

A prophetic Black voice like James Cone's might raise serious questions about whether an archaeology of race-based slavery and apartheid, which penetrates only to the level of ideology and is conceived as an alien influence layered over theological tradition by modernism, has excavated deeply enough to be worthy of the name (65, 108). For ought not repentance from such atrocities involve shaking the dogmatic/confessional systems complicit in them to their core, in order to root out and reform any theology found to have countenanced such injustice? Note that "racism" is absent from the subject index.

Keeping these two caveats in mind, *Beyond the Modern Age* stands as a testament to the ongoing vitality of the Kuyperian tradition, from which other streams stand to be enriched. For it seems to be no accident that Bob Goudzwaard and Craig Bartholomew were able to produce scholarship of such scope, structure, succinctness, and pertinence out of their shared intellectual heritage. And for that vision of "a type of Christianity that is committed to the inherent relevance of Christ and the good news to all of life as God has made it," we can be grateful (117).

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Green, Gene L., Stephen T. Pardue, and Khiok-Khng Yeo, eds. *The Spirit over the Earth: Pneumatology in the Majority World*. Majority World Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. v + 195 pp. Softcover. USD 20.00.

*The Spirit over the Earth: Pneumatology in the Majority World* is a collection of eight essays on the role of the Holy Spirit from the perspective of different Christian faith communities and the larger cultural and religious contexts in which those faith communities bear witness. The book is part of the Majority World Theology series which seeks to remedy the lack of theological resources reflecting the perspectives of Christians from the majority world where most Christians now live.

The editors of this book make a landmark contribution to the field of theology in terms of its depth and the scholarly collaboration between selected majority world theologians. The book offers a concise and excellent overview of the various Christian traditions on the person and role of the Holy Spirit, and explains how all of these traditions find their roots in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

*The Spirit over the Earth* is a powerful reminder that all theology is contextual. One's socially-constructed perspective on life always shapes one's reading, interpretation, and application of Scripture. It would therefore be naïve to think that a human being could approach Scripture from a totally neutral or absolutely objective point of view. Because there is no pure form of theology, the exegesis of the context in which the biblical text is to be applied cannot be ignored as separate from the process of doing theology. This requires that biblical scholars make an effort to rigorously exegete their intended readers' social location with the same rigor they apply to the exegesis of biblical texts. Only then can their contributions be both equipped to answer questions raised

by their intended audiences, and effective in confronting said audiences with God's revelation in a way that readers can respond to favorably and intelligently.

The book is also helpful in pointing out that Western theological perspectives are not always equipped to effectively address theological issues confronting believers around the world. From this perspective, this book directly challenges the long-held assumption that Western Christianity and its theology are "the *locus theologicus*, the universal norm, the seat of orthodox faith" (146). Orthodoxy and original scholarship in the majority world, if firmly grounded in the word of God, are in no way inferior to those of the West. Rather than competing over the seal of theological orthodoxy, biblical scholars from various parts of the world are called to acknowledge their need for one another.

Since the Bible teaches that the Spirit of God is active everywhere in creation, the book raises the following thought-provoking question: "Is the Spirit at work among people of other faiths and cultures?" While Christians are divided in their perspectives on this pressing existential question, a balanced approach is recommended, which, on one hand, affirms "the distinctiveness of the Christ-centered presence and activity of the Spirit within the community of faith," and seeks, on the other hand, to explore "Christocentric criteria for identifying and discerning the Spirit's work in the world in the midst of people of other faiths and no faith" (36). Because no single religious group can boast of a sole monopoly of the Holy Spirit, there is no room for religious or denominational narrow-mindedness as to the magnitude of the Holy Spirit's work.

One other important insight from *The Spirit over the Earth* is the idea that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not limited to those listed in Rom 12:3–8; 1 Cor 12–14; Eph 4:7–16; and 1 Pet 4:10–11. The core purpose of spiritual gifts is the equipping of God's "people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:12). Therefore, the Holy Spirit may choose to equip believers in a special way for a task in their generation or context that was not a necessary task in previous generations (106–107). Personally, I view the fact that the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to believers, just as he determines (1 Cor. 12:11), both as a call for humility to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in matters of the distribution of spiritual gifts to believers and as a warning not to interfere with his ministry in any person's life. However, it is always important that the body of Christ follows the biblical command to evaluate the claim of a person to a particular spiritual gift (1 John 4:1).

My major concern in reading and reflecting on *The Spirit over the Earth* came when Wei Hua advocates, in chapter four, that the Chinese customs of the commemorating rites of the ancestors and Confucius "should be acknowledged and absorbed into the Christian faith through the fulfilling and transforming work of the Holy Spirit" (79). It is absolutely baffling to me that he argues that once a person receives the Holy Spirit, pagan customs are no longer obstacles to their Christian faith (90). It is bewildering that Wei sees a direct parallel between Chinese traditional practices and the biblical commandment

to honor one's father and mother (94) on the ground that "the objects of Chinese commemorating rites are not powerful gods, but deceased relatives and loved ones, including fathers, mothers, and Confucius," and that "unlike religion and idolatry, the purpose of the Chinese commemorating rites is not to pursue any supernatural power, but to express thanksgiving to ancestors and to pay secular respect to Confucius" (91). How could this form of worship, or reverence as Wei calls it, in which participants display offerings and burn incense and candles in front of their ancestors' memorial tablets (90) not be equated with idolatry and the death-related practices (Lev 19:28; 20:6, 27; Deut 14:1–2; 18:10–13) that God prohibited the Israelites from practicing? These texts speak against any practice involved in ancestral worship. In general, mourning and remembering the dead were not forbidden for the Israelites. What was forbidden was the connection of these practices with pagan idolatrous rites. Although divination and ancestral worship were common practices in the nations surrounding Israel, the Israelites were not to consult the occult world because they were given a better revelation by God. The same prohibition is also applicable to Christians of all eras and socio-cultural and religious contexts. Any spiritual attempt to establish contact with the dead is deemed an abomination by God (18:10–13). Wei's sympathetic connection of Chinese commemorating rites of the ancestors to biblical commands such as Exodus 20:12 minimizes change in the lives of converts, whereas the Word of God challenges people individually and corporately to turn from their unbiblical practices. Wei's perspective is very susceptible to opening the door to syncretism as Chinese Christians continue to maintain beliefs and practices that stand in conflict with the Word of God. Faithfulness to biblical principles should never be overshadowed by any form of sensitivity to local traditions and religious practices.

Since the church was, and still is, being established through the agency of the Holy Spirit wherever the gospel is preached, a biblically-based perspective on pneumatology is as important as ecclesiology (3). This makes *The Spirit over the Earth*, in spite of some weaknesses, full of insights, well worth the read, and a valuable theological resource for ministers, teachers, and intercultural missionaries.

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Jaillard, Dominique, and Christophe Nihan, eds. *Writing Laws in Antiquity/ L'écriture du droit dans l'Antiquité*. BZABR 19. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017. 170 pp. Hardcover. EUR 58.00.

*Writing Laws in Antiquity* consists of seven essays, which were originally presented at a conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 2011, entitled "Codes de lois et lois sacrées: la rédaction et la codification des lois en Grèce et dans l'Israël ancien" [Law Codes and Sacred Laws: The Redaction and Codification of Laws in Greece and Ancient Israel]. The purpose of this conference was a comparison of "the creation and the transmission of legal collections in ancient Greece and in the ancient Near East, including Mesopotamia, Egypt and