

in his chapter on Tutu's use of liturgy ("Inspired by Worship and Adoration of God," 122-83).

That his conclusions and arguments do not respect the facts he cites to prove them is the only reasonable explanation I can find for the book's terrible organization and style. Not only do paragraphs not follow one another within a section, even sentences within a single paragraph often do not cohere. More than once, the topic of a sub-section is not the same as that suggested by its title.

Frankly, a much clearer picture of Tutu's theology *as African* can be obtained by reading one of Tutu's published volumes of sermons in parallel with Shirley DuBoulay's (almost hagiographic) biography *Tutu* (1988).

Shortcomings aside, anyone who has already read these would benefit from picking through *Ubuntu Theology*. Battle helpfully correlates Tutu's life and theology with the wider context of South African history (although the historical work is not very thorough, sometimes vague and not quite accurate). Also, his research includes a substantial number of Tutu's unpublished sermons, letters, lectures and conversations. The footnotes are excellent, and the bibliography extensive.

Taken as a group, these four works are without a doubt a worthwhile read. I can only hope, however, that they are inspiring to Canadians. There is much here that would be helpful to Canadians desiring reconciliation in our tense socio-political and historical context. Unfortunately, the two most helpful works (Schmiechen and DeYoung) are written by Americans, for America. Although the global representation in the one Canadian work (Wells and Baum) is heartening, it is somewhat distant—regardless of the one article on Quebec. Lamentably, while Tutu's thought and life is prophetically and practically encouraging anywhere (strangely *because* of, not *in spite* of, his South African-ness), Battle's discussion is not.

Heather Sansom

McGill University

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***In the Beginning... A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall.*** By Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Trans. Boniface Ramsey. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1995. ISBN 0-8028-4106-6. Pp. 100.

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This is a simple book: a set of four homilies (appendix excepted) about simple and yet profound and foundational Judeo-Christian truths—truths about God, Creation and human beings.

First, a word about the homilist. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is no stranger to the theological world. He was present at the Second Vatican Council (1962-64), and enjoyed a distinguished teaching career at several universities, including Tübingen and Regensburg. In 1976, he was made Archbishop of Munich and, in 1981, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. With this information, we can already guess the tone of this book: for one thing,

homilies are meant to inspire, defend and affirm the faith; they are not meant to be lectures about the latest theological controversies. Second, Ratzinger is the Prefect of what was once called the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Therefore, expect apologetics; expect a defense of the basic truths of the "Catholic faith" (ix-xii).

The main purpose of these four homilies and the appendix (added at a later date) is to expound *the* Catholic understanding of Creation; to instill in the Christian believer (and, in this case, in the Catholic!) faith in Creation. Ratzinger believes that modern-day Christians, and especially theologians, have lost faith in Creation, and therefore have lost trust in God—the Creator. Modern-day Christians—especially theologians—are wrong in blaming the church's interpretation of the Creation and Fall accounts for the ecological disaster which only now we are waking up to.

For Ratzinger, technological progress has gone awry, for we have misunderstood God's act of creation. We continue to ask "What can we do?" when we should be asking "Who are we?" (82). As a consequence, sin has become a "suppressed subject," and the idea of the "moral" has been abandoned altogether (63).

This is the context within which Ratzinger reflects on the Creation and Fall accounts. Each homily begins with a selected text from Genesis, and each is given a theme: God the Creator; the meaning of the biblical creation accounts; the creation of human beings; sin and salvation; and (in the appendix) the consequences of faith in Creation.

While defensive and apologetic, the style of these homilies is quite attractive. This is Ratzinger as homilist, and he is at his best. His discourse is clear and easy to follow, and his prose are quite beautiful (notwithstanding the fact that this is a translation from the German!). The Christian reader will not be cheated—from the outset Ratzinger states that he pretends to read Holy Scripture with Christ, and that his overall intent is to affirm that faith in Creation is reasonable (21).

I found his remarks on Creation's being oriented to the sabbath quite insightful: Creation is a sign of the covenant between God and human beings, essentially oriented to worship. God created in order to enter into a history of love with humankind; in order to be able to become a human being and pour out His love upon us, thus, inviting us to love Him (27-39).

Also insightful are Ratzinger's remarks on the human being as bearing God's breath; as being the image of God. To be the image of God implies relationality. Hence, the human person is an open project, who becomes most profoundly human when in relationship with another—a relationship of love and trust; of real self-giving (44-49).

It is unfortunate that Ratzinger has such a pessimistic view of the present world. While not denying that there is much that needs reconciliation and healing in our world, there is also much good that needs to be affirmed—much good that is the continuance of God's Creation. Also lacking in these homilies is a Christian reflection on the dignity and meaning of human work. Are not human

beings called to co-create with God through their work? And if so, what does this say about God as Creator, and about Creation itself?

Ratzinger's decision to present a Catholic understanding of the Creation and Fall accounts is also a draw-back of the work. Why not an ecumenical understanding? Apart from the appendix, the four homilies could very well pass for a "Christian understanding" of the Creation and Fall accounts anyway.

All in all, this is a book worth reading. For the theologian as well as for the pastor, it is well worth reflecting upon.

José Vieira Arruda

McGill University

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*The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology.* By William Stacy Johnson. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. ISBN 0-664-22094-0. Pp. 217.

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William Stacy Johnson, recently named the W.C. Brown Chair of Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Austin, Texas), has written this volume as part of the Columbia Series in Reformed Theology. It is addressed to "scholars, pastors, and laypersons." Those persons most responsible for inspiration in this work include Johnson's dissertation supervisor (1992) Richard R. Niebuhr of Harvard University; Gordon D. Kaufman (*In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology*, 1993); Barthian scholars George Hunsinger and Bruce L. McCormack; and Walter Lowe (*Theology and Difference: The Wound of Reason*, 1993).

Johnson proposes and guides a re-thinking of Barth's theology as an invitation to "nonfoundationalism." Nonfoundationalism refers to a method of thinking which invites a criticism of thinking itself. It sets "aside all appeals to presumed self-evident, non-inferential, or incorrigible grounds for...intellectual claims...reject[ing] the idea that among all...beliefs there is a single, irrefutable 'foundation' that must be protected from critical scrutiny and upon which all other claims are grounded" (3). The argument is presented in three parts with three chapters each.

In the first part, we are shown three views of Barth's theology: the first of "mystery" as the only "foundation" in Barth's early theology; the second (aimed at those who believe Barth's theology demands that revelation be more of a proof than an indication of mystery) of Barth's theology as a theology questioning foundations; and third, a review of Barth's development of triune act, his "perfections" of God, and his treatment of election.

Part 2 is an examination of the triadic pattern at work of "God for us," "God with us," and "God in and among us," as these three characterize the acts of creation, reconciliation and redemption. The "triadic pattern" is "a pattern in which there are three points of reference: a beginning point, an ending point, and a midpoint suspended between them" (6).