

If so, however, this parallel seems to undercut Bodner's larger thesis about Elisha's pre-eminent status over Elijah. Joshua is never presented as superior to Moses and always played second fiddle (Deut 34:10–12; Josh 1:7).

A second concern emerges from a comparison of the closing scenes in the life of Elijah versus Elisha. Elijah's departure is over-the-top with its fiery chariot and ascent to heaven (2 Kings 2:12). In contrast, Elisha goes out with a whimper. He becomes ill and dies with a final odd incident of a dead man falling into Elisha's grave, touching his bones, and then coming back to life (2 Kings 13:14, 20–1). A bit of drama, yes, but nothing compared to Elijah's dramatic exit. Endings are important. If the Elisha narratives were all about elevating Elisha over his mentor, a better ending could have been devised for Elisha. In the end, Elijah was a tough act to follow.

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Andrew Prevot, *Thinking Prayer: Theology and Spirituality Amid the Crises of Modernity* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), pp. 433 + xx. \$39.00.

Prevot's first monograph seeks to engage notable philosophical and theological responses to modernity through the lens of prayer – a theme frequently addressed in popular books on practical theology but rarely in a sophisticated monograph. To the reader's delight, the book is beautifully written. Very often scholars who write on the philosophical theorists discussed in these pages find it difficult to offer an account of their thought that clearly explains their commitments and purposes. Prevot succeeds in doing so on every page, writing with a verve that makes the challenging thought of the many authors he engages utterly transparent.

The book is presented in two parts. Part I explores Heidegger's critique of metaphysics and its implications for the mainstays of Christian belief, practice and theological interpretation. As much as Prevot attends to Heidegger's later critique of modernity, he presents Heidegger's thought as a symptom of the modern eclipse of the divine in which the traditional concerns and practices of Christian spirituality evaporate. Although narratives suspicious of modernity often cast their central characters in the stereotypical roles of villains and heroes, Prevot resists this temptation by recognising that, even though Heidegger's thought is Christianly neuralgic, it opens a creative space for post-metaphysical theological reflection that any number of religious thinkers have entered.

Part I continues by presenting Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological project as a paradigmatic instance of Heideggerian resistance. Prevot's account of this resistance is not unnuanced. He recognises that, as much as Balthasar's Christian commitments distance him from Heidegger, the aesthetical orientation in *Herrlichkeit* is itself a post-metaphysical gesture that acknowledges the dangers of ontotheology that so concerned Heidegger. Nevertheless, Balthasar's commitment to trinitarian love as Being itself issues in his judgement that doxology, not Heideggerian *Gelassenheit*, is the appropriate response of a creature gracefully drawn by God into the drama of salvation. Part I concludes by considering a number of thinkers who share Balthasar's privileging of doxology, yet who appreciate more than he the problematic status of metaphysics in post-Enlightenment thought: Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Yves LaCoste and Jean-Louis Chrétien illustrate the various ways in which Balthasar's struggle with Heidegger has taken the form of theological and philosophical negotiations of the issues that divide them. The chapter also introduces John Caputo's post-metaphysical approach to prayer as an unorthodox counterpoint to the Christianly engaging efforts of Marion, LaCoste, and especially Chrétien.

Part II engages modernity by addressing its broken promises of freedom, equality and peace in the violent histories of economic exploitation, colonialism and the slave trade. Chapter 4 examines the theology of Johann Baptist Metz, who sees prayer as an acknowledgement of spiritual poverty before God that properly leads to a political solidarity with those who suffer. Important here is Metz's willingness to have the genocidal violence of Auschwitz shape the meaning and practice of prayer by calling the one who prays to responsibility for the violence of the Shoah and into action that will resist such violence in all its insidious forms. Chapters 5 and 6 continue this mediation on prayer and violence by considering prayer's role in the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff and Ignacio Ellacuría. Here, too, the analysis is sophisticated, as each thinker is considered in the integrity of his own thought while yet being set in dialogue with the running narrative on theological efforts to negotiate the modern challenge to traditional metaphysics. Prevot powerfully accounts for the ways that the liberation theologians make the modern history – and present-day reality – of violence a context for their theologies of prayer. He offers in the book's final chapter James Cone as an especially rich exemplar of how a post-metaphysical theology might recover the traditional Christian commitment to the spiritual mystery of prayer, finding in Cone's interpretation of African-American spirituals a moving testimony to the Christian irresistibility of prayer.

This book is an impressive achievement in the sweeping range and sophistication of its scholarship, communicated in flourishing style. Every one of the many thinkers whom Prevot introduces is the author of a considerable literary corpus, and Prevot demonstrates a mastery of each. The work is original in the interpretation of its principles, in its narrative of modernity, and in its making prayer the focus of that narrative. Readers who take Prevot's tour of modernity will be grateful for the journey and eager for future opportunities for travel with this author as their guide.

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From Mother to Son: The Selected Letters of Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin, AAR Religions in Translation, translated by Mary Dunn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 256 + xii, £51.00.

Mary Dunn's edition of letters from mystic-missionary Marie de l'Incarnation to her son is a gift to historians of early modern Europe and Christian spirituality. This intriguing volume not only offers an intimate view into the evolving relationship between mother and son, and their understanding of the depths of a life united to Christ; it also provides a window to lesser known aspects of seventeenth-century New France. It is meticulously researched and elegantly translated, with careful annotations that are themselves a valuable scholarly resource.

The reader cannot help but feel a measure of irony while poring over this private exchange. Marie repeatedly protests sending details of her inner spiritual life, even giving painstaking instructions to her Benedictine son to burn the letters upon her death. At times, she seems to regret having revealed these interior mysteries, even to the son she loved 'more than anything else on earth' (p. 154).

Scholars often attribute this reticence to the rhetoric of feminine humility, a strategy used subversively to authorise the female voice. In Marie's case, however, her reservations seem to come from genuine reluctance. As Dunn notes, Marie resisted disclosing her spiritual journey, despite her son's persistent inquiries, until their relationship deepened over the years. Their exchanges were further complicated by the guilt Marie felt for 'abandoning' him at a tender age, when she became an Ursuline and joined the mission in New France. She mentions this rupture in eight of the eighty-one extant letters.