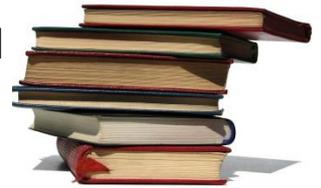


# From the Bookshelf to the Classroom and Beyond – What Redcliffe Faculty have been reading



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## Editorial

A good teacher never stops learning and reflecting. This edition of Encounters is dedicated to book reviews by members of the faculty of Redcliffe College. Although the titles covered are varied, the unifying theme is our request to participants that they complement their reviews by reflecting on how their reading might be useful for or influence their teaching.

One of the big developments in recent months at Redcliffe is the move to the College of the Wycliffe Bible Translators training, now called the Centre for Linguistics, Translation and Literacy (CLTL). This issue of Encounters therefore provides a timely opportunity to mark this exciting move and introduce some of the Faculty involved in those programmes.

The first review is by Carol Orwig, who discusses Michael Agar's book *Language Shock: The culture of communication*, a book that provides a very realistic framework for language learning that goes beyond grammar and vocabulary and takes into account cultural issues. Staying with the cultural dynamic of language, David Gray reviews *Translating Cultures* by David Katan. Picking out some of the many (and often humorous) examples offered by Katan, David applies the difficulties of translating across cultures to his own translation consultancy and teaching on CLTL courses. Following this, Howard Jackson evaluates the three volume *Basic Linguistic Theory* by R.M. Dixon. Offering a brief description of each volume, Jackson recommends Dixon's compendium as an indispensable guide to field linguistics.

Catherine Young draws on her own experience of living with the poor to review the revised edition of Bryant Myers' challenging book *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. The original edition has been a key book for her work in education and development among minority ethnolinguistic communities and she notes with approval the additional perspectives from around the globe in this new edition. On a very different tack but also meeting the needs of today's complex world, Ted Pilling takes a look at *Pathways to Jesus: Crossing the Thresholds to Faith* by Don Everts and Doug Schaupp. He suggests it will be useful not only in the classroom for modules in evangelism and discipleship but also in our own interaction with today's postmodern generation.

Inspired by John Goldingay's *Job for Everyone*, Tim Davy notes the challenge of appropriate vulnerability in the classroom and wider community, as well as the missional importance of lament. On a different note, Daniel Button looks at *The Language of Science and Faith* by Karl Giberson and Francis Collins. He believes this will become a key text for his students and highly recommends it to all who are grappling with the science-faith divide. And finally, Hugh Kemp, whose *The One-Stop Guide to World Religions* has been published this month by Lion Hudson, relates the issues raised in Stephen Prothero's *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that run the World - and Why their Differences Matter* to the way we think about communicating the Gospel in relation to other religions.

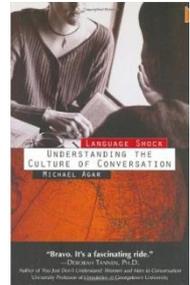
Eight reviews of widely different books, but all providing useful tools for seeking to engage with, and communicate more effectively to, our complex world.

Graham Dancy and Tim Davy (issue co-editors)

## ***Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Communication.* Michael Agar (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).**

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Reviewed by **Carol Orwig**, Centre for Linguistics, Translation and Literacy. Module Coordinator for Language and Culture Acquisition.



This book may seem a strange choice for a review as it is hardly new – having been first published in 1994. I chose it, however, because it depicts in such an interesting and accessible way the complex and important task of learning to communicate with people from a different culture, in a different language.

As Agar says, most people think that communication difficulties can be solved by language instruction. Surely if more policemen in the United States spoke Spanish, or if we provided free English lessons to immigrants, it would solve the communication problems between these groups. Agar notes

The (Washington) Post and most everybody else, assumes that language instruction would solve the problem. The Post and most everybody else is wrong. The majority think language is mostly grammar. Teach people the grammar, give them a dictionary, and they'll communicate. But anyone who's studied a second language in the classroom and then tried to use it in the real world knows better than that.

*Language Shock* explores and explains more about the frames of reference people use in real-life communication: the expectations of what people will do, all the assumed knowledge needed to interpret language and behavior correctly. It also talks about the changes that occur in the learner, in the person who is learning to bridge these different worlds of culture through communication.

Our goal in the Language and Culture Communication course is to do just that: to help people build bridges between different worlds by becoming aware of their own cultural values and the assumptions they bring to any conversation. It helps that our students usually come from a variety of different cultures, so they can learn a lot from the interaction with each other, if we set up the learning activities in a helpful way.

To return to the book, Agar talks about the tendency for linguists to draw a circle around language and to talk about the sounds, the grammar within the circle. Noam Chomsky, the famous linguist did that. His theories involved describing what an “ideal speaker-listener” would do. Here is an excerpt from the first page of his book ***Aspects of the Theory of Syntax***:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically-irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language to actual performance.

I am not sure I know anyone like that, and this view of language and linguistics is not helpful to me in preparing people for the messy business of real-life cross-cultural living, communication, relationship and ministry. Agar's book is helpful, because it describes both the complexity of the situation people find themselves in, some of the reasons for lack of communication, and also gives some tools and strategies for approaching the task of broaching the gap. He gives stories from his own experiences primarily in Austria and

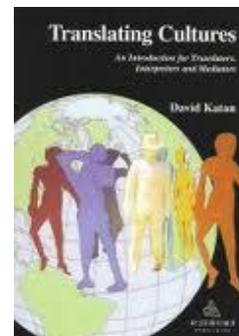
Mexico, but also many examples of miscommunications among people within his own country. He talks about what the mindset is of an immigrant, and how this needs to be different from someone on a package-tour, where one holds the host culture at a safe distance.

In a Bible college such as Redcliffe, we are all involved in cross-cultural communication at various levels. Not only are there students, faculty and staff from many countries, the very nature of Biblical study is a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic venture. Agar's book gives concepts which can be usefully applied to understanding the Bible and the conversations and interactions in it as well as to understanding conversations in the dining-room. These include the concept of cultural frames, the idea of "rich points" (those areas in which miscommunication occurs) and how we can learn specifically from those points at which our own frame doesn't fit the other person's frame. I recommend *Language Shock* to all interested in expanding their own frames of references so to understand not only "What did he say?", but also "What did he mean?" and "What is going on here?."

## ***Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators.* David Katan (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1999, 2004).**

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Reviewed by **David Gray**, Centre for Linguistics, Translation and Literacy.  
Module Coordinator for Translation Module, MA in Field Linguistics.



Many of us involved in Bible Translation have little time to read books on translation theory. This is a book worth making time for. It introduces us to the idea of translation as cultural mediation - that translators are not simply representing meaning in another language using linguistic signs, as Eugene Nida taught in his Code Model - rather they are attempting to mediate culture. In so doing they will often come across rhetoric or behaviour which seem confusing or even irrelevant to their own culture. Yet, David Katan says, these must be translated or mediated across so that they have meaning for the audience. In facing this challenge of being mediators of culture the translator is engaged in a process of interpreting meta-language, and deciding what is relevant to the audience in question. Katan's book provides a rationale for adding explanatory material (that is implicit in the text) or deleting other material (that will be seen as obvious to the reader) by explaining such changes in terms of recent translation theories such as Relevance Theory, 'Frames' and meta-language, and Speech Act Theory. One of the things I found particularly helpful, were the many examples Katan includes. Here is one:

Le Monde : Les deux auteurs directs de l'attentat ... ont quitté Auckland ... l'un pour Nouméa, l'autre pour Sydney (**Australie**).

Translation in The Guardian : The two men who carried out the attack ... left Auckland ... one for Nouméa, **in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia**, and the other for Sydney.

The translator has found it necessary to make explicit the information regarding Nouméa, which would have been obvious to a French reader (but less well-known to Guardian readers in the UK), while deleting 'Australia' as being obvious to an English reader.

Another example highlights the possibility of finding whole sentences that contain too much i.e. embarrassing information. An Italian shoemaker had written this paragraph of information about their 'Blackpool' shoes:

Complimenti! Lei ha scelto le calzature Blackpool realizzate con materiale di qualità superiore.

La pelle, accuratamente selezionate nei **macelli** specializzati, dopo una serie di processi de lavorazione viene resa più morbida e flessibile.

The translation read:

Compliments! You chosed the Blackpool shoes realized with materials of high quality.

The leather, carefully selected in the specialized **slaughter-houses**, after difference proceeding of manufacture, becomes softer and supplier.

Katan points out that some of what has been communicated is, quite frankly, inappropriate for British audiences, who don't like being reminded that their shoes began in a slaughter house, and who associate the name 'Blackpool' with cheap seaside holidays, donkey rides, and sticky sweets. He recommends the translation below:

Your *Blackpool* shoes have been carefully made from the finest quality materials.

Presumably it is too late to actually change the name of the firm, but putting the name in italics serves the function of making them 'so-called' Blackpool shoes.

Lastly, for those struggling with unknown ideas, he shows how culturally-informed such concepts are. The phrase 'annus horribilis' is used in one article from the Guardian:

Even before the close of February, the Italian government is already well into its own "annus horribilis". Mr Amato's political mentor and Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi, finally resigned after an eighth cautionary warrant from judges in the Milan scandal.

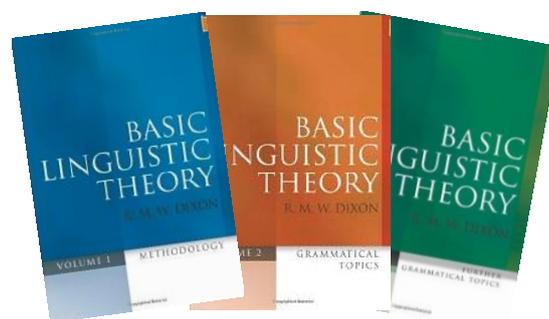
Katan suggest that it helps to be aware of Queen Elizabeth II's speech after various difficult events in her own family: 'Nineteen ninety two is not a year I shall look back on with undiluted pleasure. In the words of one of my more sympathetic correspondents, it has turned out to be an "annus horribilis"'. Since Elizabeth's use of the phrase, readers have begun to associate it with scandal, upheaval, turmoil and public criticism. This knowledge then helps the reader interpret this unknown idea in the article.

These examples illustrate how difficult it is to translate from one European culture (and therefore language) to another, let alone from the various biblical cultures and languages into one's own, often via a third, also alien culture - many translators work from secondary texts such as translations into English, French, Spanish, Russian, and so on. Those of us who train and advise translators need to be especially sensitive to this issue, as it is all too easy to influence a mother-tongue translator who is already struggling with their own mediatorial role with our exegesis and views of translation. They are trying to keep, not one, but two audiences happy – the eventual readers or listeners of the Bible, and also the consultant or translation advisor. Overall I would recommend this book as an introduction to the cultural pitfalls that befall any translator, consultant, or translation-advisor, though, as with any 'Introduction', the description of the various cultural, linguistic and cognitive theories is brief, and more likely to give the reader an incentive to read the fuller treatments of these subjects. As such it will be a very useful resource for both teaching staff and students on CLTL Meaning and Communication and Translation courses – it will provide relevant examples, and help folk see Bible translation within the general context of cross-cultural communication.

## ***Basic Linguistic Theory, Vols 1-3. Dixon, R.M.W. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010-12)***

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Reviewed by **Howard Jackson**, Centre for Linguistics, Translation and Literacy. Course Leader, MA in Field Linguistics.



What is language like? What are languages like? These are two questions that are fundamental to the discipline of linguistics. Linguists divide into two camps on the basis of which of these two questions they regard as more fundamental or to be the top priority for linguistic research. The first is pursued by ‘theoretical’ linguists, whose goal is to build a theory or model to ‘explain’ human language. The second is asked by ‘descriptive’ linguists, who see their primary goal as the investigation and description of the world’s thousands of languages. The approach of the first is deductive (from theory to hypothesis to data), that of the second inductive (from data to hypothesis to theory). Dixon belongs decidedly to the second camp; and his three-volume *Basic Linguistic Theory*, based on a lifetime’s work as a descriptive linguist, mounts a spirited defence of the inductive approach.

Dixon argues that linguists should proceed from language data to description, and from the descriptions of many languages to theory – the ‘basic linguistic theory’ of the title of his work. The theory is based on the cumulative knowledge and insights of descriptive linguists; and any new description of a previously unanalysed language could potentially modify the theory, if some previously unidentified feature is found or if a feature is used in a previously unrecorded manner. Languages must be analysed in their own terms; descriptive labels and terminology may be derived from the theory and applied to phenomena in the language under analysis that are sufficiently similar to those in other languages. Dixon maintains that no two languages are precisely the same in any feature, so that the theory must always be provisional.

The first Volume of *Basic Linguistic Theory* (BLT) is entitled ‘Methodology’. In it Dixon sets out his aims, to propose “an outline characterization of the structure of human language” (p.1), and to provide a manual for field linguistics, i.e. for those investigating previously unanalysed languages, in the field. Dixon is an experienced field linguist himself, having worked on languages of Australia, Fiji and the Amazon, among others, including English. What he has to say is of direct relevance to linguists working with SIL, who are engaged with analysing languages as a step towards Bible translation and literacy work. The first volume is essential reading for anyone training to become a field linguist. It outlines the scope of grammar, demonstrating the kinds of features that the grammatical systems of languages contain. It explains how to analyse languages and describe their grammars; it shows how to ‘do linguistics’ and engage in linguistic argumentation; and it gives tips on field linguistics. While the focus is on grammar, this volume also contains a chapter on phonology and on the lexicon (i.e. vocabulary), as well as on the issue of terminology.

The subsequent two volumes are concerned exclusively with grammar: Volume 2 ‘Grammatical Topics’ (487 pages) and Volume 3 ‘Further Grammatical Topics’ (545 pages). Grammar is the means

by which words are tied together and is thus central to the analysis of a language. How the language is pronounced, what words and other expressions make up its vocabulary, how its discourses and texts are organised are all important; but, arguably, the grammatical systems of a language are somehow at the core. Volumes 2 and 3 cover a wide range of topics in the main areas of grammar; they are illustrated with examples from a variety of different languages and language types; and each chapter concludes with a 'What to investigate' section, giving a list of questions to guide a field linguist in investigating the particular grammatical topic under discussion. Volume 3 concludes with a useful chapter on 'language and the world', discussing how cultural factors, such as politeness and honour, may be reflected in a language's grammar, as well as how geographical terrain, world view, kinship systems and size of the language community may influence grammar.

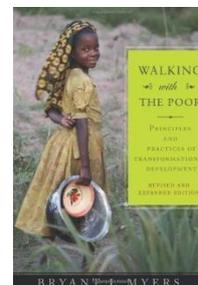
Dixon asserts that linguistic fieldwork should be undertaken for its own sake, and one of 'poor reasons' that he gives for doing fieldwork is "missionaries feel[ing] a call to translate parts of the Christian Bible into some new language" (Vol 1, p.310). He notes that some missionaries, who haven't done the linguistics properly, end up producing poor translations; but he does acknowledge that there are missionaries who have done the linguistics well and who produce good grammatical descriptions and good translations. Dixon's link between the adequacy of field linguistics, grammatical description, and quality of translation is a valid point and should be taken note of.

Although Bible translation is an important motivator for missionary field linguistics, one might argue that there is, for the Christian, another motivator. Language is one of the characteristics that define us as human beings created in the image of God. To study languages in all their variety and complexity is to seek to understand this attribute of our humanness which enables us to form relationships with God and with our fellow human beings. Dixon's three-volume work on 'basic linguistic theory' is an excellent resource for doing that, as well as an essential *vade mecum* for the field linguist, whatever their motivation might be.

## ***Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Bryant Myers (New York: Orbis Books, 2011).***

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Reviewed by **Catherine Young**, Centre for Language, Translation and Literacy.  
Course Leader, MA Literacy Programme Development.



Living in the mountains of the southern Philippines, I was mystified. My neighbour's son was critically ill, suffering from malaria and urgently required medication to treat his high temperature and the impact of the infection on his frail, undernourished body. And yet her priority with her limited cash was to ensure that there were new batteries for her small radio in order to listen to the nightly "soap opera". I believed she loved her son with all her heart. Why had she made this choice? What is the impact of poverty on decision making, particularly in marginalised communities?

When you think of "development", what picture comes to mind? Is it a positive image? Is it restricted to material development? Or is it social change in a material world? Bryant Myers' book *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, first published in 1999, focuses on concern for the whole of human life – materially, socially, psychologically and spiritually, and has been a formational text for me in my journey with minority ethnolinguistic communities in education and development. I've just been reading the revised second edition, and it's instructive to see the ways in which the author has expanded his work to include theoretical models from multiple perspectives from Europe, Asia and North America.

Billions of pounds are spent annually [1] on international development by the British government alone and the 2002 International Development Act requires all UK aid to have a focus on poverty reduction. Add to this the investment from national governments and external organisations and consider the impact. Are we seeing significant alleviation of poverty? If not, why?

Myers' goal is to bring together the best of the principles and practices of international development organisations, the thinking and experience of Christian relief and development nongovernment organisations, informed and shaped by a theological framework and to help us toward a more nuanced understanding of poverty with the intent of influencing our actions and reactions. This makes "*Walking with the Poor*" a core text for teaching and learning about issues surrounding education and development in minority ethnolinguistic contexts. This book leads us to rigorous reflection that should influence our interactions in community and plans for literacy and education programmes.

Banerjee & Duflo in *Poor Economics* [2] write of the need to

resist the kind of lazy, formulaic thinking that reduces every problem to the same set of general principles; if we listen to poor people themselves and force ourselves to understand the logic of their choices; if we accept the possibility of error and subject every idea, including the most apparently commonsensical ones, to rigorous empirical testing, then we

will be able not only to construct a toolbox of effective policies but also to better understand why the poor live the way they do.

Myers draws us away from the simplistic towards a synthesis of Biblical framework, a holistic understanding of poverty and (particularly in this expanded edition) a detailed survey of development thinking from practitioners from many different perspectives. It's clear that it is impossible to distil poverty to a simple model and there's no simple response. He centres around two significant approaches drawn from the fields of anthropology and development – Paul Hiebert's description of Western worldview and the excluded middle and Jayakumar Christian's discourse on the nature of poverty. In the Foreword to *Walking with the Poor*, Hiebert notes,

we have relegated God's transforming work to spiritual realities and assigned earthly matters to science and technology. The result is a schizophrenic Christianity that leaves the everyday problems of human life to secular specialists and limits God to matters of eternity. A truly holistic approach to mission rooted in biblical truth is essential in planting vital churches that remain Christ-centred over the generations as it is in Christian ministries of compassion.

Myers writes of the role of the outsider, playing god in the lives of the poor resulting in the marring of the identity of both the poor and the non-poor. We, as outsiders, cannot play god and be the image of God that he intends us to hold. In teaching about issues around education and development for minority ethnolinguistic communities, I believe that one core outcome is to develop reflective practitioners who are willing to critique both their own and others' practice. So, who should read this book?

Have you ever suspected that there is a more integrated way in which to view the world than the prevalent spiritual/material dichotomy that the Western worldview presents? Have you ever wondered why we need to use the word "holistic"? What is broken that needs to be repaired? The goals of the journey of transformational development are to find and enjoy life as it should be – as it was intended to be – to recover our true identity as human beings created in the image of God. If these thoughts have crossed your mind as you personally prepare for mission involvement or consider the place of missions in a complex, socially and economically fractured world, then I urge you to turn to this book.

Other books tackling similar issues, from different perspectives that I've also found helpful, include:

Hughes, D. (2008) *Power and Poverty: Divine and Human Rule in a World of Need*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press.

Corbett, S. & Fikkert, B. (2009) *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor ... and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody Publishers

Keller, T. (2010) *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just*. London: Dutton Books.

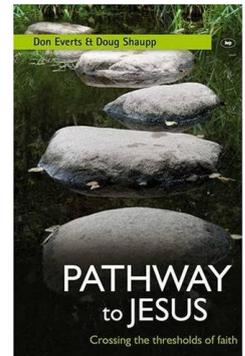
[1] £11.3bn (<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/mar/20/uk-aid-spend-important-works>)

[2] Banerjee, A. V., & E. Duflo (2011) *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. New York: Perseus.

## ***Pathway to Jesus: Crossing the thresholds of faith.* Don Everts and Doug Schaupp (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2008).**

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Reviewed by **Edward Pilling**, Lecturer at Redcliffe College.



Originally titled *I Once Was Lost*, the re-branding of this book to a positive expression of a journey to faith only adds to the already outstanding content. The past thirty years have seen countless books, seminars and conferences offered to the Christian public to help us contextualise the gospel to a postmodern culture. This is the first book that I have read in which the Introduction begins, “Meet the Authors (all 2000 of them)”. That’s the difference. Everts and Schaupp interviewed and listened to the stories of ‘postmoderns’ who have come to faith in Christ. They noticed common experiences, and certain themes were so prevalent that they became the core material of the book. The themes are called ‘the five thresholds’, but the authors are careful to caution against stereotyping and recognise that individual pathways to Jesus are both mysterious and organic.

The five thresholds are: from distrust to trust; from complacent to curious; from being closed to being open to change; from meandering to seeking; and, crossing the threshold of the Kingdom itself.

Distrust is a societal norm for ‘postmoderns’. The challenge for us to be ‘messengers’ who develop relationship not teaching, friendship not evangelism, listening not preaching and asking questions not giving answers, can be difficult when a previous generational culture would take trust for granted. The lesson from our postmodern brothers and sisters in Christ is clear, ‘no trust – no listen’.

It was helpful to read that we do not have to have all the answers to all the questions of those who are curious. The authors do suggest questions should be encouraged, but make the point that Jesus was asked 183 questions in the gospel accounts and answered only three, but asked 307 questions in reply (who researched that?) The point is that dialogue and self discovery are a means of accepting that there is more than one worldview.

Commitment to the gospel was also clear. There is to be no distortion or compromise with the truth of the gospel. The ‘seeker’ of threshold four seeks Jesus, not some spiritual curiosity. They count the cost and the personal implications of following Jesus should be unambiguous.

This book helps me to identify what stage a person has reached in their pathway to Jesus, in particular, when someone moves from curiosity to seeking, and the way to help them at each separate stage. Threshold five also confirmed something I have observed, namely that ‘seeking’ has a shelf life. There is an urgency the nearer someone is to the Kingdom of God, and the spiritual battle can become intense. At this time if a person hesitates to cross the threshold there can be a hardening of heart and attitude. We are encouraged to pray at each threshold, but especially at this point.

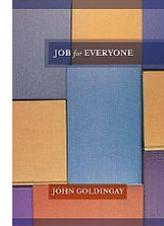
I have used this book as a set text for modules in evangelism and discipleship. When used alongside books such as *Know and Tell the Gospel* (Chapman), *Marks of the Messenger* (Stiles), and *Mission to Oz* (Tabb), there is a clear emphasis on discipleship being integral to the message of the gospel. The balance is most clearly seen when we consider the three key questions in the Christianity Explored course: Who is Jesus? Why did he come? What does it mean to follow him?

Everts and Schaupp always seem to capture the attention of the reader and promote a healthy class discussion. If you want to share the gospel, and are willing to share your life as well, this is a stimulating and thought provoking read.

## ***Job for Everyone.* John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 2013).**

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Reviewed by **Tim Davy**, Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Mission at Redcliffe College. He is the Director of Redcliffe's [Centre for the Study of Bible and Mission](#) and is in the final stages of a PhD on a missional reading of the book of Job.



Part of SPCK's *For Everyone* series, John Goldingay's book is one of a number of commentaries on Job published in the last couple of years by well-known scholars. [1] Goldingay, a British scholar based for a number of years at Fuller Theological Seminary, is the author of the Old Testament series. This follows the popular New Testament titles written by Tom Wright, and attempts to combine concise and accessible study of the text with devotional reflection. It also includes a fresh translation of the text composed by the author.

Apart from a few exceptions (for example, chapters 1, 31 and 38) each chapter of Job receives a single reflection lasting around three pages. Often this begins with a relevant story followed by a discussion of the text. Sometimes Goldingay leaves a sting in the tail, winsomely making the reader think about how the text might be challenging our own assumptions and attitudes.

He writes in a striking and personable manner which communicates his deep and imaginative scholarship very effectively. He also deals with the complexities of the book well, making the reader aware of issues without getting bogged down in them, and acknowledging when he is unsure himself. This is particularly impressive given the sheer number of interpretive questions involved in reading this most enigmatic and probing of biblical books.

As I begin a new year of teaching the Bible and mission at Redcliffe there are three things I want to highlight from *Job for Everyone*.

First, the most impressive aspect of the book is the way in which Goldingay locates his considerable scholarly insight within the context of his own vulnerability. He is clearly someone who has wrestled with many of Job's questions and makes frequent reference to the many years of caring for his late wife while she lived with multiple sclerosis. Certainly there are degrees of appropriateness to such vulnerability, but to what extent am I willing to share myself in this way in the classroom and in other contexts of community life?

Secondly, his comments on Job 28 struck an obvious chord, concerning as they do 'seminary' education:

Many people come to seminary because they think they may find there answers to theological questions that have puzzled them and that discovering these answers will sort them out. In the seminary they can get a degree and thus a document that is implicitly a certificate declaring that they have insight. They get this document without anyone asking questions concerning their piety or morality, their submission to God or their rejection of evil. It looks as if seminary certificates are therefore spurious. People may have collected information by means of their program, but it is not an indication that they have acquired insight. (p.135)

It is a sober picture Goldingay paints and is certainly a possibility. I find it another challenge to work hard to play my part in making Redcliffe's commitment to integrating knowledge, character and skills a reality in and outside of the classroom.

Finally, I was struck by the following story in the final reflection, which complements well one of my personal commitments: to help students learn the language of lament and how it might be considered pastorally and missionally:

A little while ago, a couple I know had a baby who died a few days after he was born. His memorial service incorporated a series of verses from the book of Job that expressed pain and protest, submission and hope. Someone who attended said she would start coming to the church because she did not know another church where these feelings and questions could be voiced. (p.210)

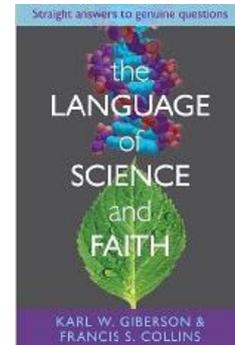
In *Job for Everyone* John Goldingay models an accessible, vulnerable scholarship that will benefit preachers, devotional readers, students and teachers. It is a very welcome addition to the ever-growing literature on this ever-important biblical book.

[1] These have differed considerably in length, accessibility, intended audience and price. The others include: Clines, D.J.A. *Job 38-42*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011); Crenshaw, J.L. *Reading Job: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the Old Testament (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2011); Longman, T. *Job*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012); O'Conner, K.M. *Job*, New Collegeville Bible Commentary (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012); Seow, C.L. *Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary*, Illuminations (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013); Walton, J.H. *Job*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

## ***The Language of Science and Faith.* Karl W. Giberson & Francis Collins (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).**

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Reviewed by **Daniel Button**, Lecturer and Head of Theology, Redcliffe College.



Truth. Beauty. Wonder. Are these concepts the province of science or of faith? Christians, and indeed people from other faiths, are often accused of having lost the sense of wonder that propels science to ever more amazing discoveries about the universe. Yet science too easily forgets that its own self-imposed naturalistic methodology can constrain its search for truth to the narrowly empirical. In fact, the common values of truth, beauty and wonder are the very concepts that allow science and faith to engage in constructive dialogue, enabling each to hold a perspective on God's creation that can be recognised, respected, and valued on its own terms, while also contributing to a greater conception of reality possible only by consolidation. But sadly for many Christians, the constant media portrayal of 'science and faith in conflict' creates an undercurrent of suspicion, too often resulting in either an impaired faith or a rejection of science. This dilemma becomes abundantly apparent in trying to engage a diverse group of students in a course such as 'The Christian Response to Secularism and Modernism'. The Christian response to science generally alternates between defensive mode and attacking mode (or a third head-in-the-sand mode), with very little sense that commonality or unity of purpose is desirable, let alone possible. It is actually the third response, arising from a sense of anxiety or even fear that science and faith are a volatile combination best avoided, which is perhaps the most tragic.

For that reason alone, Giberson and Collins' new book deserves the highest commendation. Numerous works have been written on science and faith from every conceivable perspective, yet for the general public, and Christians in particular, the very language of science (not to mention academic theology) often constructs immediate and insurmountable barriers. Take the word 'evolution' for example – or even 'creation'. Immediately we are divided into camps, and the defences go up. Getting to the core of the matter without alienating the very person one hopes to engage is no easy task, and it takes a rare perceptive ability – grounded not only in both science and theology, but in the conscious or unconscious (yet deeply-held) beliefs of biblically-minded Christians – to succeed in creating a safe context for a real engagement. *The Language of Science and Faith* does this brilliantly. Almost like a Socratic dialogue, the authors pose questions that virtually everyone asks at one time or another (or has wished they could), and then proceed to respond to those questions in a remarkably simple and straightforward manner, yet respectful of the diversity of views held by Christians and non-Christians alike. Chapter titles give a clear sense of the tone and style, from: 'How Do We Relate Science and Religion?' and 'Can We Really Know the Earth is Billions of Years Old?' to 'Do I Have to Believe in Evolution?'

While the style is simple, the content is anything but simplistic. The credentials of the authors are formidable. Francis Collins was the leader of the Human Genome Project, founder of the

BioLogos Foundation, and currently director of the National Institutes of Health in the USA. Giberson is a professor of physics and the director of the forum on Faith & Science at Gordon College. For a geneticist as renowned as Francis Collins to write a book as accessible to the non-scientist as this one is a great achievement in itself. But the particular advantage of this book over many others of the genre is the seriousness and respect with which it treats the biblical considerations and concerns of Christians who are keen to understand the scientific explanations of life – without compromising their faith.

This is a particularly delicate task in the US, where young-earth creationists, old-earth creationists, as well as Intelligent Design and other views, still vie with evolution (both theistic and atheistic) in an ongoing battle for cultural dominance. The authors even affirm that ‘young earth creationism is held by the majority of evangelicals’ [in the US]. This shows just how far this book attempts to go in explaining current scientific theories and concepts in a biblically respectful and non-threatening manner. In the UK, the battle is generally perceived to be over, but the casualties are the many who have lost their faith or turned their back on science because of a perception of irreconcilability. This book shows, from two very eminent scientists, that the Bible and science can (and perhaps must) be reconcilable after all. Each generation needs to be able to return to these questions anew, without being made to feel silly, uneducated, or that their cherished beliefs should be simply discarded like yesterday’s news. This is a book that can create fascinating classroom discussion without making anyone feel their view is being ridiculed or undervalued. In such a context, thoughtful reflection and positive transformation can truly take place.

I never imagined I would find a book in the science-faith genre that I could recommend to my students above those of the British science-theologian John Polkinghorne, but *The Language of Science and Faith* now tops the list. In its respectful, careful, yet lucid way, it reshapes old arguments with fresh insights, providing solid and rational evidence for a constructive partnership of science and Christian faith; and it whets the appetite for a science which points to the truth, beauty and wonder of God’s Creation as surely as the Bible points to the truth, beauty and wonder of its Creator.

## ***God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that run the World - and Why their Differences Matter.* Stephen Prothero (New York: HarperCollins, 2010).**

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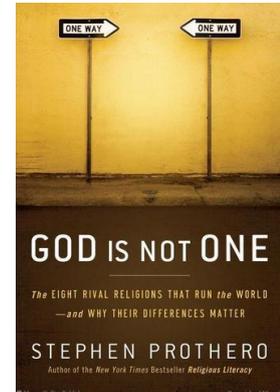
Reviewed by **Hugh Kemp**, Academic Dean and Head of Mission, Redcliffe College. Hugh is also author of the recently published *The One Stop Guide To World Religions* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2013).

If Jesus is the only way to God – as Christians claim – then why would Christians want to learn about other religions? I know that Christianity claims to have “the answer”: the real problem in life – according to Christian belief – is “how can I deal with the sin in my life, or how can I get right with God?”

When looking at other religions, Christians often compare the religions’ dealing with sin on the same terms that Christianity does. Walk into any Christian bookshop and pick up the brochures that compare the religions – nicely displayed on a stand-alone rack, designed as an easy-to-read abbreviated comparison of beliefs – and the list is inevitably determined by Christian categories: God, sin, salvation, creation and the likes. I concede that over the years I have actually bought some of these brochures, looking for easy lists to memorise. Salvation: this is what the Bible says; this is what Buddhists believe; this is what Hindus believe; this is what Muslims believe. But I confess these brochure lists have never sat very comfortably with me: they seem too... well, simplistic and reductionist.

If I then seek to give one of these brochures to a non-Christian friend, puzzlement follows. People often have a vague notion that in some sense all the religions are really just the same, and hence a list of comparisons seems odd, at best, when all paths lead up the same mountain, where at the summit we find that God is really the same God of all the religions. This of course is anathema to most Christians: Christianity does have a certain exclusivity to it when it claims that Jesus Christ is the only way to God. Yet students in my classes are often unsettled by this murky notion ‘out there’ that there’s really not any difference between the religions. I sense they’ve bought into the Dalai Lama’s claim that “all religions are as fingers on the hand”: sort of utilitarian appendages connected to a united substrate (the palm, in his metaphor). [1] Because it is socially expedient to be seen to be tolerant, it is tempting to buy into Mohandas Gandhi’s notion that “belief in one God is the cornerstone of all religions”.

Stephen Prothero’s book *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that run the World - and Why their Differences Matter* takes on this myth of religious unity. Prothero’s is a timely reminder that religions are not the same at all. Other religions are not even pretending to be dealing with the problem of sin (for example), Prothero claims. To claim thus is not to understand any of them. In fact, they are far from being one: they are “rival”, and their “differences matter” a lot. And this is a brave position to take since many consider that



religions don't matter at all – both in the popular media and in the academy – and are content to ridicule them or ignore them.

“God is not One” in as much as religious theological unity is a myth, and the Dalai Lama’s conjecture is simply naïve. In spite of the New Atheists’ attacks on Faith, the world remains deeply religious: [2] indeed, “furiously” religious, according to Prothero. [3] We don’t pretend that all economic or political systems are the same. But for some reason – Prothero demonstrates it’s due to the so-called ethic of tolerance – there is a pretence that all the world’s religions are merely different paths to the same God. Prothero’s genius in this book is the very simple notion that not all religions claim to be dealing with the same problem, and therefore they offer different solutions. We can throw our simplistic brochures out: two thirds of the world simply don’t recognise that “sin” – in a Christian sense – is a problem.

The book is divided into eight chapters – one religion for each – with a coda on Atheism in a ninth chapter. For Islam, the problem is pride; the solution is submission. For Confucianism, the problem is chaos; the solution is social order. For Buddhism, the problem is suffering; the solution is awakening. For Judaism, the problem is exile; the solution is return to God. For Hinduism, the problem is bondage to *samsara* (because of karma); the solution is *moksha* (release). For Christianity, the problem is sin; the solution is salvation. In addition, arguing against simplistic notions of “primitive religion”, Prothero demonstrates that the New World derivatives of west African Yoruba religion can be classified together as a “world religion” (p. 226), where the problem is that we have forgotten our destiny; the solution is to remember our destiny. Incidentally, this classification of Yoruba as a “world religion” is innovative for a book on world religions, but certainly defensible in light of the huge migration of West African peoples, both forced (slavery) and more recently by choice.

These are of course Prothero’s take on the religions, and he himself falls prey to his own reductionism. Can, for example, “salvation” be the only answer to the stated problem of Christianity, that of “sin”. How would the Kingdom of God as a narrative of God’s breaking into the human sphere, fit here? Is Judaism’s problem of “exile” all that different from Christianity’s “sin”? And, since the two religions are related, it could be demonstrated that Christianity’s categories could subsume Judaism’s. Is Confucianism’s answer to chaos simply social order, when that social order certainly seems to have quasi-religious notions to it, and today, Confucianism can really be only understood in its dynamic interaction with the other two religions of China, namely Daoism and Buddhism?

But these are deeper critical issues to be discussed in the classroom. The symmetry of Prothero’s chapters is a strength of the book: easy to follow, with accessible language. His framework is logical and simple, informed no doubt by copious teaching notes and experience as professor of religion at Boston University.

*God is not One* joins an emerging list of books from Prothero which have been published to high acclaim: *New York Times* bestsellers, *Time* front cover and the likes. Prothero has found a voice in the popular media: he is on a mission to make his chiefly American readership religiously literate. See for example his *Religious Literacy: What every American needs to know, and doesn't* (HarperCollins, 2008). *God is not One* is a further resource to this end.

However, in a candid moment Prothero suggests that religions may indeed offer one thing in common: the primary purpose of religion – any religion – is to “ward off the chill of death” (p. 240). Noting that religions may rise and fall on how well they deal with mortality, Prothero suggests the opposite: religion may be more about making sense of birth, not death; of creation rather than destruction. He notes for example, that the Bible (and Jewish scriptures) starts with creation of a good world, rather than with suffering, or the deaths of its founder, be it Abraham, Moses or Jesus. Perhaps, Prothero suggests, religion may be really dealing with the question of flourishing: how can I live life to the full? How can I be the best that I can be, here and now? (p. 241). If this thesis is true, and this impulse is embedded in any or all religions, then perhaps here is a commonality for a way forward in dialogue?

Terry Muck and Frances Adeney argue that a common metaphor for the interaction of Christians with other religions today – sadly – is a “managerial competition”, [4] and in light of this, offer a fresh model of “giftive mission” built on the notion that the Gospel is a free gift and should be offered as such. Prothero’s explicit agenda is the education of his compatriot Americans into religious literacy. If any of us are going to develop literacy in religions, then perhaps the best “gift” we can offer is to acknowledge the diversity of what each religion is claiming, accept them on their own terms (rather than ours) and together sit and explore what “flourishing” as humans might be all about. As a teacher of world religions at Redcliffe College, this could well be the first conversation I teach my students to have.

[1] This I’ve heard the Dalai Lama say at public meetings I’ve attended between 1996 and 2008.

[2] The New Atheists include Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, amongst others, and found voice particularly between 2004 and 2007.

[3] Inside front dust jacket

[4] Muck, Terry, and Frances S. Adeney. *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-First Century, Encountering Mission*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009, p. 10.

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