

In the fourth and final step, chapters 8-10, Treweek weaves together the results (“threads”) generated in the preceding sections into a “wonderfully intricate tapestry,” within which the body of Christ may see the purpose and place of single Christians. She notes that Christians in their view of family and marriage and singleness have not only followed secular views of these phenomena but have “also rebaptized many of these to be the ‘Christian way of life’” (p. 218). Among these is the insistence that married couples be “burdened by the lofty and grand expectation that they are all and everything to each other” (p. 218). Based on her biblical exegesis, Treweek recommends that Christian teachers and thinkers shift their focus from origins to *telos*; don’t just consider where we have come from, consider where we are going. The life of faithful singles can testify to what believers will do in eternity; Treweek notes the large amount of patristic commentary on Matthew 22:30, which described how unmarried believers could live “the life of angels” on earth. Because believing singles “are even now brother or sister (and not husband and wife) to all others within the church,” their lives are now “not a foreshadow of eternity but an actual--albeit partial--foretaste of it” (p. 231).

This is a strong and helpful book. The church needs both married and single, and married and single need each other in the church. Both have unique gifts strengths and opportunities. The church should recognize singleness as a calling, sometimes temporary and sometimes permanent. In particular, churches should be aware of the way that unmarried believers can point the rest of us toward the reality of the next life, where members of the bride of Christ will all relate deeply to each other as brothers and sisters (“neither marrying nor being given in marriage”) as we unite to our bridegroom. Churches should put care and attention into ministering to singles, providing them with opportunities for significant ministry and deep and Christ-glorifying friendships, and valuing and blessing them equally whether they pursue marriage or not.

Perry Leon Stepp

Joshua Iyadurai

Social Research Methods: For Students and Scholars of Theology and Religious Studies

Chennai: Marina Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Religion, 2023., pp. 302

Dr. Joshua Iyadurai, a lecturer and researcher from the University of Madras (Department of Christian Studies, India), is the author of an innovative textbook in the field of Methodology that offers a view of the research methods in the social sciences through their application in theology and religious studies. The

textbook is intended for students and scientists, as well as practitioners involved in pastoral practice and ministry to the church. The book was published in 2023 in English under the name *Social Research Methods. For Students and Scholars of Theology and Religious Studies* by the Marina Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Religion, Chennai, India.

The book aims to respond to the question of how to overcome the marginalization of evangelical theology, which Mark Noll, Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., and David Wells wrote about back in 1995 in their well-known article “Evangelical Theology Today” emphasizing the need for a dialogue between theology, culture, and society that is interdisciplinarily grounded.

The starting point for Iyadurai’s argument is the methodological paradigm of the 21st century, the lived faith. He believes that the lived faith experience shifts the focus of theology from being “rhetorical and speculative to constructivist,” offering a different set of “hermeneutical tools” based upon “the expertise of social sciences” (p. xvii). The author argues that the interdisciplinary openness allows theology to retain its distinctive foundation in the Word while at the same time, using the knowledge of other disciplines, improving its abilities to understand society and its relationship with God, and becoming “more intelligible in engaging the world” (p. xxvi). Here, Iyadurai follows Veli-Matti Karkkainen (2015, 3:235–241) who says that theology is a complete truth revealed in a complex world in which knowledge changes and expands extremely quickly; thus, respect for the plurality of cultures and religions, as well as sensitiveness to the intra-church and ecumenical dialogue is a necessity that protects theology from its rigidity and too easy adaptation to science. Similarly, Iyadurai begins his book by claiming that “when theology engages social sciences from this position, it guards itself against reductionism, while considering insights from social sciences to have a holistic understanding of the social world in relation to God” (p. xvii).

The book has 302 pages. The nine chapters offer content that is easy to read although the methods presented are rather complex. By combining well-designed content, academic language, and examples, the reader is provided with a substantial amount of knowledge as well as skills needed for conducting interdisciplinary research at the M.A. and/or Ph.D. level. Iyadurai presents the qualitative and quantitative research methods, and the combined methods of research, giving useful tips about how to write a hypothesis (p. 118), define basic research concepts (p. 119), determine the validity of a claim (p. 123), define the sample (p. 126), structure questionnaires and research questions (p. 132), conduct interviews (p. 138), analyze and present research results, etc. (p. 156). The author also provides examples about how to narrow down the research and formulate the main title and subtitles (p. 170), create clear research objectives (p. 180), define primary source population and sampling (p. 183), and discusses in length the importance

of proper data collection, reliability of sources and ways of data analysis (p.185) as well as how to write a research report, dissertation and journal article (p. 191).

The book may be of interest to students and researchers also because Iyadurai lists references to software that can be used to create notes and organize the research, such as EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley (p. 31), and NVIVO – a program that enables quantitative data analysis (pp. 32 and 106) and instructions how to use apps such as Zoom, Webex, Google Meet, Skype, as well as Debut Video Capture, Camtasia, Audacity and other for online interviews, meetings, focus groups and the like (p. 82). The author also refers readers to software that combines analyses of text, audio, video, and other types of docs, such as ATLAS.ti, HyperRESEARCH, MAXQDA, QDA Miner, Transana, RDQA etc. (p. 106). He also explains the role of a supervisor in the research as someone who offers intellectual, professional, administrative as well as pastoral care to the student (p. 221). The book contains a six-page dictionary (p. 245), an extensive list of references (p. 252), and an index (p. 263) which makes it easier for the readers to find their way through the book.

This book is a good overview of classic and more recent methods in social science research that can be very useful for interdisciplinary research in theology. The clear focus on showing that theology, as “understanding God’s activity in relation to human community and the world... [that] cannot isolate itself but must engage social sciences to study lived theology or lived religion” (p. xxvi) points also to its limitations. Namely, Iyadurai’s focus on the study of social science methods does not include a variety of methods useful for research in the areas of biblical studies, exegesis, systematic theology, church history, and the like, and “fails even to suggest the contours of a theological approach to methodology” (Holmes and Lindsay 2018). A reference to the ongoing debate between Christian theology and the various theoretical streams (as mentioned in Holmes and Lindsay 2018, between theology and philosophy, social theory, psychology, biological and physical sciences, and so forth), might have been a helpful addition for a Christian researcher.

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