

to each other. Furthermore, in contrast to Race, Frei's approach does not automatically privilege the constellation of historical criticism, epistemology and phenomenology in service of apologetic aims, but instead engages diverse conceptual tools *ad hoc* to articulate the church's own hermeneutics, Christology and mission in the world.

Collins then introduces Frei's five types of theology in chapter 4 and tests its usefulness by pairing each type with a specific theology of religions that emerged in the ecumenical assemblies of the twentieth century in the following way: Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry (1932) as type one, WCC Missionary Structure of the Congregation (1967) as type two, IMC Assembly of Jerusalem (1928) as type three, IMC Assembly of Tambram (1938) as type four, and the Wheaton Declaration (1966) as type five. In the closing chapter, Collins draws upon Peter Ochs, Willie James Jennings, and Frei to propose how a theology of religions may be hospitable to the comprehensiveness of God's concern for creation in light of the particularity of Jesus Christ.

There are at least three obvious contributions to be noted. First, Collins offers a comprehensive and insightful analysis of Race's presuppositions, rationales and priorities that fund his pluralist theology of religions. Second, while 'postliberal' theologians already have contributed to the development of theology of religions, this is the first substantive treatment that has brought Frei's work to bear upon the topic. And lastly, while these two trajectories of inquiry are significant in their own right, utilising Frei's typology for illuminating theologies of religions embodied in the ecumenical assemblies is especially creative and useful. Collins has rendered a great service in these regards, though the relevance of Frei's work to inter-religious and comparative theology remains to be explored. He demonstrates throughout the book remarkable knowledge of a wide range of primary and secondary resources, a deep reservoir of expertise needed in addressing the major questions in Race's typology, Frei's project, and the various ecumenical theologies of religions with enormous clarity and depth.

Without doubt Frei's contribution to theology is immense and continues to remain relevant and useful to contemporary theology as this work nicely demonstrates. Collins has taken Frei's hermeneutics, Christology and theological method and extended them in a creative way to think about theology of religions, indeed a welcome addition to Frei scholarship.

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## **Gregory D. Wiebe, *Fallen Angels in the Theology of Saint Augustine***

**(Oxford: OUP, 2021), pp. xvii + 258. \$100.00**

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When we consider Saint Augustine's status in the history of Christian theology, it is remarkable that so little attention has been given to his theological vision of fallen

angels. This book bridges the gap, while also challenging scholars to re-evaluate the significance of Augustine's demonology. In treating angels – fallen and otherwise – unapologetically, Wiebe's study (a revision of his PhD thesis) follows Elizabeth Klein's *Augustine's Theology of Angels* (CUP, 2018), which takes a similarly bold approach. Wiebe explains the lack of scholarly interest in Augustine's demonology by way of reference to Weber's concept of disenchantment. Although he might present a more nuanced account of secularisation, Wiebe's point is valid. For example, Peter Brown's influential biography of Augustine argues that Augustine turned the Christian struggle with demons inward, exemplifying the approach that Wiebe aims to challenge.

Wiebe argues persuasively, 'ultimately, for Augustine, the gods of the nations are demons' (p. 4). To make his claim, Wiebe cites Augustine's work widely, rightly focusing on *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, *The Trinity*, and *The City of God*, and highlighting the need for further work with respect to demonology in Augustine's sermons. While the title of the book refers to 'fallen angels', the study is on Augustine's demonology. Demons do not equate to fallen angels unequivocally in early Christian thought, but for Augustine they are one and the same. Augustine might provide differing accounts of the devil's fall, but his treatment of demons as fallen angels is consistent throughout his corpus.

The book's structure follows a logical path, beginning with Augustine's reflections upon the creation accounts in Genesis, at the heart of which is the Creator-creature distinction. For Augustine, angels are created wisdom: perfected intellectual spirits with knowledge of creation in God that enables them to oversee creation. The 'primary role of this angelic office is to testify to the incarnation of the Son of God' through miracles and human institutions (p. 5). In light of this administrative role it is not difficult to envisage how the fallen angels become the gods of the nations.

Wiebe follows a well-trodden path by reading Augustine in conversation with Plotinus and Porphyry, against the backdrop of Manichean thought. Further to this, it would be helpful to know of Augustine's use of earlier Christian angelic traditions, particularly with respect to the fall of the devil, which is the focus of chapter 2. Wiebe argues, quite rightly, that the devil is responsible for his own fall because of Augustine's articulation of God as eternally prior to the created will, which functions only in response to God. Angelic pride is the first of the devil's sins, since pride, according to Augustine, is prior to envy. Of particular interest is how Augustine changes his mind on how and when the devil falls. Wiebe commends Augustine's earliest account in which the 'the devil sins from the very beginning of his existence, before he is ever good' (p. 5). In *City of God*, however, Augustine shifts the fall of the devil to the moment of the devil's sin. The different concerns in each account make it difficult to argue for one in preference of the other.

An important question is that of demonic bodies, since fallen angels assume some kind of embodiment in order to relate directly to humans. Wiebe's examination of demonic embodiment leads to a fascinating study (in chapter 4) on the phenomena through which demons are detected. Demons do not have power over the human will, but they do have power over bodies and appearances, which they exploit. Augustine attests to the reality and seriousness of demonic activity while maintaining an anti-Manichaean articulation of evil as a privation of the good.

The book turns to explore the nature of the angelic role, leading to the conclusion that the gods of the nations are demons. The logic applied here is that if angels are ministers of Christ, demons perform the same role with respect to pagan Rome. Ultimately,

the goal of fallen angels is human imitation of demonic pride, engagement in false religion and the promotion of false religion for the sake of entrapping people in pride.

Overall, this study is an excellent contribution to Augustine's demonology. Not only is Wiebe clear in his aims and limits, but he opens up a number of possible avenues for further work. He concludes by challenging contemporary readers not to dismiss Augustine's theology of the demonic but to consider the implications of exposing and defeating false gods today. While this is primarily historical study, Wiebe's deft engagement with contemporary thought positions this book as valuable reading not only for scholars of Augustine or early Christian demonology, but for anyone thinking through how personified forms of evil might fit into theological systems.

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## Kate Jackson-Meyer, *Tragic Dilemmas in Christian Ethics*

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Kate Jackson-Meyer incorporates tragic dilemmas, a species of moral dilemmas in which overlapping obligations cannot all be fulfilled, into Christian ethics. She argues that if 'ought implies can', as much moral philosophy and theology suggests, then tragic dilemmas become invisible. While the 'unmet obligation' appears to dissolve, it remains generating tragedy in the world and marring the agent. This argument is not new and would find family resemblances in Niebuhrian realism, supreme emergencies and the dirty hands literature. What is new is her recognition that the consequences of the unmet obligations cannot simply be waved away by telling persons burdened by them, 'Do not worry. You were not culpable'. The brokenness brought about by the act requires healing. Her work makes a valuable contribution by showing what that healing looks like.

The work begins with a 'portraiture' of numerous tragic dilemmas such as resource allocation during the COVID-19 pandemic, choosing one's own life over their infant in a concentration camp or a famine, end-of-life decisions, and drone and combat warfare. Jackson-Meyer sketches these dilemmas inviting readers to see their complexity. She does not resolve them or offer normative prescriptions but focuses a 'theological ethical lens' to illumine the lack of easy resolutions. These portraitures frame the argument; she alludes to them throughout the work.

The first chapter lays out the central philosophical and theological issues with moral and tragic dilemmas. Jackson-Meyer demonstrates an admirable knowledge of the philosophical literature on moral dilemmas, tracing their origins from Sophocles and Plato into modern and contemporary moral philosophers. Her analysis is indebted to Lisa Tessman's account of 'burdened virtues', where the 'action guidance' for virtue