

Raheb, Mitri and Mark A. Lamport. *Emerging Theologies from the Global South*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2023. 544 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1666711837.

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This edited volume features thirty-seven thought-provoking chapters, most of them written by scholar-theologians from the Global South, including Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America. As such, *Emerging Theologies from the Global South* is an important step towards filling the current dearth of scholarship by authors from the Global South written for English-speaking pastors, scholars, and seminarians. It is a reference book, treating various topics from perspectives as diverse as “African Women’s Theologies,” “Palestinian Contextual Theology,” “Chinese Theologies,” “Sri Lankan Theology,” “North American Indigenous Theology,” “Latinx Theologies,” and “Māori Theology,” among others.

This volume affirms that it is problematic to expect scholars from any given region to be capable of embodying all the possible viewpoints of their given setting; thus, the volume does not claim to be exhaustive and explicitly states so. It also carefully challenges the notion that theologies not originating in the West are inherently “contextual,” as if Western scholarship is, by contrast, context-less. Section 1 opens with two masterful “Orientation Essays” that explain the term “Global South” while distinguishing it discursively from other similar terms that have emerged over the decades—terms such as the “third world” or “majority world.” These essays are insightful and would be a welcome addition to any class on twentieth to twenty-first-century Christian history surveying voices from around the world. Section 2 then presents five “Major Paradigmatic Themes from Emerging Theologies” that would be a further boon to scholars, students, and pastors as they engage theological frameworks from the Global South. Of this section, I would most recommend Harvey C. Kwiyani’s chapter, “Diaspora Mission Theology,” for its paradigm-shifting perspective on who constitutes a diaspora. For example, has it occurred to readers who are in the West that Western missionaries in Africa are a diaspora?

Sections 3-7 feature emerging theologies from Latin America (chap. 8-12), Asia (chap. 13-19), Africa (chap. 20-23), Oceania (chap. 24-28), and, finally, from diasporic and indigenous voices (chap. 29-32). What is

both striking and unique is each of these groups receives its own section with multiple chapters, written by both men and women and embodying markedly different vantage points. It is not essentialist in the least. For example, Michelle A. Gonzalez's "Latina Feminist Theology" (chap. 10) distinguishes between Latina feminist and *mujerista* theologies. Such nuances are usually lost in the West, but they are of the utmost importance—this is what is meant when this book is described as not essentialist. Reading about this from the pen of a Latina feminist is a tremendously enriching experience, and the whole book offers this rich fruit for theological discussion. The final section, section eight, offers a reflective essay from each region that wraps up the volume, followed by an afterword by Chloë Starr.

Emerging Theologies from the Global South makes the case that all theologies are, to a certain extent, contextual and autobiographical as it commends its contents to its would-be readers. More traditionalist Western readers may critique this claim by insisting that orthodox theology is not merely autobiographical or contextual but is rather the result of the consensus-building historic church councils, and such a critique is not without merit. However, the opposite pitfall is also true: the risk of Western theologians failing to distinguish their own contextually-located, particular theologizing from that of the historic councils, despite being centuries upon centuries removed from these councils as well as geographically distinct. Thus, the self-conscious recognition of cultural embeddedness offered by *Emerging Theologies from the Global South* encourages the humility that all theologians would do well to emulate. This humility can also help Western theology identify ways in which what would now be considered contextual particularity from around the world has contributed to the foundations of Western orthodoxy. For just one of numerous examples, due to the construct of "whiteness," Western theology has absorbed African roots by relying on theologians such as Augustine, often unconsciously considering Augustine a European and not an African as "whiteness" has deepened into homogeneity in the West.

The volume does not represent a particular theological confession or tradition; rather, it describes itself as being a book "*about* Christian theology" by authors who "claim Christianity as their own" (xv). It advances what it calls a "creative orthodoxy" that "maintain[s] and adapts" (xvii). Wesleyans will notice appeals to scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, though the volume is not specifically Wesleyan. For this volume's authors, "Scripture is authoritative: it has the power to change lives and

cultures,” and therefore “deserves to be proclaimed with confidence but not with arrogance” (16).

Emerging Theologies from the Global South is also unabashedly decolonial. For example, chapter 3 engages what it describes as scholar Miguel de la Torre’s “disruptive ethics from the margins” by quoting de la Torre’s “ethics to f**k the system” (asterisks original). On the same page, the reader is reminded of James Cone’s claim that “all white Christianity is satanic” (40). While some readers may find these claims shocking, the history of colonialism, including settler-colonialism that continues to this day in Palestine, the history of white Christian supremacy in Europe and the Americas, and the rise of Christian nationalism, demand that careful attention be given to such voices. If shocking, they are shocking because the gospel demands one’s shocked attention.

Thus, at base, *Emerging Theologies from the Global South* is landmark a collection of essays penned by scholars “who have become dissatisfied with the theological *status quo*, long dominated by Western theologians, yet love the church and wish to stir change, consider contextualization, and be recognized as peers in the academy and the church” (xv). At 544 pages, the scale and scope of its content is one of the volume’s clear strengths but it also requires quite a commitment from the reader. It is, however, a commitment worth making, both for oneself and for one’s students and/or laity. Sections one, two, and eight would make valuable classroom reading for all seminary classes, while the chapters based on regions would be especially enriching for courses on contemporary Christian theology as well as the history of Christianity in particular.