

UDTS professor's book looks at Christian tradition through marginalized communities

Dr. Robert Hoch, associate professor of homiletics and worship at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, has published the book, *By the Rivers of Babylon: Blueprint for a Church in Exile*, with Fortress Press.

"It is commonplace today to hear Christians say we are a 'church in exile' or a church in a 'post-Christendom' society. But what does this really mean?" asks Hoch. "*By the Rivers of Babylon*, reads the larger North American tradition of Christian worship and mission through the prism of visibly marginalized communities, communities that know the power of Babylon concretely. That is, they know displacement through some combination of physical dislocation, ethnicity, economic marginality, and political stigma. Each of the highlight communities accents different tensions and challenges facing the exilic community as it attempts to 'make a way' through its baptism by the rivers of Babylon."

Dean Bradley Longfield stated, "We rejoice with Dr. Hoch on the publication of this important work. *By the Rivers of Babylon* manifests Dr. Hoch's passionate commitment to justice and peacemaking and is emblematic of the concern of the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary for the life of the church and the nurture of faithful, compassionate Christian leaders."

The book has been praised by Sally Brown of Princeton Theological Seminary, who claimed "Every pastor, seminarian, or judicatory leader who has ever questioned the tameness of the North American church needs to read Robert P. Hoch's *By the Rivers of Babylon*."

Robert Hoch joined the UDTS faculty in 2003. An Alaska Native descendant and a member of the Eyak and Chugach Alaska Native organizations, he is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Dr. Hoch's scholarly interests include the practice of preaching, ecclesiology, and the interpretation of scripture.

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