

The Changing Shape of Church History. By Justo L. González. Chalice, 2002, vii and 159 pages.

In this book, Justo González, a prolific author of books on church history, considers two concerns: what *has changed* in the church today and what *has to be changed* in the writing of church history. Accordingly, he presents his historiographical probing in a twofold structure: spatial (Part I. “The Changing Geography of Church History”) and temporal (Part II. “The Changing History of Church History”). González writes from an observation that in the West the church has declined and has been de-centered while in the non-Western world the church has experienced dynamic and diverse growth. From this context, González examines the implications for church historians of two potential characteristics of the church: catholicity and marginality.

In Part I, González figuratively conveys the contour of world Christianity in both geographical and geological terms to illustrate three aspects of the recent change in the way church historians have interpreted the church’s history. The first aspect of this change is “cartographical.” The church has become global, both geographically and demographically. The old map of church history in which the center was the North Atlantic, mainly Europe and North America, is no longer adequate for church historians. He suggests a new, “polycentric” map (13). This new map demonstrates that Christianity has become a world religion with “deep roots in every culture” (17).

The second aspect of this historiographical change is “topographical.” If the former notion is horizontal, the latter is vertical. González observes that church historians have usually approached the past from a mountain-peak perspective, that is, by looking at it from atop. The result has been an orography—“without ever descending into the valleys” (22). González argues that the voices hidden in these less prominent valleys should be listened to: the voices of the powerless, the marginalized, the women, etc. This topographical change signifies perspectival shifts: from center to margin, from surface to depth, and from top down to bottom up.

The third aspect of the recent change in the way church history is viewed is the “cataclysmic” nature of this change. “Continental shifts” are taking place in the interpretation of what were formerly seen as the “great centuries,” of change in the church, that is, the fourth, thirteenth, sixteenth, and nineteenth centuries (34). One example of this “new tilt” is that the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, formerly interpreted primarily in light of the

political and theological developments of the Reformation and the rise of modernity, are now being reconsidered with regard to the Western expansion of Christianity and the implications of this expansion for world Christianity. A new awareness of the importance of previously “submerged” centuries is rising as well. For example, some historians are beginning to see the cultural context of the church of the second and third centuries as being similar to the cultural context of the church in the twenty-first century, in that it is in many places culturally marginal. And the previously “submerged” seventh and eighth centuries are now being seen as important because of the Germanization of the church.

Part II is a brief historiographical survey of church history. From the beginning, Christians had a fundamental issue of history with which to deal. “[O]ne of the main theological issues that Christians had to face,” González points out, “was the relationship between [the] . . . prolonged history of humankind and the message of the gospel” (87). Each period of church history has struggled, historiographically, with the relationship between the gospel and history in one way or another, framing it, for example, as a relationship between the gospel and the history of Israel (in the New Testament), between the gospel and Greco-Roman history (in the early period), between the gospel and the history of Germanic nations (during the Middle Ages), and between the gospel and the history of the church (during the Reformation and modern times).

González surveys the limitations of past historiographical approaches: ecclesiocentric (early), dichotomic (medieval), polemical (Reformation), and critical (modern). None of these approaches can adequately describe today’s church. González suggests a new framework that is bidirectional, which looks both forward (toward postmodernity and beyond) and backward (toward the catholicity of the early church). González argues that the claim of modern historians that their historiographical methods are grounded in objectivity and universality is simply another myth and failure. For him, even the postmodern denial of this modern claim is not enough to undo its influence: “The very name *postmodernity* is still suspiciously modern” (57). González advocates going further beyond postmodernity to what he terms “extramodernity,” – a historiographical perspective whose concern is to listen to those voices and perspectives that both modernity and postmodernity have ignored and patronized (59). González considers the importance of “catholicity” for church history, defining the term as meaning “according to the whole” (71). He distinguishes this term from ‘univer-

sality,' which emphasizes uniformity rather than unity with diversity. González emphasizes that the Christian canon is the very "paradigm of catholicity" (76). For example, the four gospels in the New Testament bear plural perspectives of catholicity in their witnesses to the same Jesus.

González's historiographical survey ends with envisioning a future, globalized, yet diversified world Christianity. This shape of the future church will affect both the reading of past church history and the writing of new church history. Considering that the church is becoming more and more universal (worldwide), it needs to avert a particular ideology being regarded as the center. It also needs to avoid "the old division between 'church history' and the 'history of missions'" (149). Considering that the church is becoming more and more catholic (diverse), it needs to account for "diversity and inclusivity in matters of gender, class, culture, and race" (150). González argues that the church has always, up to this century, seen itself as "the center". For example, both Eusebius' paradigm (the church as corporeal center) and Augustine's paradigm (the church as spiritual center) share a triumphalistic perspective. González suggests an alternative self-perception for the church, a self-image of "incarnate marginality" which sees the proper place for Christians as being the margin rather than the center (153). He thus indicates that the future church and its historiography should move their perspective from the center to the margins.

This book deserves our attention because the author outlines the contours and sketches a conceptual framework for world Christianity. World Christianity is globally local. If the modern historiographical project is the de-clothing of culture from Christianity, the historiography of world Christianity should, from its post-modern context, offer a reversal to this "de-clothing" ideal. It should, therefore, probe the closeness of the relationship between the gospel and culture, calling attention to the extent to which Christianity is, in fact — and has been — deeply culturally-imbedded. The Christian gospel relativizes every ideology that claims its absoluteness in place of God. The concept of world Christianity destabilizes traditional categories of the church and decentralizes Euro-American centrism. The voices that seem to be missing in this book, given its attention to factors changing church history and its historiography, are the voices of missions scholars such as Andrew Walls and Lamin Sanneh. Their historiographical contributions go far beyond the consideration of Christian expansion. A new conceptual framework should take the work of historians of Christian mission into consideration and thus ask the question: how much have different

voices and diverse perspectives contributed to the understanding of the gospel throughout church history?

This book's style and language is quite accessible. It could help pastors upgrade their past study of church history and expand the horizon of their understanding of world Christianity. This book calls for a historiographical awakening for church historians. Would a new Christian historiography enlarge the Christian story? Would it revise some stories? Would it enlighten the nature of Christianity? Would it enrich and refine the understanding of the gospel? If so, then how much and in what ways? Consideration of the changing shape of Christianity González mentions in this book is essential to answer these questions. We cannot take this change for granted.

—HYUNG JIN PARK

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts. C. Clifton Black. Chalice Press, 2001; xvii, 224 pages.

In the wake of renewed interest in rhetorical analysis, C. Clifton Black offers a collection of essays crafted to demonstrate how aspects of this rising trend can be applied to New Testament study and exegesis. A scholar whose work is centered around rhetorical criticism, Black is known for the assiduous nature of his work and studies. This present volume – intended for theological students, his colleagues, and pastors – is illuminated throughout by his theological insights. With the exception of the final chapter, “Peroration,” all of it is previously published material, though revised and edited where needed.

A full analysis of the rhetoric of “the gospel” as contained in the New Testament would fill volumes. Thus, Black has chosen to examine pericopes from each of the four Gospels and Acts in order to demonstrate how rhetorical criticism can be applied to any passage from these books. He concentrates upon characterizing and analyzing the arrangement and use of invention and style in these texts. His primary focus is character analysis. The “New Rhetorical” framework seems to place his work within the concerns of literary critical theory, but many of the interests of literary study and form criticism are not taken up in this collection. Indeed Black notes several times that the incredibly wide scope of rhetorical study is beyond what he is able to demonstrate adequately within the approach he has chosen.

In his introductory chapter, “Rhetorical Questions in New Testament Study,” Black explains the basic groundwork for rhetorical criticism, situating the major impetus of the movement in Muilenburg’s 1968 SBL Presidential address. Black’s view of rhetorical criticism is fully grounded in this classical tradition. He demonstrates three different interpretations of a single passage based on different aspects of rhetorical criticism: Muilenburg on structure (*logos*); Kennedy on authorial intent (*ethos*); and Perelman on *pathos*, or a text’s reception by the ancient audience. His final introductory comment, “In effect, this [book] will be a colloquy within a kind of New Rhetorical framework, ‘baptized’ in the service of Christian theology and practice,” (20) summarizes well the tenor of the book and prepares the reader accurately for what is to come.

As indicated by the title of the second chapter, “Matthew’s Characterization of Faith,” Black then takes a look at the possibilities that character analysis/criticism offer. The jumping off point is set up as a discussion with Jack Dean Kingsbury’s appraisal of characters within the gospel of Matthew. Black’s refutation of Kingsbury’s assessment is founded upon a simple reapplication of what Kingsbury himself has claimed. He redefines the roundness and flatness of Kingsbury’s characters: Jesus, the disciples, Israel’s religious leaders, the Jewish crowds and “stock characters” — and adds God and the devil/Satan to the list. For Black, the most important rhetorical concern is the theological point that Matthew is trying to make through the characters. Throughout the chapter, Black’s full appropriation of rhetorical character analysis supports his own claims that each character’s significance lies primarily in his or her theological function.

Next Black takes a look at the theological implications of volatile material found in Mark 13, in a chapter entitled “An Oration at Olivet”. He shows how arrangement, invention and style all illuminate the possible intentions of this passage for the original audience. Indeed, a rhetorical analysis of this troublesome passage may be the most informative. Though Mark 13 is often viewed as one of the most tenebrous sections of that Gospel, Black’s rhetorical lens allows the reader to see that it may actually be closely aligned with the theological intent of Mark as a whole.

Next, addressing John 14-17—which Black considers the most epideictic section of John—he carefully explores the presence of amplification and other rhetorical devices found in John’s farewell discourse. Countering Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, Black convincingly brings the reader to the conclusion that the gospel of John is most appropriately ana-

lyzed through the lens of classical rhetoric. Working with the magnificence and grandeur of the rhetoric of John, Black teases out what he considers an overlooked connection between the rhetoric of the “Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle” (93).

“The Case of the Feckless Ficelle,” a chapter from his 1994 work, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter*, is a rejoinder to those who have concluded that John Mark is an insignificant “bit player” within the story and message of Acts. True to his initial disclaimer, this chapter is more of an exegetical “redress” than an informative lesson on the aspects of rhetoric. Trusting that the interested student/reader will have learned the specifics earlier, or will learn them elsewhere, Black is a skillful teacher in this chapter as he demonstrates the way he claims rhetorical criticism should be employed in analyzing biblical texts.

In his chapter entitled, “The Rhetorical Form of the Early Christian Sermon,” Black revisits Lawrence Wills’s idea of the “word of exhortation,” comprised of *exempla*, *conclusion*, and *exhortation*. Contrary to Wills’s claims for divergence from the rhetorical norm, Black finds the essential point of sermonic material to be wedded with the effects of classical rhetoric. His rather convincing argument prepares the reader to delve into, once again, the theological implications of persuasive rhetorical devices found within the Judeo-Christian sermonic context.

The penultimate chapter, appropriately titled, “Four Stations en Route to a Parabolic Homiletic,” has the feel of a sermon itself! It is at its core kerygmatically driven. From Nineveh, to Galilee, to Hippo and back to Jerusalem, Black analyzes the use of parable within the text and how those meanings translate over into homiletical efforts. In this chapter, Black shows his belief in the centrality of the cross for all Christian biblical exegesis and preaching.

As a conclusion, Black ends with a brief chapter aptly named “Peroration.” The summary of his work points to three central ideas. Rhetorical criticism is composed of many approaches to the text. At the end of the day, there is a meaning to be found – *contra* those who leave scripture devoid of meaning by their endless critiques and dissections of the text. Finally, the ultimate artistry of the scriptures is found in their theological import. The biblical critic is charged to keep these things in mind as she or he sets out to illuminate the meanings found in the scriptures.

Black writes well for the mixed audience he has chosen. The new student of rhetorical criticism will find a helpful list of sources for specific areas of

rhetorical study in the preamble to the bibliography. Throughout the book, Black demonstrates the approach to exegesis that he wishes to engender in others. According to Black, the rhetorical effect of the gospel is intentional and deeply essential to the purpose of the whole written account. "Criticism of the Gospels that reckons with literary features such as characterization apart from their theological implications is by no means illegitimate. It is, in my judgment, ultimately impoverished" (46). The scholar uninterested in the theological implications of the rhetoric of the Gospels may be pleasantly challenged by Black in this book.

—JENNIFER G. BIRD
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The Quest for the Cuban Christ. Miguel De La Torre. University of Florida Press, 2002.

The Quest for the Cuban Christ is a provoking, yet balanced search for Christ in the diversity of Cuban history and culture. Beginning with a sincere revelation of his own social location as a Cuban exile, Miguel De La Torre affirms that *The Quest for the Cuban Christ* is a search for faith and meaning. Using the methodologies of ethnohistory, historical theology and art history, De La Torre finds representations of the Cuban Christ in key Cuban historical figures and cultural symbols. De La Torre is careful to affirm both the Cuban resident and Cuban exile contexts, and to find unity in the person of Jesus Christ in the midst of the diversity between these two communities which are often at odds with one another. This unity is found in the *Ajiaco* Christ who represents several aspects of Cubanidad, or Cuban identity. Throughout the author's quest, Christ's presence is always found in *los humildes* (the oppressed).

Working chronologically, De La Torre gives several examples of Cuban heroes/heroines whom he sees as manifesting various aspects of the Cuban Christ. Beginning with the Spanish conquest of the Amerindians who originally inhabited Cuba, he focuses first on Hatuey, an indigenous rebel who battled the Spanish and was burned at the stake. De La Torre likens Hatuey's life and death to Christ's solidarity with the oppressed. He next focuses on Bartolome de Las Casas, a Spanish priest and missionary who, according to De La Torre, was converted to Christ via softening his heart to the plight of the Amerindians. Citing Gustavo Gutierrez, De La Torre considers De Las Casas to be a precursor to today's liberation theologians who

see Christ in the Indian. De Las Casas renounced his wealth and called upon the Spanish crown to stop abusing the Amerindians. Father Felix Varela, another cleric who opposed the Spanish colonial rule, fought from both inside and outside Cuba for independence. Raising consciousness about Cuban nationalism in the early 1800s, Varela's call for Cuban independence was met with persecution from Spain, and he was forced to leave for the United States—thus beginning Cuba's long tradition of nationalistic exiles. Jose Marti, a hero in both contemporary resident and exile Cuban communities, lived and raised support for Cuban independence while in exile, then returned to Cuba to die in battle. Cited by De La Torre as another precursor to liberation theology, Marti advocated a "preferential option for the poor," putting the liberation of the oppressed at the center of his agenda.

Because of its particular and intense suffering, De La Torre insists that the Afro-Cuban population has earned the title of the Black Cuban Christ. He reports gruesome massacres of blacks by white mobs fearing slave rebellion. Neither the abolition of slavery in 1886, nor the black and white intermarriage that resulted in a large population of mestizos, nor the active participation of blacks in the war of independence, nor Marti's writings aimed at creating a colorblind society were effective in halting white racism.

De La Torre regards the Afro-Cuban syncretistic religion, Santeria, which combines African deities with Catholic saints, as a revelation of the quality of resistance in the Cuban Christ. Santeria names the God on earth who responds to prayers *Olofi*. But De La Torre notes that while worshippers utter the name of *Olofi*, they often have Jesus Christ in mind. *Ochun* is the Afro-Cuban equivalent of *La Virgen del Cobre*, a brown virgin who appeared to two Taino Amerindians and a 10 year-old black slave named Juan Moreno in 1610. De La Torre argues that the appearance of a brown virgin to two Indians and a slave marks the emergence of a unique Cuban identity. Moreover, it is significant that they are fishing in a boat when the virgin appeared to them in the bay. Thus *La Virgen del Cobre* was, according to De La Torre, the first Cuban *balsera* (rafter) to be rescued. Today *Ochun*, or *La Virgen del Cobre*, is the Cuban patron saint, revered particularly by many *balseros* who see her as their protector and rescuer while they seek refuge across the Florida Straights. According to De La Torre, *La Virgen del Cobre* has become a model for women seeking full humanity in spite of the patriarchal structures of Cuban machismo.

De La Torre likens the Spanish exploitation of the virgin land to the sexual conquest of the Amerindian women. The Spanish raped both the land and

the women to gratify sexual urges, thus making both a possession. As a result: "The blood of the conquerors and *los humildes* converged in the veins of Cubans." (67) Since Jesus sought solidarity with the outcasts of society De La Torre's theological reflection upon the conquest suggests to him an image of the Cuban Christ as an Amerindian woman.

He gives examples of Cuban women who have reflected the resistance he sees as part of the nature of the Cuban Christ. Mariana Grajales, the mother of Antonio Maceo (a black general in Cuba's independence war) who was honored in Martí's writings, is one example of the *mambisas* who collaborated in the fields during Cuba's war for independence against Spain. Women's resistance in the struggle for independence transformed the position of women in society from victims to active participants. But sexism and machismo persist, according to De La Torre, who cites one of Fidel chauvenistic views on contemporary Cuban society as an example.(76).

De La Torre continues his search for a Christ who knows what it means to be Cuban with a creative review of contemporary Cuban religious art. Appreciating the work of both resident and exile artists, the author establishes that both exhibit a common Cuban longing for liberation. Suffering, nationalism and independence are common themes in the Christological paintings. De La Torre notes that one Afro-Cuban artist in exile, Alejandro Arneus, painted *Cristo Negro* (Black Christ), and thus challenged the white supremacy and racism prevalent among white exile Cubans in Miami.

Given the historical tensions between resident and exile Cubans, I very much appreciate the author's balanced review of Cuban history and art. While the author criticizes the sexism of President Fidel Castro and the racism of Miami Cubans, his social location as an exile Cuban may have inhibited him from acknowledging fully some of the gains of the socialist revolution. Having lived and worshipped on the island for several years, I am grateful for the gift of participating in an integrated church and society where blacks, whites, mulattos and Chinese-Cubans worship and live together in relative equality. Because I hope that it might function as a bridge of inclusiveness between the resident and exile Cuban communities, I would like to see this book translated into Spanish so that resident Cubans can also read and critique it from the lens of the homeland.

One must also recognize that Christianity is not the only religion on the island and perhaps not all suffering can, therefore, be viewed through a Christocentric lens. While syncretism is abundant, proponents of African Cuban religions may not want the worship of Olafi, Ochun, among others, to

be given a Christological interpretation. De La Torre has included the African Cuban religious experience as an important part of Cuban reality, but one must caution against forcing all religious experience into a Christian understanding—even if it is for the sake of unity.

In *The Quest for the Cuban Christ*, De La Torre offers a brilliant interpretation of the suffering Christ-figure in Cuban history. Models of the triumphant, transforming Christ are less frequent. If we are serious about social transformation we must, as we recall the passion of the cross, also celebrate the resurrection. It is true that realism about the extent of suffering in Cuba is especially present in contemporary Cuban art. But I appreciate De La Torre's hope for unity among resident and exile Cuban communities within the diversity of the *Ajiaco* Christ. It is precisely in the diversity of manifestations of the Cuban Christ found within Cuban heroes, heroines, and artistic images that Cubans can find faith, meaning, and De La Torre's hope for all Cubans, that is, unity.

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CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Act & Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes. By Colin Gunton. Eerdmans, 2002, ix and 162 pages.

The British Reformed theologian Colin Gunton aimed throughout his career to articulate the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity. He did so not only to understand God but because this doctrine supplies a framework for the development of other aspects of doctrine. Gunton additionally sought to reconstruct and revise the doctrine to reflect more deeply the truth of the Triune God. This book, the last one he prepared for publication before his untimely death in early 2003, is an essay on the revision of the divine attributes. While he develops a critical assessment of many previous treatments, as well as many of the antinomies facing the doctrine of the attributes, Gunton also provides outlines of solutions. This book offers an excellent introduction to the theology of the divine attributes and deserves consideration in future discussions not only of this particular aspect of the doctrine of God, but also in more fundamental reflection on the Triune God.

Gunton argues that the failings of the three traditional ways of deriving the divine attributes (namely, the ways of negation, eminence, and causality) have a common source in the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius and some aspects of the Greek philosophical tradition. Additionally, Gunton concerns

himself with the roots of the Greek criticism of anthropomorphism. He begins his own proposal in conversation with these lines of thought as they have affected the theological tradition.

After isolating the role language plays in these three ways of approaching the attributes, Gunton identifies a fundamental failing. The *via negativa* is very distrustful of human language and, given the numerous philosophical difficulties, it sees the way to God's attributes as barred because human speech cannot in any way satisfactorily depict God.

When we arrive at Gunton's insistence that the methods of deriving divine attributes must stem from analysis of divine action, we find ourselves at the center of his proposal. He argues for a strong relationship between being and act. We may identify God by the action of God because God's being is God's action. Gunton relies here on Karl Barth's actualism but also draws on Christoph Schwöbel's work on divine action.

Gunton's main canon of interpretation is that speech about God and knowledge of God start with God's economic action. This economic action is God's action in creation, reconciliation, and redemption. In speech and thought, if not in itself, God's being and action take the form of narrative. At this point, one would have to look at Gunton's other work to appreciate that by 'narrative' here he means more than 'story' because he briefly discusses how action is God's own work in the world without relating that action to the development of a humanly spoken narrative.

Protestant treatments of the attributes have generally distinguished between those that are communicable and incommunicable, or those that belong to God's essence and those that reside in God's relation to the world. This view of the attributes continues in modified forms throughout the modern age. But such a split already brings us back to the position that Gunton criticized. He thus follows Hermann Cremer in claiming that the two sets of attributes are better understood as those that are revealed in the economic divine action and those that are required in order for that action to occur. Thus he accomplishes in clear fashion a remarkable statement about the relationship between God's eternal being and God as God is for us.

However, Gunton makes such a claim by relying on God's eternity and freedom, two matters that are usually classed within the attributes. In Gunton's view, some attributes do not directly concern the divine action, but enable it. Thus, Gunton divides attributes into these two classes. Eternity and freedom (or put differently, God's aseity), are necessary conditions

for God's love, wisdom, holiness, and so on. But eternity is not a part of the action of God in history.

Eternity receives little reflection—except a footnote in which Gunton suspects that Barth's view of eternity leads to a mingling of time and eternity. According to Gunton's stated goals, the topic of eternity would seem to require the most concentrated attention in the book. However, the topic of freedom receives the most treatment. Gunton aims to show that God's love proves to be the most important attribute because it alone belongs to both classes of God's eternity and God's freedom (God's love for us is who God truly is), a tradition lodged deep in Christian history but clearly not stated previously in the precise way Gunton formulates it.

In a most revolutionary way, Gunton places the attributes within God's own eternal action as the Triune God. For Gunton, eternity is alive with God's action: both the Spirit loving the Father and Son, and other eternal divine actions. The attributes are grounded in the Father, Son, and Spirit's indivisible yet ordered action. Thus, one cannot give an account of God's love without reference to the eternal action of the Trinity. This itself advances upon Barth, because by Gunton's claim, the role of the Spirit is too little recognized in all of God's works and therefore in God's own being.

It would be impossible to pose questions about God's freedom or eternity to Gunton's book without noting that he himself provides the way to such reflection. He essays a major revision of the way in which the attributes are related directly to God's action, both economic action and eternal action. This book deserves much study and response. The absence of Gunton's future reflection and perfection of the essays here and in the other areas of his research will be much lamented.

—GREGORY A. WALTER
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Lost Soul of American Protestantism. By D. G. Hart. Rowman and Littlefield, 2002, xxxiv and 195 pp.

In *The Lost Soul of American Protestantism*, D. G. Hart succeeds in recovering a forgotten chapter of American religious history. Challenging the well known, two-dimensional rivalry between liberal proponents of the social gospel and revivalist, born-again evangelicals, Hart retells the story of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Protestantism to include a third, neglected group of Christian believers whom he identifies as “confessional

Protestants.” *Lost Soul* provocatively argues that these believers – represented today in part by Orthodox Presbyterians, Lutherans of the Missouri Synod and Christian Reformed Church members – lie outside the main current of American religion because of their reliance on historic confessions, liturgies, and creeds. In the same way that Mormons, African Americans, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Christian Scientists have been excluded from the country’s religious mainstream, confessing Protestants have been overlooked because the categories of “mainline” and “evangelical” are simply inadequate (xxix).

Hart explains the history of confessional Protestantism and its significance for American religion and society by differentiating it from the “liberal” and “evangelical” forms of Protestantism that have occupied the greater share of scholarly and (often divisive) media attention. He documents how these two rivals were actually cut from the same cloth of eighteenth-century European and American pietism. Promoted by two Great Awakenings, pietism’s emphasis on individual conversion, moral transformation, and public evangelism produced a “new form of Christian faith.” Its privileging of social and personal utility diametrically opposed confessionalists’ doctrinal priorities. Pietism’s success in creating a Protestant mainstream busy with temporal life – whether for conservative or progressive social ends – has abetted scholars’ neglect of more churchly traditions that, in defiance of the dominant religious culture, have focused on the world to come (xxiv). *Lost Soul* thus presents “a different perspective of American Protestantism and the way historians have told its story” by calling into question the sufficiency of “liberal,” “fundamentalist,” and “evangelical” categories (xxvi).

Chapter one traces pietism to George Whitefield’s trans-Atlantic revivals (1739-41). In contrast with pastors like Jonathan Edwards, Whitefield removed preaching from the formal church setting while offering conversion in everyday, emotional terms instead of theological and intellectual formulas. The new nation’s separation of church and state “played directly into the hands of the sort of religion that Whitefield had made successful”: disestablished churches competing for members through similar revivals and emphasizing individual experience at the expense of ecclesiastical traditions. On this foundation of individual decision and public commitment, Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, and Billy Sunday built their own followings, contributing to a network of parachurch and reform institutions that created a civil religious empire (12). As a result, Christianity became a “religion to be practiced in the marketplace, the home, and the statehouse, not some-

thing to be confined to the church, under the control of the clergy” (20). Hart concludes that “[r]evivalism secured the victory of pietism, which in turn directed mainstream ... Protestantism, whether of a Social Gospel variety or an evangelistic stripe, away from the formal and corporate beliefs and practices of the church toward the informal settings and personal affairs of believers” (23).

Chapter two illustrates further the novel character of American pietism by showing how revivalism divided the fledgling eighteenth-century Presbyterian church into “Old” confessional and “New” pietistic sides. At stake was the definition of genuine religion, which confessionalists ultimately lost to the New Side’s emphasis on the profession of personal conversion. The Lutheran church experienced similar tensions in the nineteenth century between the older generation of immigrants who had successfully assimilated to American pietistic ways and new arrivals who resisted fitting the “square peg of historical Lutheran faith and practice into the round hole of mainstream American revivalist Protestantism” (46).

In chapter three Hart analyzes the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversies of the 1920s and the rise of neo-orthodoxy throughout the 1950s to account for the ways that confessional Protestantism continued to slip through the cracks of American historiography. Though more like Roman Catholics in their emphases on ecclesiastical authority and sacraments, confessing Protestants became equated with “Fundamentalists,” Christians with whom they often agreed in doctrine but widely differed in practice – particularly the Fundamentalists’ willingness to support Prohibition and fight secularism in public schools. Unlike confessing Protestants, however, the fundamentalists and modernists did not limit religion to the private world of family devotions or worship services that communicated sacraments of grace and realities of the life to come. Rather, they wanted to influence present, public life: conservative Christians through individual, family, and church efforts to convert society one soul at a time; mainliners through legislation and government programs to improve and redeem society (57-9).

The fourth chapter most fully illustrates the virtues of confessional Protestantism with its portrait of J. Gresham Machen, the principle figure in the confessionals’ 1930s departure from the increasingly liberal northern Presbyterian church. This chapter is doubly interesting for the way it ties together Hart’s first book, *Defending the Faith* (1994), a detailed biography of Machen, with his more controversial study, *The University Gets Religion* (1999). It shows how confessional Protestants’ creedal understanding of

Scripture kept them from the fatal error of William Jennings Bryan's attack against scientific modernism as well as from mainline Protestantism's identification with the modern university's nationalistic, cultural mandate. In the last two chapters Hart details the trials experienced by the Dutch Christian Reformed Church and the German Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in their attempts to remain true to their confessional, ethnic, and liturgical heritages against the assimilating pressures of American Protestantism.

In sum, Hart challenges the pietistic idea that "religion has immediate relevance to all walks of life" because it too often creates "simplistic formulas for grappling with deep-rooted problems or [contributes] to shrill national debates" (xxx). He offers confessional Protestantism's unique spirituality as an attractive alternative that transcends both the partisan politics and crass consumerism associated with the liberal and evangelical traditions. Hart's conclusions, however, cast doubt on his earlier disclaimers that the book does not merely identify pietism's faults nor imply that mainline and evangelical believers made no effort to hold on to parts of historic Protestantism (177, xxiii, xxix). In Hart's treatment, confessional Protestantism is the true heir of historic Protestantism; this is a book critical of both liberal and evangelical Christianity.

To its credit, *Lost Soul* interacts with the latest scholarship in religious studies, sociology, history, and ethnography in staking its claim for confessional Protestantism's place in American historiography. Hart presents an original, compelling argument that advances the study of religious history. Moreover, his critique of liberal Protestantism's false neutrality and presumption to represent America anticipates William Hutchison's argument in *Religious Pluralism in America* (2003) and helps explain the furor over the Ten Commandments display in Alabama. The correction of intermittent editorial mistakes and more fully crafted paragraphs could at times have made *Lost Soul* an easier read. These minor flaws, however, are outweighed by the originality and complexity of the religious, political, and social analysis that *Lost Soul* recovers for students of American history.

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Realism and Christian Faith: God, Grammar, and Meaning. By Andrew Moore. Cambridge University Press, 2003, xi and 269 pages.

Theological defenses of realism (i.e., the question whether there is a reality independent of the thinking human subject) more often than not are structured along philosophical lines. Given the constructivist elements of modern and postmodern epistemology (so the procedure goes), how is it possible to show that reality and God are independent of the synthetic-constructive work of the human knower? In this volume Andrew Moore, a Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture at Regent's Park College at Oxford University, proposes a more *theological* approach to realism. The overarching polemical horizon of his project is Christian anti-realism (e.g., Don Cupitt and Gordon Kaufman); such approaches, which consider the Christian God to be an imaginative construct, amount to forfeiture of Christian faith, Moore contends (112). Rather than basing his approach on theories of epistemic justification and the nature of rationality, Moore argues that "through their redemption in Christ human beings are granted to show the reality of the triune God" (x). In so doing he endeavors to show that when the question of realism is reframed *christocentrically*, and with attention to the unique *practices* that typify Christian faith, the problem presents itself in a wholly different form.

The first portion of the book offers a critique of "theological realism," an umbrella term under which Moore groups a variety of thinkers (e.g., Janet Martin Soskice, Arthur Peacocke, Ian Barbour, and Wentzel van Huyssteen) who are similar in (1) the fact that the independence of *God's* reality drives their defense of realism, (2) their use of analogies between theological and scientific realism, and (3) their generically theistic approach to the problem. Moore thinks that theological realism too blithely assumes that the God whose independent reality it is arguing for is identical with the God of the Bible; its real focus is on "the logical coherence of an abstract *concept* of God and her/his/its *attributes* from which biblical narrative conceptions have been almost totally eviscerated" (32-3). Following Barth and Jüngel, he insists that only certain ways of speaking about God (and therefore also defending realism) respect the fact that we are talking about *God* (rather than created reality). The engine of proper God-talk is, therefore, God's self-revelation in Christ. This approach entails constructing a transcendental argument on the basis of the "ontological commitment" that the triune God of Jesus Christ is *ens realissimum*, the "Most Real reality there is" (14). Doing

this seriously requires attention to the biblical narrative's connection between God's self-naming ("I am who I am"; "I will be who I will be") and salvific acts, which alone enables theology to avoid idolatry in its search for a proper realism.

Furthermore, Moore argues that the common theological realist tactic of employing analogies with scientific realism makes a "category mistake" by using the logic of science in Christian theology (40). When theological realism uses an analogy between the unobservability of God and the unobservability of theoretical entities in science to argue for a causal relationship between religious experiences and the unobservable God, it ends up employing the grammar of created things to describe God the Creator. This approach attempts to justify theology's putative reference to a real God by appeal to the experiences of believers. This strategy leads Moore to suspect that theological realism (despite its own efforts to the contrary) remains locked in an empiricist frame of reference. Moore considers such arguments on the basis of religious experience to be less than compelling, because religious experience could be explained by other (non-realist) explanations (e.g., naturalism).

While theological realism ignores the specific grammar of Christian faith, Moore argues that such grammar is a necessary presupposition of rightly understanding what *kind* of realist account is proper to describe language and meaning regarding the Christian God. So he enters into recent discussions of Christian theology as a "grammar" that is present in the practices of those in the Christian church. In dialogue with Wittgenstein, D.Z. Phillips, and George Lindbeck, Moore argues that in and of themselves Christian practices are an insufficient guide to the reality of God because they so often reflect disobedience. God's reality can be present in our practices, but not obviously and automatically so. Christian practices lose their meaning when they are detached from the (biblical) narrative that must inform them (114-15). Practices that truly represent God (and God's independent reality) depend on the narrative recital of God's actions, and the very actions that are recited. When the Holy Spirit acts through this recital God can be present in these practices.

All of this means, constructively, that an authentically Christian account of realism must work from the *Christian* notion of God—namely, that God is *ens realissimum* as the triune God revealed in Christ. The crucial issue for Moore is thus not the manner in which humans can gain epistemic

access to God, but the moral and ontological standing of humanity before God. Through the *imago Dei*, humanity is graciously allowed to represent God, but humanity sinfully tends to deny God's independent reality (seen most acutely in the crucifixion of Jesus). God's independent reality is not shown by epistemological argumentation, but by God's own act of resurrecting Jesus, whom human beings had put to death, implicitly denying the independent reality of the Father of Jesus. Christian realism is a reflection of the independent and prevenient reality of God that is revealed in the resurrection. This account means that Christians can only "have" reality (in a realist sense) under this salvation-historical narrative description (214). This narrative's meaning lies not in the text itself, but in the activity of God to which it points, just as Christian practices are meaningless apart from the acts of God that regulate them. The Bible and Christian practices have the effect of decentering the church and Christian believers, and focusing them on the triune God, rather than upon themselves or the text. Only as thus decentered are Christians enabled (in grace) to show through their lives and words the independent reality of God.

These are the basic lines of Moore's proposal (which includes, among other things, a "dialectical fideist" account of the relationship between theology and philosophy and a foray into speech act theory). Moore's proposal of a distinctively Christian realism is a welcome departure from those approaches that trade on the distinctive elements of Christian theology in order to play by the rules of the philosophical game. His strategy in doing so, however, may strike some readers as leading to a problematic question-begging. His approach is *so* theological that some will wonder if he is even addressing the same question of realism. For example, when he calls (on theological grounds) for an ontological approach rather than an epistemological approach, is he not putting the proverbial cart before the horse? How is it possible to speak of the being of God (independent or otherwise) apart from the epistemological conditions and constraints under which human minds must labor?

Moore might agree that such questions are legitimate, *if* one is assuming the rules of the realist game as usual, but that such an approach is nevertheless not distinctively Christian. But more than starting from an ontological approach, Moore is proposing a different epistemology, one indebted to Karl Barth's construal of God's self-revelation, which coheres with the character of God. It is an epistemology in which the conditions of knowledge rest with God rather than with human beings. It is an account that refuses to

detach epistemology from soteriology, and therefore refuses to start anywhere but the prevenient (and therefore *real*) grace of God. This methodological divergence, however, does cause Moore to underemphasize aspects of theological realism that are actually amenable to his own approach, such as the fallibilism of Soskice's account of theological language that Moore criticizes as too generally epistemological, even though he proposes a similar fallibilism on the basis of the doctrine of sin.

Although some readers will undoubtedly find this book problematic and perhaps unhelpful in showing the relationship of theology to the other academic disciplines, Moore shows that merely philosophical approaches are bound to be theologically inadequate. His approach perhaps even points toward a more authentic sense of theology's relationship to the other disciplines, one that resides in its uniqueness and its realization that it must first serve God and the church, as Barth never ceased to emphasize. As theology faithfully does that, it will also contribute more powerfully to the various problematics of the world, including philosophy and its desire to determine the extent to which human language actually makes contact with reality.

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