Christian theological attempts to integrate scientific claims about altruism in nature have not been completely successful largely because Western theologies—particularly some Protestant versions—lack a theologically grounded ontological basis for speech about altruism, agape, and other forms of love. Patristic theologies of divine essence, energia, and logos, most fully developed in Eastern Orthodox thought, provide just such an ontological basis upon which Christian thought can stand in order to demonstrate that altruism in nature does not challenge religious claims that moral behavior has transcendent meaning but rather suggests that it is itself a manifestation of the divine will.

Keywords: agape, altruism, deification, divine energies, participation.

Colin Grant, in his book *Altruism and Christian Ethics*, argues that without a theological basis altruism ends up looking either “naively idealistic” or “arrogantly self-sufficient” (2001, xiii). It is, he says, only in the context of religious ideals (read Christian agape) that claims for the reality of genuine self-giving love make sense. I agree that a theological basis is crucial to discussions of altruism, but I do not think that focusing theological reflection on the concept of agape in and of itself is sufficient. Stephen G. Post has asked, “Can we say that agape has its origins in the deepest foundations of the universe and that all the building blocks for this leap in human love suggest a telos?” (2002, 59). I say that we most certainly can, and in what follows I offer the outlines of a theology of nature to demonstrate how we might proceed.