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Miguel A. De La Torre, The Politics of Jesús: A Hispanic Political Theology

Ramón Luzárraga
Benedictine University Mesa

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Miguel A. De La Torre. *The Politics of Jesús: A Hispanic Political Theology*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015. 201 pp. \$27.00 Paper. ISBN: 978-1-4422-5036-9.

Miguel De La Torre argues that contemporary Euroamerican interpretations of Jesus Christ in the Bible are well-intentioned but naïve attempts to get at an utterly elusive objective truth about Jesus. At their worst, Euroamerican readings of the Bible marginalize and oppress Hispanics and other minorities by design, by fabricating a Jesus who identifies with white persons and defends their dominance. De La Torre proposes an unapologetically contextual reading of the biblical Jesus by replacing Jesus with *Jesús*. He privileges a Hispanic interpretation of *Jesús* because Hispanics' place on the underside of U.S. history gives them greater proximity to an authentic portrayal of Jesus as understood by the New Testament authors. Such a reading is a liberative one, designed to free Hispanics from oppression and marginalization. This contextual reading of the Bible alone saves. The author hopes that while Hispanics would benefit from this interpretation, other marginalized minorities may also, as they see fit.

The chapters piece together this liberative reading, taking the lived experience of *Jesús*, *José*, and *María* and mapping it to the contemporary, daily lived experience of most U.S. Hispanics. De La Torre begins with *Jesús* and his family sharing in the identity of those Hispanics who are poor migrants and refugees and who possess no pedigree in the eyes of the ruling class and its structures. *Jesús* brings salvation to Hispanics by accompanying them in their lives, heals their impaired and injured humanity by identifying with them, and liberates them by raising their consciousness to resist and overcome those persons and structures dominating them.

This mapping continues with De La Torre's portrayal of *Jesús* as someone who understands the social location of Hispanics because he incarnated himself in the daily life of

persons, identifying with their struggles against the temptations of possessions, privilege, and power. The identity and location of *Jesús* translate to social actions indicting Christians complicit in structures and practices that dominate and marginalize Hispanics, because *Jesús* chose the life of the poor and confronts established socio-economic and religious structures and practices. *Jesús* finally presents the reader with an “altar call” to enter into a life of discipleship, lived in a community imitating the Triune God and called to disrupt oppressive social structures, with the expectation of suffering the cross for this effort. This call is for Christians and for any marginalized group, religious or not, who identifies with *Jesús*.

Graduate students and faculty will find this book a comprehensive and provocative political theological ethic to analyze and debate. However, the author’s lack of interest in orthodoxy costs him a resource that could help his argument. Patristic theologians share with the author a strong critique against the wealthy and the powerful precisely because Jesus Christ as *theoanthropos* contradicts the idolatries of wealth and power. Without his divinity, Jesus is another virtuous person whom one may choose to follow, but who is easily outclassed by other virtuous persons in history.

Ramón Luzárraga

Benedictine University Mesa

Mesa, Arizona