

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.  
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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

Moulaison deftly treats the methodological controversies within contemporary theology. At the same time, she gives lucid attention to more ancient patterns of theological thought, especially concerning the Holy Spirit. The book as a whole seeks to provide a helpful discussion, in theological terms, about how and why theology functions as it does. It is a broadly ecumenical book, consistent with the approach of the main thinker to whom it is responding – George Lindbeck.

Barter Moulaison, who teaches Church history and theology at the University of Winnipeg, sustains a dynamic, dialogical relationship with Lindbeck throughout. One of the book's many virtues is the orientation it gives to Lindbeck as a key figure in "postliberal" theology. Lindbeck is especially well known for his concept of doctrine as the "working grammar" of the Christian faith (*The Nature of Doctrine*, 1984). Barter Moulaison takes up Lindbeck's contributions with a view to supplementing them with a more fullsome account of the role of the Spirit both in the tasks of theology and in the practices of the Church. Specifically, she adds pneumatology

to Lindbeck's three "regulative principles" that govern ecumenically-shared doctrine. The Holy Spirit is always operative in the Church's trinitarian confession, and is a norming factor in the discernment and articulation of good, faithful theology.

Barter Moulaison's addition of pneumatology as the fourth "regulative principle" helps to overcome Lindbeck's dependence on an anthropologically-limited view of doctrine. In particular, since Lindbeck's ideas about how doctrine works relies upon a functional and healthy Church, Barter Moulaison's affirmation of the (radically free and sovereign) Holy Spirit as essential to doctrinal discernment counterbalances the inevitable error of the earthly Church. With Barter Moulaison's approach in hand, we are, like the ancient Church, able faithfully to "consider the Spirit's role as a dynamic and often disruptive power" (142).

According to the postliberal model, doctrine functions best and with greatest meaning when embedded within liturgy that arises from Scripture. No "essential" truth(s) or concept(s) can be rightly understood apart from the story communicated by both liturgy and Scripture. That

story is primarily one of redemption, but not for the Church alone. Stretching beyond Lindbeck's approach, Barter Moulaison's accent on the Holy Spirit evokes a clearer sense of the Spirit's universal presence and mission within and outside the Church. We see this expressed doctrinally and liturgically in "the central soteriological affirmation of the Church"(85) – namely, that in Jesus Christ, God has reached out toward the whole world with saving intent.

Like Lindbeck, Barter Moulaison makes helpful use of patristic sources. This attention to Christian heritage provides a model for mainline liberal denominations, a model in which accessing the ancient traditions of the Church can in fact be liberating and life-giving. Accessing the treasures of the past, Barter Moulaison shows us, need not be inevitably oppressive, as many seem to fear. In Barter Moulaison's writing, the contemporary Church's aversion to ancient Christian sources meets a generous challenge. Similarly, her reflections on the Church as counter-cultural

provide encouragement toward covenantal faithfulness in our time, over against (for example) "individualistic self-determination and the cult of progress" (115).

While *Lord, Giver of Life* is at times densely written, it is always adroit, has momentum, and offers a satisfying and successful argument that pneumatology is essential in providing a full account of theology's procedures. Barter Moulaison is very appreciative of Lindbeck, but also seeks to interrogate his assumptions. Such close attention to this giant among contemporary theologians results in a nuanced and ultimately more helpful theological method.

By addressing so many questions effectively, Barter Moulaison invites the reader to think laterally about a broad range of intersecting theological issues. Accordingly, the experience of reading her book is most fruitful, and encourages one to ponder trajectories and core issues beyond what the title might suggest.

– Robert C. Fennell