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The Spirit of Adoption: at Home in God's Family

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collection of essays that would be useful for the beginning student as well as the seasoned professional.

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The Spirit of Adoption: At Home in God's Family

Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner

Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003

134 pages, \$17.14 Softcover

In this is a wonderful, touching, timely and informative book, Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner writes a theological reflection and interpretation of God's involvement in adoption. Noting that the literature on adoption lacks an articulation of the spiritual dimension, she posits faith as a resource which can motivate, undergird, and sustain the "adoption triad": birth parents, adoptees, and adoptive parents. This book, then, is a theology that encompasses the entire experiential spectrum of the adoption process. Her intention is to identify and explore the feelings people live through and with during the process of birthing a family through adoption.

The book includes interviews with adoptive families and developing adoptees. Stevenson-Moessner documents the ecstasy and excitement as well as the agony and pain of the adoption process for all participants in the adoption triangle. Through her use of fifteen interviews with adoptive parents, she takes us on a journey through the very real lives of families: their feelings, wants/desires, disappointments and excitement. She parallels the preparation process of adopted couples with those of expecting couples, and she also reflects an acceptance-of-differences between a biologically constructed family and one designed through adoption.

Through an inter-weaving of biblical stories and contemporary experiences, the author shows how faith serves as a resource. But she also critiques patriarchal language for God, and calls on practical theologians, pastors and Biblical exegetes to reconsider traditional images. She then presents a way to develop a new image of God.

I was struck by the Stevenson-Moessner's inclusive "both/and approach" in her theology of adoption. She speaks of God's rejoicing and God's woundedness (God as mutable and God as passible, etc.), developing the theological image of God as Adopting Parent and as Relinquishing Parent and as Relinquished Child.

She concludes her book with goals that emphasize the biblical doctrine of adoption as a personal message to all Christians, to particular Christian churches, to adoptive and birth parents, and to adoptees. Her purpose is to embolden, encourage, support and legitimize those in the adoption triad. Her book, moreover, offers support, sustenance, and spiritual "signposts" along the journey. As an adoptive mother of a little girl from China, I deeply appreciated *The Spirit of Adoption*, and recommend it for all involved in the adoption process.

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Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada

Reginald W. Bibby

Toronto: Stoddart, 2002

286 pages, \$32.95 Hardcover

Not long ago, I received a phone call from the mother of a 10-year old daughter and a 14-year old son. She wanted to discuss with me some of "the profound and puzzling questions about faith, the church, baptism and the Bible that my children are putting to me." Needless to say, this mother and I have had several exciting, exploratory, and helpful conversations.

How fortuitous that I am having these conversations at the very time that I'm engaging data and insights presented in Reginald Bibby's most recent book, *Restless Gods*. On the basis of sociological research in Canada conducted by Bibby and his research colleagues, the author claims that there are convincing signs of significant

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