



# **Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas' Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology**

*John Swinton*

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“No other mainstream theologian has so consistently and trenchantly taken a stand with and for people with developmental disabilities.”—John Swinton

*Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas' Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology* examines the influential writings of one of the most important contemporary theologians. Over the past thirty years, *Time* magazine Theologian of the Year (2001) Dr. Stanley Hauerwas has consistently presented a theological position which values the deep theological significance of people with developmental disabilities, as well as their importance to the life and the faithfulness of the church. Ten key Hauerwas essays on disability are brought together in a single volume—essays which reflect and illustrate his thinking on the theology of disability, along with responses to each essay from multidisciplinary authoritative sources including Jean Vanier, Michael Bérubé, John O'Brien and Ray S. Anderson.

Dr. Hauerwas has always been a fearless voice in the field of theology. *Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas' Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology* presents his work on the true meaning of disability and provides critical multidisciplinary discussions about his challenging ideas and their validity. In his essays, Hauerwas discusses his views on issues such as the social construction of developmental disabilities, the experience of profound developmental disabilities in relation to liberal society, and the community as the “hermeneutic of the gospel.” Included is a new essay by Dr. Hauerwas responding to the contributors to the book.

*Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas' Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology* explores Hauerwas' thoughts on:

- the political nature of disability in liberal society
- the creation of a society where there is more love
- the dimensions of what is “normal”
- the key role of those treated as outsiders in building community
- the theological understanding of parenting which places responsibility for the individual child firmly within the Christian community
- using the model of the church as a social ethic
- developmental disability being equated with suffering
- the concept of the person in the theology of disability
- the developmentally disabled and the criteria for “humanhood”
- the importance of family in the process of caring for people with developmental disabilities

*Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas' Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology* is a fascinating exploration of contemporary theological reflection on disability and is essential reading for students and teachers of practical theology, pastoral counselors, clergy, chaplains, and social and health care students.

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