

S. Platten, ed., *Holy Ground. Cathedrals in the Twenty-first Century*. Durham: Sacristy Press, 2017. Pp. xvi, 181. Pb. £14.99. ISBN 978-1-910519-73-8.

This is the third collection of essays reflecting on English cathedrals edited in the past two decades by Stephen Platten; yet, he judged it would be pretentious to call *Holy Ground* the final volume of a trilogy, for that would imply a more strategic process than was apparently the case. While the book complements *Flagships of the Spirit* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998) and *Dreaming Spires?* (SPCK, 2006), it covers fresh and broadly different topics and there is only a slight overlap with earlier contributors. Among the contributors are clergy and lay professionals, including individuals who serve or have served on the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE); and, just like the make-up of the CFCE (outlined in Jennie Page's chapter), the gathered individuals have first-hand familiarity with cathedral life and are drawn from a broad base of specialist knowledge. The focus throughout is on Anglican cathedrals, though there are some interesting comparisons with their Roman Catholic counterparts in Jane Kennedy's chapter on furnishings.

The candid foreword represents Frank Field's personal manifesto for cathedrals to take a key role in preventing the loss of a Christian presence in England. From his vantage point as Chair of the CFCE (2005-15), he charts a decade's change within that body, and outlines two major concerns during that time - how additional capital sums for cathedrals might be gained from 'the new rich' and how to protect the Elizabeth tradition of English church music. The sustainability of the musical tradition is taken up in Richard Shephard's chapter on cathedral music.

Platten's Introduction does not outline in a laborious fashion the rest of the volume chapter by chapter but instead extracts a few salient themes. Likewise, there is no concluding chapter to draw together the many and diverse strands. The ten chapters are accessible in style and eminently readable. Contributors adopt a scholarly approach and consider the new themes in depth, grounded in relevant literature. Each chapter has its own set of references. A composite bibliography might have been a welcome bonus.

Platten's first chapter contains initial reflections on the nature of cathedrals; and in the fifth chapter he looks at historical and theological contexts that help define a cathedral and how buildings challenge, limit and inspire liturgy and worship. History informs several contributions; yet, David Hoyle's chapter reminds readers that history is only ever part of our identity and stresses that cathedrals are living communities with a past (that may comprise 'messy' history). Simon Oliver considers the roots of cathedral growth, taking as his inspiration two findings from the *Spiritual Capital: The present and future of English cathedrals* report (Theos and the Grubb Institute, 2012); Peter Atkinson focuses on cathedrals at prayer, pinpointing at least six ecclesial identities present in the modern England cathedral; while Nicholas Henshall considers the prophetic ministry of cathedrals as outward-facing communities with a unique place in the public square; and Christopher Irvine discusses the place of art in cathedrals, as centres of worship and mission, and includes a number of preliminary questions to address in drawing up a brief when commissioning new art.

In her chapter on the Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990 and aspects of the subsequent operation of the CFCE, Jennie Page alludes to the management training now available to deans following the work of Lord Green's steering group on talent management. A strong candidate for the reading list for such training, *Holy Ground* is a rich resource on theological, historical, ecclesiological, missiological and prosaic aspects of cathedral life. It contains useful mini case-studies of innovations and how particular cathedrals have tackled certain challenges or responded to CFCE requirements (for example, to draw up a liturgical plan or art policy). *Holy Ground* will be useful reading also for the Cathedrals Working Group established in 2017 by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to review aspects of cathedral management and governance, and for all delegates to the National Cathedrals Conference (Manchester, September 2018), which will bring together for the first time under one roof key players at every English cathedral 'to discuss and facilitate development of a strategic vision for the future direction of Cathedrals' (<http://www.sacredspace2018.org/>). This is truly a stimulating time for the English cathedrals. *Holy Ground* is conspicuous in its timeliness. It may be the third collection of essays in a series reflecting on cathedrals, but it should certainly not be the final word in cathedral studies.

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