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PHILLIP TOVEY. *Of Water and the Spirit: Mission and the Baptismal Liturgy*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2015. viii + 151 pp. £16.99 eBook & paperback. ISBN 9781848258037.

Phillip Tovey's latest book is intended to stand in the same relation to the Church of England's *Common Worship* (2000) as E. C. Whitaker's *The Baptismal Liturgy: An Introduction to Baptism in the Western Church* (London 1965; 2nd edn 1981) did to the *Alternative Service Book* (1980), providing an historical rationale for liturgical reform. Much of the book is a fairly straightforward, largely descriptive, and reliable journey through the development of baptism in the West. We move from the New Testament and the *Didache*, as evidence for the roots of the baptismal liturgy, to a cautious use of Hippolytus and reflection on Augustine with a view the development of the catechumenate as an evolving model for mission. We continue through the growth of infant baptism in the middle ages and its impact on the Sarum rite, which became the model for English baptismal liturgy until the late twentieth century, the latter process being explained in the subsequent chapter. Before exploring the process of liturgical reform in England in the final two chapters, we are shown how adult baptism in Anglican world mission provided new needs and models for liturgical development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and how home mission in the late nineteenth century made liturgical reform an imperative. There is therefore a strong theme – as the book's title suggests – of mission. Indeed Tovey wishes to encourage stronger thinking about the close connexion between baptism and mission, pointing to the missional shaping of the baptismal liturgy and urging that baptism be seen as a key part of Mission Action Planning. Baptism, he reminds us, is a gospel sacrament, 'both the fruit of mission and a call to mission' (1) and should not be thought of merely as an 'occasional office'. A key point in the Foreword is Tovey's rejection of the terminology of 'Christian initiation', which he has 'tried to avoid' (viii) (though less successfully as the book progresses). Here he is on firm ground, for when we talk of baptism we are indeed talking the language of the apostles and evangelists, and not reducing a gospel sacrament to categories used by anthropologists. He is keen on every-member ministry and that the laity should be included in preparing others for baptism, also calling for the clergy to take every opportunity to preach about baptism. He wishes to see a renewed emphasis on the catechumenate, and argues for an evolving model that connects mission and baptism, challenging the clericalisation of the Church, and seeking the opening of baptism to the life of the whole Christian community. On several occasions Tovey raises the question of what confirmation is for, but fails to grapple with it sufficiently or at least provide some sort of answer. One of the theses of the book is to uphold the view that joint baptism and confirmation of adults, with Holy Communion, is the archetypal service. In this respect he sees the Ely Report of 1971 as a watershed, taking a position that baptism is the complete sacramental initiation. Here Tovey's injunction against 'Christian initiation' terminology breaks down. He does not challenge the Ely Report's use of this terminology or the concept that baptism is 'initiation'. Instead he simply notes that the Church of England currently runs a 'mixed economy' when it comes to confirmation and admission to Holy Communion. His argument, which is not a controversial one, is that confirmation arose after infants became the main candidates for baptism. As the number of infant baptisms has declined since the late twentieth century in Britain, the question arises about the meaning of confirmation when an adult is baptised. (At this point, Tovey has been tempted by Callum Brown's thesis of the secularisation of British society, an idea that is surely challenged by

Linda Woodhead's work on religion and society.) Although there are points at which the book could have been more rigorously and boldly argued, *Of Water and the Spirit* is nevertheless a very good introduction to the sacrament of baptism, and could be usefully and profitably read as well by parish clergy as by lay people exercising a teaching ministry. In his chief purpose of reminding us how baptism is central to mission – both the fruit of mission and a call to mission – and showing how this mission has quietly shaped baptismal liturgies or driven liturgical reform, Phillip Tovey has done the Church a service.

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