

Yara González-Justiniano. *Centering Hope as a Sustainable Decolonial Practice: Esperanza en Práctica*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022. 164 pages. \$95.00.

Can a church be a well of hope that quenches people's thirst for justice? How do the practices of the church shape a hope that liberates the people marginalized by recurring colonialism, skepticism, and desperation? *Centering Hope as a Sustainable Decolonial Practice: Esperanza en Práctica* provides theoretical and qualitative analysis of hope and offers a constructive model that puts hope at the center. In this book, readers will find hope springing from the practices of the Puerto Rican churches that attempt to overcome evils and misfortunes.

Centering Hope as a Sustainable Decolonial Practice: Esperanza en Práctica is published in the series Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies in Religion and Theology. This series challenges colonial biases in religions, the academy, and faith communities and pays special attention to voices, practices, and epistemologies from the margins. As one of the contributors to this series, Yara González-Justiniano adds a voice from Puerto Rico and walks us to a hope that reflects Christian theology and practices. Yara González-Justiniano, born in Fajardo, Puerto Rico, is Assistant Professor of Religion, Culture, and Psychology with emphasis in Latinx Studies at Vanderbilt University.

None of the setbacks generated by haunting colonialism and natural disasters, including hurricane María in 2017, could dampen an unwavering hope in Puerto Rico. Delving into hope-centered stories of Puerto Ricans and their communal practices, González-Justiniano attempts to develop a model that can eliminate colonial sins, including systems of economic exploitation, social stagnation, and theft of land, which have pervaded Puerto Rico and the Puerto Ricans' lives. Centering hope as a practice of liberation, she conducts ethnographic research in diverse congregations in Puerto Rico. Based on her analysis of ecclesial practices and grassroots actions in local communities, she evaluates how churches in the lands of Puerto Rico attempt to participate in and articulate a hopeful future. Having evaluated how the political system in Puerto Rico oppressed hope, González-Justiniano constructs a sustainable model of hope.

Yara González-Justiniano divides her work into three parts: theoretical framework, qualitative research, and model construction. In the first part, she provides a historical analysis of churches' practices and their relationships with grassroots activism, setting a framework that shows the relationship between hope and its challenges in Puerto Rico. Drawing attention to the arguments of Rubem Alves, Ellen Ott Marshall, and Jürgen Moltmann, she pinpoints the connection between a theology of hope and various practices that churches embrace to articulate what hope is and how they participate in raising hope for their wider society. Putting hope as an axis of her framework, she weaves theology and practice of hope. In the second part, she provides qualitative research. González-Justiniano evaluates individual interviews, site visits, field notes, sermons, public statements, and websites. Her research shows how congregations have practiced and communicated hope within wider society. This descriptive aspect of her research enriches an understanding of hope and provides vivid examples of hope represented in practices of solidarity and hospitality. Integrating the first and second parts, González-Justiniano develops a model for hope in the third part. Considering hope as a new hermeneutic, she articulates a practical theology of hope that emphasizes liberative epistemological and practical aspects.

In particular, Yara González-Justiniano's work offers several homiletical implications. She argues that preaching should express how a Christian theology of hope actively engages in practices of hope within a church and a wider society (88). Assuring the significant role of

preaching in congregations of Puerto Rico, she shows how pastors proclaim a decolonial Christ, bind people in hope, and encourage them to enact and be a hope for their community. She avers that preaching provokes hope within a community and provides solidarity that overcomes the doctrinal and political differences within a community. In this regard, preaching leads people to join in actual practices of liberation engineered by collaborative imagination. Preaching should invite people to communal work and partnership beyond any kind of boundaries (112).

In this book, Yara González-Justiniano finds and builds hope from and for a particular context of Puerto Rico. Yet, her yearning for hope is not limited by geopolitical and theological boundaries. If you are looking for a sustainable and practical hope, put this book on your must-have list. It will provide you with rich wisdom and reassuring encouragement that strives to eliminate the systemic evils and misfortunes of colonialism. Also, it will guide you to create hope-full practices for a life of thriving.

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