

*Nurturing Different Dreams: Youth Ministry across Lines of Difference.* By Katherine Turpin and Anne Carter Walker. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2014. x + 140 pp. \$18.00 (paper).

As a missionary for young people in the Episcopal Church, my shelves are full of books on youth ministry, mostly focused on group development, ideas for games, curriculum, and lesson plans, and spiritual growth. This book, however, serves as a refreshing change from the typical youth ministry book. Finally, here is a book that is willing to tackle the difficult issues of privilege and oppression in the field of youth ministry.

Katherine Turpin and Anne Carter Walker use real examples from their own experience developing and facilitating a youth program intentionally aimed at empowering young people from diverse multicultural backgrounds. They skillfully weave complex issues around power and privilege into a text that is accessible and relevant to a wide audience. It is especially impressive how rich the text is with the wisdom of so many social justice advocates, including Paulo Ereire, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, and Peggy McIntosh (among many others).

This book calls us to reflect on the history of the structures that have formed youth ministry programs, including the ways mainstream denominational youth ministry has informed and maintained a dominant culture that privileges white youth from middle to upper classes. The authors give voice to young people from a diverse range of backgrounds who beautifully articulate their own experiences within the youth ministry program.

The authenticity of the authors is refreshing as they reflect honestly on ways in which their own youth ministry program may have unintentionally silenced or disempowered the very young people they were hoping to empower. I found their process of reflection to be a model for healthy reconciliation, in which leaders of privilege are able to acknowledge their mistakes, ask for forgiveness from the community, and together rebuild the program in ways to better support the youth. I found myself having countless “aha” moments reflecting on a decade of youth ministry experience. I understood for the first time why past attempts at multicultural youth ministry may have seemed unsuccessful and saw things I could have done differently in order to bridge cultural differences and cultivate a sense of vocational identity with young people who may have been denied the opportunity to even dream for ways in which they might have an impact on the world.

Overall, I found this book to be a thorough, mature reflection on privilege, power, and systematic oppression—something much needed in the field of youth ministry, where we often, with good intentions, seek to treat all young people the same, ignoring deep patterns and histories of racism and classism that undeniably have an impact on the lives of those with whom we

minister. Chapters include helpful discussions of power and privilege, the agency of young people, negotiating respect, and the important relationships of mentoring and “eldering.” I would recommend this book to all current and future leaders in the church, especially those in formation. Many of us speak longingly for multicultural communities of faith, yet when we gather together in these very settings we find ourselves unequipped and unprepared to respond to the complex interpersonal and group dynamics.

As those engaged in Christian formation and youth ministry, we have the power to either perpetuate systems of inequality or to disrupt the inequality. This book serves as an important resource which might result in a series of conversations and reflections, possibly leading to the transformation of youth ministry programs across the church. Youth ministry has the potential to cultivate and honor the dreams of young people in order that they might “respond to God’s call and live a worthy and faithful life” (p. 1), but this is only possible when we open our eyes to the challenges and inadequacies of our current ministries and intentionally engage in recreating communities of mutuality and interconnectedness.

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*The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language.* By Rowan Williams. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. xiii + 204 pp. \$34.00 (cloth).

*The Edge of Words* is Rowan Williams’s first major book since leaving his role as Archbishop of Canterbury, and is a revision for publication of his 2013 Gifford Lectures given in Edinburgh. It is also, in his own words, an opportunity to work through “an assortment of questions and reflections jotted down over a number of years” (p. vi). These reflections focus on the nature of our language, and what our speaking implies about ourselves, our universe, and its ultimate context. It is an essay, true to the bequest behind the Giffords, in a certain sort of “natural theology.” At the heart of these chapters is an argument, or at least a series of allusive provocations, that language is not a false or arbitrary construct pushed upon nature. Rather, it arises from a communicative intelligibility intrinsic to nature. Our speaking is at home in the world. More than this, it endlessly and generatively unfolds the world in representing it. This points beyond the world and our speech to an intelligible—if unrepresentable in any normal sense—extra-natural context (that



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