

delicately nuanced. Throughout, her conviction that ‘God can be encountered as a present, active agent in the world and as something ontologically distinct from ourselves’ (p. 97) shapes how she understands the work of practical theology, and her final chapter includes five far-reaching implications of her method for Christian theological education more broadly, one of which questions theological education’s engagement with higher education systems. This particular suggestion is one of a number of instances that gave me cause for concern that the corrective wisdom of voices from outside the church, in practice, would risk being muted in her model. While the potential for misuse inherent in her method is acknowledged, for example, because of ‘the manifold oppressive ways in which this grand story [of the Bible] has been told and used’ (p. 214), it seems to me that these ways have been and still are more influential than her model allows. Nevertheless, without doubt, the book deserves its place alongside other methods of theological reflection, fostering attention to the implicit theological and epistemological assumptions of existing more familiar models and methods.

Nigel G. Wright, *How To Be A Church Minister* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 190 pages. ISBN: 978532665875.

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As a ‘reluctant’ church minister, with a slight aversion to any book with a title that begins, ‘How To’, I approached reading/reviewing this book with a certain degree of nervousness, apprehension, and even suspicion. But having read it through (twice), I found it to be an informative, insightful, and generally helpful book (or instruction manual), despite being under 200 pages long.

Wright, who is a (now retired) church minister, bible college lecturer and principal, approaches this subject as a practitioner and educator, and therefore brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to bear on a whole range of issues and important factors in being (and forming) a local church minister. From the outset, Wright recognises

that there are numerous books written within this well-trodden territory, but believes another contribution by a ‘reflective practitioner’ is valid, and I would agree. In addition, Wright acknowledges that there are many new perspectives on church ministry, but clearly states his intention ‘to show that there is much in the older traditions that can inform the practice of mission and ministry today’. In terms of a target audience, again, Wright aims (and hits) broadly. He attempts to address those from different church traditions (free, catholic, and episcopal), plus he hopes this book will be of value to those exploring church ministry, those in the process of preparing for it, those involved in it for many years, or now retired from it. As someone who has been a church minister for a number of years, I found the fourteen aspects he identifies, highlights, and considers to be relevant and instructive.

As this is a relatively short book, Wright obviously does not mine too deeply into each area, and at times I wish he had, but there is enough practical wisdom, challenging material, guiding principles, and personal advice in each chapter, to make this book a recommended resource for someone who falls into any of the above four categories. My favourite definition of church ministers comes in chapter 9 (‘Have The Courage to Lead’), where they are described as ‘active catalysts’, and I was also struck by Wright’s desire to maintain the primacy of the ministry paradigm rather than the leadership paradigm, in providing a framework for understanding what church ministers must primarily do and are called to do. Towards the end of the book, Wright reflects on the overall picture he has painted of church ministry, and in summary suggests that ‘it involves a fair share of wrestling of one kind or another’. Wright has clearly grappled biblically, and at many other levels, with what he believes is involved in being a church minister, and for those who want to join in (or have already done so), this book will be a good partner and trainer.