

“Hebrew Bible” (by Kristine Henriksen Garroway) and “New Testament” (by John Martens). These chapters go well beyond biblical texts to consider other sources of each era, as well as archaeological evidence that has the potential to expand and inform biblical exegesis. The remainder of the chapters in the book take up either particular texts—there are two chapters that consider the thorny challenges proposed by 1 Corinthians 7, while another considers the theme of diasporic childhood in Esther—or important intertextual themes, such as using contemporary understandings of traumatic violence and its impact on children as a lens for interpreting conflict narratives and their aftermath in the Hebrew Bible. Another important distinction of this book is that, whereas the 2008 volume was mostly written by professors teaching in Christian colleges and seminaries, this book is largely written by religion professors working at public universities. As such, although it has vital relevance to those doing biblical exegesis work related to children, it has a potentially wider audience.

This book fulfills each of the expectations a reader who understands the nature and purpose of the series it is part of may have. Its comprehensive approach to its subject matter and the thoughtful selection of a wide variety of authors—many of whom have already made notable contributions to the field—provide an excellent primer for anyone new to the topic and will be a reliable reference in the years to come as this field continues to develop. At the same time, with the global growth of research related to children, it is hoped that both this field of study and future editions of this text might be able to diversify their contributions beyond white Euro-American authors to embrace perspectives from scholars throughout the rest of the world who have often experienced childhoods more strikingly like those of the biblical world than we do in the privileged West.

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Catholic Discordance: Neoconservatism vs. the Field Hospital Church. By Massimo Borghesi. Translated by Barry Hudock. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2021. viii + 271 pages. \$29.95.

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In *Catholic Discordance* Massimo Borghesi, who teaches moral philosophy at the University of Perugia, offers a timely sequel to his 2018 *The Mind of Pope Francis*. His controlling question is: Why does the pope’s program for pastoral renewal meet so much organized opposition in the

United States? As he puts it, “American Catholicism exists on a different wavelength from the Francis pontificate; indeed, it does not seem to have the antennae necessary to receive and understand it” (14).

In brief, he argues that, post-Soviet economic globalization, with an anti-Islamic, pro-“Western” values accent after September 11, 2001, led to the ascendancy of a neoconservative “Catho-capitalism,” represented by Michael Novak’s earlier *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (1982), and the trio of Novak, George Weigel, and Richard Neuhaus, already baptized in Italy in 1992, as “a stars & stripes trinity” (17, n. 36). This “new form of ‘Catholic Americanism’” (16 and throughout) distorts Catholic social teaching in a free-market direction and promotes culture wars focusing on a narrow moral agenda.

In Borghesi’s reading, US resistance to Francis is no accident. The pope’s own experience of this “neoconservative project of global liberal [used throughout in the European sense of *capitalist*] world order under American hegemonic rule” (28), for example, the Argentine economy’s collapse in the early 2000s, has shaped his thought and his pastoral program. To the extent that both influential and ordinary American Catholics really believe with Novak that unbridled economic self-interest works toward the common good, they must resist Francis’ program. Complicating this analysis is the rise, after the crash of 2008 and Obama’s presidency, of what Borghesi’s calls “theo-populism,” a combination of radical traditionalism and devotion to the free market, as seen in a figure such as Archbishop Viganò, the “bard of Catholic Trumpism” (11).

Borghesi makes the case in three chapters. The first, longest (130 pages), and most important is called “The Fall of Communism and the Hegemony of Catholic Americanism.” It is followed by “The Pontificate of Francis and the Crisis of Globalization” and “A Church that Goes Forth and a Field Hospital” (only thirty-nine pages). An introduction and conclusion bookend these chapters and, absent the war in Ukraine, locate the book squarely in the present. Introductory and concluding vignettes contrast the solitary figures of Pope Francis praying in St. Peter’s Square on March 27, 2020, the beginning of COVID-19 lockdown, and the solitary figure of President Trump on the White House Lawn, leaving office on January 20, 2021. COVID-19 and the election of President Biden have, in Borghesi’s analysis, interrupted the rise of theo-populism and given Francis’ program some temporary breathing room.

Chapter 1 presents Borghesi’s case as summarized previously. He emphasizes the understudied neoconservative invasion of Italy and dissemination of “Catho-capitalism” there and in eastern Europe. He also treats in detail David Schindler’s devastating and much ignored theological critique of the neoconservative project as resting on a dualist theology of nature and grace that

allows a privately Catholic interior to rest comfortably in a system of institutionalized economic self-interest.

My summary fails in justice to Borghesi. He allows neoconservative voices and their critics, in both Italy and the United States, to speak for themselves. Lengthy citations give depth to such phrases as “Catho-capitalism.” For those who know Francis’ thought, chapters 2 and 3 cover familiar ground. What makes them important, however, is Borghesi’s framing Francis’ program as a real Christian alternative to the neoconservative project of neoliberal world order. For example, Francis is as opposed to abortion as any US culture warrior, but his opposition is based on a broader, gospel-based rejection of “throw-away” culture rather than on a beleaguered defense of select “Western” values.

Questions remain. Most important: What were Popes John Paul II and Benedict doing while neoconservatives hijacked their thought? Though he is careful to distinguish authentic papal teaching from neoconservative manipulations and cites contemporary critiques of these distortions in detail, Borghesi’s narrative portrays the popes as passive victims. For example, if “the neocons entered the Italian publishing market in force” (97) in the 1990s, who financed them? Who finances the “Centesimus Annus Seminar on the Free Society,” founded by Novak, Weigel, and Neuhaus, renamed the “Tertio Millennio Seminar” in 2000, and meeting annually in Krakow since 1994 (73, n. 67)? Borghesi fails to follow the flow of conservative US Catholic money. Nor does he ask if this money was the price of watered-down social teaching.

Catholic Discordance is, nevertheless, an indispensable book for a changed era. No one knows the thought of Pope Francis better than Borghesi. His compelling framing of it as an intentional alternative to “Catho-capitalism” and “theo-populism” should be part of courses and faculty discussions on Catholic social teaching and the thought of Pope Francis. Highly recommended.

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The Sacraments and Consumer Culture. By Timothy Brunk. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2020. xv+ 212 pages. \$24.95 (paper).

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In this provocative and well-researched text, Timothy Brunk applies careful scholarly analysis to one of the most insidious pastoral problems facing celebrating communities today, the consumer attitude toward the sacraments and the liturgy. Brunk approaches the issue through a systematic