

*The Unmoored God: Believing in a Time of Dislocation.* By Paul G. Crowley, SJ. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017. xiv + 130 pages. \$26.00 (paper).

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Years ago, a young Jesuit said some older Jesuits were still fighting battles of the 1960s and 1970s. Inspired by Vatican II and the 32nd General Congregation, they had long worked to reduce naive views on the Bible and church doctrines. They had promoted the study of other religions and of those who criticized religion. They taught a faith compatible with science, one that strove for justice. These efforts were vital, he observed, but culture had shifted. Students now were “spiritual but not religious,” viewing various religious traditions to be of equal, though minimal, value. Even those raised in Catholic households who had attended Catholic schools were likely never to have opened a Bible or catechism. Nevertheless, they were convinced that what mattered most was how we treated one another, particularly those disadvantaged. In many ways, this Jesuit and I agreed, these changes were positive. Still, we lamented the loss of a certain depth and strength to our students’ convictions, as well as their view that openness to and concern for the other must come at the expense of their religious traditions rather than because of them.

Paul Crowley, a theologian from an older (and often much wiser, truth be told) generation of Jesuits, has labored to build bridges of love and openness, but he is also painfully aware of the loss of faith and communal practice, not only by the young but by so many in contemporary society. His recent book, *The Unmoored God*, does not stop at lamenting this loss but points to a way we might move forward.

It begins with the loss of belief in general. As Nietzsche claimed, “God is dead”—and not just God, but belief in any objective truth, whether proposed by priests, politicians, scientists, or scholars. Crowley observes that since Nietzsche’s time, uncertainty has increased due to world wars, economic recessions, various forms of social oppression, natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, and large waves of migration. Spiritually, culturally, economically, and physically, we have become “unmoored” or “dislocated.”

The most immediate result of this dislocation is suffering, from the mild yearnings of the young, who do not quite know what they seek, to the agony of racial and ethnic groups persecuted relentlessly across generations. The experience of suffering, one’s own and others’, can tempt one to atheism, or perhaps worse, to belief in a God who is distant and dispassionate or one who sadistically causes pain.

What is needed, Crowley affirms, is not a new faith but a recovery in contemporary terms of the God of Jewish and Christian scripture, the God of *kenosis*,

who is not fixed in the heavens or in a building, not owned by any nation or class, but who enters this world marked by sin and suffering, becomes flesh, lives among the poor, and is executed painfully, humiliatingly. This is a God who wishes to be found not so much in power and glory but with the weak and rejected, in short, a God unmoored, dislocated, and who, in this dislocation, reveals “the omnipresence and ultimate omnipotence of God’s powerful love (Rom 8:35–39), spread throughout the universe to all humankind and to every creature, that all might be reconciled and saved (Col 1:15–20; 1 Tim 2:4)” (55).

Divinized by God’s love, we are called to participate in saving one another. Crowley builds on Sobrino, exhorting us to aid those who suffer, particularly the “crucified peoples,” who simultaneously, like the Suffering Servant, save us as they invite us to self-transcendence and conversion. They also need conversion, but they most resemble Jesus and give the most insight into Jesus. By entering into solidarity with them, we dislocate ourselves, we enter into discipleship of the God who chose to be dislocated, and we rediscover our faith. Crowley warns that this can be “costly,” leading to life and death like St. Teresa of Calcutta or Dietrich Bonhoeffer. But he promises it will also lead to hope and resurrection.

I found the book beautiful, prayerful, inspirational. Steeped in thinkers from Pope Benedict to Kathryn Tanner, it often reminded me of J. C. Murray’s *Problem of God*. My main wish is that it drew on Aquinas’ distinction of what God wills directly, permits, and indirectly wills (ST, Ia, q22, a2).

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*Safeguarding: Reflecting on Child Abuse, Theology, and Care*. Edited by Karlijn Demasure, Katharina A. Fuchs, and Hans Zollner. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2018. vi + 237 pages. \$70.00.  
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This anthology is the first in a series published by the Centre for Child Protection (CCP), part of the Institute of Psychology of the Pontifical Gregorian University. The CCP’s aim is to promote a diversity of research projects and educational initiatives (including certificates in safeguarding minors in ecclesial settings). The text is divided into four parts: theology, care, treating and managing perpetrators, and self-care.

The theology section, which contains four essays by three different men, treats God-language and language about salvation in an abusive context, as well as the theology of priesthood and sexual ethics. In the first two essays, James Corkery (who writes both) creatively mines traditional resources to talk