

## FOREWORD

Since the beginning of time, evil has presented the most severe challenge to belief in a good and loving God. When innocent victims are savagely cut down with no end in sight, how can speech about a loving God be presented credibly? In every century of the past two millennia, theologians have struggled to forge a response to the challenge of evil, only to find that their efforts invariably fail to satisfy. Today, in the wake of hegemonic neo-liberal capitalism, the reign of traumatic death continues to spread like a parasitic scourge consuming all in its path that would generate life. While crucifixions of the innocent abound, dare we believe in the resurrection?

A noted theologian, thoroughly skilled in the arts of the poetic and the prophetic, Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez brilliantly examines and reimagines the theology of the resurrection. This endeavor is all the more urgent amid the impending global collapse brought on by the ruthless force of unrestrained neo-liberal capitalism with its ever-expanding reign of death-dealing power, or, indeed, *necropower*. Necropower subjugates life and insists upon a life lived under the constant threat of brutal violence aimed at killing. Mendoza-Álvarez asks where might a love that stands strong in the face of death's reign be found. He shifts our attention from God's silence to the survivors' resilience. Whether we are mindful of it or not, we live amidst a war system and, therefore, in a time of mourning—one in which we must recognize the rights of the dead to be seen and heard if we are to affirm the promise of resurrection credibly.

Mendoza-Álvarez gives us a political theology, one distinct from yet resonant with Johann Baptist Metz's dangerous memories and attention to the interior life, the locus where an authentic spirituality of resistance is born. Long recognized as an astute interpreter of René Girard, Mendoza-Álvarez takes as a given that we live in an increasingly unstable world that demands an escalating number of innocent, sacrificial victims whose lives are taken to generate terror and achieve social control, made more traumatic by the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of evil. Indeed, how dare we speak of resurrection in a world governed by the logic of necropower and its violent destruction of the social body? His is a political theology, thoroughly

concerned with how theological discourse relates to nation-states' collapse and the human populace's organization in space and time. It is a discourse of disappeared persons and the enduring social trauma that results, not only in Mexico but in nation-states around the globe.

Confronted with the violent destruction of the social body, *The Resurrection as a Messianic Anticipation* critically interrogates the global system of neo-liberal capitalism so as to help its readers see more clearly the devolution of nation-states into a pre-political condition governed by a perverse necropower that renders certain lives disposable, carrying greater economic value dead than alive. Indeed, the global free market functions as, and is served as, a god, destroying human lives and taking no prisoners in its wake. This god demands the emergence of new governments created to serve the interests of transnational corporations rather than the people. Global hegemonic power can only be explained at the intersection of capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism, to which must be added a fourth element, argues Mendoza-Álvarez; that is, the way in which religion is a "sacrificial system that justifies neo-colonial domination, under new symbolic narratives of subordination, abnegation, and death."<sup>1</sup> With this book, Mendoza-Álvarez offers an original, gripping, intelligent, and disturbing account of the necessary future path of political theology.

Global hegemonic power has not proceeded unchecked. Survivors have met its brutal violence with acts of resistance, that is, the refusal to live in a world given over to the desecration of what it is to be human. Survivors' acts of resistance are an insurrection, an interruption. In Mendoza-Álvarez's work, insurrection is grounded in the critical thinking of philosophies from the original peoples of the Americas who, time and again, have created social movements that make possible resistance against the death powers that govern this world.

This book argues persuasively for an expansion in our understanding of resurrection, one that takes seriously the bodies of those crucified by global power. Resurrection must include a praxis of memory, narration, and celebration of the victims of global power, ensuring that they will not be forgotten. These victims are still alive in the memories of those who have survived and in the survivors' reconstruction of the community, one born of the practice of dignity, resilience, and hope.

Mendoza-Álvarez's masterful reimagining of what it means to believe in the resurrection extends theological thinking on many fronts. Resurrection is "an *uprising* of new life," practiced with "dignity, resilience, and hope" for the people and communities of survivors today.<sup>2</sup> This kind of insurrection requires new intersubjective relationships. These intersubjectivities

come into being only when they shed the trappings of capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, and sacrificial religious symbols employed in service of domination. Accordingly, the option for the poor finds meaning only in the affirmation of the subjectivity of the poor. Decolonial thinking foregrounds subjectivities in just this manner. It underscores the subjectivities that have been long negated in the social trauma of disappearances, massacres, and clandestine burials. Today, we find ourselves in the midst of a global war that is almost always masked from view by perverse distortions of reality. The most intelligent and credible theological response can only be found in and through mutual recognition and practice that affirms the subjectivities of the poor. This entails an intercultural theology of liberation, which is what Mendoza-Álvarez offers us.

This book is nothing short of a *tour de force*. It is built on a lifetime of study and thought, showing Mendoza-Álvarez at the height of his intellectual power. Not only does Mendoza-Álvarez signal the road ahead for political and liberation theologies, but he also offers his readers a reason to place their hope in the resurrection even amid the horror of a global collapse with its mounting body count. Indeed, amid the rubble of global violence, resurrection must be understood as insurrection.

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