

dominance and traditional gendered roles are affirmed in NT texts, texts written earlier reflect greater openness to divinely-inspired exceptions for women in leadership than do texts written later. Finally, he makes a strong case for understanding the preference for celibacy in some NT texts in terms of cultic purity and notions of sacred space and time.

Loader's work is thorough and comprehensive. In addition to introducing readers to a wealth of scholarship, his footnotes provide scholars and students with an excellent list of primary sources for their own research on the topic. Overall, Loader does an excellent job of engaging the works of a broad range of scholars in his analyses of texts, and his conclusions are fair and judicious. There are times, however, when he depends heavily on one source without adequately considering other scholars' criticisms of it. For example, he utilizes Bernadette Brooten's work on same-sex relations without considering serious challenges to her notion of a category of "homoeroticism" inclusive of both men and women in ancient Greco-Roman constructions of sexuality. Finally, Loader tends to treat sexuality as a discrete category, while much contemporary theory suggests the need to focus more on the intersectionality of sexuality, gender, race, and class.

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Making Love Just: Sexual Ethics for Perplexing Times

by *Marvin M. Ellison*

Fortress, Minneapolis, 2012. 176 pp. \$18.00.
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HOW DO YOU DEFINE YOUR ethics of sexuality? Whether progressive or conservative, most of

us tend to identify what is sexually bad—what is off-limits, out-of-bounds, demeaning, or immoral. We speak less about sex that honors goodness and truth and glorifies God. In *Making Love Just*, Marvin Ellison makes a compelling case that a more "sex-positive" approach is not only possible, but also essential for both honoring our sexual bodies and for speaking meaningfully about sex in today's world.

Ellison demonstrates that ethical thinkers—most especially in the church—have taken a largely "sex-negative" view. From Augustine to Focus on the Family, sexuality has been linked closely with sin, requiring marriage—which is both the product and enforcer of patriarchy and heterosexism—to keep sex under control and inside the lines. The result has been discrimination against LGBTQ persons and gender oppression, and also a dismal diminishing of sexuality's potential. In contrast, Ellison offers an alternative ethical standard: "justice-love," which he defines as "mutual respect, commitment, and care and a fair sharing of power, for gay and nongay, marital and nonmarital relationships alike" (p. 21). This approach—which he labels pro-sex, feminist, and gay-affirming—offers the promise of a sexual ethic that can revitalize both spirit and society.

Ellison, a Presbyterian minister who teaches at Bangor Theological Seminary, asks provocative questions. He also gives sometimes surprising—but difficult to dismiss—answers, as when he explores whether a person who begins a new relationship while still caring for a spouse with dementia is committing adultery. Although Ellison supports marriage equality for same-gender couples (and was a visible advocate in Maine's campaign last year), he questions whether its widespread adoption might be a "mixed blessing" in that it further devalues the unmarried and reinforces social inequities. "Inclusion is good," he says; "transformation is better" (p. 68). Most

convicting, Ellison chronicles the inadequacy of the modern church's teaching about sexuality to children and youth, calling on faith communities to offer a more justice-oriented and sex-positive approach and to teach young people "ethical willfulness and responsible agency" rather than a list of do's and don'ts (p. 130).

The central focus on justice-love and many of these ideas appeared in the 1991 report of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Task Force on Human Sexuality, of which Ellison was the principal author. That report, while later approved for study, was resoundingly rejected by the denomination's General Assembly; it was perhaps ahead of its time. Many who rejected that report will reject this book, too, as it does not accept a worldview in which biblical literalism and unassailable rule-making amount to sound ethical reflection. But times have changed, and for those with ears to hear, Ellison's latest work will provide considerable fodder for reflection. Indeed, it might just transform how we think and speak in our own congregations and communities about sex.

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Calvin's Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities

edited by J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink

Westminster John Knox, Louisville, 2012.
250 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 978-0-664-23423-2.

THIS TIDY VOLUME IS UNIQUE in its sustained attempt to recount not only the basic contours

of John Calvin's theology, but also its reception and contemporary possibilities. This multifaceted interest in Calvin's theology is built into the book's structure. Five of the most prominent themes in his thought—Scripture and revelation, union with Christ, election, the Lord's Supper, church and society—are each addressed in an opening chapter that describes Calvin's position and its more immediate reception, and then by a second chapter that describes reception in the modern period while also sketching ways that Calvin might fund further creative theological thinking today. Two points must be registered with reference to the reception of Calvin's thought and its contemporary horizons.

With respect to the reception of Calvin's theology, there are two primary difficulties involved in attempting to trace it. First, Calvin's theology is fundamentally dependent on the work of previous reformers, especially Luther and Bucer. Second, although Calvin's stature tends today to eclipse other important figures from the early Reformed tradition, in his own day he was one of many key figures. In other words, much of what one thinks of today as a distinctive of Calvin's theology was actually part of a broader theological commons. The volume's contributors are competent historians. They do a commendable job of cutting through these issues to identify what is in fact unique to Calvin and how those distinctives live on beyond him.

With respect to contemporary horizons, treatment of how Calvin might contribute to theological construction is less inspiring. Part of the problem is that the volume's contributors skew conservative, as any group of scholars including Michael Horton and Carl Trueman necessarily will. Suggestions for how Calvin's theology might be appropriated today tend in a traditionalist direction, which consequentially