

Theologians will take interest in how Coleman's depression informs her interest in process theology. She frankly recounts how trauma and depression extinguished her personal relationship with God as a young adult. During this time, it was in the revelation of a God who suffered alongside her that Coleman recognized the "only God [she] could believe in." She attributes her formal study of process theology to this eye-opening conception of God. The weaving of her personal and intellectual histories puts flesh on the often-abstract metaphysical debates of process thought.

Just as traditional metaphysics failed Coleman amid her suffering, so too did many Christian spiritual practices. While Bible studies, Sunday worship, and common approaches to prayer helped Coleman on occasion, she writes most passionately about the unconventional spiritual practices that guided her back to God in times of particular strife. Such practices include African dance, knitting, and listening to music.

Like depression, religion is a constant presence in Coleman's life story. Yet this is not a theological manifesto about process metaphysics or unconventional spiritual practices. This is a vulnerable testimony about the theology and spirituality that emerged as one bright African American woman struggled with bipolar II. The book will appeal to religious and nonreligious audiences because of this gentle approach to faith.

The book's length may be an obstacle for professors using this text with undergraduates. It is not until late in the 356-page text that many of Coleman's insights about depression and faith become clear; the book should thus be assigned in its entirety. Graduate students in theology, ministry, or pastoral counseling will fly through these pages and benefit from Coleman's story as an engaging starting point for advanced theological reflection on suffering, God, and spirituality in today's world. It could also be assigned as a text on theologies of trauma, for the middle chapters about the effects of rape are among Coleman's most engaging and theologically rich.

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The Divine Quest, East and West: A Comparative Study of Ultimate Realities.

By James L. Ford. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016. xvii + 411 pages. \$28.95.

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In this book, James L. Ford, professor of religion at Wake Forest University, has set himself a formidable, some would say audacious, task: he wants to use one hermeneutical flashlight to explore multiple religious traditions. Casting

aside postmodern warnings of incommensurability, he asks four different traditions—Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—the same question: how do you understand the Divine? And the answers he finds are surprisingly illuminating and interconnecting.

Faced with such a complex assignment, he carefully lays out his methodology, parameters, and terms. His selection of traditions is grounded in his conviction that any divine quest cannot be limited to Western monotheistic religions. (But he does not make clear why, especially in our present day of widespread Islamophobia, he omits Islam.) And while he declares that his quest is “primarily phenomenological” and “not a book of constructive theology or philosophy,” the subtitle of his book, and especially its final chapter, make clear that he very much wants it to be a “comparative study” (28–29). Is a serious comparison of views of the Ultimate possible without getting entangled in theology? Ford is, happily, more of a “constructive theologian” than he admits.

He turns to theologians and philosophers to define his central terms. To offer a notion of Ultimate Reality that he thinks would apply to all religions, he endorses the definition proposed by Robert Neville and Wesley Wildman: “that which is most important to religious life *because of the nature of reality*” (3, Ford’s emphasis). As for religion, he believes that Mark Taylor’s rather complex definition would be equally multiapplicable: a “network of symbols, myths, and rituals” that in a “quasi-dialectical rhythm” both “structures and stabilizes” as well as “disrupts and dislocates ... life’s meaning and purpose” (18–19). In tracing how a religion’s notion of Ultimate Reality can both ground and provoke the status quo, Ford’s interpretative guideline, drawn from Peter Berger and applied consistently throughout the book, is that every image or symbol of the Ultimate is the product of the human imagination (which, he adds, can be considered the vehicle of revelation) as it is challenged and inspired by the ever-changing social, cultural, economic, and political context.

Ford’s description and analysis of the divine quest in each of the traditions, too rich to be summarized here, include a selective but adequate historical summary, and then a breakdown into “acts” that identify how the quest shifted and expanded according to ever-new historical realities. His phenomenological thoroughness reveals, without explicit intent, a diversity *between* the religions that is refracted in similar diversities *within* the religions. There appears to be a common “morphology of the Ultimate” (308). In all the traditions’ efforts to imagine what is “most important given the nature of reality,” we can identify a dynamic tension between the one and the many, the personal and the impersonal, the transcendent and the immanent. And amid the astounding diversity of images and symbols, Ford

convincingly makes clear that although there are disagreements among the traditions about the *ontological* transcendence of the Ultimate, there is an overwhelming agreement about its *epistemological* transcendence (326). While all religions affirm that the Ultimate can be known, they also insist that there will *always* be more to know.

Thus, in his conclusion he announces that “pluralism” is not only “unavoidable” but must be embraced in an interreligious “endless interpretation” (338). In these final “reflections on the divine quest,” Ford steps out of the closet as a comparative theologian. And it’s clear that he believes that in this comparison of Western and Eastern divine quests, the West has much to learn from the East. Classical theism, he declares, is waning. Here Eastern insights and experience, especially Buddhist, can help guide Western theists toward a “trans-theistic” understanding of “Ultimate Reality as a single process or as nondual in its essence” (332–38). His comparative study leads to engaging constructive theology.

Given the quality of its content and the clarity of its style (honed, I imagine, by his undergraduate teaching), Ford’s *Divine Quest* could well serve both graduate and undergraduate courses in world religions, interreligious dialogue, and comparative theology.

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Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Christian and Muslim Perspectives. Edited by Lucinda Mosher and David Marshall. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016. 176 pages. \$26.95 (paper).
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This slim but illuminating volume emerges from the 2014 Building Bridges seminar held under the stewardship of Georgetown University. It is divided into five parts: the introductory overviews (part 1) and the closing reflection (part 5) frame three parts, on the themes of sin, forgiveness, and reconciliation, with preassigned scriptural texts associated with each theme.

Each part provides two essays that, taken together, significantly advance our understanding of the topic at hand. In part 1 Kärkkäinen’s overview essay on the Christian perspective lays out a taxonomy that, despite its brevity, is breathtaking for the clarity with which it differentiates between two main Christian traditions of “conceiving the Fall and sinfulness” (3). Kärkkäinen perceptively connects divine forgiveness to the call for repentance, and the church’s work of forgiveness and reconciliation to the call across traditions to “collaborate in stopping violence” (9). Brown’s essay on