

Writing books on science and faith is hard. I know; I have tried several times, with mixed results. In criticizing B.'s work, I find myself in the embarrassing position of recognizing all the failings of my own attempts at such work. Writing about the science that I know professionally, I have a hard time remembering what the non-expert reader is going to find difficult to understand. But when I write on theological topics, too often I dwell on the ideas of the last book I happened to read, without a confident depth of knowledge in the field. My own solution has been to find a co-author whose expertise complemented mine. B. would have done well to have found such a collaborator.

That said, B. does a wonderful job in raising topics that I have not often seen in science–religion discussions. His chapter on “Dangerous Infinities?” (chapter 5) opens a wonderful argument on the difficulty faced by materialists in contemplating an infinite universe, and his chapter on “Mental Reality” (chapter 11) bravely addresses the inherent contradictions of trying to explain consciousness with a purely mechanical description of reality.

In sum, my real complaint against this book is not anything that the author has done wrong, but rather in all the places I wish he had done more. It is a good book, which contains within it the seeds of a great book ... a book that I hope, at some point, he will find the time and courage to write.

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Teología Pública: Una voz para la Iglesia en sociedades plurales. By Gonzalo Villagrán, SJ. Madrid: PPC, 2016. Pp. 158. \$18.05.

How are we to produce a theological discourse relevant in societies characterized by political, moral, religious, cultural pluralism? The range of writing over the last half-century going by the title of “public theology” offers one set of answers, which this short, precise, and very well-organized introduction does much to commend. Gonzalo Villagrán is a Spanish Jesuit theologian. He has a doctorate from Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, and is now an assistant professor at the Faculty of Theology of Granada (Spain). He can thus range freely across both US and European resources. The first reason his new book is important is that it offers a distinctively European perspective on what is largely a North American current of thought. Secondly, he offers a useful mapping of a theological movement that is necessarily diverse and eclectic. Exhaustiveness is out of the question, but V. gives helpful orientations, both historical and systematic, for anyone wanting to enter this field.

In the first part of the book, public theology is presented as one possible response to both the pluralism and the privatization of religion in Western societies. It aims at “contributing to the common good in a pluralistic society by using theological categories” (33). Various models of mediation between revelation and social realities are available in theology today: natural law inherited from a long tradition; political theology (Metz); Latin American liberation theology (Gutiérrez, Sobrino); approaches

presenting the church as an alternative community (Hauerwas, Cavanaugh). What is specific to the endeavor of public theology is its orientation toward society as a whole rather than toward just the transformation of the believing community. Besides, public theology addresses the whole range of issues arising in public debates, including cultural as well as political questions. Finally, its focus is “not primarily on the transformation of *praxis*, but rather on an adequate and convincing participation in public dialogue” (39).

In the second part, V. looks at the origins of this theological current in the Protestant world before turning his focus to Catholicism. In this latter context, V. evokes John Courtney Murray, and then highlights David Tracy’s paradigm of correlational critique. From here, there is a natural transition to connections with moral theology and with philosophy. Moral theology in its traditional articulation of four sources (Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience) offers paths toward practical applications of Tracy’s theoretical reflection. Some philosophical approaches (Gadamer, Habermas, Valadier) provide helpful foundations. Here, the interplay between European and US ideas seems especially fruitful.

The third part is more critical and evaluative. It addresses—and convincingly responds to—some of the main criticisms drawn by public theology: insufficient taking into account of the question of identity, weakness in taking normative stances, lack of efficiency for transforming the society, and vagueness in methodology. Then it considers specific attempts at practicing it, both in the US (the Pastoral Letters of the Bishops in the 80s; the work of Kristin Heyer on immigration), and in other parts of the world, such as South Africa and Spain. Interestingly, these examples show that public theology today becomes more genuinely prophetic, despite its need to use the terms of standard public discourse. V. shows that liberation theology and public theology are mutually supportive, complementary endeavors.

For Spanish-speaking readers, V.’s book will be an effective introduction to a style of theology that is open and adaptable to a wide range of human situations. Now that Pope Francis is calling the church to go to the peripheries, V.’s work is indeed timely.

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Kritische Orthodoxy: Zum Umgang evangelischer und anglikanischer Theologen mit der Lehrformel von Chalcedon. By Benjamin Dahlke. Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2017. Pp. 264. €34,90.

This book is an attempt to tell a story of Christology in the Modern Era that preserves the Chalcedonian formula without glorifying it. The author is sympathetic to the likes of F. C. Baur, who praised his generation for finding alternative, interesting unvarnished truth about Jesus, which captured something of the Incarnation as event. However, that need not mean (contra Baur) that previous truths should be repealed. Rethinking the content while changing the words is fine and necessary, so long as the