



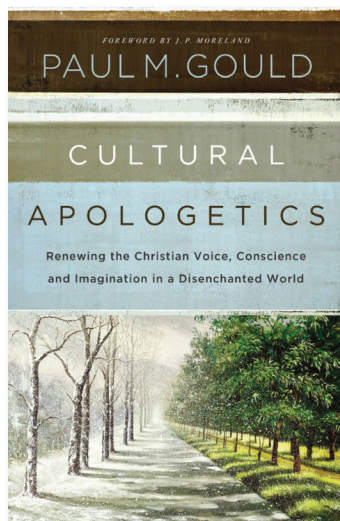
Book Reviews

October 2021

Section Editors: Craig Nesson, Ralph Klein, Troy Troftgruben

Review a book!

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Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World.

By Paul M. Gould.

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-3105-3049-7. 240 pages. Paper. \$22.99.

In *Cultural Apologetics*, which comes with a lecture series on video, Paul Gould takes a fresh look at

how to present Christianity through the lens of culture in a way that makes faith desirable, even as more and more people are moving away from the church. He acknowledges he is taking a leaf out of Apostle Paul's playbook. In Athens, Paul uses what he sees as missing in a Greek culture, and proceeds to fill those gaps with the meaning, relevance, and hope that only Christ can bring. Examining the writing of thinkers such as Kreeft, Lewis, Newbigin, and others, and by utilizing some of their ideas as a launching pad, Gould proposes a fresh approach to cultural apologetics. He aims to enable building bridges between the Gospel and a given culture in three primary movements: reason/truth, conscience/goodness, and imagination/beauty.

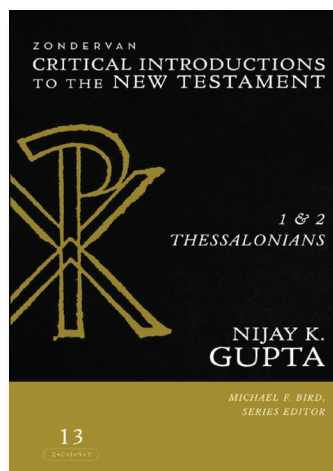
Addressing internal and external barriers to the Gospel, the author tries to show how an apologist can break through these barriers. He looks at Western culture and its current condition of having become disenchanted, sensate, and hedonistic. The culture one lives in impacts how Christians see Jesus and how they might present Jesus to others. Institutions of education, media, arts, business, and the government shift culture, and in turn influence how a culture views truth and goodness. Gould's model for cultural apologetics is meant to create a "Christian encounter" where the Holy Spirit, working through human means, convicts and redeems the world (34).

Gould reminds Christians that we can become our own worst enemy. When the outside world sees Christians as hypocrites, they no longer want to listen. Inside Christian communities are examples of anti-intellectualism, compartmentalization of faith and secular lives, and what Gould refers to as "unbaptized imagination," when Christians behave as though everything is commonplace. The author underscores the importance of enacting the Gospel in everyday activities, bringing the sacred back into daily life. All Christians are called by God to be representatives of this life-giving God who has acted through Jesus. The cultural apologist does this by working on the fringes as people transition in their faith journey from being "non-seekers," to "seekers," to being "found" (211).

As a person who is not a "cradle Christian," I appreciate that this book offers a lot to consider before a Christian attempts to be a guide to seekers. Still, I picked up on a patronizing tone that underestimates the depth of non-Christian perspectives. We must guard against assuming that all non-Christians are godless heathens or simplistic animists if we want the rest of the world to come to know Jesus. We must remember that God, who is the creator of all, is already encountering people in other religions, and drawing them to Jesus.

Jo Kinnard

Wartburg Theological Seminary graduate



1 & 2 Thessalonians.

By Nijay K. Gupta.

Zondervan Critical Introductions to the New Testament 13. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-3105-1871-6. 336 pages. Cloth. \$44.99.

True to the series title, this is not a traditional commentary, but a critical introduction to each letter of the Thessalonian correspondence. This volume focuses on the subject matters usually covered in the introductory materials of a commentary, providing an up-to-date guide of the interpretation of the letters that is both readable and thorough. With attention to the scope of interpretation from the Apostolic Fathers until the present, Nijay Gupta has provided an essential guide to the history of interpretation of 1 and 2 Thessalonians as well as offered a clear and accessible roadmap for navigating some of the most troublesome passages.

The volume is divided into two parts, with each Thessalonian letter receiving attention through four chapters: textual history (for 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 1; for 2 Thessalonians, Chapter 5),



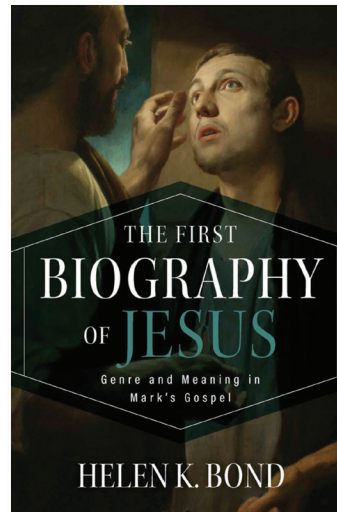
the “Background and Situation” of each letter (Chapters 2 and 6, respectively), “Themes and Interpretation” (Chapters 3 and 7), and finally a history of interpretation (Chapters 4 and 8). The volume serves as a kind of one-stop-shop for key interpretative issues and reception history. The scope of the research into the history of interpretation is both impressive and well-organized.

The real jewel of the volume, though, is the focus on the main interpretive issues that have plagued scholarship concerning each letter (chapters 3 and 7). While it is not the goal of the volume to provide a detailed commentary on the entire letters, the selected passages contain careful and thoughtful attention to the text, while also laying out the interpretive issues. The beginning of these chapters contains theological themes, while the remainder focuses on select passages. In 1 Thessalonians, Gupta highlights 2:7b, 2:13–16, 4:4, 4:11, and 5:3. In 2 Thessalonians, he gives attention to five areas: God’s judgment (1:5), the Day of the Lord (2:2), the “man of lawlessness” (2:3), the “Restrainer” (2:6–7), and the idle (3:6–15). In these sections, Gupta presents the interpretive dilemmas with clarity and thoughtfulness, like a skilled teacher. A more detailed table of contents would have made these chapters even more accessible as a reference guide since the author had to be selective about which texts to include.

Some other highlights of this volume include the chapters that summarize the history of interpretation—a history that goes back to the early church and continues to the present. Gupta’s inclusion of the development of the rapture interpretation is useful. Although, given the prominence of this reading within some theological and ecclesial circles, the reader may be left wanting more.

For those looking for deeper study of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Gupta has gifted us with a compendium of scholarship. For students who are interested in understanding some of the most contested issues, Gupta serves as a skilled guide.

Carla Swafford Works
Wesley Theological Seminary
Washington, D. C.



The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel. By Helen K. Bond. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7460-3. xiii & 317 pages. Cloth. \$42.99.

In a dense but easy to follow form, Helen K. Bond makes the case both for identifying the Gospel according to Mark with the ancient *bios*

genre and for what such identification might mean for interpreting the Gospel. The first claim is not entirely new. Most contemporary commentaries identify the synoptic Gospel accounts with the *bios* genre in some fashion. What is distinct is Bond’s in-depth treatment of what this genre entails and her systematic application of its categories to Mark.

The first three chapters make the case for Mark as *bios*, detail the genre of ancient *bioi* and its characteristics, and reread Mark as biographer. Significantly, Bond points to the strong connections between ancient *bioi* and morality. With comparison to the fabled story of George Washington’s inability to lie after chopping down a cherry tree, Bond illustrates the impact of presenting stories consistent with a subject’s overall character rather than attempting to recreate precise chronology and facts, much of which would have been inaccessible to ancient biographers anyway. This is backed up with significant intertextual references, demonstrating the role that biographies played in the ancient world, laying out moral precepts for living.

In the next chapter, Bond reads the Markan account in this way, highlighting how the author effectively demonstrates that Jesus both lived and died according to the principles he taught. Moreover, she argues that, read as an ancient *bios*, the Gospel account attempts to call the Markan audience to do the same. Although presented with significant scholarly depth, the argument at this point could not help but call to mind the “WWJD” bracelets of my youth. One of the critiques raised of the emphasis on asking “What Would Jesus Do?” at that time was the distinction between our humanity and Jesus’ divinity. However, Bond addresses this concern with reference to comparative ancient *bioi*. She writes, “the idea was not that admirers attempted to engage in the same battles or political activities, but rather that the audience distilled the *qualities exhibited by their heroes in these situations* and emulated them” (159–160).

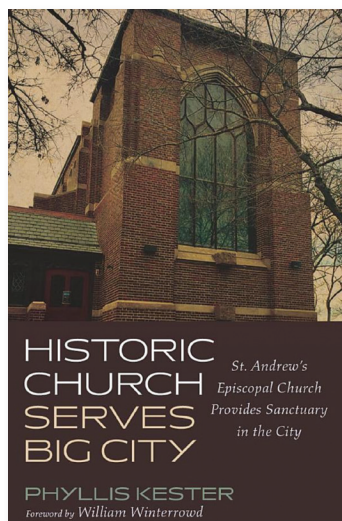
To this end, her next chapter rereads Jesus’ disciples and other characters in Mark not as examples themselves (because Jesus provides this), but rather, consistent with the form of ancient *bios*, as peripheral characters whose primary purpose is



to help move the story of Jesus forward. Finally, Bond returns to the telling of Jesus' life with her last chapter dedicated to understanding Mark's account of Jesus' crucifixion within this genre. In an ancient *bios*, it was important that the subject's death is described in a manner consistent with their living. Bond presents the potential difficulties the Markan author may have faced in reconciling the humiliation of the cross with Jesus' dignity in life, concluding that the Markan author masterfully demonstrates the contradictions of the cross as the fulfillment of Jesus' countercultural teaching.

From a performance critical perspective, my greatest critique is Bond's dismissal of early aural reception of Mark; however, this point is hardly central to her larger argument. Overall, this volume presents a compelling and accessible case for understanding Mark's genre more thoroughly and, as a result, opens space for conversation around the dynamics of truth, historicity, and meaning in the Gospel accounts.

Amy Lindeman Allen
Christian Theological Seminary



Historic Church Serves Big City. By Phyllis

Kester. Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, Wipf & Stock, 2020. ISBN-978-1-7252-6027-6. xv & 153 pages. Hardcover: \$42.00; Paper: \$22.00.

Phyllis Kester, a diligent researcher, provides a detailed story of one church, hoping to inspire readers to look at their own church's

history, identity, and service opportunities. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on the edge of downtown Denver, in its 150-year history, provided sanctuary in the city.

Presented through records of four clergy periods, the book presents callings in context. The Rev. Neil Edmund Stanley (1920-1942) established "high church" practices and also care beyond the church doors. Stanley baptized over 1000 orphans who arrived in Denver between 1925-1932. The Orphan Train Movement relocated about 200,000 children from large Eastern Cities to Western family farms to work on the land. This ended with the beginning of foster care in the United States.

Stanley's legacy includes the revival of religious orders, especially The Sisters of St. Anne, which established a convalescent home for children with chronic illnesses, the only one within Colorado. During the polio epidemic, the sisters provided no-cost care to afflicted children.

The Rev. Jon Marr Stark (1969-1984) served during a time of national upheaval. St. Andrew's birthed "The Order of the Holy Family," which offered sanctuary to transients and youth in crises. In 1969-1971 these overnight guests numbered nearly 1000 a month. After fifteen years of monastic work the church building was restored during Fr. Ken Near's ministry. St. Andrew's mission to the poor led to it's becoming an urban mission, owned and operated by St. John's Episcopal Cathedral.

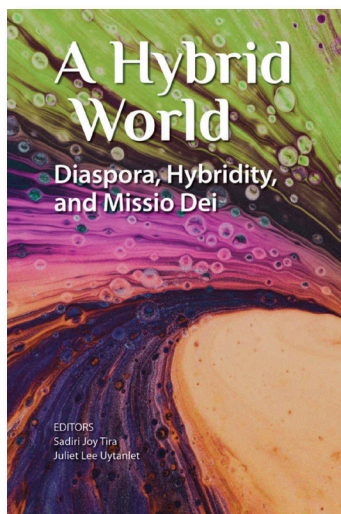
The Rev. Kenneth Near (1986-1991) re-envisioned St. Andrew's future. Depending on external support and volunteers, the congregation grew from few in worship to filled pews, at the same time ministering to those dying with AIDS. Fr. Near supported liturgical worship and music. New ministries formed including "St. Andrew's Center of Racial and Ethnic Understanding," after-school tutorials, and children and adult education. In five years Near steered the remnant community on the brink of nonexistence to a vibrant and life-affirming parish.

The Rev. Connie Delzell (1991-2007) led the little church from mission to parish status by strengthening stewardship and expanding ministries. Worship attendance grew to over 100. She invited Sally Brown to serve as deacon, the two women sharing an extraordinary partnership. They shared preaching and teaching the catechumenate, preparing 100 parishioners for core lay leadership.

Deacon Sally "led the congregation out the door." St. Andrew's established a Meditation Garden for retreat and outdoor worship. They purchased a 48-apartment building, half of the apartments were for people with AIDS and the other half for rental tenants to pay for the building. The after-school tutoring program grew into the "Children's Arts and Learning Center" out of which came the St. Cecilia Singers, who, in 2001, sang at the Washington National Cathedral.

In 1999, a fire caused major damage to the church, destroying the organ, but St. Andrew's rebuilt for the future. Four times on mission status, this historic little church was supported by the larger church body. This is so important for each church body to learn. St. Andrew's continues to pursue its vocation in the world to provide for ever-changing needs.

Dr. Norma Cook Everist
Wartburg Seminary professor emerita



A Hybrid World: Diaspora, Hybridity, and Missio Dei. Edited by Sadiri Joy Tira and Juliet Lee Uytanlet. Littleton, Colorado: William Carey Publishing, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-6450-8288-0. xvii & 238 pages. Paper. \$18.00.

If you ever moved far from home, felt homesick, or out of place—then you can

certainly relate to the people groups represented in this book who are scattered, intermixed, and on the move. *A Hybrid World: Diaspora, Hybridity, and Missio Dei* provides a look into current opportunities and challenges within the contexts of migration, ethnic and cultural hybridity, and the mission of God. Gathering insights from eighteen international contributors, *A Hybrid World* is concerned with the needs for hospitable, flexible, and adaptable missiological tools as practitioners encounter scattered, moved, and mixed people to consider what God is up to in these contexts. Each chapter features a different paper that was presented at a consultation in Metro Manila in 2018.

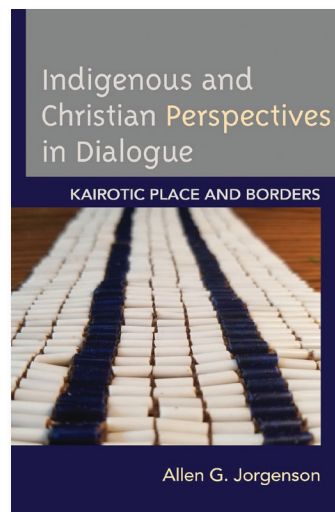
As a strength, this collective work serves as a great introduction to current activities and research in this book's missiological topics. From the wide variety of reflections provided, *A Hybrid World* is a surprisingly accessible read. Often it reads more pastorally than academically; these are not armchair theologians suggesting sterile, theoretical ideas. Important to note, the contributors demonstrate their heart for their particular project. The collective bibliography that stems from the book's chapters is a great resource for those who want to look into deeper pockets of thoughts and research.

Another strength is the international authorship. As a North American pastor, it is refreshing to hear from missiological voices from around the world. It is a global book written with the local in mind. The authors also bring a closely unified message: Christian theologians must pay attention to the mixing and movement of people, and the emergence of new missiological contexts. With today's fast-paced, everchanging society, you may find this book's themes already happening within your parish. This book can help pastors and church leaders hear from others around the world, as they recalibrate their craft to reach new blends of people with the message of Christ.

This book hints at the need for anthropological models and resources. Meeting people where they are at and using contextual tools to discern what God is doing in their unique context is part of this book's call to action. I recommend this book to a broad audience but would specifically like to encourage those in

congregational ministry to consider reading it, as this book provides both biblical and practical principles related to the relevant topics of diversity, hybridity, and migration. As a collection of voices in an ongoing and exciting conversation, this book will leave you wanting more and asking, "what's next" in the story and mission of God.

Cameron L. Smith, pastor
Doctoral student
Evangelical Seminary
Myerstown, Pennsylvania



Indigenous and Christian Perspectives in Dialogue: Kairotic Place and Borders. By Allen Jorgenson. Lanham: Lexington, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-7936-1967-9. xxix & 105 pages. Cloth: \$90.00. Ebook: \$45.00.

For those who gather around a holy book, spoken word, and shared meal, we need to ask whether

places are nothing more than interchangeable background? Is it possible to articulate a Christian theology where places have agency and lands themselves are characters in the stories of God and salvation? For Allen Jorgenson of Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, Canada, taking place seriously means entering dialogue with the Indigenous peoples of this continent: learning histories of treaties and colonial violence that have taken place on lands where churches gather, becoming aware of one's Indigenous neighbors, and opening oneself to the questions they raise. Could asking such questions help preachers and congregations become better interfaith dialogue partners with Indigenous peoples? Could repentance take root and grow?

Jorgenson addresses these questions with a remarkable candor, finding a way from where he starts as a descendant of settlers and from what he brings as a Lutheran theologian and a pastor to learn from mistakes and yearn for something better. Any notion of "better" as a step forward that leaves behind where we started is one of the key assumptions of Western culture that Jorgenson's book probes. Instead of repentance as linear advance, Jorgenson seeks for the meanings of repentance that follow the ways of circles, circles that fold together relationships into patterns of mutuality. Through five chapters Jorgenson guides the reader from an autobiographical reflection into Indigenous criticisms of Christianity.

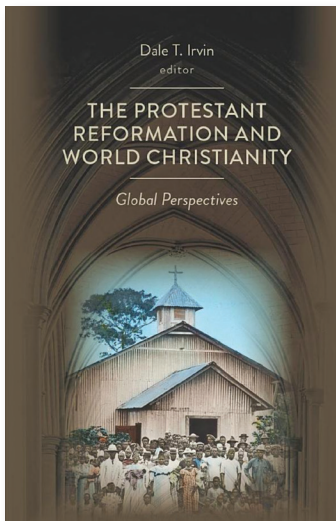
Vine Deloria Jr., George "Tink" Tinker, and many other Indigenous writers have scrutinized Christian beliefs and practices



that enable a utilitarian attitude toward land and a patronizing attitude toward Indigenous peoples. Engaging these criticisms, Jorgenson interprets both theologies of the Spirit and creation from Luther, and knowledge and relationship from Schleiermacher. The last two chapters draw together the entire discussion to articulate a notion of place as *kairotic*: place as resonant with poetic potency of the Creator Spirit. As *kairos* marks a time of fulfillment, a *kairotic* place has a sense of agency within contexts of relationship.

Jorgenson invites the reader to ask with him whether Christian peoples could open their hearts to the Triune God in ways that attend to Indigenous witness to the land. Could that witness surround, inform, and transform prior ways of understanding Christian practice? Readers will find here steppingstones for their own paths of transformation. Perhaps the greatest offering of this volume is Jorgenson's example of what an open-hearted interfaith dialogue between Indigenous and Protestant-Lutheran traditions can look like: a dialogue where one returns to one's own sources, but does so with resilience, hope, and possibility rather than fragility and fear. This book is recommended for those already with some knowledge of Indigenous cultures and the injustices Indigenous communities face, as well as for those who seek to deepen their own Christian way of repentance.

Ole Schenk
Oak Park, Illinois



***The Protestant
Reformation and
World Christianity:
Global Perspectives.***

Edited by Dale T. Irvin.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017. ISBN:
978-0-8028-7304-0.
xiii & 189 pages. Paper.
\$39.00.

Many of us have studied church history but there is so much more than one can learn from one or

more semester-long courses on the Reformation. This is a timely and informative book with essays that bring insights regarding the larger impact of what began with 95 theses. It examines the movements that have been progressing off center-stage, which have continued to this day to shape Christianity across the globe. Editor Dale T. Irvin has pulled together the highlights of the work of six different thinkers in one short book, to give us key analyses that we would otherwise have to search far and wide to gather.

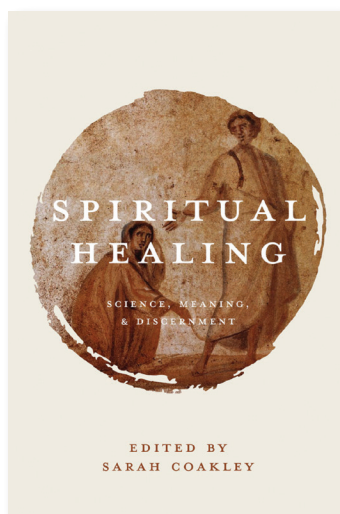
Charles Amjad-Ali awakens us to prejudices that are embedded in Christianity regarding how we see the “other,” especially Jews and Muslims. Europe in Luther’s time was already multicultural and religiously plural. Islam was regarded by Luther and others as a “rod of God punishing Christendom for its transgressions” (17). Amjad-Ali believes some of Luther’s doctrines were a result of encountering Islam. The writer warns us of the potential for Christians today to carry forward antipathy toward Muslims in the same way as Reformation period Christians did toward Jews, the papists, and the Turks.

Joel Morales Cruz explores the interaction of zeal for evangelism and the conquest of the New World in the colonization of the Americas by Spain. He expertly weaves a tapestry that illustrates how even amid power and control, there are Christian transformations that will change people and the course of history. Rebecca A. Giselsbrecht explores the roots of gender inequality in philosophers such as Plato, and theologians such as Augustine, and how the leaders of the Reformation helped change the status of women.

David D. Daniels’ chapter on “baptizing ethnics” opens a whole new dimension in the discussion about the requirements for being a baptismal candidate, as those who were being presented for baptism now included people of color from among colonized peoples. Of these, some were progeny of those who had formerly been practicing tribal religions, while others were orphans and adoptees of other religious backgrounds. Was it acceptable to baptize children of unbaptized people, removed from their families without parental consent?

Peter C. Phan writes about how Christianity has been transformed in the Asian context in the light of the structures of Eastern religious systems. Vladimir Latinovic helps us understand contemporary challenges for Christianity, such as capitalism and global migration. He notes Pope Francis’ pronouncements on ecology and the economy. I recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in obtaining a broader perspective on mission and evangelism, as well as what it means to be a Christian in today’s global social and economic context here in the United States.

Jo Kinnard
Wartburg Theological Seminary graduate



Spiritual Healing: Science, Meaning, and Discernment.

Edited by Sarah Coakley.

Grand Rapids:

Eerdmans, 2020.

ISBN: 978-0-8028-

7093-3. 261 pages.

Paper. \$35.00.

This volume, edited by a noted theologian, consists of ten essays by experts from a wide variety of academic backgrounds plus an

Introduction and Conclusion. Its inception was a symposium on spiritual healing funded by the Templeton Foundation. The main interest of the book, according to Coakley, is in “how *meaning ascription and interpretation* of healing events provide a crucial underlying fulcrum for the efficacy of healing” looked at in interdisciplinary perspective (1). “Spiritual healing,” is shown to be an ambiguous term ranging from the sense that healing events can be directly traced to the supernatural or miraculous intervention of God to the “softer” and “looser” matter of being interested in the “spiritual dimension of healing,” as widely enough recognized among researchers to be given the acronym “SDH.”

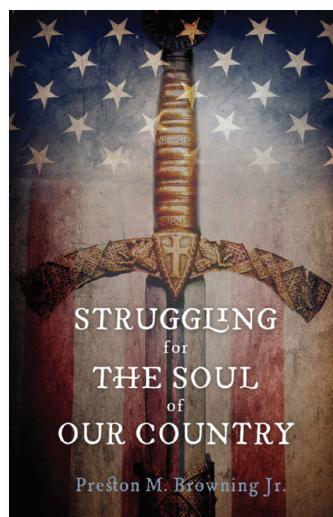
To give a sense of the diversity of approaches represented by the essayists, the volume begins with two historical accounts, the first of healing in nineteenth century Catholic France, particularly at Marian centers such as Lourdes, and the ways in which contemporary medical science, French secular society, and the church (hierarchy vs. local priests and laypersons) treated claims of spiritual healing, which usually included extraordinary claims of physical and mental healing. A second chapter considers spiritual healing in nineteenth century Protestant America, for example, in the rapid growth of the Christian Science movement. Following these chapters is a brief but pungent overview of biblical stories of healing and their larger meaning by the noted scripture scholar, Beverly Roberts Gaventa. The next section, titled “What Science Shows Us,” includes chapters by a neurologist on understanding the complexity of pain, a psychologist on “cognitive processes in healing,” and an historian of science on the “placebo effect and prayer,” which reviews several studies in this booming field of research into what someone once called “lies that heal.”

A section on “Philosophical Insights” includes an essay by Philip Clayton, a constructive Christian theologian, who recommends a “panentheist” metaphysic as helpful for reflecting on the spiritual dimensions of healing, while the philosopher Stephen R. L. Clark recommends the ancient neo-Platonist Plotinus as a useful companion in thinking through these issues. An anthropologist demonstrates the insights to be gained by “thick descrip-

tion” of actual healing rituals as observed both among traditional Navajo peoples and Catholic charismatics. Concluding the book is the perspective of a pastoral theologian, who has spent many years as a medical/mental health chaplain, that revisits the concern of the biblical theologian, reiterated throughout the volume, of the need for those of religious faith to understand “spiritual healing” in its broadest social and political contexts.

Rarely have I encountered a more challenging and thought-provoking collection of essays, all focused on a common subject but approaching it from such widely differing scholarly and international perspectives with the goal of stimulating conversation and understanding of a common curiosity they share. It thereby stands as a witness to what genuine dialogue with science can look like.

*John Rollefson, retired ELCA pastor
San Luis Obispo, California*



Struggling for the Soul of Our Country.

By Preston M. Browning

Jr. Eugene, Oregon:

Wipf & Stock, 2016.

ISBN: 978-1-4982-

0994-6. 319 pages.

Paperback. \$39.00.

This is the politico-religious last will and testament of an octogenarian activist, who is passionately concerned for our nation and the state of the world

he expects to leave to his five grandchildren. Here he collects and updates ten substantial essays that he has written over the years on interrelated concerns, which leads both to redundancy and multiple citations. His preferred authorities include Noam Chomsky, Andrew Bacevich, Pope Francis, Thomas Berry, Chris Hedges, Bill McKibben, Richard Rorty, and Walt Whitman.

His favorite American historian is William Appleman Williams, often credited as the “father” of New Left historians and about whose work I wrote my senior thesis in college in 1968. His *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) is Browning’s favorite book, which is a radical reassessment of what more traditional historians had often interpreted as a “hands off” American isolationism. Williams, however, saw this as a quest for empire, wherein the United States characteristically “externalized the evil” of its own racist and anti-indigenous peoples’ biases into anti-immigrant and nativist foreign policies (for example, the Monroe Doctrine, Mexican-American War, and Spanish-American War), which served to fulfill a growing national sense of “manifest destiny.”

Browning, a Southerner by background and academic by



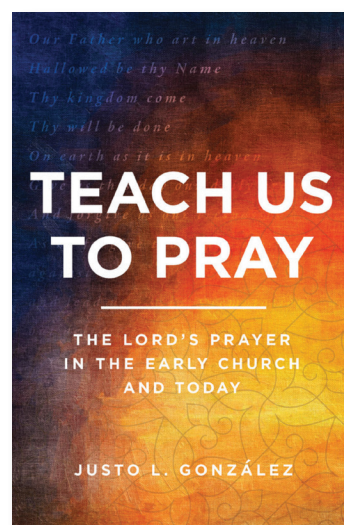
vocation (Ph.D. in Religion and Literature from the University of Chicago), in struggling to recover the “soul” of our country, also lays bare his liberal Episcopalian disagreements with our conservative evangelical Protestant-dominated past, while championing the insights of liberation theology and progressive main-line Christianity.

Perhaps his most extensive argument is found in the lengthy essay, “Why I Am a Christian Socialist,” which is a combination of both his Christian orientation (based on Jesus and the Hebrew prophets) and his political judgments and soft Marxist orientation, including alignment with much of recent Scandinavian and German socialist policy.

An unexpected, if nonetheless consistently argued detour, is the chapter on “American Dystopia,” where the author lays out his own agreement with recent JFK assassination theories that in his estimation make a strong case for the CIA connivance in the president’s death, while setting up Lee Harvey Oswald as the “fall guy.” According to Browning, Kennedy intended to lead the country in a new anti-interventionist direction and paid the price for this unorthodoxy regarding the heritage of America’s disguised imperialism.

Especially moving is the author’s “A Letter to My Grandchildren,” in which he acknowledges humbly his own lack of success in achieving more in his lifetime through right thinking and activism. He especially focuses on the apocalyptic climate crisis his grandchildren’s generation are inheriting, because of his own generation’s failure to act in time. The book stands as a useful reminder of how grim the state of our country’s soul could look even a mere half decade ago!

*John Rollefson, retired ELCA pastor
San Luis Obispo, California*



Teach Us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church and Today. By Justo L. González. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7796-3. Paper. vi & 185 pages. \$16.99.

In *Teach Us to Pray*, Justo L. González offers great insights for preaching and teaching a prayer that Jesus himself gave us. The Lord's

Prayer has long been a guide and model for prayer for Christians. González examines how it was understood by early church teachers such as Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian, and what it means for us today, taking each petition word by word. He presents a lot to ponder.

He explores “our” in “our father” as a unifier in the sense of the universal priesthood of believers: each person who prays is a priest for all the others and the whole community of believers is acting as priest for the whole world. We are thus bound in one common ministry for all people, whether they know God or not. (30)

With regard to the word “father,” González warns against earthly, familial connotations versus a metaphoric usage. Illustrating that the Bible describes God in a multitude of ways, and underscoring how the Greek language handles gender, he argues against tethering the word “father” to a gender-based understanding. As he puts it: “God is at once both a father and more than any earthly father, both a mother and more than any earthly mother” (43). How we address God has to do more with love and relationship.

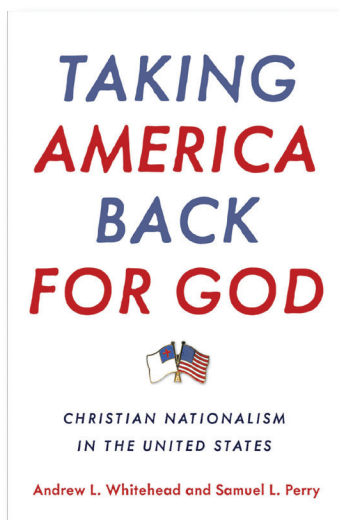
Regarding “hallowed be thy name,” González takes pointers from the church fathers and Luther. González helpfully examines such concepts as sanctification, profanation, blasphemy, witness, and justice. God’s promise to make us holy becomes manifest in our witness.

“Thy kingdom come” is about the reversal of the status quo which can be both attractive as well as frightening. We await this promised kingdom with longing and trepidation. González warns against two errors in interpreting the petition, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” One error involves separating the physical and spiritual dimensions. The other is the mistaken assumption that redemption lies outside of our physical world and bodies. We must understand salvation to include the “here and now” as much as what is to come. In this reading, I see González expounding upon Luther’s own teaching that the person praying does so with confidence that in Jesus, God has acted to break the will and purpose of the devil and all enemies of God.

The remaining petitions are also explained confessionally—from the call for us to share with others what we have been given, to the final affirmation of “Amen!”—while keeping central the theme of glorifying God.

With a guide for reflection and discussion, the book is useful for personal or group study. González has provided an articulate and inspiring interpretation of a beloved prayer for all Christians, young and old, clergy or laity.

*Jo Kinnard
Wartburg Theological Seminary graduate*



In Brief

In *Taking America Back for God* (Oxford University Press, 2020, \$29.95) Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry try to answer the question, “Why did so many evangelicals support Donald Trump?” by pursuing Christian nationalism. The book is steeped in data and written in tables and charts. The authors research people who endorse the idea that Christianity and national

identity are inextricably bound together. The book is structured in categories: “rejectors,” “resisters,” “accommodators,” or “ambassadors” of Christian nationalism.

Beyond Trump’s election is the challenge after he leaves office. The authors show that Christian nationalism in the United States includes nativism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. Aware of Robert Bellah’s “American civil religion,” the authors could further examine his writing about the inability in the United States to repent. Wrapping the cross in the flag distorts Christianity, excludes other religions, and disables the United States from taking a healthy place in the pluralistic world.

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