

Cláudio Carvalhaes, *What's Worship Got to Do with It? Interpreting Life Liturgically*. Eugene: Cascade Press, 2018. 266 pages. \$33.00.

In *What's Worship Got to Do with It? Interpreting Life Liturgically*, Cláudio Carvalhaes offers up a revolutionary and holistic vision of liturgy as organically rooted in human and other-than-human life and living. Writing from a commitment to the liberation of all persons, particularly those who have been oppressed and marginalized, and with a winsome *joie de vivre*, Carvalhaes centers the life and the living of the marginalized, the poor, and the earth as the primary concern of Christian liturgy. Divided into three primary sections: “liturgy of the church,” “liturgy of the neighbor,” and “liturgy of the world,” Carvalhaes explores liturgy’s place in Christian tradition, its ethical possibilities, and its connections with the complex, violent socio-political realities of the twenty-first century (ix).

In the first section, containing chapters 1 through 5, Carvalhaes addresses the “liturgy of the church,” or traditional aspects of Christian liturgical theory and practice. In chapter 1, he argues for a liturgical ethic of love attuned to unjust economic and political realities. The second chapter is a co-written essay by Carvalhaes and Paul Galbreath exploring Easter through qualitative engagement of the worship of three congregations. They argue that Easter casts a transformative political and ethical vision for the world. In chapter 3, Carvalhaes engages baptism with care for the human, ecology, and the economic devastation of white supremacy and capitalism. The first section concludes with chapters 4 and 5 exploring the liberative possibilities of Advent and Pentecost, respectively.

In the second section, “liturgy of the neighbor,” comprising chapters 6 through 9, Carvalhaes engages ethical problems related to the hierarchies and disparities impacting liturgy. In chapter 6, he grounds prayer in a critical reading of the racist and ecological injustice of our world, and he constructs a nondominant vision of prayer that leads those who pray to disrupt racism and to enter into solidarity with all persons who are racially minoritized by systems of white supremacy. Assessing the oral/aural ways in which power can be expressed and nurtured, in chapter 7 Carvalhaes theologically engages the liturgical acts of listening and speaking with deep care for minoritized experiences. In chapter 8 he develops a “hermeneutic of the knees,” exploring the ways in which dominant Christian liturgical propriety has, in combination with the forces of colonialism, done great harm, and he argues for embodied power, fluidity, and diversity that disrupts patriarchy, heteronormativity, and any other dimensions of dominant Christian worship (158). This section concludes with chapter 9, which interprets prayer as an act of labor and dance committed to the healing of the wounds of the world.

In the chapter 10, the first chapter of the final section, “liturgy of the world,” Carvalhaes imagines preaching through the lens of liturgies of the church, the neighbor, and the world. He argues for preaching that draws us into connection with each other and the world. Exploring the tendencies to singularly focus either on liturgical tradition or new liturgical expressions, in chapter 11 he constructs an alternative in which the focus of liturgy is a commitment to the preferential option. In chapter 12, Carvalhaes explores the virtual dimensions of online worship, offering a theology of digital worship focused on the creation and nurturing of communal connections that move beyond technical questions to a communal ethic.

The conclusion encapsulates Carvalhaes’ primary theme of connecting worship to life and living in a way that leads to the pursuit of justice. He writes, “...using the beauty of rituals, liturgies, and symbols, and the history and experiences of people, it [liturgy and liturgical theology] has to work for justice!” (241).

In the field of liturgical studies, far too much of our Western canon is silent on or is disconnected from the unjust realities of our world. Carvalhaes' approach to liturgy models a radically different way of engaging liturgical theory and practice. While unwaveringly presenting his radical vision for worship, Carvalhaes shapes his arguments in a manner that is accessible to those of us deeply formed in the Western liturgical tradition and, as the case may be, dominant Euro-American liturgical theory and practice. He carefully and critically engages the work of numerous prominent scholars in the field, while also engaging an array of voices that may be less familiar within the field of liturgical studies. This work provides lay persons, clergy, students, and scholars essential and ground-breaking frameworks and language at the intersection of liberation theology and Christian worship.

Andrew Wymer, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL