

som den "tillämpande filosofen" Catharina Stenqvist erbjuder.

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Graham R. Smith. *The Church Militant: Spiritual Warfare in the Anglican Charismatic Renewal*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications. 2016. 278 pp.

Spiritual warfare is often associated with Pentecostal churches, but it is practiced in other denominations as well. In this published doctoral dissertation from the University of Birmingham, Graham Smith offers a brief history of spiritual warfare tradition within the Church of England, interviews with leading figures in Anglican spiritual warfare circles, a case study showing how spiritual warfare is practiced in an Anglican congregation, a critical review of three theologians who have written about the ontology of demons, and a new systematization of spiritual warfare theology for the Anglican charismatic tradition. He operates within several different scholarly traditions: practical theology, church history, and sociology.

Smith is an insider. He is a priest in the Church of England who belongs to the charismatic tradition and has taken part in renewal activities (including spiritual warfare practices) for over thirty years. This allows him access to key figures in the Anglican charismatic tradition and makes his observations of the congregation more insightful than might otherwise have been the case.

The case study showed that contrary to what some critics of spiritual warfare practices would have us believe, people in the congregation did not show paranoid tendencies, but rather reported experiencing less fear. Measured forms of spiritual warfare, which assume that the devil and demons really do exist, "can release a confidence to seek greater levels of personal freedom and see de-

monic influence increasingly marginalized" (pp. 163–164).

In some congregations spiritual warfare practices appear to have positive effects. But are demons for real? That is a central concern for Smith in the second part of the book. He asks, "what is really happening when charismatics claim to encounter and engage with evil forces?" (p. 125) and "is the notion of a battle against ontologically real evil powers coherent, and does it correspond to reality?" (p. 228).

Smith's goal is to offer "a charismatic ontology of evil that remains faithful both to [congregational] experience and to the biblical evidence" (p. 126). In preparation for his own systematization, Smith studies the ontology of evil in the writings of three theologians who were "positively influenced by experience in charismatic and Pentecostal contexts" (p. 125): Nigel G. Wright, Amos Yong, and Gregory Boyd. He interacts critically with all three authors, but stands closest to Boyd. While both Wright and Yong offer non-ontological explanations for demons and evil, Boyd, who is one of the most theologically sophisticated authors in the spiritual warfare tradition, argues on the basis of the New Testament for the real existence of the devil and demons. While generally in agreement with Boyd's approach, Smith does not accept everything Boyd writes. For example, he agrees with Boyd that the best available explanation to how Satan and demons came to exist is by seeing them as fallen angels, but he finds that a better case for this may be made from the New Testament and intertestamental texts than the Old Testament texts Boyd cites.

In systematizing his own view of demons Smith discusses exorcisms in the Gospels, Pauline references to powers and principalities, fallen angels, sin and suffering, and Christ's defeat of evil. Smith's interaction with the literature is competent, but I wish he had worked more closely with the biblical material considering that his goal was to cre-

ate a theology that is faithful to the biblical evidence.

Although the biblical witness is central for Smith, he does “not wish to accept the worldview of early Christians uncritically” (p. 200), but to incorporate insights from other disciplines. But given that theologians in the charismatic tradition cannot in Smith’s opinion be limited by assumptions that govern the natural sciences, I do not know how far he can let other disciplines impact his understanding of reality. Smith notes that some psychologists have come to believe in the real existence of demons, but he ought to clarify that many, if not most, psychologists reject the existence of demons outright; references to demons would never in their view be an adequate explanation for a patient’s behaviour.

I like this work but I am not convinced the central question is one that can be answered. I understand why Smith would want to know whether the demons people experience are real, but I do not think a meaningful answer can be given. I think the best theologians in the charismatic tradition can do is offer a coherent account of the devil and demons that is consistent with the biblical texts and their experiences, but not try to determine whether it corresponds to “reality”. Attempts to answer that question will always be circular: it all depends on how we conceive of reality. Smith emphasizes that in addition to the three traditional bases for theology in the Anglican tradition (scripture, reason, and tradition), our experiences should play a central role when we construct theology. But there are no neutral experiences. Charismatic experiences of battles with demons and the devil are influenced by the tradition to which they belong and their reading of Scripture.

Scholars in the charismatic tradition can investigate the results of spiritual warfare practices, like Smith has done. Smith shows that these practices can indeed have positive results, they can give people a sense of freedom and that they do not have to result in

general paranoia. Such research can influence praxis: If a practice does not contradict Scripture and church tradition and has positive results even in the long term, there may be grounds for using it in the church even if it builds on categories that are completely foreign to modern science. People’s experiences of the devil and demons and of being freed from them are real enough; perhaps we do not have to concern ourselves with how or where they exist.

This is a thought-provoking book, although the various parts do not cohere as strongly as I would wish. More could have been done with the interviews of spiritual warfare pioneers to which Smith had unique access, and perhaps less emphasis given to the writings of Wright and Yong, which do not contribute much to his thesis. On a final note: the very fact that praxis-oriented dissertations like these are written is encouraging. It is theology done in the service of the church.

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Lennart Thörn. *Ordets tillblivelse: Lukasevangeliet*. Örebro: Libris. 2017. 572 s.

För första gången i modern tid finns nu en Lukaskommentar författad på svenska. Lennart Thörn, pensionerad universitetsadjunkt vid Göteborgs universitet, tidigare lärare på Örebro missionsskola och pastor i EFK, har skrivit den 572 sidor långa kommentaren *Ordets tillblivelse*, i Libris serie Nya Testamentets Budskap. Hittills har elva kommentarer utkommit i serien, den första 2006. Kommentarererna har två huvudavdelningar, dels bibeltextens teologi och budskap i sin egen tid, och dels reflektion, relevans och tillämpning av bibeltexten i dag. Till läsarens hjälp används symboler för att identifiera de olika syftena så som sammanhang och uppbyggnad, utläggning av textens innehåll, faktaruta med fördjupning, sammanfattning av textens budskap samt reflektioner utifrån ett