

bold and controversial claim will no doubt spark debates within the guild of liturgical studies for years to come.)

Alonso's constructive proposal invites readers to listen for the cry of hope in consumer culture. Although they will never be able to deliver the salvation they promise, commodities like WWJD wristbands, #*blessed* coffee mugs and Lourdes water testify to our craving for redemption to new life. Drawing on the work of Walter Benjamin and especially Michel de Certeau, Alonso invites scholars to look for this redemption 'not through an imaginary world purified of fallen human complicities, desires, and things ... [but] in the mundane and even sinful practices of everyday life that rarely capture the seriousness, attentiveness, and compassion of our theological gaze' (p. 124).

Alonso's primary interlocuters are Geoffrey Wainwright, William T. Cavanaugh and Vincent Miller (chapter 1), Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau (chapter 2) and Louis-Marie Chauvet (chapter 3). Interspersed between each of the book's five chapters are four narrative 'fragments', wherein the author reflects on objects of personal significance: his grandmother's *altarcito*, the hymnals of his childhood, a series of discarded Apple products and commodified communion hosts. These personal vignettes alone are worth the price of the book. More than engaging illustrations of an otherwise academic argument, they are the constructive heart of the project, stirring readers to think more deeply about the relationship between liturgy and culture, and about the myriad ways that God's generous presence overflows into the world in ways that exceed the boundaries we so often set for it. *Commodified Communion* is Alonso's first word on the intersection of liturgy and consumer culture, and I certainly hope it will not be his last. I recommend it highly.

doi:10.1017/S0036930622000047

## Joshua Mauldin, *Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Modern Politics* (Oxford: OUP, 2021), pp.ix + 165. \$85.00

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I write this on the anniversary of the storming of the US Capitol in the attempt to overturn ratification of the 2020 Presidential election. What better evidence is there that '[m]odern democracy is in crisis' (p. 1)? To understand what is happening Joshua Mauldin aims to 'focus on how the work of Barth and Bonhoeffer can inform contemporary discussions regarding dissatisfactions with and criticisms of political liberalism' (p. 3). It 'is a project in the field of social ethics rather than history' (p. 3). To give some orientation, Mauldin identifies himself at the outset with a tradition of 'pragmatism' influenced by the work of Jeffrey Stout, Richard Rorty and others, in which economic structures are regarded as human practices that 'carry with them moral norms' (p. 4). From Barth and Bonhoeffer Mauldin seeks 'theologically inflected answers to questions that are of interest well beyond circles of theological and ecclesial concern' (p. 4).

After a brief overview of 'critics of modern politics', Mauldin turns to Barth's response to the First World War, in which his 'early political theology' was

distinguished from that of theological liberalism because of his rediscovery of an eschatological perspective on history (p. 48). Chapters 3 and 4 explore Bonhoeffer's thinking about the ethical life of modern society and his theology of the structures of political life, the so-called 'divine mandates', in which spaces are held open for God in the world. Here, Mauldin defends Bonhoeffer against critics (including Barth) who view the mandates as intrinsically conservative. The most gripping part of the book for me is its discussion of the use made of Bonhoeffer, by scholars and commentators, to assess whether the election of Donald Trump in 2016 presented Americans with a 'Bonhoeffer moment', in which resistance was called for. With good judgement Mauldin argues that one may learn from Bonhoeffer without rushing to co-opt him. Chapter 5 returns to Barth's engagement with the rise of National Socialism, especially in the series of letters Barth wrote from the late 1930s to the mid-1940s to Christians in European countries and the USA. Mauldin concludes that, for Barth, since 'National Socialism is a product of a theological error, it can only be understood, critiqued and resisted on theological terms' (p. 140).

Mauldin's attempt to move from exegetical and historical theology to think constructively about contemporary challenges is welcome. But thought-provoking and enjoyable as Mauldin's book is, it skates over several critical issues, of which I note two. First, what are the significant differences between modernity and late (or post-) modernity that inhibit the usefulness of using mid-twentieth-century figures to contribute to contemporary debates? Second, while it is true that 'Barth and Bonhoeffer saw at close range the destruction caused by illiberal solutions to the challenges of political liberalism' (p. 152), it is *not* clear that either of them thought the answer was to defend political liberalism. Instead, in irreconcilably different ways, Barth and Bonhoeffer were committed critics of the political liberalism Mauldin wants (pragmatically) to uphold. Even after Barth ceased summing up his faith as 'from Christian to Socialist – and back again', he continued to hold that liberal capitalism, in its own way, is as misconceived as Communism. Respecting Bonhoeffer, Mauldin concludes that '[a]lthough Bonhoeffer's understanding of the mandates did not emphasize democratic norms, his account of ethical life has much to teach us about how we maintain the ethical life of democratic society' (p. 105). But this is true only in part. While Mauldin correctly notes that Bonhoeffer hoped for a military coup that would restore the rule of law, he does not spell out sufficiently that Bonhoeffer aimed for a Germany that would, for the foreseeable future, lack key features of a liberal democracy, such as elections and press freedom. Simply put, Bonhoeffer got this wrong, and Barth was right to tell him in 1942 that a military coup was *not* the way forward for Germany. Any attempt, such as Mauldin's, to retrieve Bonhoeffer's insights for contemporary political reflection must reckon not only with his abhorrence of Hitler, but his conviction that in the Weimar Republic liberal democracy had failed.

Finally, while I see positive aspects to Mauldin's aim to bring Barth's and Bonhoeffer's insights to bear on the current 'crisis of modern democracy', there is a price to pay respecting his engagement with his sources, particularly in relation to Barth. Though he knows German, Mauldin decides only to use primary and secondary texts published in English. While this may help with accessibility, it means that several of Barth's writings that are directly relevant, but which have not been translated, are ignored. It further means that the acute editorial material in the Karl Barth *Gesamtausgabe* is unused. Similarly, using only English secondary sources means that several monographs yielding invaluable insight into Barth's political thought (e.g. F-W. Marquardt's *Theologie und Sozialismus* (1972) and U. Dannemann's

*Theologie und Politik im Denken Karl Barths* (1977)) are absent. Supposing an American readership, which the book does, Barth's social democratic political views might well be sensitive; but without considering them, it proves difficult fully to grasp what's going on in his critique of modernity and his developing attitudes to National Socialism.

doi:10.1017/S0036930622000151

## David McLachlan, *Accessible Atonement: Disability, Theology, and the Cross of Christ*

(Waco, TX: Baylor, 2021), pp. xiii + 194. \$39.99.

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While still a relatively young field of study, disability theology has made significant strides in the theological world, assessing, describing and interpreting the lived experiences of people with disabilities. While often providing exquisite theological accounts for inclusion and human worth, disability theology has largely shied away from larger doctrinal questions, particularly those having to do with sin and the atonement, principally for the ways that traditional understandings of these doctrines have prohibited people with disabilities from full integration into the life of the church. In *Accessible Atonement: Disability, Theology, and the Cross of Christ*, David McLachlan, a Baptist minister and Associate Tutor at Spurgeon's College in London, represents what could be described as a 'new wave' of disability theology that refuses to shy away from engaging these central doctrinal loci, arguing that experiences of disability should not be seen as 'special cases' of human experience and doctrinal formulation but rather affect how we understand all aspects of doctrine.

The driving question of *Accessible Atonement* is simply, 'What does the atonement at the cross have to say about disability?' However, what is important here on a methodological level is that McLachlan is not trying to construct a sort of 'special-interest theology, or a special reading of Scripture, which only applies to, or "works" for, those particularly concerned with disability' (p. 3). To do so, he suggests, would continue to assert that people with disabilities are theological outsiders, exceptions to the accepted doctrinal norm. Rather, McLachlan asks 'in what way our main Christian account of the cross and the atonement might allow itself to be disrupted and reformed, encompassing from its roots upward all of humanity, inclusive of disability' (p. 3). In this reading people with disabilities no longer are special cases or theological outsiders but rather the means by which discussions about the atonement gain a greater breadth, encompassing more aspects of the total human experience.

*Accessible Atonement* is separated into two parts, each containing three chapters. Part I, 'Current Interactions', sets up the terms of engagement for the book, particularly the ways that McLachlan will speak about disability and the atonement, and the lack of