

hel
 global network player authority PewDiePie guilt god Leis Play anael undead writ fanzentic meadization skin contest
 game rule system representation gameplay data WGW ble sing hob hils jeior face body fight trope pe lingame PS PVI digital
 religion gane analysis The Last of Us death resurrection funeral rules virtual identity curppriest genesis clai wedding
 simulation ludology narrative



Ma Nishtana: Why is this Night Different? Photo by Gabriel McCormick.

Special Issue

Teaching with Games. Formative Gaming in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

edited by

Tim Hutchings

reports

Triple Fun! Pedagogy, Play, and Parent Involvement in Religion-Based Games

by Arwa Hussain, 144

The Aetherlight. A Case Study of the Formational Potential of a Game

by Philippa Isom, 158

interviews

Playing to Grow. Roundtable Interview on Games, Education, and Character

by Owen Gottlieb, Matthew Farber and Paul Darvasi, 178

Re-Imagining Christian Education Through Neurodivergent Fellowship, Play, and Leadership in Online Videogaming

Erin Raffety and Maria Insa-Iglesias

Abstract

From Fall 2020 to Spring 2022, the Center of Theological Inquiry, funded by a grant from the Templeton World Charity Foundation’s Diverse Intelligences Initiative and in collaboration with Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland, created a *Minecraft* (2011) videogame prototype titled *The Spiritual Loop*. This videogame prototype was designed and developed for fostering spiritual growth and connection based on ethnographic research with neurodivergent persons and their Christian faith communities in the United States. Considering the lack of access disabled persons experience with respect to Christian communities in the US (Carter 2007), alongside the disproportionate emphasis on educational and therapeutic outcomes with respect to neurodivergent gamers (Spiel and Gerling 2021), our participatory fieldwork with neurodivergent players led us to emphasize the game’s opportunities for spiritual connection versus mastery of biblical content or Christian virtues. This paper highlights two findings with respect to gaming and Christian education. First, despite the consistent emphasis on fostering Christian community and connection, neurotypical players frequently mistook the game’s goal as Christian education, whereas neurodivergent players readily appreciated the game’s fellowship potential. Second, neurodivergent players seamlessly assumed leadership roles in online game play, confirming the ability of online communities to transform theological hierarchies (Campbell 2012). Based on these findings, we suggest that a bifurcation in fellowship and education in traditional Christian formation reflects ableist biases. The flexible, playful environment presented in online gaming spaces offers critical opportunities for fostering fellowship between neurodivergent and neurotypical Christians, as well as untapped opportunities for neurodivergent leadership to flourish in reimagining more accessible environments for Christian education.

Keywords: Christian Education, Fellowship, Leadership, Minecraft, Neurodiversity, Play, gameenvironments

instance, Botha, Hanlon and Williams 2023). Furthermore, many autistic persons see their identities as falling under the broader category of neurodivergence, a category of persons whose thinking, behaviors, and ways of learning implicitly differ from that of the neurotypical people (Walker 2021). Neurodivergence is a broad term that can include autistic persons and persons with ADHD, persons with dyslexia, Tourette's, other emotional and behavioral conditions, and persons with mental health diagnoses.

The neurodiversity paradigm, which grew out of the Autism Rights Movement in the 1990s (Singer 1999), foregrounds the social discrimination that often results from these diagnoses and resists pathologizing difference (Chapman 2019), championing not only the rights but the contributions of neurominorities and neurodivergent persons in a world that rewards conformity. In his work on autistic communication, for instance, Damian Milton argues that issues of access may stem from communication biases between neurotypical and neurodivergent persons, owing to the *double empathy problem*, in which neurotypical persons perceive neurodivergent persons to be uninterested in communication because typical biases pervade (Milton 2012, 884). Similarly, Vikram Jaswal and Nameera Akhtar (2018, 3) show that autistic people often engage in seemingly *antisocial* behaviors such as avoiding eye contact or stimming, precisely to maintain social connection. Finally, my research with disabled children in Christian families who use alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices, noted the extent to which communication broke down because non-disabled persons were not able to learn AAC with enough fluency to receive others' communication (Raffety et al. 2019, 109-110).

Many theologians have troubled how routinized expectations for communication within congregational environments bracket, limit, or diminish a diversity of

gaming, and Christian theology, who provided feedback at various stages of the research.

Recruitment

After obtaining ethical approval, research subjects for the project were recruited through existing networks and social media. Given the small size of the project and the research fellow's expertise with Reformed Christian Theology, the decision was made to restrict the participants to Protestant Christian communities. Other criteria for participation in the project specified that communities must have disabled participants with prior experience in videogame play, as well as others in the community (disabled or non-disabled participants) who were willing to play with them. In other words, whereas disabled players were required to have prior knowledge of videogaming, non-disabled players were not. The research only admitted subjects who were preexisting members of Christian faith communities. Although disabled participants' knowledge of videogames and experience of disability varied considerably across the research units, purposeful sampling was employed such that each research unit was comprised of at least one disabled gamer and one non-disabled community participant. In Fall 2020, the research fellow completed initial interviews with interested parties, which were coded and analyzed for focused and open themes, and ultimately recruited three research units, existing Reformed Christian communities made up of two to four individuals, for the pilot study.

Research Subjects

The research fellow recruited a total of eight research subjects who were grouped according to their preexisting community groups in research units (RU). RU1 is formed by an adult (female, 60s) and an autistic young adult (male, 21); RU2 is

formed by an adult (male, 50s), his daughter with mood disorder (11), a young adult (male, 20s), and a young adult (female, 20s); and RU3 is formed by an adult with fibromyalgia, PTSD, and anxiety (female, 40s), and her mother (female, 60s).

Research Unit	Number of members	Demographics	Location	Community Type
Unit 1 (RU1)	2	Adult female, white, 60s; Young adult male, white, 21, <i>autistic</i>	New Jersey	Reformed Church
Unit 2 (RU2)	4	Adult male, 50s, Black and Latinx (father); Youth, female, 11, Black and Latinx, <i>mood disorder</i> (daughter); Young adult male, white, 20s; Young adult female, white, 20s	New Jersey	Lutheran Camp
Unit 3 (RU3)	2	Adult, female, white, 40s, <i>Fibromyalgia, PTSD, anxiety</i> (daughter); Female, white 60s (mother)	California/Wyoming	Presbyterian (PCUSA) church

Table 1: Research subjects.

All disabled participants in the study had diagnoses, including autism, mood disorder, anxiety, and PTSD, that fall under the umbrella of neurodivergence (although some had additional diagnoses as seen above). Although few participants used the language of neurodivergence themselves to self-identify, all three of the participants identified and expressed understandings of their disability consistent with the neurodiversity movement, including the understanding of neurodiversity as a natural difference in human variation with distinct ways of thinking, learning, and behaving, as well as the notion of neurodivergence accompanying and intersecting with other social dynamics, such as race and gender (Singer 1999, Walker 2021). Therefore, by using the terminology of neurodivergent and neurotypical in this article, we reference a definition of disability that is identity-driven (Botha, Hanlon and Williams 2023), contextual in its recognition of ableism that denotes some brains as typical and some as divergent, yet also anti-pathologizing (Chapman 2019) in that it seeks to center

Game Prototype: *The Spiritual Loop*

In this section, we briefly describe the game and its features so that readers can follow the discussion and findings specific to the gaming elements. Neurodivergent gamers' input in the preliminary fieldwork stage of research led us to focus on building the game in *Minecraft* due to its familiarity and appeal and to develop a village-based game with a church, due to the interests of our players in exploring spiritual and natural environments and experimenting with worship participation and fellowship. The server was set up with features and rules, inspired by the Autcraft community (Ringland 2017), to create a fun, safe environment for neurodivergent players and their communities. These included: players need to be on the whitelist to join the server; the default mode is adventure; the difficulty level is easy; there are no monsters or enemies; players can fly; and the nether world is disabled. These features were recommended by experienced players to support beginning players and ensure ease of play for multiplayer groups.

The game's storyline starts in a small village (see Figure 1) consisting of a main square, with a fountain, several villager houses, and a small church with a bell tower. Players can use this space but they cannot alter existing buildings (i.e., players cannot place or destroy structures in these spaces except in the dedicated areas with yellow outlines). The game's purpose is to cooperate with players to complete a set of tasks (individual and cooperative), called, *advancements* in *Minecraft*, on each level, and make it to the last level to win the game (see Figure 2 [B] for level 0 advancements and [C] for level 1 advancements). When players complete all the advancements, they are invited to participate in the great feast, a banquet that simulates the last supper in Christian scripture. Upon completion of this final level, they advance to creative mode, where they are given access to all resources and can explore beyond the pre-existing village, simulating heavenly freedom.

We also added *cooperative tasks* to the game, which are customized advancements where cooperative play is encouraged to benefit the community. For example, the task “share to care” requires sharing resources with others, and the task “cooperate to discover the mural” requires cooperating to break blocks to discover the village mural. Players are not able to advance through the game if they do not discover the meaningful cooperation necessary to complete the tasks (see the hint provided by NPC in Figure 2 [D] and [E]). Other cooperative tasks include “share time together,” “worship together,” and “the great feast.”

Although a few of the advancements can be individually completed (i.e. “find your chest,” “build your house,” etc.), most advancements require cooperative action to be completed (i.e. “share to care,” “worship together,” etc.). The game is designed to encourage multiplayer interaction and cooperation.

Tasks are designed with an algorithm that hinders advancing the videogame levels for those players who try to advance merely individually. One example of the obstacles players encounter if they try to advance through videogame levels without collaboration is when the player decides to break too many blocks to discover the mural without engaging in cooperative play. If the player keeps breaking blocks after the AI witness appears and warns the player about the need to collaborate, this player will be prevented from breaking more blocks. Another obstacle that hinders players from completing the whole videogame is when the player completes all advancements by themselves. The player will not be able to complete the whole videogame until everyone has completed all the advancements. It is at that stage when a new space appears, called Community House, and all players will be able to complete the last two advancements and win the game together.

February 2022.

Research Unit	Session Number	Date	Duration	Participants	Notes
RU1	1	11/16/21	1.5 hrs	All	
RU1	2	11/29/21	1.5 hrs	All	
RU1	3	1/28/22	1.5 hrs	2/3	
RU1	4	2/1/22	1 hr	All	
RU1	5	2/22/22	1.5 hrs	All	Feedback session/ Beat game
RU2	1	10/1/21	1.5 hrs	All	
RU2	2	10/22/21	1.5 hrs	4/5	
RU2	3	11/19/21	1.5 hrs	All	Beat game
RU2	4	1/27/22	1.5 hrs	All	Feedback session
RU3	1	9/23/21	1.5 hrs	All + tech fellow	
RU3	2	10/1/21	1.5 hrs	1/2	
RU3	3	10/20/21	1.5 hrs	1/2	
RU3	4	11/4/21	1.5 hrs	All	
RU3	5	11/23/21	1.5 hrs	All	
RU3	6	12/1/21	1.5 hrs	All	Beat game
RU3	7	1/18/22	1.5 hrs	All	Feedback session

Table 2. Play Sessions Conducted.

This data was coded and analyzed for focused and open themes, which yielded evidence of neurodivergent leadership in gameplay and a tension between Christian education and fellowship that broke down along neurotypical and neurodivergent lines. These findings are discussed in conversation with relevant literatures, and it is suggested the findings also help to identify compelling aspects of neurodivergent spirituality, that makes a contribution to the existing literatures on Christian education, videogaming, and disability theology.

Neurodivergent Leadership

In each research unit neurodivergent players took clear leadership roles in teaching others how to play, organizing others in the cooperative tasks integral to game play,

are shared, as inaccessible and inadequate for forging true social connection. This is something that other neurodivergent people have critiqued as well (Jacobs and Richardson 2022, 82-87). In so doing, she makes clear that the game is not primarily an educational, but a social space: the game offers an alternative space for accessible fellowship for those who may find traditional forms of fellowship unsatisfactory. However, she also highlights the spiritual component of accessible fellowship, making clear that the game is not just a social space, but allows players an opportunity to connect spiritually and even engage in spiritual care for one another (“How’s your dad doing? Heard he was sick. Do you need a prayer? I can offer one...” (RU3, Feedback Session, 18 January 2022)). This is significant because it affirms what we observed throughout gameplay amongst neurodivergent leaders: play and spirituality are not separate endeavors but contiguous practices that the church has overlooked when it comes to spiritual formation.

Fellowship vs. Christian Education

However, in the feedback sessions, several neurotypical players struggled to value play and fellowship as goods in and of themselves. They expressed a desire for them to be more clearly tied to education, even though education was never the stated goal of the game. As one neurotypical pastor remarked:

“There’s more *Minecraft* than Bible study...I mean, playing the *Minecraft* is fun, but how do we get the more balanced where you’re, what you learn and how you move forward in *Minecraft* is driven by you being able to learn things like, how did we put in our Bible study inventory that we understand a piece of the story, or like, we can hoe, but how do we, uh, build an ark?” (RU1, Feedback Session, 22 February 2022)

“I feel like the Bible study part was overshadowed by the figuring out the...Like, I didn’t notice some of those things sometimes because, um, wasn’t sure about what we were doing.” (RU1, Feedback Session, 22 February 2022)

“The story talks about like, where’s the, I can read the scripture, but now I’m just, it’s like another task in the game. Where’s the learning part? And we might not be there yet, but...probably from my perspective at looking at it as a Bible study game for people to use, I have people in mind who, how would they play this game and what it would mean to them? And then what does it mean? Why would I use this game as a Christian educator?” (RU1, Feedback Session, 22 February 2022)

Across these three quotations from the feedback session, we can see that the neurotypical pastor insists on thinking about the game as tool for “Bible study,” learning the Bible, and “Christian education” (RU1, Feedback Session, 22 February 2022), despite repeated reminders that this was not the focus of the game. We can see that by evaluating the game through the lens of Christian education, she finds it objectionable that “scripture” is just “like another task in the game” (RU1, Feedback Session, 22 February 2022), because she connects meaning-making with biblical learning. This viewpoint implicitly juxtaposes play and meaning-making in ways that contrast with neurodivergent players’ experiences. Whereas neurodivergent players expressed delight and expanded access in spiritual play in the videogame, some neurotypical players seemed to see play in *Minecraft* and even fun as potentially limiting to a goal of biblical learning. In the neurotypical pastor’s words, “I mean, playing the Minecraft is fun, but how do we get to the more balanced ... Bible study?” (RU1, Feedback Session, 22 February 2022).

The insistence that fun have a purposeful goal coheres with Spiel and Gerling’s concern with the way “the rhetorical concept of fun and games is exploited for the sake of othering neurodivergent populations further, to ‘cure’ them, to ‘identify’ them through diagnosis, to imply that their sociality and knowledge is insufficient and to use notions of inclusion while pointedly conceptualizing neurodivergence as deviant from social norms” (2021, 28). Indeed, the neurotypical pastor’s inability to embrace the joyful unproductiveness of play points to an implicit ableism at the heart of

within biblical teachings and principles. In order to unhinge Christianity from its ableist underpinnings, it may be necessary to move social and spiritual opportunities to alternative spaces and to appreciate what the implicit values of videogames, such as *Minecraft*, can offer Christian spirituality and fellowship. If videogames are to present a viable opportunity for neurotypical and neurodivergent congregants to grow in spiritual and social connections through play and fellowship, games cannot be subordinated or coopted by existing Christian educational values (which maintain ableist biases).

Although we noted biases amongst neurotypical players when it comes to fellowship, play, and Christian education, the insights of neurodivergent players when it comes to leadership and spirituality should not be understated. The emphasis on collaboration and instruction that neurodivergent players emphasized in their gameplay feedback highlight significant gifts for the church in shared, accessible leadership. This could bring substantive clarity to how neurodivergent folks both critique and refine discourse and practice of Christian leadership, by undoing cults of ability and individualism in favor of true gifts of the Spirit poured out on the body of Christ (Brock 2019, Raffety 2022). Furthermore, the neurodivergent pastor's reframing of both fellowship and gaming as spiritual and not just social spaces reminds us that play for play's sake in Christian community is a worthwhile endeavor. Indeed, our study shows that neurodivergent players have significant desire and resources for making these spaces more equitable, if we only yield leadership to them to do so.

Finally, the insights that games possess their own spiritual architecture that may have valuable insights for Christian communities, while well substantiated in the religion and gaming literature (Wagner 2014), is something neurodivergent players grasped, yet neurotypical players struggled to appreciate. Here it is important to point out that

fellowship and play may have significant insights for Christian education after all, but not on the terms of neurotypical approaches (biblical learning, complexity, and formal discussion) to education. This is encouraging, because it shows that neurodivergent approaches to spirituality are creative and flexible in their analysis of nontraditional settings, such as videogaming, and that the perceived hierarchy between fellowship and Christian education may be but a neurotypical presumption. More study is needed, of course, but in integrating aspects of Christian community life, such as fellowship, play, and education, neurodivergent players may be offering Christian communities more holistic and virtuous ways to practice Christianity.

Conclusion

This article has presented an overview of some of the findings from *The Spiritual Loop* project, a participatory study of video games' potential to enhance the spiritual lives of Christian congregations and foster connection between neurotypical and neurodivergent members. Although we present numerous examples of how *The Spiritual Loop*, a collaborative online game built in *Minecraft*, facilitated play with religious authority and Christian fellowship, we also show that neurotypical players identified the ways in which play and fellowship may be misaligned with the goals of Christian education. This suggests that neurotypical conceptions of Christian education as opposed to play and fellowship may be one of the biggest obstacles in fostering accessible play spaces for neurotypical and neurodivergent congregants. Yet, our study also shows that such spaces are vital points of accessibility, collaboration, and spiritual connection for neurodiverse groups that are in short supply within churches. Even as Christian churches and pastors are embedded within an American culture that glorifies productivity and renders play a luxury, play must not be undermined simply because it does not conform to so-called productive,

educational goals. Rather play, through videogaming, offers a unique site of access and spiritual formation for neurodiverse communities, if we can only get beyond our biases around what play is not.

References

Barth, K., 2010a. *Church dogmatics* III/4. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

Barth, K., 2010b. *Church dogmatics* IV/3.2. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

Berryman, J., 1995. *Godly play: An imaginative approach to Christian education*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Books.

Betcher, S. V., 2007. *Spirit and the politics of disablement*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

107

Boellstorff, T., Nardi, B., Pearce, C. and Taylor, T. L., 2012. *Ethnography and virtual worlds: A handbook of method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Botha, M., Hanlon, J. and Williams, G. L., 2023. Does language matter? Identity-first versus person-first language use in autism research: A response to Vivanti. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 53(2), 870-878. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04858-w>.

Bowman, D. 2021. *On the spectrum: Autism, faith, and the gifts of neurodiversity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

Brock, B., 2019. *Wondrously wounded: Theology, disability, and the body of Christ*.

Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Eiesland, N. L., 1994. *The disabled God: Toward a liberatory theology of disability*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Endress, T., 2021. The 'reopen churches' conversation: Disabilities and the margins. *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, 31(2-3), 193-206. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10649867.2021.1922825>.

Garner, S., 2020. Sacred pilgrimage in playful, digital spaces. In: Tucker, J. and Halstead, P., eds. *Sports and play in Christian theology*. Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 93-108.

Gottlieb, O., 2015. Current key perspectives in video gaming and religion: Theses by Owen Gottlieb. *Gamevironments* 3, 18-25. Available at <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:gbv:46-00104921-10>, accessed 16 October 2023.

109

Grieve, G. P., Radde-Antweiler, K. and Zeiler, X., eds., 2015. Current key perspectives in video gaming and religion. *Gamevironments* 3. Available at <https://journals.suub.uni-bremen.de/index.php/gamevironments/issue/view/15>, accessed 16 October 2023.

Hayse, M. A., 2009. *Religious architecture in videogames: Perspectives from curriculum theology and religious education*. [PhD dissertation] Trinity International University.

Hess, M. E., 2019. Why games and gaming might be the best way and place in which to consider the meaning and purposes of theological education: A reflection. *CrossCurrents*, 69(1), 80-94. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/cros.12361>.

Jacobs, N. L., 2023. Speaking with us, not for us: Neurodiversity, theology, and justice. *Journal of Disability & Religion*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2023.2249448>.

Jacobs, N. L. and Richardson, E., 2022. *At the gates: Disability, justice, and the churches*. London: Darton Longman & Todd, 584-605.

Jaswal, V. and Akhtar, N., 2018. Being versus appearing socially uninterested: Challenging assumptions about social motivation in autism. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 42, 1-73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x18001826>.

Lockhart, L. R., 2018. *Doing double-Dutch: Womanish modes of play as a pedagogical resource for theological education*. [PhD dissertation] Boston College.

Macaskill, G., 2021. *Autism and the church: Bible, theology, and community*. Waco: Baylor University Press.

Milton, D. E. M., 2012. On the ontological status of autism: The 'double empathy problem'. *Disability & Society*, 7(6), 883-887. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.710008>.

Minecraft, 2011. [video game] (multiplatform) Mojang Studios, Mojang Studios.

Moltmann, J., 1972. *Theology of play*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Raffety, E., Vollrath, K., Harris, E. and Foote, L., 2019. Lonely joy: How families with nonverbal children with disabilities communicate, connect, and resist in a world that

values words. *Journal of Pastoral Theology*, 29(2), 101-115. DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10649867.2019.1621024>.

Raffety, E., 2020. From inclusion to leadership: Disabled 'misfitting' in congregational ministry. *Theology Today*, 77(2), 198-209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040573620920698>.

Raffety, E., 2022. *From inclusion to justice: Disability, congregational ministry, and leadership*. Waco: Baylor University Press.

Rapp, R. and Ginsburg, F., 2013. Disability worlds. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 42(1), 53-68. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155502>.

Reinders, H., 2008. *Receiving the gift of friendship: Profound disability, theological anthropology, and ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Reynolds, T., 2008. *Vulnerable communion: A theology of disability and hospitality*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

Rigby, C., 2009. 'Beautiful playing': Moltmann, Barth, and the work of the Christian. In: McCormack, B. L. and Bender, K. J., eds. *Theology as conversation: The significance of dialogue in historical and contemporary theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 101-116.

Ringland, K. E., 2017. Who has access? Making accessible play spaces in *Minecraft* for children with autism. *Analog Game Studies*, 4(3). Available at <http://analoggamestudies.org/2017/05/who-has-access-making-accessible-play-spaces-in-minecraft-for-children-with-autism/>, accessed 27 September 2023.

Ringland, K. E., 2019a. 'Autosome': Fostering an autistic identity in an online *Minecraft* community for youth with autism. In: Taylor, N. G., Christian-Lamb, C., Martin, M. H. and Nardi, B., eds. *Information in contemporary society*. New York: Springer International Publishing, 132-143.

Ringland, K. E., 2019b. A place to play: The (dis)abled embodied experience for autistic children in online play spaces. In: *CHI '19: Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. Glasgow, UK, 4-9 May 2019. New York: ACM, 1-14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300518>.

Saliers, D. E., 1998. Introduction: Toward a spirituality of inclusiveness. In: Eiesland, N. and Saliers, D. E., eds. *Human disability and the service of God*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 19-32.

Singer, J., 1999. Why can't you be normal for once in your life?: From a 'Problem with No Name' to a new category of disability. In: Corker, M. and French, S., eds. *Disability discourse*. UK: Open University Press, 59-67.

Spiel, K. and Gerling, K., 2021. The purpose of play: How HCI research fails neurodivergent populations. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction*, 28(2), 1-40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3432245>.

Spurrier, R. F., 2019. *The disabled church: Human difference and the art of communal worship*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Stewart, J., 2015. *In Jesus' name we play. A theological playbook for youth: Toward a playful approach to Christian discipleship through a theology of vocation*. [DMIn

Thesis] Austin Theological Seminary.

Swinton, J., 2016. *Becoming friends of time*. Waco: Baylor University Press.

van Ommen, A. L., 2023. *Autism and worship: A liturgical theology*. Waco: Baylor University Press.

Wagner, R., 2014. The importance of playing in earnest. In: Campbell, H. A. and Grieve, G. P., eds. *Playing with religion in digital games*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 192-213.

Waldock, K. E., 2022. Inclusive online church consultation: What did we find out? *Open Table Network*, [online] 18 January. Available at <https://opentable.lgbt/our-news/2022/1/18/inclusive-online-church-consultation-what-did-we-find-out>, accessed 26 September 2023.

Waldock, K. E., 2023. The impossible subject: Belonging as neurodivergent in congregations. *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 27(4), 568-583. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2023.2249452>.

Walker, N., 2021. *Neuroqueer heresies: Notes on the neurodiversity paradigm, autistic empowerment, and postnormal possibilities*. Fort Worth: Autonomous Press.

Whitehead, A. L., 2018. Religion and disability: Variation in religious service attendance rates for children with chronic health conditions. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 57(2), 377-395. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12521>.

Williams, R. M. and Gilbert, J. E., 2019. 'Nothing about us without us': Transforming participatory research and ethics in human systems engineering. In: Roscoe, R. D., Chiou, E. K. and Wooldridge, A. R., eds. *Advancing diversity, inclusion, and social justice through human systems engineering*. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 113-134.