sacraments dwindles to a remnant, maybe it is no coincidence that the need for embodied grace devolves into quasi-Christian romanticised and eroticised forms.

Our forefathers in faith believed that while continence outside of marriage sometimes feels like a cross, this kind of suffering could also be redemptive. Our predecessors understood this kind of sexual ascesis as preparation for the Kingdom of God. Today it sometimes feels like there is a queue of theologians at the narrow gate, negotiating for alternatives. I think the ancient communion of saints would want to reassure them that although the road is hard, grace and mercy abound along the way.


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The ethic of solidarity developed in this book ‘is intended to offer first-world Christians a new strategy for navigating the morally precarious waters of neoliberal globalization’ (p. xiv). In broad terms, Todd Peters’s strategy for developing solidarity ethics is rooted in the principles of sustainability and social justice in ways that require first-world Christians ‘to work simultaneously on transforming personal habits and lifestyles as well as global economic and political structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice’ (p. 2). Something is deeply amiss in our world where basic education for everyone in the world would cost six billion US dollars annually while US citizens spend eight billion dollars on cosmetics and Europeans spend eleven billion dollars on ice cream (p. 1). From this starting point, Todd Peters invites Christian people to examine their own lives and find ways of resisting naïve complicity in unjust social systems that advantage the privileged but exploit and dehumanise others.

Chapter titles convey the structure and flow of *Solidarity Ethics*: 1 ‘Theories of Solidarity’, 2 ‘Foundations for Transformation’, 3 ‘A Theo-Ethics of Solidarity’, 4 ‘Moving toward Solidarity’, 5 ‘Embodying Solidarity, Living into Justice’, 6 ‘Conclusion: Hope for Tomorrow’. Chapter 1 contrasts secularist meanings of ‘solidarity’ from the French Revolution’s notion of *fraternité* through August Comte and Emil Durkheim’s respective sociological considerations of social or mechanical solidarity and Karl Weber’s idea of *Vergesellschaftung* to Karl Marx and beyond, with the idea in theological disciplines. The broad conclusion is that secularist treatments are diverse, mean different things to different people, and hence remain vague. By contrast, Christian doctrine from New Testament notions of *agapē* through to Roman Catholic social teaching in the twentieth century retain at their heart compassion and collective action for the poor. Subsequent chapters continue the theme of contrast by drawing attention to stark differences between Western values of individual rights and private property versus a Christian theology of solidarity rooted in the values of mutuality, justice and sustainability.

A distinguishing feature of the book is its targeting of people of privilege. *Solidarity Ethics* is informed by liberation theologies from around the world but written to help
relatively affluent people in ‘developed’ countries think through what ‘solidarity’ with less privileged people means. Having opened with shocking statistics and examples of poverty and its implications, the context from which the book is written is the relative affluence of those who could live more simply. Solidarity is encouraged by the building of relationships wherever possible, attention to the structural aspects of social problems, calling upon Christian people to enact timeless principles of justice, and generating a sense that Christian people must be propelled to do something. The foundations for transformation are the person and work of Jesus that inform the moral intuitions of sympathy, responsibility and mutuality, and generate practices that are accountable, sustainable and respectful of difference.

The strength of the book is its wake-up, clarion call for Christian people to look around us at global realities and respond in some way to multiple injustices. I shall recommend it to undergraduate students, friends at church, and all advocating change of the kind that Todd Peters seeks. The book is relatively introductory, however, and prepares the way for debate about many of the issues raised rather than engaging them in detail. ‘Neoliberal globalization’ is denounced as sin because it mimics the patterns of colonialism and exploitation (p. 6) and has a univocal focus on free-market solutions to poverty, but little is said about what might constitute good trade or whether companies could function transnationally in morally responsible ways. The section on ‘responsibility’ is somewhat thin and contains little more than a warning against paternalism and suggestion that the first world take seriously the need to pay reparation for the damage of slavery and colonialism. With Todd Peters, we might yearn for deeper possibilities of transformation and justice (p. 109) but much remains to be done to envisage and investigate what is really entailed theologically and otherwise practically in walking the path to which Todd Peters points. What kind of multidisciplinary engagement and in situ commitment from lay Christian professionals alongside others of good will is required for radical change?

Similarly, the book prepares the way for but holds back from investigating what theological work is required for and by people of privilege as we begin to understand the depth of sin in which we are mired. Reference is made to our covenant relationship with the God of all creation. But what theology of redemption is needed? What account of sin and salvation will nourish and direct an ethic of solidarity? So, for instance, as Todd Peters is aware, most aspects of relatively affluent ‘Western’ lifestyles are inseparable from economic systems that, viewed benignly, benefit some in the world much more than others. Barring extreme turns to asceticism, however, a problem is that people of privilege cannot escape the guilt that exceeds personal lifestyle choices when, for instance, pension funds are invested in multiple transnational companies, and embroilment in sin outstrips every effort to live more simply and consume less. Solidarity Ethics asks people of privilege to examine their wealth, status and power, as a prerequisite to entering into relationships of mutuality and solidarity with people across various lines of race, class, ability, nationality, and more (p. 117). Amen! But what Saviour can help us digest and assimilate the horrific truth of our collaboration in systems that bring death to so many without stealing hope from us too?

The message of Solidarity Ethics is that every person can begin to effect change in their lives. This is true, of course. The gospel of Christ is ultimately personal and all will
be called to account. Today, however, the realities of our globalising age exceed the immediately personal. Lines of accountability between one person’s actions (e.g., in earning a salary with pension benefits) and their effects (as mediated though the many and various companies in which pension funds are invested) are difficult to trace. It is amidst these complexities of globalising economics, trade and communications, and not only the actions over which people of privilege have personal control, that the problem of sin and guilt must be faced. What ethic can respond to these realities without collapsing under the weight of truth? What theology of incarnation and redemption is available to people of privilege learning to face this guilt?

Todd Peters’s Solidarity Ethics starts on the path we need to be taking, but much remains to be done. This relatively short book provokes anyone with money enough to buy or otherwise read it to begin, or to continue, a long journey of lifetime change.

Wesley Vander Lugt, with foreword by Samuel Wells, Living Theodrama: Reimagining Theological Ethics

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How are we to imagine the task of theological ethics? Can there be an over-arching holistic vision or must we accept the inevitability of sub-divisions, specialisations and separate schools of thought whether relating to subject matter (applied ethics, sexual ethics, business ethics, medical ethics etc.) or different approaches (virtue ethics, biblical ethics, ecclesial ethics, casuistry etc.)? In this book, based on his St Andrew’s doctoral thesis under Trevor Hart, Wesley Vander Lugt, now pastor of a church in North Carolina, offers a highly readable, stimulating and creative vision. The dramatic model developed in recent scholarship is deepened, through an inter-disciplinary rooting of it in the literature on theatre. It is also taken to a new level of theological rigour and complexity by his careful combination, revision and extension of earlier, generally more piece-meal articulations, and through his demonstration that ‘theology can dialogue with theatre without losing its grounding in divine revelation’ (p. 4).

The opening chapter helpfully surveys the literature in terms of nine movements which comprise ‘the theatrical turn’ he discerns within recent theology, often developing the earlier turn to narrative. It also introduces the key theologians he will interact with throughout his work, notably von Balthasar, Kevin Vanhoozer and Sam Wells. One weakness he identifies and ably rectifies is that ‘theologians who promote the theatrical turn draw on a myriad of theatrical terms and concepts but often in an inconsistent and uncritical manner’ (p. 14). He therefore clarifies his key terms—drama, script, theatre, performance, improvisation etc.—and his preference for speaking of theatrical theodramatics in order to avoid simply epic or lyric theology (to use von Balthasar’s terms). Considering various inter-disciplinary methods, Vander Lugt favours looking to