

Disability In The Christian Tradition

This edited collection of essays examines how religions of the world represent, understand, theologize, theorize and respond to disability and chronic illness. Contributors employ a variety of methodological approaches including ethnography, historical, cultural, or textual analysis, personal narrative, and theological/philosophical investigation.

Attention to embodiment and the religious significance of bodies is one of the most significant shifts in contemporary theology. In the midst of this, however, experiences of disability have received little attention. This book explores possibilities for theological engagement with disability, focusing on three primary alternatives: challenging existing theological models to engage with the disabled body, considering possibilities for a disability liberation theology, and exploring new theological options based on an understanding of the unsurprisingness of human limits. The overarching perspective of this book is that limits are an unavoidable aspect of being human, a fact we often seem to forget or deny. Yet not only do all humans

experience limits, most of us also experience limits that take the form of disability at some point in our lives; in this way, disability is more "normal" than non-disability. If we take such experiences seriously and refuse to reduce them to mere instances of suffering, we discover insights that are lost when we take a perfect or generic body as our starting point for theological reflections. While possible applications of this insight are vast, this work focuses on two areas of particular interest: theological anthropology and metaphors for God. This project challenges theology to consider the undeniable diversity of human embodiment. It also enriches previous disability work by providing an alternative to the dominant medical and minority models, both of which fail to acknowledge the full diversity of disability experiences. Most notably, this project offers new images and possibilities for theological construction that attend appropriately and creatively to diversity in human embodiment.

Disability and spirituality have traditionally been understood as two distinct spheres: disability is physical and thus belongs to health care professionals, while spirituality is religious and belongs to the church, synagogue, or mosque and their theologians, clergy, rabbis, and

imams. This division leads to stunted theoretical understanding, limited collaboration, and segregated practices, all of which contribute to a lack of capacity to see people with disabilities as whole human beings and full members of a diverse human family. Contesting the assumptions that separate disability and spirituality, William Gaventa argues for the integration of these two worlds. As Gaventa shows, the quest to understand disability inevitably leads from historical and scientific models into the world of spirituality--to the ways that values, attitudes, and beliefs shape our understanding of the meaning of disability. The reverse is also true. The path to understanding spirituality is a journey that leads to disability--to experiences of limitation and vulnerability, where the core questions of what it means to be human are often starkly and profoundly clear. In Disability and Spirituality Gaventa constructs this whole and human path before turning to examine spirituality in the lives of those individuals with disabilities, their families and those providing care, their friends and extended relationships, and finally the communities to which we all belong. At each point Gaventa shows that disability and spirituality are part of one another from the very beginning of

creation. Recovering wholeness encompasses their reunion--a cohesion that changes our vision and enables us to everyone as fully human.

This edited collection of essays critically examines how diverse religions of the world represent, understand, theologize, theorize and respond to disability and/or chronic illness. Contributors employ a wide variety of methodological approaches including ethnography, historical, cultural, or textual analysis, personal narrative, and theological/philosophical investigation.

Accessible Atonement

The Bible and Disability

Sacred Texts, Historical Traditions, and Social Analysis

Making Room

Giving Voice to Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities

Holistic Healing in the Gospels and the Church

Reconsidering Intellectual Disability

Nearly twenty percent of adolescents have developmental disabilities, yet far too often they are marginalized within churches. Amplifying Our Witness challenges congregations to adopt a new, practice-centered approach to congregational ministry --

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one that includes and amplifies the witness of adolescents with developmental disabilities. Replete with stories taken from Benjamin Conner's own extensive experience with befriending and discipling adolescents with developmental disabilities, Amplifying Our Witness Shows how churches exclude the mentally disabled in various structural and even theological ways Stresses the intrinsic value of kids with developmental disabilities Reconceptualizes evangelism to adolescents with developmental disabilities, emphasizing hospitality and friendship.

For most of church history, hospitality was central to Christian identity. Yet our generation knows little about this rich, life-giving practice.

Michael Beates's concern with disability issues began nearly 30 years ago when his eldest child was born with multiple profound disabilities. Now, as more families like Michael's are affected by a growing number of difficulties ranging from down syndrome to autism to food allergies, the need for church programs and personal paradigm shifts is greater than ever. Working through key Bible passages on brokenness and disability while answering hard questions, Michael offers here helpful principles for believers and their churches. He shows us how to embrace our own brokenness and then to embrace those who are more physically and visibly broken, bringing hope and vision to those of us who need it most.

*Disability in the Christian Tradition A Reader Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing
The Disabled God*

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Suffering and Disability in the Bible and the Church

The Therapy of the Christian Body

Dementia

Disability

Disability, Faith, and the Church: Inclusion and Accommodation in Contemporary Congregations

Human Disability and the Service of God

Persons with disabilities in Church and society : a historical and sociological perspective /Samuel Kabue --Claiming and developing a disability hermeneutics : towards a liberating theology of disability /Arne Fritzson --Perfect God and imperfect creation : in the image of God and disabled /Joseph D. Galgalo --Sin, suffering, and disability in God's world /A. Wati Longchar --One in Christ : priesthood of the disabled and the exercising of gifts /C.B. Peter --Biblical perspectives on disability /Sammy Githuku --Lazarus, come out! : how contextual Bible study can empower the disabled /Janet Lees --The Church, public policy, and disability concerns in Kenya /Phitalis Were Masakhwe --Cultural barriers to the disabled people's participation in Church life /Reuben Kigame --Education, employment, and health : a disability perspective /Anjeline Okola --Society and leadership : challenges and opportunities for people with disabilities /Esther Mombo --Disability : social challenges and family responses /Joseph Shiriko --Disability and sexuality /Salome Wairimu Muigai --Gender and disability

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challenges within the Church /Joseph Sinyo --Combating HIV & Aids among persons with disability : a disability perspective /Paul Chappell --Persons with disabilities and psychological perspectives /Ndung'u J.B. Ikenye --Psychosocial disability : attitudes and barriers to social integration in Church and society /Janet Amegatcher --The Church and pastoral counseling for disability /David Kiarie --Persons with disabilities in Madagascar /Ralphine Razaka --Persons with disabilities in Malawi : what are the issues? /Rachel Kamchacha Kachaje --A profile of Tanzanians with disabilities /Kaganzi Rutachwamagyo --Persons with disabilities in Uganda /Gidudu Balayo N. Seezi --Persons with disability in South Africa /Joy Sebenzile P. Matsebula.

Lived Theology contains the work of an emerging generation of theologians and scholars who pursue research, teaching, and writing as a form of public responsibility motivated by the conviction that theological ideas aspire in their inner logic toward social expression. Written as a two-year collaboration of the Project on Lived Theology at the University of Virginia, this volume offers a series of illustrations and styles that distinguish Lived Theology in the broader conversation with other major approaches to the religious interpretation of embodied life. The book begins with a modest query: How might theological writing, research, and teaching be expanded to engage lived experience with the same care and precision given by scholars to books and articles? Behind this question lies the claim that theological engagements and interpretations of lived experience offer rich and often surprising insights into God's presence and activity in the world. Answers to, and explorations of, this question form the narrative

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framework of this groundbreaking volume. Lived theology is shown to be an exceedingly curious enterprise, transgressing disciplinary boundaries as a matter of course, examining circumstance, context, and motivation, and marshalling every available resource for the sake of discerning the theological shape of enacted and embodied faith. Understanding the social consequences of theological ideas is a task with wide ranging significance, inside the academy and in the broader forums of civic discussion. Contributors consider Lived Theology from a diverse array of experiences and locations, including towns in Mississippi struggling with histories of racist violence and murder; a homeless shelter in Atlanta; churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo; faith based volunteer organizations in Columbus, Ohio; and a college classroom in the Midwest. This innovative work offers a fresh and exciting model for scholars, teachers, practitioners, and students seeking to reconnect the lived experience of faith communities with academic study and reflection.

Explores the role of human disability in the service of God and examines how the participation of people with disabilities relate to the scriptures that speak of sin, disability, and healing. Challenges the current practices within the churches, encourages people with disabilities to press for full inclusion, suggests that congregations should re-envision their actual practices in communal life and worship, and presents a selection entitled "Disabling the Lie." Includes topic and name indices.

Christians have traditionally claimed that humans are created in the image of God

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(imago Dei), but they have consistently defined that image in ways that exclude people from full humanity. The most well-known definition locates the image in the rational soul, which is constructed in such a way that women, children, and many persons with disabilities are found deficient. Body Parts claims the importance of embodiment, difference, and limitation-not only as descriptions of the human condition but also as part of the imago Dei itself.

Disability and the Gospel

Disability and the Way of Jesus

Inclusion and Accommodation in Contemporary Congregations

Disability and World Religions

Reassessing Religious Practice

Why, O God? (Foreword by Randy Alcorn)

Of Such is the Kingdom

Including both theoretical discussions and practical information for congregational use or pastoral use, this rich, accessible book explores biblical text, historical and theological issues of disability, and offers examples of successful ministry by people with disabilities. * Engages a wide range of theological traditions and writings on disability within the Christian tradition * Provides disability-focused readings of biblical texts relevant to disability studies, both as ecclesial

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*resources and for classroom use * Profiles individuals who are engaged in active ministry and church leadership while living with disabilities * Includes straightforward analysis of complicated social issues like disability and reproductive rights*

Integrating intellectual with personal, political and spiritual, the author defines a liberatory theology for the disabled. In so doing, Clifton shows that the experience of disability has something profound to say about all bodies, about the fragility and happiness of all humans, and about the deeper truths offered us by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love.--Brian Brock, Reader in Moral and Practical Theology, University of Aberdeen

By engaging person-centered practices of pastoral care, the church strengthens its witness and truly becomes a place of belonging for all people.--Rebecca F. Spurrier, Associate Dean for Worship Life and Assistant Professor of Worship, Columbia Theological Seminary

Searching for Dignity

Living in the Memories of God

Disability and Spirituality

Disability, Theology, and the Cross of Christ

A New Vision of the People of God

Jesus the Disabled God

A Theological Exposition of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Volume 2

For two millennia Christians have thought about what human impairment is and how faith communities and society should respond to people with perceived impairments. But never has one volume collected the most significant Christian writings on disability. This book fills that gap. Brian Brock and John Swinton's *Disability in the Christian Tradition* brings together for the first time key writings by thinkers from all periods of Christian history - including Augustine, Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, Luther, Calvin, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Hauerwas, and more. Fourteen contemporary experts in theology and disability studies guide readers through each era or group of thinkers, offering clear commentary and highlighting important themes.

What does healing mean for people with disabilities? Bridging biblical studies, ethics, and disability studies with the work of practitioners, Bethany McKinney Fox examines healing narratives in their biblical and cultural contexts. This theologically grounded and winsomely practical resource helps us more fully understand what Jesus does as he heals and how he points the way for relationships with people with disabilities.

Disability is not a boundary to holiness, because God is with us. But it can sometimes be an

obstacle to full participation in the life of the Church, simply because many do not understand what is needed to help people with disabilities overcome any physical, mental, or interpersonal challenges they may face in church and in leading an Orthodox Christian life. This book addresses the question from theological, practical, and experiential perspectives, giving individuals and families with disabilities the opportunity to voice their needs and suggest some things the rest of us can do to make them welcome in the household of God.

The first major book to examine ancient Christian literature on hell through the lenses of gender and disability studies Throughout the Christian tradition, descriptions of hell's fiery torments have shaped contemporary notions of the afterlife, divine justice, and physical suffering. But rarely do we consider the roots of such conceptions, which originate in a group of understudied ancient texts: the early Christian apocalypses. In this pioneering study, Meghan Henning illuminates how the bodies that populate hell in early Christian literature—largely those of women, enslaved persons, and individuals with disabilities—are punished after death in spaces that mirror real carceral spaces, effectually criminalizing those bodies on earth. Contextualizing the apocalypses alongside ancient medical texts, inscriptions, philosophy, and patristic writings, this book demonstrates the ways that Christian depictions of hell intensified and preserved ancient notions of gender and bodily normativity that continue to inform Christian identity.

Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability

Disability and Christian Theology Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities

Reconceptualising Disability for the Contemporary Church

Amplifying Our Witness

Conversations on human dignity, theology and disability

Disability in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam L'Arche, Medical Ethics, and Christian Friendship

The atonement--where God in Jesus Christ addresses sin and the whole of the human predicament--lies at the heart of the Christian faith and life. Its saving power is for all people, and yet a deep hesitancy has prevented meaningful discussion of the cross' relevance for people with disabilities. Speaking of disability and the multifaceted concept of the atonement has created an unresolvable tension, not least because sin and disability often seem to be associated within the biblical text. While work in disability theology has made great progress in developing a positive theological framework for disability as an integral part of human diversity, it has so far fallen short of grappling with this particular set of interpretive challenges presented by the cross. In *Accessible Atonement*, reflecting on his experience as both a pastor and a theologian, David McLachlan brings the themes and objectives of disability theology into close conversation with traditional ideas of the cross as Jesus' sacrifice, justice, and victory. From this conversation emerges an account of the atonement as God's deepest, once-for-all participation in both the moral and contingent risk of creation, where all that alienates us from God and each other is addressed. Such an atonement is inherently inclusive of all people and is not one that is extended

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to disability as a special case. This approach to the atonement opens up space to address both the redemption of sin and the possibilities of spiritual and bodily healing. What McLachlan leads us to discover is that, when revisited in this way, the cross--perhaps surprisingly--becomes the cornerstone of Christian disability theology and the foundation of many of its arguments. Far from excluding those who find themselves physically or mentally outside of assumed norms, the atoning death of Christ creates a vital space of inclusion and affirmation for such persons within the life of the church. --Eleanor McLaughlin, Lecturer in Theology and Ethics, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford

Disability and World Religions thus offers a respectful exploration of global faith traditions and cultivates creative ways to respond to the fields of both religious and disability studies.--Tom Wilson "ANVIL: Journal of Theology and Mission"

This publication fills a unique gap in the theological and religious engagement with the issue of human disability in South Africa. Combining the contributions of scholars, practitioners and people living with disabilities, it stands out for the way in which it promotes an interdisciplinary debate on disability and human dignity from a theological point of departure and interest. The end result is a collective effort with a critical approach to the role of religion (and the Christian faith tradition in particular) in the social and life worlds of people living with disabilities

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A forceful argument is thus constructed about ways in which religion and the Christian faith tradition should change their own discourses, practices and ideological presuppositions regarding the issue of human disability. - Cobus van Wyngaard, Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology, University of South Africa

The first major book to examine ancient Christian literature on hell through the lenses of gender and disability studies Throughout the Christian tradition, descriptions of hell's fiery torments have shaped contemporary notions of the afterlife, divine justice, and physical suffering. But rarely do we consider the roots of such conceptions, which originate in a group of understudied ancient texts: the early Christian apocalypses. In this pioneering study, Meghan Henning illuminates how the bodies that populate hell in early Christian literature--largely those of women, enslaved persons, and individuals with disabilities--are punished after death in spaces that mirror real carceral spaces, effectually criminalizing those bodies on earth. Contextualizing the apocalypses alongside ancient medical texts, inscriptions, philosophy, and patristic writings, this book demonstrates the ways that Christian depictions of hell intensified and preserved ancient notions of gender and bodily normativity that continue to inform Christian identity.

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Body Parts

Theology, Disability, and the Body of Christ

Hell Hath No Fury

A Theology of Disability and Hospitality

New Perspectives on Method, Style, and Pedagogy

Lived Theology

Recovering Wholeness

Including both theoretical discussions and practical information for congregational use or pastoral use, this rich, accessible book explores biblical text, historical and theological issues of disability, and examples of successful ministry by people with disabilities. • Engages a wide range of theological traditions and writings on disability within the Christian tradition • Provides disability-focused readings of biblical texts relevant to disability studies, both as ecclesial resources and for classroom use • Profiles individuals who are engaged in active ministry and church leadership while living with disabilities • Includes straightforward analysis of complicated social issues like disability and reproductive rights

Even today, there is still an inherent conflict between the way the Gospels speak about disability, and the attitude of the Church. This book seeks to challenge the assumptions which still exist about disability, assumptions which are reflected within the Church. Blending theory, anthropology, theology, pastoral concerns and the lived experience of people with disabilities, *Reconceptualising Disability for the Contemporary Church* offers an important and thoughtful challenge to the contemporary Church.

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The troubles and ills of the church today can only be understood and healed when Christians begin to face up to their hidden alliances with the Corinthians of the first century and embrace both the Apostle's diagnosis and therapy offered in the epistle. This is the challenge of *The Malady and Therapy of the Christian Body*, a two-volume commentary by two leading theologians that presents the fruits of a reading strategy that deliberately reflects ecclesial commitment by "reading the Apostle over against ourselves." Sharing their discoveries about the way Paul deals with questions of factionalism, sexuality, legal conflict, idolatry, dress codes, and eating habits, Brock and Wannewetsch demonstrate how neither the malady nor the therapy that Paul describes conforms to dominant analyses of the malaise of the contemporary church, which tend to be as "organ centered" as modern medicine. The authors describe the way the Apostle engages in "feeling-into" the organic whole of the body in order to detect blockages to the healthy flow of powers by redirecting their vision to how God is working among them toward the "building up" of the Christian body. The book breaks new ground in crossing the traditional disciplinary boundaries between biblical studies, systematic theology, and theological ethics.

This book brings together for the first time the views of renowned Christian leaders throughout history - including Augustine, Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, Luther, Calvin, Hegel, Kierkegaard, van den Bergh, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Vanier, and Hauerwas. Fourteen experts in theology and disability studies guide readers through each era or group of thinkers, offering clear commentary and highlighting important themes. --from publisher description.

Wondrously Wounded

Disability and Religious Diversity

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The Bible, Disability, and the Church

How God Uses Our Brokenness to Display His Grace

A Theological Anthropology

A Commentary

Pastoral Care and Intellectual Disability

The Bible and Disability: A Commentary (BDC) is the first comprehensive commentary on the Bible from the perspective of disability. The BDC examines how the Bible constructs or reflects human wholeness, impairment, and disability in all their expressions. Biblical texts do envision the ideal body, but they also present visions of the body that deviate from this ideal, whether physically or through cognitive impairments or mental illness. The BDC engages the full range of these depictions of body and mind, exploring their meaning through close readings and comparative analysis. The BDC enshrines the distinctive interpretive imagination required to span the worlds of biblical studies and disability studies. Each of the fourteen contributors has worked at this intersection; and through their combined expertise, the very best of both biblical studies and disability studies culminates in detailed textual work of description, interpretation, and application to provide a synthetic and synoptic whole. The result is a close reading of the Bible that gives long-overdue attention to the fullness of human identity narrated in the Scriptures.

Inspiring and challenging study that rethinks the Bible's teaching on disability. A theologian whose life experience includes growing up alongside a brother with Down syndrome, Amos Yong in this book rereads and reinterprets biblical texts about human disability, arguing that the way we read biblical texts, not the Bible itself, is what causes us to marginalize persons

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with disabilities. Revealing and examining the underlying stigma of disability that exists even in the church, Yong shows how the Bible offers good news to people of all abilities and he challenges churches to become more inclusive communities of faith.

Dementia is one of the most feared diseases in Western society today. Some have even gone so far as to suggest euthanasia as a solution to the perceived indignity of memory loss and the disorientation that accompanies it. In this book John Swinton develops a practical theology of dementia for caregivers, people with dementia, ministers, hospital chaplains, and medical practitioners as he explores two primary questions: Who am I when I've forgotten who I am? What does it mean to love God and be loved by God when I have forgotten who God is? Offering compassionate and carefully considered theological and pastoral responses to dementia and forgetfulness, Swinton's *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* redefines dementia in light of the transformative counter story that is the gospel.

A theologian and father of an autistic child provides biblical, theological, and pastoral tools for understanding and welcoming those with disabilities.

A Person-Centered Approach

An Introduction

A Practical Theology of Disability

Disability, Virtue Ethics, and the Good Life

Disability, Society and Theology

Crippled Grace

Cross-Cultural and Interreligious Perspectives

Leading ethicist and pastoral theologian Brian Brock reflects on the challenge of disability, refuting

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widely held misconceptions and helping readers respond well to the pastoral implications of disability. Brock, the father of a child with special needs, weaves together theological commentary with narrative reflection, offering rich theological wisdom for shepherding people with disabilities. He shows pastors and ministers-in-training that thinking more closely and theologically about disability is a doorway into a more vibrant and welcoming church life for all Christians.

With two in seven American families affected by disability, the body of Christ has a great opportunity for ministry. This new anthology uniquely points the way, training churches, caregivers, pastors, and counselors to compassionately respond. The book 's contributors—ranging from Joni Eareckson Tada and others living with disabilities, to seminary professors, ministry leaders, and medical professionals—do more than offer a biblical perspective on suffering and disability; they draw from very personal experiences to explore Christians ' responsibility toward those who suffer. The volume addresses various disabilities and age-related challenges, end-of-life issues, global suffering, and other concerns—all the while reminding readers that as they seek to help the hurting, they will be ministered to in return. This unprecedented work, which includes a foreword by Randy Alcorn, belongs in the hands of every Christian worker and caring individual who is seeking a real-world, biblical perspective on suffering.

Drawing on the controversial case of “ Ashley X, ” a girl with severe developmental disabilities who received interventionist medical treatment to limit her growth and keep her body forever small—a procedure now known as the “ Ashley Treatment ” —Reconsidering Intellectual Disability explores important questions at the intersection of disability theory, Christian moral theology, and bioethics.

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What are the biomedical boundaries of acceptable treatment for those not able to give informed consent? Who gets to decide when a patient cannot communicate their desires and needs? Should we accept the dominance of a form of medicine that identifies those with intellectual impairments as pathological objects in need of the normalizing bodily manipulations of technological medicine? In a critical exploration of contemporary disability theory, Jason Reimer Greig contends that L'Arche, a federation of faith communities made up of people with and without intellectual disabilities, provides an alternative response to the predominant bioethical worldview that sees disability as a problem to be solved. *Reconsidering Intellectual Disability* shows how a focus on Christian theological tradition's moral thinking and practice of friendship with God offers a way to free not only people with intellectual disabilities but all people from the objectifying gaze of modern medicine. L'Arche draws inspiration from Jesus's solidarity with the "least of these" and a commitment to Christian friendship that sees people with profound cognitive disabilities not as anomalous objects of pity but as fellow friends of God. This vital act of social recognition opens the way to understanding the disabled not as objects to be fixed but as teachers whose lives can transform others and open a new way of being human.

Have you ever wondered whether God knows what it is like to have a disability? Can God know this? The answer to these questions matters to the estimated one billion people with a disability worldwide. Jesus the Disabled God offers an affirmative answer. Jesus' ministry was itself a positive affirmation of those who experience disability, but Jesus went beyond ministry to people with disabilities and actually experienced disability himself on the cross. The amazing thing about this

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experience is that it was freely chosen, even planned from all eternity. As a consequence, the God-man Jesus now knows what it is like to have a disability. Furthermore, because of his glorious resurrection from the dead, Jesus is no longer disabled and can offer hope to those who are.

Gender, Disability, and the Invention of Damned Bodies in Early Christian Literature

Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition

Living Into the Diversity of Christ's Body

Logics of Social Change

Disability in Christian Tradition

Disability (Pastoring for Life: Theological Wisdom for Ministering Well)