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Reviews

Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2001). 256 pp. $22.99. Hbk. ISBN 1-58743-106-9.

In these, his Gifford Lectures, Stanley Hauerwas offers up a tale of fidelity and betrayal. Like all good storytellers, Hauerwas tells his story with relish. The bulk of this story concerns how the discipline of theology lost its way in the modern age. The result, according to Hauerwas, was natural theology's doomed attempt to offer an account of Christian truth independent of appeal to tradition.

Hauerwas's recounting of this story was occasioned by his acceptance of the invitation to deliver the 2000–2001 Gifford Lectures. He explains that the Gifford Lectures presented him with something of a dilemma. It seems that Adam Gifford, who first endowed the lectures specified that they:

> treat their subject as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences, indeed, in one sense, the only science, that of Infinite Being, without reference to or reliance upon any supposed specific exceptional or so-called miraculous revelation (p. 26—see note 24 and also note 8 on page 19 for the full citation).

The irony of Hauerwas—the perennial and vociferous critic of natural theology—being invited to deliver these particular lectures does not escape him.

His response is to deconstruct the natural theology of Adam Gifford and to offer in its stead a natural theology in the tradition of Karl Barth, but this is getting ahead of the story. Gifford's natural theology, according to Hauerwas, represents an accommodation to modernity's attempted flight from the authority of tradition. This flight—like that of Icarus—is bound to fail. For better or worse, traditions are all that we have. The non-traditional scientific account that the Gifford Lectures call for 'distorts the character of science', as if science were free of and superior to tradition. In reality, science is itself a tradition of inquiry. More to the point, such an approach distorts our understanding of the God we have come to know through the witness of the church.

Hauerwas spends the bulk of the book uncovering and explaining the roles played by William James, Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Barth in the story of theology in the twentieth century. Those who are familiar with Hauerwas should not be surprised that Niebuhr comes in for especially heavy criticism. Niebuhr's crime is the adoption of modernity's assumptions, which in practical terms means his adoption of a Jamesian-styled empirical method. Hauerwas is careful to acknowledge positive points in the work of both James and Niebuhr, but betrayal—albeit unwittingly—is Hauerwas's final word on Niebuhr's legacy.

For Hauerwas, the heart of the issue is the harmony that Niebuhr finds between Christianity and democracy. Hauerwas is deeply suspicious of any positive connection between these two loyalties. Indeed, he seems deeply suspicious of almost any proximate loyalty other than that of the church. He singles out democracy because of its close association with

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philosophical liberalism. This connection makes democracy pretentious and pernicious in relation to religious traditions such as Christianity. Liberal democracy judges religion to be a threat to social harmony. It overcomes this threat by restricting religion to the realm of private beliefs. Having so disarmed Christians, liberal democracy then calls on them to kill in its defense.

In contrast to Niebuhr's apologetic entanglements with democratic politics, Hauerwas applauds Barth's insistence that theology offer a humble and free witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like Barth, Hauerwas is impatient with those who, in the name of being responsible, appear timid in their use of Christian language. He assures us that a Christocentric theology is fully capable of commenting on the pressing issues of our day. Indeed, humble reliance on the Christian narrative empowers the theologian to witness to the self-revealing God of the cross with boldness. It is in Christ's nonviolent suffering of the cross that the way of God with the world is revealed. Moreover, the gospel, as God's free self-revelation in the particular, necessitates that the church adopt the role of witness.

Hauerwas is not entirely approving of Barth, but Barth's failings, unlike those of Niebuhr, serve as points of departure for Hauerwas's own position. He explains that Barth fails to give the necessary authority to the church as well as the appropriate emphasis to the sanctified life found in congregations as diverse as Catholic and Mennonite.

Pope John Paul II and John Howard Yoder serve as examples of theologians who have faithfully carried the church's torch. What unites their divergent positions is that each submits other sources of authority to the authority of Christian revelation. Attention to that revelation shapes a distinctive witness in the world, which ironically serves as a genuine contribution to the world. Hauerwas considers how each of their witnesses might reshape the modern university. The university, he explains, is worth considering because of its powerful role in shaping the lives of Christians. Hauerwas laments the limited role afforded to the Christian tradition in conversations about the purpose and shape of universities. Here, as elsewhere, the procedural values of liberal democracy are at work, scrupulously avoiding open consideration of the ends of the university. In response, the church has accommodated its language in hope of being included in the conversation. The trouble with this strategy is that the church ends up sounding like 'the world'. In contrast, Yoder, John Paul II and Alasdair MacIntyre illustrate the distinctive contribution a faithfully Christian perspective is capable of offering.

Criticism of the book has thus far concentrated on Hauerwas's interpretation of Niebuhr. Unfortunately, this has left much else relatively unconsidered—Hauerwas's interpretation of William James and his deconstruction of natural theology to name only two possibilities. My concern is with Hauerwas's own position. When judged on its own terms, Hauerwas's argument seems to falter at the end. It is far from clear from Hauerwas's brief account that either Yoder or John Paul II makes a distinctive contribution. Yoder contends that the discipline of:

> history must be taken back from the grasp of military historians and chroniclers of battles and dynasties so that a society's character will be described and thus judged by how those 'without a role in history' were treated (p. 234).

This sounds similar to the discipline's current emphasis on social history. Similarly, it is not clear how the fully catholic university that John Paul II calls for differs from some already existing catholic universities. To be sure, these institutions offer an alternative to their secular counterparts, but the question remains how the pope's proposal offers something distinctive to that already found in liberal society. MacIntyre's proposal appears genuinely radical,

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bordering on utopian, but Hauerwas's treatment of it is too brief to persuade those not already well-versed in MacIntyre's *Three Rival Visions of Moral Enquiry*.

The point of this criticism is not that Hauerwas's position offers nothing distinctive. One need only consider Hauerwas's particular form of nonviolence. My point rather is to wonder at his failure to offer a more comprehensive and convincing alternative to the 'modern university'. Perhaps the modern university, while deeply flawed, is not without its own moral practices and insights.

A second and less friendly criticism is again on Hauerwas's own terms. On the opening page, he criticizes natural theology's less than 'full doctrine of God'. In the end, however, the same might be said of his own doctrine of God. God's creative activity receives only slight attention. Even traditional affirmations about God as redeemer are thinned out. The cross is reduced to being a new law—the law of nonviolence. God's interaction with the world is largely restricted to the witness of the church. The church stands over and against the world from which God seems largely absent. In the end, Hauerwas seems more interested in the church than in the One to which the church is called to witness.

Hauerwas is intent on remaking the church into a covenant community whose sole norm is obedience to the lamb that was slain. The church is to be Christocentric and pacifist. With help from Yoder and John Paul II, Hauerwas attempts to convince us that this position rather than Niebuhr's is at the heart of the tradition. That and much else remain to be seen. Surely, others would insist that the tradition is larger than Hauerwas's telling. If their account is plausible, then Hauerwas's appeal to fidelity to the tradition is not nearly so compelling nor is the story of theology in the twentieth century nearly so black and white as Hauerwas would have us believe.

David True
Wilson College, Chambersburg, PA
dtrue@wilson.edu

Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). 368 pp. Hbk. $35.00. ISBN 0691102937.

Just a decade ago democracy seemed on the ascendancy worldwide. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the burgeoning status of the United States provoked images of a new world order founded on democratic ideals. Today such imaginations seem naive. Global terrorism calls into question the durability of democratic ideals. Can liberty survive amidst these threats to our basic security? Meanwhile, oligarchic corporate power, tribalist ethnic and religious identifications, and uncritical patriotic nationalism threaten to choke out the democratic practices that have taken root in America's cultural soil.

With his book *Democracy and Tradition*, Jeffrey Stout steps into the breach offering a spirited defense of democratic values and practices in disheartening times. This volume not only offers a philosophical analysis but also an exemplary instance of democratic discourse. Stout enters the current fray concerning the problems and possibilities of public life in the American context with a critical yet charitable reading of his interlocutors as well as fresh insights that help move the discourse forward.

Stout's main conversation partners in this book are John Rawls, Richard Rorty, Alisdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas. As he sees it, the current debate has reached an impasse. Liberals, such as Rawls and Rorty, ask us to base our political deliberation on a common moral language built upon the model of a social contract. On the other hand, traditionalists,

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such as MacIntyre and Hauerwas, resent their exclusion of Christian convictions from public deliberation, offering as it does an alternative, and richer, way of life. The danger, as Stout sees it, is that in an age when democratic ideals and practices are already weakened, this standoff further diminishes the citizenry's trust in and commitment to democracy.

Insightfully, Stout identifies common presumptions that make the struggle between these bitter opponents irresolvable. First, each views 'democratic modernity as the result of a break with tradition… Second, both assume that rational discourse must proceed within a framework that accords their own point of view legitimacy over against it competitors' (p. 179). They each conceive of rational discourse as taking place only among those who share a settled set of common assumptions. In this sense, despite the difference that put them at odds, 'the social contract is essentially a substitute for communitarian agreement on a single comprehensive normative vision—a poor man's communitarianism' (p. 73).

Stout attempts to break this intellectual logjam by challenging the imagined dualism between democracy and tradition as well as offering a more dialectical understanding of public discourse. Stout argues that democracy is itself a tradition. It has its own particular history, distinctive practices and characteristic virtues. To the extent that current liberals understand democracy as ahistorical and morally neutral, they misconceive its true character and play into the hands of the traditionalist critique. Stout develops a more complex, historical and morally substantive vision of democracy that he draws from the writings of Emerson, Whitman and Dewey.

He also contends, drawing on Hegel, that community and public discourse should be conceived as more open, dynamic and creative than either liberals or traditionalists imagine. Democratic discourse, far from requiring a common morality as a prerequisite for political cooperation, is a discursive practice of 'exchanging reasons about ethical and political topics' (p. 6). These practices depend upon and produce the virtues necessary for conversation: a sense of responsibility for one's own commitments; the confidence to make them public; the humility to recognize that one may sometimes be wrong; and respect for one's interlocutors.

According to Stout, while both liberalism and traditionalism tend to be authoritarian and closed—only those who submit to the authority of the recognized moral norms are welcome—democracy is open and egalitarian. All may participate in the dialogue, bringing their own best arguments, whatever they might be. There are no limits on the types of reasons, religious or otherwise, that may be presented for consideration, only the willingness to have them publicly scrutinized.

This is likely to provoke concern that agreement may be elusive. Stout recognizes that disagreement is likely to persist and agreements are likely to be partial and piecemeal. Yet he does not see this as fundamentally problematic because the very practice of offering reasons to one another itself provokes the sense of mutual responsibility and shared destiny necessary to be a democratic community. The persistence of profound disagreement will produce, Stout argues, ambivalence concerning our membership in this community. Yet it is just that sort of ambivalence that provokes the critical distance and active engagement necessary to sustain democratic dialogue.

This more open and dialectical model of public discourse depends, however, on certain epistemic assumptions about the nature of moral discourse. In the last two chapters, Stout offers an epistemology that he calls 'minimal realism'. As in his discussion of democracy, he is dissatisfied with a choice between two diametrically opposed options, realism and anti-realism. Rather, he proposes a metaphysically austere sort of realism built around our regular practices and ordinary language usage. We use the concept of 'truth' to 'preserve a spirit of self-critically open-ended inquiry', Stout says (p. 253). The term can do its work, he argues,

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without grandiose metaphysical claims. We don't need questionable theories to defend democratic dialogue against the hubris of those who believe they possess the truth or the despair of those who think that constructive discourse is impossible in a pluralistic context. We just need to continue the institutional practices and nurture the spiritual virtues that are the essence of liberal democracy.

In some ways, this is a reasonable response to the way in which epistemological debates seem to preempt more substantive moral discussions in the current context. It is also, however, the most dissatisfying part of the book. His minimal realism is a bit too austere. By concentrating so much of the discussion on 'regular usage' and ordinary practice, he seems to reduce 'truth' to its terminological function within a language game. He appears to choose a coherence over a correspondence theory of truth, when he promised us a third way more satisfying than either.

This is a wonderful book. It begins to move us beyond the impasse created by the focus on social contract liberalism and Christian traditionalism. Pointing out that these are not the only options open to us, he begins to mine alternative veins in the American democratic tradition. He does not solve all problems (he is more successful at offering a third way to think about American democracy than to think about contemporary epistemology), but he does continue the democratic dialogue in exemplary fashion.

Timothy A. Beach-Verhey
Davidson College, Davidson, NC
tibeachverhey@davidson.edu

Ann-Cathrin Jarl, *In Justice: Women and Global Economics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). 177 pp. Pbk. $17.00. ISBN 0-8006-3568-X.

Both academic and armchair ethicists will find Ann-Cathrin Jarl's *In Justice* a good introduction to conversations about global economic issues among feminist ethicists and economists, as well as a thought-provoking proposal for a feminist theory of economic justice. Jarl seriously addresses the situation of women who live in differing social and political contexts but share the experience that their industrial work and reproductive work is undervalued in the global marketplace. She refers to real-life experiences of women around the globe as she makes important connections between Christian ethics, feminism and economics. The challenge is to improve upon these theoretical approaches to devise a theory that when practically applied has the potential to yield a more just social order for those living at the bottom of the economic scheme.

Our global economic system evidences injustice by not allowing all people equal access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, housing, elementary education, basic healthcare and sanitation. Jarl cites statistics from the 1997 UNDP (United Nations Development Program) *Human Development Report* about the poverty that women experience. These statistics are instructive, but not surprising:

> Women tend to end up well below average in all available statistics, with the exception of longevity… Women hold 12.9 per cent of the parliamentary seats in the world. Women make up 14.1 per cent of the administrative and managerial personnel. Among teachers and technical workers, women compose 39.3 per cent, and women earn 30 per cent of wages in the world, while they earn 40 per cent of the wages in the industrial world (p. 112).

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In other words, across the board women earn less than men and lack access to important positions of power that would enable them to make decisions with regard to their own emotional, physical and economic well-being.

The reigning economic paradigm is blind to the affects that it has upon women. Jarl appeals to feminist economic theory to underscore flaws in neoclassical economic theory and places it in dialogue with justice discourse. Jarl comments, '[w]hen economists refer to the market, it seems like the reference is made to a well-known and univocal concept' (p. 5). The market, however, has many forms. For example, women provide important goods and services in the 'informal' sector through reproductive work. These goods and services such as cooking, cleaning, childcare and gardening receive little recognition though they would be highly valued in the 'formal' sector. In the two-thirds world the work of a young woman who spends most of her day carrying water from the nearest supply is not reflected in her nation's Gross Domestic Product.

Feminist economists question the objectivity that neoclassical economic theory assumes. They think that by directing attention to people who have real problems, economic science has the potential to alleviate the strain placed upon poor people. Jarl explores the work of Bina Agarwal and Gita Sen and notes commonalities in their work. 'They all consider economics as a social construction and are critical of its gender blindness, mathematical dogmatism, lack of a true empirical basis, and ignorance of real problems' (p. 50). When making claims about rights, equality, power and basic human needs, feminist economists employ ethical norms. Their analysis exposes the injustice caused by our economic system. However, Jarl thinks that feminist economists have not done enough to clarify the justice claims that they make. She turns to the work of feminist ethicists to inform arguments made by feminist economists.

Feminist ethicists such as Beverly Wildung Harrison and Karen Lebacqz place justice at the center of their analysis of economic issues. For Harrison, the issue of justice is closely linked to her theology; love motivates the practice of justice.

> The fundamental basis for ethical commitment is love. Love is proclaimed as integral in the Christian tradition. The love of God as presented by the son of Mary and Joseph, the incarnated godhead, who loved the people around him at the price of his own life, is the foundation for justice (p. 77).

Christian ethics is not just concerned with the spiritual life of the faith community, but should have an interest in the concrete situations in which people live.

Lebacqz emphasizes the importance of listening to the narratives of those living in oppressive situations in creating a 'shared memory of injustice' (p. 86). Reading scripture from the perspective of the oppressed, Lebacqz points out that the biblical narratives reveal that God does justice by creating right relationships. Listening carefully to narratives of injustice within our global context offers a new approach and may enable our global community to find God's vision of justice for the world today.

Drawing deeply upon the work of feminist ethicists, Jarl adds to this discussion her own understanding of economic justice. She argues that what justice in our global economy requires is for all people to have equal opportunity within the existing system to provide for their basic needs. Providing for basic human needs is the first criterion for her understanding of economic justice and the first step toward eliminating oppression.

While I must admit that at times I found Jarl's writing a bit too predictable, the labor in reading the book is well worth it. What is particularly helpful about Jarl's proposal is that she does not limit her discussion to theory but suggests some ways to assess the impact of

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her ideas. Jarl calls attention to the fact that theorists essentially agree on the notion of equal value but the theory of equal value has yet to be put into practice. Her aim is to do just that: to create a theory that will enable people to realize right relationships and provide the means for equal opportunities to realize their own agency. These strategies are intended to improve the situation of women worldwide. For Jarl, satisfying basic human needs is not a goal in itself; it is just a beginning. A much longer process of working toward the larger goal of achieving justice for all lies ahead, but, as she puts it, 'justice has to start somewhere' (p. 118).

Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty
St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Laurinburg, NC
hinsonhastyel@sapc.edu

Max Stackhouse with Peter J. Paris (eds.), *God and Globalization*. I. *Religion and the Powers of the Common Life* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000). 304 pp. $40.00. ISBN 1-56338-311-X.

Max Stackhouse with Don Schuurman Browning (eds.), *God and Globalization*. II. *The Spirit and the Modern Authorities* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001). 260 pp. $35.00. ISBN 1-56338-330-6.

Max Stackhouse with Diane B. Obenchain (eds.), *God and Globalization*. III. *Christ and the Dominions of Civilizations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001). 360 pp. $40.00. ISBN 1-56338-371-3.

God *and* globalization? Many people at the cusp of the new millennium think they have enough on their plates coming to terms with the baffling reality of 'globalization' without bringing 'God' into the picture as well. Can a theme as complex and seemingly technical as globalization adequately be addressed through the eyes of religious faith? The authors of this remarkable, handsomely produced series proceed from the assumption that it can *only* adequately be addressed through such eyes. It is a path-breaking contribution to an understanding of the relationship between globalization and religion and is a goldmine of valuable insights and perspectives.

Stackhouse rightly observes that religion barely receives a passing nod in mainstream discussions of globalization. He points out the absurdity of this neglect at a time when religion is reappearing as a major player all over the global stage—often beneficially, sometimes with a vengeance. It is worth pausing to reflect on why so many social scientists, and the policy-makers they influence, remain even today so blinkered when it comes to the influence of religion on the phenomena they engage. A main reason is that the leading centres of social science remain located in the 'secularized' West and still operate outdated modernist assumptions about how science and reason have displaced faith as sources of reliable knowledge. But it is now becoming clear that 'secularization' is not a universal process to which all societies necessarily tend as soon as they become 'modernized'. Indeed sociologists of religion are waking up again to the stubborn persistence of high-decibel religion in the most highly modernized nation in the world, the USA (how could they have ever slept through it?).

So it is both significant and salutary that a distinguished ecumenical team of international scholars should embark on an in-depth investigation of the relation between religion and

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globalization. Given the catastrophic developments of the last three years, it is hard to imagine a more timely enterprise. These volumes—amounting to 750 pages in total—are the outcome of an innovative project based at the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton Theological Seminary (a final volume is set to appear this year [2004]). The project was led by Max Stackhouse, a noted theological ethicist, who describes the project as an exercise in 'public theology' (a term I'll come back to).

The subtitle of the series is 'Theological Ethics and the Spheres of Life'. The notion of 'spheres' plays a crucial organizing role in the volumes and is their most original contribution. In his Introductions to the three volumes (amounting to over 130 pages), Stackhouse sets out a framework for analyzing globalization in terms of a series of differentiated domains of social life—'*spheres*' of dynamic activity—which make up the modern globalized world. These spheres act as channels for '*powers*'—'moral and spiritual energies'—which drive the core '*principalities*' structuring human life in every society: the economy, the polity, the family and sexuality, culture and media, and religion. Stackhouse proposes that these are universally present; they reflect the deepest needs and capacities of human social life, and, he implies, they are grounded in our very created being.

The modern world has also seen the emergence of specific '*authorities*' which have come to be differentiated from the principalities, including the classic professions of education, law and medicine. A newer species of authority are the '*regencies*' of late modernity. These include familiar authorities such as science and technology. Stackhouse also proposes that 'nature' has come to exercise an authoritative hold over our late modern mind. And the heroic personal authority of figures such as Gandhi, Mandela and Tutu—in his chapter Peter Paris calls them 'moral exemplars'—also hold regency-like sway over us. These regencies are 'seats of power…exercised in the various spheres of life by those principalities, authorities and dominions' possessing moral and spiritual legitimacy (vol. I, p. 36). Finally, the '*dominions*' traverse and penetrate all the above. These are civilization-wide religions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism and Buddhism. A dominion is what 'integrates the principalities into a working whole, and…gives distinctive shape to the development of authorities in complex societies…' (vol. I, p. 50).

The salience and potential of this intriguing six-fold classification are considerable. Many analyses of globalization are construed too narrowly. They concentrate on one 'sphere' of human society at the expense of others, and so fall into various forms of reductionism: they shrink the full complexity and diversity of human life down to only one of its many dimensions. This is most evident when globalization is seen as an essentially *economic* process, at the cost of attention to the parallel transformations occurring in distinct social, cultural, intellectual, moral, and indeed religious dimensions, and which are not mere effects of economic change. Some recent studies go some way to recognizing the multi-dimensional character of globalization (such as John Gray's *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* [Granta, 1998]). But no study I have seen offers an analytical framework with as much potential to resist reductionism as *God and Globalization*. So Stackhouse is entitled to point in his introduction to the third volume to the shortcomings of even one of the more subtle recent analyses, namely David Held *et al.*, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Polity Press/Blackwell and Stanford University Press, 1999).

Stackhouse's volumes explore how globalization is operative in numerous diverse and interrelated fields and how religious resources in those fields might humanize it and steer it in wholesome directions. Volume I addresses transnational corporations (William Schweiker), war and peace (Donald Shriver), the family (Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen), and the media (David Tracy). Volume II engages education (Richard Osmer), law (John Witte), health care

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(Allen Verhey), science and technology (Richard Cole-Turner), ecology (Jurgen Moltmann) and morality (Peter Paris).

The exploration of the civilizational role of religious dominions and their relation to the spheres is reserved for the third volume. Following Stackhouse's introduction comes a critique of the western Christian bias in definitions of religion operative in the 'religious studies' guild (Diane Obenchain), a compelling argument for taking religion more seriously in international relations (Scott Thomas), and expert examinations of specific religions in the context of globalization: tribal religions (John Mbiti), Confucianism (Sze-kar Wan), Hinduism (Thomas Thangaraj), Buddhism (Kosuke Koyama) and Islam (Lamin Sanneh). These chapters disclose the varied senses in which the main global religions have come historically to exercise civilizational dominion by generating distinctive customs, moralities and institutions. The ringing title of this third volume—*Christ and the Dominions of Civilizations*—might lead some to expect to hear the claim that those dominions stand under the judgment of the Christ whom Christians confess as Lord *of all*. This claim is not advanced, raising a question I address below. But to their credit, the contributors do explore the inescapable—if politically ticklish—question of how to go about critically assessing the kind of civilization each religion has nurtured. Although the question might have been more consistently and rigorously pressed, some contributors are willing to name specific deficiencies in the particular religions they consider, and each aims to test the resources currently possessed by that religion for contributing constructively rather than destructively to globalization. The third volume makes it clear that it isn't enough to revive interest in a generic thing called religion. We must attend to the particularity of each and every religion and then not flinch from reaching critical judgments on them, as they will on ours.

These individual studies on world religions confirm Stackhouse's crucial proposition that the plural spheres of our differentiated society have not emerged, do not function and cannot be sustained, in a spiritual vacuum. They challenge head-on the assumption that modern liberal institutions such as the state, the market, the professions and the universities, must be insulated against religion. On the contrary, the authors argue, whatever virtues such institutions still possess will be sustainable over the long haul only insofar as they are opened up to the moral and spiritual reorientation which only religion can supply. Allen Verhey, for example, pleads eloquently for a recovery within western scientific medicine of the lost spiritual dimension of healing—a dimension central to some of the alternative forms of healing now brought to our doors through globalization. And he paints an appealing portrait of the church as a 'community of peacable difference' incarnating that vision within its own life.

While Stackhouse obviously affirms proposals for an overtly Christian contribution such as Verhey's, he presents these volumes as an exercise not in confessional theology or dogmatic theology but 'public theology', theology engaged with public issues and addressed to a public audience. Those still wedded to dated versions of the 'secularization thesis', or otherwise unsympathetic to a public role for religion, will, of course, regard the idea of 'public theology' as a contradiction in terms. Theology, they will say, merely vents the tribal faith-commitments of a particular social group and cannot hope to serve as a framework for discussion or policy-making in the public arena of society. That framework can only be based on the 'public' findings of the social sciences, or on what liberal philosopher John Rawls has called 'public reason'. By what right, such skeptics ask, does theology presume to address the public realm in a society characterized by secularism and religious pluralism? Commendably, Stackhouse and other contributors challenge head-on those who would thus confine theology to the private sphere, arguing cogently that to disqualify theology or religion in advance from participating fully in public realm is simply arbitrary and intolerant.

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Religion is a universal human power, is deeply meaningful to many citizens across the globe and, for many, is the primary source of their personal and public identity. Religious believers are equally entitled and equipped to shape the destiny of our national and global public life as those who claim to hold no faith. The salutary implication (which is perhaps insufficiently explored) is that the distinctive insights of religious faith, while inevitably 'particularistic' in origin, can be deployed, as Michael Polanyi put it, 'with universal intent'. We are not locked into a debilitating ethical relativism which would undermine our confidence to urge publicly valid norms before society at large.

A series as ambitious as this inevitably evokes a huge range of questions. To whet readers' appetites, here are a mere six! The first three raise issues arising from Stackhouse's opening classification, and the rest address questions of method and perspective. I state them pointedly not to detract from the quality of the series but rather to evoke interest in the issues it so illuminatingly raises.

First, the connections between the spheres, powers, principalities, authorities and regencies in each of the various fields are not stated precisely enough. For example, if the powers of regencies are, as Stackhouse suggests, exercised by principalities and authorities, how can they have come to be emancipated from the authorities? And how can dominions which are civilization-wide religions also exercise the power of regencies? Are spheres more basic than powers, or vice versa? Drawing a Venn diagram of Stackhouse's six categories would be quite a challenge. Perhaps this is why many contributors either do not make explicit use of such concepts at all or only pay brief tribute to them. After all, it seems that Stackhouse's ambitious and imaginative framework situates, but does not sufficiently inform, the field-specific analyses. So Moltmann's chapter on ecology, for instance, urges that we recover a deep reverence for nature but doesn't connect this in any way with Stackhouse's claim that nature in late modernity has come to function like a regency.

Part of the reason for the conceptual slackness in the framework may be because most of the terms used to denote the six categories of sphere arise directly out of an exegesis of specific New Testament Greek words (e.g. 'powers' is a rendition of *exousia,* 'principalities' of *archai*). It is not clear, however, that such terms correspond sufficiently closely to the contemporary realities they are supposed to illuminate. Is 'the economy' as a whole really what the word 'principality' appropriately refers to today? Isn't a transnational corporation or a currency market a closer fit? Such biblical language may serve well the aims of theologians whose main focus is, rightly, the overall spiritual direction of such modern spheres. But social scientists and policy-makers will want a more detailed and exact conceptual apparatus.

Second, the volumes seem to circle around but do not pay consistent enough attention to the centrality of *institutions*. Although Stackhouse tells us that the spheres include organizations and 'clusters of institutions', none of the terms in his six-fold classification correspond exactly to specific entities such as states, schools, corporations, hospitals and families, or networks of structured interactions between them, such as markets, media domains or policy-making communities. Yet these are the actual centres of decision-making which are shaping globalization—or the vulnerable recipients of their effects. Some individual chapters have an institutional focus. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen on the family is a model here. Verhey and Osmer imagine how faithful church communities could embody alternative visions of health care and education. William Schweiker gestures towards an institutional analysis of the transnational corporation. But there is, for example, no adequate treatment of the modern state or its emerging global counterparts. I found Donald Shriver's chapter on war and violence ('The Taming of Mars') to be the most moving in the series. But it is not integrated with Stackhouse's classification of coercive authority as one of the 'principalities'. The

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current transformations of the 'authority' of law or the 'power' of violence cannot properly be understood without an account of the nature and evolution of the modern state which is the institutional source of both law and military power. The final volume will, apparently, analyze the new structures of global governance. I hope it will do so on the basis of a clear grasp of the nature of political authority as an institution established to promote justice in the public realm of society—including global society.

I propose that what we need here is the idea of what might be called the irreducible responsibility of an institution, its unique vocation to contribute to human society in a structurally specific way. This idea—associated especially with the pluralistic strands in Catholic and Reformed social thought—helps keep us alert to when institutions begin to stray from the vocation they are structured to fulfil. Van Leeuwen and Verhey implicitly appeal to this idea in their critical analyses of current distortions in family structure and health care practices. Richard Osmer's paper might have benefited from doing so as well. He observes the ways in which public education is under pressure to adapt itself to the demands of globalization: to prepare students for flexible adaptation to the needs of a competitive global economy and to nurture a cross-disciplinary global awareness. Now, the latter seems to be a thoroughly good thing, but the former seems more like a survival strategy to avoid unemployment. If schools continually refashion their curricula towards the need for retraining for employment retraining, what does this do to the irreducible responsibility of the school? Osmer eloquently explores the teaching ministry of the church but not the distinct vocation of the school.

Third, and relatedly, there is no sustained critical analysis of capitalism in the volumes. Schweiker and Moltmann acutely raise some of the key questions, but a much more extensive treatment is required. The series as a whole fails to convey the overwhelming power of the western capitalist economy on globalization. I've commended the authors for resisting the narrowly economic focus of many secular studies of globalization. And it is also a welcome relief to read a Christian study of globalization that does *not* condemn economic globalization wholesale but seeks a balanced appraisal of its costs and benefits. Such an appraisal, however, cannot be attained without a thorough analysis of the depth of the transformations global capitalism is undergoing, a frank assessment of the economic distortions it is bringing out (such as the grotesque inflation of financial as against industrial markets), and a much more comprehensive account of the devastating costs it is imposing on many vulnerable people, especially in developing countries.

Fourth, the series describes itself as an exercise in 'theological ethics'. But how does this sub-discipline of theology relate to social sciences such as economics, political science, law or sociology? Of the twenty-two contributors, seventeen work in various areas of theology or religious studies, one is a philosopher, and four are social scientists (including specialists in sociology, law and international relations). The theologians seem well-versed in relevant aspects of social science (and vice versa). Yet this under-representation of social scientists and social theorists may explain why some contributors to the project seem to utilize too hastily the results of analyses produced by the seemingly 'secularized' social science and social theory the project aspires to challenge. For example, David Tracy adopts Jurgen Habermas's influential idea of communicative rationality without subjecting it to any critical discussion at all.

More significantly, several contributors invoke Roland Robertson's influential account of globalization as 'the compression of the world'. This is a multidimensional process leading not only to increasing integration but also to the accentuation of local difference—resulting in 'glocalization'. Roberston restates this lucidly in chapter 1 of the first volume. It is cer-

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tainly an arresting idea, and sheds light on important features of globalization. But why should it be taken at face value? Is 'compression' a neutral process, a good thing, a bad thing? Is it inevitable, and if so, why? Several authors notice the downside of the process but no one directly challenges the plausibility of 'compression' as an explanatory concept. Various other claims about the character of globalization are made in the series but without being brought into critical dialogue with Robertson's approach. For example, in his introduction to the second volume, Stackhouse proposes that globalization can be understood as the 'universalization of [the] authorities and regencies as they developed in the West' (p. 2). This suggests that globalization is Westernization—cynics such as Benjamin Barber call it McDonaldization—but this sits uneasily with Robertson's idea of glocalization.

A possible pointer towards a distinctively Christian account of globalization appears in Stackhouse's introduction to the first volume. It arises from his posing of some fundamental theological questions: are the powers, principalities and authorities somehow based in creation? If so, how radically have they diverged from their created purposes through sin? Can they be open to redemption? I would answer yes to the first and third question (the second doesn't admit a simple answer). But we also need to be able to link these basic theological affirmations to an account of contemporary globalization. To do this, I suggest, we need a biblically guided account of *historical development* and the norms which should govern it. Such an account would seek to trace the ways in which the created design of our social possibilities can be discerned historically through the enormous variety of particular practices and institutions in many different cultures and even amidst the deep distortions and oppressions caused by human sin.

Using this idea of historical development, the Christian social scientist Bob Goudzwaard proposed a generation ago the suggestive idea of the 'normative disclosure of society' as a framework for evaluating major historical transformations in social and economic life (*Capitalism and Progress: A Diagnosis of Western Society* [Eerdmans, 1979]). He has now begun to apply a similar idea to our contemporary context in his short book *Globalization and the Kingdom of God* (Baker, 2001). Goudzwaard ventures that globalization can be viewed in principle as a further normative historical disclosure of our created social possibilities, even though its present course is being profoundly warped by the gross over-extension of the economic sphere.

I think this a promising suggestion. It invites us to regard ourselves and our communities, not as destined to remain confined within inherited territorial or tribal boundaries, but rather as created to aspire to mutual enrichment via global interdependence within God's one world. More specifically, it implies that globalization is a disclosure of the *spatial dimension* of our created social possibilities, as they work themselves out in many spheres of human activity. This does not imply a process of endless forward or outward movement, but rather a vocation to advance human well-being by widening the circles in which we cooperate for the common good of all God's creatures. So while expanding global trade for needed goods is valuable in itself (and is indeed part of that larger vocation), it must not be allowed to thwart or destroy other dimensions of human well-being, such as the stability of local community or equitable access to basic resources. Understood in this way, globalization as 'normative spatial disclosure' may avoid the somewhat negative connotation of a term such as 'the compression of the world'.

But this is merely a hunch. Wisely, this series does not aspire to present a complete alternative to theories of globalization such as Robertson's but only a 'God-based framework for discernment, evaluation, and transformation' of globalization (vol. I, p. 18). However, to deliver even on this more modest goal involves more than the series offers. It requires more

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rigorous scrutiny of how such a framework could critically test mainstream social-scientific analyses which give no evidence of being intentionally shaped by Christian presuppositions. Three of the best chapters are written by the social scientists most alert to this need (Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, John Witte and Scott Thomas). What the series does provide is a thematically linked series of outstanding individual studies on various facets of religion *in a context of globalization*—perhaps not yet a 'God-based framework' but certainly a 'religion-sensitive' one. Given the current state of the debate, that is no mean achievement.

The question of the 'Christian' character of the framework is necessarily linked to an important fifth question: what is meant by 'public theology' and how is it shaped (if it is) by 'confessional theology'? By the end of the third volume the answer is by no means clear. But if what we offer to public debate is not infused in some discernible way with what we confess in faith, is there not a risk that we will find ourselves exactly where secular liberalism would like us to be, co-opted in the Enlightenment quest for an illusory neutral rationality in the public realm while keeping our faith out of harm's way in the private realm?

Some contributors seem less troubled by this than others. Yersu Kim, for example, offers an informative discussion of recent efforts to generate a universal ethic, to which, for example, Hans Küng has contributed through the 'Parliament of the World's Religions'. Yet he makes no mention of the specific role that Christian theology might play in generating such an ethic. No doubt against the intentions of their sponsors, initiatives such as Kung's can at times unwittingly lend credence to the secular liberal requirement that religious believers check their *particular* confessional standpoints in at the door before entering the arena of public rational debate. John Witte seems nearer the mark in pointing out that when religious believers participate in debates about global human rights, they should first dig deep into their own confessional traditions—'drink from their own wells', to adapt Gustavo Gutierrez's words—to find an authentic language in which to speak about human rights. Genuine consensus on a global human rights regime in the future may depend crucially on the empirical possibility that such a human rights hermeneutic within each religion can succeed. The jury may be out on that, but we should certainly bend every effort to help it along. (Witte is a leading global participant in just such an exercise.)

It is, of course, true that the invocation of explicitly Christian theological language also comes with potential pitfalls. To the degree that our elite cultures in the West remain dominated by those who believe public life should be rigorously secular, it may be counterproductive for religious citizens (or scholars) always to *advertise* their contributions to public debate as 'public *theology*'. In non-western contexts, by contrast, especially societies which are deeply divided religiously and where public religion is experienced as a source of disorder, to offer what may appear to be a specifically 'Christian' contribution to public life (as the word 'theology' will often suggest) may be construed as yet another religious power-play. So the advocacy of 'public theology' will require a demanding combination of confessional fidelity and nerve on the one hand, and context-sensitive communicative adroitness on the other. A cross-cultural, global Christian debate about *that* challenge would certainly make for interesting exchanges.

Finally, a far-reaching question about the scope of the term 'religion' is insufficiently addressed in the series. The volumes rightly consider how the 'traditional' global religions have come to shape major civilizations. They also record how western civilization has to a great extent been moulded by Christian religion. Stackhouse goes so far as to claim that 'the socio-cultural forces that are most often associated with globalization…were formed by societies fundamentally stamped by Christian theological ethics' (vol. III, p. 12). Yet the volumes do not confront with sufficient robustness the question of whether the modern

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West has been equally, if not more, influenced by the *religion of secular humanism* and its offshoots in Enlightenment rationalism, liberalism (and capitalism, as noted). Many would argue that this has been the most powerful of the 'dominions' governing the modern world. And they would reply to Stackhouse's assertion about Christianity by insisting that it is a late-modern form of secular humanism that is driving the processes of globalization.

There are some pointed but brief critical reflections on the influence of the secularist religion of modernity in individual chapters. Moltmann speaks forcefully of the 'boundless will towards domination which has driven and still drives modern [people] to seize power over nature' (vol. II, p. 171). But why is there no dedicated chapter in the third volume on the massive civilizational power of this secular religion of modernity? This is a significant lacuna, especially since a main indictment of the West by many non-western religious believers is precisely the oppressive consequences of secular modernity on their own cultures.

I have raised some provocative questions, but I must conclude on an appreciative note. Stackhouse's ambitious goal of developing an integrated, theologically grounded assessment of the many sides of globalization may not have been comprehensively realized in these volumes. But this is not to detract either from the potency of the framework he has sketched or from the truly impressive quality and usefulness of the individual chapters. These volumes will prove extremely valuable not only to specialists in theological ethics, but also to scholars and practitioners in many different disciplines and fields. I am already thinking about how to design a course around them. Stackhouse's project will be a hard act to follow. His series should be on the shelf of anyone concerned to close off the destructive potentials of religion and to equip it to live up to its global vocation. Richard Cole-Turner states the specific challenge to the church pointedly: 'It is altogether too likely that the church will marginalize itself in the role of chaplain, picking up the pieces, caring for the bruised, mopping up the damage, but never engaging the engines of transformation themselves, steering, persuading, and transforming the transformers' (vol. II, p. 143).

Jonathan Chaplin
Associate Professor for Political Theory
Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto
jchaplin@icscanada.edu

Eric Jacobson, *Metaphysics of the Profane: The Political Theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). 337 pp. Pbk. $24.50. ISBN 0-231-12657-3.

The term 'political theology' often invokes images of revolutionary political struggles prompted by messianic or apocalyptic expectations. As Eric Jacobson shows in this volume, such revolutionary messianism in modern religious thought is not solely the province of Catholic liberation theology and Protestant theologies of hope, but is also characteristic of the writings of two of the more prominent Jewish thinkers in the twentieth century. The distinctively Jewish messianism that emerges in these writings, in fact, yields a type of political theology' the uniqueness of which cannot be fully appreciated without grasping its particular religious ambience.

The stated purpose of Jacobson's book is to highlight the 'intellectual partnership' between philosopher Walter Benjamin and philologist and Hebrew scholar Gershom Scholem as it was forged in a series of intense meetings between the years 1915 and 1923, and as it was carried on implicitly in Scholem's subsequent scholarship. Jacobson employs the term

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'political theology' in the subtitle of the book deliberately as an umbrella term for the themes of history, language and justice that frame his presentation.

The first section of the book, entitled 'Messianism', highlights the common ground between Benjamin's and Scholem's interpretation of the relation between 'profane' history and the Kingdom of God. Each may be characterized as 'messianic', as Jacobson employs the term, because each draws a sharp distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane' in order to distance the Kingdom of God from the mundane political order, while portraying the former as the true 'completion' of politics. The distance between the two enabled a sober assessment of the signs of the times in early twentieth-century Europe, leading Scholem in particular to adopt a revolutionary 'praxis of nihilism' which involved a strategic retreat from political activism in order to 'witness the immanent, temporal index of redemption in every moment of the present, under the strain of the catastrophe enveloping it' (p. 50).

By the end of the first section of Jacobson's book, the reader can already discern much of the particular influence of Jewish tradition upon the politics of Benjamin and Scholem, but section two, entitled 'On the Origins of Language and the True Names of Things' brings it out even more clearly. Here, Jacobson examines Benjamin's and Scholem's reflections upon the nature of language and its theological and political significance. Benjamin's sharp distinction between the sacred and profane orders which warrants Scholem's 'praxis of nihilism', as it turns out, is rooted in a particularly Jewish understanding of language. According to Benjamin, the creation of the world in Jewish tradition is the self-communication of the divine substance by means of speech. Creation is thus a linguistic act, and the true nature of created things is to be found in the names assigned to them at creation. Benjamin interprets the expulsion from Paradise in similarly linguistic fashion, regarding it as the origin of the 'damaged immediacy' of human language. In our profane world, language no longer 'names' objects in an immediate and self-evident fashion, but only by means of fallible 'translations'.

According to Scholem, drawing upon the tradition of 'linguistic speculation' in the Jewish Kabbalah, the 'metaphysical origin' of language itself is the name of God. The Name is the means by which God created the world, and the original 'magic' of language is its bearing of the Name, and thus of the truth and primordial goodness of creation. Like Benjamin, Scholem believed that the original power of language is lost in 'translations', but also that it continues to lurk in the meaning-disrupting language of judgment upon false claims to immediacy. The divine reality, borne by the Name and also by the Hebrew language which, Scholem believed, derived from it, paradoxically redeems the profane order from its 'damaged immediacy' by revealing that human language is, in fact, damaged and in need of restoration.

The political implications of this account of language in the context of a powerful state are perhaps obvious. The Jewish tradition is clearly interpreted as a means of critique and resistance. The constructive political posture it supports, however, is not as clear. In Jacobson's final section, entitled 'A Redemptive Conception of Justice', substantive political values which are shaped both by prophetic conceptions of justice and by Benjamin's sharp distinction between the sacred and the profane are examined. These values come to roost both in analysis of pressing political questions and in delineations of moral virtue. Benjamin's analysis of the 'revolutionary general strike' is an example of the former. The state's limitation of the right to strike is interpreted as a type of 'thieving violence' (p. 207) which is sanctioned by the allegedly 'natural' power of the state. The revolutionary general strike functions, in Benjamin's analysis, to contest the state's violence against labor and thus to undermine its legitimating appeal to nature. It is not 'proletarian', however, but 'messianic', since it does not seek to change working conditions so much as to enact a rejection of all

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unqualified claims to power which conflate the profane order of politics with the sacred order of divine redemption.

Jacobson's account of the early religious and political thought of Benjamin and Scholem is full of illuminating insights into the interdependence of these two thinkers, and into the distinctiveness of their politics. His detailed efforts at linking their politics with Jewish tradition is also most helpful. Clearly, this anarchist 'political theology' does not exhaust the possibilities for the articulation of a distinctively Jewish political orientation, but we have here a picture of one that emerges out of a lively interaction between tradition and the challenges of a particular historic era.

Unfortunately, the argument of the book is not as clear as it could be. It is debatable whether the term 'political theology' itself has any significance in the book, other than to serve, as Jacobson admits, as an 'umbrella term' for the items he addresses. It seems clear that the ingredients of a political theology are here: a view of God's relation to the world, an account of political circumstances, a set of moral and political values or norms, and at least a smattering of strategic emphases. But Jacobson's failure to articulate a clear sense of what 'political theology' *is* makes it impossible to bring these ingredients into a clear relation that could be stated in a few sentences. The result is that the reader is left with a series of insights about different but vaguely related things, but no coherent account of what unites them. Still, for the politics-and-religion enthusiast who is willing to work a little, the unique contributions this book offers make it worth sorting through.

Thomas A. James
Independent scholar
Cincinnati, Ohio
tjames@zoomtown.com

John W. de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002). 255 pp. Pbk. $19.00. ISBN 0-8006-3600-7.

Studies on the phenomenon of national (truth and) reconciliation commissions continue to appear. Surprisingly though, while political, social and legal scholars, even psychologists, are producing prodigious amounts of work on this phenomenon in Southern and Eastern Europe, South Africa, Africa and in Latin America, theologians and religion scholars have been relatively muted on the subject. The preceding statement is not made to ignore the splendid works produced by Gregory Jones, the late Colin Gunton, Donald Shriver and Miroslav Volf, and ranging in comparative scope from the USA, World War II, Germany, Japan, racial relations (or rather the lack of) and Southern Europe, but to suggest that De Gruchy's work deserves to be included in their ranks. Why? Because in this one brief work De Gruchy manages to encompass and include much material, from biblical understandings of reconciliation, to case studies, through to detailed analysis of one case study, that of his homeland, South Africa. Drawing all these elements together he provides a fine, balanced theological analysis that does not fail to include the vexed—and often omitted in similar treatments—question of religious pluralism, and utilizes it to offer a multi-religious basis for cooperation in reconciliation.

In a sense, this study of reconciliation provides a natural sequel to his earlier work on *Christianity and Democracy*, and like that one, comes as a welcome guide to the state of the subject. De Gruchy, Professor of Christian Studies at the second oldest African university, the University of Cape Town, South Africa, is already well-known for his work in Bonhoef-

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fer studies and in analyzing, from a reformed perspective, the religious and political issues surrounding South African apartheid. In this work he breaks new ground, providing not only a bird's-eye overview of the concept of reconciliation, but also of how it served (or serves) as a political means of democratic transition, and most critically, of the ambiguous role of the Christian churches and other religions in the South African process.

De Gruchy sets out his material in three parts, devoting two chapters to each part. Part one, entitled 'Discourse', discusses the usage of this term from the Christian Scriptures through to its contemporary political applications. This theme is then developed in the second chapter, which examines this term through the Hebrew Scriptures to its development by the apostle Paul. A significant section is devoted to examining the political application of this eminently theological term when it is applied in a religiously diverse context. Thus the use of the term became an issue when Muslims and others questioned its usage and the rather 'religious' composition of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was chaired by an Archbishop and inaugurated by a worship service in St Georges Cathedral, Cape Town. De Gruchy makes a clear distinction between four differing contexts of reconciliation, on the personal, theological, social and political levels. This typology provides a most helpful means of distinguishing the differing levels at which reconciliation operates or at which it is being analyzed. Further help is provided by sketching a brief history of the interpretation of the doctrine of reconciliation (including the rejection of false understandings of the same in recent South Africa) and by outlining the traditional understandings of how the Church (or religion) is related to the political realm.

Part two, entitled 'Agency', offers chapters dealing in turn with specific examples of reconciliation and of how reconciliation can be understood by all three of the 'Abrahamic' religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). These include the work of the Italian Sant' Egidio movement in Mozambique, the Corrymeela community in Northern Ireland and the Taizé community in post-World War II Europe. De Gruchy, whose academic career began with a study of Bonhoeffer's understanding of the Church as the *Communio Sanctorum* does not fail to discuss the role of the Church as 'a community of reconciliation'. Here a survey of such an ecclesiology is provided, from the Scripture through to present times, including concise summations of the sacraments, confession, forgiveness, and the vexed question of vicarious confession of guilt, so critical for survivors and succeeding generations in the twenty-first century.

Finally, Part three comprises the fifth chapter dealing with a comparative study of 'The Art of Reconciliation', and the sixth one, setting out how religions in South Africa are 'Covenanting Together to Restore Justice'. The fifth chapter offers excellent critical summations of the issues arising from other nations' prior experiences in truth and reconciliation commissions. Thus the failure of 'amnesty alone' approaches is illustrated from Latin American examples. Thus the blanket amnesty programs which characterized the Argentine and Chilean cases left these nations without the truth (or much of it) leading to doubt, suspicion, and then anger at successive governments. Further, without the truth of what actually happened, these nations—and their Churches—were left with profound political and theological issues such as how can forgiveness be granted, apologies made, history corrected, or a divided nation brought together? De Gruchy emphasizes that reconciliation is a process, often initiated by a truth commission, that can take, years, decades, and even generations to reach its goal. A nation that assumes a one or two-year commission is going to achieve reconciliation is likely to repeat its past and divided history. Thus he argues that any national commission's work must be continued through planning, education and programs that will promote the commission's positive recommendations to present and future generations.

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This is an approach strongly advocated by the Chilean José Zalaquett and affirmed by another South African, Charles Villa-Vicencio, former Research Director of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The final chapter, drawing on the earlier ones, particularly chapter four on Judaism, Christianity and Islam, contains the critical summation of De Gruchy's understanding of reconciliation, both theological and political. The concept of 'covenant' has a contested political and theological history in South Africa. This rests primarily on the fact that 'the Day of the Covenant' was celebrated as a public holiday every December 16th to remember the (Christian) Afrikaner victory over the (heathen) Zulus in 1836. Yet, De Gruchy believes that the concept can be rehabilitated as it is recognizable in all three of the 'Abrahamic religions'. Indeed in the political history of the West, the concept provided the source for ideas of providence, purpose and social contract. Thus it offers the broad context for talking about politics, common good, forgiveness, reparations and indeed justice and reconciliation. That it can still provide such a basis in a multi-religious context no doubt depends on how the resultant conceptions are developed.

De Gruchy's study makes a bold contribution to the small selection of works that address the process of reconciliation and the role of religion. He offers a finely nuanced historical analysis, which includes Christianity's relationships with at least two other religions, centered on the concept of covenant. However, while he views divine relationality as expressed in and through human sociality, it is not clear how this is then related to the other 'Abrahamic faiths'. These probably do have rather differing conceptions of how that works out in reconciliation and indeed even in justice. Closely related to these questions lies that of each religion's basic theological anthropology, for differing conceptions here will result in differing views of social justice. Perhaps this is to quibble, for whatever the readers' reservations, this book should promote further research and theological reflection, both on the grounds and commonalities of inter-religious discourse and on the nature of the humans who seek justice and reconciliation.

Iain S. Maclean
James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia
macleaix@jmu.edu

Douglas J. Schuurman, *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004). xiv + 190 pp.

Schuurman, professor of religion at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, has provided a clear and theologically nuanced treatment of an idea whose time seems to have come again: vocation. Increasingly, Americans are addressing the split between work and life by turning to traditional and New Age writings on spirituality. The question is not simply how to strike an appropriate balance between work and personal life, but how to discover some sense of meaning and purpose in their increasingly demanding careers. In a pluralistic society that has no consensus about ends, we don't know why we are working so hard.

Schuurman retrieves the wisdom of biblical sources and the classic reformers, Martin Luther and John Calvin, to offer a constructive approach to contemporary dilemmas about work. He prefers to use 'calling' rather than 'vocation', since the latter has been constricted in two directions. It has been reduced to paid work, as in 'vocational counseling', and to work in the sphere of the church. Calling, by contrast, evokes the religious resonances of biblical accounts and can be extended to the whole range of human occupations and rela-

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tions. Schuurman argues that the general calling to be Christian is specified by particular callings through which individuals make their distinctive contributions. Stanley Hauerwas and Gary Badcock assert that vocations are exclusively ecclesial because the gifts mentioned by Paul are intended explicitly to build up the Body of Christ, not the worldly commonwealth. Miroslav Wolf and Schuurman would rather extend the concept of gift or charism to include the broad range of 'secular' activities and relations that build up the common good of society. If Christians are called to transform their situations to bring them more in accord with 'the world according to God', then their public roles should also count as callings rooted in God's purposes.

This extension of religious meaning to ordinary life was the Reformers' 'affirmation of ordinary life' as Charles Taylor put it in *Sources of the Self*. Luther lambasted medieval Catholicism for limiting the life of Christian discipleship to a spiritual elite. Brewers and carpenters have just as spiritual a calling as preachers; so do mothers and fathers. Ordinary folk needed to see their roles through the eyes of faith as an assignment from God and as serving the ultimate purposes of God in the world. Schuurman resists contrasting Luther and Calvin on this point. He does not see Luther's repeated admonitions to find God's calling in one's station as simply baptizing the status quo. He does not believe that Calvin's social context permitted greater social mobility and choice that led to a more flexible and socially transformative approach to vocation. On the contrary, both Luther and Calvin 'qualified the ascriptivism of their day' (p. 121).

The fundamental norm that measures every calling is love of neighbor. Unlike Parker Palmer and others writing today, the reformers did not invoke self-fulfillment as the norm for choosing a vocation or justifying work. Self-donation in service of the neighbor offers a more grounded and theologically accurate approach. 'Follow your passion' presumes that all work can be passionately engaging. Any garbage collector can tell you that a lot of necessary work is not delightful or inherently meaningful. Nevertheless, when hauling trash is seen as service to the neighbor and a contribution to the common good, it can have religious and personal meaning.

Schuurman acknowledges that 'career choice was at best a peripheral concern in the early reformers' doctrine of vocation' (p. 117). Neither of the reformers could envision a world in which occupations and marriages were as freely chosen—and discarded—as they are today. Schuurman provides wise counsel on discerning one's calling to readers presented with a bewildering array of possible occupations and relationships. He seeks to defuse the anxiety of many young people that they must choose the 'right' job or find the 'right' person to marry. There is no divine blueprint that determines callings with that degree of specificity. Many choices are 'indifferent' in the sense that the neighbor and God may be equally served in whatever option is chosen. Waiting for a peak experience to reveal one's path is also a trap since particular callings are always mediated by personal talents, situational opportunities and deliberate reflection. Discernment is no recipe for choice but a patient sorting out of specific options against the background of the call to serve the neighbor and glorify God. Though it may seem a more pedestrian route to vocation, it is less liable to abuse and self-delusion. Discernment requires spiritual practices such as prayer and consultation with the community. Schuurman describes some helpful guidelines for the process.

As a Roman Catholic, I found his rich and balanced account enlightening yet different. If Catholics have more to say about choosing one's path, Protestants have more to offer on appreciating one's place. Since the Second Vatican Council, Catholics have been seeking to catch up to Reformation insights about the sanctity of life in the world and the universal call to holiness. We have much to learn from the conviction that God's call comes through the

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particular demands and invitations of the place where we are situated. If Catholics have emphasized 'path' to the detriment of 'place' in vocational reflection, it may be that some vocational choices were not seen as indifferent to God. If God was not calling one to take up the demands of celibate priesthood or a life of poverty, chastity and obedience, why would anyone opt for them?

A second contrast lies in a different estimate of the created order. Is not the call to be human God's fundamental invitation to all people? Schuurman echoes traditional Lutheran concerns about the difficulty of discovering what it means to be human in a fallen world, but are not some of God's original intentions still discernible in the best of human impulses and aspirations?

Thirdly, the needs of the world are taken more seriously in contemporary Catholic writings on discernment—perhaps because the vast majority of Catholics today are poor. Liberation theology reminds them of 'the irruption of the poor in history' (Jon Sobrino) and the scandal of oppression in most of the world. Does the voice of God sound more imperatively in the voice of the poor than before? Christians ought to hear not only a call to contribute their surplus to distant neighbors but a call to radical solidarity with the poor, to stand with the marginal in changing the social structures that oppress them. Perhaps that degree of social transformation was inconceivable in the sixteenth century, but once it does become a possibility 'the preferential option for the poor' becomes an unavoidable but gracious aspect of every vocation.

William C. Spohn
Santa Clara University, California
wspohn@scu.edu

John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher.* II. *The Iron Lady* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2003). xiv + 913 pp. Hbk. £25.00. ISBN 0-224-06156-9.

The second volume of John Campbell's exhaustive biography of Margaret Thatcher details her time as Prime Minister and, briefly, her contributions during the Major years and Blair's first term. The story told in the volume is one which is well known.

Thatcher's election victory over James Callaghan was expected, except for a slight doubt over whether the British public at the moment of truth would actually vote for a woman PM. But the Winter of Discontent had sealed Labour's fate. Thatcher's first task was to implement more severely the monetarist policies already being pursued by Labour's Chancellor Denis Healey. This Thatcher did with the help of Geoffrey Howe leading to recession and huge unemployment especially in traditional manufacturing industries. What is exceptional is that Thatcher was resistant to all calls for change in economic policy whether from dissenters in her own Cabinet or the infamous tribe of leading economists. The Lady was not for turning, which in a way was admirable, but it seemed her political fate was doomed. She might have been sticking to her guns but with millions unemployed and persistent high public spending she could have expected another term as Leader of the Opposition soon. What saved her was the Falklands and especially her courage in embarking on a military adventure many believed was beyond Britain's capacity. The tide of patriotic fervour and Labour's left-wing gave her a second term with a much improved parliamentary majority.

The second term was not the success it might have been given Thatcher's political dominance and the ongoing divisions of the opposition. Through careful preparation she defeated

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the miners, portrayed here as led by a tactically naïve Arthur Scargill. In this she fulfilled her promise of taming the unruly and disruptive power of the unions. Her government instituted a massive programme of privatization including council-house sales, although Campbell suggests ministers stumbled on this policy by accident. It was during the second term that the Westland Crisis blew up casting serious doubts on Thatcher's ability to work with colleagues. Campbell attributes Thatcher's ultimate fall to her autocratic and aggressive style illustrated by Westland, by her appalling treatment of Howe, then her Foreign Secretary, and by conflict with Nigel Lawson, her all-powerful Chancellor. It was also during the second term that the price was paid for Thatcher's hostility to Europe. Campbell suggests that Britain's European partners were able to endure Thatcher's terrible diplomacy while happily progressing in the way they wanted anyway. In effect, because of Thatcher, Britain lost any meaningful influence in Brussels, illustrated by the progression of Europe towards a single currency post-Thatcher without the UK.

Thatcher's successes were in the arena of international relations. She had a wonderfully close relationship with Ronald Reagan whom she assiduously cultivated and sought to advise. She also took to Mikhail Gorbachev, although her advocacy of nuclear deterrence was based on a profound suspicion of Communists and the belief that it was a show of military might that had got them to the negotiating table. Campbell describes the remarkable adulation she encountered in Eastern Europe as well as her fervent belief that Reagan won the Cold War without firing a shot. One product of the fall of the Berlin Wall was the exposure of Thatcher's strange hostility towards Germany and her fear of that nation unifying. Somewhere in her psyche there was a disturbing hatred of the Germans.

Despite these political problems and the sense that the second term was wasted, Thatcher won a convincing third election victory. But now questions began to be asked about her leadership. This was in part inevitable as the number of ex-ministers grew and some of her MPs began to realize they would never attain office. Thatcher was also faced with the problem that the new generation of rising stars were Heathites.

And of course there was the poll tax. Campbell is generous in stating that the previous system of rate collection was not working. He also notes that leading Cabinet members, especially Lawson, saw that the new community charge would be a political disaster, but opted out of the problem. Further, the record is corrected on Scotland; it was not a patronising experiment but a response to the demands of Scottish Tories for a new system. Nor did anyone seriously expect that the levels of the tax would be so high; thanks in part to Labour councils making financial and political hay at the government's expense. But the poll tax illustrates the worst of Thatcher. Initially she was sceptical but once convinced that it was a good system she refused to change her mind. Nor did many of her Cabinet think it worth their careers trying to tackle her on the issue.

Thatcher's fall is told in great detail. It is set against the background of the poll tax problems and divisions over Europe. But ultimately Campbell thinks it was a failure of politics, her treatment of Heseltine, Lawson and then Howe, her Heathite Cabinet and her distance from the parliamentary party. Howe made his devastating speech, Michael Heseltine declared his leadership intentions and no one took effective control of her campaign. Thatcher lost, but only just, and then was persuaded by an essentially disloyal Cabinet that if she stood again Heseltine would win and her work would be undone. Thatcher backed John Major because Douglas Hurd appeared to be part of the one-nation establishment she had done so much to resist.

Campbell's picture of Thatcher after her premiership is mainly tragic. She was a famous workaholic who, once deprived of a job, was at something of a loss. There were two volumes

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of memoirs to be produced. These were remarkably candid accounts of her time in office if also inevitably self-serving. She enjoyed the lecture circuit, especially in the US. She also refused to stay out of British politics, and despite the discomfort she had experienced at the hands of Edward Heath, became increasingly critical of Major. Freed from the strictures of office she began to advocate policies Major could never implement, especially over Europe. Campbell's greatest criticism of Thatcher is attributing to her the internecine strife in the Tory party, with the subsequent election meltdown. It is no coincidence that Thatcher endorsed both William Hague and Iain Duncan Smith, two leaders seen as protectors of her legacy but who could not restore the party's electoral fortunes. Thatcher's influence has only diminished with her failing heath; she has suffered a number of strokes and now does not speak in public.

Although this story is well-known from the wealth of material on Thatcher and Thatcherism, Campbell is able to add some fascinating detail. He can make use of Thatcher's memoirs, the remarkable Oxford University Press CD-Rom of all her public statements, together with the memoirs of the majority of her Cabinet colleagues including Lawson, Howe, Heseltine and Major. Campbell also makes use of candid memoirs by George Bush and, more importantly, the Reagan papers. These don't so much challenge the accepted account of her opinions and prejudices as confirm them all too graphically. They are the icing on a substantial cake.

What is disappointing is that for all the detail we do not seem to get much closer to Thatcher the person. Given the size of the first volume it might be expected that Campbell could paint a more vivid picture of her personality, related to earlier experiences. But he doesn't. The missing element is her values, her underlying philosophy that drove her to do battle with socialism, communism, Europe and the Establishment. In volume one, Campbell suggests it might have something to do with her childhood and in particular the desire to rebel against the strictness of her Non-Conformist upbringing. He doesn't develop this point in volume two. Furthermore, he neglects to discuss at any length Thatcher's adult Christianity. Campbell mentions it a couple of times but not enough given its central and fundamental place in Thatcher's political ideas. Thatcher was an English Non-Conformist, an inheritor of the values of hard work, individual moral choice, thrift, charity, family care, self-reliance and nationalism. These are sometimes called 'Victorian values' but Thatcher was no Victorian. They are also part of a cultural Christian Non-Conformity in which politics, economics and religion are indistinguishably integral much like the coherence of chapel, council chamber and corner shop Thatcher learnt from her father. Thanks to Campbell, amongst others, there is probably little more we can learn about the detail of Margaret Thatcher. But there is still much that we have to understand about her and the society she dominated for a decade.

Graeme Smith
St Michael's College, Llandaff
gs@stmichaels.ac.uk

Vernon White, *Identity* (London: SCM Press, 2002). 160 pp. Pbk. £9.99. ISBN 0334028906.

In this book from the SCM series on Society and Church, the author takes the notion of human identity in order to explore how divine faithfulness can provide continuity in a world of inevitable change. Change is paradoxical: it gives ground for hope, creativity and transformation; but it also reminds an anxious humanity of mortality: it destabilizes and disorien-

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tates. White asks how best do we live through change? And he turns to the God of the Judaeo-Christian faith who reveals him/herself as faithful to humanity in real experiences and a long rich history of engagement through times of change. There is nothing new under the sun, you might say.

White draws on the philosophy of loyalty developed by Josiah Royce and shows how theologians such as H. Richard Niebuhr appropriated 'loyalty' as a public good. He then grapples with the difficulty as he sees it of talking of God as both transcendent of finitude and time, constant—but also personal, so therefore experienced within the categories of time and change. He argues that God's identity is known and expressed in the action of love, a love that is inherently faithful in God.

Faithfulness, he believes, has not been dealt with adequately within systematic theology, principally because it has to do with time and change. White argues that the *fullness* of movement, of difference, of change is to be found in God—God is the actuality of change, rather than its potentiality. White engages with Barth and with Pannenburg to provide a theological underpinning to the way in which divine faithfulness can model a long-term sense of commitment and responsibility.

When White turns to human identity, narrative emerges as the key to continuity and to relationality. Relationality based solely on love, though, is not enough for White, and he outlines different models of human faithfulness. Continuities of tradition and community, he argues, best generate the character and disposition of faithfulness.

White devotes a chapter to *time*, drawing on theologians who provide perspectives on eternity as a way of integrating experienced time without diminishing the particularities of life within the temporal flow. Again narrative continuity and faithfulness emerge as key notions to combat all that fragments: 'Without faithfulness we splinter into a thousand fragments. Time and self alike stand or fall apart on the basis of faithfulness' (p. 86).

White then focuses for the remainder of the book upon human commitment, responsibility and role, and on practices and reciprocity in personal relationships and in practices of work. He argues that in the 'disturbances of late post-modern life which tend to sever place, time and community' the lessons of faithfulness have to be learned anew. An uphill struggle, you may think, when White advocates

> a sustained mission of general public support for commitment and faithfulness [which] means changing the stories people live by. Public culture will have to be changed through reshaping the role models of soap operas and the media presentation of public figures in entertainment, sport, politics (p. 128).

Not only culture, but also work needs to offers a place where settled identity can be developed. White draws upon Catherine Casey and Peter Sedgwick for his analysis at this point, and concludes on the basis of their findings that an unreliable work culture cannot provide 'the kind of integrity and continuity demanded by Christian anthropology' (p. 139). In the 'wired' life ('fast, globally networked, project-centred') what sort of faithfulness can be re-established? Much more, argues White, can be done to strengthen the connections through time—between projects within work, between work and wider life, to enable the continuity that is so important to this idea of faithful identity.

This book is inherently conservative, and locates itself predominantly within philosophical and systematic debates in the attempt to bolster a Christian anthropology that rests upon a notion of divine faithfulness. White's reluctance to engage with some of the strengths of postmodern perspectives mean, however, that he fails to ask some basic, but to-be-expected questions. For example, whose identity are we talking about? Different cultures, positions

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and contexts result in different constructions of identity. What about the impact of dominant or subaltern standpoints upon identity? White does not offer any exploration in these directions. But perhaps that is because the book is more about faithfulness than identity anyway.

Frances Ward
Manchester
fefward@fish.co.uk

Peter Scott, *A Political Theology of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 275 pp. Pbk. £17.00. ISBN 0521527171.

A Political Theology of Nature is in the Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine series edited by Colin Gunton and Dan Hardy—aiming 'to engage critically with the traditional doctrines of Christianity, and at the same time to locate and make sense of them within a secular context'.

Peter Scott is Senior Lecturer in Theology at the University of Gloucestershire. His explicit aim in writing this book is to examine how Christian theology contributes to the reinterpretation of the human habitat and social life demanded by ecology and by the imperatives of environmental sustainability—through exploring a new type of theology of nature. By his own admission, this is a complex inquiry! He therefore attempts to analyse and critique the relationships between people and nature, and to offer a theology which can serve as a 'prequel' to the life, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This, in general, he calls the '*common realm of God*'.

This book is not an easy read—at least for people like me now unused to reading academic texts—but it is an extremely rich one. Indeed if the wealth of ideas Peter Scott shared with his readers in this book were to be creatively expressed in a popular novel, film or even poetry, he'd be a wealthy man!

The familiar notion that human beings have become detached from their earthy roots is here explored theologically and related to our separation from God. The writer draws heavily from various ecological and social theologies to outline a way of healing these rifts through Christology and Pneumatology.

Scott's journey takes the reader through various perspectives including eco-feminism, ecological ontology, eco-Marxism and, particularly, deep ecology. His inquiry emphasizes the importance of terms such as *becoming*, *unity*, *sociality* and *openness*, which he sees as relevant to both God and nature. Dismissing 'Deep Ecology' as too apolitical and too detached from analytical psychology, he explores the need for a 're-constructive' approach to nature (echoes of Brueggeman's 're-mythologizing'?) He intentionally prefers to use the word 'nature' rather than 'Creation', the latter being too charged with meaning in his view.

'Incarnation…is the most concentrated expression of God's intentions in creation', he suggests. Jesus' life serves as an example of 'socializing'—participating in the dynamics of creatureliness—which is the blessing of God.

Eventually he concludes with some pertinent reflections on the ecological theology of the Eucharist. If the Cross and Resurrection of Christ can contribute to a 're-enchantment' of nature (re-connection in a dis-graced world) then the Eucharist serves as a special paradigm for bridging the gap between people and other people and with non-human life: 'Central to the identity of Christian practice is a social act which relates space to place, and globality to locality. That act is the "time laden and social" eucharist'. As a moment of shared celebration which brings together the results of natural processes shaped by human industry, the sacrament of the Eucharist sees Christ mediating between nature and the creator. In

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eucharistic fellowship the suffering and joy of all creatures points to a common realm which is both cruciform and resurrected.

The Resurrection, for this author at least, offers a revival of ecological relationships, while the Holy Spirit potentially renews the fellowship of humanity and nature.

Whether he achieves his goal is open to the reader's judgment. I found much of the book too wordy and intense and would have appreciated some brief synopses, which are lacking. There is both a weakness and a strength to such a detailed approach to the subject, but overall his balanced discussion is helpful between, say, ecocentrism and anthropocentrism, or humanity being a part of and apart from nature. Overall, the discipline of some purposeful thinking on politics, theology and nature is a welcome one.

In summary, as he states, 'we should not see nature's end in humanity nor the end of humanity in nature'. Where we go from this eschatological point will need to be covered by future books!

Martyn Goss
Exeter
martyn@christiancare.co.uk

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