



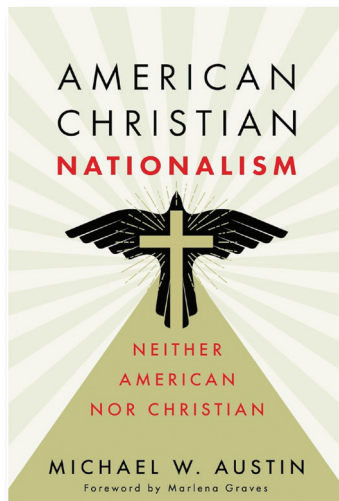
Book Reviews

October 2025

Section Editors: Craig L. Nesson, Troy M. Troftgruben

Review a book!

Currents in Theology and Mission is seeking to expand its number of regular book reviewers. If you have interest, please send name, contact information, and areas of primary interest to currents@lstc.edu.



American Christian Nationalism: Neither American nor Christian. By Michael W. Austin.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024.
ISBN: 978-0-8028-8435-0. xii & 92 pages. Paper. \$17.99.

In *American Christian Nationalism*, Austin—a philosophy of religion and ethics scholar—presents a succinct and impassioned introduction to Christian

nationalism in the United States. He argues that the ideology damages Christian witness, hinders Christian growth, and ultimately contradicts Jesus's gospel and kingdom. In light of these perceived dangers, the author joins a chorus of voices expressing deep concern about the nation's political and spiritual trajectory. However, unlike most scholars, who primarily address academic and policy audiences, Austin targets lay readers.

The book highlights long-standing traditions in the United States of viewing political leaders as saviors and the nation as uniquely favored by God. According to Austin, Christian nationalism exacerbates these impulses. While acknowledging that definitions vary, he identifies several basic features of the ideology: (1) belief that America was founded as a Christian nation, (2) belief that the government should promote a particular kind of Christian culture, (3) belief that Christians should pursue political and cultural power in taking dominion over America, (4) belief that Christians should prioritize American interests over the interests of other nations, and (5) the fusion of American and Christian identities.

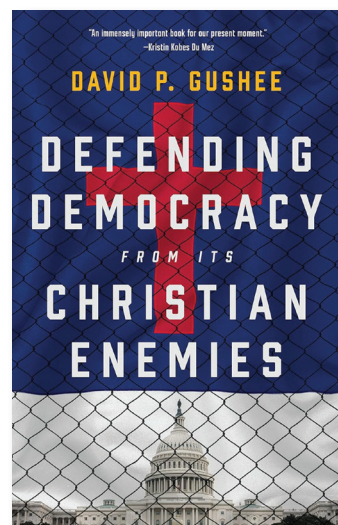
Austin argues that Christian nationalism, as he describes it, is both un-American and un-Christian. It is un-American because it inclines toward violence and coercion, which undermines liberty, and emphasizes ethnic, racial, and gender differences in ways that threaten equality. It also prioritizes personal

prosperity over serving others, fostering division. He contends Christian nationalism is un-Christian because it is idolatrous, encouraging undue exaltation of the nation and reverence for its founding documents that rivals Scripture. American Christians consequently conflate their national and spiritual identities so that they either see the two as inseparable or prioritize their national identity over their identity in Christ while undermining Christian virtues such as humility, love, and faith.

American Christian Nationalism concludes with a constructive vision for bringing Christian faith to bear in society in ways that exemplify the best American and Christian values. Drawing on Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of the "Beloved Community," the author envisions an idyllic society characterized by unity despite multiplied differences. While acknowledging that this archetype will not be fully realized in this world, he argues that the nation can move toward the communal ideal through concerted, non-violent Christian action, political engagement, and penitence grounded in conceptions of justice and love in God's kingdom.

This brief, incisive critique raises vital questions Christians in the United States should consider. The book's brevity and candor make it well-suited for readers unfamiliar with Christian nationalism, curious about its implications for the church and the nation, and unlikely to read lengthier scholarly texts. It is an ideal resource for undergraduate ethics and religion courses and church discussion groups. While other books offer more extensive evaluations—and inclusion of a balanced list recommending some of those volumes would have benefited inquisitive readers—even scholars will profit from Austin's concise arguments, along with his broad vision for aspirational Christian engagement in American culture and politics.

Melvin L. Otey
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Defending Democracy from Its Christian Enemies. By David P. Gushee.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023.
ISBN: 978-0-8028-8293-6. xii & 235 pages. Paper. \$21.99.

Gushee's *Defending Democracy from Its Christian Enemies* is a timely and distinctive contribution to the expanding conversation around Christian nationalism. The volume frames the movement as one manifestation of authoritarian reactionary Christianity, a recurring global phenomenon of which modern



developments in the United States are but one part. Like many others, Gushee's engagement is shaped by the turbulence of Donald Trump's first presidency, the bitter divide between the secular left and the religious right, and the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Writing as an American, post-evangelical democrat, Gushee argues that Christian nationalism, especially in its right-wing form, poses an existential crisis for democracy.

Gushee's historical and international scope distinguish this volume. He broadly surveys the emergence of authoritarian reactionary Christian movements over the past 150 years, beginning with political history surveys of France before the end of World War II and Germany before the birth of Nazism. The text then provides contemporary examples in Russia under Vladimir Putin, Poland with the Law and Justice party, Hungary under Viktor Orbán, and Brazil under Jair Bolsonaro before turning to the United States and Trump. By identifying similarities in circumstances and leadership, as well as shared patterns, ideologies, and tactics across these varied contexts, Gushee shows that the current American crisis is not aberrational.

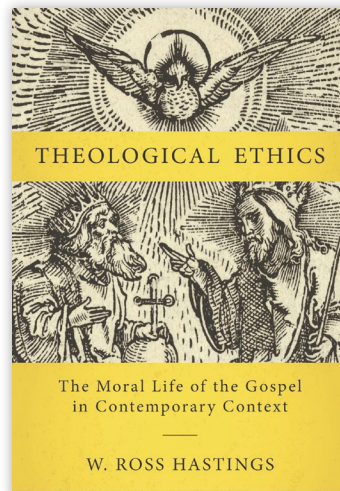
In explaining the need to defend democracy against authoritarian reactionary Christianity, Gushee describes and evaluates other political philosophies—tyranny, fascism, populism, and nationalism—while ultimately making his case for democracy, which he defines as popular sovereignty through the rule of law based on moral values that the people respect. *Defending Democracy* traces the development of modern democracy from the seventeenth century to the present, including challenges posed by fascism, Nazism, and communism, and the recent resurgence of religiously motivated authoritarianism as a counterrevolution to the moral and cultural revolutions of the 1960s. Gushee acknowledges democracy's imperfections but contends that, after centuries of authoritarian governance, it remains the best system yet devised.

The author argues that Christian nationalism is part of a concerning retreat from democratic norms, so its architects and adherents are enemies of democracy. Yet he does not merely sound the alarm; he suggests ways to enhance and improve democracy rather than retreat from it. The final chapters commend the Baptist democratic and black Christian democratic traditions in the United States. The former traditionally features congregationally and democratically governed churches, and the latter has a legacy of dogged engagement and defiantly inclusive faith. Gushee believes each offers theological and moral resources for renewing democracy. Finally, he advocates an intentional renewal of a covenantal vision of democracy.

Gushee, like many others, raises grave concerns about Christian nationalism from within the community of faith. Well-researched and engagingly written, his book demonstrates that authoritarian reactionary Christianity is historically destructive for both the faith and essential democratic freedoms. The volume should be beneficial for ethicists, clergy, scholars, politicians, and concerned citizens seeking a historical—rather than merely a political or religious—understanding of Christian nationalism,

even if they do not share the author's political or ideological background. At a time of deep division in the United States, the book offers a framework for contextualizing the rise of Christian nationalism and a call to reclaim eroding democracy through informed, faithful engagement.

Melvin L. Otey
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***Theological Ethics:
The Moral Life
of the Gospel in
Contemporary
Context.*** By W. Ross
Hastings.

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021.
ISBN: 978-0-3101-1195-5. xii &
244 pages. Paper. \$29.99.

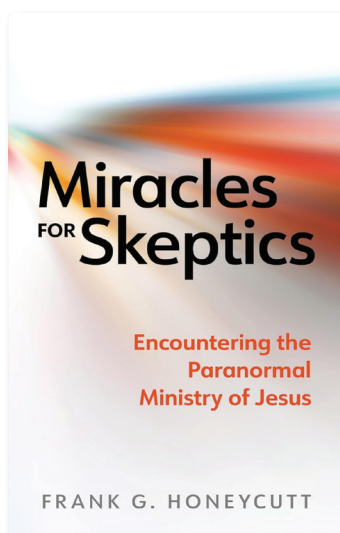
W. Ross Hastings believes approaching ethics from a theological position necessarily means

including the Trinity and trinitarian theology. This Trinitarian model, through which he looks at ethics, is a profound perspective as God perfectly interacts with Godself in and through the other persons of the Trinity. Our hope, as people, is to participate as “persons-in-communion with [the Triune-God] and in community and so fulfil the moral law and bring hope to the world” (41).

Using this Trinitarian lens, Hastings explores different areas of theological ethics, for example, how it is evangelical (chapter 6), public (chapter 9), and eschatological (chapters 4 and 5). Hastings also explores theological ethics through biblical interpretation (chapter 3), taking a literalist perspective. He covers sexual ethics in chapter 8.

Theological Ethics is geared toward academics and theologians and is written as such, making it largely inaccessible to the average reader. Nevertheless, the idea of exploring ethics through a Trinitarian perspective has merit and makes for thought-provoking reading.

Anthony G. Windau
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***Miracles for Skeptics:
Encountering the
Paranormal Ministry
of Jesus***, By Frank G.
Honeycutt.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024,
ISBN: 978-0-8028-8315-5. Paper.
\$21.99.

ELCA Pastor Frank Honeycutt has written a readable, intellectually challenging, and humorous book. It opens the door for serious conversations among those who admire the teachings of

Jesus but find miracles and paranormal actions too much of a stretch. He does not simply dismiss miracles with modern scientific explanations, but challenges readers to dig deeper into the details and nuances of Jesus' healings and miraculous acts. Skepticism has value in the Christian life (2).

Honeycutt refers to his own hiking journey adventures in the mountains to argue that Jesus' paranormal actions are intended to be signs that point beyond themselves. From John's Gospel, Honeycutt argues these signs point to something more important than the action expressed or experienced (30). The Cana wedding sign of turning water into wine points to a life filled with joy and ferment (40).

This approach has contemporary applications. If a person's life feels like it is running on empty, Jesus' signs point to a promised life of justice. (46). The sign of raising Lazarus points to life beyond death (40). Humorously, Honeycutt paraphrases Mary and Martha's scolding of his late arrival with, "If you'd been here pal, if you'd gotten off your lazy ass when you first heard the news, our beloved brother would still be alive" (72). Such playful, yet honest deeper reading of Scripture is encouraged!

Regarding the demonic, consider how darkness percolates in every human heart. Today, Christians have shown they are willing to make a Faustian deal with the lying Devil in return for promises of certitude, security, and godlike power. Evil spirit lurks in every human mind, including Jesus in the wilderness temptations. Jesus cites Deuteronomy to confront evil. How do we confront our demons today? Sending the herd of infected pigs, Legion, into water points to the death and life of baptism. This chapter is interlaced with stories from Honeycutt's pastoral ministry.

Natural disasters are all part of God's larger creation project. Nature is full of mysteries which may or may not conform to traditional Christian teachings. Digging deeper into the nuances of nature texts is similar to when a hiker, who has travelled a trail several times, suddenly sees something new and different.

If Jesus did miracles, then why not now? Many people expe-

rience images, visions of angels, and deceased loved ones, and are often dismissed as mentally impaired (175). God's responses to prayer are often quite lengthy, as Daniel 10 reported his frustrations (177).

The appeal of the Bible is its mysterious ability to penetrate human defenses and shape lives. Martin Luther called this "the living word." For those befuddled by the miracle stories in the Bible, they are on the right track. This book is an intelligent, witty conversation starter for both laity and clergy.

*David Coffin
Retired ELCA Pastor
West Union, Iowa*



***Imitating Christ: The
Disputed Character of
Christian Discipleship***.

By Luke
Timothy Johnson.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024.
ISBN: 978-0-8028-8310-0. Cloth.
224 pages. \$30.99.

"Doctrine Divides, Spirituality Unites?" This was the question at the Strasbourg Ecumenical Institute (LWF) that my wife and I once attended. Luke Timothy Johnson, the widely published New Testament scholar,

begs to differ. His conclusion that spirituality, or discipleship as he prefers to call it, is at least as divisive and disputed a matter among believers, and dangerously so. His aim is simple: to show, after eighteen hundred years, how the understanding of discipleship as the transformation of the self into the image of Christ was able to change over the last two centuries into seeking the transformation of the political realm. This occurred according to what he identifies as the social gospel/liberationist ideal for which the historical Jesus is the ideal (7).

As Johnson puts it in a personal and confessional mode:

I am a Roman Catholic who has lived his life for seventy-nine years with the firm and constant conviction that the point of being a Christian is to become a certain kind of person, a saint, and that any other standard for the success or failure of a human life is superficial by comparison. Becoming a saint. . . Is not simply a matter of moral effort. . . but above all by responding to the word of God disclosed both in Scripture and in the specific circumstances of life. The saint is the person who progressively puts on the mind of Christ, by faithful obedience to the call of God, and self-emptying service to others in the grinding processes of quotidian Existence (8).



The author takes great care in laying out his “intellectual history” of discipleship in the way of Jesus and for the most part convincingly. He refers to his experience of the kind of “liberationist” view of discipleship embodied in the largely Protestant theological students he has taught over the past fifty years. Johnson, however, does not fully appreciate the spiritualities he dismisses as the “social gospel.” To his credit Johnson does come around to a less “disputed” conclusion when in his final chapter (“Imitating Saints”) he discusses two twentieth century exemplars of what it means to be an exemplary imitator of Christ: Thomas Merton and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

His treatment of Bonhoeffer as a Lutheran saint is one of the best summaries I have encountered, although he does not cite the passage in *Letters and Papers from Prison* where Bonhoeffer recalled a conversation he once had with a young French pastor who said that what he wanted to do with his life was “become a saint.” Bonhoeffer says he was impressed but disagreed saying, “I should like to learn to have faith.” The depth of this contrast was enormous, with Bonhoeffer now reflecting: “I thought I could acquire faith by trying to live a holy life, or something like it” (193).

John Rollefson
Retired ELCA pastor
San Obispo, California



***The Good News of Church Politics*, by Ross Kane.**

Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 2024.
ISBN 978-0-8026-8383-4. 126 pages. Paper. \$19.99.

Episcopal Priest Ross Kane provides a readable account of how local church mission and vision for the community can become a positive witness of God’s love and justice regardless of one’s political views. Kane

reframes this to shape the interdependence of community life, rather than struggle for control and power (x-xi).

Part 1 contends that congregations can be centers for Christian political activity, such as serving neighbors in need through food service or advocacy for affordable housing. All religions can agree to work together with the local government efforts. Part 2 focuses on “love and politics spirituality.” Prayers and forgiveness of those who have wronged us build interdependent community. Jesus’ model is in Matthew 27:14. Silence is a sign of authority as Jesus demonstrated while on trial (58).

Part 3 provides guidelines for local church politics. On one hand, church politics are the “worst politics.” Yet, in the church

people know one another, especially during coffee hour. They are then less likely to demonize those who hold differing opinions on heated issues. Servant leaders realize their dependence on God. The challenge is to adapt to changes and to know when to be prophetic. Martin Luther King Jr. did this regarding unfair racial laws and practices (78). While the pastor only has the power of persuasion, the clergy point Christians to God’s creating, redeeming, and sustaining ministry (79-80). Interdependence with others, while living in both local and national community, is one core method of reframing church politics throughout this book (80).

Connections between local and national politics is the theme of Part 4. Being “hyper local” and ignoring national politics is a danger for many congregations, who tend to be parochial in their worldviews. “White Flight” provides an example from the later twentieth century, when racial divides widened between urban and suburban housing trends (90). Jeremiah 9:4-7 reminds us to seek the welfare of the city where God has planted them. The Book of Daniel also points to interdependence with the national culture, while living a faithful life (96). While congregations cannot escape the reality of tragedies or the uncertainties of national politics, Christian discipleship is good news for God’s creation (99).

Kane thinks Christians can learn from other religions. Gandhi, a Hindu, used nonviolent resistance methods to fight evil, as did Martin Luther King Jr. During any political disagreement, Kane reminds us of the common communion table where we are united in sharing Christ’s body and blood. Kane likes Augustine’s vision of bringing heaven and earth together through the ministry of Christians. This is the good news of church politics in any age. This would be a good book for church council members.

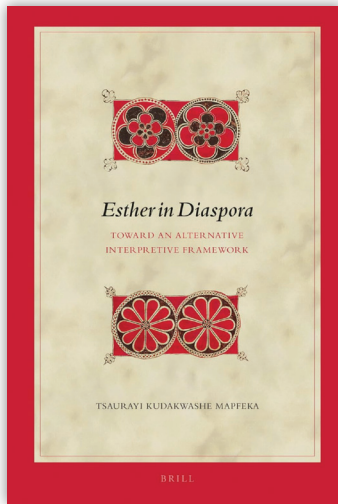
David Coffin
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***Esther in Diaspora: Toward an Alternative Framework.* By Tsurayi Kudakwashe Mapfeka.**

Biblical Interpretation Series 178.
Leiden: Brill, 2019. ISBN 978-9-0044-0655-1. xii & 220 pages.
Paper. \$148.47.

This book explores a theory-nuanced understanding of diaspora as the heuristic nexus for reading the book of Esther. Using the

focus of a postcolonial theory of diaspora (1), Tsurayi K. Mapfeka eyes the connection between the story of Esther and the Purim Festival to propose a theory-rich concept of diaspora. For him, the author of the book of Esther uses genealogy to make a social constructionist connection between communities in and behind Esther with the Jewish memory of diaspora in Scripture (6).

Mapfeka conveys his central idea in this book through five chapters. Chapter 1 highlights multiple versions of the story of Esther but focuses on the Hebrew version as a primary source. For Mapfeka, the various versions of the Esther story have descended independently from different sources attesting to different traditions.

Chapter 2 foregrounds the diaspora phenomenon in its reading of the Book of Esther. Using Esther 2:5–6 in particular, Mapfeka differs between “lower criticism” and “higher criticism”—two forms of the historical-critical method for digging into the book of Esther. He states that “Historical critical analysis has shown that despite its comic nature, MT Esther must be read as a serious text protesting against the hegemony of the Persian Empire” (93).

In Chapter 3, Mapfeka assesses historical realities behind biblical texts and other sources, arguing that the use of the diaspora method in reading the Book of Esther helps the reader form an understanding of the political order characterized by clear territories and identifiable communities (95). The milieu of the book of Esther points to an abrupt discontinuance of political administration following the rise of Cyrus the Great and the subsequent establishment of the Persian Empire.

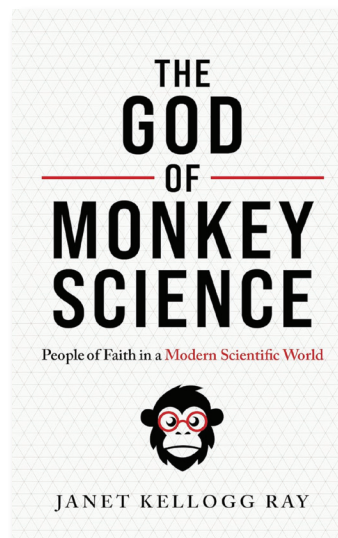
In Chapter 4, Mapfeka points out conceptual, etymological, and semantic considerations of the term “diaspora.” He explains that “The word ‘diaspora’ consists of two main parts in Greek, namely *dia* and some variation of *sporos*; the former being a ‘preposition which, when used in compound words, means division and dispersion but commonly understood as the rough equivalent of the English ‘through’” (135). Furthermore, he explains that “Diaspora in Septuagint is associated with the *zuah* [terror] that YHWH has in store for biblical Israel in the event of

disobedience.” (136).

Chapter 5 describes how the third- or second-century Jewish community outside of Jerusalem could be classified as a diaspora. Mapfeka illustrates the continuity of the diaspora analogy from ancient to modern times, suggesting that the study of diaspora in Esther can be more precisely contextualized.

Using a theory-nuanced understanding of the concept of diaspora, Mapfeka explores the book of Esther with an approach that refocuses interpretive study upon diaspora. This work is an especially helpful resource for exploring the Purim Festival with a diaspora context given central stage. I appreciate the way Mapfeka’s argument introduces the idea of a theory-nuanced approach to read the book of Esther contextually, since reading the Bible contextually is the way readers of every context and time should read the Bible. I recommend this book to students in biblical studies and individuals interested in diaspora studies.

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***The God of Monkey Science: People of Faith in a Modern Scientific World.* By Janet Kellogg Ray.**

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023.
ISBN: 978-0-8028-8319-3. x &
238 pages. Paper. \$19.99.

The God of Monkey Science shares an important spot with *Red State Christians* (by Angela Denker) in understanding why some Christians reject science and vote the way they do in U.S.

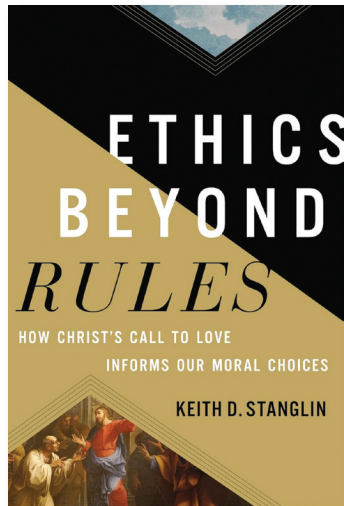
elections. In our post-Covid reality, Ray reflects on how and why conservative evangelical Christians made the choices they did during the pandemic, often opting to ignore healthcare professional’s recommendations to mask, vaccinate, and social distance. Ray has the background to support the scientific decisions made by these healthcare professionals and often explains the science in accessible ways. A high school understanding of biology and chemistry is recommended.

As an evangelical Christian herself, Ray speaks from the inside, knowing firsthand the stories, deceptions, and fear spread in the church to deter people from trusting in science. Ray affirms: “There is a faith over fear that is God-honoring. A faith over fear that is neighbor-loving. A faith that gives thanks for answered prayers in a pandemic in the form of a science-based vaccine. There is a faith that makes room for trusting science” (71). She is a prime example of one who does just that.



The God of Monkey Science is easy to read, geared toward group conversation (with 20 pages of discussion questions), and at times, funny, all-the-while being thoroughly researched and supported with sources. The 20 pages of discussion questions are appropriate for either group or personal engagement. This book is perfect for individuals and congregations looking to think critically about faith and science.

Anthony G. Windau
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Dixon, Illinois



Ethics Beyond Rules: How Christ's Call to Love Informs Our Moral Choices. By Keith D. Stanglin.

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021.
ISBN: 978-0-3101-2090-2. xix & 233 pages. Paper. \$26.99.

Keith Stanglin explores what it means to live one's faith beyond Sunday morning worship. Faith inevitably informs ethics, and Stanglin looks at how Chris-

tian faith informs Christian ethics past simply following rules.

The book is written in an accessible style, avoids distracting amounts of endnotes, and focuses, instead, on readability. The text is divided into three sections. The first, "Foundations," has five chapters looking at the basics of how faith informs actions and where the Bible fits in with that. Section two on "Issues" contains seven chapters, each covering today's hot topics such as abortion, politics, and sexual practices. Section three on "Calling" is the shortest and expands on Stanglin's themes of Christians living their faith in the world and not shying away from saying what they think is right.

Stanglin's book is deeply thought-provoking. Each chapter ends with a well-thought-out "what does love require" in reference to the topic at hand. However, his language against anyone who does not share his view of Scripture and ethics is often borderline polemic. Strawman arguments boil down opposing views into broad strokes that fail to fairly represent the complex perspectives contained within Christianity. Even so, *Ethics Beyond Rules*, is worthwhile for any Christian to more deeply consider how faith informs their ethics. An index at the end allows readers to hunt for topics. The discussion questions at the end of each chapter invite further reflection.

Anthony G. Windau
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The Great Open Dance: A Progressive Christian Theology. By Jon Paul Sydnor.

Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2024. ISBN:978-1-6667-7515-0. xiv & 341 pages. Paper. \$45.00.

Jon Paul Sydnor presents an open, progressive Christian systematic theology based on the concept of agapic nondualism, which combines unconditional love with relational inclusive-

ness. This well-researched treatise utilizes Christian scriptures, an impressive cross-section of religious scholars and theologians, as well as nondualistic ideas from Hinduism and Buddhism to express modern, thought-provoking ideas on a variety of important doctrines and topics of faith. Sydnor also addresses contemporary challenges involving multiple religions, sexism, and gender minorities, which he uses as examples of dualism that need to become inclusive, open, and lovingly nondual.

The book's welcoming, non-confrontational tone and clear descriptions of complex theological subjects invites readers to contemplate a relational Triune God whose divine, unconditional love extends to humanity and the rest of creation. It also contains artwork to complement Sydnor's prose. These attributes make the book accessible to pastors and lay readers as well as academics, who will appreciate its extensive bibliography. This book would contribute fresh, contemporary views to graduate-level survey courses in Systematic Theology. Likewise, sections of it would be valuable to augment college courses pertaining to specific Christian doctrines or social justice issues addressed in the text.

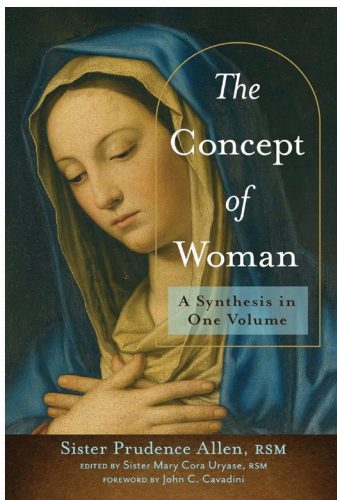
Sydnor's first sentence: "Love is the ground, meaning, and destiny of the cosmos" (1), establishes his thesis of "agapic nondualism" (35), a common thread throughout the book's ten chapters. The first chapter defines agapic nondualism as unconditional love in relationship. Applying it to Christian Trinitarianism, three distinct persons are one God through agape love expressed as the great open dance. Chapter two explains the Trinity's infinite relationality as continuous becoming, rather than being, per se. Then the next four chapters discuss the divine persons, first as a continuous Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos, then as incarnational Revealer of a personal, intimate God who expresses universal, absolute love "for all humankind" (129). The Holy Spirit, referred to as Sophia, is the "animating power of wisdom" (148) whose sacred openness enables the eternal flow of love and universal relatedness throughout the cosmos.

Next, Sydnor tackles theologically difficult topics dealing with injustice, suffering, and salvation (although his interesting,



thought-provoking theology of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection at the end of Chapter five and in Chapter seven requires further evaluation and discernment). In Chapter eight, he describes agapic nondualism revealed through community prayer, healing, the sacraments, and the "always broken and always mending" (241) Church. Chapter nine contains biblical exegesis through the lens of agape love, while the last chapter is about "the relationship between God, time, and destiny, both individual and social" (271). Sydnor approaches the topics of death, the end times, and the debate about particular or universal salvation with optimistic hope. Then in the Afterword, Sydnor hints at the possibility of a second book that will apply agape nondualism to Trinitarian ethics, epistemology, and religious pluralism. A volume this theologian looks forward to reading!

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Chicago, Illinois



The Concept of Woman: A Synthesis in One Volume. By Sr. Prudence Allen. Edited by Sr. Mary Cora Uryase.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024.
ISBN 978-0-8028-8388-9. xxxvi
& 451 pages. Paper. \$54.99.

Sr. Prudence Allen created an important philosophical work in her three volumes published between 1997 and 2016. These volumes lifted

up the voices of women philosophers over three millennia and discussed several different theories of sex and their definitions of woman. Allen provided a history of philosophy for those new to the field and made as the centralizing focus the concept of woman. She introduced scores of women philosophers from the ancient and medieval world to academic philosophers who had hitherto ignored them en masse. The first volume, like the later two volumes, was an intellectual history on the subject of woman. In these three volumes, there were places that one might critique: she dismissed existentialism and second wave feminism. But, in general, these three volumes contained a wealth of information about the history of the concept of woman.

This consolidated volume, however, with its foreword by John Cavadini, condenses Allen's scholarship into a volume that seems ideologically oriented rather than philosophically illuminative. The abridged chapter on the pre-Socratics, for example, ignores entirely Sappho and skims over Aspasia, when Allen's work on these in 1997 was critical to raising up their voices in the history of philosophy. It is noteworthy how many men's voices

remain in the abridged version.

The new abridged version still serves as a remarkable catalog of women philosophers in the medieval and modern period who were thoughtfully engaged in understanding themselves and the concept of woman, along with analyses of several twentieth century women philosophers, such as the brilliant Edith Stein and G.E. Anscombe. This book also shows the interplay of metaphysics, empirical science, and the mind-body problem in the conceptualization of woman. Moreover, the chapters on the evolution of the philosophy of gender by Pope John Paul II show his remarkable thought in the context of difference feminism. Critically, Allen notes his understanding that not everyone belongs to one sex or the other from birth. She shows the strengths of his position to both those who would confirm or critique his views.

However, rather than explaining new twentieth and twenty-first century concepts of gender, this abridged volume calls them perversions and corruptions, likening some feminist theory to a virus. The reader wonders that Allen did not use such language Aristotle's insistence on female inferiority, Juvenal's blatant misogyny, or Rousseau's view that disenfranchised women even as modern liberalism called for democracies to allow autonomy for all men,

While this abridged volume still has merit as a catalog of voices, it is ideologically abridged to argue for a type of gender complementarity that in today's culture is no longer as rich or complex as it was expressed by Pope John Paul II due to its refusal to engage contemporary science. Readers are better served reading the original three volumes. This book needed to be updated to include new voices, not abridged.

Jennifer Hockenbery
Women of the ELCA
Interim Executive Director



2025 Ad Pricing and Specifications

The journal, *Currents in Theology and Mission*, is now accepting advertisements in our quarterly journal. Please see full details in the ad rate sheet at the end of the Introduction (page 3 of this issue).

Publication Dates and Deadlines

The journal, *Currents in Theology and Mission*, is published four times per year: January, April, July, and October. Ad deadlines for each issue are one month prior to publication (December 1, March 1, June 1, September 1). Late submissions may be published in the next issue. Issue-specific themes are available from the co-editors: [Craig Nesson](#) and [Kadi Billman](#).