

Having "reset" our understanding, the final chapters invite a radical "queering" of perspective, challenging traditional worldviews and revealing liberating truths in the messy parts of human life. Ana Ester Pádua Freire introduces this impulse in "Liberating Fixed Identities" (Chapter 10), providing a framework for engaging marginalized groups whose identities have been fixed by patriarchal or colonial norms. Inatoli Aye's "Queer Resistance: Reflections of an Indigenous Woman" (Chapter 11) shows how queer resistance can be a shared resource for Indigenous peoples reclaiming their identities from colonial impositions. In "Male Violence Against Men" (Chapter 12), David Tombs, Sithembiso Zwane, and Charlene van der Walt create a space for victims of violence by queering the crucifixion of Jesus. Anita J. Monro's "*Stabat Mater: The Birth/Death of the Cross*" (Chapter 13) uses psychoanalytic frameworks to re-symbolize the cross as a birth rather than a death. Finally, Anna Kasafi Perkins' "Filth in the church/body" (Chapter 14) critiques sanitized Christianity by engaging with excreta and other profanities to show how we can find liberating truth in despised parts of human life. The volume's final chapter, "liberating tidalectics: *a luta continua*" (The Struggle Continues) by Michael N. Jagessar, summarizes the book's main thesis: liberation is not a final destination but a perpetual journey.

Although the book's provocative style effectively views theology through new lenses, I find the book's decolonization efforts, which focus on theology and identity, diverge from a key component of decolonization in our context in Canada: the repatriation of land. This omission leaves a gap for future theological work to address.

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Wearing a Broken Indigene Heart on the Sleeve of Christian Mission.

By Carmen Lansdowne. Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2025. xxvi + 176 Pp. \$34.00.

Carmen Lansdowne is Assistant Professor of United Church of Canada Studies at Emmanuel College, Toronto. Previously she served as Moderator of The United Church of Canada. She is a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation and ordained in the United Church. In this book she lays out basic guidelines for a theology of mission from an Indigenous Christian perspective. She believes that for all the harm Christianity and its institutions have done, still Christian faith offers healing, life-giving

possibilities that must be honoured. Lansdowne also believes that theology matters and that it must engage political and cultural realities that shape systems of injustice that marginalize Indigenous and other communities.

She begins by briefly laying out the realities of colonial oppression that continue to exist but which are often downplayed or not recognized. A key feature of the present from her perspective is that Eurocentric or Western philosophies, worldviews and practices are assumed to be normative in Western institutions and civil discourse in a way that marginalizes and denigrates Indigenous thought and traditions, along with those from the Global South and racialized minorities. She lifts up how in her inherited tradition learning and truth-seeking are based on relationships and shared work and activities. In this approach, right action leads to correct understanding. Lansdowne links this to Gustavo Gutiérrez's view that practice is the first step, and that theological understanding follows from reflection on it. Paulo Freire's notion that consciousness raising is key to the liberation of both oppressed and oppressors is also central to her approach. She presents this book as an exercise in consciousness raising. By laying out the devastation caused by colonial structures of thought and practice in both church and Canadian society, and by lifting up Indigenous alternatives to Eurocentric approaches, she hopes to raise peoples' awareness and move the church to become more intercultural in its approach to mission. Her aim is not to repudiate Eurocentric perspectives, but to de-centre them, so that a liberating dialogue can ensue between Eurocentric theology and Indigenous and other perspectives.

For Lansdowne, mission must be understood as being church with others. Rather seeking to help and often colonize others, the church must enter into solidarity with them, accepting the cultural differences of others and being open to transformation by them. From a stance of being with others, seeking justice then becomes a second component of mission. A first task in seeking justice is to unmask the hidden privileges and complicity in oppression of colonial thought patterns and social structures that are assumed to be normative. Through solidarity and relationships with others an understanding of liberation for both oppressed and oppressors emerges that becomes the goal of mission. Lansdowne also endorses Gutiérrez's notion of the preferential option for the poor as a guide for this solidarity. The fourth element of mission is theology. While Lansdowne argues that relationships and shared action are primary as the source of understanding, she also emphasizes that thought and theology

matter. Critical reflection arises from action, but through reflection thought also guides action and illuminates its meaning.

Following upon this she develops three principles that must guide an Indigenous understanding of Christian mission. First, following the preferential option for the poor, she argues that the history of Christian missions must be told and current approaches to mission must be formulated by giving primacy to the experiences, stories and perspectives of the marginalized and oppressed. Second, mission must be wholistic in its approach. It must engage political and cultural realities, it must engage ethical issues, and it must have a pedagogical element of consciousness raising. Third, an Indigenous approach to mission must be developed through interdisciplinary study and dialogue, and intercultural in its perspective. Lansdowne endorses the United Church's understanding of interculturalism with its aim that different groups will be mutually transformed by the perspectives of others. This includes a critique of hegemonic theological perspectives which have crowded out others in the church.

Lansdowne develops these ideas through dialogue with a wide variety of Indigenous and other writers and by drawing on her experience in the World Council of Churches and other forums. The book ends with a list of suggested readings for those who want to pursue further study along the lines of thought she opens up.

This is an important, informative, thought provoking and well written book. It will be beneficial for clergy, theological educators, church leaders, and anyone concerned with the church's mission.

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Saskatoon, Canada.

The Upending of Wendell Forbes

David Giuliano. Latitude 46 Publishing, 2025. pp.237

I was recently asked for suggestions for a speaker on the topic of the spirituality of aging. I was tempted to suggest Wendall and Ruby Forbes. They are characters in David Giuliano's second novel *The Upending of Wendell Forbes*. Like his first novel, *The Undertaking of Billy Buffone*, this book is set in the fictional town of Twenty-Six Mile House in Northern Ontario.

David was the 39th Moderator of The United Church of Canada and served as the United Church minister in Marathon, ON for many years. He continues to live in that northern community. After writing many sermons,

articles, children's books and two books reflecting on his journey with cancer, he has moved to the genre of writing novels. I have known David for over 40 years and I am grateful for his gift of writing, as his natural practice of theological reflection has found expression in the depth of novels.

Wendall and Ruby Forbes are a retired couple who are learning to adjust to new realities of diminished memory, having children and grandchildren living at a distance and learning new technologies of connection. There is a deep bond of love and commitment to one another that helps them through the struggles and opportunities that shape their daily lives.

The novel takes place during the days around Christmas. The reality of winter and the season of Christmas combine to provide room at the inn of the Forbes home for a collection of travellers and neighbours in need during a fierce storm and subsequent power outage. Over a couple of days, the welcoming of a baby, the sharing of food, the telling of stories reveal the truth of a love and blessing that is a pathway to the Holy. While the electrical power is out, there is an important *kairos* time when the power of compassion and human vulnerability creates a sacramental experience of community and connection.

While Wendall and Ruby are the main characters, there is a delightful collection of other characters who offer breadth and depth to the story. The supporting cast is a variety of ages with a variety of needs and stories, and the mixture of ages is part of the gift and meaning of the season for Wendall and Ruby. While the other characters are vital to the novel, the primary character is Wendall, who is a retired minister working at processing a variety of needs, wounds, and realities.

I recently heard an interview with a writer who has moved from writing screen plays to novels and spoke of how the novel provides the opportunity to write about the inner thoughts of a character. This novel is defined by the inner thought and spiritual processing that is at work within Wendall. He makes the decision to adopt the muteness of the biblical character of Zechariah and so he doesn't speak through most of the novel (except to Ruby). It can be easy to forget the muteness because the inner thinking of Wendall is so beautifully written with humour, wisdom and grace as he lives with the upending of so much of what has anchored his living.

The book is filled with theological and biblical themes and images as Wendall adjusts to new realities and works through the changing