

marginalize, or give her presence a miraculous meaning. Also to be mentioned are Stuart Jessen's focus on Simone Weil's idiosyncratic spirituality of death, Jin Sook Kim's chapter on Jacques Lacan and symbolic death, Jordan Paper's material on zero-experiences through which death loses significance (but this is hardly what most mystics seek), and Robert Michael Ruehl's chapter on Thoreau's nature spirituality and his concern for the plight of the Native people.

However, a volume with the term "mysticism" in its title that depends upon the outdated and refuted views of Agenanda Bharti, W. T. Stace, and Williams James but makes no mention of Bernard McGinn's works, the preeminent scholar of the Western Christian mystical tradition, is skewed. The volume abounds with a vague use of the terms "mysticism," "peak experiences," "paranormal," "supernatural," and "altered states of consciousness." Mysticism is often confused with spirituality, worldview, or religious sensibilities. A few authors seemingly do not realize that there are not only mystical experiences but also mystical states and mystical consciousness—or that one must differentiate between subjective and objective ultimates.

Is not death an analogous term: medical, mystical, psychological, and ritual, for example? Too uncritical a bias for Eastern mysticisms, an emphasis on the noetic aspect of mysticism ("heart" appears once in the volume), and little knowledge and appreciation of the orthodox undifferentiated-union view (positive apophaticism) of many Christian mystics (the tiresome trotting out of a poorly understood Eckhart) permeate this volume. The authors seem unaware of Christian positive mystical death, as John of the Cross illustrates, to give but one example: "I live [in God] not living where I live [on earth]." I wonder how many of the authors would share my view that a genuine mystical consciousness can be one saturated with the human spirit's unrestricted and infinite non-conceptual loving-knowledge of God that destroys the conceptual and the categorical insofar as these claim to be ultimate realities. Concerning much material presented, I share the opinion of the late British Jesuit, Herbert Thurston, a renowned scholar of the paranormal, who wrote that he was convinced that such phenomena existed but wished they did not.

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*Transformational Leadership: Conversations with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.* Edited by Annmarie Sanders, IHM. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015. Pp. xvi + 207.

Books on organizational leadership abound; this one is noteworthy both for the circumstances out of which it arises and for the sources consulted. Religious congregations in the United States have been tested in recent decades by their own efforts to strengthen their mission in light of declining personnel and resources. In addition the Vatican instituted a canonical visitation of each congregation as well as a doctrinal assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Negotiating all of these challenges has forged a new generation of leaders.

As communications director of the LCWR, Sanders has been a privileged observer and participant in all of these efforts. In this book she shares interviews with 18 contemporary thinkers, including theologians, psychologists, educators, and religious leaders from various disciplines. The reader will easily recognize names such as Constance FitzGerald, OCD, Margaret Wheatley, Joan Chittister, OSB, Walter Brueggemann, Judy Cannato, and many others from their publications and their service within and to religious congregations.

S. is a skilled interviewer, focusing on each interviewee's special expertise and probing beyond the obvious to illuminate concepts such as the role of contemplation in leadership, the power of prophetic imagination, leading in the midst of darkness, polarization, and change. There is a certain amount of repetition of ideas and images, but it seemed to this reader to enrich the whole, as the key concepts are viewed through multiple lenses. The overall focus is on the future, and experiences of the recent past are sources of ongoing wisdom. Anyone interested in developing his or her own leadership skills, particularly within a faith-based environment, will find some helpful insights here.

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*The Challenge of Priestless Parishes: Learning from Latin America.* Edited by Edward L. Cleary. Introduction Robert J. Schreiter, CPPS. New York: Paulist, 2014. Pp. viii + 205. \$22.95.

This book is a valuable contribution to the growing body of literature about the lived church in Latin America. It would fit solidly in what is being identified as "concrete ecclesiology," theological reflection as practical reasoning in service of church communities. Each chapter offers a contextual understanding of the Catholic Church and the variety of ways it has responded to shortage or lack of ordained functionaries. Edward Cleary, OP, begins in Puerto Rico with an overview of lay ministers in rural areas. That is followed by Cynthia Folger, OP, who offers a fascinating chapter on indigenous peoples in northern Argentina, as well as the role of women in that community as "carriers and transmitters" of faith. Bruce Calder offers a wide-spanning contextual look at Guatemala with solid history and a range of topics from liberation theology to the charismatic movement. Brian Pierce, OP, introduces the reader to delegates of the Word in Honduras who were supported and empowered by their bishop. Finally, Nadir Rodriguez da Silva, OP, offers a summary of the centrality of baptism in Brazilian Catholic communities while David Orique, OP, concludes the text with an expansive summary highlighting what we can learn from the adaptability and creativity of Latin American Catholicism.

One is reminded of Pope Francis when he states in *Evangelii Gaudium* that reality is more important than ideas. As the Catholic Church shifts from the global north to the global south in terms of numbers and growth, we would do well to learn from this region. The variety of pastoral responses to particular contexts is a wonderful reminder that the church ministers to what is, not what ought to be. This examination of different