fascinating meditations on the socio-economic contexts of a modern reading of Jonah.

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Ted Lewis, ed. *Electing Not to Vote: Christian Reflections on Reasons for Not Voting.* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008.

This volume takes up an interesting and important question: Might Christians faithfully abstain from voting? This is a provocative question in a culture which assumes that voting is a civic responsibility, even (perhaps especially) for Christians. As the essays collected here demonstrate, it is a question that should be asked and discussed carefully in our faith communities.

The essays are uniform in their affirmation that it is possible, and sometimes desirable, for Christians to abstain from voting. The nine contributors make the case for abstention from voting in a variety of ways from a rich array of Christian perspectives.

Indeed, one of the book's most interesting features is the breadth of ecclesial perspectives represented. Authors come from Mennonite, Pentecostal, Catholic, Baptist, and intentional Christian community traditions, and they write from, and sometimes to, those communities. Central to the conversation is how our identity as Christians is shaped by our political participation and how we are to understand the dual nature of our citizenship.

The authors offer a wide range of critiques of voting. Some reflect personally on their experiences of voting and participating in electoral politics, and suggest that the process damages their Christian discipleship. For instance, Michael Degan rejects voting in part "because of who I become in order to win" (61). Others share a concern about how the polarized politics of American presidential elections have affected conversations in our churches. John D. Roth's well-known essay, which begins the collection, is the best example of this concern. Others offer critiques of the candidates we

have to choose from, the US Electoral College system, and the way electoral rules and processes affect outcomes.

Perhaps the most critical difference among the contributors is on whether or not voting should be the norm for Christians. Michael Degan, Tato Sumantri, Ted Lewis, Andy Alexis-Baker, and Nekeisha Alexis-Baker offer strong rejections of voting. For these authors, not voting is apparently the norm. In contrast, for John D. Roth, G. Scott Becker, and Todd Whitmore voting is assumed to be the norm, and not voting is a selective step that should be taken after careful deliberation.

Whitmore reflects on the two candidates in the 2004 US presidential election, ultimately arguing that both George W. Bush and John Kerry advocated policies that violated fundamental principles of Catholic teaching and, as a result, not voting was his obligation. But he argues that this obligation "does not spill over to another election" (79) and concludes by noting that he is "undecided about whether I will vote in the 2008 election, pending a hearing of the views of the candidates" (80). Many of the authors in this collection need no such hearing.

The essays are strongly uniform in advocating a form of political participation that goes beyond voting. In fact, most of them argue that voting is insufficient participation in civic life. Thus in their call for abstention from voting, the authors are not calling for a withdrawal or retreat from participation in the life of the *polis*. Instead, they call for a different kind of engagement, as Roth writes, not allowing "narrow definitions of 'political involvement' to set the terms" for how Christians care for society (8). Instead of the apathy and cynicism that leads most Americans not to vote, these authors call for what Lewis terms an "active refraining" that "leads to proactive engagement" (114).

The volume is intentionally limited to presidential elections in the United States. It falls to others to work out what faithful political participation looks like in other countries and contexts. It also falls to others to articulate the possibilities of electoral participation at more local levels (though Degan explicitly rejects voting at other levels as well). The essays are well written and not overly technical. The volume is suitable for churches and lay audiences where it should be read and carefully considered; it is an

important entry into a difficult but critically important conversation about faithful political engagement.

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How Do Stories Save Us? An Essay on the Question with the Theological Hermeneutics of David Tracy in View. Scott Holland. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

In this erudite, dense, and artful text, Bethany Theological Seminary professor Scott Holland takes the reader – as the back cover says – "on an intellectual adventure through narrative theology, literary criticism, poetics, ritual studies and aesthetics in the composition of a theology of culture."

Throughout the text, the work of revisionist theologian David Tracy is "in view." Tracy, a Catholic priest and active professor emeritus at the University of Chicago Divinity School, is the author of well-known texts including *The Analogical Imagination* and *On Naming the Present*. Holland's book concludes with a 10-page bibliography of Tracy's writings plus a more general bibliography, including 18 books and essays by Paul Ricoeur and 8 articles by Holland.

Holland works particularly with what he refers to as two emerging self-corrective foci in Tracy's public theology (i.e., theology that is "always involved in complex and interesting relationships with diverse historical and social realities"): "a hermeneutics in which the 'other' not the 'self' is the dominant focus; and a theological insistence that only a mystical-prophetic model of theology can save us" (35-36).

In terms of narrative theology, Holland casts his lot with Tracy and others representing the University of Chicago narrative school rather than with those representing what might be called the Yale school (e.g., George Lindbeck, Hans Frei). The latter, says Holland, see the church as the sole reference of theology (58). In that schema, the world "becomes an *object* of theological description and prophetic critique, rarely a rich and mystical *source* for imaginative and revisionary theological thought and writing"