

Foreword

WITHOUT DOUBT THE CONTEMPORARY Christian scene is becoming dominated by interest in all things Pneumatic—anything to do with the Spirit of God is a crowd-puller and pleaser. This is a good thing: we are increasingly becoming interested not only in *what* the Spirit does but *how* he goes about it. However, most attention is given to what the Spirit does in our gatherings at the expense of individual spirituality. What is needed, today, is a theology of the Spirit that engages with basic questions of Christian existence, at a very practical level. What does this activity look like? How does it “work”?

Enter the prophetic perspective of Klaus Bockmuehl, a theologian who saw this need at a time when things of the Spirit were perceived a “niche” realm of the seminary. Precocious and sometimes marginalized his insights regarding the Spirit’s agency in Christian ethics, and therefore in our daily Christian experiences, have renewed import, now. At last, someone who saw the connection between Law (the framework of Scripture—not rules and regulations) and Spirit. Without Spirit, Law only leads to legalism and its antinomian reactions. And they are rife in the contemporary church. And this plays itself out in our ethics, of course.

What Annette Glaw does in this exposition of Bockmuehl’s analysis of the Spirit in Christian Ethics is to extend his thinking into a more relational context. By building on Bockmuehl’s functional view of the Spirit Glaw argues that a more relational approach to Christian Ethics would enable us to think of the Spirit as drawing people into a love relationship with the Father. As such, a Christian ethic is better understood as union and communion with the living God through loving relationships with God, neighbor and self. And this only happens when the Spirit moves and empowers.

This is an exceptional book—it introduces us for the first time to a much-neglected thinker. It also equips us with an understanding of how the church can live ethically in power—through its love relationship with

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the Father. In both respects it has much to offer its reader and the wider contemporary church.

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