

*Woman, Women, and the Priesthood in the Trinitarian Theology of Elisabeth Behr-Sigel.*  
By Sarah Hinlicky Wilson. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp. viii + 200. \$120.

Often referred to as the “grandmother of Western Orthodoxy,” Elisabeth Behr-Sigel (1907–2005) was a theologian, ecumenist, and ecclesial activist whose extraordinary life and prolific scholarship deserve more attention than they have generally received. To that end she is well served by Wilson’s careful study of her long theological development and evolving views on the ordination of women to the priesthood.

W. ably locates Behr-Sigel, a Lutheran convert to Orthodoxy (1929), within the milieu of the Russian *émigré* community in Paris where Orthodox theology flourished as it sought to assess its relationship to Russian nationalism and Western modernity. Detailed discussion of the sources and influences on Behr-Siegel’s theological writings introduces readers to key Orthodox theologians from that period, notably Paul Evdokimov and Vladimir Lossky.

The close, contextual, and chronological analysis of Behr-Sigel’s major writings on women and priesthood is one of the book’s strengths. While Behr-Sigel’s own recycling of her arguments occasions some repetition, W.’s approach allows her to show the organic evolution of Behr-Sigel’s thought as she moved away from Evdokimov’s attribution of ontological significance to gender differences and the necessity of a male priesthood, to a critique of his theological anthropology and trinitarian theology (1980s). Equally important is W.’s attention to Behr-Sigel’s participation in international gatherings of Orthodox women and to the conferences on “The Community of Women and Men in the Church” sponsored by the World Council of Churches (1976 and following) that enabled her to clarify her theology in dialogue with other women.

In the final chapter W. offers a constructive interpretation of Behr-Sigel’s mature position (1995), which was rooted in a trinitarian understanding of personhood (influenced by Lossky) as exceeding gender and hypostasis, and a historical perspective on tradition that deconstructs the recent fixation on the iconicity of the priest. Behr-Sigel’s signal contribution to the Orthodox debate on women and priesthood is the conjunction of these two insights, leading her to conclude that ordination of women to the priesthood is a necessity that follows from the creation of persons in the image and likeness of God that and will enrich the church’s ministry and mission. W.’s fine book makes Behr-Sigel’s contribution newly accessible.

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*Embodied Words, Spoken Signs: Sacramentality and the Word in Rahner and Chauvet.*  
By Rhodora E. Beaton. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. Pp. vii + 213. \$49.

The greatest merit of Beaton’s fine study is that it puts the topic of the sacramentality of the Word on the theological agenda again, and does so with both intelligence and vigor. Clearly, B.’s theological horizon is Roman Catholic theology in the post-Vatican

II era, shaped by a dynamic understanding of divine revelation. God made himself known neither in a series of ideas nor in a set of rules of conduct, but primordially as a powerful and liberating operation of grace and salvation mediated through a network of rites and symbols in the world and in history as human beings know and experience them. B. connects that fundamental understanding of revelation with a profound theology of the word of God, of which the most specific characteristic might arguably be its sacramentality, that is, its theandric potential to engraft humanity onto divinity.

It comes as no surprise, however, that the concept of sacramentality itself needs to be broadened and deepened, so that it is not limited to seven specific rituals that were officially sanctioned at one point in history (and to some devout practices depending upon them). For this move, B. draws inspiration from two giants in 20th-century Roman Catholic sacramental theology, Karl Rahner and Louis-Marie Chauvet. The two chapters on these challenging thinkers are well-balanced syntheses of their thought that skillfully introduce readers to the most important primary sources, without, however, paying sufficient attention to scholarly literature in languages other than English. Furthermore, these chapters are anticipated by soundings into the history of a sacramental theology of the word. B. provides reflections on Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, and argues that all of them somehow marked 20th-century Roman Catholic theology. Moreover, B. defends the thesis that their work can, and should, be further unpacked with a view to facing contemporary challenges. Her monograph deserves praise for its conciseness and clarity as well as for its ecumenical sensitivity and openness, but specialists in liturgical and sacramental theology will miss a perspective that points beyond the evident.

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*Creation.* By David Fergusson. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. viii + 149. \$18.

A model of synthesis, crisp analysis, and engagement with recent scholarship, Fergusson's volume provides readers a concise overview of the Christian theology of creation in its biblical, historical, systematic, and ethical dimensions. Part of Eerdmans's Guide to Theology series, which has as its primary audience students of theology, the volume deftly covers such topics as biblical exegesis, providence, deism, evolutionary theory, environmental ethics, and extraterrestrials. Seeking to provide more than a survey and synthesis, F. raises a number of questions and contested areas in the theology of creation, including doctrinal disputes, the encounter of faith and science, and the problems of anthropocentrism. The volume also comes with a richly annotated bibliography.

While F. is generally more content to illuminate questions and disputes than to resolve them, there is a constructive dimension to the work that places it on the cutting edge. One example is the recent discussions of the *imago Dei*, and whether the biblical and doctrinal traditions that support it are compatible with evolutionary theory and