



Tabernacles of the Spirit

George Gammack

And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. (Exod 25:8)

Tent, booth, shelter, ark, tabernacle, temple, sanctuary The range of biblical terms connected to a place of sacred significance is somewhat bewildering. The tension between the temporary and the permanent runs through it all; in the attempts to capture the elusiveness of the divine, be it in Abrahamic altar or Solomonic Temple, the Spirit often ends up being set in stone. The God of Bethel, who would lead us on – if we would only get up out of the pews.

We are still at it, planting churches and erecting special buildings, not always with proper recognition of the relatedness factor that must form the foundations. The heart of the biblical revelation is the formation of a community in which people are given living affirmation of their selves in interaction with others – life in all its fullness.

The original tabernacle was constructed by divine command, but we risk confusion between (a) the Spirit dwelling in fabric of the community, and (b) the book of rules locked away in the wooden box. They follow on from each other quite rapidly in the biblical text. First the instruction to Moses, almost an afterthought: ‘And have them make me a sanctuary’. And then comes the order for the furniture to go in it: ‘Tell the people to build a chest of acacia wood forty-five inches long, twenty-seven inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high’ (Exod 25:10). This is the Ark, to be distinguished from the outer structure, the tabernacle, which was a kind of tent. The chest contained the written law, but the tabernacle has sacramental meaning beyond its outer shell. The things of God for the people of God, but only if they do not become idols, only if they can be broken in order to be refashioned.



God in the box?

God is not in the box; the Book of the Covenant is in there, but God is at large among his people in the embodiment of his Spirit, as the covenant community. The nearest they can come to pinning him down is to erect a special place: ‘the tabernacle represents the presence of God in fulfillment of his covenantal pledge’.¹

It only becomes a tabernacle of the Spirit when there dwells within and around it an embodied presence, a covenant community inspired by that Spirit of God. Only then does it fulfil the specifications of a sanctuary sufficient to allow an experience of holiness.

Tabernacle as tent underlines the elusiveness of it all: the temporariness of place, the fragility of human life, especially among a people on the move. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews emphasises this provisionality, making it abundantly clear that the old tent + box arrangement – the physical structure and the moral code – has been quite comprehensively revised:

They offer worship in a sanctuary that is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly one; for Moses, when he was about to erect the tent, was warned, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one. [...] In speaking of “a new covenant”, he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear. (Heb 8:5–7; 13)

So what are the specifications for the better tabernacles of today? Does the divine dwelling among us always have to be fabricated according to the same standard ecclesiastical model? If we are, in the here and now, called to make a sanctuary then we need to heed the Spirit of Sinai calling us to build new people formations for today.



God in a shed?

How about sheds? In the course of my searching in recent years for clues to the meaning of faith as it is found in this live relatedness of human beings, I made a passing reference to the contemporary ‘phenomenon’ of the Men’s Shed.² In my quest for an understanding of church founded on people’s togetherness, I was struck by how these happenings among the ‘company of men’, mostly old men at that, encapsulated the reality of the power of the Spirit at work in ways that carry no religious or other ideological superstructure.

It seems all wrong though. Does this not take us in reverse directions? In an age of gender awareness, feminism and all manner of inclusivenesses, we should surely not be extolling ‘men only’ groups; and, likewise, at a time when ‘fresh expressions’ is the watchword, why seek for that which is new among the old? And, finally, is this not just another downward slide on the slippery slope of ‘secularism’?

Curiously enough this Shed business defies these contemporary sensitivities, and the arrival at a certain age and stage in the life of men is a crisis point for new beginnings in social and spiritual life. My own experience testifies to this.

Having, over more or less eight years since ceasing paid employment, spent a large amount of time in the rather solitary pursuit of writing, however much I may or may not have been conscious of it, I was in need of something new. Not necessarily a complete abandonment of the old, but a new dimension that was about doing things with other people. Crucially, not doing them because I had to, but because I wanted to and because others also wanted to make something more of their later years.

Ordinary, however, is a misrepresentation. At the time of writing this I have just sat in with a group of ten men meeting for the first time with a view to forming a ‘Shed’. A fascinating range of personalities and skills in all manner of trades and occupations was revealed; those gathered there were not from the top of hierarchical systems, once

responsible for controlling vulnerable ‘subordinates’. Instead, this was a coming together of a number of people all sharing a need to build a small working community. That is the nub of it all. The search for a tabernacle of the Spirit.



Old age and new life

The question as to why faith should look to old age for new life is a real one, especially considering that the average pew is heavily laden with grey and white hair, the kirk aisles a parking place for sticks and zimmers. Is the institutional church not dying because it is propped up by such? The essence of the matter, however, lies not in the age factor but in the identification of a focal constituency of a need which demands to be met among retired men.

Ageing men in sheds are full of enthusiasm and vigour, quite the opposite of stereotypes for senior aged men and their abilities. Shed experiences appeared to have helped many to rediscover an active retirement life, wanting to make the very most of the life they were now living. Many were enthusiastic because they had survived bouts of depression, disappointment or lifetime partner loss and had got themselves back on a more even track. With new friends and projects to think about, their minds were alive and they were buzzing. [...] When I heard the stories of those who had dealt with depression and fought back to health again or an incapacitated stroke victim now realising he was not a burden to society but an asset, passing knowledge and skills on to others. These realities had become life changing.³

There is a clue here to what should be happening at all stages of life, the facilitating of working tabernacles of the Spirit, not by way of teaching doctrine and inculcating morality, but of enabling networks of relatedness that embody fullness of life.



Making and repairing

They give you your severance pay and your pension and you sit on a park bench. For this man, when his work ended, everything ended.⁴

The Shed challenges the stereotype of old age as a time of decline. It is realistic about the ills that may befall us in later years but determines that age shall not weary us. We would concur with the writer of Ecclesiastes in condemning the kind of work that is sheer drudgery and exploitation: ‘What do we gain from all our work? I know the heavy burdens that God has laid on us’ (Eccl 3:9). He then issues the ultimate judgement: ‘Only someone too stupid to find his way home would wear himself out with work’ (Eccl 10:15). Here the sage of antithesis seems to lose his balance, however. We need to rescue and redeem the skills that are given to even the least of us to use for the benefit of all. The focus is on retirement not as a time to fail in health but a time to rise up, a place to go where there is an opportunity to make and to repair, to create and to redeem, both things and people.

Negatively, sanctuary has connotations of a hiding place. A refuge from forces of ill intent. Positively it is a necessary requirement at certain times and stages of life, for people in particular circumstances. Here the defence is against loneliness, depression and sorrow.

Retirement for many men can be a tipping point into such conditions. Daily engagement, not just with workbenches and wiring diagrams, but with other people, suddenly all disappears; Jeremy Kyle and *Countdown* beckon. A heading in a *Guardian* feature about the Camden Men’s Shed says more than many paragraphs might do: “If I didn’t come to the shed, I’d be alone, watching TV”.⁵ Worse, if retirement also brings bereavement, the loss is often of that one key relationship that remained this side of the shop floor.

It is this focal need for the sanctuary that is a comforting place and at the same time a challenging place for men in which to construct frameworks of friendship, the ‘scaffolding of spirit’.⁶ The Shed is a refuge but also a strength. It takes dimensions of life’s brokenness but is powerful in creating newness out of the old.



The gender trap

Women of course also retire, and this leads in to an area of contention for many people: why just men? This is a question asked about Jesus. Some may argue that Christianity is disqualified because Jesus was male and had only male followers. This is wrong on two counts: firstly, there is clear evidence of a group of women who were, if not among the twelve, significantly involved in the work.⁷ And secondly, because post-Jesus we have the Christ community which includes, respects and outflanks all gender differences. *In Christ there is neither male nor female ...* (Gal 3:28).

A community of the Spirit extends beyond gender; its authenticity lies in the quality of its relatedness. Thus Men's Sheds may or may not have women members. Some do and some don't. In one shed visit I encountered two women busy wood-turning and indeed in the beginnings of some of the early sheds in Australia women played a formative role. Deliberate exclusiveness is something else, but is in no way the norm: 'Although Sheds mostly attract older men, some have included men of any age, women and young people.'⁸

Broadly speaking, it's an open house, its membership constituted by those who need to be there; those, with all their diverse attributes, who want to be there.



The poet and the fisherman

Seamus Heaney has a poem about a fisherman: a drunken fisherman, a dead fisherman. But while he is still alive Heaney is accustomed to see him in a pub, their somewhat tangential relationship characterised by occasional, tentative sparring over their respective professions:

Incomprehensible
To him, my other life.
Sometimes, on his high stool,
Too busy with his knife
At a tobacco plug
And not meeting my eye,
In the pause after a slug

He mentioned poetry.
We would be on our own
And, always politic
And shy of condescension,
I would manage by some trick
To switch the talk to eels
Or lore of the horse and cart
Or the Provisionals.⁹

There is mystery in this tenuous meeting of souls, sacred mystery which may not be codified but only glimpsed in its depths. Heaney does this by taking to the sea in the dead man's boat and there he catches a sense of the rhythm of life that unites fisherman and poet: 'I tasted freedom with him'.



The writer and the rigger

A similar tension vibrates through the encounters of Primo Levi with Faussone, his factory colleague and erector of cranes: 'I don't mind telling you that rigging a crane is a great job, and a bridge crane even more; but they're not jobs just anybody can do.'¹⁰ There is friction between them on the basis of their different professions, Levi's occupation as writer as well as a chemist being seen by the other to be less of a real job: 'A man can't get sick from writing.'¹¹ Levi then traces out the contours of their common ground:

I tried to explain to him that all three of our professions, my two and his one, on their good days can give fullness: his, and the profession of chemist that resembles it, because they teach us to be whole, to think with our hands and with the entire body, to refuse to surrender to the negative days and to formulas that cannot be understood, because you then understand them as you go on. And finally, our professions teach us to know matter and confront it: the profession of writing because it grants (rarely, but it does grant) some moments of creation, like when the current suddenly runs through a circuit that is turned off, and a light comes on or a rotor moves.

We agreed then on the good things we have in common.¹²

Later, he states it another way: ‘But I’ve always been a rigger-chemist, one of those who makes syntheses, who build structures to order, in other words.’¹³

Poets and fishermen; writer/chemists and riggers. A covenant community needs them all, needs them to be joiners together in their differences.

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hope and dreams and visions;
rock of faith and vault of grace [...]
*All are welcome in this place.*¹⁴



The crafty community

An apparent contradiction is built into that heading. The standard concept of a craft lies in the material and physical dimension – work with ‘stuff’, whereas community building is seen as people work in which those involved may never set eyes on a tool or a machine; its arm or brain, but no connection between. In his study of craftsmanship, Richard Sennett challenges this: ‘Craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake. Craftsmanship cuts a far wider swath than skilled manual labour; it serves the computer programmer, the doctor, and the artist; parenting improves when it is practiced as a skilled craft, as does citizenship.’ He emphasises that the intimate connection ‘between hand and head appears in domains seemingly as different as bricklaying, cooking, designing a playground, or playing the cello’.¹⁵ Sennett wants to ‘treat all such concrete practices as like laboratories in which sentiments and ideas can be investigated.’¹⁶ The big theme is the ‘positive conception of craftsmanship – broadly conceived, applicable to people who use their heads as well as their hands.’¹⁷

He records how he ‘was struck again and again by a particular

social asset in doing practical work: cooperation.’ He takes this up in a subsequent volume: the focus ‘is on responsiveness to others’; it is an exploration of ‘cooperation as a craft.’¹⁸ ‘Cooperation’, says Sennett, is ‘an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter.’ There is a fitting together socially and physically. Sennett gives the example of a workshop which repairs stringed instruments, where the workers responsively fit in with each other, dovetailing both practical and social skills:

The five luthiers pride themselves on their competence in the most demanding of jobs, cutting and shaping the plates which form the front and back of stringed instruments; they’ve all earned their authority at the cutter. When someone is at the cutting machine, he or she commands the shop, handing off discarded wood without twisting around, expecting others to be there and to take the discards without comment.¹⁹

The craftsmanship, of diverse expression though it may be, is shaped into wholeness and beauty as the members co-operate in its realisation. Sennett calls it ‘social expertise’: ‘A well-crafted institution will favour the sociable expert; the isolated expert sends a warning signal that the organization is in trouble.’²⁰ Theologically, the tabernacle so formed is the ‘template’ of the Church, the whole body sanctified by grace which ensures that all ‘the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together’ (1 Cor 12:26). Physical ills and practical skills all go into the mix, all giving and receiving as need and ability engage with and complement each other.

One of our members is a vastly experienced engineer who was building a new workbench. Because of a physical condition he is forbidden to use power tools. Another professes no special material craft but brings the willingness to offer a pair of hands to assist others. Thus the scenario one day as a large sheet of plywood destined to be the surface of the workbench, being held in place by six Sheddors as another cuts it to the required dimensions.



Fit for purpose

There is a live responsiveness to each other and to the overall network of relationships. H. Richard Niebuhr wrote a book entitled *The Responsible Self*, subtitled *An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy*. It takes us beyond an abstract ethic into the groundwork of community building. This community is ‘an interacting community’. It consists of people who ‘are not atoms but members of a system of interactions.’²¹ It is ‘the ethics of the fitting’.²²

As we respond to the others we fit together and become fit together; a multimedia social, emotional and physical tabernacle, the right people in the right place, the right skills and the right sensitivities, cutting the wood to the right specifications. This is the heart of the biblical truth and vision, the covenant community within which God seeks to dwell. Niebuhr sums it up in his final paragraph:

The action we see in such life is obedient to law, but goes beyond all laws; it is form-giving but even more form-receiving; it is fitting action. It is action which is fitted into the context of universal, eternal, life-giving action by the One. It is infinitely responsible in an infinite universe to the hidden yet manifest principle of its being and its salvation.²³

Charles Taylor, following Ivan Illich’s interpretation, earths this in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, who ‘acts outside of the carefully constructed sense of the sacred’ and ‘creates a new kind of fittingness, belonging together, between Samaritan and wounded Jew.’²⁴ New networks of relatedness arise in this manner of responsive action, not by diktat from above, but, as the phrase has it, ‘from the bottom-up’.



Sheds for salvation

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps 27:1)

The Psalmist seeks a refuge – the tabernacle is the place:

For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent (Ps 27:5)

May we venture to interpret this not just as an individual cry but *at the same time* that of a whole people assailed by hostile forces? And not just as external enemies seeking to kill their individual bodies, but all manner of injurious circumstances that may invade their common lives; wild warriors on the ground and vicious viruses in the air, both threatening to break up their unique national integrity.

An individual may indeed retreat into the holy place: ‘in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me’, as the AV puts it in verse 5. The question is whether this privatised seclusion is only one dimension of the multifaceted phenomenon that is salvation, an at-one-ment that is communal at the same time as individual and cannot be one without the other: healing and holiness in the creation of new networks of relatedness. The lament of loneliness is soluble in the song of sociability. The redemption of ‘that which is obsolete and growing old’ (Heb 8:13) is energised in the active re-creation of a new covenant arrangement.

This is where the model of the Shed can illumine the path. Members of a Shed come with all manner of skills and ills, diverse conditions of mind, body and spirit, not in search of miracle remedies, but in pursuit of a wholeness of self that comes from being a valued participant in shared activity. In working together, the members of the body support and uphold each other. This is in accordance with the biblical story of redeeming life through total spiritual solidarity, ‘a dynamic we-formation of fellowship in face to face groups committed to sharing and transforming their common burden of suffering.’²⁵

From his immersion in troubled human situations, Bob Lambourne has offered us precious insights into what this means in terms of requiring ‘individuals to be less concerned with their individual salvation and more prepared to find health with others in the mission of assisting others to find health together.’²⁶ He is critical of a theology that follows the medical model of ‘curing people by disease

extraction.’ This is ‘a particular kind of Protestant ethic which puts supreme value on individual salvation and sees such salvation in the eradication of sins within oneself.’ In sum, ‘man’s personal health and his personal salvation is wrapped up in his community. He cannot receive the blessings either of God or modern Medicine except he receive them with and through others.’²⁷

It is about ‘whole salvation’ in which whole persons uphold and are held by a whole community. There is all-round fitness, in which all members are given full value and play a full part. The true tabernacle is formed in a coalition of members helping each other bear burdens, entering together into a power which literally ‘incorporates’ our frailties into a greater stronghold and which indeed is ‘made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor 12:9). In shaping sanctuaries for salvation the search at all levels is for a gracious strengthening of the soul in the face of suffering, a quest that ultimately is not an individual pursuit but a corporate destiny. Such is the strength of salvation.



Tabernacles for transcendence

Lodged firmly in my mind is a visit to a church some years ago when there was a lunch club on the go. Serving up this meal were members of the local community some of whom were church members while others had no church connection. The building itself, though owned by a particular denomination, was a multi-purpose community facility. So was this a religious event? Was the soup sacred or secular? What sort of tabernacle was this? What does incarnation tell us about it?

Edwin Muir laments our propensity for what Charles Taylor calls ‘excarnation’, where ‘the spiritual life lies more and more “in the head”’.²⁸

How could our race betray
The Image, and the Incarnate One unmake
Who chose this form and fashion for our sake?
The Word made flesh here is made word again,
A word made word in flourish and arrogant crook.²⁹

‘There’s better gospel in man’s natural tongue’, he asserts; Muir’s sentiment is echoed by another poet:

[...] so in everyday life
it is the plain facts and natural happenings
that conceal God and reveal him to us
little by little under the mind’s tooling.³⁰

The secular and the sacred are irreconcilably interwoven. Only fanatical atheism and ultra-zealous religion try to split them asunder, but the wiser counsels of the day offer a more nuanced approach. The neglected work of Ronald Gregor Smith on the theme of ‘this-worldly transcendence’³¹ which I first encountered some forty years ago is finding fresh expression with writers such as Taylor and Luc Ferry. Ferry comments on the ‘strange persistence of transcendence’ and reasons that ‘it is a question of a kind of transcendence, but no longer that of a God who imposes himself on us from the outside.’³²



Out of control

*The biblical covenant was a systematic proclamation that no one was in control.*³³

God’s arrangement with the covenant community is not based on control, either by God or by us; freedom is afforded to fabricate a people, and, vice versa, holiness will not be strangled or stifled by imposing names and conditions thereon. Jacob was one who tried it, wrestling through the night with this mysterious stranger, and limping on into the first day of the rest of his life without a neat answer (Gen 32:22–32). They tried to pin Jesus down too: ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ (Mark 15:2) and his response was to turn the question back on them. We have to live with and dwell in the mystery, rather than explain or eliminate it, take the rich materials of life’s relationships and be co-creators in making something of them.

Salvation is brought down to earth and forged on the shop-floor of life. People are enabled to make things together, and in the making of things are made into a people. There is a simultaneous fitness of

timber joints and human souls. This emerges not through standardised programmes devised in distant offices, but in the crafting of mutual skills of metal and machine, of sensitivity and strength, of wood and word and welcome.

We should not be side-tracked into either triumphalist theological abstractions nor vitriolic atheistic abuse, and need to focus on seeing the quality of covenantal relatedness not as some secondary ‘fellowship’ but as *actually constituting* the tabernacle, the indwelling of holiness in which all are welcome. Having nice curtains³⁴ may help, but we need to look and see the relational reality that lies behind them. We have to trust in ‘secular transcendence’, in the persistently energetic and evolving movement of the Spirit in the workshop of the world:

When through the night the furnace fires flaring,
Loud with their tongues of flame like spurting blood,
Speak to the heart of love alive and daring,
Sing of the boundless energy of God;
[...]
Then will He come – with meekness for His glory,
God in a workman’s jacket as before,
Living again the Eternal Gospel Story,
Sweeping the shavings from His workshop floor.³⁵



Sheds and churches

Sheds are not churches but point to the kind of active relational fabric needed to build contemporary tabernacles of the spirit. While it is documented that some sheds have had church involvement in their initiation, they are not ecclesiastical entities, although the Lutheran Church in Australia seems to have come close with its Better Blokes Camps which are events ‘run under auspices of Shed Night, a ministry using meetings in sheds as a non-threatening environment to engage openly and honestly with men of all backgrounds.’³⁶ But beware of morality and doctrine being sneaked in by the back door.

The absence of hidden agendas and party lines is crucial; no-power drilling into conformity with set standards of living and believing, the rigidities of institutions which would capture and tame

that elusive and energetic Spirit with clinically-enforced ‘top-down’ statutes: ‘Something is lost when we take the way of living together that the Gospel points us to and make of it a code of rules enforced by organisations erected for this purpose.’³⁷ Sheds therefore are important for the life of faith both as a corrective to abstract cerebral theology and an antidote to the ‘fixed’ ecclesiastical institution. Perhaps more churches could use part of their premises for Shed-style tabernacle/workshops where the material and the spiritual are not at odds, but form a living, seamless whole.

No tabernacle of the Spirit can last for ever, nor can it be constructed so to do. The covenant community which is the true citadel is eternal, but the way to it:

[...] leads not back to that snake haunted
Garden, but onward to the tall city
of glass that is the laboratory of the spirit.³⁸

Thus are formed tabernacles in which we may work together to experiment in shaping creation and redemption.

O Christ, the Master Carpenter
Who, at the last, through wood and nails,
Purchased our whole salvation,
Wield well your tools in the workshop of your world,
So that we, who come rough-hewn to your bench
May here be fashioned to a truer beauty of your hand.³⁹

Notes

- ¹ Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 580.
- ² George Gammack, *The Secret Service Church: Faith Seeking Relatedness* (s.l.: Rossendale Books, 2015), 106f.

- ³ Barry Golding, *The Men's Shed Movement: The Company of Men* (Champaign, Ill.: Common Ground Publishing, 2015), 227.
- ⁴ Primo Levi, *The Wrench* (trans. William Weaver; London: Abacus, 1988), 81, 86.
- ⁵ *The Guardian*, 7 October 2014.
- ⁶ R. S. Thomas, "Emerging", in *Later Poems: A Selection* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 117.
- ⁷ Luke 8:1–3.
- ⁸ <http://www.menssheds.org.uk/>
- ⁹ Seamus Heaney, "Casualty", in *Field Work* (London: Faber, 1979), 23f.
- ¹⁰ Levi, *The Wrench*, 9.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 50.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 52f.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 143.
- ¹⁴ Marty Haughen, "All Are Welcome" (GIA Publications, 1994).
- ¹⁵ Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008), 9.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 112f.
- ¹⁸ Richard Sennett, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), ix.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.
- ²⁰ Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 246.
- ²¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 78.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 97.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ²⁴ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 739.
- ²⁵ R. A. Lambourne, "Health Today and Salvation Today", in *Explorations in Health and Salvation: A Selection of Papers by Bob Lambourne* (ed. Michael Wilson; Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, 1983), 236.

- ²⁶ R. A. Lambourne, “Models of Health and Salvation – Secular and Christian”, in *Ibid.*, 207.
- ²⁷ R. A. Lambourne, “Wholeness, Community and Worship”, in *Ibid.*, 21.
- ²⁸ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 771.
- ²⁹ Edwin Muir, “The Incarnate One”, in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 228.
- ³⁰ R. S. Thomas, “Emerging”.
- ³¹ Ronald Gregor Smith, *The Doctrine of God* (London: Collins, 1970), 172.
- ³² Luc Ferry, *Man Made God: The Meaning of Life* (trans. David Pellauer; Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 20, 21.
- ³³ George E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 195.
- ³⁴ Exodus 27:9.
- ³⁵ G. A. Studdert Kennedy, “Then Will He Come”, in *The Unutterable Beauty: The Collected Poetry of G. A. Studdert Kennedy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), 98f.
- ³⁶ Lutheran Church of Australia, “‘Better Blokes’ challenges men to stand up and be counted”, <http://www.lca.org.au/‘better-blokes’-challenges-men-to-stand-up-and-be-counted.html>
- ³⁷ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 737.
- ³⁸ R. S. Thomas, “Emerging”, in *Collected Poems, 1945–1990* (London: Dent, 1993), 263.
- ³⁹ Iona Community.