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The logo features the letters 'AAR' in a large, bold, serif font. A thick, black, curved line arches underneath the letters. To the right of 'AAR', the words 'BOOK REVIEW' are written in a smaller, bold, serif font.

God and the Green Divide: Religious Environmentalism in Black and White. By Amanda Baugh. University of California Press, 2017. 205 pages. \$85.00 (hardcover), \$29.95 (paperback), \$28.09 (e-book).

While the field of religion and ecology has come a long way in a short time, Rosemary Radford Ruether has argued that this emergent area of scholarship would benefit from greater attention to race, poverty, and social justice. A number of other scholars have also noted that there is not much literature linking religion and ecology to the literature on environmental justice (the body of research focused on the intersections between social inequality and environmental risks). Amanda Baugh's *God and the Green Divide* attends to both of these questions and much more.

Baugh takes the field of religion and ecology to task as a body of scholarship that often uncritically assumes that “all religions teach the same thing”—in particular, that all faith traditions are, at some core level, “green.” The author problematizes this claim, because, although well intended in that it advocates for the pro-ecological themes in religious traditions, the implication is that it enforces particular religious ecological outlooks, pushing those deemed insufficiently “green” to conform to a particular orientation toward ecological sustainability, and may suggest that any faith tradition or practice not aligned with this dictate is misguided or inferior.

Baugh explores these tense dynamics through an in-depth ethnographic study of Faith in Place—a Chicago-based organization that works to build inter-faith support around environmental stewardship across multiple racial/ethnic communities. Baugh finds that many leaders and supporters of this organization were motivated by a range of complex perspectives, including religious values and assumptions about racial, ethnic, and class difference. Some of those complex motivations were on display when a leader from a Chicago area mosque pushed the organization toward an embrace of “green” practices like installing a solar water heating system. The mosque’s board president and others associated with the organization indicated that, in addition to their firm conviction that the

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Quran and Hadith contain many pro-environmental passages and that environmental values lay at the heart of Islam, their public embrace of such views served in large part to counter increasingly common associations between Islam, fundamentalism, and terrorism. For some Christian ministers involved in partnerships with Faith in Place's brand of religious environmentalism, a strong motivation was to recruit new parishioners to Chicago's churches that were in need of revitalization in the face of dwindling membership.

Thus, for Baugh, religious environmentalism is frequently fueled by diverse motivations and shaped by the "messiness" of everyday "lived religion" that many scholars and proponents often overlook. In other words, the scholarship on religion and ecology suggests that people of faith and faith institutions should or do care about our ecosystems, but have presented scant evidence or understanding of how ethical and theological reflections actually present themselves in everyday life.

Faith in Place's Director, Clare Butterfield, summed up the organization's approach to environmental and climate justice in this way: "All our faith traditions call us to care for the poor. And with global warming, the poor are hurt first and worst... It is our moral responsibility to protect the most vulnerable communities as we transition to a clean energy future" (131). Baugh points out that "as these declarations indicate, Faith in Place leaders relied much more heavily on generalized religious prescriptions to advance social justice than on particular references to scriptures or religious ethics" (131). Butterfield is a fascinating character in the story, and offers Baugh some of the most interesting linkages to religious studies scholarship. Baugh argues that Butterfield's faith draws on process theology ("positing a God of great empathy who established the laws of science but cannot violate them") and the biological concept of emergence (the idea that natural systems exercise capacities that are greater than the sum of their parts) to constitute what anthropologists like Webb Keane call "modern religion"—a worldview and practice that seeks liberation from the "false beliefs and fetichisms" of previous eras to realize and exercise greater agency. This weaving of various concepts and theories allowed Butterfield to live a life and practice social change in ways that reflected the belief that there need be no conflict between religion and science, and that both were "always revisable" (138). This framework posits that both God and humans collaborate in the world everyday, and that since humans are responsible for climate change, humans must lead the charge to "get us out of this mess" (p 147).

Butterfield's scientifically rational approach to theology worked well for many supporters and colleagues, but clashed with others who were people of faith who felt that environmentalism should be kept separate from theology or that it conflicted with certain tenets of their theological views and practice altogether. Therein lies the dilemma for Faith in Place: while espousing a religious environmentalism that is presented as universal (and assuming that all world religions have, at their core, an ethic of ecological care and stewardship—a problem at the

heart of the field of religion and ecology as well), Faith in Place glossed over the specific ways in which many different religious traditions and their practitioners may not actually share those views. Butterfield's modern religion, therefore, ran into serious limitations when used as a means to build bridges of understanding across diverse faith perspectives, because those whose faith pushed them to refuse certain "pro-environmental" dictates revealed that in Faith in Place's framework, they were evidently practicing "bad" religion and should bend to accommodate the scientifically proven needs of an earth in crisis.

Faith in Place's Veronica Kyle is an African American woman hired to build support and outreach in the black community and who was quite successful in that regard. Kyle was deeply conscious of the challenge of environmental justice in communities of color, but insisted that the organization go beyond typical environmental justice concerns with disproportionate exposure to pollution and instead encourage African Americans to pursue energy efficiency, home weatherization, and the installation of solar panels—practices typically associated with middle-class, mainstream white environmentalism. I would argue that, in the hands of African Americans facing environmental racism (as many certainly do in the city of Chicago), these activities may represent an integration of African Americans into mainstream environmentalism, but they also reveal an expansion of environmental justice activism rather than ideas and action that go beyond environmental justice politics.

Baugh cites the work of historian Hal Rothman, who rightly noted that the lack of cultural and class diversity has been one of the great failings of the modern secular US environmental movement. This is also a failing of many religious environmental organizations. However, Faith in Place, for all its shortcomings and challenges, has bucked this trend and succeeded at achieving its primary goal of bridging the eco-divide. One reason why the organization was so successful is because of its unique and clear message that environmentalism should be focused on "people, not polar bears"—a major distinction that consciously set them apart from mainstream conservation groups that tend to define environmental concerns as primarily focused on wild spaces where charismatic mega fauna exist. Furthermore, in contrast to scholarship by researchers like Bron Taylor and Rebecca Kneale Gould that reveals how nature-oriented religions sometimes replace more traditional forms of institutional religion, Baugh finds that Faith in Place participants found a way to integrate their environmental concerns into their existing religious worlds.

Baugh argues persuasively that the success of Faith in Place's religious environmentalism is a result not of promoting the environmental basis of religious texts and traditions, but rather because of the ways that assumptions about race, ethnicity, and class motivated organizers, leaders, and practitioners like Butterfield and Kyle to mobilize and reach out to people across those divides. And people of color who embraced Faith in Place's version of religious environmentalism frequently did so because they interpreted environmentalism as

a means of promoting positive behaviors and favorable representations of their communities, such as support for education, respectability, and affluence.

Baugh demonstrates the power of first-rate ethnography—throughout the book the author presents clear and compelling details so the reader really gets a feel for the people and communities engaged in religious environmentalism in Chicago's neighborhoods and faith organizations. The author is also quite conscious of her own positionality in terms of her class, gender, and racial status and how this can shape a scholar's research and access to the field. That methodological orientation and awareness pays off, as Baugh navigated Chicago's turbulent terrain of race relations with great skill and produced an important study that significantly advances our understanding of religious environmentalism.

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