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Traditioning Disciples: The Contributions of Cultural Anthropology to Ecclesial Identity (American Society of Missiology Monograph)

Colleen Mary Mallon

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In a globalized world and an "age that cannot name itself," how do Christian communities sustain a recognizable gospel identity? How might examining tradition and identity formation from both theology and cultural anthropology help churches approach the challenges of being a follower of Jesus today? With these questions in focus, Colleen Mallon studies symbol systems in the works of anthropologists Mary Douglas, Victor Turner, and Clifford Geertz and places her findings in dialogue with a "thick description" of discipleship gleaned from the great Roman Catholic ecclesiologist Yves Congar, OP. The result is a reflection on gospel identity that will be invaluable to Christian ministers, missioners, and students of theology interested in the social and theological processes of disciple formation. "This path-breaking book opens new directions in the conversation between faith and culture as well as the contemporary dialogue between theology and social science. Discipleship and the dynamic nature of religious tradition are explored through an insightful correlation of Geertz, Douglas, and Asad with Congar, whose work was so central to the Second Vatican Council. Freshness, originality, and theological depth make this critical for ecclesiology and missiology, as well as practical theology. Highly recommended." --Bryan Froehle St. Thomas University, Miami "This is a truly amazing book. Using the method of mutually critical correlation between modern and postmodern anthropologists on the one hand and Catholic Theology on the other, Colleen Mallon takes ecclesiology and missiology in a new and exciting direction. Her work is clear, expansive, and passionately faith-filled." --Stephen Bevans, SVD Catholic Theological Union, Chicago "Beautifully written, this volume retrieves the rich notion of tradition as exemplified in the work of Yves Congar and correlates it with the contributions of cultural anthropology to address the current crisis in Roman Catholic identity formation and transformation in a globalized and postmodern context. Professor Mallon offers a model of the critical appropriation of the social sciences in theology. It provides a rich resource for all Christian communities struggling with traditioning disciples." --T. Howland Sanks, SJ Jesuit School of Theology/Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley Colleen M. Mallon is Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri. She is the author of the award-winning article "Globalization at Large," published in Terrence W. Tilley's New Horizons in Theology (2005).

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