

with biblical creation by drawing attention to the “decentration” exhibited in Jesus’ life lived for the benefit of others. Vacek focuses on Teilhard’s ethics of love conceived as persons cooperating in Christ’s activity, thereby contributing to “Christ’s evolution” (chap. 9).

The book includes a brief introduction and conclusion, a helpful time line of Teilhard’s life, and a chart listing his writings available in French with their English translations. Each essay ends with “Points to Ponder” and “Questions for Discussion,” making the book particularly suitable for graduate courses. The publication of this collection less than a year before the 60th anniversary of Teilhard’s death makes it a timely book of interest to Teilhard enthusiasts and those interested in the relationship of natural science and Christian theology.

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*Sacrifice and Modern Thought*. Edited by Julia Mezaros and Johannes Zachhuber. Oxford: Oxford University, 2013. Pp. ix + 279. \$99.

The book may be best summarized in contributor Philip McCosker’s words: “There is no one definition of sacrifice—it is an inherently aporetic or lacunic reality—and . . . it is therefore a polyvalent concept with many senses” (133). The essays are wide-ranging, brought together by a word with many meanings rather than by a unified idea.

Predominant is the notion of sacrifice as the destruction of a victim, whether it be the slaughter of an animal, the taking of human life, or the surrender of something for the benefit of others. Thus we find in this volume essays titled “Sacrifice as Self-destructive ‘Love,’” “From Slaughtered Lambs to Dedicated Lives,” and “The Aztec Sacrificial Complex.”

Given the popularity of René Girard’s theory of ritual sacrifice as a scapegoat mechanism, it is not surprising that three of the essays treat or draw upon Girard’s ideas at some length. Girard has postulated that, in archaic religions, sacrifice was a controlled way of reenacting a foundational murder that brought peace between warring groups.

Some treatment is given to Augustine’s interpretation of sacrifice as symbolic of “an internal act that attunes the agent to God” (3). Augustine broadened the concept to include “every work that establishes community between human beings and God” (16). But only one mention is made of Cudworth’s theory that ancient sacrifices “were meals in which God and man participated together” (3). It is this understanding of sacrifice that quite plausibly lay behind Justin Martyr’s explanation that the ritual meals shared by Christians were sacrifices even though they did not take place in temples and shrines.

Of particular interest is McCosker’s treatment of sacrifice as interpreted by Roman Catholic theologians. The traditional explanation of the Mass as a sacrifice in which

Christ is both priest and victim, a self-offering to God the Father for the salvation of humankind, began to be rethought in the early 20th century by Maurice de la Taille, Anscar Vonier, and Odo Casel. The possibilities they opened up have been recently explored by David Power, Louis-Marie Chauvet, Matthew Levering, Robert Daly, Pope Benedict XVI (writing as Joseph Ratzinger), and James Alison—all treated in this volume. This collection serves as a handy summary and road map through the eucharistic regions of the Catholic theological landscape.

All in all, the book offers helpful insights that readers might best discover by consulting the table of contents rather than by reading the book cover to cover.

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*Understanding Interreligious Relations.* Edited by David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas. New York: Oxford University, 2014. Pp. viii + 448. \$150; \$35.

Because it favors the comprehensive rubric of interreligious “relations,” which includes and exceeds the specialty of interreligious “dialogue,” this extensive and finely written volume combines a breadth of topical treatment with multiple religions’ perspectives on the religious other that few (if any) earlier studies have managed to conjoin. The authors, principally from the United Kingdom and the United States, are leading scholars in their fields.

Part I contains five treatments of the religious other from the convenient vantage point of five major religions—Hinduism (Jeffery Long), Buddhism (Elizabeth Harris), Judaism (Edward Kessler), Christianity (Perry Schmidt-Leukel), and Islam (David Thomas)—and this section’s omission of African Traditional Religion is regrettable opposite the five tradition-specific and richly detailed treatments of sacred texts, theological developments, historical and cultural contingencies, and contemporary issues surrounding religious otherness. Taken together, these early chapters constitute a clear, rich, and efficient synthesis of traditions’ development and deployment of internal resources and criteria to respond to religious otherness in various ways.

The longer part II ably treats “themes and issues” in interreligious relations that remain open scenes of challenge and debate in contemporary life, such as conversion (Andrew Wingate), dialogue (Marianne Moyaert), migration in the context of majority–minority interreligious dynamics (Peter Phan and Jonathan Tan), fundamentalism and extremism (Douglas Pratt), conflict and peacebuilding (Anna Halafoff), the public sphere (Nicholas Adams), liberation and justice (Mario Aguilar), multiple religious belonging (Catherine Cornille), boundaries (David Vishanoff), and cooperation (Paul Weller). The editors contribute a final chapter on the urgent need for a new mode of theology—interreligious theology—occasioned by the fundamentally changed and new experience of religious identity in the 21st century.