

projects. “The systematization of Mormon theology,” Brooks explains, “went hand in hand with a centralization and bureaucratization of Mormon religious life at the turn of the century. Consequently, modern Mormonism instituted one of the most rigidly enforced systems of racial segregation in the history of American Christianity” (59).

Scholars familiar with Mormon history will likely not find much new with regard to historical figures, texts, and stories because Brooks is mostly building upon and drawing from a host of existing scholarship. Further, though Brooks initially frames this project as one meant to address the broader issue of American Christianity through the lens of Mormonism, much of the narrative is told in a contextual vacuum that does not fully engage the extent of assimilation with or divergence from broader cultural currents.

But it would be unfair to expect this book to fit into the typical categories and standards of traditional historical monographs. *Mormonism and White Supremacy* is, at its best, a scholarly jeremiad, an attempt to use academic tools to address contemporary problems.

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*On Consumer Culture, Identity, The Church and the Rhetorics of Delight.*  
By Mark Clavier. New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2019. x + 157 pages.  
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In this addition to the publisher’s Reading Augustine series, Clavier appeals to the North African Father’s rhetorical theology for both a diagnostic tool to the church’s dilemma in a consumer society, which would reduce it to one more commodified lifestyle option, and the way out of that dilemma. Because the consumer culture imposes and propagates itself through advertising, Clavier finds that rhetoric proves an apt analytic tool, as does the example of Augustine when he presents the situation of the Christian in this life as one caught between competing rhetorics, each of which draws strength from the delights it promises.

After an introduction in which he documents the emergence of lifestyle marketing and the manner in which it has grown to dominate the social imagination through which identities are constructed, Clavier’s argument unfolds in three steps of two chapters each. In the first step, he first lays out how Augustine masterfully appropriated Cicero’s theory of civic rhetoric to arrive at what, in modern terms, amounts to a psychological explanation of the bondage of the will through a “rhetoric of self-destruction,” a rhetoric

that Clavier then finds operative on a massive scale as he details the dynamics of the consumer society. Step two follows Augustine in construing the gift of saving grace rhetorically as the manner in which the gift of the Spirit, God's love poured into our hearts, confers a share in God's eternal delight that enables one to abide in divine wisdom. This is the delight that stands counter to those offered by consumerism, a system that claims that the freedom to choose among commodities is the path to happiness. In a third step, Clavier draws the conclusion that the church's mission calls it to become a rhetorical community whose aim is to aid its members through persuasion and delight to find their identity in its narrative of redemption. *Pace Cicero*, it is only Christ whose divine eloquence can rescue the community, and those who teach within the Christian community serve as the means through which God's eloquent wisdom instructs, delights, and persuades.

Karl Rahner once remarked that the Christian of the future will be either a mystic or no Christian at all and, with his Augustinian identification of the experience of divine grace, love, and delight at the heart of authentic Christian identity, Clavier would seem to agree. He is surely correct in eschewing an Enlightenment conception of disembodied rationality to emphasize the manner in which emotions and feelings provide the mass and momentum of our lives, and so his turn to rhetoric is richly suggestive. At the same time, one might wonder whether the Church's redemptive task involves more than a rescue mission. Might the release from bondage by which grace heals us free as well an intelligent creativity that might penetrate beneath the dynamics of consumerism to imagine and work toward a more just, humanizing economics?

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*Wisdom Commentary: Psalms Books 4-5.* By Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2020. lviii + 340 pages. \$39.95.  
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In this twenty-second volume in the Wisdom Commentary Series, Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford presents the final sixty psalms in the Bible from the perspective of a feminine reader or hearer. She employs the lived experience of twelve South African theology students who each provide unique and valuable reflections on several of the psalms a quarter century following the end of apartheid. The author identifies as a "white, relatively affluent female living in suburban North America" who provides a reading of the psalms from her understanding of the world. Having spent a short time in