

Reviews



THE FEARLESS ORGANIZATION: CREATING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE FOR LEARNING, INNOVATION, AND GROWTH, by Amy Edmondson, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2019. 233 pages. \$30.00.

Are you maximizing the wisdom of the people within your ministry? As congregations and faith-based nonprofits face overwhelming challenges in the midst of unprecedented circumstances, their leaders might be overlooking their greater asset—their people. Organizations thrive in today’s complex, fluid environment when they unleash the knowledge and creativity of their people. Yet unleashing human resources requires more than simply placing smart, motivated people in the right roles; it entails creating an atmosphere where people feel free to share their “concerns, questions, mistakes, and half-formed ideas” (xiv) as they collectively engage their work. This is the critical dynamic Amy Edmondson identifies within “fearless organizations.” Her claim that psychological safety is a foundational aspect of organizational life does not seem earth-shattering. Yet as research points out, cultivating such a climate is extremely hard and requires overcoming many cultural forces.

Edmondson first discovered the power of psychological safety over twenty

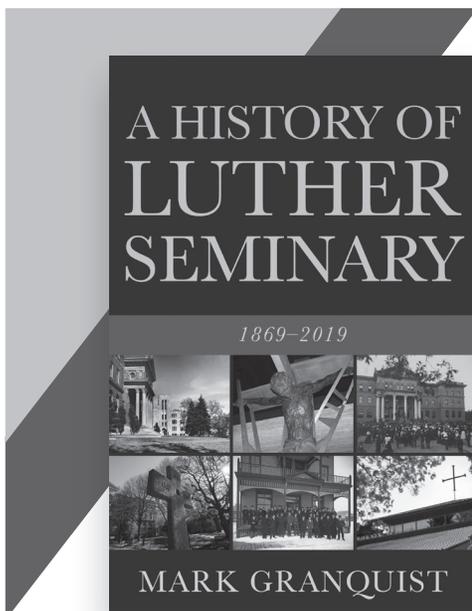
years ago while studying teamwork in hospitals. In the past two decades, studies have expanded the understanding of what it is, how it works, and why it matters within a wide range of settings. Edmondson’s work focuses on helping organizations that lack psychological safety cultivate it.

Psychological safety is “the belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking” (8). It is “a climate in which people are comfortable expressing and being themselves” (xvi). As a climate, it is experienced at a group, not individual, level and varies within subgroups. It has aspects of trust and respect, but is different. Trust, for example, is a person or organization’s ability to do what they promise to do, and psychological safety is related to the immediate interpersonal consequences of an encounter, making it dependent on the people and circumstances of each encounter. Psychological safety is an invisible force that contributes to the well-being of organizations because it promotes learning, encourages innovation, and increases personal engagement (xviii). In organizations where the challenges are complex and the work extremely interdependent, high expectations and standards are not enough. Without psychological safety, people with different ideas and perspectives are not willing to engage in productive conflict and/or to exercise the candor

necessary to perform at their highest level. While it is not the *only* important factor for congregations to thrive in today's environment, it is a foundational one. Edmondson has created useful tools to measure and enhance breakthrough practices that help organizations develop this capacity.

The book is organized into three sections. The first section introduces the concept of psychological safety and provides key findings from academic research. These chapters expand the concept of psychological safety and provide readers with an overview of its history and research. The second section presents real-world case studies of organizations that have both failed and thrived based on psychological safety. Their stories bring the concepts of the first section to life and help leaders imagine

how psychological safety manifests itself in everyday work. With case studies from organizations in both the private and public sectors, ministry leaders have various scenarios in which to see psychological safety at work. The third section addresses how to create fearless organizations, or "organizations where everyone can bring his or her full self to work, contribute, grow, thrive, and team up to produce remarkable results" (xx). One chapter within this section, "Making It Happen," is the gem of the book. This chapter outlines how leaders move these concepts from their head into their organizations. This chapter includes a typology of failure, a case for why everyone's voice is needed, and insights on designing structures that favor everyone's input. The self-assessment at the end invites leaders to begin this



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work by reflecting on their own leadership. While congregations and faith-based nonprofits were not noted in her research, the ideas and practices are easily translatable.

I recommend this book not only because it is easy to read (with summary notes at the end of each chapter), but because it calls attention to a critical dimension of ministry leadership—creating a climate where people bring their whole selves to the collective work and feel comfortable taking interpersonal risks. It makes sense that hospitals become fearless organizations, because the consequences of being silent or not exercising one’s voice may be a matter of life and death. While the work of ministry is less dramatic, the value of creating a psychologically safe climate is no less important. In fact, I propose that cultivating a fearless organization is exactly what congregations and nonprofits should be committed to doing. Organizations called to proclaim the gospel must also embody it. The interactions between ministry leaders and the ways organizations carry out ministry should reflect the blend of trust and respect Edmondson describes. Ministry leaders who set the stage for such a climate, invite ongoing participation, and foster productive organizational responses cultivate critical capacities that congregations and faith-based nonprofits need, especially in today’s challenging and unprecedented times. *The Fearless Organization* honors the gifts and wisdom of the people we lead and work with and will certainly be in my library of leadership resources.

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PEARLY GATES: PARABLES FROM THE FINAL THRESHOLD, by Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, n.p.: Thornbush, 2020. 118 pages. \$15.00.

Pearly Gates: Parables from the Final Threshold is an interesting book, though one that will require the proper setting for best effect. In order to understand it, a word must first be said about its publisher, Thornbush Press. Founded by the book’s author, Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, Thornbush Press began publishing in 2020 as an independent publishing house that “opts out of the zero-sum, lowest-common denominator, polarizing trends of mainstream publishing.”¹⁵ Hinlicky Wilson has lofty goals for the publishing house. The homepage of the website proclaims itself “The New Samizdat,” a reference to the Soviet-era practice of distributing censored manuscripts in secret. That sense of rebellion and provocation lies behind *Pearly Gates*.

Thornbush Press focuses on theological material, but with a focus on three “genres.” I’ve placed *genres* in quotation marks because Hinlicky Wilson plays with our expectations of genre and seems intent on molding new avenues for theological writing. She describes Thornbush Press as devoted to three types of books: curated catechesis, mystagogical realism, and transgenre theology. Helpfully, she categorizes *Pearly Gates* for us under the transgenre theology label. However, as with many things in *Pearly Gates*, there’s a twist. *Transgenre theology* refers not to a distinct type of theology, but rather to the efforts of a work to

¹⁵ <https://thornbushpress.com/>.

transcend the assumption that the academic monograph is the “proper place” to work out theology. As such, the category currently contains two memoirs in addition to *Pearly Gates*.

The question then arises: If *Pearly Gates* is not a monograph or a memoir, what is it? The book is a collection of thirty short narratives. The subtitle calls them “parables,” but a reader should be aware that these are not parables like those found in the Synoptic Gospels. The Gospel parables are set within broader narratives and are often offered in response to specific questions or situations. The narratives in *Pearly Gates*, on the other hand, occur outside of any larger frame. As a student of folklore genres, I must admit that if I were to classify them, I would call them fables. Though they do not feature talking animals, the style and approach of these narratives have more in common with Aesop’s fables than with Jesus’s parables. This is not meant as a criticism, but simply as a guide for a reader about what to expect from the work.

In each of the narratives, one or two characters, always unnamed, approach the pearly gates. Sometimes the narrative focuses on a character’s internal monologue, but mainly they center on the interactions between those approaching the gate and either an apostle or the Lord, both also unnamed. The categories and descriptors used for the characters are always broad. We meet, among others, “a mean-spirited old lady” (1) and “a man who worshiped and loved a lord who was not the Lord” (17). Most of the characters are simply described as “a man” or “a woman.” Some of the characters bring things with them; all of the characters bring expectations of what

entry through the pearly gates entails. The challenge of the book lies in the ways in which the apostle and the Lord subvert the expectations of both the characters and the readers.

Hinlicky Wilson ranges over a variety of theological topics through these narratives, among them hell, baptism, faith, and academics. Through all of them, a strong theology of Jesus as the suffering servant emerges (though Jesus is never mentioned by name). Themes from Isaiah 53 occupy many of the narratives, and many have an explicit focus on the Lord’s wounds as a means of healing, sometimes literally dwelling on the need to pass through the Lord and his blood to enter through the gates. Another common theme is the baggage that the characters bring and the ways in which the Lord or an apostle helps them to release that baggage before they can enter.

If the above description of the contents sounds vague, it is intentionally so. Hinlicky Wilson has painted these stories with broad strokes. As with Aesop’s fables, the broadness of the stories and their Everywoman/man quality will allow many people to see themselves and their concerns spoken to. That said, it is important to note that this is not a collection that is easily accessible. The writing assumes a hefty knowledge of Christian Scripture and theological debate. In addition, the vocabulary and the syntax are quite elevated, almost to the point of being antiquated, and some readers may struggle to parse phrases such as “beyond his ken.” Those concerns aside, *Pearly Gates* presents pastors and theologians with an alternative entry into weighty questions of Christian faith. This book could easily function as the center of a Bible study or adult education

group for readers ready to be challenged in their assumptions.

With regard to Thornbush Press as an independent publishing house, it must also be said that the book is beautifully designed and typeset. The type is clear and easy to read and the book is printed on quality paper. There are none of the defects that sometimes pop up with small print-runs, and Hinlicky Wilson should be commended for her commitment to high quality in the production of the book.

I also had the opportunity to preview the audiobook version of *Pearly Gates*, and as with the book itself, the production quality is high. The audio is crisp and clear, and I believe that readers will benefit from hearing the author read her own work. In addition to being weighty, *Pearly Gates* is dryly humorous, and that comes through in Hinlicky Wilson's reading.

In summary, as I remarked at the beginning, *Pearly Gates* is an interesting book. It is not for everyone, but Hinlicky Wilson has succeeded in writing an engaging theological work outside the monograph genre, and I look forward to further entries within the category of transgenre theology from Thornbush Press.

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THE BIBLE IN A DISENCHANTED AGE: THE ENDURING POSSIBILITY OF CHRISTIAN FAITH,
by R. W. L. Moberly, Grand Rapids:
Baker Academic, 2018. 217 pages.
\$22.00.

In March of 1860, the Oxford classics scholar Benjamin Jowett published

an essay titled "On the Interpretation of Scripture." In what was a viral bombshell in its own time, Jowett argued that one should "interpret the Scripture like any other book."¹⁶ His point was not to disparage the Bible but to open it up to questions that would let its true light shine. In the present day, most biblical scholars would rush past Jowett's claim without even the slightest raise of the eyebrow.

In practice, however, most Christians (including Christian biblical scholars) do treat the Bible as if it had a privileged status—as if it were *unlike* any other book. In *The Bible in a Disenchanted Age*, renowned biblical scholar R. W. L. Moberly insists that Christians honestly account for this often unexamined assumption. Writing both as an academic at Durham University and as a priest within the Church of England, Moberly frames the issue in this way:

Most Christian scholars who advocate approaching the biblical documents "like any other book" nonetheless still take for granted the (in one way or another) *privileged* status of the biblical documents and see no need to make a case for this privilege. That is, they assume that certain documents constitute a Bible, that biblical content merits extensive and searching historical and comparative study, and that the results of such study will highlight the special qualities of the material and its enduring significance for knowing God. In other words, the book itself

¹⁶ Benjamin Jowett, "On the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Essays and Reviews: The 1860 Text and Its Reading*, ed. Victor Shea and William Whittle (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 504. Moberly discusses this text on page 13 of *The Bible in a Disenchanted Age*.

remains in some way unlike other books. But unless some account is offered as to why the Bible is not like any other book, it becomes ever less clear that one should continue to value and privilege the Bible and its contents in the first place. Why bother to study these ancient documents rather than others, and why assume that the results of one's study should have more than antiquarian or general cultural interest today? (19)

Even though Moberly lives and teaches in a European context, his framing of the problem is relevant for American audiences as well, albeit with a few unique qualifications. In the current moment, Americans are in a protracted public conversation about how to relate

to their past—and in particular, elements of their past that are connected to the enslavement of Africans and the mistreatment of Native populations. This long-overdue conversation expresses itself in the form of debates about Confederate monuments, building names, school curricula, sports team mascots, etc. The Bible is caught up in the fray as well since biblical texts have been used in some cases to bolster arguments and ideologies that place the weak under the heels of the strong. Given these realities, Moberly's larger point is correct that the church needs to have a vigorous debate about why the Bible should be privileged at all.

Moberly approaches his problem through a series of exegetical case studies featuring Daniel 7's vision of "unending dominion" and the *Aeneid* 1's vision

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of “limitless empire.” Through exegesis of these two texts, he probes the following questions: How does the biblical content differ from the content of other religious traditions? On what grounds should credence be given to the biblical texts’ depictions of God? In all of this, Moberly’s stated goal is not “to add to the literature in which scholars claim, or conversely deny, the ‘superiority’ or ‘uniqueness’ of biblical material in relation to other ancient material” (30). The larger, more important issue concerns “the nature of the grounds (if any) whereby ancient religious and cultural traditions can be considered enduringly significant (i.e., ‘classics’), and the nature of the grounds (if any) whereby particular ancient traditions, of which individual texts are an expression, can today still be considered to have enduring truth content about God, humanity, and life (i.e., to be ‘Scripture’)” (30). In sum, why would a person choose to trust or believe Daniel 7 over *Aeneid* 1?

Moberly does not provide easy answers to the nettlesome questions he raises. If he did, his arguments would be justifiably suspect. He does, however, offer a number of reflections on Scripture that are important to consider in the disenchanted age in which we find ourselves.

First, one cannot understand the Bible’s privileged status apart from the communities that persistently place it at the center of life, practice, and theological reflection. In order to understand the Bible’s privileged status, one must first understand the “social nature of belief and knowledge” (156). At this point, Moberly draws on the concept of “plausibility structures” to explain the Bible’s privileged status among Christian churches. Plausibility structures are the “social and cultural contexts within which people live regularly” and which

“make a difference to the understanding of life that they hold to be true” (93). The Bible’s unique status does not exist as a detached cultural phenomenon, but only in the ecosystem of the church’s life. Moberly argues, “The biblical portrayal of human nature and destiny will present itself to consciousness as reality only to the extent that its appropriate plausibility structure, the Christian church in its many forms, is kept in existence” (101). The persistence of biblical faith is not sufficient reason to believe that it is true, but “it remains a necessary condition” (157). Canon, community, and truthfulness are intertwined.

Moberly’s second point is to highlight the long Christian history of learning and debate that refines and clarifies “belief in terms of what it should and should not entail” (159). Here he argues that “the persistence and the development of that ancient faith in its Christian frame of reference make it possible for believers today to enter into a belief in God that is not identical to, but does stand in real continuity with, that of ancient Israel” (159). The biblical canon is itself a monument to that learning. The longevity of the Christian faith alongside the vigorous discourse that has marked its trek through history are cause for taking the claims of the Christian faith seriously.

Moberly’s third argument concerns the subject of “revelation” itself. How can one speak of revelation—as one sees for instance in the apocalyptic sections of Daniel—while living in a modern, disenchanted world in which knowledge and truth ought to be empirically determined? For Moberly, the problem is our misconception of “revelation.” If one thinks about revelation as something that stands in stark contrast to what one observes in the observable world, then it is easy to dismiss revelation as nothing

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more than a religious “trump card” used to silence disagreement and assure believers that they possess the truth (160). Instead, following Nicholas Lash, Moberly argues that “the search for God is not the search for comfort or tranquility, but for truth, for justice, faithfulness, integrity: these, as the prophets tirelessly reiterated, are the forms of God’s appearance in the world” (160). He goes on to say that “it is in human life that is responsive to God, and so demonstrates the qualities and priorities of God, that God is to be encountered” (161). It is in the concrete realities of human life that Jesus himself is revealed in his divinity.

In his learned and insightful volume Moberly courageously addresses one of the church’s most significant and pressing challenges: how to account for its privileging of the Bible as Scripture. With so many other available authorities, Christians are increasingly hard pressed to explain why these ancient texts, with their antiquated and sometimes shocking depictions of reality, should be pondered, believed, and obeyed. Readers will not find easy answers in this volume. But what they will find is a thought-provoking set of reflections from an astute theological interpreter of the Bible.

Michael J. Chan
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SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, VOLUME 2: PROCESSIONS AND PERSONS, by Katherine Sonderegger, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020. 580 pages. \$49.00.

The second volume of Katherine Sonderegger’s *Systematic Theology*, on the

processions and persons of the Trinity, identifies a problem with twentieth-century theology. She scrutinizes the tendency to build out the doctrine of the Trinity from the stories in the gospels by then projecting trinitarianism backward onto the Hebrew Bible and forward into our own social situations. Sonderegger joins a growing body of research that seeks to move past the trinitarian revival commenced by Karl Barth and codified in Rahner’s rule that the immanent and economic Trinity are identical. In Sonderegger’s case this means that the Trinity is not an aspect of God’s proximity to humans in scriptural revelation, the person and work of Jesus, or the current experience of God’s presence. She takes the opposite approach in *Processions and Persons* and attempts an account of God’s inner life premised on God’s unapproachable distance.

Sonderegger is critical of the current state of trinitarian theology. She opens with an inventory of her dissatisfactions with the majority report. Starting with her plea for the primacy of Israel, she then lays out some reservations with the tendency to conflate the Trinity with Christology and soteriology. Though charitable, Sonderegger censures some celebrated theologians in the process—for example, Robert W. Jenson. Though he is usually read as an advocate for the centrality of the Hebrew Scriptures in trinitarian doctrine, Sonderegger contends that Jenson is especially guilty of plotting the content of God’s inner life from the story of the gospels and then reading it into Israel’s Bible. In this analysis, Jenson’s errors amount to a compression of the Trinity into a soteriology mined from the life of Jesus.

Sonderegger holds that compressing the Trinity into other topics will not sustain its intellectual legitimacy.

She names this compression “regional” because it takes the Trinity as Christianity’s distinctive feature compared to its alternatives. Aquinas and Barth supply their own unique kinds of regionalism. Yet Sonderegger seeks a trinitarianism that makes Christianity sensible, not distinctive. It is therefore bound up with a recovery of metaphysical realism. The Trinity is not identical to the gospel, but is the trace of the real outside the human mind. Realism resists reduction to one phenomenon, a single doctrine, or a method of correlation between theology and philosophy. The Trinity pervades our encounter with everything real according to Sonderegger’s rescued trace of the Trinity in the world and human experience.

What should those who are accountable to Scripture make of Sonderegger’s recovery of metaphysical realism? She rejects neat divisions between biblical faith and pagan wisdom, suggesting instead that the Bible is properly metaphysical because it includes the real. Scripture is not a mere manual for speaking correctly of the gospel’s God, but is a mirror of the real in which we behold divine glory. Reading the Bible means much more than genre analysis: ideas are not just artifacts of style or culture, but they reach for what is true about the world.

Sonderegger makes Leviticus the primary scriptural text in her exposition of God’s internal life. This is sensible because Leviticus is the book of Israel’s holiness—containing as it does the detailed instructions by which the people are to manage ritual purity. What Sonderegger does with the priestly literature is discern a pattern that discloses God’s life. This pattern is one of divine holiness, which means divine separation and transcendence. Sonderegger’s work

with Leviticus encourages us to read the persons and processions of the Trinity as this holy fire of God’s distance. But Leviticus also teaches us that God’s holiness sanctifies. Transcendence might mean that God does not need creation just to be God. But Sonderegger proposes that there is a sacrificial element to holiness. God’s personal self-offering means that holiness-as-sacrifice should be interpreted as a gift.

Sonderegger draws *Processions and Persons* to a close by reflecting on the metaphysical uptake of her recovered realism. She uses modern set theory to provide an account of divine infinity as “structured infinity.” Set theory is not a warrant for the Christian claim that God is both infinite and personal. What it provides is a glimpse, or trace, of the infinite that can be pressed into service for dogmatics and indicate its general intelligibility outside a distinctively Christian grammar. Rather strangely, Sonderegger postpones her explicit treatment of the persons of the Trinity for a brief final section. These remarks are punctuated by a series of intriguing observations. One such is her proposal that the Spirit is that person of the Trinity in which the “Absolute Holiness” of the divine infinite is named (566).

Processions and Persons is no small book. A number of stylistic habits blunt its often provocative reflections on God’s life. Sonderegger has a tendency to capitalize nouns—perhaps to articulate their importance for the reader. But the pattern she uses does not make its purpose very clear. The prose also tends to wander, with adjective heaped upon adjective. Unfortunately, the clarity of the argument suffers especially where summary is in order. Sonderegger adds her voice to an expanding consensus that questions the centrality of

the gospel and the life of Jesus in many of the trinitarian theologies produced in the previous century. If Sonderegger is to be believed, then mysticism and speculation must occupy that space from which the gospel story has been evacuated. A metaphysically attuned reading of the Bible must also purify the typically Protestant passion for the literal sense of Scripture's words. It will be for Sonderegger's careful readers to determine if all of this amounts to a new apologetic for the Trinity's public intelligibility or an unfortunate reduction of the gospel's dogmatic centrality.

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**SANCTUARY: BEING CHRISTIAN
IN THE WAKE OF TRUMP**, by
Heidi Neumark, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. 226 pages. \$24.99.

Full disclosure: A few summers back, our family took a road trip with long stops in Washington, DC, and Manhattan. We stayed in the vacant parsonage of a friend near the Capitol, and then in Manhattan we slept on the floor of a room on the second floor of Heidi and Gregorio's home/parsonage. In other words, I know the author of this book, Heidi Neumark, and it colors how I review it. I've slept in her home, watched the cat make its way around her kitchen, toured the church, gone out to eat with them at favorite breakfast nooks, and sat up late in the front room discussing life and church while listening to the sounds of the city. In the case of *Sanctuary: Being Christian in the Wake of Trump*, however, this collegial intimacy

serves as an asset to reviewing the book, precisely because the book offers, more than almost any pastoral memoir I've ever read, a real glimpse into the life and thought-world of Heidi Neumark as a pastor.

Early in my career as pastor, perhaps maybe even for the majority of my career, I tended to read books by pastors about their successes—in particular, books about how they grew their church. There's a lot of pressure to read such books, and I guess also pressure to write them, inasmuch as they sell and inasmuch as those of us who haven't grown our churches into megachurches maybe want to learn from those who have. That's not this book. Not even close. What you get in *Sanctuary* is something else, something rare, something almost unheard-of written into book form. You get a glimpse into the church as manger/shelter for homeless LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults, church as slowly falling apart building in gentrifying Manhattan, church as honest as honest can be woman pastoring among the poor in a city that has regularly built itself up off the suffering and disenfranchisement of those poor.

Reading the book, it is as if you yourself are the parsonage, attached if ever so tenuously to the side of the church. For a brief moment, you are an anchorite. Reading it, you get not just a glimpse into church as sanctuary, but by necessity an invitation into the vulnerability of being such sanctuary.

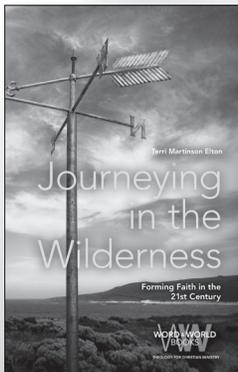
The future of the church is in cages with children. The future of the church is profiled and choked and left dead on the street. The future of the church is hiding under a desk and in a nightclub bathroom as bullets fly. The future of the

church is with a Black, transgender woman mocked and shot in the heart. The future of the church is in the belly of a whale stuffed with plastic garbage and lying lifeless like the body of a dead migrant child washed up on the shores of the Rio Grande. If the church is not in these places of crucifixion, the church is not with Jesus, and if the church is not with Jesus, we are lost and have no future. (11)

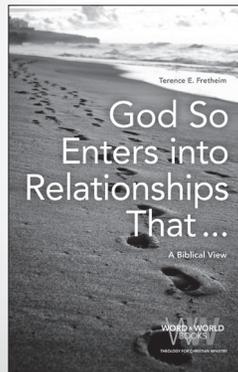
Heidi has an amazing sense for liturgy, if you are willing to consider liturgical ideas that arise on the outskirts beyond the walls of high-church orthodoxy. The first chapter is titled “Putting Herod Back in Christmas,” which, as you might guess, includes a Herod in the Christmas pageant who closely resembles the Herod of 2020.

More generally, the entire book is organized by the church seasons—Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Ordinary Time, Christ the King Sunday, Advent. That said, read the book and you may never again think of any of these seasons in quite the same pietistic manner you’ve been trained into. One thing I love about the book, among many: the chapters are more like shards, explorations, forays into what sanctuary as being Christian means in the wake of Trump. The closest book I can think of that might be a model is *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* by Reinhold Niebuhr. I appreciate this approach, a book that is more of a notebook with entries in it, because it so authentically portrays the life of a pastor. Those of us who pastor in complex communities are aware of how piecemeal

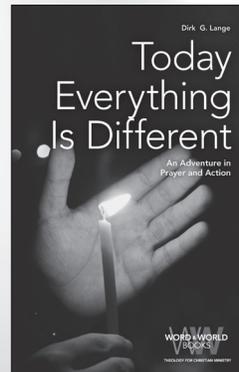
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everything is, how the meaning of something sometimes never emerges, or if it does, it comes surprisingly late and in the middle of some other moment.

Heidi is a profoundly political theologian. She has a distinctive enough voice that she ends up representing the faith on national shows like *Good Morning America*. But she also wears such political faith lightly, perhaps because it's never a posture or empty rhetoric for her. She lives it, and abides among people who live it. Heidi is also a great teacher of pastors. Over the course of her long career first in the Bronx and now at Trinity Lutheran in Manhattan, she has hosted handfuls of interns. Many of these interns have gone on to help shape ministries in far-flung locations around the country. She models pastoral ministry in a way that frees those interns to be their own selves. She tells many of their stories, and names their names in this book, a way of honoring the student I've rarely encountered in any published text.

Perhaps a word I could use to describe this book is "raw." This isn't to say that it lacks finish or isn't polished enough. I get the real sense the book is raw because it is intended as such.

Because that's how we're all feeling right now, and a church sensitive to being Christian in the wake of Trump is going to be raw. Whether you'd like to spend time with Heidi in her work at Trinity Place, the LGBTQIA+ homeless shelter, or get some solid liturgical insights through her worship experiments, or see how to do and be vulnerable church in public right under the nose of empire, or whether you'd like to journey with her to the border to see how the church is practicing sanctuary in the "sanctuary" sense of that word, I recommend this read. It's not long. It's not difficult. But it's guaranteed to give you a different

sense of church than almost any book you've ever read. Which is something we really need right now.

One snippet, for a taste of how Heidi weaves together her meditation on church life with the invitation she had to ensure it was a reflection "in the wake of Trump":

Counting, as Donald Trump understands, is never neutral. I don't think it's any coincidence that, as the Gospel of Luke tells us, Jesus was born during a census. God came to earth not only in a manger; God came to earth during the season of counting. Every time I read a newspaper article about the census, every time I hear the president on the news inflating numbers, I am reminded that we can put our own counting to various ends. For women, for the dispossessed, for immigrants, for the precariously housed, for queer people, for all of us, our counting can advance, or it can prevent, the kind of community Jesus always seeks. (169)

Finally, there was one revelation in Heidi's book I'd never heard before, or read anywhere, and this tidbit has totally transformed the end of the church year for me. It's in her chapter on Christ the King Sunday.

For churches that follow a calendar of liturgical seasons, Christ the King Sunday falls on the final Sunday of the church year, the Sunday before Advent, crowning the year. It's a relatively recent addition to the calendar that was introduced by Pope Pius XI in 1925 as the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. In 1925, in Italy, where the pope lived,

Benito Mussolini, the leader of the National Fascist Party, had claimed that supremacy for himself. Over in Germany, also in 1925, Hitler had published his antisemitic manifesto, *Mein Kampf*, and rose in his bid for absolute power as the leader of the Nazi party. In light of these political developments, Pius XI decided to boldly assert that Jesus Christ is the one who reigns supreme and to remind Christians

that their allegiance is to their spiritual ruler, Jesus Christ, as opposed to any earthly leader who claimed supremacy. (183)

I'll just leave that right there. Christ the King Sunday is anti-fascist . . .

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