

Edward Foley. *Theological Reflection across Religious Traditions: The Turn to Reflective Believing*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. 162 pp. \$32.00. Paperback. ISBN: 978442247192.

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Edward Foley identifies himself as a practical theologian educated in liturgical theology. In the project that resulted in this book, he set out to rethink some of the principles that undergird practical theology, which is a praxis method of thinking theologically. Both the scope of his examination and the method of his investigation were radically transformed as he carefully moved deeper and deeper into the ways women and men, believers and nonbelievers alike, reflect on the values and issues at the heart of their search for meaning in life. What began as rethinking developed into reimagining; what was initially perceived as theological reflection was reimagined as reflective believing.

As the book unfolds we see how Foley himself engaged in an exercise in practical theology. He may have begun with a refined grasp of what theological reflection entails, but this grasp only served to formulate the questions he put to the people with whom he met. Their answers, their concerns, their intuitions, and their experience revised or replaced the questions, focused the direction taken by the conversations, and provided the substance of Foley's own new thinking. The diversity of the ethnic, cultural, and religious background of his conversation partners added complexity to the venture. However, his expertise in critical analysis enabled him to glean rich insights from this multilayered approach, and his familiar style of writing invites his readers to appreciate these insights.

Charts and graphs that demonstrate or further elaborate what is being discussed are employed throughout the book. However, it is the examples from various corners of art, sports, literature, and ordinary human experience, as well as Foley's reflections on his own intellectual journey, that situate the ideas squarely within the context of life itself. Finally, in a series of appendices, he provides us with examples of other praxis approaches. Each one is carefully described, its influences mentioned, its process outlined, its strengths listed. In this way, the reader can place Foley's method within its own theological context.

The book itself is something of a paradox. While it is about theological reflection, its reader-friendly approach will also prove to be of interest to those who do not understand their search for meaning in theological terms. While it seeks to showcase theories of reflective thinking, its rise from pondering issues of life and meaning produced insights that are far from being heavily theoretical. Though written by a Roman Catholic presbyter, it is profoundly respectful of other religious or nonreligious value systems. Learning from the various groups of people he met and interviewed, Foley has uncovered a common search for meaning in life and in life-projects that is not confined to one system of belief.

The topic developed here, the method employed in the search for understanding, and the conclusions reached will be of interest to and benefit for various audiences. The first group includes the pastoral ministers for whom this

project was originally intended. It will call them to appreciate their own manner of reflective thinking, as well as that of those with whom and for whom they minister. Related to this group are schools or programs of ministry formation. Both those responsible for the formation and those being trained will profit from the praxis approach demonstrated as well as the variety of suggestions for reflection offered throughout the book. This project has demonstrated that reflective believing is an activity of life not limited to religious thinkers. Therefore, any reflective believer, religious or not, will be enriched by the insights found here.