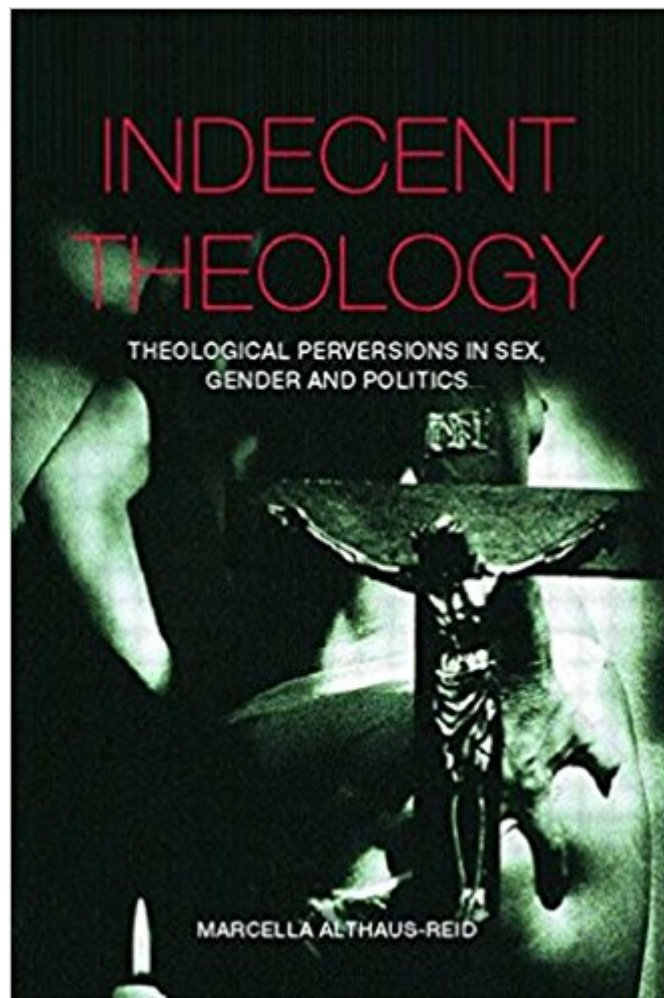


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Indecent Theology



Synopsis

Indecent Theology brings liberation theology up to date by introducing the radical critical approaches of gender, postcolonial, and queer theory. Grounded in actual examples from Latin America, Marcella Althaus-Reid's highly provocative, but immaculately researched book reworks three distinct areas of theology - sexual, political and systematic. It exposes the connections between theology, sexuality and politics, whilst initiating a dramatic sexual rereading of systematic theology. Groundbreaking, intriguing and scholarly, Indecent Theology broadens the debate on sexuality and theology as never before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'This is imaginative theology at its best - theoretically challenging, politically inspired and physically embodied ... it beautifully disturbs and sets a new agenda for a 'Queer' theology ... to embrace the world of unknown and unexplored theological desires.' - Jeremy Carrette, University of Stirling, Literature and Theology

Marcella Althaus-Reid is a lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. She is a Latin American theologian who trained during the years of political conflict in the southern cone of South America.

Splendid. Nice doing business with you...Thanks

This book is not for the faint of heart. Althaus-Reid takes the reader to a theological place that few have been or been willing to go. She argues that all theology is sexual; it is just a matter if the theologian/thinker is willing to "out" or make clear the sexual nature of her or his theology -- that is to speak clearly about what underlies one's assumptions and theology -- or if, as so many Heteronormative Systematic Theologians have done, if the sexual in the theology will be cloaked in so-called decency. I found this book to integrate Latin American liberation theology, feminist theology, queer theology, and other theologies of the poor and oppressed in a way that rightfully makes clear that oppressions cannot be compartmentalized, but rather they are all part of one system. That is, none of us can be free, until we are all free. We cannot subordinate a queer theology of liberation to the preferential option for the economically poor in the name of strategy, or, as has been done so clearly in so much (heterosexual male) Latin American Liberation theology, we cannot set aside the concerns of poor women while we work on the "main" problem of "general" (read: male) poverty. Althaus-Reid weaves together critique and theological conjecturing in this exciting book, where "exciting" goes far past the sort of excitement we are accustomed to in theological writing. This book is readable and creative, and has amazing potential to challenge theological thinking in the church, academy, and "on the ground". My only slight concern or minor reservation about the book is that it is so sexualized and radical that it could be rendered inaccessible to those who are not yet ready to read a book that discusses f***ing God (doesn't let you write the actual word!) or a transvestite Jesus. Although this book is not the place to do it, I would wonder how such a potentially liberating and freeing theology could be made accessible to those who are not yet far along enough or at the place where they can make sense of or truly hear a theology that is so sexualized and so counter to what so many have been taught to believe is proper and decent. Overall, a great book for all Latin American, Queer, liberation, feminist, etc. theologians and students/scholars of religion, as well as folks who have always felt that something more lurks in the stories and images that the Church gives us. This book helps the reader/thinker/theologian to think about that something more that is lurking, quiet and unsaid, covered up or silenced by the regimes of decency.

After classes in Queer Theory and Queer Leadership and Sexual Ethics and living out and bold as an African American Transgendered woman I found myself thoroughly immersed in Marcella Althaus-Reid's book, *Indecent Theology, Theological pervasion in sex, gender and politics*. As I grappled with the reading I was reminded of the lectures of my professor and the joy that he exudes in his presentation. Like my professor, Marcella's book called me to a provocative joy of learning

and the opportunity to delve deep into the once indecent and sacred act of theology. On the first page is written the following: by examining the dialectics of decency and indecency and exploring a theology of stories from the margins this book brings together for the first time Liberation Theology, Queer Theory, Post Marxism and Post-Colonial in an explosive mixture. Although the book is dense and somewhat cumbersome she nevertheless engages, blends and mixes the theologies and theories of the margins; it is a theological work of an imagination that is intense, sexual and tasty, a meal that feeds the soul. Marcella begins by addressing the collapse of the Grand Narrative of Latin America and the sexual mutilation that occurred and the yearning to throw off colonialism. As an illustration she uses the imagery of women who sell lemons without any undergarments which represent the throwing off of the colonial oppressor and their system of economic injustice and rediscovering and embracing the historical, authentic Grand Narrative of the indigenous people. She then queers and liberates the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ and God from any thought of traditional colonial interpretations and iconic symbology, reframing them in the context of Post Colonial positions of sex thus revealing a hermeneutics of the absurd as it relates to the colonial theological regime. The book is a thought provoking critique of Colonialism and the engagement of the Latin American cultures such as the Mayan and the Spanish conquest creatively using sexual imagery. Her utilization of sexual imagery asks the question of sex before the Spanish conquest and the beloved Church and the unwanted, abusive marriage that ensued. Throughout the book Marcella engages issues of economics, anthropology, religion and sexual desire which make the book that more interesting and intriguing. But by the time I had gotten to the end of the book I was exhausted with theology as indecent from a theological viewpoint. So while I did enjoy the book I feel that she could have made her point without an over abundance of sexual imagery. The reading was somewhat dense, cumbersome and not as fluid as other books I have read such as Judith Butler's Gender Trouble (Routledge, 1990), provocative and engaging yet cumbersome. I find Indecent Theology, Theological pervasion in sex, gender and politics to be an engaging, high calorie meal of reading that left me full but also left me wanting more.

The book is fresh and interesting, the author following a Liberation Theology perspective, try to go beyond the traditional Liberation Theology and Feminist Theology to introduce us into the proposed dimension of an Indecent Theology. The author use a lot the queer theory as an hermenetic key to understand the Bible stories. I feel that the book open the doors to a more deep understanding of the queer spirituality, but at the same time, she has a negative vision of heterosexuality, blaming it for the chaos and oppression of the "decent oppressive system." As heterosexual I feel that I can not be

included into this "inclusive indecent heology", just for my sexual orientation. The author said that all theology is a sexual act, I agree with her, because "indecent theology" is the result of the sexual experience of the queer people and the spiritual and sexual journey of the author, but the heterosexual folk has their own journey and sexual stories too and I do not think that all of them are bad or oppressive. The argument that every body need to go out of the closet, it is ok for me, but, to go out for an heterosexual person will means just to live his or her sexuality in love and freedom, the author try to tell us that heterosexuals do not have this possibility, for the idea that heterosexuality is necessary linked with the oppressive decent system. I disagree, decency is a social concept, heterosexuality is an orientation. I recomend the book, it is good to see that the Teologia Latinoamericana stills exploring new frontiers. Pr. Jose Luis

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