

the many and diverse stories that orient humanity to the world” (8). The challenge, then, is to begin moving through the world with awareness of those diverse stories that orient humans in many life situations to divine goodness and hope between and among one another. Her conclusion reminds us that humans are “fundamentally relational” and that we “have the capacity to...know ourselves into interbeing in community with others” (209). When we start with experiences, mine and yours, we can get to different places than when we start with a Bible passage, a confession of faith, or a membership policy. Perhaps we begin and end with fundamental disagreements, but perhaps we also understand one another better and are better able to agree and disagree in love.

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Harold J. Recinos, ed., *Wading through Many Voices: Toward a Theology of Public Conversation*, Rowman & Littlefield, Plymouth, UK, 2011. 392 pp. \$64.95. ISBN: 9781442205833.

I added a new phrase to my lexicon in the process of reading and reflecting upon *Wading through Many Voices*: subaltern theologizing. Put simply, *subaltern theologizing* is theology “from below” and reflects the central conviction that animates this fine collection of essays edited by Harold Recinos. Winston Churchill is reported to have remarked, “History is written by the victors.” The same could be said about theology. Theology has, like many other types of study and discourse, been dominated by white males writing out of contexts of privilege and exclusivity. *Wading through Many Voices* represents an attempt to correct this deficiency by paying attention to themes and perspectives that have often been excluded from dominant modes of theological discourse.

Included in this work are voices from a wide variety of communities. Whether it is Tink Tinker’s critique of modern American conceptions of the “public good” from a Native American perspective, or Nancy Bedford’s analysis of the politics of food production through the lens of its impact on US Latina workers, or Korean American Andrew Sung Park’s plea for a public theology of “enhancement” as a way both honoring *and* challenging the particularity of individual cultures in the American context, each chapter (and its response) reflects the intention of the project as a whole. A theology of public conversation *must* include a diversity of voices. It *must* include the experiences and reflections of those who have historically found themselves on the margins. And it *must* not only accept, but also *prioritize* the themes of justice and liberation that so often emerge “from below.”

This book reflects almost exclusively on the American political and theological

landscape. As such, non-Americans may have some “translation” work to do for their own cultural contexts. As a resident of the Canadian prairies and as a pastor of a (mostly) white Mennonite congregation, the shape this translation ought to take in my own context seems obvious enough. Our city is located next to the Blood and Peigan Nations to the east and the south, and the Siksika to the north, all three of which, along with the South Peigan in Montana, are part of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Like many others, our region is still characterized by deep and abiding attitudes of racism and suspicion toward our indigenous neighbors. How might we make space to listen to—indeed, to *privilege*—these voices “from below”? How might our theology and practice need to change to make space for the voices of those who have not only historically been *excluded* from dominant arenas of discourse and reflection, but actively *stifled* and *vilified* through Canada’s calamitous legacy of Indian residential schools? The challenge is daunting, but desperately necessary.

Which brings us to one of the inherent ironies of this collection of essays. What we have here, of course, is a book advocating for *subaltern theologizing* whose contributors are exclusively academics at respected American institutions. The list of contributors reads exactly like every other collection of academic essays: Prof. _____ received their PhD from _____ and teaches _____ at the University of _____. There is racial diversity amongst the contributors, as you would expect, and there are a whole host of different experiences, histories, and perspectives represented by each writer, but academic theological reflection done by academic theologians in American academic institutions is not exactly theology done “from below.” Would not a chapter written by (or transcribed from an interview with) a Central American migrant farmworker been appropriate? Or from a Native American boarding-school survivor? Would not an appropriate gesture toward a genuinely *subaltern theology* have been to include *non-academics* who used non-specialist language to reflect their own lived experience, their own contribution to a broad and expansive genuinely *public* conversation?

In his recommendation of this book, Robin Lovin says, “a public theology for the future must find ways to sustain conversation across the boundaries that now fragment our faiths and divide our politics.” Perhaps one of the “boundaries” that conversation must be sustained across, in addition to the familiar categories of race and gender, could be the academic and nonacademic boundary? Indeed, David Sánchez asks this question in his response to Victor Anderson’s plea for the privileging of “local” voices: “I remain incredulous...as to whether an academic theologian is the optimal voice for such articulations in the construction of the unarticulated local” (197). In other words, instead of academics presuming to speak *for* those who find themselves occupying subaltern positions, maybe we should just let them speak for themselves. And actually listen to them.

In the end, the title of this anthology, *Wading through Many Voices*, is an apt one.

Wading can be a slow, awkward process. It's not swimming and it's not exactly walking either. It's a kind of laborious trudging against the resistance and weight of the water. It is not easy, and we're bound to get a bit soggy and uncomfortable in the process. But we keep moving, nonetheless, because we are convinced that the many voices—particularly those “from below,” as Christ himself reminds us in Sermon on the Mount—are worth wading through if we are to get any closer to truth, to justice, to love, to harmony, to the glorious vision of the peaceable kingdom articulated by the Hebrew prophets and by Jesus of Nazareth himself.

I close with these beautiful words from María Teresa Dávila—words that, in my view, sum up the goal of this valuable book and the challenge to all who read it: “Knowledge becomes a matter of location, and location becomes a matter of where we choose to see and ultimately what we choose to love” (69).

I commend this book to all who want to have better theological conversations, and who are convinced that these conversations require that we listen most closely to those whom our Teacher and Lord consistently, stubbornly, relentlessly, inconveniently made space for.

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We Were Children, directed by Tim Wolochatiuk. National Film Board of Canada, 2012. 88 minutes. \$24.95. Film.

Yummo Comes Home, directed by Don Klaassen. Outreach Canada. 2013. 28 min. \$20.00. Film.

Since the beginning of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2009, several films have been made about the Indian residential schools (IRS) that were run by various Christian denominations and the Canadian Government between the 1880s and 1970s. Two of these films are *We Were Children* and *Yummo Comes Home*.

We Were Children tells the story of Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod through interviews interspersed with dramatization of their experiences at the schools. It depicts the complex relationships between indigenous communities and the churches, between parents, church leaders, and children. The film also highlights the essential purpose of the IRS system—to assimilate indigenous children into settler society through conversion to western European Christianity—and narrates the traumatic impact this had on both the children as well as the larger indigenous community (i.e., intergenerational trauma). A strength of *We Were Children* is that it does not present either the Christians or the indigenous peoples as one-sided, but attempts to display the complexities and conflicting realities of the residential school experience.