

comparison with nondualist (*Advaita*) Hinduism. The final wave of the work (chapters 23–24) suggests that such Buddhist accounts of self and spiritual practice may offer a valuable corrective to the attenuated anthropologies of Western secular humanism.

McGhee's book is a worthy read. At the same time, the accounts of Buddhism and Hinduism are somewhat weak in historical contextualization, and the work would also benefit from a stronger focus and argumentative structure. I was frustrated, for example, that aside from the last two chapters, McGhee's accounts of secular humanism were usually marginal, such as his passing comment that "If anything is 'missing' in secular accounts, it is this background spiritual community dedicated to this kind of practice, as a preparation for life" (104). There's a lot to unpack in that short statement!

Or perhaps this desire for focus and system is yet another form of grasping, when what is required is something more like aesthetic receptivity, holding oneself ready for a glimpse of reality when the moment is right. Either way, the book merits a place in any academic library, as well as in upper-level or graduate courses in comparative philosophy and philosophy of religion.

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*Remembering and Resisting: The New Political Theology.* By Johann Baptist Metz, edited by John K. Downey. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022. xv + 89 pages. \$18.00 (paper).

doi:10.1017/hor.2024.51

The present collection of essays by and interviews of Johann Baptist Metz (1928–2019) is a much-welcomed addition to the availability of this important German thinker in the English language. The originator of "the new political theology" in Germany in the years just after the conclusion of Vatican II, Metz has been of unsurmountable importance in his influence on liberation theologies, feminist theologies, Hispanic theology, Black theology, contextual theologies, and on categories like narrative theology and theology as biography. Phrases like "dangerous memory" and "a mysticism of open eyes," images that are widely used today, were developed and formulated by Metz. His prophetic voice span sixty years of theological life, which he developed out of his own horrific experience of WWII when he was pulled into the army at the age of sixteen and then as a postwar theologian paying utmost attention to the central memory of Auschwitz.

John K. Downey, Professor Emeritus of Fundamental Theology at Gonzaga University and former Director of the Coolidge Research Colloquium, is an expert in Johann Baptist Metz's theology. He has published Metz's work in translation for years, written his own reflections on them, and became a good American friend of Metz. He has made Metz's thought available to a wider audience in the United States, and now he has assembled this unique new collection, a book both charming and truly important.

Downey organizes the collection in three parts. In the first part, he connects two of Metz's foundational insights: theology as biography and theology as theodicy. Regarding the first, Metz saw his great mentor, Karl Rahner, not only as a brilliant, original thinker but as a person whose courage and depth of faith exemplify a "theological existential biography." As to the second, Metz insisted on the crucial importance of theodicy in the development of any authentic theology after Auschwitz. Theology could not risk remaining a closed salvific hermeneutical circle of a victorious Christianity, a theology that virtually ignored two world wars, the rise of communism, fascism and, most importantly, the brutal reality signaled by Auschwitz. Together with his friend Gustavo Gutiérrez, he brought the question of theodicy and the figure of Job into the heart of theology. Metz's own theological existential biography provides—especially for recent efforts to think theologically about trauma—a searingly important theological witness. I am thankful Downey included it here.

The second part of the collection allows English-language theologians to read a central text out of Metz's late book *Memoria Passionis*, which has been translated into numerous languages but not yet into English. The article "Memoria Passionis: A Fundamental Category for Political Theology" published in 2006 could have been written this year, for it speaks to the current situations that trouble our theological waters in 2024. The question how individual happiness and the suffering of others remains one of the central questions for any theological endeavor, and it appears not only in one specific essay of part 2 but is, in a certain sense, the bottom line of all the essays gathered in the second part.

The third part augments these central theological "manifestos" of part 2 with discussion around cultural amnesia, individual and communal awareness, and the surprises Metz thought Pope Francis could bring to the church (which he indeed has done!).

The genius of this small and very accessible collection is that Downey integrates into it several interviews that Metz gave to German news outlets. It shows the importance Metz had as a public theologian far beyond the ivory tower. It also showed how he wittily and brilliantly maneuvered language,

influencing our theological lexicon in ways that have no equal in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries.

I highly recommend this short collection not only as an important work for contemporary theologians, but also as an excellent classroom text at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It will serve well those students who have heard of the categories Metz developed but have never read anything by him. It also is good for some surprises for seasoned theologians who know Metz's thought well. Indeed, it is a wonderful gift for theologically curious minds who will both laugh and cry reading these texts by a thinker of whom David Tracy said: "After this theology, nothing can ever be the same again."

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*Reforming the Church: A Synodal Way of Proceeding.* By Serena Noceti. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023. v + 209 pages. \$18.95 (paper).

doi:10.1017/hor.2024.47

Published in June of 2023, Serena Noceti's work emerges as a significant and timely contribution to the field of synodality. The text is introduced by its connection to Rafael Luciani's (Trans. Joseph Owens, SJ) *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church* (NY/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2022) and their co-authorship of *Sinodalmente: forma e riforma di una Chiesa sinodale* (Firenze: Nerbini, 2022). Like Luciani, Noceti is a pivotal player in the synodal milieu, arguing that synodality was hermeneutically sewn into the conciliar reforms of Vatican II. For a vigorous assessment of Luciani, see Peter De Mey's Book Review *Horizons* volume 51, issue 1, June 2024 (219 – 221).

Where to begin, exactly? Although Noceti and Luciani share several perspectives, Noceti's focus is distinct. For Luciani, synodality is a way of proceeding. For Noceti, the way of proceeding is toward an endgame: reform. As others have noted, including De Mey, what Noceti means by reform is stopping the circularity of "one" person receiving support from the mediation of "some" to be given authority over "all." In a church setting, this could be likened to a bishop receiving support from *some* priests to assume authority over *all* the faithful. Similarly, in volunteer work, one individual may receive backing from a small group, which then asserts authority and seeks to control the community. Instead, Noceti proposes that synodality must shift the church toward the ecclesial and communal "we."