

## Facets of the Kingdom

**Loris O. Gillin**

Page Turner Press (Jan 31, 2023)

Softcover \$9.99 (80pp)

979-888622925-7

*Facets of the Kingdom* gathers reflections on the nature of racial and religious categories in contemporary society to argue for goodwill between all people.

Loris O. Gillin explores the foundations of a Christian society in her religious book *Facets of the Kingdom*.

Due to the digitization of mass media, people forget to treat others with respect regardless of their racial or religious identity, according to Gillin. She asserts that postmodern ideas, like that of “the Self,” have led to more emotional responses to social topics, including those of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and confrontations between the state and Aboriginal people in Australia. Rather than be ruled by emotion, the book argues, activists need to see past markers like race and gender and pursue mutual acceptance that reflects humanity’s shared citizenship in the spiritual kingdom of God.

Though the book first draws comparisons between Australia and the United States regarding race and nationality, it also addresses the political systems and plights in nations including China, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and France. Intriguing claims are made in close succession, if without sufficient sourcing: that between 10 and 432 Aboriginal deaths in police custody have been reported since 1991; about how police departments handle errant officers. The book makes appeals to activists to temper their demonstrations, pontificating on topics like civility. It casts a wide net when it comes to social topics too, despite its limited length, declaring that most prisoners are fatherless, for instance, and that there should therefore be more state support for single parents. In the end, its concise coverage of racial oppression elides clear explanations and contextual inquiry, making its claims unpersuasive.

In addition to its social commentary, the book includes a travelogue section with discussions of food, daily experiences, and interactions with others; these memories are not made to connect to the book’s overarching thesis in a satisfying manner. Psychoanalytical arguments also play in, and are similarly underattended, rushing through broad concepts like in-group and out-group sentiments in religion in a disorganized manner. And the book is further diluted by its recountings of biblical stories, as when it traces human genealogy according to the Bible or muses through the stories of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. Other people are quoted on topics including COVID-19 and the necessity of religious belonging, but these quotes come without sufficient context to bind them to Gillin’s own arguments. In the end, the book leaves a meandering impression, sharing notes on topics as ranging as the dangers of digital media and herd mentalities.

A musing text, *Facets of the Kingdom* gathers reflections on the nature of racial and religious categories in contemporary society.

ALEENA ORTIZ (June 6, 2023)

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