

In this context, the title of the book misguides the reader. The main title, *The Arab Christ*, is not indicative of the main theme of the book's two parts. None of them offers an Arabic theological interpretation of Jesus Christ's event or life, identity and ministry, let alone reasoning theologically about Christology. On the other hand, the description of an 'Arab Christian theology of conviviality' in the book's subtitle in terms of 'towardness' gives the impression that the author is inviting the readers to ponder the possibility of developing a theological discourse that has not been moved *towards* before, and that the author is initiating, if not pioneering, this towardness. The second part of the book demonstrates that this is far from being the case. A more appropriate and telling title to the book would be something like: *The Lebanese Christians: Politico-Contextual Models of a Theology of Conviviality*. Notwithstanding these qualifications, this book offers a useful text to expose students, scholars and interested readers on what is going on theologically in that turbulent part of the world.

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Grant Kaplan, *Faith and Reason in Christian History: A Theological Essay*

(Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2022), pp. xvi + 360. \$29.95.

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What most distinguishes Grant Kaplan's survey of faith and reason is the quality of his prose, which is so fluid and engaging that I found myself choosing to enjoy reading sections of the book late every evening in times I usually reserve for leisure reading. Its eminent readability makes this an especially attractive text for professors seeking to spark the interest of undergraduates. Kaplan pulls this off with little loss in precision, all while condensing his survey of faith and reason throughout Christian history into a little over 300 pages.

The book is divided into three fairly equal sections. The first part, 'Premodern Christianity', covers first century origins to Aquinas, Bonaventure and Scotus in the 'High Middle Ages'. The second, 'Modern Theology', covers the Reformation through the nineteenth century. And the third, 'The Twentieth Century and Beyond', begins with neo-Thomism, Blondel and Barth, and ends with various theologies of liberation. Kaplan is Catholic, and this influences his periodisation, selection and interpretation of figures. As a Protestant I found this particularly informative, in particular regarding his treatments of Reformation and twentieth-century theologians (though his almost complete omission of Schleiermacher was a surprise). Scholars from outside the Catholic tradition may benefit from the ways Kaplan's survey can add new perspective to and begin to fill in gaps in their studies.

Any single volume covering so vast a period will necessarily sacrifice depth (e.g. 'The Pauline Approach' is two pages long; Aquinas gets the most space with twelve pages), so

it is not surprising that Kaplan's summaries of figures I know well felt insufficient. At the same time, those summaries were never misleading. This is as good as it gets with such ambitious surveys and lent me confidence about Kaplan's treatment of figures I do not know well. In such cases, I found his summaries clear and accessible.

The subtitle of the volume is 'A Theological Essay', but while the work communicates a soft affirmation that faith and reason are not incompatible (and, indeed that in important ways faith may provide an essential complement to reason), the book is not intended to be a constructive work advancing a precise theory about the relation of faith and reason. It is more an extended series of vignettes unfolding the relation of faith and reason in select theological figures across the history of western Christian thought. The precise and shifting meaning of 'faith' and 'reason' among different periods and figures is not seriously interrogated. This may call for supplementary work in the classroom, but it is consistent with the generalist approach any such survey must adopt. Perhaps because of his theological focus, Kaplan chooses not to cover modern philosophical debates over faith and reason, including the works of modern Christian philosophers like Alvin Plantinga and Richard Swinburne.

One question broad historical summaries must ask is whether their selection of figures perpetuates harmful systemic distortions. On this count the book stumbles, and to his credit Kaplan does not hesitate to articulate the indictment clearly. Noting that until midway through the final chapter he has focused 'almost exclusively on males, most... European', Kaplan explains why some would contend his 'approach wilts under the gaze of a liberationist hermeneutic that interrogates a narrative of the "mainstream" tradition for stifling the perpetually muffled voices of women and non-European men. Motive matters little because the effect is the same – norming a tradition that perpetuates exclusion' (p. 290).

Kaplan unpacks the critique squarely and offers something of an apologia in conversation with key liberation, feminist and black theologians. Here again his summaries are concise and precise, and his rejoinder is measured, but in this case the inevitable insufficiency has more bite. Kaplan is friendly to the critique, stiffening only in reaction to those who caricature and reject the Christian theological tradition wholesale. Resisting thin counter-narratives and wholesale dismissal of the Christian tradition is surely justifiable, but when historically marginalised voices and critique of the mainstream tradition are still not integrated throughout the entirety of a twenty-first century summary of the Christian tradition, strong support is unfortunately lent to the suspicion the tradition as a whole may indeed be irredeemable. Kaplan alerts readers to this vital issue clearly enough to spark substantive classroom discussion, but here and in earlier chapters professors will want to supplement Kaplan's text with others that give voice to historically marginalised figures. Given Kaplan's sensitivity to the critique, and his gift for summarising complex ideas clearly and concisely, it is reasonable to expect and hope Kaplan himself will soon set about rectifying this shortcoming.

Summarising the contours of so technical and fraught a topic as the relation between faith and reason over the entire course of Christian history is impossibly ambitious, so it is impressive that, if with a significant caveat, I can recommend Kaplan's book, joined with supplementary readings, in particular for undergraduate survey courses.

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