

Book Reviews

Introducing Latinx Theologies. By Edwin David Aponte and Miguel A. De La Torre. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2020. xliii + 211 pages. \$30.00.
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In the 2020 revised edition of *Introducing Latinx Theologies*, coauthors Edwin David Aponte and Miguel A. De La Torre present the reader with an updated introduction to and renewed appreciation for Hispanic-Latino/a-Latinx theologies, religiosity, and spirituality (187). In addition to incorporating the growing expressions of Latinx theologies, traditions, and practices, this helpfully expanded volume also includes the increasingly diverse voices and experiences of grassroots communities of Latinx peoples across the United States today.

A central premise of this work is that all theological thought is inextricably linked to the social location and cultural roots out of which it emerges (75). Thus, Aponte and De La Torre begin their introduction to Latinx theologies with an exploration of Hispanic, Latina/a, and Latinx social and cultural identities, as well as a discussion of how these personal and communal contexts give shape to Latinx theological discourse. The volume's first chapter surveys the multifaceted contexts of Latinx peoples, including demographics, religious backgrounds, and faith expressions, while the second chapter examines some of the common cultural themes within a community-based theology, such as race, ethnicity, culture, and physical location.

Chapter 3, "Theoretical and Theological Perspectives," constitutes the heart of Aponte and De La Torre's introductory work. In this chapter, the authors provide an overview of some of the key theological concepts and tenets that arise from Latinx social, cultural, and religious perspectives (e.g., sin, salvation, ecclesiology, the Spirit, Mary, and the last days). The authors also highlight the methodologies of *conjunto* and accompaniment, which are key components of those Latinx theological discourses centered on praxis.

The volume's fourth and fifth chapters engage the historical development of Latinx theologies and the existential experiences of Latinx communities, respectively. Like the chapters that come before them, the final two chapters

use an intersectional lens to engage the diverse everyday voices and experiences that comprise this fluid and vibrant theological discourse, while also attending to the complicated histories of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and colonialism within the movement.

At the end of the volume, Aponte and De La Torre provide a “Latinx-centric” bibliography for those readers who wish to advance their study of Latinx religious and theological perspectives. The bibliography contains nearly two hundred entries that have been carefully curated by the authors, “to include works from within the Latinx *comunidad* and those persons allied with such communities that have made important contributions to theology done *latinamente* (in the best possible sense)” (188).

Aponte and De La Torre’s 2020 revised work, *Introducing Latinx Theologies*, is timely, comprehensive, and relevant. It offers a valuable resource for those persons interested in developing a basic orientation to the theological, religious, and spiritual perspectives of the diverse peoples collectively labeled “Latinx.” This book would also be beneficial to instructors and students looking for a primer on Latinx theologies to enhance their teaching, research, and scholarship.

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Bad Faith: Race and the Rise of the Religious Right. By Randall Balmer. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2021. ix + 120 pages. \$16.99.
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Though it has gained attention for its discussion of abortion, Balmer’s *Bad Faith* seeks to answer the question “Why did 81 percent of evangelicals support Donald Trump in 2016 and 76 percent in 2020?” While tempting, reading *Bad Faith* simply as a refutation of the Religious Right’s campaign against *Roe v. Wade* misses Balmer’s purpose and, with tragic irony, rejects the very narrative he seeks to uncover.

Unfortunately, *Bad Faith* lends itself to such a misreading. Balmer takes considerable time setting the stage for his condemnations. He begins by linking the optimism of the Second Great Awakening to the traditional evangelical commitment to progressive social reform. Tragically, the rise of premillennialism in the nineteenth century increasingly led evangelicals to a “theology of despair” that focused on individual salvation. As a result, evangelicals