

As a type of scholarly love letter to the ongoing legacy of Peter Phan (and also Gerard Mannion's equally ebullient but tragically cut short life), this volume is wise, challenging, prophetic, generous, and expansive—only some of the words one could use to describe Phan (and Mannion). This is a book, if one didn't have the honor of contributing to, can be an honor to read, or in this case, review. Theological terms and examples of Phan, from Deus Migrator, pluralist-inclusivist, interfaith Christology, and ecclesiological kenosis to the joy of religious pluralism or the intermediate state will continue to spur the minds of current and future scholars, especially those at and across the various borders of our world.

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A History of Christianity in Wales, Barry J. Lewis, Madeleine Gray, David Ceri Jones and D. Densil Morgan, University of Wales Press, 2022 (ISBN 978-1-78683-821-6), 384 pp., pb £19.99

This is an outstanding interpretation of Christianity's impact on the social and political life of Wales. In his Forward, Rowan Williams reminds us that the course of Christianity in Wales was characterized by periods of brutal suppression and spiritual recovery. In the early period the struggle between 'indigenous' British Christianity and the imposition of 'foreign' religious orders reflected the outplaying of dynastic control and the territorial reach of non-native rulers as Wales was integrated into the proto-English state. But in time, such was the effectiveness of the local culture in absorbing new waves of migrants and their institutions that, the once foreign imports became naturalized elements of Welsh life, as for example, 'the Cistercians became indispensable allies of the indigenous rulers and even patrons of the bardic traditions'.

Armed with this significant insight into the interplay of Welsh and wider European currents of thought, belief, ritual and control the eleven chapters of this volume detail in chronological order the vicissitudes of Christian thought and practice. The volume opens with an account of the Roman impact c.AD 1–c.AD 400. It's author Barry Lewis who also authored the three other chapters in the early history of the new faith recognizes that two difficulties hinder a proper understanding of this period. The first is that the geographical referents of Wales, England, Scotland etc., just did not exist for some time; thus, a good deal of imaginative reconstruction of the spread, penetration and long-term impact of Roman rule on specific territorial landscapes is required. Any

such approach is also hindered by the thinness of the documentary record, at least until the eleventh century. It is known that the indigenous people worshipped in specific sacred places and that the cohort of druids regulated much of formal religious and legal life. We also know that the Roman settlers, with their cults, votive offerings and animal sacrifices, were also polytheists, so that even at this early stage there was a certain degree of intermingling and religious pluralism, if not tolerance, at work. Christianity had some things in common with the mystery cults, such as initiation rites and rituals, but it could not suffer any semblance of a polytheistic religion, insisting on repentance and personal salvation in the sacrificial work of the Cross. However, professing any personal adherence to the Son of God in the first three centuries of Roman rule could be dangerous.

Even after 312, when the emperor Constantine came to power and the persecutions began to decline, it was still possible to describe the territory that is now Wales as one devoid of any formally organized religious life. While by 314 there was an organized church in Britain, as three bishops attended the Council of Arles, it took until the end of the century for Britain to possess a hierarchy which was in contact with other parts of the empire, particularly Gaul.

In Chapter 2, 'The Age of Conversion, c.400–c.600', Lewis declares that Wales, unlike Scotland and Ireland, did not have an obvious good story as to how it became a Christian land. The new identity that was being forged during these two centuries was undoubtedly increasingly Christian, reinforced by in-migration from Ireland and from those fleeing eastern England as a response to Anglo-Saxon incursion. The archaeological evidence, mainly Latin inscriptions, abound by the end of the period. However, the Roman burial practices only came to the fore after the Roman period and there are few extant burial descriptions during this period. The most telling evidence for the transformation wrought was linguistic as so many Latinate words came into Welsh to describe Church ordinances, officers and rituals, for example, church (*eglwys*), priest (*offeiriad*), bishop (*esgob*) and a whole new set of concepts such as sin (*pechod*), baptism (*bedydd*). Lewis continues his narrative in Chapter 3, by exploring the Definition of Christian Wales, c.600–c.800. The period saw the retreat of British nobles into Wales and parts of the West Country as the Anglo-Saxon invaders dominated much of central and eastern England. While in these latter regions the Christian witness atrophied, in most parts of Wales the British kingdoms continued and 'here the work of Gildas was not overwhelmed but rather transformed' (p. 49). It is in the landscape and placenames that the institutionalization of Christian worship is best recorded, with the popularity of *llan* (parish) and *eglwys* (church) so evident even today. Lewis devotes some considerable energy to the Easter controversy and the British contribution to the rise of the English Church and debunks the myth of the Celtic Christian tradition,

arguing that this is an invention of the post-Reformation period when Protestants wanted to disassociate the ancient Christian tradition from Rome. He argues that by the end of this period there had emerged a distinct Welsh Church albeit under the ambit of the universal faith centred on Rome.

The interpretation offered in Chapter 4, 'Vikings to Normans, c.800–c.1070', has the advantage of being able to derive significant evidence from an abundance of sources. With few bishoprics the development of *clas* and estate churches, together with some foundations headed by abbots, formed the backbone of an emergent Christian culture. However, the cult of Welsh saints, David, Teilo, Cadog and Beuno, lovingly catalogued in the *Bonedd y Saint*, began to be threatened by the Norman hegemony whose influence is traced by Madeline Gray in Chapter 5, 'The Age of Definition and Hierarchy, c.1066–c.1200'. The Normans brought new ideas on devotional life, a new emphasis on Christ's humanity and a piety focussed on his sufferings. However, Gray is at pains to argue that many of the reforms witnessed in Welsh Church life and organization would have happened independently of Norman suzerainty and their dealings with Ireland, for which process Wales had become a military and logistical launch pad. Thus, despite the increased presence of monastic houses and Cistercian abbeys, Wales still maintained its own conventions, relics, shrines and practices. This was mainly because it did not constitute a significant enough part of mainstream proto English life. Thus, the evidence of any distinct Welsh contribution to the Crusades or to the role of Welsh houses for Cistercian women is slight, if identifiable. In contrast the Knights Hospitaller had a strong presence in Wales, while the Templars were almost exclusively located and maintained within the Anglo-Norman realm.

David Ceri Jones tackles the big issues of the Reformation (1530–1603) and Wales's conversion to Protestantism (1603–1760). The turning points for me were the recognition in 1563 by the Anglican Church that to convert Welsh people to Protestantism required a Bible in Welsh, the only language understood by the masses. Agitation and support for this policy came from the Welsh Gentry. Thus, an Act of Parliament required that a copy of the English Bible and the Book of Common Prayer be placed alongside the Welsh versions in every church, so that the people might 'the sooner attain the knowledge of the English tongue'. This project also encouraged literacy in Welsh, and the translation of the Bible into Welsh in 1588, under the oversight of Bishop William Morgan, created a standardized and elegant written form of the language, while the smaller editions available from the 1630s facilitated the official and private use of the Welsh language in the religious domain.

In Chapter Ten Densil Morgan traces the contours of the creation of a Nonconformist nation (1760–1890) which focusses on the spread of the Word through effective evangelism carried out mainly by Baptists,

Congregationalists and Methodists. Both doctrinal differences and the impact of key personalities, such as Christmas Evans, figure in the analysis which also traces the development of the Sunday School movement, the foreign mission societies and the spectacular growth of a Welsh language denominational press.

The final chapter, written by Morgan and Jones, covers the transformation from the Nonconformist high noon to the secular society we inhabit now (1890–2020). It evaluates the impact of the 1904 revival, the Liberal inspired disestablishment campaign and the emergence of a distinct Church in Wales the liberalization of theology, the development of social movements derived from left wing ideologies which propagated a Social Gospel and the more diverse Christian experiences which have characterized the nation in the past century. Understandably perhaps in such a tightly written book, there is little room for additional information on smaller denominations, such as the Open and Closed Brethren, the Salvation Army, the home church movement and the various strands of Pentecostalism, but there are insights on how the Catholic Church has fared, which as elsewhere in the UK, has benefitted from the in-migration of peoples from Central and Eastern Europe.

This is a masterful interpretation, which I stated at the opening, was valuable for its insights on the social and political life of Wales. But is also valuable as a guide to how Christianity itself can be imposed, moulded, transformed, regulated and whose tenets and ordinances can be used to inspire many generations of believers and other citizens alike. The key to the success of this interpretation is the interweaving of the internal dynamics of Church life together with constitutional, economic and socio-political contexts which it both shaped and resisted in times past. In sum it is a masterful treatment of the defining force in the development of a distinct national life, albeit one heavily imbued by English and to a lesser extent, other transnational influences.

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Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies, Marilyn McEntyre, Eerdmans, 2021 (ISBN 978-0-8028-7889-2), xii + 252 pp., pb \$19.99

For peacemakers, while monologue is a peacebreaker, dialogue is an essential tool for peacebuilding. Deeply listening to the other, learning their story and understanding their point of view are vital for coping with complex problems and resolving intense conflicts. Dialogue is a powerful