

Review

Navigating Post-Truth and Alternative Facts: Religion and Science as Political Theology. Edited by Jennifer Baldwin. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018. xxx + 168 pages. US \$90.00 (Hardcover).

This edited volume could not have appeared at a better time. It was published just after I had written my first editorial for *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, in which I emphasized a renewed focus on “Science, Religion, and Public Policy,” in line with the ultimate concern and normative goal behind setting up this journal in the 1960s. *Navigating Post-Truth and Alternative Facts*, edited by Jennifer Baldwin (who holds a science-and-religion PhD from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and is a practicing psychotherapist), is the second title in a promising new series on “Religion and Science as a Critical Discourse.” The series editors, Lisa Stenmark and Whitney Bauman, explain in the book’s Foreword that they would like to see the science-and-religion discourse move away from too much focus on theory, toward injecting a prophetic voice and a planetary perspective into public debate. Their series offers a scholarly platform to do exactly that. I very much welcome such voices and encourage them to continue raising these important concerns in this journal too.

In her Preface, Baldwin identifies the “central curiosity” of the volume: “What is the role of religion and science scholarship in a post-truth society?” (xiv). In the Introduction by Antje Jackelén, which is an English translation of a lecture given when Jackelén received an honorary doctorate at the University of Greifswald, Germany in 2016, the scene is set for the volume by highlighting that polarization, populism, protectionism, and post-truth together constitute “an expression of a lack of hope” (xxvii). She places discussions on the need for broad education, genuine freedom, proper fear—that is, of God and not of “the world’s dictators and the tyrants in our lives” (xxiv)—better understanding, and courageous hope in the context of discussion within and without the Church on five hundred years of Reformation.

All ten invited contributors to the volume provide their own answers to the question posed by Baldwin. What stands out is the scholarly quality of the engagements, from many perspectives, Protestant and Catholic, but for the most part not tied to a particular Church tradition and featuring naturalistic approaches, in line with the spirit of the book series to increase diversity in science-and-religion discourse. Nothing is left untouched, including superficial readings of what “post-truth” or “alternative facts” might be taken to mean. The ten contributions are divided in three parts; in Part I (“Finding Truth”) there are contributions by Lisa Stenmark, Ted Peters, Paul Allen, and Craig Boyd; in Part II (“Affect and the Public Trust”) by Knut-Willy Sæther, Adam Pryor, and Jennifer Baldwin; and in Part III (“Politics, Religion, and the Environment”) by Philip Clayton, Whitney Bauman, and Graham Walker.

This volume provides very worthwhile reading, which we should all reflect on. For instance, it becomes clear from the volume that taking science seriously and adopting a naturalistic philosophy does not have to lead to a disenchantment of

nature (Bauman's contribution), that issues of disbelief in science from the sides of religion and public policy may be a result of disbelief in a plurality of value-laden perspectives from the side of science (Stenmark's contribution), and that more generally identifying systems of value is a major task for science-and-religion that may allow weighing different worldviews as real possibilities for decision making about the future (Clayton's contribution).

ARTHUR C. PETERSEN 

Department of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Public Policy,
University College London, London, UK
arthur.petersen@ucl.ac.uk