giving flesh to current speculation and debate about what is happening to religion in Britain. Dr Woodhead's paper is a slightly revised version of her conference presentation. The responses of Georgina Nelson and Russell Barr, speaking from the different contexts of health care chaplaincy and parish ministry do not challenge the basic thesis of the research. They do however raise interesting questions for further discussion. Is Kendal really typical of Britain as a whole? Are there subtle, or maybe not so subtle, differences between the religion/spiritualities of the Scots and English? – even when the English data comes from what is probably the nearest big town south of Carlisle. Even where we lack the facilities to undertake thorough research like that described, it would be a useful to reflect upon our Scottish communities and churches in the light of the findings described both in this paper – and in the book.

The papers by Sarah Hall and Paul Nimmo are based upon recently completed research in Edinburgh. Like the first paper in this issue, Sarah Hall explores an issue about which many must have speculated and provides hard data for future discussion. What is the relationship (if any) between modern biblical scholarship and Bible study in a 'normal' congregation? Is such a relationship possible or even desirable? The value of the research is that it has been generated by the actual realities of Bible study in congregations. Hopefully it will provide 'reflective practitioners' with tools and concepts for reflecting upon and developing present congregational (and ecumenical) practice.

Paul Nimmo offers us a new reading of John McLeod Campbell's work on the atonement. McLeod Campbell was one of the most significant (and controversial) figures in nineteenth-century Scottish theology, challenging the then current orthodox theories of penal substitutionary atonement.

Finally, Kenneth Ross explores an issue which could not have been foreseen by the nineteenth-century Scottish church: new forms of church consequent upon large scale immigration to Britain and the consequent possibilities and problems of new forms of ecumenical relationships.

If these papers do not centre around a common theme, they are at least testimony to the rich diversity of scholarship and research which presently constitutes theology in Scotland.

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