

anxious “other” to liberalism.

This volume is somewhat ironic, then, in that while Hauerwas’s discussion of eschatology reflects a radical theological imagination, seen most clearly in “Bearing Reality” (ch. 6) and “Doing Nothing Gallantly” (ch. 12), the payoff of such insights feels postured—as solutions to problems from the same old enemies. This reduces the impact of the author’s compelling claim that “there is indeed something the church cannot do. The church cannot make the difficulty of reality less difficult” (157).

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Sian and Stuart Murray Williams. *The Power of All: Building a Multivoiced Church*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2012.

In *The Power of All*, Sian and Stuart Murray Williams collaboratively draw from their own experiences in ministry as well as biblical and historical material to make the case that practices associated with a “multivoiced” church will bring about the renewal and transformation necessary for enabling the church to engage its calling more effectively. Throughout the book, multivoiced practices are contrasted with practices where church members are “passive consumers instead of active participants” and leadership is exercised primarily by clergy through one-way communication (21). The multivoiced church aims to equip every member for witness and to strengthen the church by encouraging mature discipleship, reducing biblical and theological illiteracy, and sparing clergy from burn-out through shared responsibility.

Chapters on biblical foundations and historical trajectories argue that the multivoiced model is effective for churches wanting to survive and foster faithfulness in a non-Christian dominant culture. Early church communities described in the New Testament are important examples of such multivoiced communities, and the Corinthian correspondence is particularly significant. The authors note that studies of the two letters to Corinth tend to focus on restriction rather than on Paul’s “wholehearted endorsement of multivoiced

church and . . . detailed advice about how this can become more effective” (36).

Church history provides further insights. In addition to Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, the authors discuss the 4th-century Apostolic Constitutions, which show Christian communities in transition towards monovoiced practices. They also discuss several church protest or renewal movements, many of which, including the Montanists, Waldensians, and Anabaptists, were condemned or persecuted in their time. Multivoiced church movements in the recent past and present can learn much these movements, such as the involvement of men and women in leadership, a focus on spontaneity and the Spirit’s prompting, balancing personal and communal responsibility and discernment, and the challenge of maintaining multivoiced practices as movements mature over time.

The authors discuss multivoiced practices in the arenas of worship, education, community, and discernment. Multivoiced worship invites the Spirit to move through any member of the church in diverse ways through collaborative planning, dialogue, shared leadership, a dialectic of planned and spontaneous participation, and engaging diverse learning styles. Multivoiced learning is oriented towards participants rather than information, favors dialogue over monologue, and fosters ongoing engagement over firm conclusions. Multivoiced community is characterized by settings where members engage directly with each other, offering counsel, resources, and care through sharing their lives together. Multivoiced discernment involves the whole community, including those who often find themselves on the margins such as children, older persons, new members, artists, and others.

In chapters addressing specific areas of church life, the authors address common challenges to the multivoiced church, such as unbalanced participation, predictability and routine replacing fresh initiatives, lack of adequate preparation, and little focus on the world beyond the congregation. They note that experiences of multivoiced discernment can frequently be “debilitating” (145). They address practical concerns, such as the need to re-arrange worship spaces, to equip leaders to find ways to engage with technology in ways that invite participation, and to encourage preachers to move away from monologue-style preaching. They also offer suggestions, such as reconnecting decision making with worship and other vital aspects

of congregational life, and teaching members how to engage with a group discernment process, possibly employing techniques such as “Samoan Circles,” role-reversal presentations, and “clearness” processes (148-49).

Overall, Sian and Stuart Murray Williams accomplish their aim by presenting a compelling argument for congregations to embrace practices associated with the multivoiced church. However, *The Power of All* could be improved by offering a less polarizing, more sympathetic view of what the authors call the “monovoiced” church in order to entice readers from such a tradition. Their critique of traditional monologue-style preaching would have been enhanced by engaging with or citing recent literature from the field of homiletics that could augment their suggestions. (Examples include Lucy Rose, *Sharing the Word* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997], and John McClure’s *Roundtable Pulpit* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1995] and *Otherwise Preaching* [St. Louis: Chalice, 2001].)

This book would be useful for multivoiced congregations seeking to strengthen practices, for study by small groups, Sunday school classes, or leaders at traditional congregations, and for seminary students in worship and leadership classes.

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Willard M. Swartley. *Health, Healing and the Church’s Mission: Biblical Perspectives and Moral Priorities*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.

This is a book about the need for health care reform in the United States and how Christians and Christian churches might contribute to that reform. It is therefore a call to US Christians to remember who they are as heirs of Jesus Christ and the church that developed over the centuries from the first century till now. In the process of sketching out this picture, Willard Swartley holds the healing disciplines and practices that characterized the ministry of Jesus and the early church together with the care of the sick, the dying, and the dead that developed in subsequent centuries. He regards these two elements—healing and health care—as the Christian tradition that