



# The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong

*By William C. Placher*

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William Placher looks at "classical" Christian theology (Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Martin Luther) and contrasts it with the Christian discourse about God that evolved in the seventeenth century. In particular, he deals with the notion of transcendence that gained prominence in this era and its impact on modern theology and modern thinking today. He persuasively argues that useful lessons can be drawn from premodern thinking about God, especially when viewed within the context of contemporary objections to it. This reexamination, according to Placher, has practical and profound implications for modern theology.

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### Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Placher (theology, Wabash Coll.) argues that much contemporary discourse about God is directed at a mistaken understanding of the classical Christian doctrines of God. Placher uses the doctrines formulated by Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin to recapture a sense of God's transcendence in the modern age. Placher's book is an elegant theological essay that exposes the wealth of Christian history as well as the bankruptcy of much modern God-talk. Recommended for most libraries.

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From [Booklist](#)

To the extent that Placher's purpose is to convince us that--in their radical visions of divine transcendence--premodern theologians have lessons to teach us, he succeeds brilliantly. The great strength of this book is its reintroduction of Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin to the postmodern theological conversation. Readers will encounter them here in ways that, to Placher's credit, will render the object of postmodern criticisms of "classical theism" thoroughly strange. That object, Placher maintains, is much more appropriately identified with a wrong turn taken by philosophy and theology in the seventeenth century, which he describes as a domestication of transcendence. Even readers who are not convinced by Placher's critiques of process thought and Mark C. Taylor's a-theology will find much of value in this beautifully and thoughtfully written account of God's essential "wildness." And it is a timely meditation on human response to wildness which, paradoxically, inspires silence at the very moment that it enfolds us in a world of words. *Steve Schroeder*

From the Back Cover

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