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Thompson's "The virtual body of Christ in a suffering world" (Book Review)

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Thompson, D. A. (2016). *The virtual body of Christ in a suffering world*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 144 pp. \$19.99. ISBN 9781501815188

The world we live in is fast becoming a wireless one where 24/7 digital connectivity through email, Facebook and instant messaging is increasingly the norm. This book accepts digital connectivity as our reality, but presents a vision of how faith communities can use technology to strengthen the body of Christ for those who are hurting while also helping followers of Christ think critically about the limits of technology. Thompson begins with a testimony of a professor of religious studies who did not use technology and was critical of its ability. Upon receiving a stage 4 Cancer diagnosis, this professor experienced how technology could be used as a 24/7 support line to encourage and support their journey. The book concludes by acknowledging that the body of Christ can and does exist virtually and does make a difference in the lives of those who use it.

Reviewer

Deborah McConkey, Horizon College & Seminary

Challies, T., & Byers, J. (2016). *Visual theology: Seeing and understanding the truth about God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 155 pp. \$17.99. ISBN 9780310520436

Tim Challies, a pastor, speaker, and well-known blogger, and Josh Byers, a communications pastor, have written a book on living the Christian life that articulates basic aspects of theology. The book is divided into four sections: Grow Close to Christ, Understand the Work of Christ, Become Like Christ, and Live for Christ. The chapters includes a variety of visuals such as representative icons, relationship charts, or a decision tree asking specific questions to understand how to put sin to death (pp. 96-97).

Section two describes the world as a stage with God unfolding His drama in the four acts of creation, the fall, redemption, and the new creation. It is refreshing to see doctrine presented as something essential and alive, leading to love, humility, obedience, growth, worship and unity, rather than something that is seen as either divisive or boring dogma.

Chapters six provides an excellent description of what is involved in stopping old habits and patterns using John Owen's model of sanctification, and chapter seven describes four marks of repentance that will result in true change.