

understanding of women in the first-century context. One weakness in this chapter is that Schwarz spends almost no time on homosexuality. Given the ongoing interest in the topic, it would have been helpful to see him wrestle a bit more with this contemporary societal issue.

He also takes time to consider human work. Relying largely on Luther's conception of 'station' Schwarz affirms the importance of human work whatever that work might be insofar as it serves the common good. As Schwarz notes, rethinking work in outward-focused terms is a much needed corrective to Western society's impulse towards conceiving meaningful work as that which serves oneself and one's financial gain.

Overall, this is an excellent contemporary treatment of theological anthropology which advances scholarly discussion, weaving together scientific discoveries and the historic Christian faith.

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Leslie Dorrough Smith, *Righteous Rhetoric: Sex, Speech, and the Politics of Concerned Women for America* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2014), pp. 256. £22.99.

In *Righteous Rhetoric* Leslie D. Smith investigates the rhetoric of Concerned Women for America (CWA), a Christian Right policy organisation in the United States which is also the country's largest conservative evangelical women's group. Smith examines a style of political speech favoured by CWA, which she calls 'chaos rhetoric', emotionally laden speech which persuades people through a depiction of a threat to their values and lifestyles, and positions CWA as the wise, trustworthy organisation which can help them defend themselves.

Chaos rhetoric is not unique to CWA. Smith argues and provides evidence that chaos rhetoric is also practised by other Christian Right groups, as well as by progressives, including scholars who study the Christian Right. The ubiquity of chaos rhetoric makes this study important for readers who seek to know more about how language can be used for political purposes, and how those with rhetorical skills position and reposition themselves on the political landscape. This study is also useful for anyone who wishes to consume political and religious news more critically.

Smith closely analyses articles about sex, gender and reproductive issues published on the CWA website since 2000. She grounds her study in Durkheim's understanding of the construction of collective sentiment;

Foucault's understandings of discourse, power and knowledge; and Butler's theories about power and identity formation. One of Smith's gifts is her ability to make the complex ideas of these scholars comprehensible.

American leaders have often contested issues of sex and gender. Smith begins her analysis with a brief historical overview of these rhetorical contests and their importance in American discourse, and this is the weakest part of the book. While adequately discussing the twentieth century, Smith gives short attention to earlier periods, when many of the ideas that she discusses took shape. A fuller discussion of the social and intellectual history of gender discourse in the US would strengthen this study.

Smith explains that chaos rhetoric 'creates its own moral panic' (p. 68). With cogent examples from CWA articles, she demonstrates that chaos rhetoric uses techniques of categorisation and myth-making to define reality in ways which intentionally evoke a sense of threat for readers. Chaos rhetoricians construct urgency by demanding that readers take sides, employing defensive arguments and deflecting rationale, and inciting readers to action.

Smith delves deeply into the processes of defensive argumentation and rationale deflection in her chapter about CWA's ironic ability to ridicule and marginalise radical feminists while simultaneously claiming feminist credibility for themselves. CWA leaders accomplish this largely by painting their opponents as elitists who are ideologically on the fringe and themselves as mainstream representatives of true American womanhood. The strategic use of labelling, scientific and other secular studies which support their positions, educational credentials and selective renditions of history bolster their efforts to claim moral high ground.

The intellectual and moral framework for CWA's work is constructed on six interrelated issues: family, the sanctity of human life, education, pornography, religious liberty and national sovereignty. CWA leaders engage these issues synergistically. Smith identifies and explores their deft employment of emotionally charged symbols: innocent and vulnerable children, their vulnerable yet strong mothers, a vulnerable yet strong nation, and – unless their readers resist – a government which is poised to exploit and inappropriately control its vulnerable population. CWA writers artfully evoke in readers empathy for the vulnerable and antipathy for the government that might violate the rights of vulnerable citizens.

Righteous Rhetoric is a well-written, cogent and interesting analysis of chaos rhetoric: what it is and how it works. In it Leslie Smith makes two contributions. Not only does she help readers better understand this frequently used rhetorical strategy. She also makes an important corrective to scholarship about the Christian Right, which tends to depict this wing

of American religion as monolithic and absolute in its theological positions. Smith ardently disagrees with that assessment, and argues instead that CWA, at least, is not at all absolute in the stands it takes. She demonstrates that its political efficacy relies on its ability to shift political position with the use of rhetorical tactics, and 'become almost anything it needs to be' to exert and maintain its power (p. 190).

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Oliver Davies, *Theology of Transformation: Faith, Freedom, and the Christian Act* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 288. £65.00.

This is an ambitious book. It proposes a major reorientation of theology, both methodologically and substantively. The methodological shift is to centre theology in the meaning of Christian life, specifically the Christian act (as distinct from the meaning of texts and doctrinal systems abstracted from that life). Oliver Davies sees this to be a natural counterpart to the way the new scientific view of the human now points to the centrality of embodied act in human life generally (as distinct from the centrality of thought, which had dominated in modernity). The substantive shift is to rehabilitate the doctrine of the exalted Christ as the key site for theological enquiry. The guiding question for theology now becomes 'where is the exalted Christ at work in the life of the world' (as distinct from his existence in a heaven beyond). This too finds its natural counterpart in new science, specifically modern cosmology which has no place for a heaven 'outside' the world.

The theological anthropology underlying this is crucial. With a central focus on integrated, embodied, human life and activity, theologically understood as the act of Christ's body in the world, Davies is able to claim an earthed and engaged basis for all his theological enquiry. As such, actual transformation within the world becomes an essential part of its hermeneutic. That is to say, the exalted Christ is revealed precisely in transforming human praxis and specifically in Christian praxis, not primarily in texts or ideas. Davies then trawls major doctrinal themes in the light of this reorientation. Trinity, Spirit, the church, sacrifice, human freedom, are all reviewed through the lens of this non-dualistic metaphysic and transformational hermeneutic.

Davies deploys an impressively wide range of scholarship and erudition in this enterprise, as well as fertile creativity. Thus the congruence with contemporary science, especially neuroscience, is supported by reference to