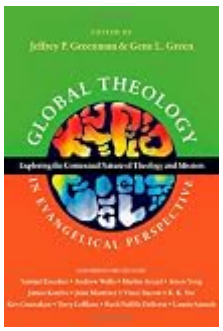
GLOBAL THEOLOGY IN EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Category: Reviews



There is a story that a headline in The Times once read "Fog in the Channel; Europe Isolated". This may be an urban myth, but it does have a whiff of truth about it.

I was reminded of this story while readingÂ Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective: Exploring the Contextual Nature of Theology and Mission. In my experience, many Christians have an attitude to the worldwide Church which rather reflects the Times' headline. This is especially the case when it comes to theology. People will grudgingly admit that there is such a thing as African-Theology, or Asian-Theology, but there is also Theology (without a hyphen). Unhyphenated theology is, of course, the Western theological tradition of Luther, Calvin, Barth *et al*.

This book, composed of papers from the Wheaton Theology Conference of 2011 shows very clearly how inadequate that view is.Western theology is one expression of global theology; it does not answer all of the questions raised by the Bible or other cultures and it can only be enriched by exposure to other approaches. Try this for size:

> *In spite of Colossians and other passages that describe the clear intent of theÂ CreatorÂ and after all these years of observing the groaning of the earth, Western-rooted theologies of creation and redemption appear neither robust enough norÂ biblicallyÂ thorough enough to effectively informÂ contemporaryÂ and future Christian behaviour with respect to the complex issues confronting us today, let alone being prophetic in a world driven by the desire for bigger, better, more and faster! Western thought and its multifacted dualistic framework appears unable to take us where we need to go. (Terry LeBlanc - a Canadian First Nation theologian p. 168.)*

The book has four sections:

- **Setting the Stage**. Three chapters (including one by Andrew Walls - the most important Christian author that most people have not heard of) which set out the background for Global theology.
- **Non-Western Theologies**. Six chapters; each one giving a broad outline of a regional theology. These include Latin, Chinese and Middle-Eastern theologies.
- **North American Theologies**. I found these three chapters onÂ hyphenatedÂ American theologies the least interesting section of the book (though I did quote one of them above).

- **Next Steps**. The last couple of sections suggest ways in which the Western church can and should engage with theological traditions from other parts of the world. Jeffrey P. Greenman gives a few straightforward suggestions:

> *The best place to start is reading everything you can get your hands on by Andrew Walls, Lamin Sanneh and Philip Jenkins.*

I couldn't agree more.

I don't suppose thatÂ Global Theology in Evangelical PerspectiveÂ will become a Christian best seller in the UK. However, anyone who takes an interest in Evangelical theology, be they professional theologians or interested amateurs, should read this book.