

terms from both fields near where they first appear. (There are exceptions: "phenomenology" is defined late in the book, even though the word is used several times earlier.) Nagel assumes that the reader has a basic familiarity with the principles of and paradigmatic modes of reasoning used in both disciplines, roughly what is covered in a first-year university course. I recommend this book to anyone interested in exploring what are the limits of scientific thought or prospects for the conversation among theology, philosophy, and science.

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Hope Sings, So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line.

By Christopher Pramuk. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2013. xxv + 212 pp. \$25.00 (paper).

Christopher Pramuk knows that moral exhortations and cogent arguments will never uproot the heresy and systemic evil that is racism. So, while admitting that "my aims here are modest, frankly experimental, and at times quite personal" (p. xvii), he intends to provoke and foster experiences of encounter "across the color line." Like the Bernard Lonergan of *Method in Theology*, he understands that only the experience of encounter can confront and dissipate entrenched bias. Encounter means an engagement with an "other" that interrupts our settled routines and reveals the pitiful narrowness of our horizons (p. xix). Encounter is thus the gateway to liberation from the boundaries between "us" and "them" that fear builds and maintains. "Are we willing," he asks, "to let the circle of familiarity be broken open, and the boundaries give way to the coming of the Lord?" (p. 152).

Genuine encounter is sacramental. To accept the challenge of encounter, he argues, is to take the Incarnation seriously: every human being discloses something of God (p. 137). Thus, to marginalize any person or group on account of their skin color, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status is to cling to an idol, instead of the finally unfathomable God who is Love. No wonder, then, that "theology requires a method and a language, above all an imagination, that does not seek to manage or erase difference . . . but is committed to listening to the other receptively, contemplatively" (p. 124).

Out of his passion for social justice, his sensitivities as a musician, his devotion as a husband and father to his black and white children, his wide

reading, and his education and commitments as a theologian, Pramuk offers a mosaic of encounters here: music, painting, photography, biographical and autobiographical narratives, and, of course, theological reflection. With racism as his chief focus, he renews our acquaintance with the nameless saints who “composed” the black spirituals; Howard Thurman; Billie Holiday; Stevie Wonder (who continues to enthral him); and Sister Thea Bowman. But the marginalization and exploitation to which “others” like women, LGBT people, Latino/as, indigenous peoples, and the earth itself are often consigned concern him deeply, too. So he also gives us, for example, Georgia O’Keefe, the Pueblo Indians, and the ever astonishing Etty Hillesum.

In less astute hands, a treatment like this can be sketchy and sentimental. His understanding of imagination is rooted, however, in Merton, Newman, and the great master of Christian imagination, Ignatius Loyola. Encounter gives way to contemplation and prayer, which, in turn, gives birth to a new imagination of life’s possibilities: hope (p. 106).

The final chapter expresses Pramuk’s dream for the church: “We are called to a way of being in the world, a radically inclusive way, because of who God is” (p. 153). This is precisely the kind of church for which young people are yearning, according to his long experience of working with them (p. 149). Yet he can provide only a few examples of such inclusivity and hospitality. Most American Christians seem too fearful and unimaginative to be about “Building the Beloved Community” (p. 150).

Obviously, for a book such as this, where the aim is not simply the accurate transmission of information but rather transformation, the crucial test of its worth must be carried out in private and personally. Not only does it mark out a pathway to hope, inviting readers to imagine and live out a process of conversion, but it is also a sign of hope in a “world full of crosses” (p. 66). Liturgical Press has supported the development of a website “to serve the catholic and ongoing conversational aims of this book” (p. xxiii). Thus, *Hope Sings* becomes the inaugural component of an expanding and collaborative resource for individuals, classrooms, and congregations in their struggle to encounter and embrace all the “others” in whom God comes to us.

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