Bräutigam

Ironic Thriving

Theological Paradox and Psychological Dissonance

Ironic Thriving brings theology into dialogue with psychological science, and with cognitive dissonance theory in particular, to investigate the formative impact of theological tension. The book argues that theological paradoxes concerning the human self evoke cognitive dissonance. Yet this dissonance is not a problem to be resolved. Instead, it can serve as a catalyst for spiritual flourishing. The inquiry centres on the theological anthropology of Martin Luther, whose paradoxical vision of the Christian self offers a rich framework for exploring the dynamics of inner conflict and grace. For readers in theology, the author provides a succinct and accessible account of cognitive dissonance theory, from Leon Festinger's original formulation to contemporary refinements that focus on identity, motivation, and self-related processes. The model of ironic thriving presents a vision of human flourishing not through the pursuit of coherence and tranquillity (as common approaches suggest), but through inhabiting unresolved contradiction. The book is grounded in a method of relational integration, which keeps the distinct contributions of theology and psychology intact. The result opens new lines of inquiry into spiritual formation, the conflicted self, and the generative potential of theological paradox.

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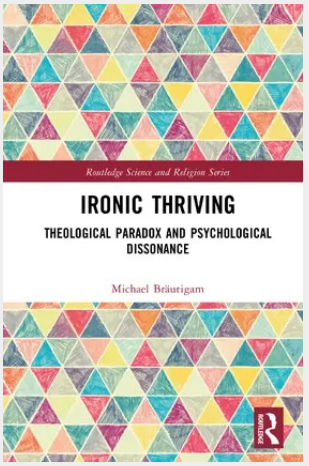

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