It has become fashionable to say that ‘feminism’ is dead, or at least is past its sell-by date, or – as an academic discipline – has collapsed into a variety of ‘feminisms’. So I was intrigued when I was asked to contribute to the research for this book, and then even more intrigued to read it. One of the authors, Kristin Aune, did her PhD on women in one of the new churches, and has written on Christians and singleness and more recently on why Christian women are leaving the Church.

The authors set out to reclaim feminism by arguing for what they call the ‘new feminist movement’. They point out that, while much has been gained for women by earlier waves of feminism, women still feel unequal in a number of ways.

In their research, the authors received responses from nearly 1,300 women, and found widespread support for traditional ‘feminist’ issues such as equal pay, equal opportunities in education, shared housework and childcare, and welfare provision for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. They found that many women begin: ‘I’m not a feminist but...’ and that a surprisingly large percentage of women surveyed recently would consider themselves feminists: two-thirds of 16-1-25 year olds in one 2007 poll and nearly 40% of women in a 2008 poll. Thus, feminism is very much alive and well.

While those surveyed varied in their responses, there was consensus in seven main areas, the things today’s feminists are most concerned about, and the seven chapters of this book focus on these: liberated bodies; sexual freedom and choice; an end to violence against women; equality at work and home; politics and religion transformed; popular culture free from sexism; feminism reclaimed.

Each chapter covers a wide range of areas, and is full of facts and figures, surveys and quotations. I have written on domestic violence myself, so I was particularly interested in that chapter, and the one on politics and religion. It’s been good to track progress on the violence issue over the last 30 years, but sexual violence and harassment are still huge issues, and global poverty and economic inequality can put women at greater risk. I’ve always argued that all Christians should be concerned about violence, and not leave it to feminists, but I’m not convinced that much progress has been made.

The discussion on religion makes the point that feminism often ignores or else attacks religion, and there is some evidence that second wave feminists are less religious. But this book takes a more nuanced approach, and examines a variety of approaches which feminists have taken to religion. I can remember debates back in the 1980s about whether one can be a feminist and a Christian (despite the fact that many of the nineteenth-century feminists were feminists because they were Christians!), and it’s good to read that these debates continue.

I found the book illuminating and challenging in equal measure; a good insight into many aspects of women’s lives which Christians all too often overlook. Also see www.thefword.org.uk.

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A new wave of feminists, some still in their teens, are putting the struggle for women’s rights back on the agenda for the first time in a decade. The feminist resurgence has spawned a flurry of new blogs, magazines, books, societies, conferences and protest marches and this time dungarees are out. Catherine Redfern, who conducted the survey for Reclaiming the F Word: The New Feminist Movement, which she is co-writing with Kristin Aune, said: “We want to tell people that feminism is still here, and is a growing, vibrant movement.” Theirs is one of three books on feminism due out in the next few months, including Natasha Walter’s Living Dolls: The Return of Sexism. The accuracy of the correlation method is examined by simulating particle movements under uniform parallel flows and uniform shear flows. Particle images are produced by decomposing each pixel into 9x9 sub-pixels and shifting particle patterns in a sub-pixel unit. This method is also applied to the aerial photographs taken during floods.