

BOOK REVIEWS

attention to the pastoral aspect of this type of writing: the readers should know the people their work will address. Perhaps these things are something more conventional preachers need to hear too?

For the seasoned worship leader experienced in use of a variety of resources and drama, this book will be a welcome addition, particularly as it is lectionary-based. For those who are contemplating breaking new ground in their worshipping communities by introducing a different way of proclaiming the Word, this is a good place to test the waters.

Carol Wilkinson

Poulton le Fyilde

Senn, Frank C., 2012. *Introduction to Christian Liturgy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. ISBN 978-0-8006-9885-0. 244 pp. £19.99.

Frank Senn is an American Lutheran pastor and distinguished liturgist. From 1990 until his retirement in June 2013 he served as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Evanston, Illinois. He was Assistant Professor of Liturgics in the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and has taught courses in a number of other American universities and seminaries. Dr Senn's wide range of publications in the field of liturgical study includes ten previous books. If, in order to be able to write a short introduction to the whole spectrum of Christian liturgy, one should first be able to write a long and detailed account that draws on a lifetime spent acquiring a deep knowledge of the whole field, then he is eminently qualified for his task.

To attempt a complete survey of Christian liturgy in all its richness and diversity across two thousand years, to make that history speak to what happens in church today, and to

complete the task in little over two hundred pages is a fearsome undertaking. Deciding what to omit is surely far more difficult than deciding what to include. Happily, Senn writes with a lightness of touch, although in places he necessarily has to resort to lists in order to present the essential information his readers need.

The book begins with a general account of why we worship and attempts, reasonably successfully, a definition of what liturgy actually is. Senn grounds his remarks in scripture and in the writings of the church in its first centuries. In a chapter on the history and culture of worship, he gathers together what scant and incomplete evidence survives to give us a glimpse of how those first Christians went about organising their worship. Confines of space prevent this from being a more nuanced narrative, taking account of the scholarly doubts that counsel caution in laying out too consistent and coherent a theory of the worship of the early church.

Senn goes on to outline the main periods of liturgical history, reflecting on the relationship between liturgy and culture from antiquity to modernity. He then focuses on the content and order of worship, beginning with the eucharist (here called the 'Principal Order of Service' although it has not consistently maintained that status in every denomination) as it has developed in the different Christian traditions. This is followed by chapters on the liturgy of time (the daily office) and the church year both in general and in detail, through the cycles of the ecclesiastical calendar.

A chapter on 'Life Passages' (baptism, ordination, marriage and funerals) describes the way these occasional rites reflect, feed and inform our sense of who God is and who we are in relation to God and to each other. There is a chapter on the 'Liturgical Arts' covering music, hymnody, bells, architecture and vestments, but not addressing dance or the visual and

plastic arts. A final chapter on participation attends usefully to the bodily senses of touch, taste and smell and some of the rituals associated with them, and on the importance of processions in fostering a sense of liturgy as pilgrimage, and as something involving the whole person, not just the rational mind.

For whom is Senn writing? He introduces the book as a pastoral liturgical handbook and offers it as a useful and informative guide to ordained pastors and interested lay people. The degree to which Christians of any particular confession, lay or ordained, might find it so, necessarily turns on the adequacy and proportionality of the treatment given to their own particular church rites and ceremonies. It is here that the sheer scale and difficulty of the author's task is apparent. Senn has not given equal weight to every tradition and this limits both the value of his study as a universal overview, and its potential target audience.

This limitation becomes apparent in the chapter on the development of the eucharist. In order to gather all the earliest eucharistic rites under his umbrella, Senn restricts himself to listing what those rites contain without much further explanation. Detailed considerations of Byzantine, Orthodox or eastern liturgies in general do not figure highly in this survey, though their importance for the evolution of the eucharist in the west demands that they be at least acknowledged. So the student pastor or interested layperson will encounter some very unfamiliar words such as *trisagion*, *proskomide* or *diptych*, terms that are inexplicably omitted from the otherwise very useful glossary provided at the end of the book. It is as if this information is provided because it has to be there, but as a matter of marginal interest, since the theology and praxis of the eastern churches have diverged from the development of western catholic and protestant liturgies.

The Roman Mass is summarised quite succinctly and brought up to, but not beyond, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The rites of the Church of England, however, are given very short shrift. Only the First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI and the *Westminster Directory of Worship* authorised by the Puritan Parliament of 1644 are mentioned and on the nineteenth- and twentieth-century liturgical revival in the Church of England and the development of its eucharistic rite from the Book of Common Prayer to *Common Worship*, Senn is silent. *Common Worship* is not acknowledged at all in this book, making it less useful in a Church of England context, although the Prayer Book of the Episcopal Church of the United States is briefly treated. Senn does provide us with a very full account of the development of the various Lutheran forms, with nods to Methodist, Presbyterian and to Pentecostal and Emergent Church worship, though these last by definition and design, elude precise liturgical classification.

Clearly, the principal readership for whom Senn has provided this handbook is the one with which he has engaged over many decades as pastor and teacher. His method of structuring each chapter around a series of questions, which could almost be drawn from lecture notes, suggests that this book distils a lifetime of experience in training Lutheran pastors and educating congregations liturgically. There is certainly much to be gained from this book by readers from other ecclesial traditions. Senn is particularly good on the development of the ceremonies attached to the great feasts of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. In the main, however, I see this book finding its place on the reading lists of Lutheran seminaries in the United States and on the shelves of those members of Lutheran churches who care as passionately about liturgy and its performance as does its author.

Paul Andrews

St Neots