

Anna Case-Winters, *Reconstructing a Christian Theology of Nature: Down to Earth* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 190pp, \$89.95, ISBN: 978-0754654766. Review doi: 10.1558/jsrc.v2i4.534.

According to Anna Case-Winters, a Christian theology of nature pushes the envelope of traditional theological thinking, and in an age when humankind negatively impacts the environment, developing a Christian theological response to this predicament is an absolute necessity. She suggests a potential Christian response using 'process-panentheism' (Chapter 7). Her basic assumption is 'the value of the non-human world is *intrinsic* and is not dependent upon its usefulness for human purposes' (p. 14). She writes, 'If it is the case that even a portion of the responsibility for the present crisis can be laid at the door of Christian tradition, responsible theology will seek to undo the damage' (p. 42). In response to this mandate, she remains connected with Reformed, feminist, and process theology, while seeking to develop a theological approach to 'undo the damage'.

The first two chapters emphasize the need for a 'new theology of nature', in which she writes from a secular perspective (Chapter 1) and the discipline of theology (Chapter 2). Chapter 1 is primarily about ecological and economic crisis situations in the world. Case-Winters argues that there is a need for a theology of nature in order to establish a 'moral will to change' the crisis-producing behavior (p. 17). Chapter 2 examines the current state of theology, beginning with Lynn White's indictment of Christian theology and then critically engages Gordon Kaufman and Sallie McFague. Case-Winters concludes that there is a need for a new theology of nature and humankind has a responsibility to act.

Case-Winters presents the tools of three different theological approaches in Chapters 3 through 5. Chapter 3 emphasizes the Reformed Tradition; Chapter 4 examines eco-feminism; and Chapter 5 highlights process thought. While readers might feel the three chapters are disjointed, she uses the ideas as building blocks and synthesizes them in Chapters 6 and 7. She writes, 'I am convinced that it is essential that we conceive God's relationship to the world and the place of the human being within nature in ways that respect and affirm the alterity and integrity of nature and grant subject status to nature' (p. 99). Her treatment of different theological approaches in Chapters 3 through 5 are brief, and readers might be inspired to go further by reading Rosemary Radford Ruether for eco-feminism or John Cobb for process thought.

Chapter 6 is about the relationship between theology and science. Case-Winters writes about 'what theology and science have to offer one another in a critical and mutually illuminating engagement' (p. 101). She suggests rethinking *imago Dei* as a basis for common ground between theology and science, in which science informs theology of 'the place of human beings *within* nature (rather than separate from and above nature)' (p. 123). She argues *imago Dei* will then include all of nature. In Chapter 7, Case-Winters offers process-panentheism as a possible means to further develop a theology of nature. She draws on the previous chapters and argues that process-panentheism maintains God's transcendence and the integrity and otherness of nature, 'while avoiding the separation of God and the world that attends to classical theism' (p. 144). In the conclusion, she addresses three recurring challenges to a theology of nature (desacralization of nature, anthropocentrism, devaluing nature), and she outlines 'a trinitarian vision of the God-World relation' (p. 151). The trinitarian vision includes: God *With* Creation, God *For* Creation, and God *In* Creation. In

the trinitarian vision, she draws out the ethical implications of Christians following this vision and then acting accordingly.

This book will be most useful for scholars and graduate students interested in ecotheology. Because Case-Winters writes from a Christian perspective, the book would also be a useful textbook for a seminary course that focuses on the relationship between theology and nature. Readers who are unaware of the wider literature that Case-Winters incorporates might not understand her casual references to other theologians. Overall, however, Case-Winters addresses an important issue and recommends an interesting trinitarian vision, making a substantial contribution to this growing area of theology.

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