

He shows his empathy in the treatment of those two contrasting figures: Benedict the theologian, pope of “affirmative orthodoxy” (158), and Francis the surprising Jesuit pope. Although Francis’s pontificate was only beginning when R. wrote his book, his analysis of the pope’s style and vision is insightful. The final chapter presents in broad strokes the current “Global Catholicism” with some of its regional challenges.

While written with pedagogical gusto and clarity, R.’s book is not simplistic. He does not shy away from explaining in few words intricate theological notions and their significance for theological discourse, e.g., the notion of the *analogia entis* (31). R. tackles burning issues for contemporary readers with pointed remarks; hence his fair treatment of the fine line to walk in the midst of various theological readings of Jesus’s resurrection (73), and his discussion of the challenges to religion by the “New Atheists” (13). Throughout, R. avoids unnecessary polemics, remaining benevolent towards the authors he calls to the fore. This attitude is extended to the ecumenical perspective, although R. contrasts when needed the Catholic position with Protestant ones, for example, on theological anthropology.

The balanced nature of the book does not preclude the author from discreetly weighing in on some current theological debates. In his treatment of the Eucharist, R. emphasizes the fact that conversion flowed from communion, that is, table fellowship (62), not the other way around, a thought to be considered in the current debate on access to communion. In his compelling presentation of Vatican II, R. sides with the proponents of the newness (i.e., rupture) introduced by the Council, showing both the backstage work and the unexpected resulting sea changes regarding the role of the laity, religious freedom, the liturgy, and ecumenism. Such positive appraisal does not impede R. from criticizing the unresolved issue of the relationship between the pope and the local church (137).

R.’s book is brief, but evocative and at times even poetic. The use of a variety of images of Christ, the Church, and the Kingdom of God speaks to the broadness of perspectives of faith and nourishes theological imagination. This introduction to the Catholic faith could, nonetheless, have devoted more space to the lived experience of faith, for example, through the sacraments (only two are developed), prayer (“mysticism” only gets one paragraph), and social justice (referred to only briefly on p. 197). Overall, this book can be used advantageously to foster theological discussions in an adult faith-formation program, or be read by those interested to gain a sweeping view of what Christianity is about in its Catholic form with an eye on contemporary trends.

André Brouillette, S.J.

Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

Twentieth Century Christian Responses to Religious Pluralism: Difference is Everything. By David Pitman. The Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies Series. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. Pp. x + 246. \$109.95.

This book returns to 20th-century arguments about a conundrum the author claims remains crucial for the 21st century: how Christian truth claims can engender

authentic, open dialogue with different faith traditions. Pitman divides his presentation according to the still “helpful” (217) typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, delineating within each response refinements he claims are necessary to engage the conundrum. The chapter-length analyses of the various positions are detailed, draw on primary sources, and do not shy away from theological complexities. The lever P. uses to evaluate each position is drawn from Rabbi J. Sacks (8): the manner in which proponents take difference seriously.

The exclusivist response is the position out of which P. grew when, early in his career, he served as a missionary among Hindu communities on Fiji (ix). He profiles four variations, all Protestant: “Definitive” (Barth), “Hard” (Kraemer), “Conservative” (Brunner), and “Moderate” (Newbigin). Each wrestled with difference by starting from the finality and uniqueness of Christ and related theological doctrines. Despite their conciliatory posture—for example Kraemer’s “radical humility” (47) or Newbigin’s “pastoral heart” (80)—they end up alienating and denigrating the religions with whom P. believes they should be in dialogue (16–17, 22, 23, 50–52, 81). P. captures subtle differences but it was not clear why we needed the fourfold refinement he introduced to appreciate the limitations of this response. Alternatively, I would have appreciated attention to why exclusivism remains a viable option for many Christians, beyond dismissively claiming its appeal rests in “the security it offers to those who have a need for certainty and because of the manner in which it appeals to that innate (albeit unconscious) conviction of Western superiority” (23; see also 40, 52–53).

P. introduces the inclusivist response as the attempt to conjoin “the a priori assumption that Christ is necessary for salvation” (91) with an openness to the truth of other faiths. Working primarily with Rahner’s famous essay, “Christianity and the non-Christian Religions,” P. criticizes his “traditional” inclusivist response: because Rahner cannot qualify the primacy of Christ and the Christian church—illustrated by his “anonymous Christianity” idea (100–103)—Rahner’s position is “desperate,” one whose logic “leaves us with a feeling of deep dissatisfaction” (98; see also 106–7). Contrary to critics who label Tillich a pluralist, P. argues his life-long “conditional exclusivism” (113, 115) in which Christ is “the criterion by means of which all religions, including Christianity, are to be judged” (111), means he is an inclusivist, albeit a “progressive” one. P. finds in Tillich a “fundamental problem” (121): the presumption one can extract a universal “Christ-event” from its embodiment in the particularities of the Christian religion.

Because its proponents take seriously the interplay between religion and culture (130–36), pluralism represents the way for 21st-century Christians to engage religious difference. P. introduces two types of “classical” pluralism by tracing how each proponent moves beyond an initial inclusivist stance. On the one hand, we see Küng move from exclusivist-like “arrogance” (149) in *On Being a Christian* (1974) to later writings and projects in which a religion’s truth claims are evaluated in terms of whether or not their expression in action enriches human life (152); and we see “mutation” (159) evident in Panikkar’s fascinating personal journey to the point where he enters “a perilous area for theologians” (176) by grounding a vital dialogue with other religions in an equally vital but open Christian conviction. The other dyad within the pluralist response is judged less successful in creating room for that Christian conviction. Hick’s Copernican revolution grounds a “theocentric” approach which P. claims

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.

Philip Boo Riley
Santa Clara University

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