the similarities, differences, and potential linkages between them and the authors' ideas would strengthen the book's collaborative message.

Second, the inconsistent use of the word "religious" in the text diminishes the overall message of inclusiveness. The word is employed broadly at times to encompass the range of religions, while at other times it is used as a synonym for "Christian." I expect that readers who do not identify themselves as Christian would find this presumption offensive and exclusionary, potentially limiting the book's broad appeal as a result.

Finally, given that the primary and intended audience is Christians in the field of mental health, it is quite appropriate that most of the examples offered involve Christian therapists. What is less clear is why the vast majority of these examples include clients who are also Christians, albeit of different cultural backgrounds. It would have been instructive and in keeping with the book's central thesis to better illustrate what a peaceable psychology looks like for a Christian therapist working with clients of other religious traditions.

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Donald Heinz. *Christmas: Festival of Incarnation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.

Do we really need another book about Christmas? With this new volume Donald Heinz has carefully carved up a unique literary dish for those who care about Christmas. It is not a sentimental picture book, a call to recover the "real meaning" of Christmas, or a rant against commercialization, but a well-researched social history of the Christmas festival. Heinz's primary argument is that the evolution of Christmas as a religious festival "displays the risky course of Incarnation in the world" (124). Incarnation is God becoming human. Christmas, the festival of Incarnation, is divine mystery "incarnated" in material culture.

Heinz likens the two-thousand-year history of Christmas to an

unfolding theatrical production in three acts. Act 1 concerns the sacred texts that describe the incarnation of God into human flesh. The author exegetes the biblical narratives of Matthew and Luke but spends most of the book on the remaining two acts.

Act 2 describes the church as the continuing extension of the incarnation on earth and the primary festal house of Christmas. Christmas as a Christian holy day was declared in 354 C.E. as Christian worship became public. Heinz sees it as only natural that the pagan festivities surrounding the winter solstice and Sun worship would become a worship of the Son.

Is Christmas then the triumph of religion in the world or its ultimate degradation? Heinz's answer seems to be that it's simply part of the risk of incarnation. Christmas, as the incarnation, blends the secular and sacred, spiritual and material, divine and human, and therefore will inevitably also attract "detour and diversion" (66). The dual theme of incarnation runs throughout the book but is perhaps articulated most clearly, and sometimes controversially, in the chapter on theology. "The incarnation implies a dangerous freedom with regard to all human cultures," says the author. "God appears open to every human form. Being a first-century Jewish male, for example, is not definitive. Even faith itself, the heart's grasp of God, comes clothed in culture and does not float above history" (89).

In Act 3 Christmas is incarnated into the homes, streets, and shopping centers of the world. Although Heinz writes as a Protestant, he wonders whether Protestant suspicion of material culture has resulted in the acceptance of a secular, and hence not seen as idolatrous, material celebration. He regrets that "snowmen, reindeer and mountains of gifts pile up where religious ritual and image have been banned" (111). Nearly all cultural artifacts have been embraced by the Christmas festival: gifts, lights, trees, decorations, literature, feasting and drinking, saints, visual art, and music. Heinz sees this not as "syncretism" but as the "remarkable ability of the Incarnation to acculturate itself to every imaginable setting, as in the poet Hopkins' notion that Christ plays in a thousand faces" (156).

Although the author admits that there is a "highly permeable membrane" between Christmas as a holy day and Christmas as a holiday, he argues that the "generous material culture of Christianity is not a fall from a spiritual golden age, but a fuller realization of the religious core

of Christmas" (221). Today, Christmas finds itself positioned between the two competing worldviews of Christianity and consumer capitalism. Heinz believes that liturgy with visual art and music may be the key to keeping alive the meaning of incarnation during the festival.

Christmas was only declared as a "holy day" in the fourth century as part of the shift toward Christianity becoming the official religion of the empire. Records of church activities before this are scant because of the church's minority persecuted status, but the question remains: Did the early church celebrate any other events in the life of Christ besides the Lord's Supper? Heinz does not touch on this question but jumps from the birth narratives right into the fourth century. Christians in a radical tradition will be wary of uncritically embracing any aspects of Empire, including Christmas.

Despite this missing link, *Christmas: Festival of Incarnation* is a refreshing read that cuts a fine path between recent universalizing sentimentalities in the popular media and somber jeremiads against consumer capitalism. Considering the incarnational theme of the book, it is ironic that it is not written in a more popular, accessible vernacular. However, pastors and teachers will appreciate this volume as they do the work of translation for congregations and students.

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