

## Q & A



### **Reviving the Golden Rule**

*How the Ancient Ethic of Neighbor Love Can Heal the World*

October 2, 2025 | \$32.99, 272 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-1276-5

**Andrew DeCort** (PhD, University of Chicago) founded the Institute for Faith and Flourishing and cofounded the Neighbor-Love Movement in Ethiopia, which have reached over twenty million people with the invitation to nonviolent spirituality. He has taught ethics, public theology, peace and conflict studies, and Ethiopian studies at Wheaton College, the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, and the University of Bonn. He is the author of *Blessed Are the Others*, *Flourishing on the Edge of Faith: Seven Practices for a New We*, and *Bonhoeffer's New Beginning: Ethics after Devastation*.

## Love as Our Moral Responsibility

### What led to your interest in and now sharing about neighbor love?

**Andrew DeCort:** I believe that othering is the most pressing problem of our time. Othering simply means seeing “others” as unrelated or less than ourselves. It’s a mindset of separation and superiority to others that leads to isolation and conflict. It’s the gateway of dehumanization, violence, and genocide. Today we’re witnessing more conflict-related deaths than any time since the Rwandan genocide in 1994. In the United States, we’re seeing rising polarization and a normalization of talking about others as enemies, animals, or monsters. Signs of authoritarianism are also rising in the US, often targeting “others” like undocumented immigrants, legal residents, Muslims, trans people, and Christians who are critical of the current administration. The wars in Ethiopia, Palestine, Ukraine, and other places show where these patterns take us. Sadly, many Christians are being swept into these dangerous cultural trends.

I wrote this book because I wanted to show that the heart of Jesus’ movement has a powerful, healing response to othering: loving our neighbors as ourselves. I wanted to unpack how neighbor love originated, how it evolved, and how we can continue this movement today. In Jesus’ vision of neighbor love, every other is our neighbor and worthy of love, including those we label as “enemies.” The practice of neighbor love means that the other is seen as morally connected to us and equally precious in value. This is a path of dignity, joy, and freedom: Jesus taught that the practice of neighbor love is the key to human flourishing, interpreting Scripture, fulfilling God’s will, and entering into eternal life. I trace how Jesus’ movement unfolded over the last two thousand years, and try to show how loving others as our neighbors has been central to this movement when it is at its best. I also show cases of profound failure where Christians slipped into othering and what we can learn today from reckoning with our past.

My hope is that this book will help revive Jesus’ radical neighbor-love movement in the face of othering, both in Christian communities and our shared world. Loving our neighbors is the heart of following Jesus, the heart of being human, the heart of our hope for a better future. This ancient ethic can help heal our world today by inspiring us to see every other as precious in value.

### What is your main thesis in *Reviving the Golden Rule*?

**DeCort:** My thesis is simple but increasingly subversive in contemporary culture: the other is our neighbor, not our enemy. The call to love our neighbors as ourselves is the heart of the biblical story and the movement Jesus started. Every other is our neighbor and someone God commands us to love as our selves. This invitation was and remains a daring movement to abolish othering and heal our world. In a time of escalating othering, the ethics of loving our neighbors as ourselves has never been more urgently needed and more full of hope. An ethic that once seemed obvious and even benign increasingly feels subversive, costly, and full of promise for transformation.

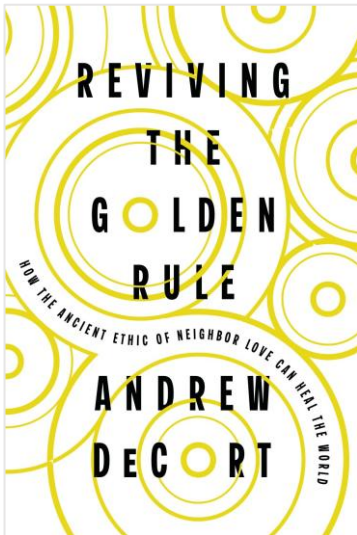
To my knowledge, this is the first book in English that (1) presents neighbor love as a direct response to the problem of othering, (2) guides the reader through every passage in the Bible that discusses how to love our neighbors as ourselves, (3) shows how the teaching and practice of neighbor love evolved across Christian history, and (4) invites the reader to continue this ancient movement to abolish othering and heal our world by practicing neighbor love today.



Karin DeHaven, senior publicist  
kdehaven@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media



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Jesus taught that loving our neighbors as ourselves is the heart of God's will, the key to interpreting Scripture, and the way of everlasting flourishing, but I'm not aware of another book that offers a comprehensive survey of the origins, evolution, and contemporary importance of this movement. We need neighbor love now more than ever, and this book shows us where it came from, how it unfolded, and how we can continue it today.

My methodology combines moving, personal storytelling with rigorous biblical interpretation, historical narration, and contemporary application. This is not dry, detached academics but an inspiring story that we can claim as our own and continue today in the face of othering, conflict, and violence.

#### **What do you hope your book contributes to the discussion of neighbor love?**

##### **DeCort:**

1. My book shows how neighbor love was and remains a movement to abolish othering and heal our humanity. Neighbor love has contributed to some of the most historic moral breakthroughs in human dignity, rights, and flourishing. Neighbor love is not merely a moral mandate but a radical spiritual movement to heal our humanity.
2. My book discusses every passage in the Bible about loving our neighbors as ourselves and offers an immersive survey of the Bible's moral imagination for human relationships. I'm not aware of another book that does this.
3. My book traces how the ethics of neighbor love unfolded across twenty centuries of Christian history, exploring little-known ancient documents and inspiring modern figures like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Simone Weil, and Martin Luther King Jr. It argues that neighbor love remains the most precious treasure and promising core of Christian ethics today. Neighbor love is an inclusive, ecumenical ethic that energizes solidarity rather than superiority, cooperation rather than competition.



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Karin DeHaven, senior publicist  
kdehaven@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media



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