

A scene from
The Mask You Live In

relinquishing any sort of power around that.” She thinks that people are frightened to “go even an inch outside of their comfort zone at all, literally, for class, race, gender, sexuality.”

Unjust for filmmakers—and viewers

Culture colors our perceptions of ourselves and of others. It can also influence how we encounter God. Detweiler, who said he traces his spiritual roots to watching *Raging Bull* as a kid, says he finds profundity in film that he doesn’t always find in church.

“Film touches my heart in ways that sermons can’t,” Detweiler told *Sojourners*. “Seeking out stories about people who aren’t like you is one of the easiest ways to expand your heart, mind, and experience—and all you have to do is press ‘play.’”

Foster says he also experiences film as a way to see others compassionately. “Movies allow us to walk in someone else’s experiences,” Foster said. “They can take down barriers that exist in an academic argument and make their point in a gentle and subversive way.”

If TV and film have this much influence over us, then discrimination in Hollywood isn’t limited to the injustice of shutting out diverse voices. It also means we’re missing out on stories that can change conversations and help dismantle prejudice. We’re missing potential cultural moments that could allow us to better understand and minister to our neighbors.

The studio offices of Hollywood may seem distant and unreachable, but audiences still have an impact. Because the industry is built on what makes money, we must be intentional consumers if we want real

change. Pay attention to what movies and shows get recognition, and who makes them. Support projects that come from underrepresented voices, and abstain from ones that reinforce stereotypes.

We can also support organizations working to encourage diverse, culturally sensitive media. One, The Representation Project, produces films (2015’s *The Mask You Live In* being the most recent) about the role of media stereotypes in promoting gender inequality. Another, Media Rise, connects filmmakers with activists and social scientists to help their messages reach audiences. The 2014 Media Rise Festival brought together more than 700 established and emerging voices for the chance to share their stories and pitch ideas.

I’M STILL reconciling the long-term effects of my early movie heroes. Maybe having more women to look up to would have changed my trajectory, maybe it wouldn’t. I’ll never know. But, Giese says, making sure there are more protagonists of every race and gender—as well as parity reached in who gets to tell their stories—can ensure future generations won’t risk being negatively affected.

“We have to think about what the ramifications are for women, girls, men, and boys all over the world,” Giese said, regarding female filmmakers. “We are not getting our best voices out there. Those best voices are going to come from everywhere.” ■

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Reviewed by Weldon D. Nisly

JESUS AND THE LIES OF WAR

Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War, by Robert Emmet Meagher. Cascade Books. *Borderline: Reflections on War, Sex, and Church*, by Stan Goff. Cascade Books.

DAYS AFTER 9/11, a just war philosopher and I were interviewed on Christian radio. I’m a pacifist who served on peace teams in Nicaragua and Iraq. My co-interviewee called for waging war on “terrorists” because we must kill our enemies while loving them. My plea to listen to Jesus and victims of war was scorned.

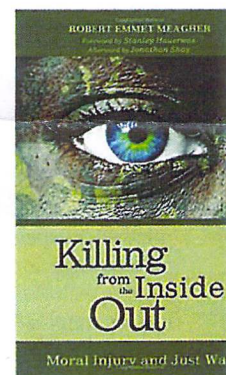
Two compelling recent challenges to Christian justifications for war are Robert Emmet Meagher’s *Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War* and Stan Goff’s *Borderline: Reflections on War, Sex, and Church*.

Meagher, a humanities scholar, incorporates listening to veterans of war into his work. Goff writes as someone who was a soldier before being transformed by Jesus.

Three issues in both books—just war, masculine sexual violence, and moral injury—resonate with my peace team encounters with war. Through very different approaches, Meagher and Goff offer the best reflection on these concerns that I’ve seen; both rightly implicate the church.

First, just war has a sordid rather than sanctifying history. Meagher’s survey of ancient literature, scripture, and Christian history reveals its legacy as antithetical to Jesus’ teaching: “Since the time of Constantine ... just war doctrine has served to license and legitimize state and ecclesiastical violence and to draw a convenient, if imaginary, line between killing and murder.”

Meagher documents the church’s role in envisioning and biblically supporting just war. He rightly calls just war a “deadly lie”



that deludes us with the “possibility of war without sin.”

Goff confesses that, in his experience, waging war was not about defending or loving anyone, but about “martial manhood, a death cult, I’ve come to see, was my religion.” Speaking out of his current faith Goff proclaims, “Violence and domination characterize a world in rebellion. Yet we can embody the kingdom of heaven as the body of Christ—the peaceable kingdom—here and now, as testimony to the redemptive lordship of Christ to a broken world. That is where I start.”

Second, war is shaped by and shapes masculinity that perpetuates sexual violence and the domination of women consistent with domination of the enemy.

Drawing on history, culture, theology, feminism, and his combat experience, Goff unveils the perverse masculinity of war, declaring, “We cannot separate war and the contempt for and subjugation of women.” He names two questions as the themes of his book: “First, why have Christians been so warlike? Second, why do Christian men still caricature, dominate, misrepresent, condescend to, and dismiss women?” Goff beautifully counters the masculine war on women with Jesus’ way with women. His best biblical insight takes us to Jesus eating dinner with men (Luke 7:36-50) who were scandalized when a woman entered and washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and hair. Jesus confronts them with the question: “Do you see this woman?” Goff confronts men now with

“War invariably makes soldiers do bad things, and we become what we do.”

this same question throughout his book.

Meagher helps us “come face to face with the sexuality of war and conquest” in ancient literature and church history. I longed for him to explore what it means to confront sexual violence in war today, but I understand that his task is writing an obituary for just war doctrine.

Third, in addition to the death and destruction suffered by victims of war,

combatants are also wounded by war.

Meagher exposes the wounds of war known today as moral injury—“the violation, by oneself or another, of a personally embedded moral code or value resulting in deep injury to the psyche or soul.” My experience listening to a mother’s heart-breaking story of her Iraq war veteran son who took his own life confirms Meagher’s claim: “Military suicide today is not some undecipherable, modern, or even postmodern aberration ... it is the lamentable legacy of a long tradition of justified war and inevitable moral injury.”

Reviewed by Julie Polter

SERMONS FOR LIFE

Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit, by Leah D. Schade.
Chalice Press.

PREACHING A SERMON on an issue debated in the public square: It’s complicated. Make that issue the climate crisis, and it’s really, really complicated. Even in congregations where climate change is not broadly disputed, a pastor faces the challenge of crafting a gospel-informed message that doesn’t swing either to naïve ways we might “make it all better” or pessimistic apathy.

But there’s evidence it’s worth the work and risks: In terms of policy issues, climate is one where a clergy leader’s word has proven impact. According to a 2014 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute and the American Academy of Religion, Americans with a clergy leader who “speaks at least occasionally about climate change” are more likely to be concerned about the issue than those “who attend congregations where the issue is rarely or never raised.”

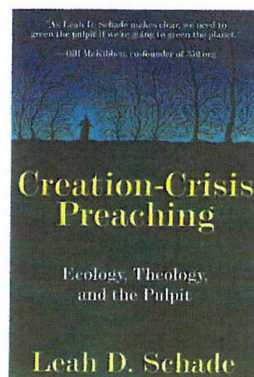
So where does a preacher begin and with what goals?

Leah D. Schade’s *Creation-Crisis Preaching* equips pastors to name the present crisis and preach a call to action and healing. She describes one theological path to sermons infused with both testimony of the sacredness of God’s creation and our call to

Goff laments that “war, as a practice, does not inculcate honor as often as hatred, hostility, cruelty, and the fragmentation of the soldier’s personality. Bad soldiers do not make war a bad thing. War invariably makes soldiers do bad things, and we become what we do.”

Meagher and Goff both make clear that there can be no just war. Jesus calls us to become who we *are* in Christ, not what we *do* in war or because of war. ■

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be agents of the world’s healing. Schade is a Lutheran pastor and anti-fracking activist who has also done doctoral work focused on homiletics and ecological theology. Appropriately, in this book she explores both the theoretical underpinnings and the practicalities of climate-crisis preaching. Her approach is clear-eyed about the current dire situation of creation, but also committed

to hope: “Because I am a Lutheran homiletician,” she writes, “I am compelled to find a way to preach the *eco-resurrection*, even when most signs indicate that Good Friday may be the fate of our planet.”

Schade sketches the sometimes contentious and damaging history of religion’s relationship to the environment, some different approaches to ecological theology, and a “green” hermeneutic for interpreting scripture.” She explores briefly how social change theory can inform the vocation of preaching and the role sermons might play in a social movement.

Drawing on social change theory, Schade suggests three approaches to environmental preaching: “consciousness-raising, call for action, and sustainable change,” giving examples of each from others’ sermons