

at least in this reader's view, were one essay to have been devoted to gender justice and another to socioeconomic justice. Not only are these topics important in themselves but they are also singularly important for the view of Islam held by non-Muslims. The central essay of part 2 is Regina Boisclair's study of the gospel lections in three principal Christian lectionaries. A second historical piece, focusing on the confluence of Islam and Orthodox Christianity in modern Russia, brings part 2 to a conclusion.

Part 3 contains five essays on spirituality and poverty and wealth. Three of them are decidedly Roman Catholic in orientation: a study of the adaptation of the Franciscans' ideal of poverty to changing social conditions, an examination of liberation theology and the "non-person," and an overview of contemporary Catholic ideals for economic justice. The names of Benedict and Francis grace this section, in which the charts on pages 233–34 should be the stuff of Catholic religious education, homilies, and study groups. Essays on the Muslim doctrine of Al-Fana', the purification of the self, and on prophetic ethics in the monotheistic tradition coalesce to make this third part of the volume perhaps its most valuable section.

The last part of the book consists of three essays on sharing wealth, written respectively from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian perspectives. All told, this volume contains a number of insightful studies. They should be pondered in their individuality, but there may be some advantage for a reader who does not belong to one or another of these three religious traditions to read in sequence the group of essays that emanate from an unfamiliar tradition. Much insight and appreciation of another religious tradition can be gained from such a reorganization of one's reading.

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*The Promise of Martin Luther's Political Theology: Freeing Luther from the Modern Political Narrative.* By Michael Richard Laffin. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016. xiv + 213 pages. \$128.00.

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Michael Richard Laffin offers a persuasive friendly amendment to those who critique Martin Luther's theology of politics as a contribution to the privatization of faith and its formal contrast with political life—a conventional critique and one with, as Laffin spells out, a long history. In this book Laffin specifically examines the negative assessments of Luther's political theology by John Milbank and by Jennifer Herdt (as representatives of a broader field including Radical Orthodoxy). Though Laffin does not disagree with

their larger critical projects, he does declare their readings of Luther “a caricature of Luther’s theology.” He rejects any assessment of Luther’s theology as world denying and therefore either indifferent to political life or opposed to it. He argues, one, that Luther’s theology is in fact ontologically relational, world affirming, and demanding of our engagement in the political order and, two, that Luther’s theology correctly understood actually offers better solutions to Milbank’s and Herdt’s critiques than do their own proposals.

Laffin has structured the book usefully for the reader. He sets forth his whole project in his introduction: the critiques of the “caricature” of Luther’s political theology made by Milbank and Herdt, including the current political science in which their critiques are grounded; the outlines of his own alternative, corrected interpretation of Luther’s political theology; and his claim that his reading of Luther contributes to both Milbank’s and Herdt’s larger projects more effectively than their own proposals.

In his first three chapters Laffin sketches Milbank’s critique of Luther’s soteriology and “two kingdoms” doctrine. Milbank claims they privatize faith and dichotomize faith and political life. Laffin responds to this critique by recovering an emphatically relational ontology in Luther’s theology, wherein faith cannot be separated from participation in Christ, community with others, sanctification, and active love. He also emphasizes Luther’s positive understanding of political life as a gift of God for human benefit, not merely as a restraint on evil. In chapter 4, Laffin turns to Herdt’s critique of Luther’s soteriology. She claims it eliminates any room for genuine habituation of virtue. In response, Laffin demonstrates how Luther holds divine agency and human agency together as interplay, and how the gift of political life to all allows for genuine virtue among both Christians and non-Christians. This brief description cannot, however, reflect the sweep of Laffin’s arguments, which offer much more variety and depth than can be summarized here.

For the reader interested in Luther’s political theology itself, however, Laffin’s last chapter is of the greatest interest. Here Laffin unfolds Luther’s language of sanctification as found in his development of the “three institutions”: church, household, and politics. Luther identifies these institutions as God’s gift, revelation, and positive context for human life, and thus explicitly affirms this world as well as human political life.

Laffin’s arguments are based on a laudably wider reading of Luther’s works than is often the case. Though he draws heavily on Luther’s *Lecture on Galatians*, *Lectures on Genesis*, and commentary on Psalm 101—works from 1534–35—his citations range from Luther’s major treatises of 1520 through his Bible commentaries and catechisms to his letters. Further, the breadth of theologians that Laffin builds upon is also impressive: not only

the so-called Finnish school around Tuomo Mannermaa, but also Oswald Bayer, Berndt Hamm, and Bernd Wannenwetsch. Along the way he engages Hannah Arendt, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Stanley Hauerwas, Hans Ulrich, and many others. His diverse citations make the footnotes interesting reading in their own right.

Though I find Laffin's prose and text at times overly dense and worthy of more attentive editing, and though the book addresses a rather particular niche in the Radical Orthodox project, this work is a valuable contribution to the ongoing reassessment of Luther's soteriology and offers us a useful orchestration of the voices identifying relational ontology and faith-as-process in Luther's thought. For this reason the book will also be of interest to theologians working with the Orthodox doctrine of theosis, with process theology's relational ontology, or with the Catholic Church's rich tradition of mystical and corporate ecclesiology. Though beyond the scope of undergraduate or even many graduate courses in theology, the book deserves a spot in advanced coursework and theological libraries.

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*Theology Needs Philosophy: Acting against Reason Is Contrary to the Nature of God.* Edited by Matthew L. Lamb. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016. xxi + 325 pages. \$69.95.

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As the title of this collection of essays suggests, Matthew Lamb has brought together a group of scholars who are offering an apologetic for the Catholic Church's insistence that faith is both compatible with and in need of reason. More specifically, as Lamb tells it, the assembled group of philosophers and theologians are defending a central tenet of John Paul II's pontificate later picked up by Benedict XVI: in the face of the secular world's attack on reason itself, Catholic intellectuals need to defend reason's (albeit limited) ability to penetrate into the nature of things, and thus its suitability to serve as a handmaid to theology. And, while this is a forward-looking project of philosophically informed theology, the church looks to Aquinas as "a model of the right way to do theology" (*Fides et Ratio*, §43). Even more specifically, this collection is held together as a sort of incidental memorial for Ralph McInerny, who passed away during the organizational stage of the 2011 conference out of which this book comes. Finally, with Matthew Lamb's recent death, his editorial work for this book can be seen as his parting gift to the Catholic intellectual world. Given the limited space of this review, I will outline two