unfortunately this is largely absent. Although the author tries to point out that she is concerned with a hermeneutic inclusivism that wants to overcome any claims to superiority in dialogical practice, strictly speaking, it is no longer a question of theology of religions but one of hermeneutics in general. Focusing on the idea of the search for truth as a religious reasoning for religious freedom, the appraisal of Abdullah Saeed's approach is coherent. Insofar as a common, albeit religiously differently accentuated human longing for transcendence comes into view, the comparison allows both an interreligious and autonomous-philosophical compatibility of Christian and Muslim thought.

The conclusion of the book is drawn in the fifth chapter by a practice-oriented concretisation of an interreligious commitment to religious freedom. The concluding section is consistently elaborated following the previous considerations and reflects on problem areas and the relevance of religious freedom for religions, as well as approaches to a criteriology of its consistent defense.

The study makes clear from the beginning that it wants to be understood as a contribution to the defence of the universal value of religious freedom. In this understanding, it is also instructive in many respects and offers a liberal perspective for an interreligious ethos, especially in the field of Christian-Islamic understanding. However, it remains epistemologically problematic if the truth of religious convictions is measured against the validity of ethical premises. In this way, the autonomous justification of human rights seems to determine the very essence of truth, while religious convictions may illustrate this essence, but any deviation from it is a distortion. This threatens to immunise the human right of religious freedom against a critical further definition on the basis of specific religious convictions. Also, dialogue can basically only be conducted with those people of other religions who share one's own ethical convictions. Here one will have to ask whether a consistent advocacy of the freedom of religion must not lead into a critical-constructive dialogue also with those positions that want to limit or even deny its universal validity. It is precisely here that a search for theologically conditioned motivations seems politically more relevant and theologically more productive.

doi:10.1017/S0036930622000503

Brad East, *The Doctrine of Scripture*

(Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021), pp. xvii + 210. $28.00

Cole Hartin

St Luke's Anglican Church, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada (colehartin@gmail.com)

Brad East's *The Doctrine of Scripture* is a jaunty attempt to outline the topic identified in the title. After a very positive foreword by Katherine Sonderegger, East begins by suggesting that 'the doctrine of Holy Scripture is a matter of joy. Before it is an occasion for disputation, disagreement, or division, prior to hassling over terms, definitions, and scholarship, the doctrine of Scripture is a cause for praise' (p. 1). This spirit of the joyousness of the doctrine of scripture suffuses East's book and enlivens discussion that would otherwise be wooden and bare. East attempts to present his doctrine of

scripture in 'an ecumenical sketch in service to the universal church' (p. 4). In so doing, he draws together insights from the academy and the saints, and brings them into their proper home, the church catholic. East wants to present the doctrine of scripture in a way that is representative, constructive, exhibitive and explanatory, terms that he defines in his introduction. This requires quite a few assumptions, but if East's terms are granted, his hope is that his doctrine would have 'made sense' to pre-Reformation Christians (p. 6).

The meat of the book comes in six chapters, each covering a different facet of the doctrine of scripture. The treatment begins with scripture's source, at once from God and an human artefact. Next, East treats the nature of scripture, in which he suggests God takes texts and elicits and deploys them 'for his redemptive and communicative purposes in the economy of grace' (p. 40).

In the third chapter East discusses the attributes of scripture, including its sufficiency and clarity. Following this, he discusses the ends of scripture, which, though being many, 'conduce to a single point', for the canon 'conducts the covenant people in its exilic mission to the nations in a kind of circle: from its sending in the presence of the risen Christ back to the selfsame Lord, now enthroned, glorious, and manifested for all creation to behold' (p. 91).

In the fifth chapter on interpretation, East situates the proper home for scripture in Christian worship, noting that most often in the history of the church, scripture was *heard* rather than *read* by the faithful. This leads into the last substantive chapter, in which East teases out what it means to say that scripture is authoritative. Instead of a conclusion, East has substituted a homily from St John Chrysostom on the Gospel of John.

East's book is an important one, not only because of its clear and compelling contribution to the discussion on the interpretation of scripture. It is not just a monograph *about* scripture, but it actually engages vast swaths of scripture in deep exegesis. Further, this book serves as an example of ecclesial theology that is at once in step with the academy but shorn of the pettier quibbles that can suck up so much of the professional theologian's time. East's thought is deep, but one will not be weighed down with technical jargon or stuffy footnotes. Compared to many other recent treatments of scripture (e.g. Darren Sarisky's *Reading the Bible Theologically*, or Joseph K. Gordon's *Divine Scripture in Human Understanding*), East's book sings. While this is a merit of *The Doctrine of Scripture*, it also raises a question about who will read this book. Seasoned scholars will find East's work compelling for its clarity and concise treatment of scripture, and seminary students and pastors will find it a readable introduction to the same. However, it might not have quite the depth that the former are expecting, and its integration of a wide range of sources might leave the latter scratching their heads. Given the price, it is likely that it will find its way into the hands of engaged lay people and seminary students, instead of simply collecting dust on library shelves.

One major concern with the book is its assumption of a kind of Protestant catholicity. This need not be troublesome on its own, but it seems as if East is writing to and for the church from nowhere. He admits his ecclesial commitments and his debt to Robert Jenson (which may account for the origin of his proclivities), but problems remain. East seems to want to have his cake and eat it too, affirming an ecumenical and catholic voice without inhabiting the concrete and particular realities of his own ecclesial commitments. Can one be catholic without submitting to the doctrine and discipline of one's own church?

While East's desire to avoid jargon in order to write prayerfully is commendable, at times the style of the text is a little too chatty. References to podcasts (and one tweet!)

mean that, despite the impressive range of sources, at times, his touch feels a little too light. Other than one typo, however, the text is clean and quite readable. And though this is East's first monograph, it commends itself as a mature work of scholarship that will benefit the church and the academy alike.

doi:10.1017/S0036930622000527

Nathan J. Chambers, *Reconsidering Creation* Ex Nihilo *in Genesis 1*

(University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021), pp. ix + 280. $49.95

Craig D. Allert

Trinity Western University, Langley, BC, Canada (allert@twu.ca)

In *Reconsidering Creation* Ex Nihilo *in Genesis 1*, Nathan Chambers has offered a welcome, if not bold, contribution toward the growing dialogue between biblical studies, exegesis and theology. Given that the book grew out of a thesis supervised by Walter Moberly, this should not surprise. Motivated by Moberly's insistence that 'there is more than one frame of reference and more than one goal for reading Israel's scripture' (p. 242), Chambers seeks to draw together Ricoeur's worlds *within* the text, *behind* the text and *in front of* the text. Traditionally, modern biblical scholarship tends toward the world in which the text was written (behind the text), while the focus of classic Christian theology is on how the text is performed in the world (in front of the text). For Chambers (and most would agree), the larger literary-canonical context (within the text) serves as the point that should draw the other two together.

As the title suggests, the specific issue with which Chambers interacts is the well-known conclusion of modern biblical scholarship that creation out of nothing is an 'anachronistic imposition' on proper interpretation of Genesis 1 (p. 1). This imposition is believed to obscure rather than illumine the text. Of course, this claim is not new, and it has engendered tension between scholars whose focus is behind the text and those whose focus is in front of the text. The traditional understanding that *creatio ex nihilo* is a second-century development thus introduces the key question posed for the entire book: 'How should we relate these subsequent movements in "scriptural thinking" to "the Old Testament's own categories of thought"'? (p. 2) Here Chambers attempts to balance the valid concern of biblical scholarship that these impositions may risk losing the wisdom of the Old Testament with the equally valid concern of theologians that without these developments we may risk not understanding the implications of the text.

Chambers is honest about his shared anxiety with many biblical scholars that the voice of the Old Testament is not muted or lost by tradition. Yet, he is also in agreement with Gadamer's critique of the Enlightenment prejudice against prejudice. Thus, 'it is no longer tenable for biblical scholarship to reject creation *ex nihilo* as "post-biblical" or "traditional" simply on the grounds of Enlightenment assumptions regarding the relationship between critical reason and tradition' (p. 4). But, as Chambers points out, this does not automatically mean that creation *ex nihilo* should be accepted as 'traditional wisdom'.