

singing tedious. It then becomes the job of the musician to enliven the presentation.

One might find some of the tunes not as lyrical as one might expect from congregational songs/hymns, or are we musically not as sharp as we used to be? Have we gone too far in “dumbing down”? We may conveniently forget that many of our “standard” hymns began life as folk songs of the time – look at a description of what we know today as the “Passion Chorale”. Who knows how long some of these selections will last – they were written for a time which may not be relevant years later. But just as the “Passion Chorale” has stood the test of time, perhaps “When We Are Tested” (#65) will do the same and become a new Lenten favourite.

This is also a specifically Canadian resource, in the sense that it features many of our own gifted text writers and composers. Some are being published for the first time – only in Canada, you say. We are a talented country and it makes me proud to see such inspirations being shared with the church and community.

The contents are ordered after a worship service, which

makes it easier to see where selections would be suitable. The indexes are informative, especially the Scriptural References and Liturgical Use, Topics and Categories. The layout is well-done for ease of playing and reading, and the coil binding allows the book to lay flat on the music stand.

Congregations are encouraged to supplement their singing with *More Voices*. It will open your hearts and minds to new horizons as we continue to evolve as a church in today’s world. Bravo on a job well done!

– Sharon L. Beckstead

SECULARITY AND THE GOSPEL: Being Missionaries to Our Children

by Ronald Rolheiser New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2006. 240 pp. \$24.95

Our congregations are receiving mixed messages about the world in which we live. On one hand, voices are telling us that our collective Christian spirit and memory are fading.

The world is seen by many Christians as being an increasingly hostile place in which to live and serve. The church is being forced to rethink its place in this new society. We're being told that more of our churches will soon be closing. On the other hand we are being told that we are being offered a real opportunity to renew our faith communities and rebuild our institutions in a way that helps build a new world. People seem interested in and open to what we have to say. They want to listen to what we have to offer and also want to consider an appropriate response. So which is it? Is Christianity dying? Is our influence decreasing? Or is the church experiencing renewal? One thing that informs our answer is how we see the role of mission and evangelism fitting into our individual lives and wider church communities.

Ron Rolheiser has both contributed to and edited a book addressing the place of mission in our world. In *Secularity and the Gospel*, Rolheiser challenges his readers to rethink the relationship between church and world. In the first part, he writes a series of chapters defining the world around us. He tries to explain what the secular world

looks like and how it affects the work of the church. He also addresses the challenges the church faces as we try and connect with this rapidly changing world. The second part is an edited collection of presentations offered in a series of events addressing this connection between church and world. Each comes from someone representing a different part of the wider church. Their thoughts and observations provide material we can all learn from.

Rolheiser notes that the content of this book is beyond liberalism and conservatism. Its main point is that the church has to develop a renewed mission to the secular society in which it finds itself. This book talks about, to use Rolheiser's words, "being missionaries to a secular culture". He writes, "The most difficult mission field in the world today is western culture, secularity – the board rooms, living rooms, bedrooms, and entertainment rooms within which we and our families live, work, and play."

It can be argued that church and society have pulled away from one another in past decades. This increasing gap has more than its fair share of complications. People beyond the

church seem defensive around and curious about the church. People living in a secular environment no longer know what many of our more common religious expressions mean. There is a tremendous amount of misunderstanding when people approach the church for things like weddings and funerals. Rolheiser raises some good questions that we in the United Church can deal with as we continue to make our way into the 21st century. What do we need to do in order to cross the Christian/secular divide? How do we find and identify the situations in which the seeds of the Gospel can be successfully planted? How do we approach people with the Christian message? Much of this book addresses the context in which our individual and collective mission is lived out. Robert Schreiter writes, "What we do is create a space or environment in which the gospel is then able to act." How do we do this? Different approaches to a renewed sense of mission are introduced through the individuals making presentations at the events. Some of these approaches are quite simple. Their simplicity can be misleading, however. Some things can be so simple we miss them completely

and this is why reminders are so important.

Secularity and the Gospel is an important tool in building a bridge between our churches and the world around us. It raises questions that need to be considered by individuals and churches seeing a need to reach out to an increasingly secular world. It also offers suggestions for how we can meet these needs and build a new world.

– Mike Jones

**LORD, GIVER OF LIFE:
Toward a Pneumatological
Complement to George
Lindbeck's Theory of
Doctrine**
by Jane Barter Moulaison
Editions SR Volume 32.
Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier
Press, 2007. xii + 168 pp.
\$65.00

In this informed and well-written volume of theology, Jane Barter Moulaison succeeds admirably in her purpose of exploring the relationship between the methods of Christian theology and the work of the Holy Spirit. Consistently affirming the triune reality of God, Barter