

In this volume—taken as a whole or in parts—scholars will find clear and refreshing treatments, while students will be appropriately stretched by its rigor, but profit by exposure to a globally informed and historically sensitive survey of interreligious relations. A significant quality of the book is that it invites readers to understand and act reflectively and responsibly in our religiously plural world. For these reasons, every library and student of theology should hold a copy.

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Being Promised: Theology, Gift and Practice. By Gregory Walter. Foreword by Patrick R. Keifert. *Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013. Pp. xiv + 110. \$25.

Being Promised is part of the *Sacra Doctrina* Series that analyzes different Christian theological topics for the postmodern culture. The contributors to this series are grounded in the Christian tradition and work from an ecumenical perspective. Walter's contribution is an analysis of "gift" from the perspectives of the cultural anthropology of Marcel Mauss, the philosophical phenomenology of Jacques Derrida, and the biblical tradition. From the Scriptures, W. focuses on the story of Abraham and Sarah at Mamre and the strangers' empty or excessive gift of Isaac, the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the gift of Christ's body at the Last Supper and Eucharist. The "dangerous memory" of the crucifixion and the hope of the resurrection of Christ guide these theological reflections (93).

The book's great strength is that in thinking about promise as a gift and a practice, it lays out a postmetaphysical and postfoundational method for theology that avoids the usual pitfalls of gift study: the archaic gift of reciprocity and modern efficient causality, and the pure gift of postmodernism that has no strings attached and is impossible by definition. W. endeavors to clarify the "phenomenon of promise as gift," both exchanged and pure (26), by presenting the theological, hermeneutical, and ethical significances. The promise is a kind of gift that is doubled and extended; it is a pledge, an actual giving that is extended over time. It is also a "weak power" that enables surprising possibilities toward the neighbor, and that is open to public criticism and evaluations of credibility. The promise of gift is exchanged, invites response, and remains free of obligations. Ultimately, W. suggests, promise is the way God deals with human beings (97).

I recommend the book for both students and scholars interested in contemporary foundational issues in theology. It is stimulating and breaks new ground in what it offers to the current discussion of the gift and for possible future reflections on God, theological ontology, and revelation. However, while W. avoids scholarly jargon, his writing style is dense and may be exacting for some readers.

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