

Theological Reflection across Religious Traditions: The Turn to Reflective Believing. By Edward Foley. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. Pp. xvii + 159. \$90; \$32.

In this succinct, absorbing, and imaginative book, Foley persuades self-exploring, other-sensitive, and Spirit-directed Christians to turn from the practice of theological reflection (TR) to the promise of reflective believing (RB). Recognizing a radical shift in the Western historical context, F. urges us to risk leaving an older, more secure worldview, which is characterized by religious uniformity, predicable order, and linear progression, and expectantly embrace the contemporary one, which is steeped in religious pluralism, liquidity, and “rhizomatic” thinking.

Employing a fascinating and expansive array of approaches, disciplines, and resources, F. presents RB as a modified method, which requires a composite modality on its journey toward blessed integration. As a theological method, RB shifts awareness from “watching our language in the presence of God” to “watching our language in the presence of each other, especially ‘the stranger’” (26). Such a method disrupts habits of merely digging deeper into one’s own Christian tradition and urges stretching wider to engage the encompassing riches of interreligious gifts. As a composite modality, RB employs all genres of language (words, silence, ritual, body language, and storytelling) and also draws upon various modes of reflectivity and representation. The head, which acquires “right thinking” (87), works in tandem with the heart, which beats “in tune with the cosmos” (72), even as they work through the hands, which “disciplines the body so that its movement contributes to harmony instead of discord” (83). Blessed integration through RB awaits the individual’s journey, which makes meaning from the gift of religious pluralism and creates value for “the common good” by conjoining one’s “wisdom-heritage” with “holy envy for other ways of believing” (92).

Although engaging and enlightening, this theological proposal has a couple of limitations. First, F. fails to account for the appeal of “strong religion,” which fuels alarming growth in religious fundamentalism today. Second, F. highlights individual journeying to such an extent that he hides the fact that Christianity is primarily a communitarian religion, wherein the social is as real as the personal. Despite these drawbacks, this is a book recommended for both theologians and reflective Christians in the West.

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Glass Ceilings and Dirt Floors: Women, Work, and the Global Economy. By Christine Firer Hinze. The Madeleva Lecture Series. New York: Paulist, 2015. Pp. xvi + 155. \$13.95.

Fordham University Professor Firer Hinze presents a carefully argued and accessible study of the serious problems faced by women and others who perform “care work”

and examines how this important human work is related to contemporary market economic life and the demands of justice. F.-H. observes that “the care sector has tended to be underacknowledged and undervalued by the market sector of the economy” (11). As women by far provide most of the paid and unpaid care, a “systematic pattern of injustice is embedded in our ‘current social organization of care’” (15). Given at St. Mary’s College, Indiana, as the 2014 Madeleva Lecture, the book’s four chapters bring into dialogue Catholic social teaching, feminist economic ethics, and modern economic thought.

At the outset F.-H. draws on the narratives of five women from different backgrounds and work situations. This lends a real-life experiential grounding to the theoretical and critical analysis that follows. A central argument throughout is that “care work” makes possible all other economic activity necessary to meet human needs. She studies the “universal need for care” necessary for all persons and draws on feminist ethics to better understand a crucial problem: the universal need for care depends on social, economic, and cultural organization that seriously undervalues and deficiently treats dependency needs in caregiving both in household and market economies (44–45). The undervaluing of “care work” (e.g. in households, hospitals, nursing homes, and in other places) seriously hurts women and makes them and others in their lives more vulnerable in economic and social life. For F.-H., working women are particularly “sensitive to a dangerous flaw in the way modern market economies are understood and operate” (15). She proposes that Catholic social teaching and “feminist social-economic reflection and action” (55) taken together may help in better understanding and responding to these problems. Thereafter she explores the “rules that economically devalue care-related work and then assign it to women” (76) and proposes that we need to recognize the “interdependence of household and waged economies” (76). A serious present concern is that “the painful conflicts between the demands of waged and household economies run directly through the lives of working women. Among economically vulnerable women these conflicts cut especially deeply and exact the highest costs” (81).

F.-H. presents the convincing case that how we think about, prioritize, finance, compensate, and support women and men who carry out “care work” that all persons depend upon really matters for economic and social justice. I especially recommend this important book for undergraduate and graduate courses in economics, business, and medical ethics. Other readers interested in moral concerns of global economic life will also find it valuable. Some may ask if the author’s six steps of “Remodeling for Oikonomia” (104–17) can realistically be applied in the present global economy. But she is wise to suggest specific choices and actions. A first step should include “correcting the way we understand markets, households, and their relationships” (120). The book gives us welcome guidance in this needed journey of transformation.

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