

Coleridge is also generally positive about the liturgical reforms enacted in the wake of Vatican II. However, having been actively involved in the recent re-translation work for the current edition of the *Missale Romanum–Novus Ordo*, he is highly critical of the previous translation. For example, he argues that in trying to make the English translation accessible to the average person, the text that resulted appeared to have endorsed a semi-Pelagian understanding of salvation. In his position as a diocesan ordinary, charged with overseeing the liturgy in his diocese, Coleridge not only calls for the liturgy to be celebrated according to the liturgical books, but also for music, church buildings, vestments, and vessels worthy of and appropriate for the liturgy. He also encourages silence throughout the liturgy so that worshippers can reflect upon what they have heard and seen.

In his episcopal role as a teacher, Coleridge does not shy away from dealing with controversial issues. For example, he denounces the staggering number of abortions in Australia annually—some 90,000. He also challenges versions of gender theory currently gaining traction that assert that all aspects of gender are constructs. He reminds his listeners that integral elements of male identity and female identity are not negotiable because they are ‘part of the inbuilt ecology of the human world ... part of the plan of God for human flourishing’ (288–9).

*Words from the Wound* is an excellent collection of addresses and letters. It would make ideal spiritual reading, and could be used as the basis of group reflection and discussion.

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**A PUBLIC GOD: NATURAL THEOLOGY RECONSIDERED**, Neil Ormerod (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015), pp. 196, paperback, \$69.99; ebook, \$51.72.

Neil Ormerod’s *A Public God* performs a great service for the theological community. He argues that natural theology engages us in a complex cultural and political conversation about who we are and how we should live. Though the book incisively discusses various arguments about the existence of God, it focuses less on knocking down its opponents with a single syllogistic blow, which it does not shy from delivering, and more on the pre-theological decisions or commitments that shape how different people think about the value of God-talk in public discourse. Such pre-theological decisions pertain to how we go about making judgments about the world; they pertain to the criteria for truth and reality that we apply, however unreflectively, when we learn something new or make claims to knowledge, and these decisions are critical for thinking about the question of God and the value of religion in civic life.

Ormerod argues compellingly for the importance of a renewal of metaphysics. He takes issue with reductionist thinking and makes us feel the weight of its culturally derisive influence. If we assume that only science

produces genuine knowledge, then we rule out of reality anything that eludes empirical verification and the inferences of physicists. Such a decision conflicts with our at least tacit acknowledgment of the reality of meanings and values—for example, the existence of national identities and laws, interest rates and mortgages, love and friendship. Most of our lives are lived above ground, as it were, in a world mediated by meaning and value, and reducing reality to empirical or sub-atomic elements only undermines the scientific impulse in each of us: to verify and affirm the various patterns of intelligibility that our minds discern in this universe.

The argument here addresses the kind of popular atheism that aggressively chides belief in God (Richard Dawkins) and attempts to explain how the universe emerges *ex nihilo* without any link to a Creator (Lawrence Krauss). Ormerod exposes the complete inadequacy and awkwardness of Krauss's attempts to speak of 'nothing' in a way that has any purchase for meaningful debate about the question of God. If anything, Krauss illustrates the dire need of a renewal of metaphysics in many circles of conversation. Similarly, Ormerod shows how Dawkins presumes a narrow, problematic conception of reason that does not adequately account for Dawkins's own commitment to reasonableness and purpose.

The brilliance and flash of Ormerod's book shines here: natural theology must unfold contextually. It must meet the needs of the culture, and thus in the West it must reply to the kind of problematic thinking about reason and faith that so-called 'new atheists' evangelically defend. Redressing more than theoretical or intellectual gaps, the needed renewal of metaphysics would serve also as a therapeutic reply to a distorted understanding of reason at the level of culture. It would change how folks think about what constitutes knowledge in different instances and who might best contribute meaningful insights to the various enquiries we undertake in the course of human living.

Ormerod also offers a provocative proposal on how we should conceive the relation of religion and politics. Distinguishing an integral scale of values, he argues that God-talk in the public forum must pass through a series of mediations on its way to influencing political decisions. Many of the questions that arise in creating and maintaining a political economy possess the relative independence that belong to the social order of thinking about meaning and value. How do we make the trains run on time and ensure that people can get to and from work efficiently and reliably, for example? When we engage culture and religion in making decisions about society, however, we need to account for their mediation; for example, if we neglect making all the trains run on time because we believe that people should not rely on public transport for their daily needs, or because some neighborhoods are not worth servicing, then we need to account for how political and economic decisions are interacting with values of individualism and meritocracy. Debates about values then engage further considerations and voices.

The proposal here does not assume to end all debates. Rather, it promises constructive ways forward for arguments about God and politics that often stall prematurely or explode unnecessarily because of insensitivity to distinct values, spheres of discourse, and the need for proper mediations.

Ormerod insists that his approach to natural theology remains public and does not rely on the authority of a religious tradition. Nor, interestingly enough, does he see natural theology as completely divorced from religion and revelation. The final chapter addresses the project of theodicy and argues that natural theology largely anticipates the structural features of what the historical religions may arguably attempt to communicate more or less clearly. Natural theology can thus offer a doorway into interreligious dialogue.

Written in a clear and accessible style, Ormerod's book offers creative insights and fresh proposals for scholars and laypeople alike. He helps us appreciate how reappropriating natural theology can contribute to culturally meaningful change.

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**CHILD, ARISE! THE COURAGE TO STAND: A SPIRITUAL HANDBOOK FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**, Jane N. Dowling (Melbourne: David Lovell, 2015), pp. 260, \$29.95.

This book outlines the author's journey from child abuse to survival. For those who have not been victims of child sexual abuse, Jane reveals the depth of her courage as she exposes the physical, emotional and spiritual harm that had been inflicted on her. It portrays her struggle to find herself; it is a journey of persistence that has led her to come to know and accept the goodness that she has been gifted with, to regain what was taken from her.

Jane, in everyday words, expresses the pain and trauma of a childhood that was taken from her by trusted adults, and her journey to survival in a context that most will find surprising. Her sharing would seem too much to wish for, but she offers detailed explanations and examples as she outlines the steps in her method of survival. Jane offers her journey to others who seek to reverse the personal deprivation and abuse suffered as children. Clearly this journey continues for Jane, but the pattern she has established to assist her is there for others to consider.

I leave it to Jane to tell her story and for the reader to discover the extent of her suffering and the context in which she continues her survival. As adults we seek to be led to understand our responses to human tragedy and Jane's journey outlines an understanding of the trauma that results from child sexual abuse. Her aim was to express, initially for herself and then for others, the way she has been able to bring stability to her life. Principally, Jane revisited as an adult the desolation and isolation she experienced as a child. The subtitle to her book indicates the methodology she has used to process her reflections and prayer as