

context of persistent racial violence, the Black Lives Matter movement (founded by three African American women), and renewed interrogation of enduring white cultural dominance.

The work is well organized around five sections: sources, doctrines, internal debates, ongoing challenges, and prospects for the future. The 34 contributors include some of the most eminent African American scholars in the world. Editors Pinn and Cannon explain how the “academically informed enterprise” of African American theology emerged from churches in the midst of the struggles for Civil Rights in the 1960s, and show that this historical moment itself raises fundamental questions about the complexity and fluidity of African American culture and lives.

Stephen Finley opens a robust conversation about the contested historical context in which the formal discourse of African American theology emerged. He argues that William R. Jones, author of *Is God a White Racist?*, was critical of the triumphalist interpretation of black history and called God’s benevolence into question while Delores Williams and many other women scholars initiated a womanist approach that questioned the masculine assumptions of the first generation of black theology.

This handbook presents a full array of diverse approaches to African American theology. M. Shawn Copeland’s chapter brilliantly navigates the violent transformations of slavery through which African peoples reinterpreted African religions and even white Christianity. Willie James Jennings explores how slavery transforms African bodies into commodities always being viewed and thereby always reproducing a “callous pedagogy.” His chapter, as well as the volume overall, illuminate the multiple and fragmented “public imaginaries” through which African Americans struggle for life and freedom. I highly recommend this volume for every theological and American library.

Alex Mikulich
Loyola University New Orleans

Invitation to Practical Theology: Catholic Voices and Visions. Edited by Claire E. Wolfteich. New York: Paulist, 2014. Pp. xi + 386. \$24.95.

This volume is an important contribution to the burgeoning discipline of practical theology. It is the first edited volume on practical theology that focuses exclusively on the voices of Catholic theologians in the United States in a field historically considered the purview of Protestant theology. Wolfteich brings together eighteen scholars from various fields, including moral, philosophical, and systematic theology. The collection is essentially dialogical: it demonstrates the symbiotic relationship of pastoral practice and theology, and it advocates for a mutual and significant relationship between Catholic practical theology and Catholic theology more generally. W. also emphasizes the need for collaboration among the academy, church, and society.

In the first section, Kathleen A. Cahalan and Bryan Froehle show the historical contexts of Catholic practical theology. This is juxtaposed with the exploration of

epistemological considerations relating to the discipline (Colleen M. Griffith) and the merits of a revised correlational method within practical theology (David Tracy). In the second section, attention turns more explicitly to practice and context, with emphasis placed upon everyday experience and concrete practice as sources for practical theology. The various areas include ecclesiology and practices of dialogue, family ethics, Latino/a popular religion, missiology, and spiritual direction. A final section focuses on teaching and research, describing pedagogical practice and research methodology. In addition to delineating the contours of Catholic practical theology, the book's contributors establish a practical theological lexicon. For example, M. Shawn Copeland describes "practical theological agency" (129–31) referring to the formation of African American Catholic laity and their engagement in cultural issues and praxis within faith communities. This term may define other practical theological endeavors that seek to empower participants, especially the marginalized.

The book's essays mine the rich seams of the Catholic tradition—including the Catholic imagination, the importance of beauty and aesthetics, liturgical experience, and mysticism—and complement ecumenical work in the practical theology arena. This volume will be of value to students, those engaged in pastoral practice and formation, and scholars alike, and will advance the work of practical theologians in the USA and worldwide.

Deborah Ross
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

Republican Theology: The Civil Religion of American Evangelicals. By Benjamin T. Lynerd. New York: Oxford University, 2014. Pp. xii + 249. \$99; \$27.95.

Lynerd's book offers a subtle and historically rich accounting of a political duck-billed platypus. The creature in question—dissonantly hybrid and seemingly bound for extinction—is American evangelicals' civil religion. An amalgam of a libertarian ethos ("small-government economics") and a traditionalist public moralism ("big-government moralism"), one would think it not long for this world (205). After all, as political scientists often point out, moments when libertarian and evangelical interests align are often short-lived. And, as many Christian social theorists contend, this amalgam is too fraught with "internal ambiguities" (200) to survive as a coherent and thus viable perspective.

Yet it does. Finding such political and theoretical assessments to be wanting, L. provides a distinctly "theological account" (6). Evangelicals' civil religion, he argues, is underwritten by a species of political theology—what he dubs republican theology—that renders freedom, virtue, and faith as being mutually interdependent. Hence, the apparent tension between limited government and state-sanctioned moralism gets resolved theologically. Limited government is the condition for a thriving church (and for individuals' sanctification) and posits republican theology. The health of the