

ecclesiological investigations in years gone by.

In any case, Davidsson's ecclesiology deserves to be given serious attention in the Pentecostal Academy.

**Wayne Hudson, *Australian Religious Thought* (Monash University Press: Victoria, 2016). Reviewed by Paul Oslington.<sup>5</sup>**

Wayne Hudson seeks in this book to show “that there has been more religious thought than most historians have assumed”, and in this he succeeds admirably. Admittedly a low bar given its almost complete absence in academic Australian history. Most of all the book underlines the need for a more comprehensive examination of Australian religious thought, and the benefits of its integration into mainstream Australian history. In the same way as writers like George Marsden and Mark Noll have integrated religion into American history, moving beyond the genre of church all history.

Nothing comparable exists for Australia. We have discussions of Australian spirituality (e.g. Millikan 1981, Bouma 2007), path breaking quantitative work on Australian religion (Mol 1971, and now NCLS Research), histories of the Australian denominations (e.g. Breward 2001, O' Farrell 1992), countless histories of individual churches, histories of Australian theology (Banks 1976, Goosen 2000), and various institutional histories (e.g. Austin 2013, Barnes 2007, Sherlock 2009). Perhaps the closest we have to a book like Hudson's on the cultural impact of religious thought are the histories of Hilary Carey (1996) and Stuart Piggins (1996 and his forthcoming larger book on evangelical Christianity), and the recent writings of Roy Williams (2013,2015).

It is by Hudson's own admission only a survey of a few themes of particular interest to him. Firstly, Australian disbelief (active rejection – by contrast with what he calls unbelief where one is favourably disposed to

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religion but cannot believe). Secondly a chapter I found truly excellent on what Hudson calls “sacral secularity” which disturbs the binary contrast between the religious and the secular. As Hudson points out the idea that the secular means excluding religion is a recent and peculiar idea, and an idea which misleads historians even more in the Australian case than for many other societies. In his illuminating survey of the various interpretations of the secular in Australian history the issue is more often clericalism and denominationalism, which are excluded from particular domains in order to better advance religion. Or at least to advance a generic Protestantism, with Catholics somewhat on the outer. I look forward to Hudson’s discussion of Australian secularism being taken further by John Gascoigne, Ian Tregenza and Steve Chavura in their current ARC funded project (Chavura and Tregenza 2015 is a preview) and by Gregory Melleuish. Thirdly religious liberalism. Fourthly a chapter on religious philosophy in Australia which is perhaps the toughest test of Hudson’s argument. He concentrates on a few major figures, but many readers will be left with the feeling that religious philosophy remained somewhat insular and lacking influence on the main currents of philosophy in Australia. Certainly nothing like the prominence and cultural influence of religious art and poetry in Australia. Perhaps the same is true of theology which is his fifth theme. Theology of course has been greatly hampered by it being mostly confined to church run colleges that prepare candidates for ordained ministry, and largely excluded from the universities. Throughout Hudson’s book more attention could be paid to the institutional context of the thinkers he writes about. A strength of his discussion of theology is the recognition of the importance of aboriginal religion (with all the conceptual and historical complexities of that terminology) and of the more recent connections with Asian religion. The chapter on theology like the chapter on philosophy is a personal selection of thinkers, and I have my list of important thinkers that should be there and are not. Pentecostalism gets a brief line and no references. Much more of course needs to be done, as Hudson himself intimates at various places in the book. Comparing the Australian experience with other settler societies such as

Canada and South Africa would be illuminating. Going into much more depth about the role of religion in our school and higher education systems.

Hudson's book is a welcome and learned contribution on an important topic for the future of Australia.

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**Roland Boer and Christina Petterson *Idols of Nations: Biblical Myth and the Origins of Capitalism* (2014), and Roland Boer *The Sacred Economy* (2015). Reviewed by Paul Oslington.<sup>6</sup>**

According to Roland Boer's blog <http://stalinsmoustache.org> he now has 21 books, 11 edited volumes and 253 refereed articles and book chapters. These publications are the fruit of twenty years of research at the Uniting Church Theological College in Sydney, Monash University, the University of Newcastle, and now Renmin University in Beijing, though much has been written on his extensive travels by bike, boat and other less common forms of transport. His writing has been supported by a succession of Australian Research Council grants.

Roland's research combines two topics long considered unfashionable in academic circles - Marxist theory and religion – and judging by the response has found a winning combination with publishers and granting bodies.

Reactions to his work vary widely. He quotes with pride some of the assessments on his blog: “all style and no substance”, “mystifying and dismaying”, “garbage” “yellow journalism” and “Stalinist and apologist for the strong-arm tactics of the Maoists and the PRC”. Obviously his editors and ARC referees assessments have been different to these quotations.

As someone who shares Roland's interest in the intersections of

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