

approach is arguably no harm in interdisciplinary areas such as this where readers are likely to be unfamiliar with all the background. A good book then overall, certainly worth ordering for one's university library, if not necessarily for one's personal bookshelves.

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WAYS OF MEETING AND THE THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS by David Cheetham, *Ashgate*, Farnham, 2013, pp. 224, pbk

Theological reflection on other religions and the practice of inter-religious dialogue remain highly contested and often fraught areas of enquiry and engagement. While it has been natural for theologians to see the task in hand as being primarily one of finding the right theological paradigm, one that can account for the reality of religious pluralism, such paradigms have seldom proved to be without considerable difficulties and controversy. Likewise, while it has been natural for those involved in the concrete encounter of dialogue with other religions to want to engage with the religious experience and practices, the spirituality, of other traditions and to seek here either for convergence or mutual enrichment between traditions, such endeavours have very often made other members of those traditions uncomfortable. In such a situation it has proved highly desirable to find other ways in which members of religions can creatively encounter and respond to each other combining commitment to their traditions with openness to the other. David Cheetham provides us with just such an approach, in his refreshing, creative and vigorously argued study.

Cheetham is concerned to explore non-religious ways in which members of different religions can meet, ways that creatively explore and engage with the 'imagination and attitudes of thinking, finding new spaces for meeting, and sustaining commitments to faith traditions' (p.197). Thus, in considering what kind of person a comparative philosopher needs to be (chapter 1) Cheetham notes the shift in contemporary philosophical and theological reflection on the encounter with other cultures and their religions to an insistence on the tradition specific or conditioned nature of all such encounter and the rejection of the idea that there can be neutral perspectives or engagements, such as advanced in pluralist theologies of the sort advocated by John Hick. He cites here the British Catholic theologian, Gavin D'Costa, as a leading advocate of the tradition specific approach. Cheetham is concerned that such tradition specific approaches can end up becoming inward looking, since the emphasis is on the internal criteria and perspectives of that tradition. As a corrective, he suggests that the comparative philosopher should be the kind of person who is willing to use his or her imagination creatively and construct models in which the religions meet each other in different ways, models that are then subject to more rigorous philosophical analysis. Here, for instance, we could take the pluralist account of Hick as one such theoretical model and think about what it is like and what it might teach us. This provides 'a temporary amnesty or forgetfulness concerning the restraints of incommensurability, difference, global complexity or politics of thought' (p.28). Such models are recognised as thought experiments and as fictional in nature and hence do not contradict the tradition specific character of any actual encounter with other religions.

Cheetham argues further that we might develop an 'aesthetic attitude' (chapter 5). More generally, this characterises an approach to another religion, whereby someone engages with that religion within the categories of aesthetic appreciation,

just as one might engage with aesthetic productions in general such as stage dramas, responding in various ways and with different emotions to the characters and plot. More narrowly, such an attitude considers the actual artistic works of other religions as a point of encounter, where a member of one religion can readily appreciate the beauty of that work, such a sacred image, and agree with a member of another religion about its aesthetic merits, without this having to involve doctrinal questions about what is believed about that image or enter the cultic engagement with it found in that religion. Such an approach thus differs from a religious one in that it needs neither to resolve the issues of the truth of the other nor to affirm the religious experience of the other:

The idea of an encounter on the basis of an 'aesthetic attitude', or a kind of play, is intended as one possible suggestion towards providing a different kind of meeting space. Moreover, our goal has been to facilitate 'safer' forms of empathy with other faiths by suggesting a shift from 'spiritual' to aesthetic sorts of method and discourse. In which case, the depth-encounter with other faiths is not a case of spiritual adultery as such; not so much about being 'open' to an interfaith commitment but about learning to see the world and those others in a certain way. Or else, being in an aesthetic mode is about living *not as a full-blown participant* in other religious experiences but 'as an imaginatively participating perceiver' (p.147).

Cheetham considers a range of such non-religious spaces where members of different religions can encounter each other in profound ways, to have 'deep meetings' without the only criterion for depth being those explored in theology or spiritual experience. There is the external space of the world as a whole, where there can be mutual experience and enjoyment of the many different created goods to be found in the world. This provides an alternative to a more theological approach concerned with considering other religions in terms of the presence and activity of God or the salvation of human beings (chapter 3). Likewise, there is the subjective space of the individual self and the multiple ways in which a person opens him- or herself to others. This provides an alternative to the approach of 'inter-spirituality', centred on exploring the spiritual experiences of other traditions and identifying areas of convergence (chapter 4). There is also the social space of ethics, centred on a call for the 're-enchantment' by members of individual religions with their own specific ethics, so that they have the basis and incentive from within their own tradition to engage with individuals in other religions. This is also contrasted with theological attempts to develop a global ethic that can be ascribed to by all religious traditions (chapter 6). Summing up the book Cheetham gives us a wide range of concrete examples of what meeting in these different spaces might entail:

People of opposing beliefs (believer and non-believer) admiring the glory of a sunset; the enjoyment of beautiful and profound works of art and music together; sharing non-moral excellences, skills and goals; a crowd recognising a comic moment; experiencing sorrow together over a catastrophe; taking pleasure in the *beauty* of other traditions – and recognising that this is an aesthetic rather than a religious 'agreement'; exercising *human creativity* when making ethical decisions together. These are the kind of experiences that could be appropriated by all religious traditions and articulated within their own belief systems and structures (p.199)

As the final remark indicates, the potential value of such spaces of meeting is that they do not conflict with the particular commitments members of religious traditions, but rather have their basis within those commitments and are encouraged by them.

Both because of the interesting nature of the alternative ways of meeting suggested and because of the sustained argument that makes the book stimulating to read at every point, Cheetham's work is to be recommended. I would, however, want to make two comments on what Cheetham proposes: first, while I welcome Cheetham's suggestion of the use of imaginative models in comparative philosophy, I think greater recognition might be made of the creative and imaginative dimensions already present in the work of those, such as D'Costa, who keep firmly within a tradition specific approach. I do not agree that it is as inward looking as he suggests; second, we might also recognise as well the ways in which classical traditions of Christian theology and the history of Christian encounter with other religions have already entered the non-religious spaces Cheetham advances. Such recognition would locate the very good suggestions Cheetham makes in continuity with the past as well as constructively looking to the future.

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CATHOLICS OF THE ANGLICAN PATRIMONY: THE PERSONAL ORDINARIATE OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM by Aidan Nichols OP, *Gracewing*, Leominster, 2013, pp. 82, pbk

What is in a title?, one might ask. The title of this slim volume by the distinguished Dominican scholar, Fr Aidan Nichols OP, makes strikingly clear what members of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham are. Personal Ordinariates – structures erected by Pope (now emeritus) Benedict XVI – are governed by the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* (2009). This Constitution makes provision for Anglicans, who so wish, to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church in a corporate manner while retaining distinctive features of their Anglican liturgical and spiritual identity.

In the Preface, the author states that *Anglicanorum coetibus* has changed the landscape of English Christianity irreversibly. For an understanding of this development, Nichols examines four particular themes which help to explain the point and purpose of the Ordinariate for England and Wales. To this end, the book is divided into four chapters.

Chapter One examines the historical and theological context of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham (2011). Theological issues raised by the historical background of Anglicans are looked at from the Reformation period to the present day. Various streams of Anglicanism are viewed – the Catholic, the Protestant and the Broad or Liberal currents – from the perspective of *Anglicanorum coetibus*. The emergence of Catholic-minded Anglicanism is mapped out in some detail, from its beginning in the reign of James I (1603–25) with the High-Church party, through to the Oxford Movement in the nineteenth century. The author discerns a theological shift with the Tractarians whose aim, as he puts it, was 'to take over the Church as a whole, to render it consistently Catholic albeit in an English way'. This aim was continued by Anglo-Catholics of succeeding generations until the outcome was rendered unattainable when the shape of apostolic ministry was abandoned in recent years. Nichols sees the emerging Ordinariate as a sort of 'little church' (*ecclesiola*) for former, traditional Anglo-Catholics 'within a body... culturally unfamiliar to them but theologically congruent'.

Chapter Two places *Anglicanorum coetibus* within the wider theological vision of Pope Benedict. The author supposes Pope Benedict to be a 'Noah figure' seeking to bring various passengers into the 'Ark' which is being buffeted by the