



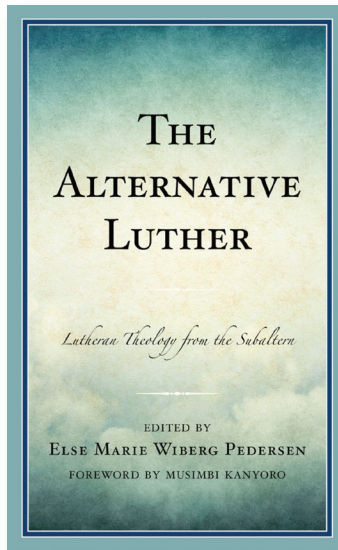
# Book Reviews

April 2022

Section Editors: Craig Nessian, Troy Troftgruben

## Review a book!

*Currents in Theology and Mission* is seeking to expand its number of regular book reviewers. If you have interest, please send name, contact information, and areas of primary interest to [currents@lstc.edu](mailto:currents@lstc.edu).



*The Alternative Luther: Lutheran Theology from the Subaltern*. Edited by Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen. Foreword by Musimbi Kanyoro. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books / Fortress Academic, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-9787-0381-0. xvi & 352 pages. Cloth. \$120.00.

This collection of essays succeeds at its goal of showing that the insights of Martin Luther and Lutheran theology have meaningful contributions to make with respect to the contemporary perspectives, insights, and interests of those not often represented by social power, a status collectively identified in this work as “the subaltern.”

Readers who enjoy meta-level analysis of concepts, language, and structures will appreciate the editor Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen’s introduction to the book and its focus on subalternity. As shown in the title of Kirsi Stjerna’s essay, many of the authors explore ways to read “Luther against Luther,” which is an important exercise in theological reasoning. Just as biblical interpreters wrestle with what to do when one scriptural text seems to contradict another, these theologians describe ways to prioritize the liberative, experiential, and gracious aspects of Luther’s theology over those that reveal his theological and cultural prejudices.

The consensus of this work is that Luther’s revolutionary emphasis on God’s grace for the lowly and Christ’s persuasive invitation to love others as God has loved us remain valuable for global theologies of liberation. One keen observation about the potential messiness of this approach appears in André Musskopf’s essay on Queer Theology, which notes the aptly Lutheran risk of

“not being the same and becoming something else—whatever that may be” (187). In such a way, this book commends an ongoing transformation of theologies and communities that lives into God’s abundant life.

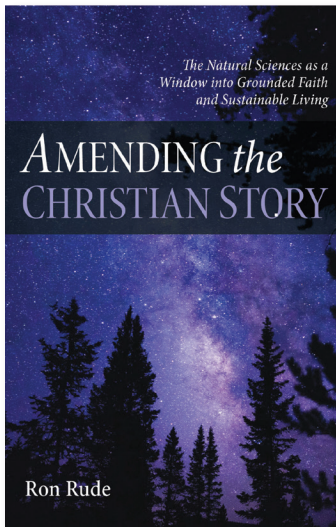
While many essays reflect generally on theological process, others pay close attention to specific biblical and contextual topics. Mary J. Streufert’s essay on gendered language for God, Mary Elise Lowe’s discussion of queerness and the *imago dei*, and Sini Mikkola’s essay on Luther and gender constructs each demonstrate how to engage contemporary issues of sexuality based on Lutheran theology and biblical interpretation. Similarly, several essays directly connect Luther’s interpretations of biblical texts with specific instances of gender violence: Monica Jyotsna Melancthon provides a rich study of Dinah, Luther, and the ways that India’s caste system limits female agency; Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir examines clergy sexual abuse in light of Tamar’s cry in 2 Samuel 13; and Surekha Nelavala considers the story of the woman who washes Jesus’ feet in Luke 7 in light of structures that silence women. Nelavala notes, for example, how Luther highlighted the righteousness that Jesus bestows on this woman rather than obsessing on her presumed sinful status, as so many other commentators have. Studies like these show how Luther’s insights can continue to proclaim Christ’s liberating gospel, even beyond the patriarchal contexts that also shaped the reformer’s worldview.

The two final essays in the book provide a welcome focus on creation and environmental stewardship. Allen G. Jorgenson writes about how Luther’s support of social and economic reforms might be reclaimed by shifting from an abstract conception of the “common good” to the materiality of “common goods.” Terra Schwerin Rowe considers how Luther’s emphasis on Christ’s real presence can promote care for creation beyond the hyper-individualism so often connected with private faith and personal salvation.

For this reviewer, the book’s insights were strongest when they connected theological texts with specific human experiences. There were places in which abstractions and generalities felt far removed from the challenges faced by people in positions of powerlessness, but perhaps some readers will find those places more liberating and edifying than this particular reader did. Part of the wisdom of a collection like this is that there is not only one way to do theology, even something as potentially hegemonic as “Lutheran” theology.

This book deserves a welcome place in libraries and other scholarly collections.

Martin J. Lohrmann  
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*Amending the Christian Story: The Natural Sciences as a Window into Grounded Faith and Sustainable Living.*

By Ron Rude. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-6667-1862-1. xv & 127 pages. Paper. \$18.00.

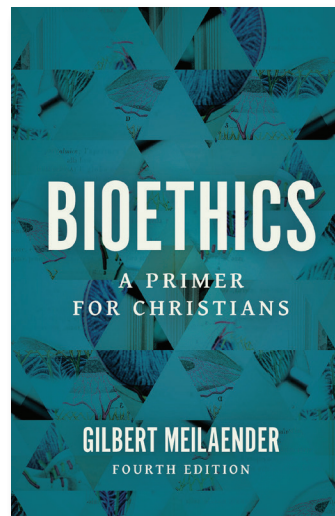
In this short book, Ron Rude makes the welcome point that the Christian story could use some expansion: we benefit from remembering that we belong to a cosmos that is billions of years old and that we live on a planet that contains countless forms of life other than people. Pastor Rude believes that a religious focus on our humble place in the universe can serve as an important correction to the non-sustainable ways of life that are damaging to the natural environment and human communities.

This book can be appreciated as a conversation partner in matters of faith, stewardship, and harmonious living. It does a nice job of raising issues and imagining new possibilities. Its purpose is not to provide scholarly analysis or concrete suggestions for how this could happen at the congregational or personal level. The unanswered questions are all the more intriguing: what might it mean that the Lord of the entire cosmos has known us in our wholeness—including our fallenness—all across time? What insights will shape our congregations as people of faith spend more time embracing the natural sciences?

Readers might wrestle with the way that Pastor Rude names the biblical story of salvation from Israel to Jesus and the church as a “secondary mission.” The Christian salvation story is not one of patching up broken pieces here and there. Human fallenness is part of an evolutionary world, not separate from it. What does Christ’s salvation say to that convoluted situation? There is significant value in raising these topics to challenge our imaginations, even if not fully answered here.

Reading like an extended conversation, *Amending the Christian Story* can help readers or a book group name and ponder key issues of our time. It invites us to reimagine how the salvation of Jesus Christ is truly cosmic in scope and boundless in its gift of abundant life.

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*Bioethics: A Primer for Christians.* By Gilbert Meilaender. Fourth Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7816-8. 176 pages. Paper. \$19.99.

“Bioethical questions,” the author claims, lie “at the heart of many of our society’s difficult moral problems”; this book aims to assist Christians “to think

about these problems within a perspective shaped by the structure of Christian belief” (ix). This book is an updated “primer” on many of the prominent bio-medical issues of our day, written in accessible language and with occasional scriptural and theological commentary from the perspective of a rather conservative Lutheran ethicist, who formerly served as a professor at Oberlin College and is now Senior Research Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University.

In chapters on “Procreation versus Reproduction” and “Abortion,” the author shares his skeptical judgment of medical “advances” that privilege interventions such as prenatal screenings, allowing the possibility of parents to create designer children either through aborting the fetus or genetic manipulation. Meilaender’s fear throughout—and not an unwarranted one—is the slippery slope in our individualistic, consumer society for anything judged possible by medical science to become a practice that should be undertaken without adequate ethical reflection. This is especially the case from a Christian point of view that maintains a lively sense of humanity’s own perceived self-interest.

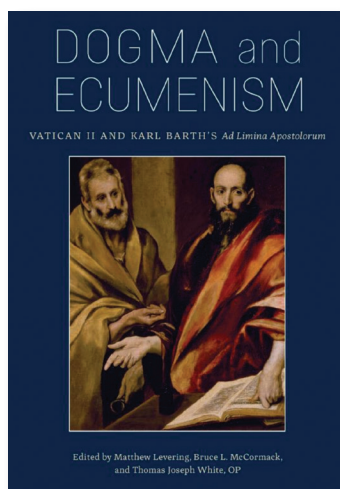
Sensitive to the tendency to support medical research and new technology as means of reducing suffering and death on the part of many (for example, organ donation and embryonic stem cell research), Meilaender argues that from a Christian viewpoint the elimination of suffering is not the highest good and cannot justify all scientific “advances.” Even such widespread practices as “advance directives” are far from an unmitigated good. He asks why it is that for adults with cancer only 2-3% enroll in clinical trials, whereas among child cancer patients (who do not make their own decisions to enter such trials) approximately 70% are enrolled in such trials. As he writes near the book’s conclusion: “. . . however greatly we value the betterment of life made possible by medical research, we have no overriding obligation to seek such betterment. Research brings betterment of our life; it does not save our society—or us. Notable goal that it is, medical progress is always optional” (148).

“Bioethics,” Meilaender contends “invites us to think about the way we live toward death in a world marked by illness and



suffering” and “should provide an occasion for us to consider how our way of life is shaped by the fact that we trust in a God who suffers for our redemption” (149). While the author counsels caution regarding ethical questions based on the progress of medical research in our day, I welcome a dissenting voice who causes us to think again based on our ultimate faith commitments.

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***Dogma and Ecumenism: Vatican II and Karl Barth's Ad Limina Apostolorum.***

Edited by Matthew Levering, Bruce L. McCormack, and Thomas Joseph White, OP. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-8132-3240-9. xi & 369 pages. Paper. \$34.95.

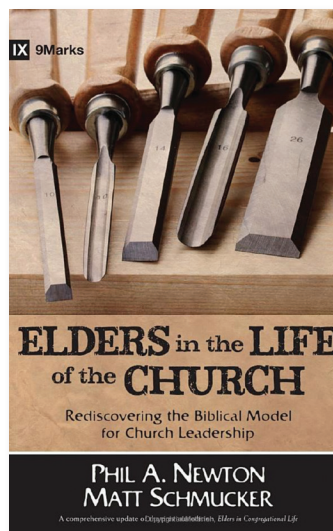
In the introductory chapter, White recounts how Karl Barth was invited to “Pope Paul VI” after Vatican II to “discuss conciliar documents with major representatives” (5), which, in turn, gave occasion to Barth writing his *Ad Limina Apostolorum*. Because Barth was willing to seriously engage Catholic theology and learn from it, White argues that Barth’s engagement with Vatican II is something that can be looked to in order “to learn from it what shape a constructive, doctrinally informed ecumenism might have today, and under what conditions” (5).

This volume, edited by two prominent Roman Catholic scholars (Levering and White) and one Reformed, Barthian scholar (McCormack), consists of twelve chapters, with six Protestant and six Catholic authors. The first chapter, written by Matthew Levering, sets up the book and the final chapter, written by Richard Schneek, concludes with a discussion on the nature of ecumenism. The content of this book is structured around “five major documents from” Vatican II, “each of which Barth commented on in his work” (19). The remaining ten chapters follow this structure. Chapters two and three address *Dei Verbum*, which is on divine revelation; chapters four and five address *Lumen Gentium*, on the church; chapters six and seven address *Nostra Aetate*, on non-Christian religions; chapters eight and nine address *Gaudium et Spes*; and chapters ten and eleven address *Unitatis Redintegratio*, on Catholic principles for ecumenism.

Each essay is of high quality and worth considering by

Catholics or Protestants. A few essays are especially worthy of note. Lewis Ayres (ch. 3) offers a robust and interesting account of tradition from a Catholic perspective, describing tradition as sacramental and a theological act “nurtured by the Son and Spirit” (79). Bruce Marshall (ch. 7) thoroughly demonstrates that the tension between the possibility of universal salvation and the necessity of the universal “missionary mandate” in *Nostra Aetate* “is ... apparent rather than real” (203). Hans Boersma (ch. 10), one of today’s leading Protestant ecumenical theologians, argues that “the Decree on Ecumenism ... does not suggest that the Catholic Church is on equal footing with ‘separated brethren’” (267). This is a fascinating book that juxtaposes the theology of Barth with Vatican II and gives the reader a sense of where things are today in the ecumenical efforts between Protestants and Catholics. The only significant drawback of this volume is that many of the essays fail to engage directly with Karl Barth and as such the subtitle is somewhat misleading.

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***Elders in the Life of the Church: Rediscovering the Biblical Model for Church Leadership.***

By Phil A. Newton and Matt Schmucker. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8254-4272-8. 256 pages. Paper. \$16.99.

In *Elders in the Life of the Church* (a major update of the 2005 first edition, *Elders in Congregational Life*),

co-authors Newton and Schmucker are clear regarding their thesis: the biblical (and thus normative) model for local church leadership is a plurality of male elders. This thesis is thus a direct critique of the leadership structure of many local churches, where a single person (usually male) is in charge. They structure their argument for elder plurality in three sections: historical, biblical, and practical aspects.

The first section, focusing on historical evidence, highlights the specifically *Baptist* theological and denominational frameworks of the authors (as well as suggesting the intended audience). In contrast to the common perceptions of modern-day Baptists, there is solid historical evidence for an elder-based leadership model throughout Baptist history.

The second section focuses on biblical evidence from four texts: Acts 20:17-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:17-19; and



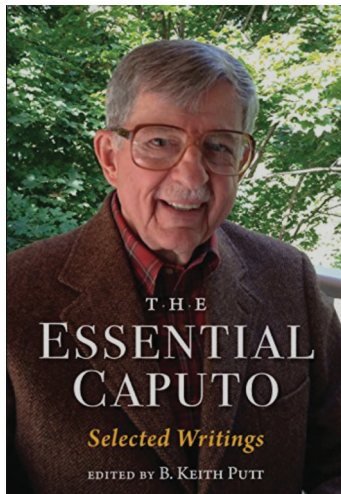
1 Peter 5:1-5. Perhaps the section's most significant argument is that the New Testament evidence unanimously accords local *spiritual* leadership in each church to a plurality of elders (also known as overseers or bishops), while the single-leader model finds its earliest support in the second (not first) century of the church. The second group of local leadership affirmed by the authors is deacons, who are described as having temporal (as opposed to spiritual) leadership.

The third section of the book offers practical advice both for the implementation and ongoing maintenance of an elder-based leadership structure. Some allowance is made for contextual differences, including the number of elders in a local church and new church settings, especially outside of the United States.

This book will be useful to people in church settings either curious about what a "biblical" view of local church leadership may be or simply frustrated with the weaknesses of current models—although the Baptist emphasis unintentionally limits wider readership. Also, while the authors' Southern Baptist background is named and referenced, the book's repeated allowance for only *male* leadership might deter readers otherwise sympathetic to the authors' arguments.

The authors carry out exegesis of biblical texts well, and their basic argument (to my mind) is persuasive. However, some of the added layers—including some of the elders being paid church staff and some not, with the pastor being "first among equals" (though not in status, just visibility)—seem to nuance the NT picture far beyond what the evidence supports. Once the basic framework is accepted, however, the practical examples (including vows that elders can make when they assume their responsibilities) and advice are helpful, especially for churches that already use and wish to keep a basic congregational model that the authors affirm.

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***The Essential Caputo:  
Selected Writings.***

Edited by B. Keith Putt. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-2530-3221-8. xi & 407 pages. Paper. \$50.00.

Reading these 23 selections from the work of John D. Caputo (earliest from 1974, most recent

from 2013) is as demanding as it is invigorating. One does well

to approach both the philosophical and the theological genres that blend in this collection through an aesthetic lens. Caputo's "radical hermeneutics" invites such—thought giving rise to word giving rise to thought. The turns of phrase and neologisms are often as playful as they are provocative.

Exploring the literary fruit of Caputo over the decades, one can appreciate the clear continuities within his hermeneutical approach, even as one notes the striking shift as Caputo followed Derrida in attending to "the ethical demand" (Løgstrup) buried in plain sight as unearthed by deconstruction. Two parts of the book, "Radical Hermeneutics: Selections" and "Cold Hermeneutics: From Phenomenology to Deconstruction" provide perspective on Caputo's philosophical hermeneutics through discussion of Eckhart, Heidegger, Aquinas, Foucault, Rorty, and culminating with Derrida. Phenomenology, especially as practiced by Husserl and Heidegger, provides the methodological launch for Caputo's ethico-theological creativity.

Deconstruction is "a dream of the coming of the other, indeed, a prayer for the coming of the Messiah" (226). Herein lies the origin of Caputo's theological impulse. God does not exist; God insists. God in weakness insists on calling us "to let something new come" (234). This something is what Jesus invoked as kingdom of God that beckons "in the leper and the lame, the Samaritan and the prodigal son, the prostitute and the sinner" (241).

God is calling us to the impossible: "The impossible is not that, against all the odds, there will be a miraculous intervention from on high, but that there is a meaning here, in this impossible situation, that a meaning is possible where it is impossible that this death or illness, this tragedy or misfortune, could have any meaning for with God all things are possible" (332). We do not wait for God to act; God calls us to act. God calls us to respond to the theodicies of this world: "Of a vocative like justice, we should say not 'it is' but rather 'it calls'" (373).

Caputo resolves the God-world problem by collapsing the divine into language: in the beginning was the Word. God is hidden—and disclosed—entirely within word events that are plentifully evident in this brilliant body of work. There is no theologian writing today who has generated more originality than Caputo in his theological texts (*The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*—2006, *The Insistence of God: A Theology of Perhaps*—2013, *The Folly of God: A Theology of the Unconditional*—2015, and *Cross and Cosmos: A Theology of Difficult Glory*—2019). Caputo is a theologian's theologian.

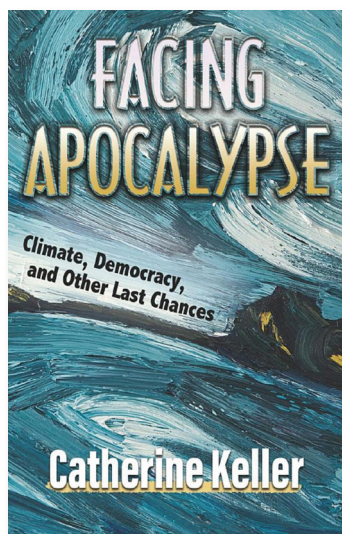
Harkening back to Tillich's "ultimate concern" (336) and "courage to be" (396), Caputo rejects God as a being or a transcendent deliverer (*deus ex machina*). The point of access between God and the world is exactly through language that performs God among us. Yet... What would it mean, perhaps, to shift the premise of this framework to affirm that God encompasses all of reality under the proviso that language provides communicative access between creation and this God? How might this shifted premise open the horizon of the future



to something like life after death in the presence of God? Such possibility could invite an even more radical hermeneutics. In his recent work, Caputo forecloses imagination on this eschatological possibility as is anticipated in the selections in this reader.

In Part One on “Radical Hermeneutics: Reflections,” the editor, B. Keith Putt provides an insightful introduction to the volume. Two interviews with Caputo by Clayton Crockett and Mark Dooley add commentary and context for interpreting these writings. This book is recommended for understanding the scope of Caputo’s work and to elucidate his theological thought.

Craig L. Nesson  
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***Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy, and Other Last Chances.*** By Catherine Keller. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-6269-8413-4. xxii & 218 pages. Paper. \$26.00.

This rhetorically powerful book belongs to the genre of theological commentary, hearkening back to Karl

Barth’s *Epistle to the Romans*. At the time of Barth’s writing, the world was emerging from the apocalypse of the First World War and his *Romans* commentary was described as a “bomb that fell on the playground of the theologians (Karl Adams).” This commentary on the Book of Revelation comes exactly 100 years after the second edition of Barth’s *Romans* and appears at our own moment of apocalypse: ecocide, systemic racism, human triage under global capitalism, mass migrations of disposable people, dispensationalist biblical readings glorying in earth’s demise, and other threats to a sustainable future, all of which are fracturing the remnants of democracy. What is especially perilous in 2021 are signs of collapse in the biosphere and our habituation to the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Informed by the work of biblical scholars, this book is no conventional commentary. Rather, it offers imaginative and prophetic reflection on the stories and symbols of Revelation to awaken and stir the consciences of readers in a call to action.

Perhaps it now invites us—with the authority of the Apocalypse—to make living room in the new millennium.” The multiheaded dragon of race/gender/sex/class/ability/nation/species lives too, vomiting varied supremacist bites. Within the United States, where such

radical possibilities opened with visionary force so long ago: Has any dream-chance of a “universal publick” of friends miscarried? (81)

Along the way, Keller creatively references the work of artists, poets, novelists, journalists, philosophers, theologians, and other scholars, alongside intertextual biblical passages. The entire book reads more like literature than a conventional theology text, let the reader beware!

After painting the aporias we face from the palette of monstrous images from the Apocalypse, the book concludes not with definitive doom but instead with a range of scenarios. As in Revelation 22, “the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb” and “the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations,” Keller portrays seven visions of what the future may hold. None of these are predetermined nor are they intended to be exhaustive.

“So as we now scroll down through a set of likely futures, they do not reveal any predictable plan. Any future that pretends to be preset is nothing but a ploy of very present human power” (197). Keller sketches these possibilities: 1) “Exhumanity” (extinction of our species), 2) “Brute Reminders” (survival of the fittest on an earth reduced to rubble), 3) “New Jeru for the Few” (survival of the gated super riche), 4) “Cybertopia” (existence through artificial intelligence), 5) “Village Earth” (recurrence of small-scale agricultural communities), 6) “Cosmococalypse” (radically altered life patterns post-destruction), and 7) “Age of Enlivenment” (transformation through trauma to ecocivilization). Which of these will we choose, or another? And how shall we live unto?

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***How Change Comes to Your Church: A Guidebook for Church Innovations.*** By Patrick Keifert and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7624-9. viii & 154 pages. Paper. \$16.99.

“Most congregations in the US recognize their need for change... But they don’t know how to change” (10). Drawing on decades of



experience across denominational lines with congregations and the systems that support them, authors Patrick Keifert and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson claim that congregations must alter the way they change. *How Change Comes to Your Church* addresses this challenge by helping congregations not only think about change biblically, theologically, and theoretically, but practically, providing practices “that create a climate and a culture in which transformational, missional change can take root in the life of God’s people” (24).

Written in a short, accessible format, *How Change Comes* is organized around six chapters, preceded by an introduction. The first two chapters focus on time and space. Understanding what it means to be church in a time so vastly different than it has been, a time they call a new missional era, is imperative to understanding change. Intentional space (or liminal space) then needs to be created for congregations to facilitate transformational change in this era. Chapter three invites the reader to think about the role leadership has in shifting organizational culture from strategic planning and Roberts Rules to discernment, a process of searching for God’s promised and preferred future. Chapter four locates this process of transformation deeply in scripture—specifically in the practice of dwelling in the Word. Chapter five makes it clear that this work of transformation does not happen in a silo. Part of the process is identifying the many partners congregations have, both inside and outside the organization, to join them on this journey of transformation. The sixth and final chapter provides six practices for missional change, “to shape our desire to seek God’s preferred and promised future” (123). This chapter is followed by a bonus section offering discussion questions aligned with each of the six chapters that can serve either as a structured reflection for the reader, or dialogue starters for a congregation. However, the work of transformation is not the sole responsibility of the leader(s). As the authors point out, this journey of missional transformation is for the whole people of God. This book is to be read, processed, and engaged on a communal level. It is only through the work of the people that a congregation will be able to make the shift to missional transformation.

Readers familiar with previous work of Keifert or Granberg-Michaelson will recognize many of the themes, practices, and ideas in this text. However, *How Change Comes* weaves these themes together in a helpful, coherent way that helps even those most resistant to change believe that change is not only possible, but maybe even something to embrace—moving from understanding change as a crisis response to an ongoing practice of life together, discerning God’s call for them in time and space.

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*There Is No God and Mary Is His Mother: Rediscovering Religionless Christianity.* By Thomas Cathcart. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-5064-7416-8. 132 pages. Paper. \$19.00.

Thomas Cathcart’s *There Is No God and Mary Is His Mother: Rediscovering Religionless Christianity* examines a Christianity that is stripped of religion. Cathcart’s primary thesis is “Christianity can still have *spiritual* value and the power to transform lives, power that inspires us to not only live morally but also face the anxiety of being an existing human being and search for ways to make that transformation real in the real world” (3). Cathcart also mentions that his goal is to look beyond the dogma that has dominated Christianity. This involves translating the language that is often used, “faith based on strong feelings, intuitions, visions, a sense of community, felt commitments, and an unexpected power to act on them” (xxiv).

Cathcart organizes his book around the question of why people should still care about religion. His chapters explore the history of the question, existentialism, basic terminology, and ends with an examination of the different paths. The four different paths are couched in alternative questions to “Do you believe in God?” (xxvi). The four paths that he addresses are the kingdom of God; the work of the Holy Spirit; the proclamation of grace; and lastly, the possibility of being transformed by the indwelling of Christ (xxvi-xxvii). He ends the work with why this all matters.

This book captures the essence of an existentialist theology, but it is the conclusion that fulfills the book. Existentialist theology, for those not familiar, is grounded in the subjective reality of the individual and, in addition, the anxiety that is found within the individual. Cathcart alludes to this in the introduction when describing that certain groups of Christians utilize their faith to act on their anxiety. Cathcart draws heavily from the works of Paul Tillich and Soren Kierkegaard to make his argument of what a religionless Christianity may look like.

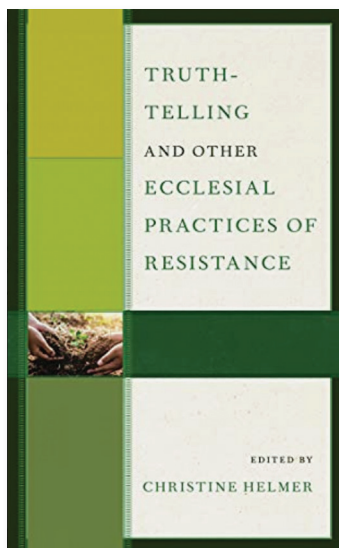
The jury remains out on whether or not religionless Christianity is needed in a post-Christian society. However, the use of existentialism and Tillich’s message that Christianity is constantly being re-interpreted into new contexts still applies today, especially in a pandemic-consumed world. The question remains: What is Christianity? It is a loaded question, even more so than asking, “What is the church?” Cathcart seems to acknowledge that religionless Christianity is what Christians do



during the week through “participating in the Kingdom of God” (131).

This book describes, I think, what Bonhoeffer sought to capture as he began developing the ethic of a religionless Christianity. I recommend this book for those who are wanting to delve deeper into the concept of a religionless Christianity; I would also engage this book in conversation with others who center on a post-Christian society, especially in the United States.

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***Truth-Telling and Other Ecclesial Practices of Resistance.***

Edited by Christine Helmer. Lanham: Lexington, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-9787-1210-2 viii & 238 pages. Cloth. \$95.00; E-book. \$45.00.

These essays from Lutheran theologians on practices of truth emphasize the situated, embodied, and communal aspect of the

church. Reading this volume could help pastors and congregation members find new articulation for what the church offers in fostering practices of truth-telling and stewarding shared truthfulness. Christine Helmer characterizes the volume within a recent turn toward the Scandinavian Creation Theology tradition which emphasizes created goodness. While major twentieth-century German theologians amplified the function of the proclaimed word, that focus had an abstracting effect. Helmer's later essay in the volume expands the introduction, arguing that the abstract word tradition has supported unilateral and abusive male power.

Jan-Olav Henriksen reflects on how taking responsibility, holding one another accountable, and desire for truthfulness all create the possibility of a shared common good. For Christians accompanying each other in faith, the desire for truthfulness exceeds in importance any feeling of having or securing the truth. Allen Jorgenson calls for churches to know and tell the truth about the lands we gather on, and to learn from Indigenous peoples how colonial attitudes of extraction and division have devastated them but now threaten us all. Paul Hinlicky argues that churches taking up political language and strategy in response to injustice often participate in the same destructive system they resist. Hinlicky counsels not sharper political focus, but catechesis for the nurture of spiritual life. Cheryl Peterson

identifies two theological resources for facing a rising fascist threat: renewed attention to the Spirit's role in prophetic truth-telling, and an ecclesiology of the cross for the sake of solidarity with the poor and suffering. Amy Carr draws from experience with activists and parish settings to describe four senses of truth-telling: the empirical which recognizes common facts, the ideological which names structural sin, the ethnographic which takes care for the particular texture of people's lived experiences, and the properly theological which beholds one another in light of God's redemption as shared within sacraments.

Gordon Straw's posthumous contribution is a moving account of his spiritual and racial journey interweaving Native American and Lutheran identities and the arrival into his own sense of creation piety. Straw reflects on antiracism as a matter of practices, spirituality, and vocation. Man Hei Yip both calls for greater commitment from congregations to education, engagement, and active relationships with immigrants and reflects on how Jesus' own story binds all who follow him with those endangered on the move. Craig Nesson contrasts the temptation for churches to take on religious identity politics with what he coins as neighbor politics. Neighbor politics begins as Jesus does with concrete practices and moves toward strategy in relation to the needs in a locality. Timothy Seals bookends his chapter with meditation on how his white-majority childhood Lutheran congregation responded with silence to the death of Dr. King. Seals' central focus is the book of Daniel as a resource for spiritual practices for resistance from the perspective of mystical and postcolonial approaches.

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Oak Park, Illinois



## 2022 Ad Pricing and Specifications

The journal, *Currents in Theology and Mission*, is now accepting advertisements in our quarterly journal. Please see full details in the ad rate sheet at the end of the Introduction (page 5 of this issue).

### Publication Dates and Deadlines

The journal, *Currents in Theology and Mission*, is published four times per year: January, April, July, and October. Ad deadlines for each issue are one month prior to publication (December 1, March 1, June 1, September 1). Late submissions may be published in the next issue. Issue-specific themes are available from the co-editors: **Craig Nesson** and **Kadi Billman**.