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# The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology, edited by Jerry L. Walls

John E. Thiel

Fairfield University, [jethiel@fairfield.edu](mailto:jethiel@fairfield.edu)

## Peer Reviewed

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A quick bibliographical search for North American women theology demonstrates how small has been the output of Asian–North American women compared to their white, black, and Latina counterparts. *Off the Menu* fills in that lacuna, gathering together two decades of theological accomplishments by the organization Pacific, Asian, and North American Asian Women in Theology and Ministry (PANAAWTM).

The book is divided into four sections. The first surveys the history, background, and concerns of Asian and Asian–North American women and discusses how these concerns are shaped by globalization and transnationalism (Kwok Pui-Lan), colonialism and essentialism (Nami Kim), and racism and discrimination (Gale Yee). In section 2, Asian and Asian–North American women critically reassess and reenvision their cultural and spiritual traditions, exploring the politics of appropriating Asian spiritual traditions (Jung Ha Kim), the devotional piety of Filipino American Catholics (Rachel Bundang), and retrieving and reconstructing ancestral traditions (Jane Iwamura). Section 3 explores the ways Asian and Asian–North American communities have challenged the pervasiveness of Euro-American individualism. Here two chapters stand out for their imaginative revisionings that are deeply rooted in the traditional Asian values of relationality and mutuality: Rita Nakashima Brock's reflection on living in the margins with "interstitial integrity" and Anne Joh's retrieval of the Korean paradigm of "*jeong*" to counter the injustice and violence against the innocent. Finally section 4 investigates the ways Asian–North American women can live out their commitment to social justice, striving for social and communal change.

The book's interdisciplinary framework is noteworthy, with contributions from biblical scholars, theologians, sociologists, ethicists, community activists, and doctoral candidates. This book is a must-have, not only for those interested in Asian–North American theologians, but also for anyone generally interested in issues pertaining to the interplay and dialogue among faith, identity construc-

tions, globalization, pluralism, and transnationalism. Scholars and students would undoubtedly find useful the extensive bibliography and detailed index.

JONATHAN Y. TAN  
Xavier University, Cincinnati

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF ESCHATOLOGY. Edited by Jerry L. Walls. New York: Oxford University, 2008. Pp. xviii + 724. \$150.

Walls's edited volume offers 39 essays on a broad range of eschatological topics that fall into three broad sections. Part 1, "Historical Theology," includes biblical and patristic theology, as well as eschatology in religions other than Christianity (Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and New Religions). Part 2 considers "Eschatology in Distinct Christian Traditions and Theological Movements." Besides the expected fare of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox Christianities, there are excellent contributions on fundamentalist and Pentecostal theologies, and on process, liberation, and feminist theologies. Part 3 is broadly titled "Issues in Eschatology" and includes topics that are entirely expected (resurrection, heaven, hell, purgatory, last judgment) along with other essays that creatively take stock of the ways eschatology is appropriated by and plays out in popular culture (Stephen Webb on "Eschatology and Politics"; Carol Zaleski on "Near-Death Experiences"; Robert Jewett and John S. Lawrence on "Eschatology in Pop Culture"). Part 3 also includes essays from the perspective of the philosophy of religion (Michael Peterson on "Eschatology and Theodicy"; Charles Taliaferro on "Human Nature, Personal Identity, and Eschatology"; William Abraham on "Eschatology and Epistemology"; and William L. Craig on "Time, Eternity, and Eschatology").

Essays from a Roman Catholic perspective include Brian Daley's crisp synthesis of his earlier research on patristic eschatology and Peter Phan's helpful overview of eschatological issues in postconciliar theology and in the teaching of the magisterium. Paul Griffith's essay on purgatory flags in its tendency

to make the development of the belief into a logical process and in its rather singular appeal to Dante's *Purgatorio* to evince the medieval religious imagination on this very rich topic. I was surprised not to find an essay on the communion of the saints.

This work is a valuable resource that serves both novices and professionals alike. It is a "must" for every academic library, and well worth its high price as a reference work in personal collections.

JOHN E. THIEL  
Fairfield University, Conn.

THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY: HOW THE GLOBAL CHURCH IS INFLUENCING THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS THEOLOGY. By Timothy C. Tennent. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007. Pp. xxi + 295. \$24.99.

Tennent's reflection on the "emergence of a global theological discourse" attempts to bridge the divide between systematic theology and missiology, suggesting that the expansion of our "ecclesiastical cartography" enjoins us to develop a new set of categories that are suited to a less eurocentric church (1-2). He does not aspire to comprehensiveness, preferring instead to ponder separate, yet related, questions raised by the encounter between Christianity and various cultures. If the resulting study appears fragmentary and conjectural, it is because Christianity is still finding a new identity as it leaves behind the husk of the religion preached by missionaries from the "Majority World" (xix).

Eight chapters constitute the book's core, each outlining and assessing the theological significance of embodiments of Christian communities in eight different countries. While some discussions offer few original insights (e.g., the identity between the Christian and the Muslim God [25-49] or Latin American Pentecostalism and the role of the Holy Spirit [177-79]), T.'s reading of Hindu texts as a "corroborative witness" to the biblical message (71-72) and his call for an atonement theology that takes into

account the crucial role of "shame" in several Asian cultures (91-97) are both insightful and challenging. The most original sections are his discussion of the "Messianic Muslims" who profess a belief in Jesus while usually remaining members of a mosque (196-202) and his comparison between the spirituality of Jonathan Edwards and the so-called "back to Jerusalem" movement in 19th-century China (240-46). T. may overestimate the impact of those phenomena on Islam or China, but his main argument stands that existing notions of "church" or "religious belonging" need rethinking to accommodate these realities.

Anyone interested in the interface of theology and missiology will not fail to be inspired by T.'s survey. Teachers can also use this volume to introduce undergraduate students to the multifaceted nature of 21st-century Christianity.

THOMAS CATTOI  
Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley

THE LAUGHTER OF THE OPPRESSED: ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESISTANCE IN WIESEL, MORRISON, AND ENDO. By Jacqueline A. Bussie. New York: Continuum, 2007. Pp. vii + 212. \$24.95.

Why in Western theological and ethical thought has laughter been treated ambivalently or negatively as "nihilistic and irresponsible, especially if occurring within tragic circumstance" (3)? Bussie intriguingly observes that those reflecting on laughter, from Plato and Augustine to Reinhold Niebuhr, were white males in positions of power. She wonders if the relatively powerful "might find laughter intimidating because either consciously or unconsciously, they understood it as a threat to their own power or that of their group," and she asks "what does it mean to laugh while one is suffering or disempowered" (2)? Building on Freud, Bergson, and Bakhtin, she argues that "laughter interrupts the system and state of oppression, and creatively attests to hope, resistance, and protest in the face of the shattering of language and traditional frameworks of thought and belief. Simply put, the laughter of the oppressed functions as