A would-be reader approaches the ambo at a preparation session for new lectors. The reading has clearly been prepared. It is paced appropriately so that a congregation would have the time to absorb the words. The biblical names are pronounced correctly. There is even a reasonable degree of eye contact between the lector and the congregation. However, something essential is missing: life. There is no feeling in the reading, no sense that what is read flows from a human experience. And when such readers are challenged to bring a little emotion into their proclamation, the defense often heard is, “But I don’t want to be overdramatic.” It’s a refrain usually heard at least once whenever a group of new lectors is being prepared for their ministry.

The concern is understandable. Many congregations have had the painful experience of sitting and listening to a performance that calls attention to the oratorical and dramatic skills (or lack thereof) of the reader. Attention is focused on the person reading, not on the Scripture proclaimed, and the congregation is brought to a state of annoyance rather than to that full, conscious, and active participation that the liturgy should be. Certainly such a proclamation of the liturgy’s readings is to be avoided.

However, precisely because the sort of reading described above is so egregiously bad, it tends to be the exception, not the rule. Often, one lector in a parish will have the reputation of “overdoing it,” and the assembly will suffer through several minutes of exaggerated emoting, drawing some comfort from the fact that the rotation of lectors will spare them for another month. They can look forward to three or four weeks of inoffensive, tranquil readings—and that is the real danger. As bad as the overly dramatic proclamation may be, it is at least recognized as such. It is the calm, flat, emotionless, sterile reading that is all too often unquestionably accepted as the norm, which presents a more subversive, and therefore more dangerous, challenge. If the overdramatic calls attention to the reader, the flat reading calls attention to nothing, including the meaning of the text. It also ignores the fact that honest emotion is an essential quality of human communication.

Indeed, such a reading can often contradict and undercut the lection’s meaning. Tone of voice is a basic component of communication. Consider the phrase, “May I help you?” Taken at face value, it is obviously an offer on the part of the speaker to be of some assistance to the addressee. In our

Donald Heet, O.S.F.S., D.Min., is associate clinical professor of homiletics at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He has presented numerous workshops and days of recollection for lectors in the Washington metropolitan area.
Word and Worship

imagination we can hear a solicitous waiter, flight attendant, or sales clerk inquiring what they can do for us. However, imagine the same phrase spoken by the manager of a gift shop filled with very expensive, fragile ornaments, which has just been invaded by several jostling members of the local high school’s football team. The phrase, “May I help you?” might mean something very different (including, probably, “Would you please leave?”), and would clearly be spoken in a very different tone of voice. The words are exactly the same, the context and intent are very different, and they demand a very different manner of speech in order to communicate the intended meaning.

It is an obvious example, but similar situations arise often in liturgical settings. The first reading for the Fifth Sunday of the year in Cycle B is taken from the book of Job and begins, “Is not man’s life on earth a drudgery?” On the other hand, the second reading for the Third Sunday of Advent in Cycle C begins, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice!” What happens when these two readings—and all readings in between—are read with the same steady, dispassionate voice? It is fair to assume that a good deal of the meaning suggested by the text is lost in the proclamation. True, the congregation can sometimes grasp the obvious meaning of the text, but words spoken without feeling tend to be simply heard, registered as heard and then forgotten. The situation is even more pronounced when the reading includes a dialogue. The first reading of the Third Sunday of Lent, Cycle A, tells the story of Israel grumbling against Moses because of their thirst. In the four verses of the passage there are three voices (not counting the narrator): the people, Moses, and the Lord. Each is speaking from a different emotion: the people’s grumbling despair, Moses’ frustration, and the Lord’s calming directives; if the lector fails to take the differences into consideration and reflects them in the way the voices are read, the Scripture loses much of its power.

Little wonder that the church’s blessing for readers at liturgy prays “that they may read with conviction and boldness.” After all, speaking with an appropriate amount of emotion is basic good communication. As noted above, often it is the emotion that conveys the speaker’s intended meaning, and if a reader fails to approximate the same emotion as that suggested by the text, the meaning is altered and in some cases subverted. However, there is a theological consideration as well. Some lectors who read in a dispassionate tone do so because of an often unvoiced belief that the sacred, including Sacred Scripture, somehow should transcend human experience. Such an approach betrays not only an ignorance of the very human experiences of marriages and wars, sacrifice and sin, friendship and betrayal, out of which the Scriptures were written, but also a failure to take seriously the foundational fact of the Incarnation: The Word was made flesh. When John uses the term Logos to refer to the Second Person of the Trinity, he is emphasizing the fact that in Jesus the inexpressible has been expressed, the transcendent has become tangible, all in very human form. Given that basic belief of our faith, why should we hesitate to use human words expressed with human emotions to describe the actions of the God who loves us passionately?

But there is another underlying concern that discourages reading with feeling. How does one find the appropriate feeling for the passage to be proclaimed? How does one avoid the pitfalls of either speaking with insufficient emotion or imposing emotions that are false or overdone? The answer lies in understanding. The more a reader understands the text to be read, the more naturally will the lector proclaim it with the appropriate emotion. Ironically, both reading with no emotion and reading with too
much emotion—and often the wrong emotion—flow from a superficial understanding of the Scripture being read. If one has simply scanned over the text to catch the meaning of the individual words, not attending to the meaning of the text as a whole or to its larger context, the temptation will be either to impose an artificial emotion that somehow seems appropriate or to avoid the issue altogether by reading the words with no consideration of what the underlying feelings might be and no expression in one’s voice. The church is looking for something more. In the motu proprio, Ministeria Quaedam, Paul VI called on those appointed to the installed ministry of lector to “meditate assiduously on the sacred scriptures so that they may more fittingly and perfectly fulfill their functions.” Clearly the purpose of such meditation is not primarily the spiritual growth of the lector; there is an implication that contemplative reflection is to have a profound and positive effect on the quality of the reading. Most readers, if they truly understand the text, will not have to try to generate emotion; the feelings contained in the text will be obvious. Readers simply have to allow them to be manifest in their proclamation.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) is specific: If each genre of liturgical speech calls for its own tone of voice, then ought not the proclamation of Scripture reflect the genre of the passage being read, as well as the emotion of the verses in question?

The same document offers a vision of what the ministry of liturgical reader can accomplish: “that the faithful by listening to the readings from the sacred texts may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture” (GIRM, no. 101). In human relationships, one does not develop a warm and living love for lifeless words. So too, only a living proclamation, spoken with authentic and appropriate emotion, can touch a human heart.

References


Reviewed by
Antonio D. Sison, C.PP.S.
Catholic Theological Union

Aloysius Rego’s book seeks to distill a theology of suffering from the later thought of the great modern theologian Edward Schillebeeckx. While the various threads of Schillebeeckx’s formidable corpus of works have already been explored many times before, Rego correctly points out that the theme of suffering has not been comprehensively addressed as a singular focus in existing research material. The one other study that shares the general trajectory of Rego’s work is a doctoral dissertation by Kathleen McManus entitled “The Place and Meaning of Suffering in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx” (University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, 1999).

Those initiated into the works of Schillebeeckx know how wide-ranging his epistemological underpinnings are. Like those before him who sought to explore Schillebeeckx’s theology, Rego devotes a good part of the early section of his book mapping the various influences that have factored into the great theologian’s thought journey.

The first chapter investigates the link between Schillebeeckx’s developing theology of suffering as it was marked and contextualized by his theological and philosophical formation. What would become a strongly anthropological perspective crystallized during his theological turnabout from a unitary Thomistic frame of reference to a more praxis-oriented one, imbued as it was with the principles of hermeneutics and the Frankfurt School of critical theory. The circumstantial background for this fecund stage in the evolution of Schillebeeckx’s thought was the wave of secularism and pluralism of the late sixties and most of the seventies. The second chapter builds on this and elucidates Schillebeeckx’s appropriation of the “new philosophies” in greater detail.

The third chapter explores the concept of “experience,” one of the important conjunctural elements of Schillebeeckx’s thought. Since his training under the mentorship of Dominican De Petter in the 1930s, Schillebeeckx had considered the primacy of experience itself as a point of departure for theology over the interpretive frameworks used to make sense of it. Rego also discusses the notion of “mutually critical correlation,” a methodological approach of Schillebeeckx’s later theology characterized by confrontation and dialogue between what he considers the two sources of theology—our present world of experience and the constant structures of Christian tradition.

Rego introduces a more direct elucidation of Schillebeeckx’s understanding of suffering in the fourth chapter. Consistently, Schillebeeckx approaches the phenomenon of suffering from the optic of the historical and experiential. Among the topics Rego explores are the distinction between “meaningful”
and “meaningless” suffering, the believer’s and nonbeliever’s experience of suffering, and “negative experiences of contrast,” a distinguishing concept of Schillebeeckx’s thought posited on the paradoxical human quest for a positive, redemptive moment within the crucible of an experience of suffering.

In the fifth chapter, Rego engages in a thematic examination of suffering in Schillebeeckx’s theology of revelation and creation. Of great interest in the chapter is the discussion on human finitude and contingency vis-à-vis what Schillebeeckx describes as God’s “defenselessness.” Schillebeeckx argues that the reality of evil and human suffering in human history cannot be attributed to a God of “pure positivity” who seeks the happiness of humankind.

Schillebeeckx’s understanding of suffering from a christological perspective is the central topic of the sixth chapter. For Schillebeeckx, the touchstone for any Christian valuation of the salvific meaning of suffering is Jesus’ own profound experience of suffering. Rego examines key topics drawn from Schillebeeckx’s *Jesus and Christ*—Jesus as the “eschatological prophet,” Jesus’ *Abba* experience, and Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection, in relation to his life. Rego concludes with chapter seven, noting that his study is a “modest attempt” to take up some new questions that have arisen since Schillebeeckx’s works were first introduced.

The modest project of Rego’s book is, at one and the same time, a strength and a weakness. Undergraduate researchers who may be daunted by the denseness and complexity of Schillebeeckx’s writings will certainly appreciate the book’s focus, structural clarity, and accessible language. Advanced scholars, however, will find Rego’s moorings too safe and hemmed in, never really exploring the critical correlation Schillebeeckx’s theology offers to concrete situations of suffering in the world today.

**Eternity Today.**

**Volume 1: On the Liturgical Year: On God and Time, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Candlemas.**


Reviewed by

**Edward Foley, Capuchin Catholic Theological Union**

This is an unusual publication for which academic and pastoral liturgists, preachers, and students alike will be very grateful. There have been few major monographs in English over the past three decades that have attempted to offer an overview of the history and theology of the liturgical year. Because of the complexity and vastness of the topic, scholars prefer to tackle discreet issues in the history and development of the church year through more focused articles. More often than not, monographs on the liturgical year lean toward the pastoral, with decidedly weak scholarly underpinnings. Connell, an associate professor in theology at Saint John’s University in Collegeville and a well-respected liturgical scholar, has successfully challenged that pattern with this rich and informative work.

Facile with the sources, Connell tackles a dazzling array of questions surrounding the historical development and theological complexities of the liturgical year as well as anyone writing in English today. Most impressive is the way he scrutinizes the groundbreaking work of Thomas Talley (d. 2005), whose *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (1986) was a landmark publication in late twentieth-century liturgical scholarship. While indebted to Talley’s work, he pushes
beyond the old Master’s conclusions to offer more nuanced and variegated opinions on such things as the origins of Christmas. His extended attention to Talley’s work, however, seemed to limit his engagement with some other scholars, and informed readers may be surprised at missing references to Patrick Regan, Susan Roll, Gabriele Winkler, and others.

While scholarly, even erudite, *Eternity Today* is anything but boring. Connell is as much at home with poetry, literature, theater, and film as he is with patristic sources and liturgical texts. When was the last time you encountered a liturgical work that invoked Emma Thompson and Ephrem the Syrian, or Quasimodo and Mark Doty, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, the short stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer, and lyrics from the musical *Rent*? I laughed out loud when I read Billy Collins’ “Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep A Gun In The House” in the introduction to the Easter Season (II:158). Yet Connell is not simply entertaining and certainly not pandering here. Rather, he effectively employs the lyrical, narrative, vulgar, and artistic to shed light on the progression of the liturgical year, which—at its heart and certainly in its history—has also been lyrical, narrative, vulgar, and artistic.

He is also to be applauded for addressing, albeit in a limited way, the cultural context in which he writes. His introductory section on “Time in the United States” (I:40–51), particularly the history of the railroads and the “battle for keeping local time,” was most enlightening. Given the multicultural nature of the U.S., however, it would be helpful if he avoided homogenizing references to “US Culture” (e.g., I:2; cf. I:119).

In many respects *Eternity Today* is essentially a work on the temporal cycle of the liturgical year: the first volume (after an introduction to “On God and Time”) spanning Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas; the second volume on Sunday, Lent, the Three Days, the Easter Season, and Ordinary Time. One could demur that there is no treatment of the week, so foundational to the very structure of the liturgical year; no concentrated overview of the astronomical factors of the earth’s rotation and phases of the moon that figured so prominently in calendric calculations; and limited attention to the sanctoral cycle. On the other hand, you cannot do everything. The two volumes as they stand are weighty without being formidable or overpriced. And Professor Connell, according to many academic standards, is still a relatively young scholar. Maybe in the years ahead we can hope that he will consider a companion volume to address some of these and other issues. In the interim, I will be adopting his current work as a text whenever I teach a course on the liturgical year, and will recommend it to those who plan worship, preach the cycles of the season, and others who wish to plumb the riches of this renewable spiritual resource with a sure guide. We are in this author’s debt for a publication that promises a very long shelf life.


*Reviewed by Gene Ahner*

*Catholic Theological Union, Adjunct Faculty*

Any collection of articles that includes authors such as Stanley Hauerwas, Alasdair MacIntyre, Fergus Kerr, and Wolfhart Pannenberg certainly deserves attention. Although the collection is from a conference that took place in King’s College, London, in 1997 and was only published in 2006, the editors
rightly judged that the merits of the articles stand the test of time.

While the title, taken from the original theme of the conference, seems rather abstract and even esoteric, the issue at stake is not. In effect, it is an exploration of the tensions involved in the more general theme of nature/grace, reason/faith transposed now into the practical realm of ethics/morals. Is there really a difference between Ethical Philosophy and Christian Morality? If so, what just might that difference be? The issue is far from academic. If ethics is truly an adequate, stand-alone discipline, then grace and faith become an afterthought, even if a divine afterthought. On that reading, then, it becomes easier, if not actually clearer, to dispense with the divine as an unnecessary superstructure that serves only to muddy the clear waters of rationality.

The strength of this volume is that it puts any discussion of ethics squarely into a theological perspective. There is no such thing as natural law and reason apart from God. God created us for participation in the life of the Father, Son, and Spirit. If that is our end, then morality is always about our way to God. We are made for friendship with God and with one another. That is the ground of the Decalogue and all moral action.

The limitation of the work is the opposite of its strength. Having firmly established the framework for all ethical reflection, it does not sufficiently explore the role of reason and ethics within that perspective. This would seem to be the next critical step to further the fruitfulness of faith in daily activity and in dialogue with the larger world. MacIntyre, Pannenberg, and Webster take up the challenge in some interesting ways that would merit further exploration, perhaps even the next such conference. They point to the fact that our understanding of ourselves, our world, and God is always fragile, open to deception and, at best, the halting achievement of a lifetime and not the result of clear, unencumbered, and enlightened reason. As Webster makes clear, conscience is not an independent primary moral notion but a derivative, set within the context of life destined for communion with God. One of the interesting surprises for the reviewer was to be led to the realization that Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth, those two great champions of the supposed divide of reason and faith, might be a lot closer than usually imagined.

Eleven authors approach an issue that is highly relevant to an age when practice seems to trump theory and when the future of our planet seems more in our own control than ever before. Their salutary message is that all action will only make ultimate sense within the framework of a destiny of our universe as revealed by God through Christ in the power of the Spirit. Therein is a personal and pastoral horizon that we all need to be reminded of as we go about the busyness of daily living and moral decision making.


Reviewed by Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp. Catholic Theological Union

Here is a book that, simply by its title, needed to be written. Female circumcision, sometimes specified as clitoridectomy, infibulations, or by equally graphic vocabulary, is a widespread and long-standing cultural practice that has provoked impassioned judgments, reactions, and responses from both insiders and outsiders, religious and human rights advocates, women and
men. And yet not everyone is adequately informed about the social facts or the rationale (whether explicit or implicit) behind it, about the immense variety of actual practices, or about the implications of trying to eradicate social institutions by direct or confrontational methods.

That millions of females—many of them still children—in myriad cultures are subjected to surgical procedures to modify their external genitalia is a social fact; that cultural-religious precedents and principles are invoked for their continuance is quite true; that custom and patriarchy are called as chief defendants and human rights and feminism as major plaintiffs is a familiar representation; and that “something has to be done” is an increasingly loud cry from many quarters and a significant catalyst for gatherings, discussions, and books like the one under review—this too is incontestable.

The book is warmly welcomed and endorsed by pertinent scholars (so the cover attests) and thus holds out much promise; and the author’s credentials are impressive: trained in medical and theological disciplines, she is a Kenyan woman concerned to state the nature, extent, and rationale for the practice, and to produce a cogent argument which, while acknowledging “cultural values” (including “religious”) in principle, defends the rights of women in particular not to be mutilated by fiat or immemorial custom. Trying not to overgeneralize, she restricts herself to Kenya, but without adequately acknowledging the enormous variety of cultures and practices and the different degrees of social awareness and social action among the population.

Because her medical and theological expertise and goodwill are not matched by her cultural-anthropological finesse, the author does frequently overgeneralize and elide many variables, which in turn leads her to produce an ambitious yet sometimes unconvincing script. She has read and consulted widely, but her analysis and synthesis are less than her bibliography promises. She can be uncritical of sources, selective in her arguments, and not infrequently wrong in her assertions.

What this means, ultimately, is that Female Circumcision is an unreliable guide for those really interested in this important topic; while my theological and anthropological sensibilities resonate strongly with the author’s, in your reviewer’s opinion this is not yet an adequate textbook. Although the author is to be commended for trying to present this very complex and urgent issue, the book is not as scholarly a treatment as might be hoped and as is surely still needed. Sometimes a little learning is a dangerous thing, for writer and reader alike.


Reviewed by Edmund Kee-Fook Chia
Catholic Theological Union

Professor Mahmoud Ayoub is without doubt one of the most prominent figures in the formal and academic dialogue between Christianity and Islam. He counts among the very few Muslims at home with both Islam and Christianity. A Lebanese Muslim, Ayoub came to the United States in the 1960s and earned a Ph.D. in the history of religions from Harvard University in 1975. He served in various teaching positions, and since 1988 has been professor of Islamic Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia. A well-published scholar, Ayoub’s research interest focuses on Islamic theological, historical, and cultural issues, especially as
they intersect with Christianity and Western civilization.

This volume is a collection of some of Ayoub’s critical essays written over a period of more than three decades. Ayoub’s scholarship reveals clearly that while he is a Muslim devoted to a Qur’anic epistemology, he is at the same time very committed to interreligious dialogue, especially with Christians and Jews. The sixteen essays that constitute this volume were pulled together by one of Ayoub’s own former students, Irfan Omar, himself a budding Muslim scholar of Islam and also thoroughly committed to interreligious dialogue.

The first part of the book establishes the context for Muslim-Christian relations. The five essays in this section explore why dialogue is sorely needed, especially in light of the less-than-perfect relations between Christianity and Islam over the centuries. Ayoub argues for dialogue not only through his interrogation of the Islamic tradition and sources, but also through those of Christianity. For instance, in a discussion on revelation, Ayoub points out that “the Muslim ummah was shaped by the Qur’an, while the New Testament is a product of the church” (11). For Islam, revelation is a book, while for Christianity it is a person. “A parallel has often been made by both Western and Muslim scholars between Christ in Christianity and the Qur’an in Islam—both the Word of God” (12). Christians and Muslims, therefore, have a duty to find out what God has revealed to them in and through their own religion, as well as to others in and through the other’s religious tradition.

Part two of the book examines comparatively theological and juridical themes that impact the two traditions. Ayoub explores what is meant by holiness, martyrdom, and redemption in both Christianity and Islam. He also takes up the issue of Dhimmah and what the Qur’an and Hadith actually say about the People of the Book. The third part of the book examines one of the most sensitive issues in Christian-Muslim dialogue, i.e., Christology. Ayoub discusses what Muslims refer to as the “miracle of Jesus” and how Muslims ought to appreciate the Divine Word. He acknowledges that some of his “reflections will be controversial, at least to Muslim readers” (111), but continues anyway since he is motivated by the Qur’anic challenge that there is but one God whom all humanity worships. The final part of the book is dedicated to exploring the state of Muslim-Christian dialogue in the modern world. Ayoub begins by plotting out what he refers to as “Qur’anic pluralism” as contrasted to the development of “Muslim exclusivism” (190). He also gives an overview of the issues that contemporary Muslim thinkers are raising in Muslim apologetics, as well as those used for the refutation of Christianity. Finally, Ayoub discusses the impact of Pope John Paul II’s views of Islam on Muslim-Christian relations as a whole.

Indeed, this is an invaluable resource for both Christians and Muslims. In the words of Ayoub: “Men and women of faith in both communities must learn to listen to the divine voice speaking through revelation and history, and together seek to understand what God is saying to Muslims through Christianity and to Christians through Islam” (229).


Reviewed by Dianne Bergant, C.S.A. Catholic Theological Union

Most people are aware of the revolutionary insights gained from the success of scientific accomplishments such as the Hubble tele-
However, they are frequently at a loss to understand how such new insights into the composition and dynamism of the universe fit with the religious teachings that they hold dear. Does new cosmology replace old theology? Or must religious-minded people dismiss as godless the claims of new science? It is to such dilemmas that John Haught speaks.

A senior fellow in the area of science and religion at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, Haught is considered by many to be an expert in his field of study. The author of several books on the subject, in this volume he treats aspects of physics, biology, and cosmology in order to discover what they might mean to Christian faith. He examines them through a double theological lens, namely, the kenotic humility or descent of God and God’s promise or the concept of futurity—two theological themes that play prominent roles in both biblical testaments. Within the contexts identified, he discusses questions such as miracles and limit experiences, the purposefulness of the universe, evolution and divine providence, death and resurrection.

Haught maintains that, despite the demystification of the natural world brought on by scientific discovery, “mystery still somehow impinges on human consciousness” (21). Though materialist scientists might contest this claim, Haught offers Einstein as an example of someone who believed as he believes that mystery remains, even after science. With exceptional ability and insight he leads his readers through many of the mysteries of both science and theology. In doing this, he shows them that science and theology need not be in conflict, nor need they be independent of each other. Though they are concerned with different aspects of the natural world, they can enhance each other’s quest for truth. He advocates the development of a new theology of nature that takes into account and respects new scientific insights. According to him, such a theology must address what he identifies as four infinites: the immensity of nature, its infinitesimal character, its complexity; and its future. He explains how these characteristics correspond to various theological beliefs.

The development of the kenotic or self-emptying nature of God may at first sound to some contradictory to the standard notion of omnipotence. However, Haught roots his line of reasoning in the biblical concept of divine self-giving, self-giving that is grounded in omnipotence. In like manner, the futurity of God can be seen in the divine promises and the eschatological movement found in the biblical tradition. Both these perspectives correspond to the newly perceived understanding of an evolving or unfolding universe. In this way, Haught does not dismiss standard understandings of God, but reinterprets them, thus demonstrating how science and religion are not necessarily opposed.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges theology faces is the Darwinian insight into evolution. Specifically, how can the notion of divine providence be maintained in the face of apparent accident, natural selection, and the deep time needed for the evolutional process? Haught admits the difficulty in dealing with such questions. The fact that our struggle in this area is only beginning does not exempt us from entering into it. Here, too, he argues for the development of a theology of evolution that takes seriously the notions promoted here: divine descent (kenosis) or humility and God’s future that is open to promise.

This book opens one up to the marvels of the world of which we are all a part, as well as the mysterious power behind and within that world, the power that we recognize as a self-emptying and promise-making God. It leaves the reader grateful for being a part of it all.


Reviewed by Tom Nairn, O.F.M. Catholic Theological Union

In the introduction to his book, Daniel Sulmasy explains his metaphor of “clinic” as Foucault’s understanding of “the scientific, pathological approach to medicine” that has been dominant since the Enlightenment (xi). Proclaiming that this approach is now dead, Sulmasy uses the rubric of “spirituality” to investigate an older and more holistic understanding of the art of medicine.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first part, he develops his understanding of medicine as a craft, and, using ancient texts such as the Hippocratic oath and the book of Sirach, maintains that medicine must remain a spiritual practice. In this section he investigates concepts such as dignity, vulnerability, and suffering, and concludes that medicine must be “conducted as a service with trustworthiness and fidelity” (83). The second part of the book looks to recent empirical research on the relation between spirituality and healing. After showing several flaws in this research both on empirical and theological grounds, Sulmasy does however suggest that physicians are not only permitted to attend the spiritual needs of their patients but that they must. He insists: “Attention to the spiritual needs of patients is a moral obligation. The only real question is how to put this obligation into practice” (169). The final part of the book deals with physicians and spirituality at the end of life and addresses such issues as praying for miracles and the basis for hope. He ends with a call for clinicians to acknowledge the loss they themselves feel when a patient dies.

Similar issues dominate Taylor and Dell'Oro's anthology of fourteen essays, the result of a symposium sponsored by Georgetown University's Center for Clinical Bioethics. The book's introduction offers a synopsis of the project: What began as an exploration into what medical ethics might look like if responsiveness to patient vulnerability were seen on a par with the accepted principles of autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence became a study of “more foundational questions about human health and flourishing” (vii). The book echoes several of the themes found in Sulmasy's work, including vulnerability, dignity, and integrity. Each essay has its particular contribution to make. Sulmasy's essay on dignity included in this volume, for example, could serve as the philosophical grounding for what he says about dignity in his own book. Also helpful are Margaret Mohrman's two working definitions of integrity and S. Kay Toombs' description of her lived experience of a debilitating chronic illness to show a patient's threefold vulnerability, seeing the body as threat, the environment as threat, and finally one's personal integrity jeopardized. Therese Lysaught uses the Epistle of James and its “nexus of touch/speech/prayer” (173) to deepen the understanding of vulnerability in illness and its healing. Christine Gudorf's evocative essay on relationality suggests that society should accept (return to?) “a decentring of sex/gender as core aspects of personhood and support sexual relationships as important but not exclusive avenues to intimacy and bonding” (200). Lisa Sowle Cahill also analyzes relationality through the lens of the Catholic
social tradition and maintains that theological anthropology must be “validated in practice” through those forms of social participation and engagement that enhance the common good (220). Ron Hamel’s essay on the public policy debate concerning health care as well as Kevin Fitzgerald’s short essay on scientific methodology both show the challenges and opportunities of using Catholic theological anthropology in a pluralistic society.

Both these works are good examples of the moral reflection being done today on the nature of medicine and the healing profession, a sort of reflection that goes well beyond the familiar discussions of clinical medical ethics. Both books should be read by physicians and by those who minister to them.


_Reviewed by Carmen M. Nanko-Fernández_ Catholic Theological Union

As a transfer student to The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., I spent my junior year wondering what Charlie Curran could possibly look like. Fueled by tales across the ideological spectrum in my home archdiocese, my youthful imagination conjured a theological Che Guevara. My search finally ended, but not as I expected. Much to my surprise, I had known Charlie Curran the whole time: he was the unassuming gentleman who greeted me by name on a regular basis in the hallway. He was more Jimmy Stewart than Che. In many ways this story captures the tone of _Loyal Dissent: Memoir of a Catholic Theologian_, the reflections of a hesitant chronicler of his own life and scholarship in service to a church that did not always appreciate his contributions.

In chapters one through seven, with dry wit and sensitivity, Curran retells the story of his journey as a moral theologian, beginning with a precocious childhood, complete with a propensity for picking winners in football pools (4). His Catholic upbringing nurtures a vocation to the priesthood, and his academic achievement results in a theological education in Rome that leads to doctoral studies. Formed by his time in Rome from 1955–61, he returns to Rochester to teach in the local seminary with an awareness of the “need for change and reform in the church” (7). Fewer than ten years after his ordination he is at the center of what becomes a watershed moment both for his career and the church. As a professor at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., he and several colleagues publicly dissent from the papal encyclical _Humanae Vitae_, maintaining that it is not an infallible teaching and that Catholics “could responsibly decide to use birth control if it were necessary to preserve and foster the values and sacredness of their marriage” (52).

While he wins the battle for academic freedom in this case, the long memory of the Holy See eventually catches up and Curran is deemed “neither suitable nor eligible to teach Catholic theology” (155–56). Twenty years after the initial skirmish, Curran loses his tenured job and the subsequent court case. Condemned by the Vatican, eventually Curran unexpectedly and successfully lands at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, accepting the Elizabeth Scurlock University Chair of Human Values, and at the age of fifty-seven becoming a homeowner for the first time in his life (179).

This autobiographical narrative, with painstaking and at times exhaustive detail, retraces the intersecting strands that shape the life and scholarship of an influential moral theologian considered by some as
controversial yet by others and by his own standards as moderate. The apparent oxymoron of the book’s title expresses well the trajectory of a teaching ministry characterized by a positive understanding of the role of dissent as an act of fidelity. Chapters eight through ten are especially enlightening as Curran reflects on the implications of his theologizing and the directions he sees emerging with the contributions of women, African Americans, and Latino/a theologians.

Curran understands himself as part of a greater tradition of reformers whose presence is necessary for the health of the church. He critiques triumphalistic viewpoints that he finds not only in conservatives but in liberals and progressives in today’s church. He appreciates and finds value in the tensions that are an unavoidable part of living in community and of accompanying “the sinful pilgrim church” (243). In keeping with his positive interpretation of dissent, Curran maintains that these struggles and tensions signify the church as a “living community striving to be ever more faithful to its covenant commitment” (243).

In the book’s final pages Curran writes, “I must confess that patience is not my strong suit” (252). This confession will come as a surprise to readers, for one cannot imagine the level of patience and hope necessary to survive—intact and faithful—the professional ordeal that Curran describes without even a hint of rancor. As with a number of theologians of his generation, Curran’s writing demonstrates awkwardness in dealing with his social location. This comes through especially in his tendency to collapse context with personality. Amidst the details emerges a portrait of a scholar and priest who survives the pain of hierarchical condemnation yet admits being hit by the “absence of grandchildren” (255), an energizing presence in the lives of his contemporaries but the vocational price he pays for his choices. However, it is his celibacy, he ironically recognizes, that has made it easier for him to publicly dissent as only he would be impacted by the consequences (257). In the end the reader is left not with a radical revolutionary but with a faithful and hopeful Catholic priest.


Reviewed by Gemma T. Cruz
St. Ambrose University, Davenport

This book is a collection of essays that came out of a series of lectures at St. Mary’s College, Twickenham, England, on the topic of “Mission and Evangelization.” Its unique feature is that it explores the topic through the prism of the many Roman Catholic movements that are operating throughout the world. The first problem is that the term “ecclesial movements” is very differently understood across the movements. Some are loosely knit while others have distinct centralized organizational structures. Some are exclusively lay while others have ordained clergy and even bishops and also religious among its members. Some have their members living on their own with their families while others form explicit communities and share lives in common. Some are strictly for Catholics while others are ecumenical and yet others have members coming from different religions.

The introductory chapter by the editor, Michael Hayes, speaks to this diversity but also offers some common themes that bring the movements together. Specifically, they all have the Second Vatican Council as their point of reference, especially “its universal call to holiness and to the active apostolate” (2). All these movements recognize that
aside from the institutional dimension of the church there is also the charismatic, which seeks to articulate how lay Catholics can be of service to the church and exercise their Christian vocation without being ordained or joining religious life.

The book, therefore, offers glimpses into the foundation, life, works, and contributions of a variety of international ecclesial movements. The first chapter provides an overview into ecclesial movements and their role in the life of the church. The next offers a sense of how the community of Sant’Egidio exemplifies the vision that the church ought to be a place “where everyone is welcome, but where a primary place is given to the unfortunate of society: a community gathered, in other words, to embrace the widow, the orphan and the stranger” (30). Another chapter offers a glimpse into the French-based Community of the Beatitudes founded by Brother Ephraim, and how it promotes consecrated families and especially the way entire families can live in community with one another. Another chapter explores the theology of evangelization as espoused by the Communione e Liberazione, a movement that sprung up from Milan through the efforts of Father Luigi Giussani among student youth. The work of the Schönstatt Community, in the meantime, was presented in terms of attachment theories and how it facilitates networking to assist people grow as Christians in the modern world. The approach to evangelization by the L’Arche movement of Jean Vanier, meanwhile, was examined against its foundational inspiration that rests on the doctrine that “God is especially with the poor and that in a mysterious way the poor are rich and carry gifts for the rest of us” (125). One chapter has the founder of the Spanish Neocatechumenate Way, Kiko Argüello, speak of his works in the area of Christian initiation and faith transmission. Another founder of yet another movement, Luis Fernando Figari of the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae that arose from Peru, shares his vision of what it means to be a lay faithful striving toward the fullness of Christian living. Finally, the well-known Chiara Lubich, late foundress of the Focolare, speaks to the centrality of Marian devotion in ecclesial movements.

As can be expected from an edited volume such as this, the chapters are uneven in quantity as in quality. Some are longer than forty pages while others fewer than ten. The content also differs radically and spans from historical overviews of the organizations to expositions of their theological thrusts to how they live Christian spirituality. Some chapters are written in a scholarly fashion while others seem more like personal reflections. But the book could serve as a good introduction to ecclesial movements for the uninitiated.


**Reviewed by**

**Dawn M. Nothwehr, O.S.F.**

*Catholic Theological Union*

Here is a fine, intelligent, and highly accessible undergraduate textbook on two foundational norms for Christian social ethics, love, and justice. Schubeck successfully achieves his goals of (1) interpreting, elucidating, and interrelating the meaning of love and justice; and (2) illustrating how these two virtues illuminate and help resolve contemporary moral issues. Schubeck maintains that love is the primary mover that energizes and guides justice. Yet, love is affected by justice insofar as justice gives structure, direction, and protection to it. In each of the seven chapters, Schubeck shows
more precisely how various thinkers understand the relationship between love and justice.

In a move particularly helpful for undergraduates, Schubeck begins his text with seven narratives from the lives of college-age students illustrating various experiences of injustice. He sets these up in light of Schillebeeckx’s “negative contrast experiences” and shows how such stories point the way to positive dimensions of justice and healing love that succors scars and restores life.

Chapter two unfolds biblical notions of love and justice. Here Schubeck probes the texts of Deuteronomy, Romans, and the New Testament parables showing the sources of love and justice as rooted in the characterization of God as compassionate, generous, merciful, forgiving, and healing. God’s justice liberates humanity from the slavery to sin.

Various dimensions of love and justice in the life of the early Christian communities—particularly in relation to violence, non-violence, and war are examined in the third chapter. The teaching of Jesus and St. Paul are explored concerning the love of enemies and evildoers. Schubeck illustrates the adoption of these teachings by Tertullian in opposing military service and by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his use of nonviolence in protesting the injustices of racism and segregation in the United States.

Chapter four takes up St. Augustine’s teaching on charity and justice. On the one hand, the two virtues serve to prohibit Christians from killing in self-defense. On the other, they serve to justify the conditions for killing in the defense of the nation; those conditions being the core of today’s “just war theory.”

Thomas Aquinas’s synthesis of theological ethics concerning love and justice, drawn from the teaching of Aristotle and Augustine, frames the discussion on chapter five. Schubeck explores Thomas’s claim that love and justice make common cause, directing all other virtues in support of the common good.

Love and justice as seen from the viewpoint of Protestant theologian and Christian realist Reinhold Niebuhr is the topic of chapter six. Schubeck places Niebuhr in his historical context and then unfolds his critique against racism and Marxism. These two protests illustrate Niebuhr’s understanding of the relationship of power, love, and justice, and how those work together in institutions and society at large.

John Paul II’s understanding of love and justice is discussed in chapter seven. Building on Aquinas, this pontiff held that love and justice are virtues that bring humanity to its full development and divine destiny. In this penultimate chapter, Schubeck shows how this renowned Pope brought justice and love to bear on issues of the twenty-first century, particularly international trade, the workplace, and socialist political and economic systems.

I recommend this book because it is solid and substantive in content, yet “user friendly” for readers. The ethical material is peppered with engaging stories illustrating the key points. For example, Aquinas’s understanding of the virtue of martyrs is illustrated using dialogue from the film Romero. In that same chapter, Thomas’s notion of common good is explained using a U.S. Civil War soldier’s letter to his wife and children. Each chapter ends with a list for further reading and a set of provocative questions for discussion. There are several helpful charts and sidebars to enhance the main discussion of the text and an index.

The text could be used for adult formation or discussion groups. However, the very strength of the book might make such use less desirable because so many of the illustrations are specific to the undergraduate audience.

Reviewed by Edmund Kee-Fook Chia
Catholic Theological Union

This is no ordinary book. It was written by Terrence Tilley and others. The “others” are his students of a graduate seminar course at the University of Dayton. Even if we didn’t know that, it would not be difficult to detect that this is a book of varied authorship, considering the writing styles differ considerably. Moreover, one can also tell that some chapters are the work of graduate students as they contain more citations and references than would be expected of a seasoned writer. In some instances the reader would be hard pressed to figure out the author’s thinking on the issue since the written piece looks more like a compilation of the thoughts of others. That in itself is not such a bad thing as it means having access to the actual theology of the principal proponents of the various positions that the book sets out to explore. These are the differing positions taken by Christian theologians on the phenomenon of religious diversity. Specifically, the book explores this as it relates to the North American context. Thus, the reader is led into a survey of the various theologies of religious diversity as posited by theologians over the decades since the Second Vatican Council. This begins with none other than Karl Rahner’s classical inclusivist approach with its famous theory of the “anonymous” Christian. The book then explores the more contemporary inclusivist theologies as advocated by Jacques Dupuis and Gavin D’Costa. Another chapter outlines the radical pluralist theologies represented by John Hick’s theocentric pluralism, Paul Knitter’s soteriocentric pluralism, and Roger Haigh’s Spirit Christology. Both the inclusivists and pluralists tend to be foundationalist in approach.

As a reaction to the foundationalists, the nonfoundationalists developed the particularist models. One chapter examines these models through the works of Augustine Di Noia and Paul Griffiths. Mark Heim has posited a radicalized version of the particularist model as represented by his theory of “many salvations.” Another form of nonfoundationalism is found in the comparative theology approaches with their emphasis on the praxis of dialogue. One chapter of the book interrogates the Buddhist-Christian comparative theologies of James Fredericks as well as the Hindu-Christian comparative theologies of Frank Clooney. Another chapter of the book looks at yet another related phenomenon, namely, the issue of multiple religious belonging: Roger Corless, who claims to be at once a Catholic and a Buddhist; Sallie King, the Quaker-Buddhist; and Raimundo Panikkar, who identifies as a Hindu-Buddhist-Catholic are prime examples of this.

Aside from the various positions taken vis-à-vis religious diversity the book actually sets out in the first three chapters to explore some basic foundations for understanding and assessing these positions. These chapters, written by Tilley himself, speak to the contextuality of all theologies, survey the cultural terrain of the United States, and establish a number of criteria for evaluating theologies of religious diversity. This last aspect deserves special mention as it constitutes the basis for the entire project. Specifically, it drew from Roman Catholic magisterial teachings to discern four key principles that must be adhered to if a theology of religious diversity is to be judged authentically Christian. Suffice it to say not many of the positions surveyed passed the test as these principles adhere closely to the concerns raised by Dominus Iesus, a docu-
ment of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith precisely issued to address the issue of religious diversity. If you are curious about what these four key principles are, you ought to get the book!


Reviewed by

**Thanh Van Nguyen, S.V.D.**

*Catholic Theological Union*

The First Letter to Timothy has been used frequently throughout history to silence women in worship and to exclude them from leadership positions in the church. Controversial passages like 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and others in this pseudo-Pauline letter have caused much damage to women. How then should one read this troubling epistle without blindly affirming the literal or fundamentalist interpretation? This short but thorough examination of the struggles for power in early Christianity by means of an interdisciplinary approach (social historical, political, cultural anthropology, and others) seeks to reconstruct the social context of First Timothy in order to read and better understand these troubling texts and practices.

Elsa Tamez is one of the first feminist liberation theologians from Latin America. She is the author of many books and professor of biblical studies (and former director) at the Latin American Biblical University (UBL) in San Jose, Costa Rica. Her latest book is an analysis of First Timothy done in a style that is different from other standard biblical commentaries. The book does not go through the letter from beginning to end but utilizes the whole letter, choosing related passages that deal with power relationships and struggles in the nascent Christian community at Ephesus and carefully analyzing them.

Besides an explanatory introduction and a concise conclusion, the bulk of the book contains four chapters. The first chapter examines one of the strongest conflicts, namely, power struggles in relation to social position within the patronage system, especially with the rich women who asserted their authority because of their power, wealth, and status. Chapter two analyzes the letter from the perspective of gender in the context of the cultural values of the patriarchal Greco-Roman empire. The third chapter studies the struggles between groups in the community that had different theologies and lifestyles in order to understand why the author condemned one theological position over the other. The final chapter looks closely at the criteria for leadership positions in the struggles for power. The book also has four helpful appendices: a graph of the socioeconomic structure of the Roman empire, introductory notes and full text of the Acts of Paul and Thecla, a chart on plurality in primitive Christianity, and a complete text of the First Letter to Timothy.

Tamez's analysis of the struggles for power in early Christianity is innovative and liberating, and her reconstruction of the social situation of First Timothy is provocative and challenging. She daringly points out that the appeal to patriarchal ideology to legitimate the suppression of women and their exclusion from leadership positions is unjustifiable and contrary to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Yet, unfortunately, it is still being practiced today in Latin America and in the church. Thus, Tamez's historical, social, and literary analysis and the reconstruction of the situation behind the text offer readers a better understanding of and appreciation for this canonical literature and
to dissent from the texts that depreciate and oppress women and the poor.

While this thin book might be considered an important recent contribution to the study of the Pastoral Epistles, it is certainly not for everyone. Although the translation is very good, it can be laborious to follow at times. While a synopsis of key concepts such as family, household or domestic codes, patronage, honor and shame, and the examinations of archaeological evidence are invaluable, they are often treated too briefly for a beginner, yet are too simplistic for advanced readers. As pointed out by the author, this book is only “a first step” (xxv) of a long project of reconstruction and interpretation of First Timothy. A second book is not only needed but is forthcoming to fill in the lacunae of this present book, a project that scholars will anxiously anticipate.


Reviewed by Thanh V. Nguyen, S.V.D. Catholic Theological Union

Who exactly were the Gnostics? Did they really exist at all or are they a mere creation of early Christian heresiologists, as many scholars have suggested due to the lack of correlation between the heresiologists’ accounts and the writings found at Nag Hammadi in 1945? This book addresses as well as challenges the current debate about the existence of Gnostics and provides a fresh perspective along with archaeological evidence of who precisely the Gnostics really were.

As a leading Gnostic scholar today at the University of Exeter, Alastair H. B. Logan painstakingly examines various forms of evidence—literary, sociological, and archaeological—to demonstrate that the Gnostic group or movement has all the hallmarks of a valid religious cult with distinctive beliefs and rituals emerging within Christianity. Unlike a sect, which is a deviant schismatic movement seeking to return to its original purity, the Gnostic group is an innovative and non-schismatic cult movement that originated within the Christian tradition.

The book consists of five solidly researched chapters. Chapter one briefly examines both external as well as internal evidence of the Gnostics, focusing on the character of the texts discovered at Nag Hammadi and the nature of its community. Logan demonstrates that, contrary to the prevailing hypothesis of a Pachomian monastic provenance and a heresiological character, the texts actually belong to a Christian ascetic Gnostic cult movement whose Scripture was mainly formed by the Apocryphon of John and the Gospel of the Egyptians and whose myth and ritual were encapsulated. Chapter two focuses on the evidence mentioned by pagan writers of the second and third centuries such as Celsus, Plotinus, and Porphyry. The information provided by these writers adds new insights on the existence, character, beliefs, and practices of the movement and at the same time correlates with and confirms the evidence given by the early Apostolic Fathers and the Nag Hammadi documents.

Chapters three and four deal with the Gnostics’ self-identity, responding to the question: How exactly do the Gnostics see themselves over against Catholics? In chapter three, after having established the claim that Gnostics were more of a cult and non-schismatic movement than a sect and schismatic movement like the Valentinians, Logan explores the issue of authority and tradition as revealed through the debate between Gnostics, Valentinians, and Catho-
lics. As a cult movement that introduces new ideas, Gnostics were remarkably independent of the New Testament and mainstream Catholic tradition while still claiming to be true Christians. In chapter four, Logan continues to develop—in more concrete and practical way—how the Gnostics understood themselves and their identity as Christians over against other Catholic critics by examining their rituals and focusing on their lifestyle.

Turning away from the literary evidence, Logan’s final chapter appeals to concrete archaeological and sociological evidence. The author claims that the Hypogeum of the Aurelii in Rome, with its marvelous and mysterious paintings, is actually a burial site of a Roman branch of the Gnostic cult with quasi-philosophical tendencies very similar to the Naassene Gnostics.

Despite the fact that the book consists of some reworkings of unpublished papers and lecture series, it is nicely organized into a cohesive whole. Logan informs the readers in the preface that the thesis of this current investigation emerges from issues arising from his previous book, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy* (1996), and from two other important books: Michael William, *Rethinking *Gnosticism*: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (1996), and Karen King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (2003). At any rate, Logan’s methodology is clear, and his argument is nicely defended. The thesis of each chapter is always clearly stated in the beginning and nicely summarized at the end to help the reader stay focused. In general, the book is easy to follow, providing helpful transitions, section subtitles, and detailed endnotes (although printed in very small-sized fonts).

Nevertheless, this book is not for everyone! While *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* offers new insights and fresh discoveries about the identity of Gnostics and the existence of Gnosticism, the book is written primarily for scholars in this field. For those who are not versed in this area of studies, the book can be very difficult to follow and cumbersome.