

## Pastor Stef's Book Review – July 2018

I have long been looking for a good book to introduce theological concepts to children. Unfortunately it has been difficult. There are plenty of children's devotionals out there that retell Bible stories and/or give moral (sometimes moralist) applications like obeying your parents, sharing your toys and being nice to the unpopular kid, but where does one find a book to introduce children to good doctrine? Is it only when we become adults that we should begin exploring doctrines like the Trinity, the atonement, justification and the resurrection? But sadly, most adults do not bother to explore these ideas either. Since the Christian faith is based on God's character and what God has done, and not on what we are supposed to be (or not to be) doing, then having a good grounding in theology is imperative - and the earlier in life the better.

**Marty Machowski's** book *The Ology: Ancient Truths Ever New* (2015) is a book of seventy one short readings covering theological topics like God, people, sin, covenant, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, the end times and the Bible. I wouldn't say it was an amazing book, and the graphics throughout are particularly poor (including linking Bible verses to the various parts of the graphics), but it is at least an attempt in a field where there is a great vacuum.

On a positive note, the readings are short enough to keep a lively family focused, and they did provoke a lot of good discussions around our supper table. Discussions around why do we pray if God knows everything? What does it mean that God first chose us? How is it fair that everyone is guilty because of something Adam did? How is Jesus fully God and fully human? Who is the Holy Spirit? And why is there so much suffering in the world if God is in control? Of course, we were not able to answer all of these questions, and didn't always agree with where the book came down on them, but that's not necessarily the intent of theology. Instead, in the act of questioning and talking about God we are modeling what it looks like to be in relationship with him as a person, not just gather information about him. Parents will also be surprised at how much they will also learn through the process as it may even challenge and correct some of their mistaken beliefs.

I hope **Marty Machowski's** *The Ology* book will encourage more writers and artists to pick up the mantle and improve on this attempt by putting together more books on theology for kids, for they are greatly needed.

As an aside, though they are not books on theological concepts, two great books to introduce kids to the story of the Bible and to praying the Bible, which are also filled with wonderful pictures, are *The Jesus Story Book Bible* and *Psalms for Young Children*.