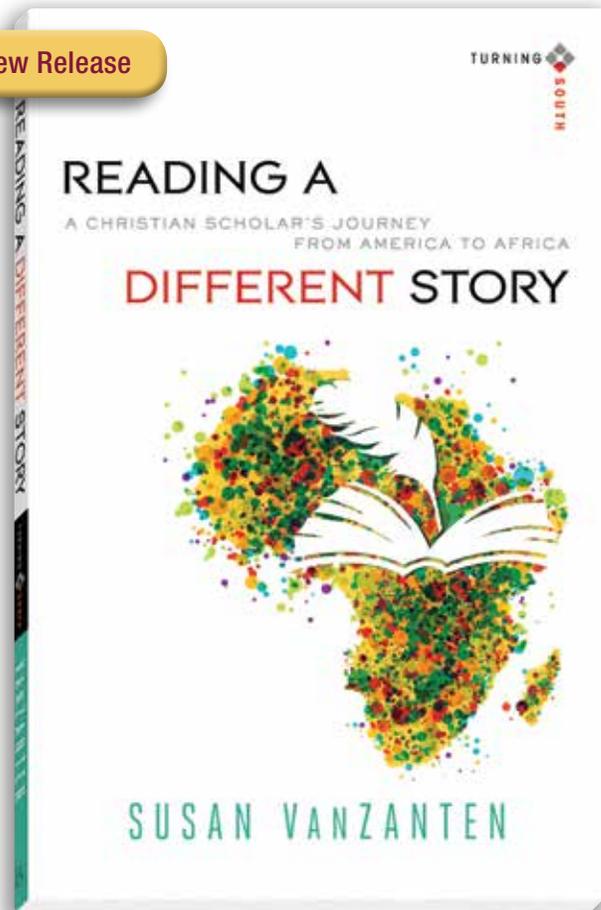


New Release



Reading a Different Story

A Christian Scholar's Journey from America to Africa

Susan VanZanten

TURNING SOUTH: CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS IN AN AGE OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY

Joel Carpenter, general editor

Christianity's demographics, vitality, and influence have tipped markedly toward the global South and East. Addressing this seismic shift, noted Christian literary scholar Susan VanZanten recounts how her focus has shifted from American to African literature, leading her to advocate for a global approach to education and scholarship. *Reading a Different Story* recounts her journey of reorientation, reflects on the challenges of being a Christian woman scholar, and shows how the rise of global Christianity necessitates changes in academic life.

Excerpt

Although my graduate training in the late 1970s was in classic nineteenth-century American literature (Hawthorne, Melville, Dickinson), for much of my professional life, my research has focused on African literature. My scholarly turn to the south was steered by a providential conjunction of personal circumstances, academic winds, and world events. One small opening led to an insignificant decision, which led to another opportunity, and so on. I've never operated with a five-year plan; rather, I've tried to be faithful to the opportunities and passions God has given me, the blue skies and my internal compass, and such attempts at faithfulness have taken me in unanticipated and sometimes ironic directions. My journey, like all journeys, was shaped by the cultural currents of its time.

In today's academic world, postcolonial literature programs include African texts; graduate students can specialize in numerous authors, areas, or genres of African literature; and monographs and essays on African literary topics are published by university presses and scholarly journals every year. But in 1982, when I finished my PhD and found myself an overwhelmed twenty-six-year-old assistant professor of English at a tiny Christian college, the only work of African literature I had ever read was Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Given this modest beginning, people often ask me how I came to work on African literature, and herein lies the tale of this book, recounted in six chapters to which I've given titles from *Moby-Dick*—that profound quest to find one's vocation in the midst of an immense, beautiful, and bewildering world.

About the Series

The Turning South: Christian Scholars in an Age of World Christianity series offers reflections by eminent Christian scholars who have turned their attention and commitments beyond North America.

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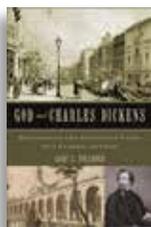
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Susan VanZanten (PhD, Emory University) is professor of English at Seattle Pacific University and leads faculty workshops and retreats across the country. She is the author or editor of seven books, including *Joining the Mission: A Guide for (Mainly) New College Faculty*, *Mending a Tattered Faith: Devotions with Dickinson*, and *Truth and Reconciliation: The Confessional Mode in South African Literature*. She frequently reviews contemporary African fiction in *Books & Culture*.

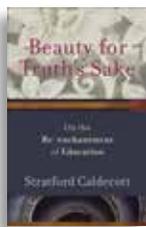
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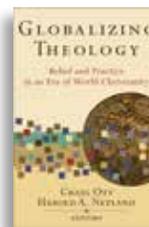
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Journey toward Justice

Personal Encounters in the Global South

Nicholas P. Wolterstorff

TURNING SOUTH: CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS IN AN AGE OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY

Joel Carpenter, general editor

“Drawing on his experience of being confronted by those who have suffered injustice, Wolterstorff helps us understand why and how such experiences should make a difference for how justice is understood. His reflections on the relations of beauty, hope, and justice are profound and moving.”—**Stanley Hauerwas**, Duke Divinity School; author of *With the Grain of the Universe* and *Hannah’s Child*

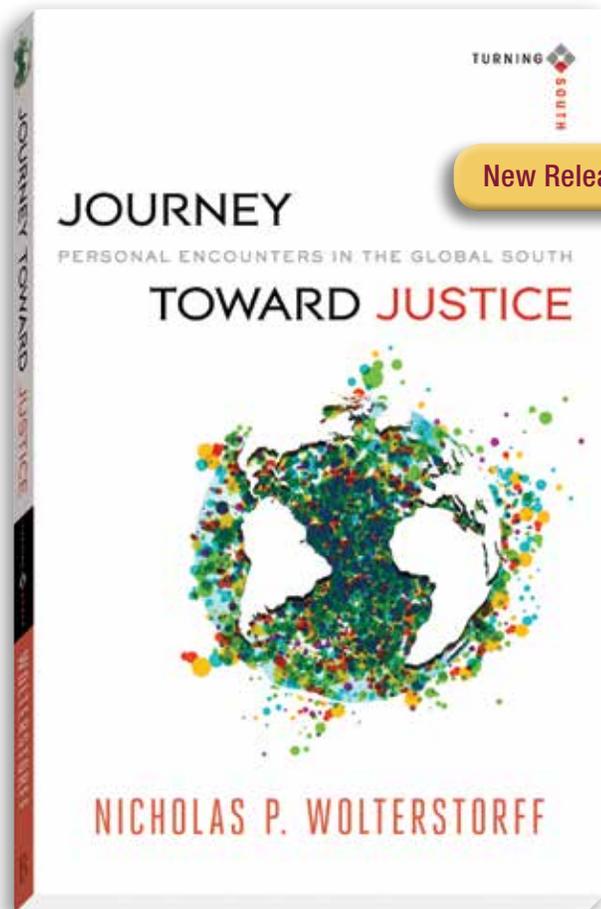
Excerpt

In September 1975, I was sent by the college at which I was teaching, Calvin College, to an international conference on Christian higher education organized by the University of Potchefstroom in Potchefstroom, South Africa. This was the first time I had set foot in the global South.

Most of the South African scholars present at the conference were Afrikaners; but there were some so-called blacks and coloreds as well. In addition, there were scholars from other parts of Africa, a sizable contingent from the Netherlands, a number of us from North America, and some from Asian countries.

Apartheid was the dominant topic of conversation during coffee breaks and meals, and constantly threatened to intrude into the conference itself. Eventually it did, first into a scheduled session of the conference, and then into a hastily called unscheduled session. The discussion in that unscheduled session was more intense than anything I had ever experienced. The Dutch were very well informed about South Africa and very angry about apartheid; they vented their anger at the Afrikaners. The Afrikaner defenders of apartheid in turn vented their anger at the Dutch. Eventually the so-called black and colored scholars from South Africa began to speak up, more in tones of hurt than of anger. They described the daily indignities heaped upon them and the many ways in which they were demeaned; they spoke of being expelled from their homes and herded off into Bantustans. With great passion they cried out for justice.

Not only was I profoundly moved by this cry for justice, I felt convinced that I had been issued a call from God. I did not hear words in the air; it was by way of the speech of the so-called blacks and coloreds that God spoke to me. Fidelity to God required that I speak up for these victims of injustice in whatever way might prove appropriate.



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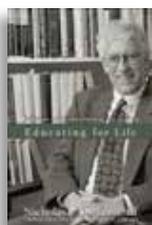
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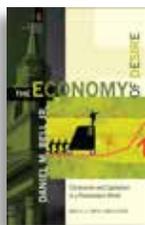
Nicholas P. Wolterstorff (PhD, Harvard University) is Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology at Yale University and senior fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia. He is the author of numerous books, including *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, *Justice in Love*, and *Lament for a Son*.

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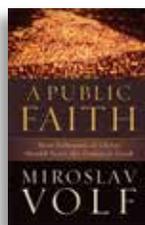
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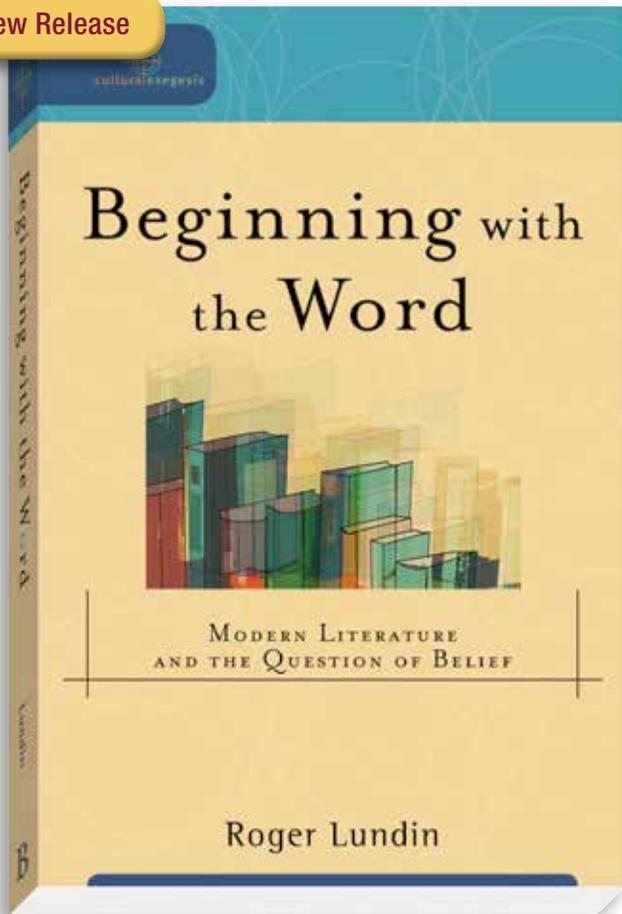


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Modern Literature and the Question of Belief

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CULTURAL EXEGESIS

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Roger Lundin, an award-winning author, offers a sophisticated theological engagement with the nature of language and literature. He conducts a sustained theological dialogue with imaginative literature and with modern literary and cultural theory, utilizing works of poetry and fiction throughout to prompt the discussion and focus his reflections. The book is marked by a commitment to bring the history of Christian thought, modern theology in particular, into dialogue with literature and modern culture.

Excerpt

Words have power—on that point, virtually everyone would agree, including St. John, William Shakespeare, and Emily Dickinson. But beyond that point, out in the vast universe of language usage, the disputes begin and the battles are fought over the nature and meaning of words.

According to the Gospel of John, the Triune God provides the secret to the source and power of words. “In the beginning was the Word,” John announces, “and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.” For John, the Word is personal and powerful beyond imagining. From the nucleus of the minutest cell to the edge of the farthest galaxy, at the heights of joy and in the depths of sorrow, the Word abides. Before “heaven and earth were created, there was the Word of God, already existing in closest association with God and partaking of the essence of God.”

To describe the incarnation and “its connection to all the past and all the future,” John used the Greek word *Logos*, which can only be “faintly and partially imaged by ‘the Word,’” argues the eminent Victorian biblical scholar Brooke Foss Westcott. For “as far as the term *Logos* expresses a revelation, it is not an isolated utterance, but a connected story, a whole and not a part, perfect in itself, and including the notions of design and completion.” The idea of a given revelation only partially expresses the meaning of *Logos* because the concept also speaks of a redemptive purpose that has been revealed in and through human history and that was “in the depths of the Divine Being before creation.” Yet until the Gospel of John was written, “no one had dared to form such a sentence as that which . . . declares the central fact of Redemption, in connection with time and eternity, with action and with being: *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*”

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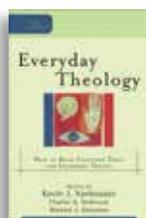
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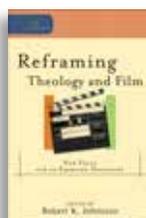
Roger Lundin (PhD, University of Connecticut) is Arthur F. Holmes Professor of Faith and Learning at Wheaton College. He is the award-winning author of several books, including *Believing Again: Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age*, *Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief*, and *From Nature to Experience: The American Search for Cultural Authority*, and editor of *Invisible Conversations: Religion in the Literature of America*.

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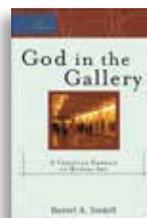
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Contents

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Part 1: Approaching Christian Philosophy

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3. Ancient Pagan Philosophy: The Pre-Socratics to Socrates
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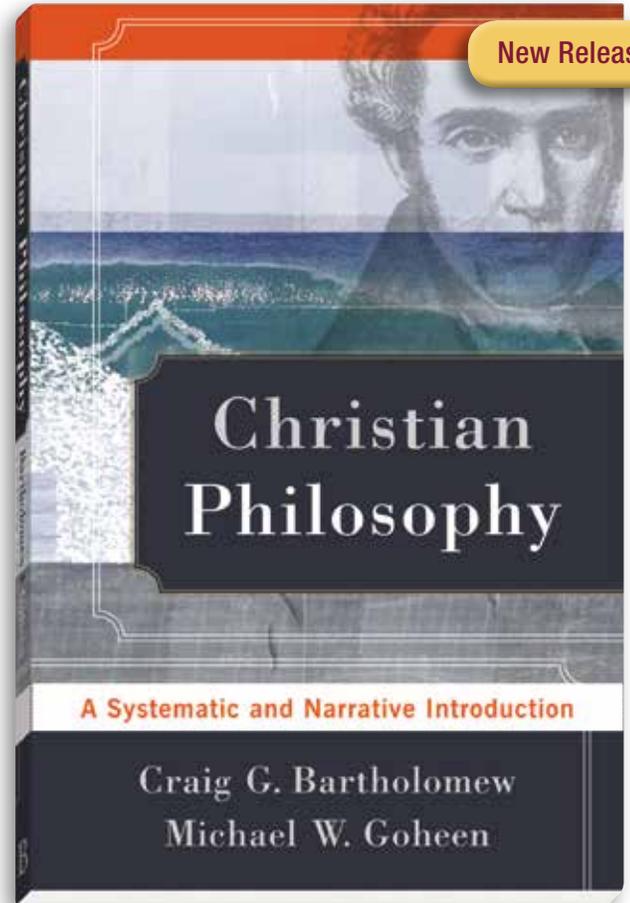
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12. Christian Philosophy Today
13. Reformed Epistemology
14. Reformed Epistemology Applied
15. Reformational Philosophy

Conclusion

Annotated Further Reading List

Index



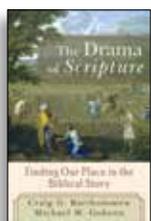
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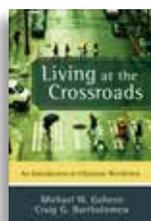
Craig G. Bartholomew (PhD, University of Bristol) is the H. Evan Runner Professor of Philosophy at Redeemer University College and the principal of The Paideia Centre for Public Theology. He is the author of *Ecclesiastes* in the Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms series and *Where Mortals Dwell*. **Michael W. Goheen** (PhD, University of Utrecht) is professor of missional theology at Newbigin House of Studies, San Francisco, and Jake and Betsy Tuls Professor of Missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary. He is also minister of preaching at New West Christian Reformed Church in British Columbia and the author of *A Light to the Nations*.

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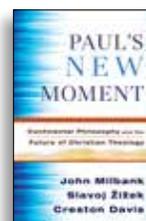
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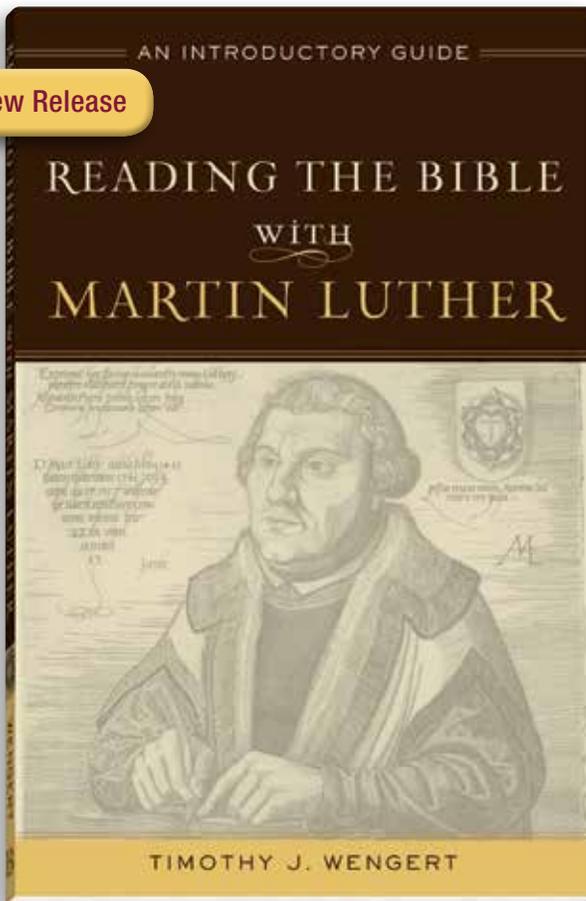
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Galatians 3:6–14 in 1519
Galatians 3:6–14 in 1535
An Afterword: Looking Forward to Reading the Bible with Luther
Index



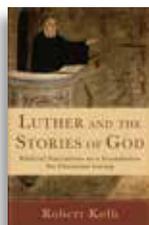
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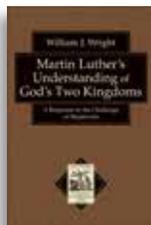
Timothy J. Wengert (PhD, Duke University) is Ministerium of Pennsylvania Professor, Reformation History, at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He has authored or edited twenty books, including *The Book of Concord* (2000 translation, coedited with Robert Kolb). He received the Melanchthon Prize from the city of Bretten, Germany (Melanchthon's birthplace), for contributions to the field of Reformation scholarship and has written over one hundred articles. He is also associate editor for the *Lutheran Quarterly* and has pastored churches in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

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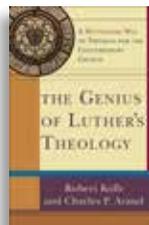
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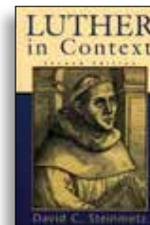
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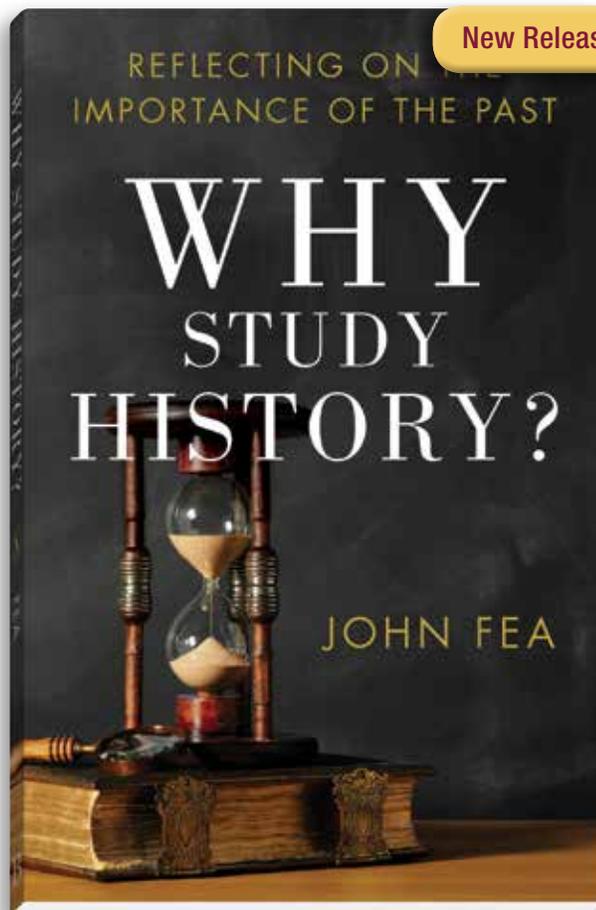
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Index



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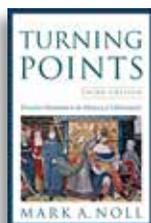
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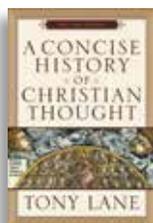
John Fea (PhD, State University of New York at Stony Brook) is associate professor of American history and chair of the history department at Messiah College. He is the author of *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* and the coeditor of *Confessing History: Explorations in Christian Faith and the Historian's Vocation* and *The Way of Improvement Leads Home: Philip Vickers Fithian and the Rural Enlightenment in Early America*.

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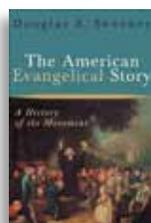
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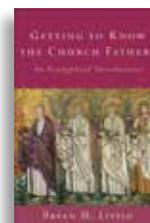
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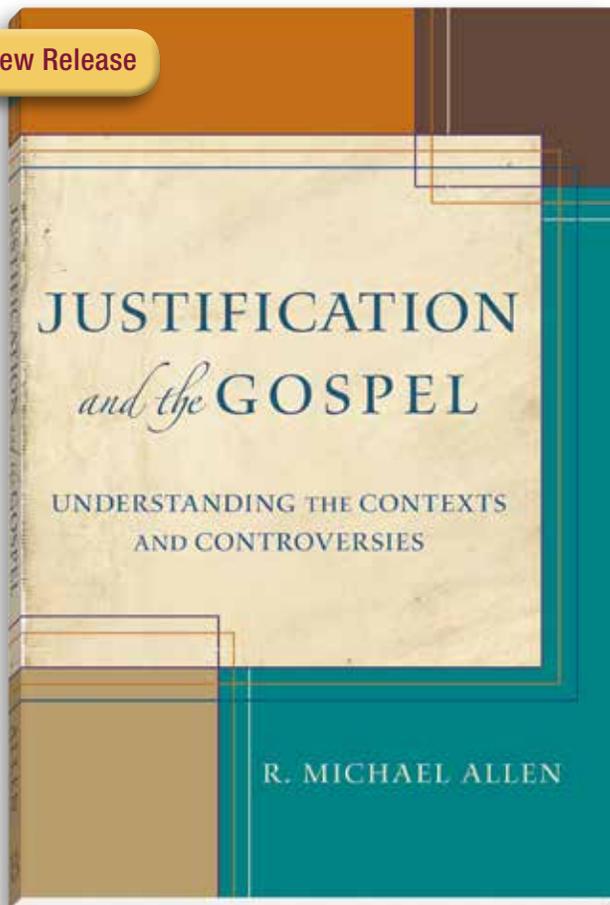


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Endorsements

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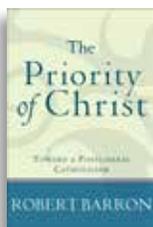
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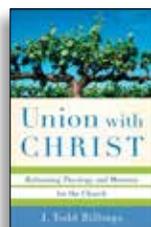
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“Decades ago, black liberation theologian James Cone invited white theologians to listen closely to the spiritual insights of people of color. *The Suffering and Victorious Christ* does just that. With sensitivity and skill, Mouw and Sweeney show how much white American Christologies can benefit from Asian and African American histories and theological reflections.”—**Edward J. Blum**, coauthor of *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America*

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Contents

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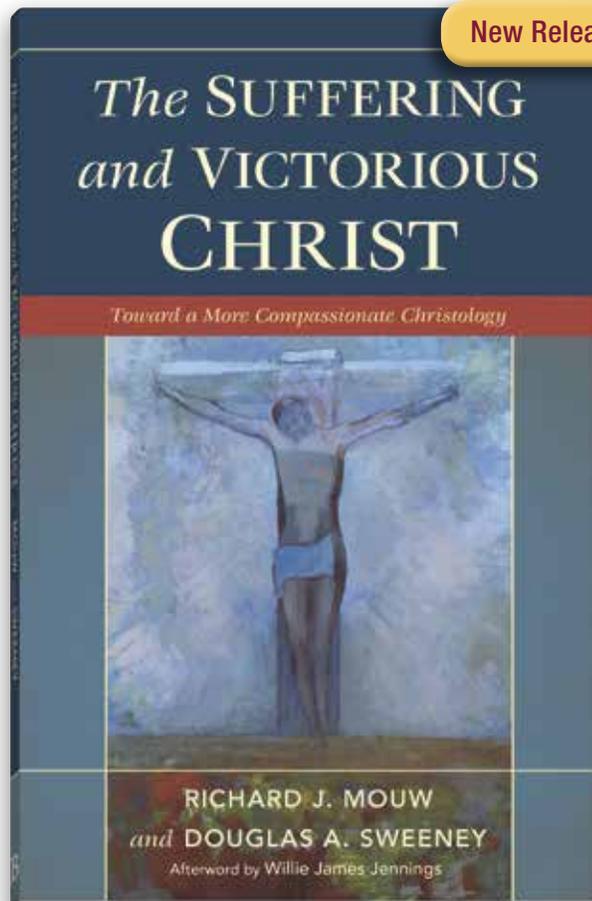
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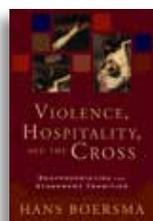
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Richard J. Mouw (PhD, University of Chicago) is president of Fuller Theological Seminary and has taught at Calvin College and the Free University in Amsterdam. He is the author of numerous books, including *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World* and *Talking with Mormons: An Invitation to Evangelicals*.

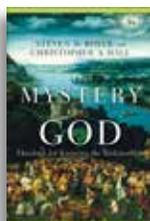
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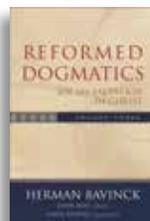
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Mark Thiessen Nation, Anthony G. Siegrist, and Daniel P. Umbel

Foreword by Stanley Hauerwas

The prevailing view regarding Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life is that he abandoned his commitment to pacifism and became involved in plots to assassinate Hitler due to horrors he encountered during World War II. However, this pioneering work carefully examines the biographical and textual evidence and finds no support for this theory. In fact, this book argues that Bonhoeffer maintained his ethic of discipleship, consistently affirming a strong stance of peacemaking from 1932 to the end of his life, and that his commitment to peace was integrated with his theology and ethics as a whole.

Endorsements

"An enormously important book. It is exactly right on the core of Bonhoeffer's Christian ethics and incisively helpful on the ethics of peace and war. The point is not principlism but God in Jesus entering incarnationally with compassion into the midst of our defenses and alienation, bringing healing and our participation in Jesus's nonviolent way."

—Glen Stassen, author of *A Thicker Jesus: Incarnational Discipleship in a Secular Age*

"The authors challenge the widely-held assumption that Bonhoeffer not only participated in the anti-Nazi conspiracy, but set aside his earlier pacifism and adopted a more 'rational' and 'realistic' stance—which included participation in the plot to assassinate Hitler. The close readings of Bonhoeffer's biography set in the larger story of the conspiracy and of the *Ethics* manuscript, in which the more realistic account is supposedly found, are of particular value. Regardless of whether you are persuaded by the authors with respect to Bonhoeffer's level of involvement in the attempt to kill Hitler, this volume will decisively reframe the way we read the thought and life of this most remarkable Christian." —Barry Harvey, Baylor University

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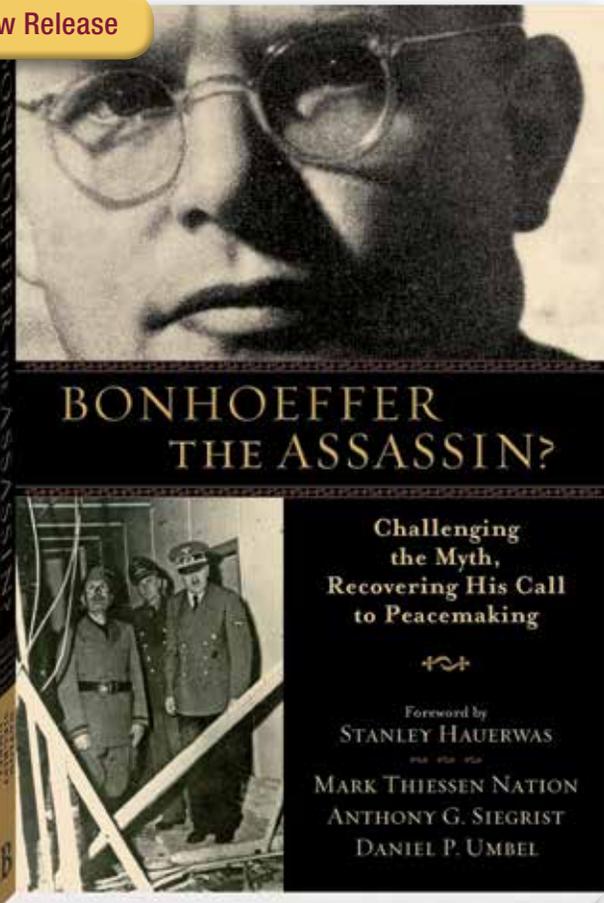
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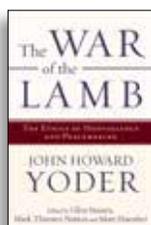
Mark Thiessen Nation (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary) is professor of theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary and has authored or edited several books, including *John Howard Yoder: Mennonite Patience, Evangelical Witness, Catholic Convictions*.

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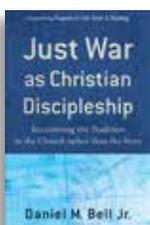
Daniel P. Umbel (MDiv, Eastern Mennonite Seminary) is a pastor, formerly of Mt. Olivet Church in Dyke, Virginia.

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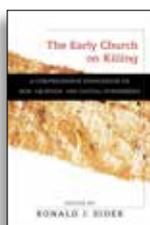
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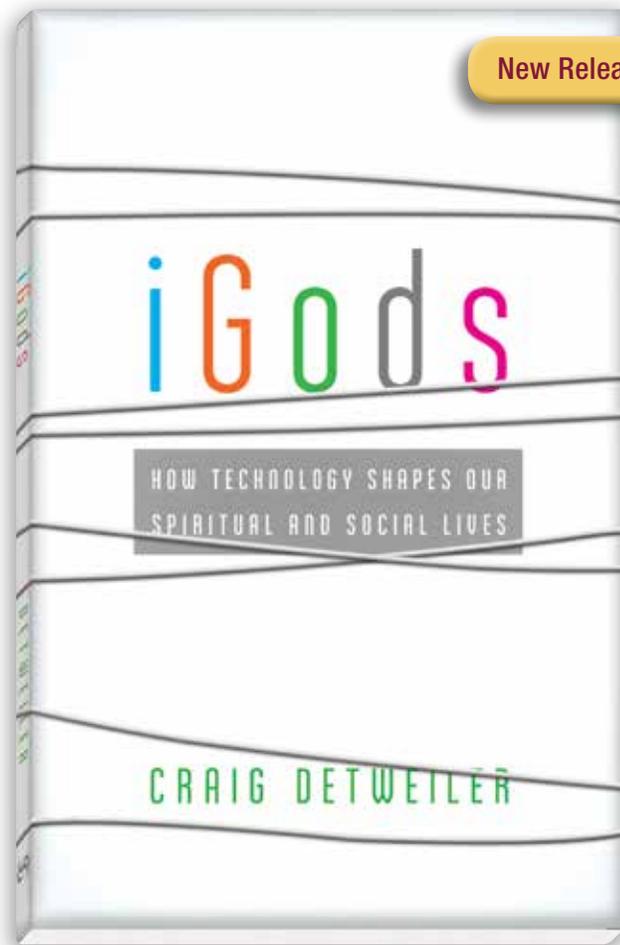
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“This is a wonderfully engaging romp through the largely American hills and valleys where theology and technology meet—a splendid contribution to the emerging conversations about what constitutes the good life in this age of information and communication technologies.”—**Quentin Schultze**, Calvin College; author of *Habits of the High-Tech Heart*

“Craig Detweiler is one of the best at interlacing theology and popular culture. With books on film and on gaming, and as the coauthor of a best-selling survey of the field, he now turns to consider technology and its effect on our lives. Is technology a gift or a curse? As we all sense, it is both. Engaging, well-researched, theologically probing, and sensitive to cultural change without either defensiveness or fawning, *iGods* will inform both addict and skeptic.”—**Robert K. Johnston**, Fuller Theological Seminary; author of *Reel Spirituality*

Excerpt

Futurist Arthur C. Clarke noted that any “sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” We marvel at the results without analyzing how the trick was accomplished. We may be tempted to bow down to the magic box, ascribing secret powers to the technology. We may also applaud the magician who performed the trick. When it comes to technology, we celebrate the icons of Silicon Valley as iGods worth emulating. We reward them for granting us superpowers. With an iPhone in our pocket, we can transcend the bodily limits of space and time. We can send and receive, buy and sell, upload and download with a swipe of our fingers. In this book, we will consider the magic technologies that we may consider godlike. We will also study the trails blazed by tech leaders like Steve Jobs—the original iGod. We will also consider the temptations offered by Google and Facebook and Twitter to build our digital brand, to become iGods of our making. An iGod can be a technology, a technologist, or the person bewitched by the power promised by the gadget. A healthy perspective on technology, unmasking the magic, may make us more appreciative of the craft involved. In examining how technology improves our lives, we may even come to a deeper understanding of the glory of God. In other words, a better grasp of the iGods we fashion and follow can lead us toward the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

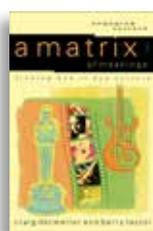


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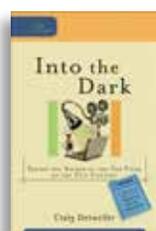
Craig Detweiler (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary) is associate professor of communication and director of the Center for Entertainment, Media, and Culture at Pepperdine University. He is the author of *Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century*, coauthor of *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture*, and editor of *Halos and Avatars: Playing Video Games with God*. He is also an award-winning filmmaker and cultural commentator.



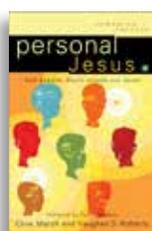
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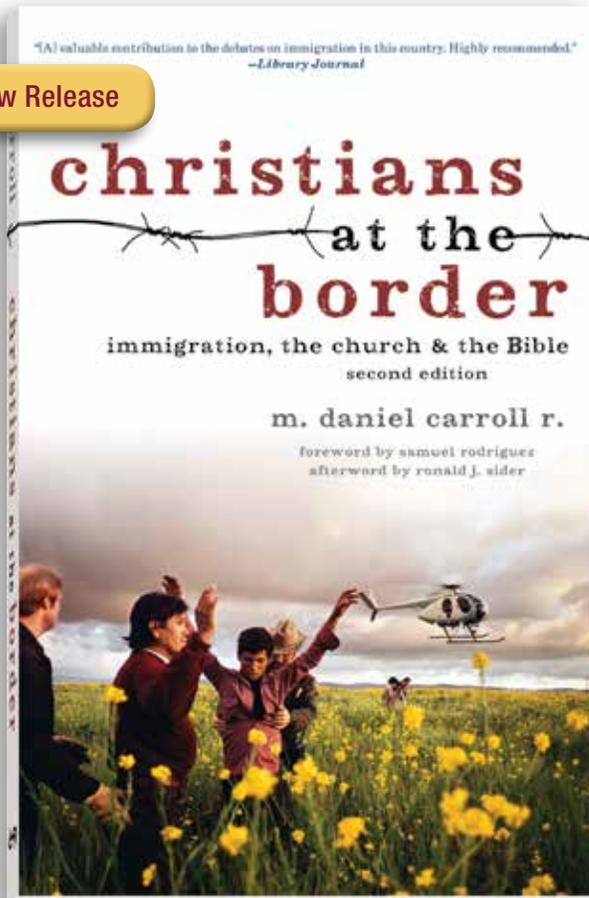


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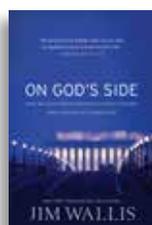
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M. Daniel Carroll R. (PhD, University of Sheffield) is distinguished professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary, where he founded IDEAL, a Spanish language training program. He is also an adjunct professor at El Seminario Teológico Centroamericano in Guatemala. He is the author or editor of several books, including *Global Voices: Reading the Bible in the Majority World* and *Amos—The Prophet and His Oracles: Research on the Book of Amos*, and is a contributing editor to *Prism*.



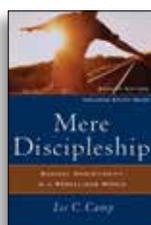
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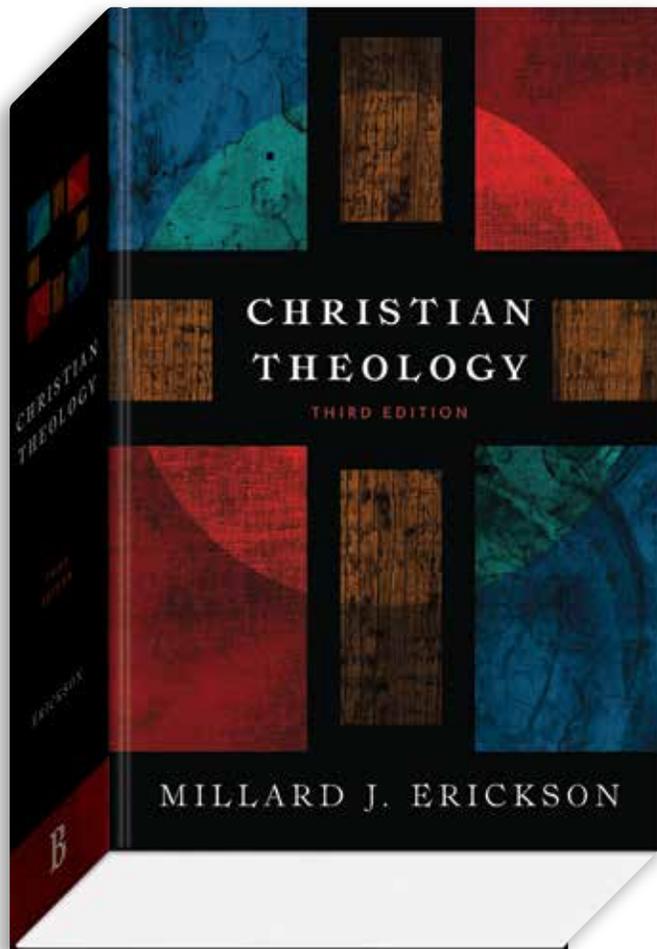
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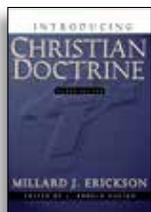
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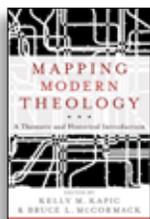
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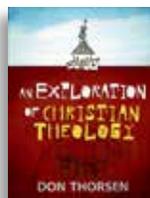
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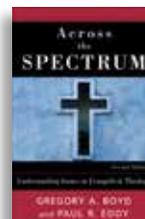
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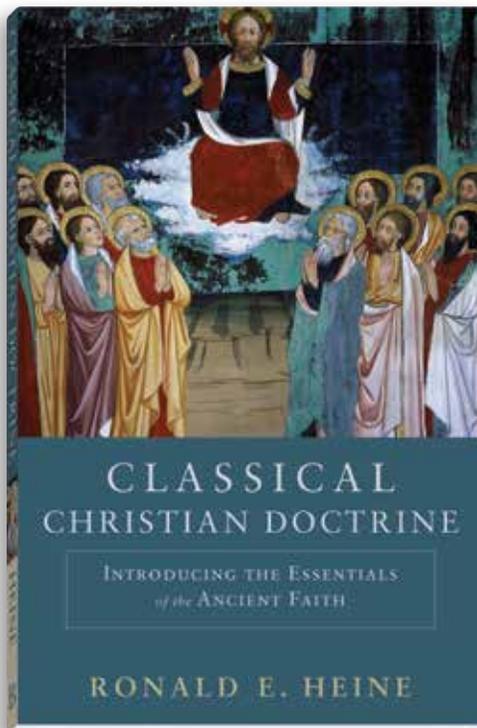
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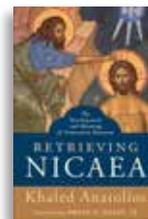
Ronald E. Heine (PhD, University of Illinois) is professor of Bible and Christian ministry at Northwest Christian University. He is the author of *Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church* and several books on Origen.

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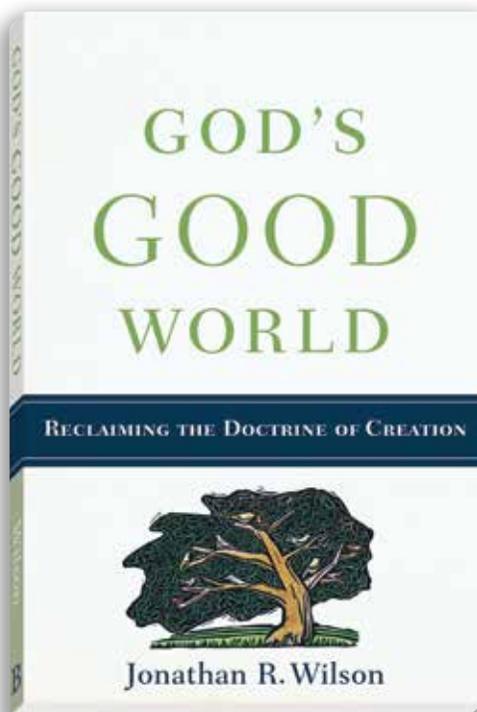
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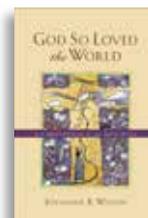
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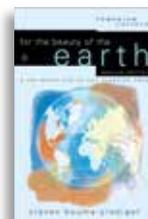
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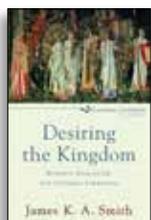
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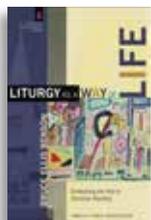
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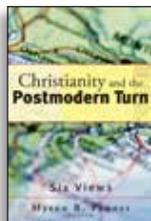
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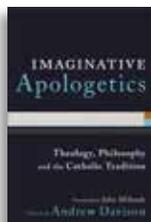
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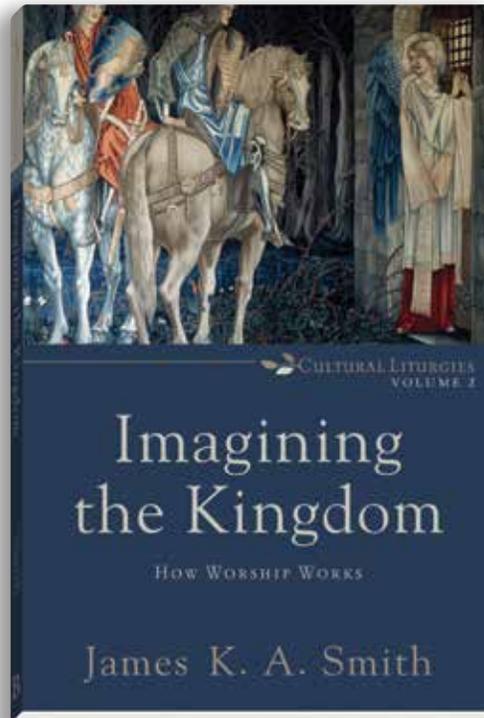
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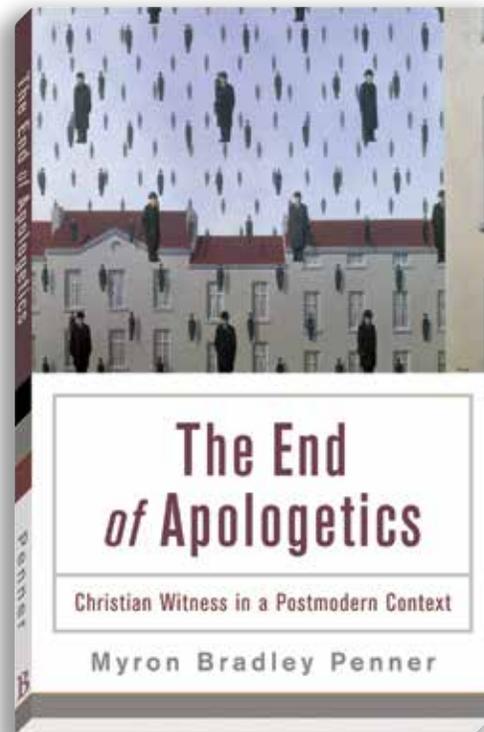
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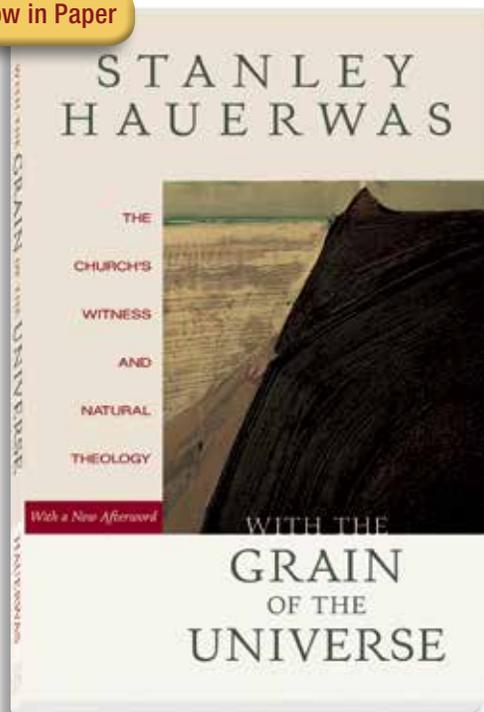
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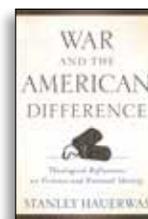
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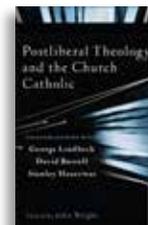
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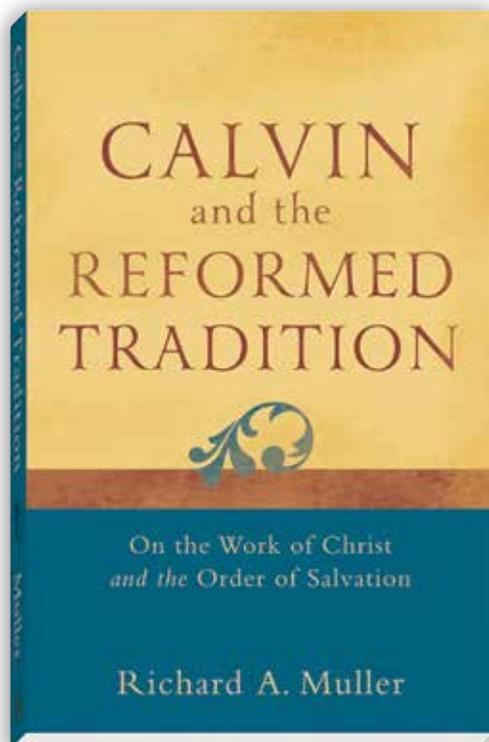
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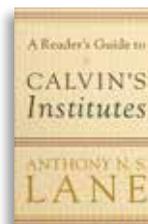
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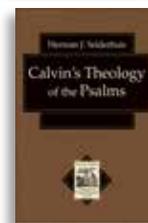
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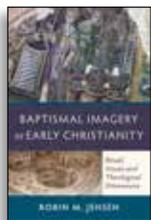
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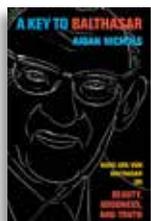
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Matthew Levering (PhD, Boston College) is professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton. He is the author or editor of numerous books, including *Ezra & Nehemiah* in the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible, and is the coauthor of *Holy People, Holy Land*.

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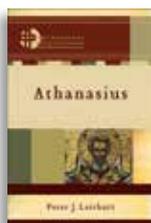
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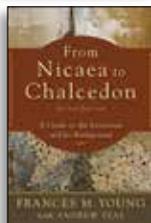
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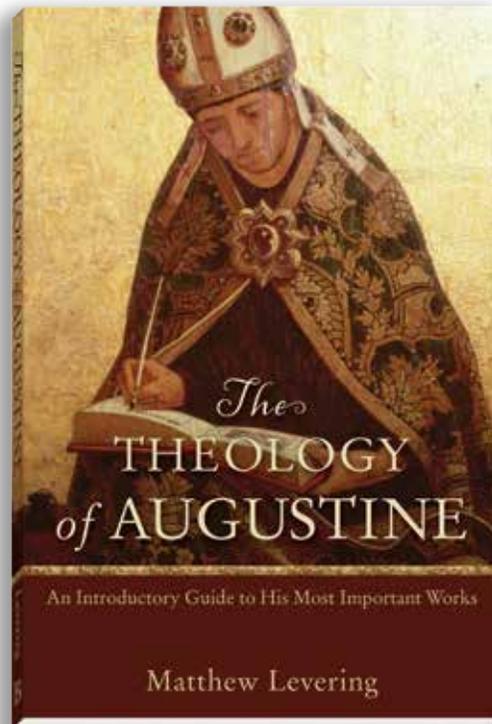
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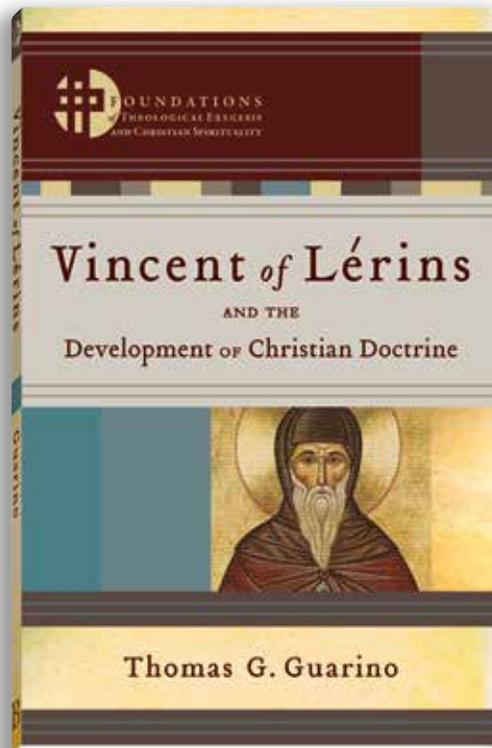
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