

forms of ministry is an honest look at the church as it struggles to serve without enough priests, and thus offers “a rich history of creative efforts to solve (or to take advantage of) the problem by both the Church and other actors” (107–8).

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Worship and the New Cosmology: Liturgical and Theological Challenges. By Catherine Vincie. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2014. Pp. x + 125. \$16.95.

For a long time, Christians lived in a three-story universe, with the heavens above and the netherworld beneath a solid and stable earth. A good deal of theology reflects the language of this old cosmology even though we have known for centuries that the earth is not the center of the cosmos. At the same time, most of us are not disturbed by the contrast between the scientific understanding of the universe and the world depicted in theological and liturgical texts.

This is increasingly not the case, however. Many educated people today find Christianity unbelievable because it is connected with an ancient and discredited cosmology. At the same time, some Christian thinkers have been proposing an alternative picture of an evolving universe in order to lessen the tension between science and religion. Among them are John Haught, Denis Edwards, Arthur Peacocke, Elizabeth Johnson, and Ilia Delio—all of them inheritors of the groundbreaking ideas of Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry.

A prominent feature of the New Cosmology is that it is expressed as a dynamic vision rather than a static picture. Thus its proponents prefer to talk about the universe’s story, the earth’s story, and the human story when describing the cosmos and the components most familiar to us. Within this framework, Vincie presents the above-mentioned authors’ theological visions of creation, God, the Holy Spirit, and Christ. Lastly, she presents mainly her own suggestions about how such a revisioning might influence the theologies of baptism and confirmation, the Eucharist, and sacramental reconciliation, including some practical suggestions about the liturgical calendar and particular prayer texts.

A question that arises when reading alternative integrations of scientific and religious ideas concerns their truth value. They each present attractive possibilities, but they cannot all be right if they are genuine alternatives to one another. Moreover, how would one evaluate the truth of any of these theological visions? Against this, it might be argued that truth can be evaluated only within a context, so the context itself cannot be judged to be true or false. It is only plausible or not, in the same way that the three-story universe was plausible before the advent of modern science. In a sense, then, any alternative vision is just as acceptable as any other.

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