

*Eucharist and Receptive Ecumenism: From Thanksgiving to Communion.*  
 By Kimberly Hope Belcher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.  
 xv + 238 pages. \$99.99.  
 doi: 10.1017/hor.2021.88

The focus of Belcher's book is on the Eucharist in the context of ecumenism. Ultimately, she suggests that doctrinal differences regarding the Eucharist need not stand in the way of ecumenism because these differences are obstacles to ecumenism only if they are interpreted in terms of an allegedly discredited "analytical metaphysics," notably that of Aquinas. Aquinas is replaced by postmodernist theorists such as Derrida and, in theology, by Jean-Luc Marion. Those who are skeptical about postmodernism and related forms of phenomenology and believe that Aquinas and other analytical thinkers still have much to offer theology in general, and our understanding of the Eucharist in particular, may find Belcher's main thesis less than compelling.

Chapters 1 and 2 outline developments in eucharistic theology. Belcher claims that the main problems in eucharistic theology all concern a reductionist view of the Eucharist (1). She attributes this error to narrow doctrinal (metaphysical) definitions accepted in the Roman Catholic Church. She states that her approach, by contrast, is phenomenological, experience based, and more concerned with Christian practice.

Chapters 3 and 4 outline her "phenomenology of thanksgiving." Belcher claims that a movement away from a metaphysical approach is necessary because the presence of God in the Eucharist cannot be reduced to a single metaphysical model (55). In this discussion, she draws on the work of Derrida and Marion. In these chapters there is a long and, at times, somewhat unclear discussion of Marion's theory of "givenness." For instance, the use of the word "erotic" is nonstandard and somewhat unclear—"Suppose, then, a structural environment where my contributions are attributed, where I can be afforded authorship; in such a place, the act of giving thanks becomes an erotic act I might have once been denied" (77) and "Only an erotic reduction can allow space for a gift to be attributed to God without God becoming an idol" (80).

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the eucharistic theology of Ambrose and Augustine. In the case of Ambrose, Belcher's focus is the cosmic dimensions of the Eucharist. Regarding Augustine, her focus is eschatological and ethical.

In Chapters 7 and 8, Belcher focuses on contemporary Roman Catholic theology and the exceptional practice of shared communion. Here, she makes her claim that metaphysical differences need not be church dividing (155).

Chapters 9 and 10 outline Belcher's recommendations, including in chapter 9 the claim that "We must *prefer nothing whatever to Christ, not even clarity, convenience, or human reason*" (187) and in chapter 10 the idea that "Catholics may hold to transubstantiation and yet consider a range of other philosophical models to be within the scope of legitimate diversity for Christians ..." (201).

Although, at the level of theory, Belcher's dismissal without serious engagement of Aquinas is disappointing, especially given his influence in the Roman Catholic tradition in particular, Belcher's knowledge of the history of the development of the Eucharist in the context of ecumenism is impressive. In this scholarly area, the book is very well referenced and a wide array of sources have been consulted. As such, it will be useful to students and scholars alike.

A final point concerns Receptive Ecumenism. Readers of this book who have an interest in Receptive Ecumenism (RE) may be disappointed. Belcher does not discuss RE in any detail, notwithstanding the fact that the book has RE in the title. In defense of Belcher, however, this "absence" perhaps lends weight to scholars who claim that RE is intellectually very thin; there is, in fact, little to discuss. RE is more a stance of "humility" rather than a worked-out methodology, let alone a full-blown theory.<sup>1</sup>

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*Mormonism and White Supremacy: American Religion and the Problem of Racial Innocence.* By Joanna Brooks. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 240 pages. \$34.95.

doi: 10.1017/hor.2021.92

When Joanna Brooks wrote this book, she likely didn't expect it to be so timely. But the official publication date, summer 2020, coincided with protests across the nation that called for an end to racial oppression. These loud #BlackLivesMatter chants have forced institutions, corporations, and churches to reassess their connection to the systematic racism upon which America was built. *Mormonism and White Supremacy*, then, was perfectly timed to add to a growing chorus at a moment of discursive crescendo.

<sup>1</sup> See Peter Carnley, "Does Receptive Ecumenism Have a Future?" Virginia Miller et. al., eds., *Leaning into the Spirit: Ecumenical Perspectives on Discernment and Decision-Making in the Church* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).