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To set the captives free: liberation theology in Canada

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"wait a little longer". The effect in each case is the same.

This is a fascinating book. It deals with what is central to biblical theology and the faith of the people of God. Read it! It will be an important resource for preaching, teaching, and personal edification. Never has a (revised) doctoral dissertation been more readable and practical. The author will take you on a journey from the Blessing of Jacob (Genesis 49) to the end of the age (Revelations 22). He will explore with you the faith of the pre-exilic and the post-exilic prophets, the hope of the early and the later Jewish apocalypses, the exhortation of Paul and the Synoptic Gospels, and the eager longing of John of Patmos.

But the author will do more. He will reflect with you on how essential it is for the Christian church to witness to that hope which is in us, and to persevere in that confidence precisely when we cry "Lord, how long?"

Erwin Buck
Lutheran Theological Seminary

To Set the Captives Free: Liberation Theology in Canada

Oscar Cole Arnal

Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 1998

230 pages, \$21.95 Softcover

Oscar Cole Arnal, professor of the history of Christianity at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, provides a tantalizing glimpse into the history of background and liberative theologies in Canada. This work includes an excellent historical and social analysis of the Canadian context. It is a book directed to seminary students, social justice advocates, clergy, and all those who wrestle with Christianity and justice in the Canadian context.

The first chapter sets the stage for his book, followed by a foundational chapter on the liberation-oppression struggle in the Christian tradition. He begins with the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, and continues with a brief survey of liberation in the history of the church. Following Douglas John Hall, Cole Arnal points a finger at the "Constantinian betrayal" of the church. He traces protest voices (echoing Hall's "thin tradition") from the early church to the present. Revealed is a church with a poor record of caring for the oppressed.

The third and fourth chapters provide a social analysis of Canadian society. In chapter three, Cole Arnal names the economic elite as the oppressors in Canada, since they control the media, culture, and education

in Canada. Cole Arnal proposes that the economic elites have shaped and manipulated Canadian society for their own purposes.

In the fourth chapter, the oppressed in Canadian society are named. They include the economic poor and the poorest of the working class, those affected by patriarchy, the forgotten, and those who are marginalized in society. There is an intricate web of interrelated oppression, supported by an intricate web of oppression.

In the fifth chapter, Cole Arnal identifies communities who are fighting these inequalities within Canada. He traces the background and history of many of the ecumenical coalitions and other organizations who are working for justice. These groups are signs of God's gracious realm breaking in upon society. He follows this up in the final chapter with a description of the relationship between Christians and social and political coalitions. There are candid appraisals of the mistakes, problems, successes, and potential for these coalitions.

This book is important for those concerned for social justice in Canadian society. Yet two things are missing in this otherwise excellent book. First, while the sub-title is "Liberation Theology in *Canada*", many examples of oppression and injustice in North America in the first fifty pages are US rather than Canadian stories. Second, the subtitle "Liberation *Theology* in Canada" is misleading. The book is more a history of justice movements and a social analysis of Canadian society from a liberative perspective than a theology. What are the theological issues in the Canadian context which make oppression and liberation more than just "themes" in the Christian tradition? The struggles for liberation are rooted in the very nature of God.

This excellent historical survey and social analysis provides a welcome addition to Hall's recent three-volume trilogy, and Bishop Remi De Roo's seminal theological work, "Cries of Victims — Voice of God".

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Many Voices One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World

Walter Brueggemann and George W. Stroup, Editors

Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998

ix + 202 pages, \$22.50 Softcover

This book is a *Festschrift* in honour of Shirley Guthrie, Professor of