



Volume 65 | Issue 1

Article 19

5-23-2022

Nicolet and Kartzows' "The complexity of conversion: Intersectional perspectives on religious change in antiquity and beyond" (book review)

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Recommended Citation

Keesing, Karen (2022) "Nicolet and Kartzows' "The complexity of conversion: Intersectional perspectives on religious change in antiquity and beyond" (book review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 65: Iss. 1, Article 19.

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Book Review



Nicolet, V. & Kartzow, M.B., (Eds.) (2021). *The complexity of conversion: Intersectional perspectives on religious change in antiquity and beyond*. Sheffield, UK: Equinox Publishing, Ltd. 265 pp. ISBN 9781781795736

This book is an interdisciplinary compilation of curated essays on conversion and Christian identity. Kartzow and Nicolet note that “This book addresses the complexity of conversion and uses a range of cases, primary sources and theories” (p. 1). This book contains twelve chapters authored by preeminent theologians and academic experts knowledgeable on texts written from Antiquity. This book was written to address the complexity and intersectionality in the conversion process.

This book’s structure is a little confusing and challenging to read for those not familiar with the intricacies contained within conversion. The first chapter serves as an introduction, offering a definition of conversion and reviewing the existing literature on the psychological impacts and perspectives on conversion. The author notes the homogeneity of conversion stories, specifically stating that “Stories of conversion rarely transmit the various voices or experiences of children, disabled persons, slaves, or women” (p. 15).

Chapters two, three, and four discuss past and present issues around conversion and mystery cults. Chapter five explores the link between disability and conversion in the Gospel of Mark and discusses the impact of Wesleyan theology on conversion. Chapter six analyzes the story in Acts of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch to emphasize the importance of gender and ethnicity in conversion. The remaining chapters focus on the role gender has in conversion. The story of Joseph and Aseneth is explored in-depth and is examined through the lens of intersectionality.

This book is recommended for scholars interested in the complexity of conversion. Additionally, this book expands and adds to the existing literature on conversion viewed through the theory of intersectionality.

Reviewer

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