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### **Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World, edited by Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, K. K. Yeo; The Trinity among the Nations: The Doctrine of God in the Majority World, edited by Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, K. K. Yeo**

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*Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World*. Edited by Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, K.K. Yeo. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, Eerdmans 2014. Pp. vii + 174. \$20.

*The Trinity among the Nations: The Doctrine of God in the Majority World*. Edited by Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, K.K. Yeo. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, Eerdmans 2015. Pp. viii + 193. \$20.

Readers of *Mission Studies* will not be surprised of the global shift that has occurred in the world Christian population. The academic emphasis on this reality has, however, been on historical and social scientific studies. The two volumes in the Eerdmans series *Majority World Theology* aim to fill the lacuna in theological studies.

The first of these works focuses on the person and the work of Jesus Christ – Christology from the majority world. This makes sense. As Andrew F. Walls describes in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, despite the great diversity found in the Christian religion across time and space, all Christians have held to a consistent theme of the ultimate significance placed on Jesus of Nazareth (1996: 6, 23). After an introductory chapter, *Jesus without Borders* is divided into two parts: Theological Engagements and Biblical Explorations. The first of the theological chapters is written by a Westerner – Kevin J. Vanhoozer – expositing the trajectory of Christology in the West. While agreeing in part with Walls’s claims, Vanhoozer challenges the former’s reluctance to speak about a necessary coherence of creedal or propositional Christology (29). Walls sees such activity as a necessary product of a particular Christian culture, whereas Vanhoozer asserts the importance of confessing Chalcedon as truth, albeit not the *whole* truth.

The book continues with Vanhoozer and the remaining contributors addressing the question of how particular global Christologies relate to Nicaea and Chalcedon. In Chapter 2,

Victor I. Ezigbo outlines three models of sub-Saharan Christology: Neo-missionary Christologies, Ancestor Christologies, and a Revealer Christology. Timoteo D. Gener focuses on the Christologies of Asia which underscore the triple realities of poverty, religions, and cultures, and Jules A. Martínez-Olivieri looks at Latin America liberation approaches offered by both Catholic and Protestant thinkers. Mindful of Vanhoozer's claims, Martínez-Olivieri notes, "The main limitation of creedal Christology is its tendency towards abstraction consequent upon its use of philosophical conceptuality – making the doctrine of Christ susceptible to historical indifference" (96). In other words, there must be a strong relationship between dogma and ethics. The second part of the book contains biblical explorations about Christ. Yohanna Katancho gives a Palestinian reading of the Gospel of John, Aída Besançon Spencer critiques Latino/a Marian veneration as a misplaced shift from the worship of God to the worship of the Mother of God (*Theotokos*), and Andrew M. Mbuvi looks at cultic aspects of Christianity as seen in 1 Peter and Africa. K. K. Yeo, one of the editors of this series, ends this second part and the book with Chapter 8, entitled "Biblical Christologies of the Global Church." Yeo's contribution combines his own constructive discussion of a Chinese Christology of *Renren* and a reflection on the earlier chapters. While Yeo's chapter has creative potential in the former, there is a bit of confusion due to the mixing in of the latter.

The second book under review, *The Trinity among the Nations*, is not subdivided in the same way as the first book, but focuses mainly on theological accounts of the Trinity. As K. K. Yeo points out in the introduction, most of the majority world contributions in the volume tend towards a social understanding of the Trinity (15). Again, a Westerner – Gerald Bray – begins with a review of the doctrine of God (theology proper) and Trinitarian nuances raised in Nicaea and Chalcedon, before providing a general overview of Trinitarian discussions in the contexts of both the West and the majority world. Randy S. Woodley's chapter brings a perspective built upon a North American Indigenous understanding of

Trinitarianism. While most scholars who write on Africa focus on sub-Saharan Africa, Samuel Waje Kunhiyop discusses the entire continent in his chapter. He explores views held by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (which traces its beliefs and practice to the fourth century), the challenges posed by Islam and African traditional religions, and the result of a Trinitarian theology on preaching, worship, and spirituality. Chapters 4 and 5 are contributions from the Latin American context, both informed and engaging the developments of liberation theology. Antonio González develops the view that “God is not primarily a thing, but an act; the pure act of love” (84), whereas C. Rosalee Velloso Ewell argues that the Trinity has a prophetic voice for justice and peace, as heard through the Christian community. Natee Tanchanpongs surveys the context-sensitive approaches of four Asian theologies – Raimundo Panikkar’s cosmotheandricism, Jung Young Lee’s yin-yang, Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya’s *saccidananda*, and Nozomu Miyahira’s betweenness-concord – before assessing how each does or does not move towards biblical authenticity, an essential characteristic of what he sees as key to an evangelical contextual theology. Atsuhiro Asano offers a discussion of the need to reclaim a maternal image of God from a Japanese perspective, whereas Zi Wang revisits the “term controversy” in China before offering a cross-cultural perspective of God based on Romans 1:16-17 and resources within Chinese traditional culture.

Both volumes began with Western voices reviewing the “traditional” development of the doctrine, which some may critique as unnecessary or perhaps overstepping the bounds of a book series on majority world theology. But as can be attested to in Tanchanpongs’s chapter and the repeated return to Nicaea and Chalcedon, these two volumes provide an analysis of majority world theology from within a broadly evangelical tradition and analytical parameters as these should be expected. Moreover, alongside majority world voices from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the editors should be applauded for bringing in often

overlooked perspectives (e.g., Palestinian, North African, and North American Indigenous).

This reviewer felt the division of *Jesus without Borders* into theological and biblical explorations is a bit awkward, and would have appreciated an independent postscript for both volumes to speak to the unity in the diversity of the global church. Overall, Eerdmans's new series *Majority World Theology* is a welcome contribution to the growing field of world Christianity and mission studies, and will undoubtedly become excellent textbooks for students of Christian theology – in the West and in the majority world – for years to come.

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