

Chapter 1

Surveying the Landscape of Doctrinal Imagining

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Imagining in theological and political/cultural context

“Christian doctrines” and “global gender justice” rarely appear together in the same sentence. The inception of authorized Christian doctrine was hotly contested in the early centuries of Christianity, while the Reformation saw both Protestant reformulation as Lutheran and Calvinist doctrines and an elevation of scripture over and above doctrine as a source of theology. With radical feminist, womanist, and postcolonial critique, received doctrinal traditions have been subject to a healthy hermeneutic of suspicion: the power relations inherent in the imposition of doctrines by authorized ecclesial authorities have come under scrutiny. As will become clear, the project taken forward in this volume is premised on the conviction that Christian doctrines and global gender justice can indeed appear in the same sentence; in stronger terms, Christian doctrines will necessarily be misunderstood if this connection is broken.

With regard to global gender justice, we write in troubling times. In Syria and Iraq, the hope so recently expressed in the upbeat metaphor of an Arab Spring is currently overshadowed by a grim reality of brutal violence towards civilians, targeting children and women as much as male fighters, while the longstanding Palestinian-Israeli conflict is concurrently inflamed. In Nigeria, young women have been abducted from their place of education to a form of sexual slavery. In these places beset by violence, it is awful to contemplate the day to day realities in the lives of children and women, as well as male civilians. In the regimes envisioned by those who fight, the prescribed subordinate position allocated to women is grim.

The social and economic destabilization caused by global climate disruption bears most heavily on the poorest peoples of the world, and particularly on the poorest women—those who benefit least from the economic and technological practices that accelerate this disruption. In Asia, human trafficking of young poverty-stricken girls is increasing, particularly in south-east Asia. Many young girls are sold by family members to traffickers who then take them to other countries to be sold into brothels, prostitution rings, the garment industry or as domestic workers. The demand for young girls is created by structural issues of globalization, colonization, neo-colonialism and militarization.¹ The family members' pressure to sell their girls is in response to increasing poverty as they are driven away from their lands and so lack a source of income due to these global economic and structural forces. Many of these young girls will never make enough money either to send back to their families or to return home. This is a contravention of human rights and an inhumane act of violence committed against young girls; the numbers are on the rise. Trafficking is a form of modern day slavery.

In the UK, recent revelations in Rotherham, South Yorkshire about systematic grooming of young white girls for sexual abuse—affecting an estimated 1,400 young women over a period of 16 years, with the complicity of police and social services²—show that the privileges of whiteness are inflected by class and gender. It has subsequently become clear that this is but one instance of a long-standing wider culture of institutional cover-up of child abuse, particularly of the most vulnerable children.³ In the Rotherham case, the men who perpetrated the abuse were of Asian heritage, while the vulnerable young white British women they targeted were not from privileged social backgrounds. In this case the ethnic background of the perpetrators was an additional factor in the reluctance of the authorities to investigate, due to a fear of inflaming community relations: though the majority of girls affected were below the age of sexual consent, they were deemed to have “chosen” their

abusers as partners. These women struggle with the legacy of their prolonged experiences of abuse, exacerbated by the effective sanctioning of systematic exploitation by the statutory authorities.

In Ukraine, violent destabilization of a new nation state poised between Russia and Western Europe raises the spectre of a renewed Cold War between East and West, focused on Eastern Europe. In the US, recent unrest in the city of Ferguson following the shooting of an unarmed black teenager by a white policeman highlights the increasing militarization of the police force; the incident makes clear that the aims of the Civil Rights movement are far from being fully realized.

Added to these political destabilizations is the self-inflicted economic collapse of 2008 beginning in the US, with the consequent austerity policies in western nations and their wider reverberations; the comfortable stability enjoyed by the privileged in the postcolonial and post World War II world now appears to be under serious threat, except for the super-rich minority. For the poor of the world, unreported in the daily news media, routine austerity, insecurity, and violence continue to mark the pattern of daily life.

For those Latina/*mujerista*, *evangélica*, womanist, Asian American, white feminist, and other constructive women theologians who add their prayers for the world to the intercessions of their faith communities week by week, seeking to discern ways of just response, these global issues press on our creative imaginings as we grapple with our own received doctrines. Shaped by our past traditions as we in turn imagine their current and future form, we glimpse a Christian gospel of love and justice that has always been among “us”—the current gatherings of Christians throughout the history of our faith—even while western Christendom and other iterations of Christian faith have as often exacerbated the violence and injustice of the world. This band of constructive theologians keeps company with those who have caught a love of justice throughout Christian history then use it as the

key for understanding their faith. White feminist theology is both enriched and diminished by dialogue with theologies of women of color;⁴ constructive theologies including the imaginings of Latina/*mujerista*, *evangélica*, womanist, and Asian American women deserve attention from all theologians, men as well as women.

From reimagining with doctrines as “subfield” to inward and outward movements in feminist theology

The essays collected in this book comprise a sister volume to *Reimagining with Christian Doctrines*.⁵ The rationale for this second collection is that there is scope for extending the doctrines engaged in *Reimagining*—though like theology itself, such a project can never be fully realized, rather there is always room for new imaginings. For readers who encounter this volume before reading *Reimaginings*, it will be useful to reiterate a substantial point discussed in the introduction to this earlier volume. Our project began with Serene Jones’s reference to a “subfield” of feminist theology which engages with received doctrines.⁶ These sister volumes develop this subfield.

This way of describing feminist⁷ engagement with doctrine ensures that the broad field of feminist theology is respected. The core concern of feminist theology is the struggle for gender justice in the colonizing and heteropatriarchal Christian traditions of Church and theology.⁸ Feminist theologians in the current century concentrate on constructive work, as critique is already well articulated.⁹ While work in Jones’s “subfield” reconstructs by engaging received doctrines, in the broad field of feminist theology there is a strong impetus for creative reconstructions that are unbound by received doctrine.¹⁰

Once this point is made—that the subfield does not restrict the scope of the field—in light of essays in these sister volumes, it will be helpful to name in different terms the relation of this venture with the broad field of constructive feminist theology. Instead of “field” and

“subfield”, we can speak of outward and inward directions of feminist theology: on the one hand, an outward constructive impetus away from the core of regulatory orthodox doctrine in favour of its own unimpeded creative constructions; on the other, an inward trajectory in response to the “pull” exerted by doctrine, through insisting on the orthodoxy of creative imagining with doctrine. The heart-beat of feminist theology is this double outward and inward impetus in relation to received doctrinal traditions.

Contemporary resonance of the inward movement of feminist imagining with doctrine

Reviewing white feminist theology and other constructive theologies of women, such as *Latina/mujerista*, *evangélica*, womanist, and Asian American theologians in 2015, it is pertinent to bring into view the changed landscape of Christian affiliation within contemporary world Christianity, in contrast to the global context in which both “second wave” and early postcolonial feminist theology arose.¹¹ Formative Christian influence had shaped those women who cared enough about Christianity to voice twentieth-century feminist critique of Church and theology, with a view to imagining feminist-compatible, and postcolonial versions of Christianity. By our contemporary moment in the twenty-first century, “detraditionalization”¹² in the west, and postcolonial critique in and from the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America is shrinking the orbit of formative Christian influence within long-established western Christian denominations, in all their diverse global forms. Thus, for different reasons in differing global contexts, the churches that have grappled with reconstructing their gender relations in response to feminist and other women’s critique are simultaneously losing their social influence. As post-Christian feminist theologian¹³ Carol Christ has commented, this decline in liberal forms of Christianity means “the home for feminist reimagining is being emptied”.¹⁴

The important point here is that while there was a sizeable constituency of women of Christian subjectivity who shaped the creative outward impetus of twentieth century feminist theology, there are two constituencies among contemporary Christian women who might find more pertinent the inward impetus represented in this book and its sister volume. The first is the remnant of women and “women-oriented men”¹⁵ within the long-established denominations, who are either ordained to ministry, or receptive to the ministry of women. A refreshed inward movement will be a valuable resource to Christian congregations that are renewing their received denominational traditions, whether in the western world or through indigenous leadership in the postcolonial churches. Critique of the colonial Christ opens a way to postcolonial imaginings with doctrine that are able to connect with these long-established traditions of converting Christianity from its colonizing and heteropatriarchal forms.

Ordained ministers in Protestant denominations, and women involved in lay leadership are well represented among the authors who contribute to these volumes: as women are increasingly welcomed into diverse leadership and partnership roles within the churches, the time is ripe for renewal of the inward impetus of feminist theology. Protestant denominational affiliations of contributors to this book are themselves testament to developments within reformed traditions of European heritage. Thus Loida Martell-Otero is ordained within the American Baptist Churches, USA, while co-editor Grace Ji-Sun Kim is an ordained minister within the Presbyterian Church, USA.¹⁶ Linda Thomas is ordained within the United Methodist Church. There is also a strong strand of white Lutheran theological imagining in this collection. As minister within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, who currently holds a post in the Norwegian Lutheran Church, Sigridur Gudmarsdottir writes from the national church of Iceland—though in a context of growing ecumenical and interreligious diversity. Amy Carr is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church of America (ELCA), formed by amalgamation of three major Lutheran denominations in the late 1980s. Hilda Koster is a member of the Protestantse Kerk Nederland, which unites the reformed churches: the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church of The Netherlands. Working in the US, she is currently a member of the ELCA. Jenny Daggars is a lay member of the established (Anglican) Church of England, which has a parallel historical place in English national life.

These are exciting times for Christian theology, as the balance tips away from the white Christian heritage of European Christendom towards the growing churches of the postcolonial world. While the western denominational traditions that derive from European Christendom—including the Catholic Church—face detraditionalization, diasporic Christian churches in western cities grow in size, in the US alongside existing African American churches—after all, as James Cone once put it, Asian Americans alongside Latino/a Americans, and Native Americans are Third World peoples living in the First World.¹⁷ At the same time, Christianity continues to expand in the continents of Africa and Asia—largely through indigenous mission—and the worldwide spread of independent evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity grows apace.¹⁸

Within this dynamic diversity, “old” traditions are renewed, and “new” traditions are created where—all too often—already-critiqued forms of gender and colonial relations are reinscribed. The legacy of the colonizing theology of old traditions casts a long shadow. Colonizing theology may be perpetuated in renewal of the “old”; it is also reinscribed in creation of the “new”, long after the colonizers have left, whenever colonizing behaviours derived from western missionaries during the colonial era are perpetuated.

As a consequence, new ways of imagining with Christian doctrines are crucial for the well-being of women within emergent forms of the twenty-first century global Church. So the second potential constituency for an inward movement of feminist theology comes into view:

women within the growing forms of independent and Pentecostal Christianity across the globe, and “women-oriented men” who also seek to re-form gender relations. While male leaders may seek to inoculate their congregations against feminist critique and vision, questions of gender relations will arise intrinsically, so that feminist imaginings are likely to find a resonance.

In sum, at this stage in the development of world Christianity, a renewed inward impetus may be more in tune with our times than the confident creative constructions of twentieth-century women theologians whose Christian—and post-Christian—subjectivity was forged *before* the impact of feminist and postcolonial critique on Christian forms of life. (As already made clear, contemporary outward-facing feminist constructions are valuable in their own right, but their creativity is also vital for this inward movement). In church traditions old and new, Christian theology grapples with the meaning and implications for humanity of the triune God incarnate in Jesus Christ, as witnessed by the biblical text and in the diversity of theological traditions.

The renewal of doctrinal theology through “feminist” and postcolonial imaginings

Theology takes a Latina/*mujerista*, *evangélica*, womanist, Asian American or feminist turn when the depth of misogyny embedded in received traditions and texts is fully recognized, not only as gender injustice but also as a kind of false consciousness that obscures the gospel itself. Theology takes a postcolonial—or anti-colonial—turn when colonizing logic embedded in received traditions and texts is similarly recognized not only as colonial injustice but also as a form of enduring false consciousness that obscures the gospel. And of course, some work is both feminist *and* postcolonial. Feminist imaginings are therefore necessarily *reimaginings*, in that they correct the distortions of heteropatriarchal and colonizing received traditions. But to claim them as “imaginings” is to claim a substantial

authority for these theological insights in their own right: they do more than correct errors, as they do what theology has always done, namely bring the best of human ingenuity to grapple with the raw material of Christianity in theologians' particular settings. If heteropatriarchal misogyny and the colonial mentality are forms of myopia, then feminist and postcolonial consciousness brings a fresh and penetrating vision, capable of unlocking a potential that has been previously obstructed and obscured by heteropatriarchal and colonial power relations.

In broader postcolonial perspective, the mark of European Reformation debates on the primacy of Scripture versus tradition is evident in the received traditions of the postcolonial mission churches. Thus the Vietnamese-American theologian, Peter Phan, from his Catholic perspective appropriates patristic doctrine as an *Asian* creation, and thus as a fit foundation for contemporary Asian theologies.¹⁹ His strategy keeps an open way between white Catholic imaginings with doctrine and constructive work emerging from post-colonized contexts. Even where newly formed Christian churches are Scripture-based, the doctrinal formulations that interpret scriptural references may be brought to bear; the theological history of European Reformation/modernity/postmodernity, and American liberalism/fundamentalism/Pentecostalism exerts its continuing influence.

Regarding doctrinal traditions, old and new, while the theological traditions of European Christendom, modernity, and postmodernity remain dominant in prestigious western theological institutions, newer traditions work with their own versions of the raw material of doctrine, as well as with the biblical text.²⁰ Postcolonial critique of received Eurocentric traditions—introduced via the western missionary movement—opens the way for new constructive inculturations of Christianity that counter the enduring colonized legacy.

Introducing the chapters of this book as intercultural theology for the churches

As befits a volume on Christian doctrines, chapters are arranged in a systematic sequence, beginning with the doctrine of God in chapter 2, and ending in chapter 10 with theological anthropology. Chapters 3 and 4 both grapple with ecological issues in relation to a theology of the cross and redemption, respectively. Chapters 5 to 7 imagine with the Holy Spirit, eschatological Hope, and Mary. Chapters 8 and 9 consider the *Imago Dei* and free will. However, the broader currents discussed in this introduction flow through its pages, and we hope that readers will place chapters written from their very different contexts in dialogue with one another and with the reader's own context and theology.

African American black theology may be situated as a form of postcolonial critique.²¹ The black theology and churches of the US have their own long traditions, rooted in slavery, where imposed Protestant Christianity was infused with African spiritual forms to create a form of resistance to white slave-owner religion. African Americas were also co-creators of American Pentecostalism and have developed this tradition.

In this collection, the womanist essay by Linda Thomas is a powerful statement, honoring the theological creativity of enslaved women who drew on African spirituality to sustain them in their struggle, so bringing into being new perceptions of the Holy Spirit at work in their world. The theme of theological creativity is further developed by black feminist scholar, Elise M. Edwards. Writing about the contemporary generation as an accomplished architect, Edwards develops theological anthropology with her theological aesthetics that is directly connected with the empowerment of women in the current generation of "Third World peoples in the First World": read in conjunction with Thomas's account, the continuing power of the heritage of enslaved women's creativity is thrown into relief.

When Loida I. Martell-Otero in her Latina *evangélica* theology from a bicoastal US-Puerto Rican context points out that African slaves were imported into Puerto Rico, her

reader can detect a direct synergy between African American and Latina *evangélica* commitments. Her insight that in this context, “Protestantism did not so much convert as it was converted” might well hold true also for African American black theology. A common theme emerges of strong counter-traditions to imposed forms of Christianity, whether the Protestant Christianity of the slavers and slave owners impressed on enslaved Afro-Americans, or Iberian Catholic Christianity enforced throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Martell-Otero offers a powerful rendition of the doctrine of God, informed by the suffering caused by violent oppression of poor Latina women and their steadfast faith in God who is present with them in the face of these brutalities. She contrasts the *kairotic* question, *where* is God, which is posed by the people of the peripheric spaces—including poor Latina *evangélicas*—with the ontological question, *what* is God that is posed from the centre. Analysing the transmutation of Iberian Catholicism in its encounter with indigenous and African religion, Martell-Otero argues for the already-mentioned conversion of subsequent Protestantism that followed when it, in turn, encountered this *mestizo* Catholicism in Puerto Rico and throughout Latin America. The significant formative strength of indigenous roots, prior to the introduction of African traditions, is emphasised in her account, both in the shaping of *mestizo* Catholicism and in subsequent Protestant “conversion”.

Here God is *presente* and *presencia*—present and presence: Holy Other rather than the “wholly Other” of Barth and Otto. In Martell-Otero’s Latina *evangélica* perspective, the doctrine of the Trinity is an answer to the question of God’s “whereness;” it is a language of familial intimacy, which collapses the inflated significance lent to God as Father in the doctrine of God from the centre.

Grace Ji-Sun Kim offers a theology of hope in Asian American perspective arising from the imposed “foreigner” status accorded to Asian Americans on the basis of their

ethnicity, regardless of the number of generations who have grown up in the US. Her plea that “othering” be replaced with welcoming by the white American community is undergirded by her theological meditation on the doctrine of hope in the eschatological perspective of the coming Reign of God. Though Kim does not argue in these terms, her reflection can be read as a form of conversion of received theologies, such as Moltmann’s theology of hope.

This feminist theological conversion is not only for the purpose of radicalizing women; it is not only “written by feminist theologians from the academy to feminist theologians from the academy”, as one reviewer rather disappointingly said of *Reimagining*.²² Of course feminist theology *is* for feminist theologians – but the inward impetus towards received traditions should necessarily challenge the wider project of theology. To put it another way, the inward impetus of imagining with doctrine challenges the notion that discrete theological enterprises exist within a hierarchical power relation, so that the dominant authorized traditions arising from the heritage of European Christendom—those at the “center”—need not engage other theologies.²³ Theologies of Thomas, Edwards, Martell-Otero and Kim arise from their distinct contexts but they are not for these contexts alone. Rather each essay speaks back and is worthy of attention wherever theology is done.

What rationale could there possibly be for teaching systematic theology or doctrine by reference to (excellent) texts produced by theologians from the center alone?²⁴ What might be the impact of reading doctrine as it is imagined in these sister volumes in tandem with these centrally-authorized teaching materials? I suggest this will be threefold: first, such reading will shrink to its natural size white theology of European heritage, as white theologians would be challenged to curb their Eurocentrism by recognizing the local limits of their theologies. Second, white theologians will thereby come to recognize the imperative to heed voices from the margins *as the only means of interrogating their whiteness and its*

unacknowledged will to power. Third, male theologians would see their engagement with feminist imaginings of doctrine as the necessary means of recognizing and addressing perpetuated heteropatriarchal power relations within theology. If we are serious about doctrine, then as Martell-Otero points out, given our claim that there is no space where God is absent: “our dialogue about God, our theo-logos, cannot afford to silence the voices from the margins, the voices of the least of these whom Scripture seems to indicate are the people of God’s favor in human history.” White feminist theologians might add that to do our received European traditions justice, restorative work is needed to address the gender injustice so deeply embedded in the denominational legacy of Christendom.²⁵

This challenge is not addressed to the white male reader alone. Black theology chimes with postcolonial critique in its challenge to all white theologians: to recognize their complicity in forms of Christianity shaped within Christendom that sit all too comfortably with the brutalities of colonial domination and slavery. A serious commitment to gender justice demands white feminist theologians interrogate their own complicities with these violent histories and contemporary brutalities.

Whereas for Latina/*mujerista*, womanist/black feminist, and Asian American contributors, postcolonialist perspectives are integrated with their own, for white feminist theologians there is an imperative to triangulate their local white feminist concerns with postcolonial critique in their reimagining with doctrine. Many colonialists were white Europeans who perpetuated white Eurocentric theology and doctrine. In this manner, it has been historically understood that doctrine reinscribes the colonial Christ. As such, there is a postcolonial suspicion of doctrine as always preserving a colonial understanding of Christ, Christianity and doctrine.

Triangulation is thus required of white feminist theologians and white feminist readers, who are challenged to broaden their view beyond shared local white concerns. The

work of Latina *evangélica*, African American womanist, and Asian American feminist theologians appear side by side with white feminist theologies in this volume. White theologians in pursuit of their local white concerns face the challenge of engaging perspectives from the margins, without repeating colonizing moves. Women of color can best adjudicate how far this has been achieved. Therefore, it is not possible to engage in theological imaginings of Christian doctrines without including diverse voices of women and importantly the voices of women of color. The problem of reinscribing the colonial Christ is clearly evident. The diversity adds much needed perspective on doctrine which further deepens our understanding of God and God's world. In short, the alternative of engaging white voices alone is no longer acceptable.

Turning to the remaining, mainly white contributors to the book, Catholic theologians, Gina Messina-Dysert, and Elizabeth Gandolfo resonate with Peter Phan's strategy in appropriating rich doctrinal elements from their tradition and turning these to their own creative use. Messina-Dysert engages with seminal feminist theological work on Mary, Mother of God—notably Mary Daly, and the constructive Latin American perspective of Yvone Gebara and María Clara Bingemer—to make a fresh engagement with Mariological doctrine. Her purpose is to liberate Mary as a transgressive symbol that allows us to begin from the female body when considering the divine.

This attention to the female body is continued by Gandolfo, who weaves together a diversity of maternal voices with insights from the Catholic mystical tradition in order to grapple with the vulnerability of the human condition from a theological perspective. The result is a theological anthropology in which she reflects anew on “the paradoxical unity of invulnerability and vulnerability” of human beings made in God's beloved image.

Though protected from the vulnerabilities and oppression faced by poor women of the global south, it is noticeable that chapters by white Lutheran contributors strike a sombre

note, reflecting the widened reach of dark times, as reflected in the opening paragraphs of this chapter. While creative imaginings with doctrine are brought to bear on the darkness, there is a sense that this is our darkness as well as our eschatological hope. We embody and profit from the ecological evils of colonial and heteropatriarchal logics, even as we strive for a better way of human being.

White European American and European contributors articulate ecofeminisms that recognize the ineradicable closeness between human vulnerability to suffering and the plenitude of salvation. Thus Sigrídur Guðmarsdóttir draws on Bonaventure and the Icelandic poet Pétursson to construct her theology of the green cross; this is a green cross of Holy Wisdom that is capable of balancing the red cross of suffering, with its trajectory towards necrophilia.

Hilda Koster offers an ecofeminist cosmic wisdom Christology that works in and through the vulnerabilities and chaos of life. As a white theologian, she learns from Gebara's ecofeminist passion, informed by the strengths, vulnerabilities and deprivations of the poorest Brazilian women, as well as from insights of Catherine Keller and Elizabeth Johnson. She moves ecofeminist theology on in her grappling with the realities of evolutionary struggle for life, while providing a clear Christological focus that is lacking in some feminist work. (Koster's theme of vulnerability as a focus for creative theological imagining is repeated in Gandolfo's theological meditation on the intertwining of human vulnerability to harm with the embodied image of Divine Eros.)

Amy Carr adds her innovative reflections to the longstanding theological debate on sin, free will and grace, and to the newer strand of writing on "trauma and grace,"²⁶ where the interweaving of suffering, vulnerability and harm with the work of redemption provides the stuff of her work. Her categories of Receptive Mary, Feminist Pelagia and Eco/Feminist Stoic, as counter positions to the Deceived Eve, are productive in allowing different feminist

analyses and strategies to be mapped: her Eco/Feminist Stoic reflects the sombre tone that we find reflected in this volume. Her aim is not to categorize individual feminist theologians, but to spot the shift from a North American feminist mood of Pelagian optimism to one of grappling with “the systemic violence of a still kyriarchical world,” which brings eco/feminist stoicism to the fore. Thus, in resonance with the interweaving of harm and salvation already drawn out above, Carr finds a possibility that “divine affliction can itself be a locus of divine grace.” Her approach allows for “an elusive divine sovereignty over our individual lives and creation as a whole”, which is a viable alternative to received notions of divine omnipotence.

It is our hope that new readers of feminist theology may find an inviting entry point in these sister volumes. Seminal work in feminist theology informs all chapters, so newcomers will learn of the twentieth century heritage of feminist theology, even as they encounter the new theological insights reflected here.

It is our dream that the inward impetus towards received traditions will promote the good health of Christian theology by inspiring further theological contributions from the peripheric people, so that these insights may move “from margin to center”,²⁷ never losing their borderland creativity, but always disrupting the hegemony of heteropatriarchal Eurocentrism. The inward movement of feminist and postcolonial imagining with received doctrines thus confuses the homogenizing claims of the unifying and universalizing centre: instead, as Wendy Farley has suggested,²⁸ doctrine is like jazz—to be constantly revisited and reworked by Christian theologians in our wildly diverse human contexts.

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¹ See Kwok Pui-Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 20ff. Over two decades earlier, the Indonesian theologian, Marianne Katoppo had identified the exploitation of Asian women through sex tourism (see Marianne Katoppo, *Compassionate and Free: An Asian Women's Theology* (Geneva: WCC, 1979), extract reprinted in U. King (ed.) *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader* (London: SPCK, 1994), 114–18).

² See Alexis Jay OBE “Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 – 2013”, at http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham Accessed 21 Sept 2014.

³ See, for example, BBC coverage “Why the Historic Child Abuse Enquiries are in the News” at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-28189858> . Accessed 10 November 2014.

⁴ In the sense that decolonizing white minds requires shrinking white theology to its natural size, that is, the local concerns of white women theologians, disconnected from a perpetuated colonizing impetus.

⁵ Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Jenny Dagers (eds), *Reimagining with Christian Doctrines: Responding to Global Gender Injustices* (New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2014).

⁶ Serene Jones, “Feminist Theology and the Global Imagination” in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*, eds, Mary Fulkerson and Sheila Briggs (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 30, cited in Kim and Dagers op.cit., 2.

⁷ We are bequeathed a well-established term, “feminist theology”. As acknowledged above, for women of color, the term has a white inflection—which leads to other chosen namings for projects concerned with gender justice for women within theology, the churches and more

broadly in the world. The list above—Latina/*mujerista*, *evangélica*, womanist, Asian America, feminist—is neither complete nor capable of closure, as indicated by the rather clumsy following words “and other constructive women theologians”. To complicate the picture further, some African American and Asian American women have chosen to identify with the term “feminist” and so to strengthen the connection between their own work and that of white feminists. As the following discussion takes up a term already in use, we ask the reader to read it in this broader way when it is used without the qualifier, “white” —and then to “talk back” to us, if any reader finds herself excluded by as yet unconscious acts of “othering” on the part of the authors. (Daggers recognizes that she is more likely to act in this way than, Kim her co-editor).

⁸ We use the term “heteropatriarchal” to indicate that patriarchal order insists on normative heterosexual relations and the control of women’s sexuality within this framework. Critical “queer” theology informed by “queer” theory points this up. See, for example, Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Queer God* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2003). The risk of re-colonizing by white theology is ever present; white feminist theologians too need to actively make conscious their imperial attitudes, and to meet the challenge of women of color who set this agenda. (See, for example, Mukti Barton, “Wrestling with Imperial Patriarchy” in *Feminist Theology* 21 (1) (2012): 7-25).

⁹ Of course, it is necessary to update feminist “critique” of Christianity to keep pace with dynamic developments in world Christianity. However, a firm groundwork has already been put in place by feminist theologians in the decades since the 1960s.

¹⁰ There is good reason for this approach, given that doctrines are laden with heteropatriarchal and colonial power relations and thus subject to a “hermeneutic of suspicion”.

¹¹ Here we use a term—“second wave” feminism—that makes sense within a western historiography of feminism. However, we do not subscribe to the view that American feminist theology *preceded* the feminist voices that emerged in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Women theologians, such as Elsa Tamez and Ivone Gebara, Marianne Katoppo and Mercy Amba Oduyoye came to speech in the same historical moment as feminist theology emerged on the North American scene. Although it is anachronistic to name this work as “postcolonial feminist theology”, there is a clear line of descent from these writers to the concerns of contemporary postcolonial theologies. Once again, we ask the reader to bear with the ambivalent term, “postcolonial *feminist* theology”.

¹² See, for example, Lieven Boeve, *God Interrupts History: Theology in a Time of Upheaval* (London: Continuum, 2007). The concept of “detraditionalization” better acknowledges the combination of continuing spiritual practice alongside a decline of institutional affiliation to established churches than does the earlier secularization thesis.

¹³ “Thealogy” is the term coined by Christ and others to describe reflection on the female divine, in reconstructed Goddess religion and more broadly.

¹⁴ Carol P. Christ, “Whatever Happened to Goddess and God-She? Why Do Jews and Christians Still Pray to a Male God?”, in “Wrestling with God”, (eds) Lisa Isherwood et al *Journal of the European Society of Women in Theological Research* 18 (2010), 52.

¹⁵ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Will to Choose or to Reject”, in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (ed) Letty M. Russell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 126.

¹⁶ Kim grew up in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Though her parents are both from Buddhist families, many Korean immigrants converted to Christianity due to its appeal for economic and social increase. The Presbyterian Church (USA) and Presbyterian Church in Canada sent many missionaries to Korea in the late nineteenth century and as a result many

Koreans became converted to Presbyterian forms of Christianity. When Korean immigrants arrived in North America, many joined the mainline Presbyterian denominations.

¹⁷ James H. Cone “Cross-fertilization: A Statement from the U.S. Minorities” in *Third World Theologies*, 129-30, cited in José David Rodríguez, “Black Theology’s Impact on EATWOT”, in *Living Stones in the Household of God* (ed) Linda E. Thomas (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2004), 223-4.

¹⁸ See the growing literature on “fresh expressions” of Church in western detraditioned contexts, for example: Church of England, *Mission-Shaped Church* (London: Church House, 2005); Steven Croft and Ian Mobsby (eds) *Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition* (London: Canterbury Press, 2009); Andrew Walker and Luke Bretherton (eds) *Remembering our Future: Explorations in Deep Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2007). For analysis of the growth of Pentecostalism, see Cecil M. Robeck Jr. And Amos Yong, (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge, CUP, 2014); Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Boston MA: Da Capo Press, 2001); Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

¹⁹ Peter Phan, “Introduction” in Peter Phan (ed) *Christianities in Asia* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 1-8, 1-3.

²⁰ One notable example is the prolific theological writing of the Malaysian-American Pentecostalist theologian, Amos Yong, who engages with doctrine beyond the pneumatalogical focus of his tradition. See, for example, Amos Yong, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity: Soundings from the Asian American Diaspora* (Westmont, IL: IVP, forthcoming 2014).

²¹ See Emmanuel Y. Lartey *Postcolonializing God: An African Practical Theology* (London:SCM, 2013), p.35, for an argument that historical and contemporary African-American Black churches be understood as “postcolonializing” churches.

²² See review by John Kenyon, at <http://gracejisunkim.wordpress.com/2014/05/24/book-review-reimagining-with-christian-doctrines/#more-5417> accessed 26 Sept 2014.

²³ In contrast, as demonstrated in chapters in this volume, postcolonial and feminist theologians are well versed in the authorized theological discourse that is systematic theology.

²⁴ See, for example, John Webster, Kathryn Tanner & Iain Torrance, *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2007); Richard J. Plantinga, Thomas R. Thompson, and Matthew D. Lundberg *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).

²⁵ See Rachel Muers “Doing Traditions Justice,” in Jenny Dagers (ed.) *Gendering Christian Ethics*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2012, pp. 7–22.

²⁶ The title of Serene Jones’s book, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville: WJK, 2009).

²⁷ bell hooks *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Centre* 2nd edition (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

²⁸ Wendy Farley. “Foreword” in Kim and Dagers op.cit, p.ix.