At the heart of Garnett and Harris’s anthology is the exploration of how religious experiences inform migrants’ self-identity and their engagement with the “secular” public sphere of the urban landscapes in which they settle. The common thread that weaves through the various chapters is that the public spheres of today’s modern cities are vibrant spaces in which ongoing negotiations of socio-religious identities take place, within a community, between various communities, and always in relation to the political. The collection adds to the work of scholars (Ammerman, Knott, McGuire, Orsi, Tweed, Vásquez, and Vertovec) in the areas of lived religion, sociology of religion, social anthropology, and religion in the public sphere, as well as migration, identity, spatial, and urban studies. It provides ethnographic analyses that speak to the spatial-political components necessitating the navigation of the politics of difference/recognition within the public realm. This text is an important anthology of nineteen chapters intended for academics, researchers, and graduate students, presenting case studies from around the globe. Three chapters set the stage by offering a theoretical overview of past assumptions within the academy that have framed some past analyses: Western liberal Christian values, normative social-science models, and the construction of the categories of analysis itself. Aside from the introductory and concluding chapters, the three theoretical and sixteen research essays are grouped into four thematic sections: linguistic, spatial, generational and gender, and finally public policy, a section that explores local relationships against the backdrop of global economic and political forces post-9/11. An international group of scholars from Australia, Canada, China, Europe, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States contribute to the various essays resulting in a rich tapestry of “on the ground” research through which the central theme of the anthology weaves: to think historically about the “ways in which religious constructions of identity and ways of imagining the world have engaged with the contingencies and pluralism of migrational life in the modern city” with an eye to “de-familiarize and challenge settled assumptions” about categories such as migrants/settled, religious/secular, and modernist/traditionalist within the modern cityscape.

Marybeth White
Wilfrid Laurier University

Gender and Sexuality


Saving Sex is an overview of and introduction to contemporary evangelical teachings on sexuality and culture, intended to be accessible and helpful to popular and academic audiences. DeRogatis is clear about the boundaries of her work: she does not deal with issues of sexual orientation, and limits her analysis to literature and media that are popularly accessible. One of the strengths of the book is that it does not fall prey to the academic curse of so much specificity and nuance so as to render it irrelevant to nonexperts. DeRogatis had to make tough decisions about what to include. Although one might personally quibble with this or that choice, on the whole, she provides balanced coverage of diverse beliefs and practices related to sexuality that fall under the broad category of evangelical. She touches on topics ranging from the sexual purity movement and the complexities of evangelical heterosexual married sex, to some of the less mainstream evangelical concerns related to sexuality such as demon possession and spiritual warfare. Even though white men produce the vast majority of the material she covers, reflecting the still largely intact power structures of evangelical Christianity in the United States, she does make an effort to include material from African American evangelical religious contexts. Readers should keep in mind that her material, produced almost exclusively by evangelical leaders, cannot capture the fullness of evangelical sexual teachings and culture, particularly as experienced by those marginalized (for example, women, adolescents, people of color, and those who identify as gay, lesbian, transgender, or bisexual). The lived experience of evangelical sexual teachings dramatically complicates the official version that DeRogatis documents and analyzes so well in her book, and writings that include this lived dimension of evangelicalism will be a welcome companion to Saving Sex. Overall, the monograph is an excellent starting place for anyone who is not familiar with contemporary evangelical sexuality teachings: appropriate for students, academics, and even an ambitious book club.

Elizabeth Gish
Western Kentucky University


Kang presents a methodological commentary on the ways secular discourses—postmodern, postcolonial, and feminist—offer Christianity dynamic renewal and the ways Christian faith likewise has the power to refresh these modes of thought. Kang sees an affinity between critical discourses and diasporic consciousness, a consciousness native to Christianity though consistently suffocated by Christianity’s long alliance with imperialism. Kang demonstrates how diasporic consciousness does organically what critical discourses do deliberately: they expose hegemones, resist master narratives, and propose alternative ways of being. Kang helpfully uses her experiences as an Asian immigrant to the United States, a feminist, and a Christian, as touchstones for exploring diasporic consciousness. These identity positions drive the book, creating a kind of theoretical Venn diagram. Kang works in the space where immigrant experience, critical discourses, and Christian practice overlap. Most importantly, Kang seeks to expand that
overlapping space, and to invite others to work in it with her. Her vision is distinctively theological, and inflected by a resurrection hope to reconcile people in conflict and transform the social order. This hopeful quality not only animates the theoretical project, but also sharpens Kang’s critical edge. Kang powerfully “talks back” to critical discourses at times, calling for reforms so as to remain relevant and functional to those living diasporic lives—and to ensure diasporic consciousness does not become yet another stronghold for identity politics. For all its sophistication, Kang’s thought-provoking book remains grounded, accessible, and, above all, concerned with the concrete exigencies of lived Christian practice in a complex and conflictual world. The work is appropriate for advanced undergraduate and graduate students as well as scholars.

Mara Brecht
St. Norbert College


Christianity, Rebecca Moore argues, “owes an enormous debt to its female followers” for their role in determining the construction and practice of the faith from its inception. It is this debt that Moore examines in her concise, yet sweeping introductory text, detailing the ways in which women have historically shaped dominant traditions within the church alongside their less recognized roles. Beginning with Eve—perhaps the most theologically dense portion of the work, as she shows how Eve was used to subtend soteriology and justify female subordination—the text examines the fortunes of women’s roles as leaders, resisters, and devout followers in relation to ever-changing ecclesiastical structures in a plethora of moments and movements. In telling the story of Christianity, Moore writes that she did not want to replicate a traditional historiographical model and compose a narrative entirely of “great women.” The diversity of figures represented is testament to this effort, moving well beyond the canon of white women. The stories of female missions to New France, the first Native American saint Kateri Tekakwitha, and African American missionary Maria Fearing are notable. The book is not a work of theory but does periodically consider how the story of Christian women has been told by historiographers and theologians. Sometimes the reader wants more theoretical heft to accompany descriptions of daily life. For example, why was life so terrible for urban Byzantine women as opposed to Irish women of the seventh century? Such questions are, however, generative; paired with more detailed theoretical and historiographical materials, the book would be an excellent source in an introduction to Christianity or a class on women in religion.

Rachel Smith
Villanova University


Changing Horizons is the second volume in a three-volume set tracing the contours of Schüssler Fiorenza’s influential work in the emergence and development of feminist biblical hermeneutics. The collection—a diverse set including journal articles, book chapters, sermon texts, and dictionary entries—is divided into two sections mirroring the twin foci of Schüssler Fiorenza’s work: scholarship and praxis. Part I, “Charting Critical Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics,” focuses on issues of interpretation and textual rhetoric; Part II, “Practicing Feminist Biblical Interpretation,” highlights the critical praxis of liberation with an increasing emphasis on global contexts. Strengths of Changing Horizons, for readers familiar with Schüssler Fiorenza’s work, include the opportunity of seeing the scholar’s thought develop and the convenience of having a significant collection of ground-breaking essays in a single location and language. Original publication sites of individual chapters include Brazil, Japan, Korea, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, and the United States and reflect the commitment of the author to engaging in global feminist discourse. However, the editorial decision to organize the book thematically with the original publication dates of individual chapters listed together on a single “Acknowledgments” page does a disservice to the author. Given a publication span of over three decades, the muted chronology can lend an appearance of contradiction and discontinuity to what are actually moments of growth and increasing nuance in Schüssler Fiorenza’s thought. The characteristic combination of scholarship and praxis make this a useful text for advanced undergraduate and graduate classes in both the university and seminary setting as well as an accessible introduction to a seminal thinker in biblical hermeneutics.

Judith L. Bishop
Mills College


Vance’s project seeks to test Max Weber’s suggestion that “the religion of the disprivileged classes . . . is characterized by a tendency to allot equality to women.” Putting “new,” which she uses “to denote religions that emerge and exist in tension with their social context, not to indicate age per se,” in the place of Weber’s “disprivileged,” Vance reviews theories and practices of gender (and sex and sexuality), social and historical contexts, and religious identity in Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism, The Family International, and Wicca. The result is a focused and helpful overview of the four religions, including