
Jackson explores how political liberalism might be grounded in and governed by the agapic love of God and all neighbors embodied by Jesus Christ. Jackson prefers to define “liberalism” with reference to a distinctive meaning of the Latin term “liber,” meaning bountiful, generous and open-hearted. He says “such liberalism is prophetic in as much as it takes agape as the foundation and ordering measure for the otherwise fractious social goods of liberty and equality.”

“A Christian must indeed be in the world, must love God and the neighbor in and through (and sometimes around) some particular social context. So there is no escaping the burden of articulating and defending those political and economic arrangements deemed most expressive of, or at least compatible with, the holy will of God,” said Jackson, who is a senior fellow in the Center for the Study of Law and Religion (CSLR).

The book’s early draft was the focus of a recent roundtable discussion, led by Michael J. Perry, Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Law and CSLR senior fellow. The CSLR hosts roundtables each year to offer critical feedback to authors at the early stage of a new manuscript.
Esteemed scholars from Emory and elsewhere participate in the discussions. For the Jackson book, participants included Don Browning, University of Chicago; Terence Cuneo, Calvin College; Christopher Eberle, U.S. Naval Academy; Richard Garnett, University of Notre Dame; Eric Gregory, Princeton University; Jon Gunnemann, Emory; Jennifer Herdt, Notre Dame; Edmund Santurri, St. Olaf College; Steve Smith, University of San Diego; Steve Tipton, Emory; Paul Weithman, Notre Dame; John Witte, Jr., Emory; and Nicholas P. Wolterstoff, Yale University.

This was the third annual roundtable led by Perry. The first, in 2004, critiqued Wolterstorff’s forthcoming book, Justice as Rights. This volume also was the subject of Wolterstorff’s March 29, 2006, McDonald Lecture, hosted by the CSLR. The 2005 roundtable examined Perry’s own forthcoming book, Toward a Theory of Human Rights. Perry will host a fourth roundtable in January 2007 to focus on a forthcoming book by Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law and CSLR senior fellow, titled The Future of Shari’a: Secularism from an Islamic Perspective.

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