

some countries in Africa. Using Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire as his case studies, Opongo makes the argument that electoral violence can be a graced moment for peacebuilding advocates to study closely the root causes of electoral dysfunctions in a country to allow for putting in place workable structures that can help foster a healthy national life. In light of this, Opongo argues that the ICC played a positive role in addressing the electoral crises that engulfed Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire.

Seventh, a prophetic turn is a clear marker of this anthology. Each contributor makes a case not just for lament of the dysfunctions defining the electoral processes in Africa's nation-states, but constructive ways of remedying the issues at stake. Tim Murithi makes a strong argument for rethinking the current system of governance in Africa. In doing this, Murithi argues for the retrieval of ancient African values defining the politics of African societies that can be used to address the several dysfunctions playing out in today's Africa.

The interdisciplinary strength of this anthology is outstanding. The authors draw on social psychology, memory studies, trauma studies, legal studies, cultural studies, philosophy, gender and feminist studies, and many more disciplines to address the electoral cultures in contemporary Africa. They use compelling data to make their arguments to allow for the readers to consider the multi-pronged matters at stake.

This work stands to be relevant to scholars, politicians, think-tank agencies, NGOs, and other peacebuilding agents and institutions who are interested in studying in detail the current trajectory of Africa's political and social cultures. The anthology has made a strong case to be a credible source for future scholars to consult as their intellectual vade mecum.

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*After Method: Queer Grace, Conceptual Design, and the Possibility of Theology.*

By Hanna Reichel. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2023. vii + 277 pages. \$40.00.

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Theology is a human endeavor to understand and explain what can be neither understood fully nor explained thoroughly. Conversations on theological method do not usually draw standing room only crowds. But many will engage with Hanna Reichel's queer postmodern approach. The author claims, or at

least hopes, it is more adequate, they dare say “better,” than what has come before. Using design theory, they play with the idea of theology as constructive design. The book is a worthy project, though aimed at a highly specialized audience of theologians.

Hanna Reichel frames their analysis in three moments:

1. How (not) to get along (*primus usus legis*)
2. How (not) to lose hope (*secundus usus legis*)
3. How (not) to do better (*tertius usus legis*)

In the first moment, the author chooses their pillars, Karl Barth for systematic theology and Marcella Althaus-Reid for constructive theology. They deconstruct the work of both of these seemingly strange bedfellows, giving each its due and marking the shortcomings of each. Finding both lacking, albeit differently, in their approaches to claims about ultimate meaning and value that characterize theology, the author goes in search of grace. They despair of method as a solution to anything, though acknowledge the importance of both rigor and fluidity, praxis and analysis, all of which benefit from some framework commonly called method.

In the second moment, “queer grace” comes into focus in the search for “a better way.” System building, according to Reichel, is “where the theologian heroically advances the truth of God to the point of mastering, controlling, and overriding it” (82). Likewise, praxis, even with robust intersectional approaches, carries no assurance of a comprehensive program.

“Queer grace appears in God’s excessive reality” (115) for reasons as old as theology itself. The claim to “queer holiness” (116), like so many similar theological insights, is a factor of faith for those who live with certain forms of religious consciousness. How it works beyond the Jesus story and whether other religious traditions have parallel approaches are issues that are not raised in this explicitly Protestant discussion of method. Earlier explainers of theological method such as Bernard J. Lonergan in *Method in Theology* (Herder and Herder, 1973) with his neo-Thomistic approach, and Juan Luis Segundo in his liberationist model in *The Liberation of Theology* (Orbis Book, 1976), might find this approach exotic. But if, as Reichel claims, “no single methodological paradigm can do justice to reality” (246), then multiple methods in conversation are a must. This book is an example of that.

In the third moment, the author employs ideas from architectural design theory, especially how things function, how they are built, and what purposes they serve. They also turn to queer theory, including reflections on cruising and promiscuity among other concepts. Resulting insights are offered in the

service of a “better” theology. There are plenty of open questions to ascertain what might be even “better” in the future.

The volume presupposes more than a nodding acquaintance with both Barth and Althaus-Reid. Despite its contemporary vibe, it is laced with language that may make another generation of theological students fear theology the way premed students fear organic chemistry. Words such as “systematicity,” “hamatological,” and “interdigitate” need more explanation if even the most interested of readers is to follow the arguments.

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*Teresa of Calcutta: Dark Night, Active Love.* By Jon M. Sweeney. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2022. xxi + 162 pages. \$19.95.

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It has long seemed incongruous that one of the most universally recognized people on the planet was a small nun who lived with the poor in Calcutta. In his new book *Teresa of Calcutta: Dark Night, Active Love*, Jon M. Sweeney beautifully reveals the holy woman at the heart of this incongruity.

Sweeney’s biography is divided into three sections. The first part, “Preparation,” covers Mother Teresa’s family and early life in Skopje, Albania, and her initial vocation to join the Sisters of Loretto. The second, “Call,” continues the chronological trajectory by walking through her “call within a call” (35) to serve the poor in India, her creation of the Missionaries of Charity, and the early years of that ministry before she burst onto the international scene. The third section, “Legacy,” is not as chronologically organized as the previous two. Although it does cover the major events of the second half of her life, it is primarily structured around the key topics of Mother Teresa’s celebrity, travel, critics and her responses, her intersections with the world of politics, her experience of the dark night, and finally her sainthood.

Throughout all three sections, the narrative is often guided by three recurring themes. The strongest is Sweeney’s focus on sanctity. Sweeney notes several times that Mother Teresa was the rare figure who was almost universally described as a saint during her lifetime; Pope John Paul II even waived the usual five-year waiting period for opening a cause for canonization in her case not long after her death in 1997. But Sweeney also uses the lives of other religious figures to explain aspects of Mother Teresa’s vocation and works. In particular, Sweeney draws comparisons to Catholic saints, including