

Her chapter on spirituality (chapter 2), in which Nouwen and Palmer figure prominently, is a beautifully crafted explanation of how the disciplines of prayer, solitude, fasting, celebration, and service prepare Christians for hospitality to others. She argues that these spiritual disciplines, which “cultivate receptivity to the Spirit of God[,] are necessary to a full and flourishing practice of hospitality” (41). In this way, she unifies the all-too-often separated internal/external, spiritual/worldly states of being, showing that a person becomes better able to live hospitably with others as she lives hospitably in her own spiritual life.

Nowhere is the influence of Catholic Worker more apparent than in chapter 5, where Wroblewski discusses the writings of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, as well as the practices of Catholic Worker communities around the country. She does not call everyone to follow exactly in the footsteps of the Catholic Worker and founders, since she realizes that people are capable of offering hospitality to different degrees. Instead, she offers Catholic Worker as a prophetic voice urging people to move beyond their comfort zones toward a more hospitable presence in their homes, churches, and even political lives. This chapter illustrates the most important points of Wroblewski’s theological arguments in a relatable format that even students not well versed in theology will understand, which makes it accessible to a wide audience.

As the title suggests, *The Limits of Hospitality* addresses the limits that people must place to make hospitality possible. However, the arc of Wroblewski’s argument challenges the excessive limits to hospitality that the privileged erect either out of fear or for their own comfort. Through well-constructed theological arguments and compelling examples, Wroblewski gently nudges her readers beyond their limitations and into lives lived in the expansive embrace of God. Because it is laced with personal illustrations that make her theological arguments accessible, the book is well suited for undergraduates and will be a valuable resource in any academic or church library. Moreover, because it challenges the status quo while being theologically and spiritually sound, this book will be valuable to graduate and divinity students who are preparing their minds and hearts for a life better lived in Christ’s hospitable grace.

REBECCA MEIER-RAO

Edgewood College

Kierkegaard’s Concept of Faith. By Merold Westphal. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. x + 284 pages. \$35.00 (paper).

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Is this book a fair description of Kierkegaard's position on faith? Yes, in a sense it is. Merold Westphal has spent his life working on Hegel and Kierkegaard. Some of his earlier work I found admirable. But this book? Well it's not useful to me. This is not my Kierkegaard. Nor my God.

Westphal is deeply biblicist. And displays what one must name "American" relativism. (Even Derrida, not least, fought against such an interpretation of his work.) I find this position dangerous; what will protect us when fascism rears its head?

The book is based on Kierkegaard's central works for the understanding of "faith" (*Fear and Trembling, Fragments, Postscript, Sickness unto Death, and Practice in Christianity*), and divided according to his pseudonyms. It is a narrow (as I will explain) depiction of Kierkegaard's position, together with useful reference to Hegel and comments on (and often polemics against) other scholars.

So what's the problem? That is perhaps best answered by considering what does not appear on the horizon; or, to change the metaphor, what falls through Westphal's grid.

Reading Westphal on *Fear and Trembling* and *Fragments*, one could not imagine that in his youth Kierkegaard had, through his study, been forced to lay Christianity aside. In these texts Kierkegaard clarifies what Christianity claims. Thus I would see Kant behind the texts as equally as Hegel. It may indeed be Hegelian ethics that is attacked in *Fear and Trembling*, yet Kant's position on Abraham is surely present as that, in the face of which, Kierkegaard seeks an alternative. Kierkegaard finds "honest Kant" (the "Socratic" in *Fragments*) to have a consistent position, as also Christianity is internally consistent. Hegel has muddied the water, wedding what cannot be wed. Both texts have about them what Roger Poole called (of *Fear and Trembling*) an "undecidability." Hence their power. Perhaps Kierkegaard was uncommitted?

Secondly, no meaningful historical context is present. It is not that a single "biblical" position extends from the Reformation to Kierkegaard (albeit Kierkegaard takes up strands of Reformation thought). It was the upheaval of the Enlightenment that made it necessary to proclaim faith, full throttle, as *paradoxical in the face of reason*. Again, I don't quite know where it gets us for Westphal to tell us a position is "biblical"? I think one should chastise Kierkegaard for not taking seriously the biblical historical scholarship already under way in his day: his distant relative Hans Brøchner found him, on their walks together, unreceptive to the questions he was asking. For Westphal (in 2014) not to recognize that biblical documents reflect the outlook of the early church, not to consider that the Chalcedonian formula arose in the context of the philosophy of late antiquity, strikes me as lacking.

Thirdly, there is (from a European perspective) a lacuna in Westphal's depiction of available theological positions. The possibilities, we are told, are Christianity, or Hegelianism, or Spinozism (defined as different forms of pantheism). This leads to his quite mistakenly naming Part 1 of *The Sickness unto Death* "Christian": it is nothing of the sort, but simply theistic. Kierkegaard speaks of that power (which is God) in which the relation that is the self rests. Part 2 then proceeds to re-run the argument from a specifically Christian perspective. It has apparently not struck Westphal that one could be theistic (and not pantheist) without adhering to Christian dogma. Yet this would be where most people I know today (who are not simply atheist) stand.

The problem is that Kierkegaard is agile; Westphal flat-footed. Kierkegaard leaves his readers free; Westphal coerces a biblicist and relativistic (such that a biblicist position is as "true" as any other) position. I think Kierkegaard querulous when, by 1849—alone, having lost his wealth, and bitter—he tells us (as a consistent deduction of his position) that to deny Christ "is the highest intensification of sin." But I know he also believed (inconsistently) that "we will all be saved"; this, he says, "awakens my deepest wonder." (Not my vocabulary as one who is not a Christian, but I note Kierkegaard's generosity of spirit.) Westphal's understanding of Christianity revolves around "commands" (God's) and "obedience" (ours). By contrast Kierkegaard at times opens up profoundly imaginative ways of thinking of God—revolutionary even by today's standards.

DAPHNE HAMPSON
Oxford University

Excursions with Kierkegaard: Others, Goods, Death, and Final Faith. By Edward F. Mooney. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. xv + 211 pages. \$34.95 (paper).

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Edward Mooney has an impressive record of scholarship on Søren Kierkegaard; his *Knights of Faith and Resignation* is among the important studies of *Fear and Trembling* from the boom in Kierkegaard studies that followed the publication of new English translations of Kierkegaard's works in the 1980s and 1990s. In *Excursions with Kierkegaard*, Mooney meanders through ten essays about how Kierkegaard's texts can inform a person's self-understanding in the face of others, God, and death. Much of the work here was previously published in journals and collections over the past five years.