

reader will find that these principles apply to many other ministries and organizations, diocesan placement and planning officials, and potential donors.

There is one unfortunate omission in the book. There is no clear and specific definition of “development.” One possible definition is “broadly speaking the *raison d'être* of all faith-based development is to overcome the evil of poverty” (p. 81). Elsewhere Mitchell says the nature of development is “to help people . . . experience the fullness of life” (p. 119). In chapter 3 he shifts from “development” to “change” as though they are the same. These are all elements of a definition of “development,” but remain implicit throughout the book.

Woven through the text is the perspective that Western Enlightenment ideas should not be imposed on local non-Western populations by faith-based organizations. He “nibbles” at the tension between ideas like “personhood” and “the fullness of life” on the one hand, and the limitations of local political and social structures on the other. Similar tensions on other issues are implicit throughout Mitchell’s argument, but they are matters for ongoing reflection and struggle. The theological dimensions of this book are important and make the book worthy. The explicit justifications for development ministries are a useful summary that might serve as the basis for additional conversation and development. While I suspect Mitchell would reject the appellation, this book is an action-oriented Anglican version of liberation theology.

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*Love Itself Is Understanding: Hans Urs von Balthasar’s Theology of the Saints.* By Matthew A. Rothaus Moser. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2016. xi + 319 pp. \$79.00 (cloth).

Matthew Moser’s *Love Itself Is Understanding: Hans Urs von Balthasar’s Theology of the Saints* makes a detailed case for Balthasar’s correlation of theological epistemology and an Ignatian-inflected metaphysics in which (divine) being and love are coextensive. Though the Ignatian character of Balthasar’s thought is central, Moser’s project is not an explicit attempt to interpret it through the “hermeneutical key” of another figure, as was the case, for instance, in Kevin Mongrain’s fine *The Systematic Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar: An Irenaean Retrieval* (p. 19). Rather, the designator “Ignatian” is a kind of shorthand that marks the “missional thrust” (p. 19) of

Balthasarian theology, which “exists for the service of love and mission, a saintly life of contemplation, prayer, and obedience” (p. 23). Moser accents with particular clarity the dialogical nature of truth (and therefore the dialogical nature of knowing and loving), which leads him ultimately to privilege the operation of prayer, understood primarily as attunement to Being. Thus, the saints—for whom “prayer is union with God in Christ who, as the incarnate one, *is truth*” (p. xxiv)—are not only the theologians par excellence but also the knowers, metaphysicians, and philosophers. Moser argues compellingly that Balthasar’s close pairing of being, love, and truth functions as a deliberate intervention in modernity that has not only permitted them to fissure but has also ghettoized the saint to the merely spiritual.

The first chapter rehearses the details of Balthasar’s Jesuit formation, doing especially well to highlight the importance of receptivity/*indiferencia*, surrender, and obedience, alongside a firm commitment to integrating practical and speculative theology. Chapter 2, “Balthasar on Mission,” is given over primarily to locating Balthasar against the backdrop of the German Idealist interlocutors for which his metaphysically and theologically grounded epistemology provides an alternative. Here Moser suggests, if only in contour, the complexity of Balthasar’s engagement with Hegel. Chapters 3 and 4 are in my estimation the strongest of the book, getting most closely to the heart of Moser’s primary theme: that Balthasar connects with immense effectiveness metaphysics, epistemology, and a theology of the saints characterized especially by a quality of receptivity able to counter the various “titanisms” of modernity. One of the distinct contributions of the book is the sophisticated level at which the author engages material from the somewhat neglected *Theo-Logic*. This engagement is especially evident in “Truth as Love,” which depends heavily on *Theo-Logic I*, especially as it construes truth as simultaneously unveiling (*aletheia*) and fidelity (*emeth*), a reality meant to be approached in its fundamental mystery and excessive donation through an ec-static participatory epistemology. Such knowing-by-participation nuances the relationship between subject and object in order to demonstrate that the free, reciprocal demonstration of love is the center and the summit of all forms of knowledge; in short, this theological epistemology “requires the form of the saint” (p. 141). Moser supplements the metaphysical and epistemological claims presented theretofore with a turn in chapters 5 and 6 to Christology and pneumatology, respectively. It is the cruciform Christ—the fullest expression of the unity of truth as being and (a profoundly kenotic) love; in other words, the dramatic self-expression of God—who is the condition of the possibility for contemplative knowledge, and the Holy Spirit who makes the plentitude of truth known by inviting the knower into loving participation with God. The penultimate chapter, “Love Itself Is Understanding,” recapitulates elegantly many of the preceding themes in a more systematic key; the accent on a theological (“orantic”)

anthropology modeled after Martin Buber and Ferdinand Ebner is particularly welcome (pp. 234–237).

On the whole, Moser's is an appreciative, generous, and generally irenic treatment of Balthasar; his strongest critique comes, however, somewhat abruptly in the final chapter in the context of a "case study" of Adrienne von Speyr. Moser countenances to some degree Karen Kilby's criticism that Balthasar insufficiently treats the concrete lives of the saints, which leaves Balthasar vulnerable to the critique that he shifts too quickly from existential particulars of a sanctified life at prayer to intellectual abstractions. Moser goes on, however, to acknowledge that it is neither historical exposition nor the strictly canonical legitimation of official sainthood that represents Balthasar's primary interest. For Moser, an account of von Speyr's visionary prayer life can provide a concrete exemplum for illuminating Balthasar's theological epistemology, though he registers anxieties I do not especially share with respect to Balthasar's possible capitulation to "ascribing theological authority to her experiences *qua* experiences" (p. 289).

Moser's *Love Itself Is Understanding* is a readable, manifestly comprehensive treatment of the coincidence of metaphysics and epistemology with Balthasar's theology of the saints. It will be of interest not only to students of Balthasar, but also to systematic theologians concerned with metaphysics, theological epistemology, sainthood, Ignatian spirituality, the practice of prayer, and the reciprocal relations between contemplation, theological reflection, and religious practice.

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*Ritual Participation and Interreligious Dialogue: Boundaries, Transgressions and Innovations.* Edited by Marianne Moyaert and Joris Geldhof. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. 262 pp. \$114.00 (cloth), \$39.95 (paper).

It's the rare volume that brings you to the cutting edge of a field, introduces you to its many facets, and convinces you of the viable positions on the various (and conflicting) sides of its future. This is such a volume. At the growing edge of the field of interreligious dialogue and theology, the contributors in this collected work adopt a range of methodological perspectives to introduce readers to the pitfalls and possibilities of interfaith ritual practice.