

challenges of the church's fifty-year effort of evangelizing after the opening of Vatican II. While the church is still actively engaged in *missio ad gentes*, new situations, especially the secularization of "territories of Christian traditions" and the loss of Christian identity, this is a call for a re-assessment of the evangelistic approach of the church.

The first set of essays situates the new evangelization within its historical setting—from Vatican II (Lamberigts) to the 1983 Latin American Bishops' Conference (Gorski), and through the reigns of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI (Rowman). The second part of the book explores the impacts of the new evangelization on the church's self-understanding and on mission: as a call to communion and solidarity (Wood), and as an instrument of conversion of a whole culture to Gospel values (George). The challenges of ecumenism (Murray) and globalization of the church (Linden) are also duly noted.

The essays in the third and fourth parts of the volumes address the challenges of the new evangelization in specific contexts: the situation of the younger churches in Global South (Filoni) and in Africa (Baawobr), the challenges of other world religions (D'Costa) and of religious pluralism (Mayer), and the effort of re-evangelization in Europe. Examples of the new evangelization effort in the UK are also discussed: the role of the magisterium (Willey), the "heart-to-heart" approach of John Henry Newman (Morgan), the need to learn the "truth about Jesus" (Brooks), and the encounter with God in interreligious dialogue and collaboration (Smith-Muller).

At the heart of the new evangelization, which can be seen as *missio inter gentes*, is the conversion and commitment to Christ, as various authors have shown. The book provides an excellent overview of the current status of mission and evangelization and, as such, can be used in a graduate level course on ecclesiology or missiology.

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Christian Understandings of Evil: The Historical Trajectory. By Charlene P. E. Burns.
Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. Pp. xi + 218. \$19.93.

Burns is to be commended for her comprehensive survey of major thinkers in Christian thought and theology from the Church Fathers up through to the contemporary era. Her subject, despite its title, focuses more on the question of how these figures philosophically resolve the problem of evil, i.e. theodicy, than it does on the more currently relevant question of how we might best and most compassionately live out our lives in light of injustice, suffering, and brutality indelibly affixed to the human condition. For the most part, the volume is a solid account of the critical distinctions among classic theodicies. Along the way, B. helpfully breaks down the kinds of arguments that one might use to engage these issues.

The volume's limitation is that it might seem like a reduction of two millennia of Christian theology to a singular focus on theodicy's justification of divine cruelty. But this limitation is also its strength, for B. demonstrates that some unlikely candidates

could be seen as providing such vindication of God. Thus, while most of her readers are familiar with Augustinian and Thomistic theodicies, B. explains to non-specialists how Origen's "two creations theory," according to which humans spiritually have choice despite the *ex nihilo* creation of the physical world, opens the door for free will among the Church Fathers (49–50), or shows how a Kierkegaardian teleological suspension of the ethical in the self's bid to become authentic can also be creatively construed as the overcoming of boredom, "the root of all evil" (147). Yet B.'s broad treatment sometimes misses critical details. For example, this very phrase from *Either/Or* is in fact voiced by a pseudonym, the aesthete Johannes the Seducer, not Kierkegaard himself. B. also occasionally forces connections to preserve historical continuity. Her section on "literary explorations in the Nineteenth Century," where she ties liberal Protestantism to the gothic literature of the Romantics, seems a particularly hard sell (146–48). Finally, some critical works are not treated, such as the most poignant of the empirically sensitive, non-speculative theodicies of the modern era, C. S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed*, where Lewis ties flourishing to pain in a manner which could have served as an effective rejoinder to Leibniz's Enlightenment "best of all possible worlds" defense of the divine.

Nevertheless, for clarity of classic texts as varied as the *Book of Job* (12–14), Augustine's *City of God* (65–66), Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* (96), and even John Hick's seminal *God of Love* from the twentieth century (171–73), one could scarcely write more succinctly or accessibly than B. has done. In the end, the case for a "trajectory," the explicit purpose of the volume as indicated by its subtitle, is duly made.

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The Cosmic Common Good: Religious Grounds for Ecological Ethics. By Daniel P. Scheid. New York: Oxford University, 2016. Pp. xiv + 248. \$29.95.

Given the suffering caused by ecological degradation to humans and other creatures alike, theology is tasked in our day to bring the natural world back into view as a subject of religious and moral importance. In this broadly researched and clearly written book, Scheid sets out to do just that with one keystone element of Catholic social teaching: the common good. Not only does he rethink features of this principle, expanding it in an ecological direction, but he also places this principle in dialogue with Hindu, Buddhist, and American Indian traditions. The point of arrival is an inter-religious vision of the cosmic common good which can serve as a basis for ethical action to protect the planet, or "to care for God's creation" in Catholic language.

The pivotal argument takes robust shape in chapter 2, which—among its major moves—skillfully works through tension that might arise between the dignity of the human person and a common good that includes the created world. If the human person is a relational being with an essentially social nature, and if the common good affirms the inherent value of the whole composed of intrinsically dignified parts, then a way opens for these two principles of Catholic social teaching to function together dynamically.