

5-15-2022

## Patrick B. Reyes. The Purpose Gap: Empowering Communities of Color to Find Meaning and Thrive

Krista M. Chinchilla-Patzke  
*Dominican University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/jhlt>

---

### Recommended Citation

Chinchilla-Patzke, Krista M. "Patrick B. Reyes. The Purpose Gap: Empowering Communities of Color to Find Meaning and Thrive," *Journal of Hispanic / Latino Theology*. Vol. 24 : No. 1 , Article 8. (2022) :67-68  
Available at: <https://repository.usfca.edu/jhlt/vol24/iss1/8>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Hispanic / Latino Theology by an authorized editor of USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. For more information, please contact [repository@usfca.edu](mailto:repository@usfca.edu).

Patrick B. Reyes. *The Purpose Gap: Empowering Communities of Color to Find Meaning and Thrive*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021. 238 pp. \$26.00 Paper. ISBN: 978-0-664-26670-7.

Patrick B. Reyes's *The Purpose Gap: Empowering Communities of Color to Find Meaning and Thrive* is an exploration of surviving and thriving. Reyes's contribution to the available literature about finding one's purpose is unique. Reyes strongly suggests that we "not believe the self-help literature that finding your purpose is the key to happiness. This exploratory work is not a solo act. Even Jesus could not perform his purpose alone" (145). *The Purpose Gap* initially dives into this communal work of discerning personal, communal, and institutional aspirations within the context of privilege. More specifically, Reyes unpacks these aspirations from the context of *a lack of privilege*, which he defines as the "threat of extinction" that marginalized and oppressed communities face (1). Understanding this context is the first step in a move toward thriving. Reyes speaks directly to those who find themselves in what he calls "the purpose gap." He plainly acknowledges the "violent and oppressive conditions [that] exist while making the point that for those just trying to survive, moving toward thriving is not beyond your reach" (3).

*The Purpose Gap* is just as valuable for those who do not find themselves within this gap or do not face this threat of extinction. Though Reyes himself is a Latino writing from a community that has had to focus on surviving, he explicitly states that closing the purpose gap is the necessary work of a community for the benefit of *everyone* in a community.

In addition to naming and describing the purpose gap, Reyes provides questions and guided reflections throughout the book, giving readers the practical opportunity to reflect on their lived experience, the communities from which they come, and how they might work to close the gap.

Reyes weaves personal stories into each chapter as he beckons us to identify the purpose gap and, ultimately, to eliminate it. These stories help readers to immerse themselves in his reality and, to a great extent, illustrate how communities are compelled to produce and focus on their singular brightest star (or very few bright stars). Reyes's vulnerability provides a tangible example of how the purpose gap might affect others and, perhaps more importantly, point to the collective dream that can be envisioned when a community dedicates itself to closing this gap.

In discussing the threat of extinction and the purpose gap faced by marginalized and oppressed communities, Reyes's book poses a critical challenge. For those "who are oppressed, dispossessed, and descended from those who survived slavery and colonization" as well as for those who are not, *The Purpose Gap* calls for the recognition that "our inner lives are never ours, alone." The gaps must be addressed and closed for future generations (32). Reyes challenges readers to diligently unlearn our miseducation, a task that is a part of the "daily grind" to eliminate the purpose gap (171). His book opens conversations for all to participate in creating systems in which constellations, not singular stars, are celebrated. This makes *The Purpose Gap* an important read for all.

*Krista M. Chinchilla-Patzke*

*Dominican University*

*River Forest, Illinois*