



---

Volume 58 | Issue 1

Article 13

---

2015

## Moynagh's "Being Church, Doing Life: Creating Gospel Communities Where Life Happens" (Book Review)

Rory Patterson  
*Liberty University*

*The Christian Librarian* is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit <http://www.acl.org/>

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl>

---

### Recommended Citation

Patterson, Rory (2015) "Moynagh's "Being Church, Doing Life: Creating Gospel Communities Where Life Happens" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 58 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol58/iss1/13>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

Testament to the councils and creeds. That Acts 16:4 supports near biblical authority to post-biblical church proclamations is something with which most Protestants would dispute.

Another example is found in Acts 19:26 in which Pelikan defends the use, in worship, of images of saints, angels, and “Mary the Theotokos” (Mother of God). Similarly, in Acts 20:7, Pelikan finds “the still inchoate but already developing sacramental system” leading to ordination, penance, absolution, etc. (p. 217). In Acts 22:16 Pelikan defends the idea that the sacraments communicate grace *ex opera operato*, or apart from the attitude of the one being baptized. He applies this specifically to the baptism of infants. Many Protestants may argue that Pelikan’s conclusions come not so much from an unbiased exegesis of the Book of Acts as from reading later church decisions back into the text.

Those in Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions may find this commentary exceptionally helpful. Although Evangelicals may disagree with some of Pelikan’s conclusions, the discussion is often fascinating and does not distract from the usefulness of the commentary as a whole.

Readers will learn much, not only about the Book of Acts but also about historical theology. Although the book is based on deep scholarship, it is easy to read and – with the exception of some occasional untranslated Greek and Latin quotations – it is generally understandable even on a layman’s level. This commentary is excellent for understanding the relation between the Book of Acts and historical theology. Those looking for the meaning of the original text of Acts in its historical context, however, may find other commentaries more helpful. The book contains a bibliography, subject index and Scripture index.

---

**Being Church, Doing Life:  
Creating Gospel Communities Where Life Happens,**  
by M. Moynagh. Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch Books, 2014. 344 pp. \$18.99;  
ISBN 9780857214935

*Reviewed by Rory Patterson, Associate Dean, Planning, Administration, & Operations,  
Jerry Falwell Library, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA*

Moynagh has written or co-authored twelve previous works, all in Britain. This work illustrates how to join in an upcoming megatrend in Christianity: a serving-first journey of doing life and church together. This trend helps the church meet three top needs in current Western culture: competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Moynagh progressively builds his case, and then ties the progression together by repeating three questions and two concepts. The three questions (Who are you? What do you know? Who do you know?) allow readers to see how they can apply the book. The two concepts are actively living in the Spirit's direction with non-Christians, and connecting the "traditional" church. This tension of following the Spirit and church tradition is repeated but is not addressed.

Moynagh writes from Britain, so the book has a UK tilt to its illustrations and mindset, and is from a High Church viewpoint. Moynagh presents a large number of stories to illustrate his points, many if not most of which are from Anglican or Methodist churches. The book's major fault is undercutting its own teaching in two key ways. First, Moynagh lists data from a survey stating that the type of church he is promoting is 15% of the churches in 2 denominations in Britain, but only 10% of the attendance, so it seems to not be as successful gaining and keeping people. Second, he moves from a postmodern mindset in ten chapters where he illustrates but does not prescribe, to a modern approach in the appendix for how to evaluate qualitatively and quantitatively a church or ministry created using those illustrations. This book seems to work against itself, although the appendix is excellent for ways to assess missional ministries.

---

**Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary Together with Sellic Spell,**

by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 425 pp. \$28.00. ISBN 9780544442788

*Reviewed by Robert Burgess, Digital Resources Librarian,  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX*

When people hear the name J.R.R. Tolkien, they immediately think about his classic fantasy works *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. However, many people often forget that he served as an Anglo-Saxon and English language professor at the University of Oxford for over thirty years. His professional career was spent in the study of linguistics and English literature. In addition to the study of Old English, Tolkien also translated the Book of Jonah for the *Jerusalem Bible*, created around a dozen languages for his Middle Earth stories, and translated a definitive edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. He spent several years translating his own version of the epic poem, *Beowulf*; however, he never published it during his lifetime.

This book was edited by Christopher Tolkien, who has disseminated several of his father's unpublished manuscripts. Christopher combines his father's *Beowulf* translation, notes, and lectures so readers can learn J.R.R.'s textual criticisms along