

not only “challenges every fundamental tenet of orthodox Christian doctrine” (183) but also levels the difference that is P.’s key criterion (190). P. demonstrates his sympathy for Smith in his detailed exposition of key concepts about which he had written books (such as the personalist approach to religious life that puts faith at its center) but in the end rejects his “anthropocentric” vision because of misgivings about its feasibility for Christians (211–14), the methodology underpinning it (199–201), and the extent to which it takes difference seriously enough.

P. concludes the “classical” pluralist response is the best way forward (217–18), but I would be more convinced if there were more than brief comparisons (56, 76–77, 93, 167) across otherwise siloed responses to make this case. Given that dialogue is a key to his presentation, there is very little reference to actual occurrences as a locus for theological reflection or as orthopraxis (106–7); the Parliament of the World’s Religions is referenced in passing once, and no attention is given to interfaith encounters like those captured in, for instance, Gustav Niebuhr’s *Beyond Tolerance*. And this North American reader needed more help to see the relevance of debates from the 1970s and 1980s to the more complex globalizations engaged by thinkers like Clooney, Juergensmeyer, Marty, Eck, Wuthnow, Lawrence, et al. Those misgivings aside, P. has constructed a nuanced and sympathetic account of theological efforts to relate Christian truth claims to the religious differences that increasingly define our world.

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Theology of Transformation: Faith, Freedom, and the Christian Act. By Oliver Davies.
New York: Oxford University, 2014. Pp. ix + 274. \$99.

This work is Davies’s most recent effort in the “Transformation Theology” (hereafter TT) project, a collaborative endeavor of some colleagues and students at King’s College, University of London (see <http://transformationtheology.com>). TT strives to overcome the abstract, thought-centered character of academic theology, displacing theological reflection from its theoretical entrenchment into the “space and time” and “materiality” of lived Christian experience and decision (1, 37).

D.’s point of departure for this endeavor is the exigency of adequately responding to the question—“Where is the exalted Jesus Christ?”—in the wake of the epochal advances in human knowledge that have taken place since the modern scientific revolution (ch. 1, esp. 4–10). The disintegration of the prescientific cosmology of Scripture and the creeds, D. argues, has made it impossible to understand Christ’s ascension and exaltation in ways exactly consonant with the beliefs of the early church (12, 37–39, 64). For prescientific Christian believers, the affirmation that Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father entailed belief in his mediatory lordship of a permeable creation from the height of the cosmos. The modern scientific revolution replaced the premodern enchanted view of the porous relationship between mind and cosmos with an understanding of human persons as standing over against the world as objective observers (39). The discoveries of indeterminacy in quantum physics and the recognition of the dependence of

consciousness on its biological substrate, however, have made possible a renewed assertion of the nondualistic, integral relationship of mind and matter (see esp. 46–47).

D. argues that these changes require us to rethink Christ's exalted lordship. We must now identify and locate Christ not at the height of an antiquated map of the cosmos, but instead

where we are most deeply in space and time, according to our creaturely freedom. It is in the loving act, where we become material cause for the sake of the other through the Holy Spirit that we are most intensively spatio-temporal, since it is here in self-offering in the name of Christ that we are most fully integrated as creatures who are both body and mind. (59)

Christ is present, and exercising his lordship, then, in the continual advent of the Holy Spirit in free actions of Christian believers. Christ is not present merely as remembered—and so absent—but instead is present as disruptive, commissioning us in the present (65). Christ has not departed from our midst in his ascent and exaltation; he is hidden in our midst and becomes manifest through the free, self-giving acts of the people whom he commissions (85–86).

D. refracts his hypothesis through clarifying the trinitarian shape of this transformation in history (ch. 4) and through examining how Christ can be present in human persons and human persons in Christ (ch. 5). In chapter 6 he examines how the text of Scripture serves as an instrument of the transformational work of Christ. The latter chapter offers some particularly stimulating proposals for how the diverse material signs of Scripture, whether written or in sound, can serve as loci of Christ's work in the world today not despite but especially through their historical situatedness. D. rounds out the work by relating the act-based paradigm of TT to contemporary scientific discoveries on the integrality of language, consciousness, and sociality (ch. 7), rethinking the philosophical reason *vis-à-vis* the reorientation proposed by TT (ch. 8), and freshly exploring the character of Christian political action (ch. 9).

D. throughout demonstrates impressive acquaintance with and facility in navigating the currents of contemporary Christian theological reflection. He covers a lot of ground, however, and so readers who specialize in the thought of his interlocutors will find points of contention in his presentations of specific figures and movements. D.'s work could be fruitfully extended through reflection on the place of action and decision within and relative to experience, understanding, and judgments of both fact and value. Reflection on these concrete human capacities could also help remedy what the present reviewer thinks are epistemological confusions in D.'s work. Even so, the work demonstrates great erudition, and D.'s creative reflection on and adaptation of recent scientific literature represents a significant strength of the book. His emphasis on contextualizing—and in a sense, demoting—academic theology relative to first-order theology, or lived Christian faith, is also salutary. There are undoubtedly many resources in the present work for advancing that noble goal.

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