Book Reviews
Volume III
By
Mark McGee
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**Introduction**

I began recommending Christian books to students decades ago for the purpose of helping them know about some of the better resources available to them. Many of the books were about Bible study, theology, discipleship, Church history and apologetics. The response was almost always positive, so I decided to review books online to help even more students know about books that would both inform and challenge. Most of the books I review are new or of recent origin.

*Book Review Volume III* is the third in a series about books on the primary subject of “Apologetics” on FaithandSelfDefense.com. Another series you may find helpful is *A Reading Plan For Christian Apologists*, also on FaithandSelfDefense.com.

Our hope is that you will find books you can add to your Christian library — books that will become your friends and allies as you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
RATIONAL faith
A Philosopher’s Defense of Christianity

STEPHEN T. DAVIS

I enjoyed reading it on several levels, one of them being that Dr. Davis is a Christian professor who has taught at secular colleges most of his adult life. His words are those of someone who knows from first-hand experience how the secular world views Christians and Christianity.

“The bottom line is that today in American secular colleges and universities Christian students (as well as Christian professors) often have a difficult time. In many ways the university gives them the impression that their religious beliefs are outmoded, superstitious and naive, and that their ethical views are old fashioned, oppressive and enslaving. The secular world thinks that Christians are inflexibly dogmatic about their beliefs and major in condemning other people.”

Introduction, pp 10-11

I appreciate Dr. Davis’ choice of what issues to address in his book because they address so well what happens on secular campuses every day –

- Is there any such thing as objective truth?
- Why believe in God?
- Is the Bible’s picture of Jesus reliable?
- Was Jesus raised from the dead?
- Does evolution disprove Christianity?
• Can cognitive science explain religion?
• Is Christianity unique among the religions of the world?
• Do evil and suffering show that God does not exist?
• Can people be happy apart from God?

As you look at the topics, and the order the author presents them, we see the primary types of problems secularists have with Christianity. For example, in the first chapter about objective truth, Dr. Davis looks at the realist theories of truth, relativism on truth, and Jesus as the truth. He moves from objective truth to belief in God and Jesus Christ and shares personal stories about how he has shared these truths with students and professors on campus.

I appreciate the way Dr. Davis summed up the chapter about objective truth –

“‘I think there is no higher calling in life than to teach people the truth of God’s teachings. Truth is the heart of what Christian academics do.’
Chapter 1, p 28

I did not agree with Dr. Davis’ arguments on every topic (e.g. evolution), but I appreciated his kindness in presenting his perspectives. That is an important aspect of campus ministry (as well as all types of ministry).
Dr. Davis wrote that he aimed his book at two types of people: Christian academics and students, both undergraduate and graduate students, “who are Christians or are considering Christianity, and who also wonder about the issues discussed here.” (Introduction, p 11)

If you are a college professor, college student, high school student, parent, grandparent, pastor or youth worker, I highly recommend Rational Faith for you and your family to read and use as a resource in ministry.

Here is some information about Dr. Davis’ book from the publisher, IVP Books.

**Publisher: About the Book**

Why believe in God?

If God exists, why doesn’t he eliminate suffering and evil? Does evolution disprove Christianity? Can religion be explained by cognitive science?

People have grappled for ages with these kinds of questions. And many in today’s academic world find Christian belief untenable. But renowned philosopher Stephen Davis argues that belief in God is indeed a rational and intellectually sound endeavor. Drawing on a lifetime of rigorous reflection and critical thinking, he explores perennial and contemporary challenges to Christian faith. Davis appraises objections fairly and openly, offering thoughtful approaches to common intellectual problems.
Real questions warrant reasonable responses. Examine for yourself the rationality of the Christian faith.

Reviews & Endorsements

“In this book, Stephen Davis offers a clear and cogent case for the reasonableness of Christian faith. In a relatively short book, Davis manages to treat just about every issue that an honest person concerned about Christian faith might want to ask, ranging from reasons to believe in God and Jesus as God’s Son to problems connected to science, religious diversity and uniqueness, and evil. Davis is fair to the critics of Christianity and careful not to claim more than his arguments warrant. This is a book that will be helpful to both believers and unbelievers. The tone is personal and down-to-earth; the reader comes away with a sense of having had an enjoyable, stimulating, and possibly life-changing conversation.” C. Stephen Evans, professor of philosophy and humanities, Baylor University, professorial fellow, Australian Catholic University

“With characteristic clarity, rigor, and accessibility, Stephen Davis presents a compelling defense of the Christian faith. While taking a fresh look at traditional arguments, Rational Faith also addresses cutting-edge topics in apologetics such as the implications of evolutionary and psychological accounts of the origin of religious belief. This is a valuable resource for Christian believers and skeptics alike.” Michael J. Murray, senior visiting scholar, Franklin Marshall College
“[Davis] offers objective evidence for belief in God’s existence and makes the case for God’s existence as the basis of morality. He covers these complex topics with clear, orderly arguments and with charity. . . Recommend Rational Faith especially to college students, high school seniors, and other customers who want to better understand, share, or defend their faith.” Daniel Johnson, Christian Market, December 2016

The Author

Stephen T. Davis (PhD, Claremont Graduate University) is the Russell K. Pitzer Professor of Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College. He specializes in the philosophy of religion and Christian thought, and he is the author or editor of over fifteen books including *Encountering Evil*, *Christian Philosophical Theology*, and *Disputed Issues*. He has also written more than seventy academic articles and reviews. In 2015, he was honored with the festschrift *Christian Philosophy of Religion: Essays in Honor of Stephen T. Davis*.

The Dictionary of Christianity and Science (Zondervan, 2017) is an exceptional resource for Christians who are engaged in apologetics, evangelism, and discipleship.

Christianity and science is a hot topic on college and university campuses. Many atheists claim science has “proven” that Christianity is not true and that God does not exist. The first question I ask atheists who say that to me is – “which science”?

They look puzzled and wonder what I mean. I then ask them if the science they believes disproves Christianity is astronomy, biology, chemistry or some other system of knowledge.

To make a general statement that “science” has proven Christianity untrue and God non-existent is to show how little the person knows about science.

As we see in The Dictionary of Christianity and Science, that atheistic claim cannot be supported from true scientific investigation.

The full title of the new book is Dictionary of Christianity and Science: The Definitive Reference for the Intersection of Christian Faith and Contemporary Science and it certainly lives up to its name. The editors (Paul Copan, Tremper Longman, Christopher Reese, Michael Strauss) have done a wonderful job selecting the article and essay topics and authors. Contributors include scientists and professors from a wide variety of disciplines including –
• Astronomy
• Biology
• Chemistry
• Christian Apologetics
• Computer Science
• Ethics
• Environmental Studies
• Evolution
• Geography
• Geology
• Health Sciences
• History of Science
• Humanities
• Mathematics
• Neurology
• New Testament
• Natural and Behavioral Sciences
• Old Testament
• Pediatrics
• Philosophy
• Philosophy of Science
• Physical Science
• Physics
• Psychology
• Religion
• Terrestrial Magnetism
• Theology
What you will find inside the book are entries for more than 450 key terms, theories, individuals, and debates, along with essays from more than 140 scholars.

I highly recommend *The Dictionary of Christianity and Science* for all Christians who want to better understand how to build a strong apologetic for the Christian worldview even as it is under attack by so many in academia, the workplace and marketplace. Christians can and should have in-depth conversations with non-Christians about science.

**Publisher: About the Book**

The definitive reference work on science and Christian belief

How does Christian theology relate to scientific inquiry? What are the competing philosophies of science, and do they “work” with a Christian faith based on the Bible? No reference work has covered this terrain sufficiently—until now.

Featuring the work of over 140 international contributors, the Dictionary of Christianity and Science is a deeply-researched, peer-reviewed, fair-minded work that illuminates the intersection of science and Christian belief. In one volume, you get reliable summaries and critical analyses of over 450 relevant concepts, theories, terms, movements, individuals, and debates. You will find answers to your toughest questions about
faith and science, from Adam and Eve and the Age of the Earth to Evolution and String Theory.

Reviews & Endorsements

Dictionaries are shaped by editors, and the editors of Dictionary of Christianity and Science have created a resource unlike anything available. Here the reader will find fair-minded summaries of crucial scientific categories, diverse viewpoints that will surely satisfy and dissatisfy everyone, sketches of schools of thought that become mini-classroom experiences, and a breadth of learning that demonstrates that evangelicalism is coming of age in the discussion about science and faith. Gone are old-fashioned dismissals of science in favor of the Bible. Instead, what we find is rigorous thinking about some of our faith’s most difficult challenges. Every Christian studying science will want a copy of Dictionary of Christianity and Science within arm’s reach. — Scot McKnight, Julius R. Mantey Professor of New Testament, Northern Seminary

As a pastor, I’m called to speak God’s word about God’s world to God’s people. This means connecting Scripture to a whole range of contemporary issues—many of which are outside the training or expertise of the pastor. As a result, I’m always on the lookout for resources to help me wisely shepherd my congregation. That’s why I’m thrilled to see the Dictionary of Christianity and Science. What pastor has the time to be up to speed on all the issues at the intersection of Christianity and science? Yet what pastor can avoid the need to have
something thoughtful to say? Our congregations look to us for this kind of intellectual leadership—and this one-of-a-kind resource makes that job a whole lot easier. A wealth of articles on an array of topics, written with both scholarly acumen and pastoral grace. I can’t recommend this resource highly enough. — Todd Wilson, Senior Pastor, Calvary Memorial Church

This is an invaluable resource that belongs in every Christian’s library. Pastors and others will find themselves consulting it frequently for its insightful and helpful entries. I will be keeping my copy close by when I’m writing. — Lee Strobel, author of The Case for Christ; The Elizabeth and John Gibson Chair of Apologetics, Houston Baptist

Zondervan’s new Dictionary of Christianity and Science sparkles with passion, controversy, and diverse perspectives. Contributors cover the many intersections of Christianity and science, and the thinkers who work there. The embattled terrain of evangelicalism receives special emphasis, with contributions from competing thinkers. The result is an engaging, useful volume that belongs in the library of anyone thinking seriously about science and Christian belief. — Karl Giberson, Professor of Science and Religion, Stonehill College

I am pleased to recommend this dictionary edited by Paul Copan, Tremper Longman, Chris Reese, and Michael Strauss. From the beginning article on Adam and Eve, it is clear that the editors have labored earnestly to include differing perspectives on many issues involving science and Christianity. Although I do not agree with every
position, particularly theistic evolution, there is value in challenging readers to examine these issues carefully for themselves. — Dr. Henry F. Schaefer III, Graham Perdue Professor of Chemistry, University of Georgia

In this unusual dictionary, over a hundred evangelical Christian scholars vigorously (and variously) defend biblical insights in dialogue with and confronting contemporary science (and scientism). From the early Genesis stories of creation, accepting Adam as historical and representative, to Darwinian natural history and genetics, to Jesus’s resurrection, to human nature seen theologically and in social science, here is conservative Christianity at its reasoned best. — Holmes Rolston III, University Distinguished Professor, Colorado State University

Zondervan’s Dictionary of Christianity and Science is an impressive resource that presents a broad range of topics from a broad tent of evangelical scholars. I appreciate that it often presents multiple views. For example, we find entries defending both old-earth and young-earth views of creation as well as one defending a historical Adam and Eve and one not so committed to that view. I look forward to having this reference work on my shelf. — Michael R. Licona, Associate Professor of Theology, Houston Baptist University

Books on the relationship of Christianity and science are, by their very nature, controversial, and this one will be no exception. However, the editors and authors have assembled a substantial amount of material on this topic, including not only terms and definitions but multiple-view
discussions that explain various views on many of the more controversial subjects. The sheer number of terms, ideas, concepts, and discussions included in this dictionary make this book an extremely unique and helpful “first step” for anyone interested in the subjects included. This volume is the place to begin when questions dealing with the relationship of Christianity to science are broached. — K. Scott Oliphint, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Science and Christianity are the two great forces that have shaped the modern world. This wideranging dictionary offers thorough coverage of numerous points at which they have intersected historically, mapping the intellectual landscape. Any serious reader who turns to it for reference or for more thorough study will learn a great deal. — Timothy McGrew, Professor and Chairman, Department of Philosophy, Western Michigan University

Since the mid-1990s, an exciting development has arisen within scholarly circles of what many people have termed the “New Academic Dialogue between Science and Religion.” There has been a dramatic increase in the number of books moving away from the common perception that modern scientific discoveries and Christian faith are entrenched in a never-ending conflict. The Dictionary of Christianity and Science is a welcome addition to this growing body of literature. The excellent selection of entries covers all the major topics and debates that are relevant today. The remarkably clear writing style and balanced presentation of differing views make this dictionary accessible to both specialists in the field and the general public. I am certain that this
dictionary will serve the church for many years in leading many to demonstrate that modern science can glorify our Creator and honor his creation. — Denis O. Lamoureux, Associate Professor of Science and Religion, St. Joseph’s College, University of Alberta

I am very grateful to the editors and contributors for this incredible resource. They have wisely sought advocates of the differing positions and have throughout sought to be comprehensive, informative, and, above all, fair. “Dictionary” is too humble a label for what this is! I anticipate that this will offer valuable guidance for Christian faithfulness. — C. John Collins, Professor of Old Testament, Covenant Theological Seminary

A Systematic Summary

Reformation Theology

Prologue by Michael Horton

Edited by Matthew Barrett

Contributions by
Michael Allen • Matthew Barrett • Gerald Bray • Graham A. Cole • Aaron Clay Denlinger • J. V. Feske • Douglas F. Kelly
Eunjin Kim • Robert Kolb • Robert Letham • Peter A. Lillback • Korey D. Maas • Donald Macleod • Keith A. Mathison
Michael Reeves • Kim Riddleburger • Scott R. Swain • Mark D. Thompson • Carl R. Trueman • Cornelis P. Venema
The full title of this new book is *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary* (Crossway, 2017). Its publication is certainly timely as we approach the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation this October (October 31, 2017).

I understand Michael Horton’s concern about the upcoming anniversary –

“Frankly, I’m a bit ambivalent about this anniversary. If it is another occasion for liberals to hail Luther’s “Here I stand!” as the harbinger of modern autonomy, or for conservatives to celebrate Protestant values, or for confessionalists to rewatch the Luther movie and dredge up polemical grudges, then it will be at best a colossal waste of time. If, on the other hand, it is an occasion to allow God’s Word once again to break into our self-enclosed circles with a word of radical judgment and radical grace, then it will be a happy anniversary indeed.” Prologue, p 34

Horton asked an important question in his Prologue that we all need to consider as we approach the eve of the anniversary – “What Are We Celebrating?” I think it’s an important question because many Christians don’t have an answer and don’t know where to get one. We hear about the upcoming 500th anniversary but know little about what was, and is, at stake.
Editor Matthew Barrett goes to the heart of the issue in his Introduction –

“What distinguishes the Reformation, however, is that its deepest theological concern was the gospel itself. In other words, the Reformation was a renewed emphasis on right doctrine, and the doctrine that stood center stage was a proper understanding of the grace of God in the gospel of his Son, Christ Jesus.” Introduction, p 45

The doctrinal concerns of the “Reformation” were many and are addressed in Reformation Theology –

- Doctrine of Salvation
- Doctrine of Church Authority
- Doctrine of Scripture (Sola Scriptura)
- Doctrine of the Holy Trinity
- Doctrine of the Being and Attributes of God
- Doctrine of Predestination and Election
- Doctrine of Creation
- Doctrine of the Person of Christ
- Doctrine of the Work of Christ
- Doctrine of Union with Christ
- Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
- Doctrine of Bondage and Liberation of the Will
- Doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone
- Doctrine of Sanctification, Perseverance, and Assurance
- Doctrine of the Church
• Doctrine of Baptism
• Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper
• Doctrine of the Relationship of Church and State
• Doctrine of Eschatology

The editors and contributors to Reformation Theology do an excellent job explaining the historical issues surrounding each of these and the part they played in the Reformation.

You may be surprised to learn how many people were involved in the Reformation process – including some who were instrumental years, even centuries, before the official beginning of the Reformation in 1517. The man most identified with the Reformation is Martin Luther –

“The figure of Luther bestrides the popular image of the Reformation like no other. There is good reason for this. His life shaped the future of the Christian church in unique ways. Not only did his early protest against indulgences help to bring into the open the widespread disenchantment with the church, but also his personal approach to various concerns—authority, justification, the Lord’s Supper—shaped the way the theological debates of the day were framed and prosecuted.” Chapter 3, The Reformers and Their Reformations, p 112

“When Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the church door at Wittenberg, he was not attacking the church’s official doctrine or even the institution of the papacy as such. What he claimed was that the popes had exceeded their jurisdiction by purporting to determine the fate
of souls that had departed this life. Who were the popes to say who was in heaven, purgatory, or hell? What right did they have to transfer someone from one of these places to another, which is ultimately what indulgences claimed to be doing? How did they justify doctrines and practices that not only lacked any scriptural warrant but actually contradicted the biblical text?” Chapter 2, Late-Medieval Theology, p 107

What happened when pastors began preaching from the Bible? Here’s an account of what happened in Zurich after Zwingli presented his “Sixty-Seven Articles” during a public disputation –

“Biblical preaching led people to seriously question the place of images, saints, and relics in the church, and even the legitimacy of the Mass. They responded by acts of iconoclasm, destroying church ornaments and tearing down crucifixes from the streets.” Chapter 3, The Reformers and Their Reformations, p 119

Reformation Theology also addresses a modern concern –

“It may well be that Protestantism is in its death throes as an identifiable tradition within Christianity. And it would be churlish to preserve a name that means nothing more than ‘courageously seeking what is new and turning away from old, familiar customs.’ If ‘Protestant’ does not refer to a specific set of convictions grounded in God’s revelation, then it is merely an attitude—and not a particularly healthy one—looking for occasions to protest. If this is what Protestantism now means, then it is
no more than another schismatic sect, cultural rallying point, self-help group, or political action committee.” Prologue, p 27

Reformation Theology is one of the best books about the subject you will find available today. In addition to excellent articles written by leading experts in their fields of study, the book also includes a list of Primary and Secondary Sources for each chapter which is a wealth of direction for further research.

The book is lengthy (785 pages), which demonstrates both the volume and detail of material covered. It will be a great resource for you during this anniversary year and for many years to come. I highly recommend it to every Christian.

**Publisher: About the Book**

Five hundred years ago, the Reformers were defending doctrines such as justification by faith alone, the authority of Scripture, and God's grace in salvation—some to the point of death. Many of these same essential doctrines are still being challenged today, and there has never been a more crucial time to hold fast to the enduring truth of Scripture.

In *Reformation Theology*, Matthew Barrett has brought together a team of expert theologians and historians writing on key doctrines taught and defended by the Reformers centuries ago. With contributions from Michael Horton, Gerald Bray, Michael Reeves, Carl Trueman, Robert Kolb, and many others, this volume stands as a manifesto for the
church, exhorting Christians to learn from our spiritual forebears and hold fast to sound doctrine rooted in the Bible and passed on from generation to generation.

Reviews & Endorsements

“Dr. Barrett has gathered a full stable of blue-ribbon theologians for this winning volume. All the essays are carefully contextualized, the Reformers judiciously selected, and the bibliographies thoughtfully assembled. Some chapters are especially notable for the breadth and depth of the author’s research, others for their adroit summaries of complex themes. There is little doubt that Reformation Theology will ably serve the church and academy as a textbook for students and a reference work for scholars. It is already reshaping my own teaching on late-medieval and early-modern theology, and I commend it heartily.” Chad Van Dixhoorn, Chancellor’s Professor of Historical Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary–Washington, DC

“This delightful volume is a breath of fresh air in Reformation studies, putting theology back at the center. It shows with crystal clarity how the Reformers expounded the heart of the Christian faith, and why these evangelical doctrines still matter so much.” Andrew Atherstone, Latimer Research Fellow, Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford
“This rich book takes up the challenge to think beyond 2017 and does so in a very stimulating manner. Each of the contributors is an expert in his field and knows that the Reformation is a highly relevant treasure for both the church and theology. They convincingly encourage the readers to think through this treasure and adopt it. Everyone eager not just to look back at five hundred years of reformation but also to look forward finds here the perfect material.” Herman Selderhuis, Director, Refo500; Professor and Director of the Institute for Reformation Research, Theological University Apeldoorn, the Netherlands; author, *Calvin’s Theology of the Psalms*

“Dr. Matthew Barrett has assembled a first-rate team of pastors and scholars to write an anniversary volume of the Reformation that promises to receive a welcoming readership across a wide spectrum of the evangelical community. At a time when some are suggesting that for all practical purposes the Reformation is ‘over,’ Barrett’s Reformation Theology offers a needed corrective by showing the relevance of the Reformation for healthy church ministry and the Christian life today.” Philip Graham Ryken, President, Wheaton College; author, *Loving the Way Jesus Loves*

“This collection of essays is both necessary and appropriate. It’s necessary because the issues addressed mattered then and matter now. It’s appropriate because this is how we best remember our past and honor the Reformers. The Reformation is our pivot point in the past, and the issues it addressed remain the pivot point for church life and
discipleship.” Stephen J. Nichols, President, Reformation Bible College; Chief Academic Officer, Ligonier Ministries; author, Martin Luther: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought and The Reformation: How a Monk and a Mallet Changed the World

“A superb collection of first-rate essays on Reformation theology—one of the best I have seen. A welcome addition to the swell of literature in this year of Reformation remembrance.” Timothy George, Founding Dean, Beeson Divinity School; General Editor, Reformation Commentary on Scripture

“An anniversary is a great moment to do a book like Reformation Theology. And with the passing of time, Reformation truths and the importance of the Reformation as a milestone in church history get forgotten—incredible as that sounds. But it is true. Perhaps we should not be surprised. How many times in the Old Testament do we read that the Israelites ‘forgot’? So I am enthusiastic about Reformation Theology.” David F. Wells, Distinguished Senior Research Professor, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; author, The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-Lovers, Marketers and Emergents in the Postmodern World

“Matthew Barrett is certainly to be congratulated on bringing together this outstanding group of top-tier theologians and Reformation scholars to produce this wonderful resource. Not only are readers given a masterful survey of historical theology illuminating the key reformational themes of the sixteenth century, but also we are provided thoughtful and
insightful guidance to wrestle with the important theological issues facing the church in the twenty-first century. I am delighted to recommend this comprehensive work.” David S. Dockery, President, Trinity International University

“Reformation Theology promises to be an influential book indeed. Written by recognized historians and theologians, this volume aims to clearly articulate the teaching of the Reformers according to traditional theological categories. It is a genuine contribution and a great read besides.” Fred G. Zaspel, Pastor, Reformed Baptist Church, Franconia, Pennsylvania; author, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* and *Warfield on the Christian Life: Living in Light of the Gospel*

“Nothing would benefit American evangelicals more than a real rediscovery of the Reformation—not a superficial regurgitation of the familiar talking points but a powerful, experiential encounter with the learned depth, wisdom, humility, piety, and practical know-how of our Reformation forefathers. A volume like the one Dr. Matthew Barrett has put together is a big step in the right direction.” Greg Forster, Director, Oikonomia Network at the Center for Transformational Churches, Trinity International University; author, *The Joy of Calvinism*
“The lineup of authors in Reformation Theology and their respective topics reflect the very best in Reformed evangelical scholarship. The book should be of widespread interest. Not only would seminary and college students find the volume profitable in their studies, but all informed Christians would benefit from the essays.” W. Andrew Hoffecker, Professor of Church History Emeritus, Reformed Theological Seminary–Jackson; author, Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton

“A clear articulation of one’s Reformed faith requires familiarity with the ideas and events in which that faith is rooted. Unfortunately, there are few books on the subject currently in print that are both learned and accessible. Thankfully, this volume offers an outstanding solution to this problem.” Chris Castaldo, Pastor, New Covenant Church, Naperville, Illinois; author, Talking with Catholics about the Gospel; coauthor, The Unfinished Reformation: What Unites and Divides Catholics and Protestants after 500 Years

[Review copy received from Crossway]

Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary, Crossway, 2017, 785 pages

My first thought on seeing this title in the B&H Academic catalog was to ask “why?” Why do we need another book about how to study the Bible inductively?

I asked the question because of a book about inductive Bible Study I used in Bible college more than 40 years ago – *Methodical Bible Study: A New Approach to Hermeneutics* by Robert Traina (Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952). Though written 65 years ago, I couldn’t imagine the need for another book about how to study the Bible inductively. I have used the lessons learned in Dr. Traina’s book for more than four decades, so why something new?

While that may seem a strange way to begin a book review, I had to smile when I read the beginning of the Author’s Preface to their book on Inductive Bible Study. The authors asked the same question I did and gave a good reason to consider their new book.
“Why another book on inductive Bible study? Since the 1952 work *Methodical Bible Study* by Robert A. Traina, dozens of books, ranging from popular-level works to academic textbooks, have presented a methodical, inductive approach to the study of the Scriptures. Another book is needed for the following two reasons. First, as evangelical scholarship of the Bible continues to bring greater insight to the field of hermeneutics, there’s an ever-present need to incorporate those advances into a usable, applied guide for the study of the Bible. Second, as practitioners in teaching the new generation of students, we understand that there’s always room for improvement in developing an academically sound yet practically manageable presentation for learning how to do Bible study. This text assimilates a hermeneutically viable model into a step-by-step methodical approach to Bible study.” Author’s Preface, p ix

The authors are Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard Alan Fuhr. Dr. Köstenberger is senior professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC and director of acquisitions, B&H Academic. Dr. Fuhr is Associate Professor of Religion at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.
Step-by-Step Approach

I agree with the authors when they point out that hermeneutics is an art or skill –

“… hermeneutics provides the interpreter of Scripture with a methodical process that, with practice, may be applied to the biblical text and result in an accurate understanding of the Bible.” Chapter 2, p 20

I would add that developing a methodical approach to hermeneutics is “necessary” in coming to a proper knowledge, interpretation and application of Scripture. That is the goal of the inductive method of Bible study and is the procedure presented in this book.

The authors use an excellent guide for the inductive process that they call “Seven Sensible Principles for Thinking through Scripture Meaning.” All of the principles are vital to correctly interpreting Scripture.

“On the basis of the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture, following these principles will provide a sure hermeneutical foundation that will guide our thinking throughout the practice of inductive Bible study.” Chapter 2, p 21
In case you’re wondering whether a “deductive” approach to Bible study might be preferred over an “inductive” approach, the authors do an excellent job explaining the differences and why inductive is superior for Bible study.

**Hermeneutical Triad**

The authors present what they call a hermeneutical triad: Observation, Interpretation and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology.

“Our approach is to present individual, specific steps for applied study through the primary steps of observation, interpretation, and application. Within this framework, there are specific and unique step of observation, interpretation, and application, all of which contribute to the development of biblical theology. Following the model of working upward from the triad base, each inductive step reflects an awareness of the Bible’s historical, literary, and theological traits.” Author’s Preface, p x

The authors do an excellent job in explaining each aspect of the “triad” and the importance of taking the time of doing each step of inductive Bible study correctly. Reminds me of 2 Timothy 2:15 –
“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” NKJV

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” NIV

Learning how to study the Bible inductively was one of the best courses I took in Bible college. Getting it right makes all the difference in both your life and your ministry. I highly recommend *Inductive Bible Study* by Andreas Köstenberger and Richard Fuhr.

**Publisher: About the Book**

“Inductive Bible study is a practical, relevant, and time-tested approach to interpreting Scripture. This volume incorporates insights from contemporary evangelical hermeneutics into an approachable, step-by-step process moving from observation through interpretation and on to the application of God’s Word. Each step is viewed through the lenses of the hermeneutical triad, exploring the historical, literary, and theological elements that impact how one observes, interprets, and applies the Bible. Chapter by chapter, Inductive Bible Study explores a broad representation of biblical texts as it illustrates the steps of inductive methodology across the literary landscape of Scripture. Important features of the book include comparing translations, asking the right questions of the text, basic discourse analysis, considering various
facets of context, the study of words and phrases, interpretive and thematic correlation, evaluating relevance and determining legitimacy in application, the role of the Holy Spirit in appropriating Scripture, and doing theology as the outflow of inductive Bible study.”

Reviews & Endorsements

“This wonderful new volume by Fuhr and Köstenberger is a breath of fresh air. It turns our attention back to where it belongs, namely on God’s Word. It will be a great blessing to every believer eager to understand the Scriptures better.” Michael J. Kruger, president and professor of New Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC

“It is exciting to see this work that blends the inductive method with the historical disciplines. . . . Our deep thanks are due Köstenberger and Fuhr for this invaluable resource for quality Bible study.” Grant R. Osborne, professor emeritus, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

“Fuhr and Köstenberger’s new book will help a new generation of students discover the joy of studying the Bible for themselves. Here you will find a hermeneutically sound and accessible guide to studying the Bible inductively.” Robert L. Plummer, professor of New Testament interpretation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, and host of http://www.DailyDoseOfGreek.com
“I know of no other book that covers such a wide range of issues with such user-friendly expertise and wise simplicity. Read it to (re)kindle excitement about mining Scripture’s inexhaustible riches!” Robert W. Yarbrough, professor of New Testament, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

*Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology*, B&H Academic, 2016, 384 pages
WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

MICHAEL R. LICONA

FOREWORD BY CRAIG A. EVANS

Dr. Licona is the author of several books including *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (IVP Academic, 2010) and *Paul Meets Muhammad* (Baker, 2006). He is also co-author with Gary Habermas of the award-winning book *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Kregel, 2004) and co-editor with William Dembski of *Evidence for God: 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy, and Science* (Baker, 2010). Licona is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Institute for Biblical Research, and the Society of Biblical Literature. He is also a well-known speaker and debater and has appeared on dozens of radio and television programs.

Dr. Craig Evans, Dean of the School of Christian Thought at Houston Baptist University, wrote the Foreword to *Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?* –

“Many Christian readers of Dr. Licona’s book will be surprised by his findings. Some will perhaps be troubled. Hopefully all will read his book with an open, teachable mind.”
I agree with Dr. Evans’ assessment. Michael Licona is one of the top New Testament scholars writing on the subject today and his findings and conclusions may surprise some readers. However, as for possibly being troubled, I found it to be most settling. The book contains the answers to so many questions and doubts from people searching for the truth about Jesus of Nazareth. What I found in the book was an extraordinary depth of scholarship that both Christians and non-Christians should consider seriously and carefully.

As a former atheist and opponent of the Gospel of Christ, I can tell you that what Dr. Licona presents from his research will be formidable in its ability to give believers a clarity of understanding and unbelievers an opportunity to see the legitimacy of the Gospels in their historical setting. One of the powerful arguments that helped me see the reliability of the Bible (Old and New Testaments) was looking at the texts from the perspective of other writings and practices of the various eras represented in Scripture.

As a journalist I am fond of orderly systems of research and presentation of findings. Dr. Licona has done an excellent job of that in the way he presents his findings throughout the book. The appendixes, indexes, notes, glossary and bibliography are also helpful for further study and independent research.

I highly recommend Michael Licona’s new book to anyone who is searching for answers to their questions about the veracity and credibility of the Gospel accounts.
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- Argues that differences in the Gospels are similar to differences in works by other ancient authors
- Compares pericopes from Plutarch’s work in order to better understand the compositional devices he employed
- Invites readers to understand the Gospels more nearly the way their authors originally intended

Anyone who reads the Gospels carefully will notice that there are differences in the manner in which they report the same events. These differences have led many conservative Christians to resort to harmonization efforts that are often quite strained, sometimes to the point of absurdity. Many people have concluded the Gospels are hopelessly contradictory and therefore historically unreliable as accounts of Jesus. The majority of New Testament scholars now hold that most if not all of the Gospels belong to the genre of Greco-Roman biography and that this genre permitted some flexibility in the way in which historical events were narrated. However, few scholars have undertaken a robust discussion of how this plays out in Gospel pericopes (self-contained passages).

*Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?* provides a fresh approach to the question by examining the works of Plutarch, a Greek essayist who lived in the first and second centuries CE. Michael R. Licona discovers three-dozen pericopes narrated two or more times in
Plutarch’s Lives, identifies differences between the accounts, and analyzes these differences in light of compositional devices identified by classical scholars as commonly employed by ancient authors. The book then applies the same approach to nineteen pericopes that are narrated in two or more Gospels, demonstrating that the major differences found there likely result from the same compositional devices employed by Plutarch.

Showing both the strained harmonizations and the hasty dismissals of the Gospels as reliable accounts to be misguided, Licona invites readers to approach them in light of their biographical genre and in that way to gain a clearer understanding of why they differ. — Introduction

Reviews & Endorsements

“Criticism often progresses through comparison, as it does in this significant volume. Licona’s experiment of exploring differences between the synoptics in the light of differences within Plutarch is suggestive in multiple respects, and students of the gospels will come away with much to ponder.” Dale C. Allison, Jr., Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary

“Licona should be applauded for helping his audience rethink their presuppositions about the Gospels by situating them among ancient Mediterranean biographies, rather than the modern kind, correcting a ‘historical nearsightedness.’ Moreover, the presentation is very reader friendly, with a glossary and appendices added to assist those lacking
certain competencies. Interested readers can add this affordable volume to their libraries with confidence.” Reading Religion

“Anyone who has looked at a synopsis of the Gospels will have wondered why the accounts of the same events in different Gospels vary. Michael Licona breaks new ground by arguing that the writers used the same compositional devices as the biographer Plutarch employed when he reworked the same material in more than one of his biographies. This is an illuminating fresh approach to understanding how the Gospel writers used their sources.” Richard Bauckham, Professor Emeritus of New Testament Studies, University of St. Andrews

“How worried should we be by the differences between the Gospels? Do they discredit the whole story? In an exemplary crossover of classical and New Testament studies, Michael Licona shows that the answer is ‘not very worried at all’: when we compare the techniques used in Greco-Roman literature, the striking feature is the Gospels’ consistency rather than their differences. Troubled believers will find this book as important as classicists and New Testament scholars.” Christopher Pelling, Regius Professor of Greek, Christ Church, Oxford

“Licona’s book is the most important book I’ve ever read on the literary techniques of the Evangelists. There is no book that has this finesse based on the Gospel genre as a ‘biography’ and hence this study can be used with confidence in classes engaged in the Synoptic Gospels. His conclusions about how the Evangelists did what they did are reliable and yet give us one more clear glimpse in how to understand the nature of
the Gospels.” Scot McKnight, Professor of New Testament, Northern Seminary

“Professor Licona’s new book is a monograph exploring some compositional techniques which the synoptic evangelists appear to have used. Clarificatory and thorough, it is an accomplished piece of work which it is a pleasure to commend.” J I Packer, Board of Governors’ Professor of Theology, Regent College

*Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?: What We Can Learn from Ancient Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2016, 336 pages)
Many of the books I read and review are “large” books with hundreds of pages. This series of books is not one of them, but it doesn’t mean there’s not a lot of great material worth reading and sharing.


“These are books to put in the hands of beginning students. Take them to a high point to catch a view of the horizons beyond. Orient them to true north. Empower their imaginations. And kindle the virtues they will need to prosper in the field.” (Publisher)

I’ll begin by reviewing the newest addition to the Little Books set, then share some information about other books in the series.
A LITTLE BOOK FOR NEW BIBLE SCHOLARS

WHY AND HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

E. RANDOLPH RICHARDS
& JOSEPH R. DODSON
The full title of the newest Little Book is *A Little Book For New Bible Scholars: Why And How To Study The Bible* (IVP Academic, 2017). The authors, E. Randolph Richards and Joseph R. Dodson, do a great job getting so much wisdom into just 126 pages.

Richards (PhD, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) is provost and professor of biblical studies in the School of Ministry at Palm Beach Atlantic University. Dodson (PhD, University of Aberdeen) is associate professor of biblical studies at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

If you love studying and teaching the Bible, you will love this little book.

Christianity needs more scholars. Why? As the authors explained –

“Rather than rushing into ministry, we must prepare ourselves to face the enemy, who delights in leading believers and unbelievers alike to misunderstand and misuse the Bible. In studying Scripture we seek proficiency in demolishing the arguments raised up against the knowledge of God. Through studying the Bible, we train to take captive every teaching and submit it to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-6). Good exegesis must exist because bad exegesis must be answered.” Chapter 3, p 39
I cannot count the number of people I know or have heard about who have fallen for Satan’s deceptions because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of what God’s Word really means. Some have fallen for the deception of atheism or agnosticism. Some have fallen for the deception of New Age beliefs and practices. Some have fallen for the deception of heresies that deny the Lord Jesus. Some have fallen for the deception of so-called “progressive” theology, “emerging” theology and “prosperity” theology. Whatever the deception, the reason is often the same: a misunderstanding and misuse of God’s Word.

The answer? According to the authors the answer is “exegesis.” They warn that “bad exegesis” can abbreviate or even dilute the Gospel. That is so true, and sadly, so much of what we find in western Christianity today. As the authors remind us, we need to “keep the main thing the main thing.” This Little Book costs less than $10 and will be a great addition to any Christian’s library.

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Introduction: A Noble Calling
1. Fall in Love
2. Have More Stuff and Less Fluff
3. Hold Your Horses
4. Don’t Play Marbles with Diamonds
5. Speak the Local Language
6. Keep The Main Thing The Main Thing
Many young Bible scholars are passionate for the Scriptures. But is passion enough?

In *A Little Book for New Bible Scholars*, Randolph Richards and Joseph Dodson encourage young students of the Bible to add substance to their zeal—the kind of substance that comes from the sweat and toil of hard study. “Just as we should avoid knowledge without love,” they write, “we should also avoid love without knowledge.”

Aimed at beginners, this concise overview offers a wealth of good advice, warns of potential pitfalls, and includes wisdom from a variety of other biblical scholars as well as stories from the authors’ own long experience in the guild. Full of warmth, humor, and an infectious love for Scripture, this book invites a new generation of young scholars to roll up their sleeves and dig into the complex, captivating world of the Bible.
Reviews & Endorsements

“Richards and Dodson give us all a profound gift, shining light on the ‘narrow way’ to sweet satisfaction in biblical scholarship. It is found not in exploiting a career for personal gain, social approval, or vanity, but in enjoying the riches of God’s Word among God’s people. This is a rich store of wisdom.” Timothy Gombis, professor of New Testament, Grand Rapids Theological Seminary

“A Little Book for New Bible Scholars is a fun and challenging look at the joys and realities of the academic study of the Bible. Richards and Dodson offer wise yet practical advice, peppered with words of warning, about studying the Bible academically. Not only is their advice for new scholars, it is also full of valuable reminders about the benefits and pitfalls of biblical learning for those of us who are no longer beginners.” Benjamin E. Reynolds, associate professor of New Testament, Tyndale University College, Toronto

“Whether starting out in formal biblical studies as a freshman at a Christian college or completing a PhD in Old or New Testament, students of the Bible need to read this little gem of a book. A veteran biblical scholar joins hands with a younger peer to offer all the right advice about how to approach one’s career, what to avoid, and how to keep the main thing the main thing. Laced with humorous and incisive real-life stories and choice quotes from other scholars who have trodden the same path, this work represents Christian wisdom at its finest.” Craig
L. Blomberg, distinguished professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary

“To snorkel or to dive? That is the question this little book asks its readers to consider. In a well-written and personally engaging reflection on the vocation of biblical studies, Richards, Dodson, and a collection of scholars invite would-be Bible students to consider anew the importance of the discipline of academic Bible study for the benefit of both one’s personal life and the ministry of the church. The church of our time is desperate for the pastor-theologian who has the skill and the theologically chastened intuition to wrestle with the significant challenges of a twenty-first-century world with its lightning-fast revolutions in science, sexuality, and globalization—to name just a few. This kind of leader is increasingly becoming the most significant commodity for the twenty-first-century church. The authors are seasoned guides as well as cheerleaders for a new generation of lifelong students of Scripture for the sake of the Messiah Jesus’ church.”
Joel Willitts, professor of biblical and theological studies, North Park University

“A delightful read and absolutely on target, A Little Book for New Bible Scholars gets my highest praise and recommendation. It should be required reading early in the program for all students preparing for ministry.” J. Daniel Hays, Ouachita Baptist University
“Plotting a course of study or even a career in biblical studies can be fraught with many trials and temptations. In this charming little book, Joey Dodson and Randy Richards offer some sage advice to budding students of the Bible on how to keep their egos intact, how to keep their faith authentic, how to use their vat of new biblical knowledge to serve others, and how to grow as Christians through biblical studies. Everyone should read this book before seminary!” Michael F. Bird, lecturer in theology, Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia

“This delightful volume is full of wit and wisdom not only for biblical scholars and theologians but for all students of the Word. The stories, anecdotes, and insights will encourage you to discover more deeply the riches of God’s Word and the heart of Christian ministry.” Mark L. Strauss, university professor of New Testament, Bethel Seminary San Diego

“Dodson and Richards have given young biblical scholars a book that charms while it instructs. Their combined years of wisdom are presented with whimsy and honesty that will be helpful in discernment for emerging biblical scholars. This book gets at not only the head knowledge, but also the heart. The interspersing of other biblical scholars throughout the book adds diversity, breadth, and weight to each chapter. As an advisor for students pursuing work in biblical scholarship as their vocation, this is precisely the kind of book I will gladly recommend to them!” Beth M. Stovell, assistant professor of Old Testament, Ambrose Seminary
A Little Book For New Bible Scholars: Why And How To Study The Bible, IVP Academic, 2017, 126 pages

Other Little Books

A Little Book for New Theologians

Whenever we read, think, hear or say anything about God, we are doing theology. Yet theology isn’t just a matter of what we think. It affects who we are.

In the tradition of Helmut Thielicke’s A Little Exercise for Young Theologians, Kelly Kapic offers a concise introduction to the study of theology for newcomers to the field. He highlights the value and importance of theological study and explains its unique nature as a serious discipline.

Not only concerned with content and method, Kapic explores the skills, attitudes and spiritual practices needed by those who take up the discipline. This brief, clear and lively primer draws out the relevance of theology for Christian life, worship, mission, witness and more.

“Theology is about life,” writes Kapic. “It is not a conversation our souls can afford to avoid.” (Publisher)
A Little Book for New Scientists

Many young Christians interested in the sciences have felt torn between two options: remaining faithful to Christ or studying science. Heated debates over the past century have created the impression that we have to choose between one or the other. The result has been a crisis of faith for many students.

Josh Reeves and Steve Donaldson present a concise introduction to the study of science that explains why scientists in every age have found science congenial to their faith and how Christians in the sciences can bridge the gap between science and Christian belief and practice. If Christians are to have a beneficial dialogue with science, it will be guided by those who understand science from the inside. Consequently, this book provides both advice and encouragement for Christians entering or engaged in scientific careers because their presence in science is a vital component of the church’s witness in the world. (Publisher)
A Little Book for New Philosophers

What’s the point of studying philosophy when we have theology? Is philosophy anything more than a preparation for apologetics?

Often called “theology’s handmaid,” philosophy has sometimes suffered from an inferiority complex in the church. Many Christians see little point in it at all. But as Paul Copan contends, it is possible to affirm theology’s preeminence without diminishing the value and contribution of philosophy.

In A Little Book for New Philosophers, Copan offers a concise introduction to the study of philosophy. Aimed at newcomers, this brief overview is both a survey of philosophy’s basic aims and categories and an apology for its proper function in the life of the Christian. “By God’s grace,” Copan writes, “philosophy can enhance our understanding and worship of God . . . and assist us in defending the coherence of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Publisher)
CONVERSION

HOW GOD CREATES A PEOPLE

MICHAELE LAWRENCE
Conversion: How God Creates A People by Michael Lawrence (Crossway, 2017) is part of the 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches series from Crossway. Lawrence, who is the lead pastor of Hinson Baptist Church in Portland, Oregon, has a PhD in Church History from Cambridge University and MDiv from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He also authored Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church (Crossway, 2010).

Dr. Lawrence started his book with Scripture, which I always appreciate because all of our thoughts should begin with God’s Word. Here’s what he chose to use –

“Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Pet. 2:10)

How God “creates a people” is primary to His eternal purpose. God created the first human beings in His image and likeness to be His “people” and has been in the process of “creating” a people for Himself since Adam and Eve became separated from God by sin. As Peter wrote, we once were “not a people,” but now “are God’s people” because we have “received mercy.” Dr. Lawrence paints a picture of how Christians view “conversion” today and it’s not pretty, but I agree with its accuracy. How people become true followers of Jesus Christ is, unfortunately, mixed up. Lawrence suggests in his book that Christians focus on the problem of the “theology” of conversion and with how we “apply” that theology to our church. He asks
an excellent question that we definitely need to answer – “How do we work out our beliefs in practical ways that express those truths we claim to believe?”

Here are some of Dr. Lawrence’s thoughts about that from his Introduction to the book –

“Too often our confessional theology says one thing, while our practical theology says something else. We say that regeneration makes us new creatures in Christ, but then we teach our kids a moralism that atheists could duplicate. We say that Christianity is about a trusting relationship with Jesus, but then we treat it like checking a box on a decision card. We say that only the Holy Spirit transfers a person from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, but then we employ the marketing tools used for getting someone to switch brands of toothpaste. Again and again, what we claim in our doctrinal statements about conversion doesn’t match what our churches practice or their ministry models. So it shouldn’t surprise us that our kids end up being something less than Christian. Of course, this isn’t a problem that just affects parents and children. It affects churches. When our converts from one evangelistic campaign are nowhere to be seen when the next campaign rolls around; when our members treat church as optional, to be balanced with sports leagues and vacation houses; when giving and attendance fall far short of the membership numbers; when volunteers are hard to find unless it’s a social event, the problem probably isn’t our evangelism technique, or poor leadership, or uninteresting worship services, or bad volunteer management. The problem may well be our
practical theology of conversion. Too often we treat the symptoms. But what we really need is to go after the underlying disease.” Introduction, pp 14-15

Dr. Lawrence is such a good writer that I found it difficult to pull just a few favorite quotes from the book to share with you. However, here is one that goes straight to the core of the problem in many churches –

“When we fail to preach the justice of God and downplay his wrath, we are talking about some other gospel. We have changed it from an objective rescue to a subjective path to personal fulfillment.” p 35

Here are two more quotes you may find helpful –

“God saves us not because of who we are, but despite of it. Why? Because he loves us.” p 39

“Ultimately, the purpose of our salvation is not our salvation. The purpose of our salvation is God’s glory.” p 43

It’s not often in life that we deal with life-and-death issues, but Christian conversion (salvation) is one of them. I highly recommend Conversion: How God Creates A People for every Christian to read, take to heart, and respond.
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How Does Understanding Conversion Shape Ministry?

The way a church operates says a lot about how they believe people are saved. When a church truly embraces the Bible’s teaching on conversion, they will call people to repentance and faith—not just one-time decisions, therapeutic healings, or moral lifestyles.

This short book was written to help churches rightly understand the difference that a biblical doctrine of conversion should make for teaching, evangelism, discipling, membership, and every other facet of the life of a local church.

Reviews & Endorsements

“Conversion is essential and misunderstood. Lawrence understands this and explains what the Bible teaches simply and compellingly. This small book is a big gift.” Mark Dever, pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC; president, 9Marks

“This discipleship resource has it all—pastoral clarity, urgent relevance, practical brevity, and faithfulness to the Scriptures. Line by line, every chapter contains fodder for significant discussions on what the Word says about evangelism, conversion, and the church. I’m so thankful that Michael Lawrence wrote this book—I’ll be referring to it often.” Gloria
Furman, author, *The Pastor’s Wife; Missional Motherhood;* and *Alive in Him*

“Down-to-earth, clear, practical, straight shooting, biblically cogent treatment of the nature and necessity of conversion. This is an excellent book.” David F. Wells, distinguished senior research professor, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; author, *The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-Lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World*

“This is a biblically informed and extremely relevant book for pastors and sheep alike. Michael Lawrence hits the nail on the head when it comes to the conversion experience. Being born again is not the result of a superficial, emotional, and man-motivated prayer. This is a call to reexamine the Scriptures to see that conversion is a divine work from beginning to end, which should be externally evident by the way true disciples live in love-motivated obedience to Christ; by the interest they show in belonging to a local body of believers to whom they are accountable; and by the way they live the gospel in holiness and practice evangelism. Conversion requires repentance, and repentance requires a work of the Holy Spirit. I am delighted to see this book published at this time.” Miguel Núñez, senior pastor, International Baptist Church, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; president, Wisdom & Integrity Ministries
“In this important book Michael Lawrence outlines the biblical theology of conversion with clarity. The aim here is not to suggest that conversion makes people nice, because it is possible to be nice and not be converted. On the other hand, conversion is not a matter of mere subjectivity, for it is possible to feel converted and not be. Lawrence argues that conversion is an act that begins with God (regeneration) and bears fruit in men (repentance and faith). This overflow of God’s grace not only allows us to repent and believe, but also enables us to be inserted into the people that God created in Christ Jesus. In short, conversion culminates in membership in the local church. I heartily recommend this book.” Jonas Madureira, senior pastor, Reformed Baptist Church, São Paulo, Brazil

“Real conversion is not a facade of ‘niceness,’ nor does it depend on a decision made once years ago. True conversion is nothing less than rebirth, new creation, and new life in Christ. This book offers a clear and compelling account of conversion, according to the Scriptures. And it shows how essential a right understanding is for the life of every believer and every church. Highly recommended.” Constantine R. Campbell, associate professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
“With theological precision, but with plain and accessible language, Michael Lawrence guides us through the Scriptures to help us understand what true conversion is and what are the fruits that evidence it. This is a book I would like to place in the hands of all members of our church.” Sugel Michelen, pastor, Iglesia Bíblica del Señor Jesucristo, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

“If there is a subject that Satan has tried to confuse people about, it is the nature of true conversion. What better way to get religious people to land in hell than by letting them think they are converted when in fact they are not? Michael Lawrence has clarified this matter for us by building up from the oft-forgotten truth of regeneration, which is the foundation of conversion. He ends with the practical implications of this truth when held in biblical proportions. His pen is that of a skillful writer, and it oozes with wise pastoral counsel. I highly recommend that those of us who know that we are truly converted should also read this delightful book so as to avoid leading others astray.” Conrad Mbewe, pastor, Kabwata Baptist Church, Lusaka, Zambia; chancellor, African Christian University, Lusaka, Zambia

*Conversion: How God Creates A People* (Crossway, 2017, 144 pages)

[I received a review copy from Crossway.]
PAUL E. LITTLE
Author of How to Give Away Your Faith

Know Why You Believe

“Scholarly. Articulate. Simple.”
BILLY GRAHAM

OVER A MILLION COPIES IN PRINT!
I usually review new or recent books in this ongoing series recommending writings for Christian apologists to read. However, it’s also good to remember some of the good apologetics books from the 19th and 20th centuries that are still in print and available for purchase. Some of the older books might use the term “evangelistic” to describe their purpose. That’s not surprising since apologetics is a tool of evangelism and making disciples.

InterVarsity Press (IVP) has done a good thing by keeping the writings of Paul Little available for people to purchase. Know Why You Believe and Know What You Believe were first published by Scripture Press Publications, Inc. (1967 & 1970) and were based on Little’s ministry to students on college campuses. I remember them from my early years as a Christian. Vision House published Know Who You Believe under the original title of Faith Is For People in 1976. IVP published revised editions of the books – with the latest revisions dating from 2008. The first two
books contain a section on Study Questions at the back that you may find helpful for getting the most out of every chapter.

Paul Little and his wife, Marie, worked for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship for 25 years. Little was also associate professor of evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School until his death in an auto accident in 1975.
PAUL E. LITTLE
Author of How to Give Away Your Faith

Know Why You Believe

“Scholarly. Articulate. Simple.”
BILLY GRAHAM

OVER A MILLION COPIES IN PRINT!
Know Why You Believe

Paul Little addressed 12 common questions about the Christian worldview that he heard from students across the country. They are:

1. Is Christianity Rational?
2. Is There a God?
3. Is Christ God?
4. Did Christ Rise from the Dead?
5. Is the Bible God’s Word?
6. Are the Bible Documents Reliable?
7. Does Archaeology Verify Scripture?
8. Are Miracles Possible?
9. Do Science & Scripture Agree?
10. Why Does God Allow Suffering & Evil?
11. Does Christianity Differ from Other World Religions?
12. Is Christian Experience Valid?

Even though Little wrote this book decades ago, his answers to these questions are still timely and helpful. The editors added new information (as of 2008), including updated reference materials.
“After 2,000 years, no question is going to bring Christianity crashing.’


These are just a few of the twelve most common intellectual challenges to faith that Paul E. Little encountered during his twenty-five years of speaking and teaching in the university. These questions need solid answers, and that’s what a million people have already found in this clear and reasonable response to the toughest questions posed to Christian belief.

Sprinkling in a few “sure-fire jokes” and other humorous illustrations, Little uses these questions to jog readers’ thinking and help them examine their present worldviews, ranging from scientific determinism to rabid existentialism. By thinking through the most common challenges to Christian faith, believers will be prepared to answer others out of the wellspring of their own certainty.

This edition, revised and updated by Marie Little in consultation with experts in science and archaeology, provides twenty-first-century information and offers solid ground for those who are willing to search for truth. Including a study guide for individuals or groups, Know Why You Believe is the classic answerbook on Christian faith.”
Reviews & Endorsements

“As a student, I love Paul’s teaching. As an apologist, I am grateful for his impact. *Know Why You Believe* is a valuable piece of work.” Ravi Zacharias

“Paul Little gives brightly understandable answers to questions about biblical Christianity. He shows there is a reasonable base to believe that Jesus Christ offers to give us connection to the living God.” Josh McDowell

“I’ve worn out multiple copies of this book and lost count of how many I’ve given away to seekers and new believers. It’s a classic.” Bill Hybels

“Scholarly, articulate, simple.” Billy Graham

“When I lost my childhood faith, I needed a book like Paul Little’s *Know Why You Believe*.” Kenneth Kantzer

“Shortly after my conversion in 1968 I was given a copy of *Know Why You Believe*, and it was what sparked my own lifelong interest in Christian apologetics. Through the years its quality has been demonstrated by its longevity. Now in this updated and expanded version, Paul Little’s book can continue to provide hope and help to a new generation of truth-seekers.” J. P. Moreland, professor of
philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, and author of *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*

One of the “Top 50 Books That Have Shaped Evangelicals” Christianity Today, October 2006

“This book canters brightly through the border-country between conviction and questioning.” The Methodist Recorder
PAUL E. LITTLE
Author of How to Give Away Your Faith

Know What You Believe

OVER A QUARTER MILLION IN PRINT!
Know What You Believe

Reading Little’s Know What You Believe took me back to my early years as a Christian when I devoured everything I could find about God. Some of my favorite books were about systematic Bible study and Know What You Believe takes us into that wonderful arena:

1. The Bible
2. God
3. Jesus Christ
4. Jesus Christ’s Death
5. People and Sin
6. The Holy Spirit
7. Salvation
8. Angels, Satan and Demons
9. The Church
10. Things to Come

Publisher: About the Book

“What does Christianity have to do with anything? What does the Christian faith teach about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit? What do I need to know about angels, Satan and demons? What place should the Bible or a church have in my life?”
By exploring these and other core questions, bestselling author Paul E. Little leads you into a greater appreciation of a God who has done great things to bring you into a relationship with him through Jesus Christ. He presents ten bottom-line, non-negotiable truths of Christianity using humorous, anecdotal illustrations gathered from years of experience helping believers share their faith with not-yet Christians. Expanded and updated throughout by Paul’s wife Marie, this contemporary edition is packed with illuminating answers to questions and misconceptions about the Christian faith, with study questions for each chapter.”

Reviews & Endorsements

“This updated classic stands ready to serve a whole new generation. Read it and let Paul help you understand the timeless biblical truths that will prevent you from being ‘blown here and there by every wind of teaching.’” Mark Mittelberg, executive vice president, Willow Creek Association

“There are just a few timeless treasures in Christian literature. Know What You Believe is one of them. I am confident that the expanded and updated version of this book will be as important to this generation as it was in the days when I was a student.” Joseph Stowell, former president, Moody Bible Institute
“I have deeply admired [Paul Little] as a man of God with extraordinary insights into the work of God and boundless enthusiasm for communicating the Word of God.” Billy Graham
Know Who You Believe

Christianity is different than every other religious belief. It is about a personal “relationship” with God. How can we be personal with God? Through His Son, Jesus Christ, who “became flesh and dwelt among us.”

1. Inner Direction Needed
2. Jesus Christ, the Centerpiece
3. Alone on the Stage of History
4. Love and Justice Meet
5. He’s Alive
6. Jesus Christ, a Valid Object
7. Making the Magnificent Connection
8. God Uses Words
9. Biblically Correct Angels
10. “That’s Your Truth, Not Mine”
11. It’s Hard to Be an Atheist
12. Staying Power for the Journey
Publisher: About the Book

“In writings lovingly collected and edited by his wife Marie after his death, Paul E. Little explores the central question of Christianity: can we know God? By looking at the identity of Jesus Christ, his claims regarding his identity and his promises to his followers and inquirers, we arrive at the wonderful conclusion of the Christian faith: through Jesus Christ we may know God personally.”

Reviews & Endorsements

“In his unique way Paul describes ‘the electricity of Christ’s claim.’ . . . You will find here an authenticity that comes from a man who was unconditionally devoted to Jesus Christ.” Billy Graham, from the foreword

Here’s a short video about Paul Little you may find interesting.
How To Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets (Crossway, 2017) by Peter J. Gentry is an excellent book for any Christian who wants to understand the Old Testament prophets. I first encountered the prophets during an investigation into the reliability of the Old Testament. After becoming a Christian, I returned to the prophets and have enjoyed them through the years. As Hebrews reminds us – “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets …” (Hebrews 1:1). That’s an amazing statement and well worth remembering as we read the prophetic writings.

Peter J. Gentry (PhD, University of Toronto) is professor of Old Testament interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and director of the Hexapla Institute. He served on the faculties of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, University of Toronto, Heritage Theological Seminar, and Tyndale Theological Seminary. In addition to writing How To Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets, Dr. Gentry has also written Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants (Crossway, 2012, with co-author Steven Wellum) and Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants (Crossway, 2015, with co-author Steven Wellum).

The writings of the prophets take up a large portion of the Old Testament. God spoke through them to both Israel and surrounding nations. Jesus and His apostles spoke often about the importance of the prophets and their writings because they were about Jesus.
“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27

“But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” Acts 3:18

“Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.” Acts 3:24

“To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” Acts 10:43

“Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23

“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,
and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Romans 1:1-4

The importance of the prophets is not the prophets themselves, but their message from God to Israel and the world about the coming sacrifice and reign of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Because of the importance of the prophetic message, it is important that we know how to correctly read and understand that message. Dr. Gentry’s new book is an excellent resource for learning how to do just that.

Gentry has a great writing style that is both in-depth and easy to understand. His insights to the prophetic writings have the effect of an increased desire to read and profit from the writings of the prophets. I highly recommend this new book to you.

Here are some helpful notes from Crossway:
About How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets

A Concise Guide to Reading the Prophetic Books

The Prophetic Books of the Bible are full of symbolic speeches, dramatic metaphors, and lengthy allegories—a unique blend of literary styles that can make them hard to comprehend. How can we know if we are reading them the way God intended them to be read?

In this accessible guide, leading Old Testament scholar Peter Gentry identifies seven common characteristics of prophetic literature in the Bible that help us understand each book’s message. With illustrations and clear examples, Gentry offers guidance for reading these challenging texts—teaching us practical strategies for deeper engagement with the biblical text as we seek to apply God’s Word to our lives today.
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**Introduction**

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**Conclusion**

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# Endorsements

> "When reading the Prophets, one may despair like the Ethiopian eunuch puzzling over Isaiah, ‘How can I understand, unless someone guides me?’ Fortunately, Peter Gentry meets us on the road and asks, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ Gentry ably guides us through this strange and foreign land." Lindsay Kennedy, Assistant Pastor, Calvary Chapel Bothell, Bothell, Washington; blogger, My Digital Seminary
“This is just the book I was looking for! And why? To serve as an essential guide and resource text for my Lusaka Lutheran Seminary exegesis of Isaiah class. Gentry succeeds most admirably in his stated objective, which is to enable readers to read and understand the Prophets. And he does so in a way that is truly exemplary, employing a clear, concise, logically developed writing style that makes it relatively easy to probe this potentially difficult subject—the Old Testament prophetic literature. The basic principles and procedures of text interpretation are given substance in many helpful reading strategies that are exemplified by some crucial biblical case studies—primarily Isaiah, but also other prophetic texts that reflect upon the fundamental covenantal tenets of the Mosaic Torah, Deuteronomy in particular. All the key topics and tactics necessary for more effectively delving into the Prophets are introduced and amply illustrated: literary-stylistic cues, discourse structural markers, function of the foreign nations, Yahwist covenantal theology, biblical chronology and typology, and, of course, correctly discerning the future, including the apocalyptic genre. In short, the author demystifies the Hebrew prophets and successfully relates their writings also to hermeneutical issues facing the church today—all in the space of less than 150 pages. This book would serve as a helpful introduction for adult Bible studies as well as college-level courses on hermeneutics. Scholars teaching at higher academic levels too would benefit from Gentry’s excellent pedagogical approach. I had intended to complete my review of this book periodically, over the space of two weeks; however, once I got started, it took me only two days. Whether one happens to agree with the author’s various interpretive conclusions
or not (I do!), one must commend him for the careful manner in which he arrives at them. Many readers now will look forward to some sort of a teacher’s guide (including various content and application questions) that could accompany this indispensable resource on the Hebrew prophets.” Ernst R. Wendland, instructor, Lusaka Lutheran Seminary, Zambia; Internal Examiner, University of Zambia

“Having established a stellar reputation already through his many publications in Old Testament studies—especially in Septuagint and biblical theology—Gentry reflects broad expertise here in his treatment of prophetism as an institution and in the literary output of the canonical Prophets of the Hebrew Bible. This is more than ‘just another book on the Prophets: their lives, times, and ministries.’ The approach in this case goes beyond the standard of the oeuvres already at hand. Gentry knits together most skillfully the strands of criticism, theology, history, poetry, apocalyptic, and pastoral practicality in a style that betrays at once solid scholarship and transparent readability.” Eugene H. Merrill, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary

“When traveling to a foreign land, the experience is so much richer when you have an experienced guide to explain the unique customs, point out things you might have missed, and take you to places you would not dare traverse alone. For modern Western readers of the Bible, the Prophets are a foreign land, even if we do not initially realize it. Peter Gentry, with his decades of experience traveling in this difficult terrain, can be your expert guide to the biblical Prophets through reading this
book. I’m overjoyed that Gentry is sharing in print for a wider audience what I first found so helpful as class lectures a dozen years ago. Pick up this travel guide and experience the biblical Prophets afresh.” Richard Lucas, biblical and theological studies mentor, The NETS Center for Church Planting and Revitalization; associate pastor, Christ Memorial Church, Williston, Vermont

“Peter Gentry is a master exegete and theologian, and in this brief volume he supplies excellent guidance for those of us who desire to read and understand the Prophets with greater biblical faithfulness. With clear prose and numerous examples, he identifies how we should approach the prophetic genre—its grounding in the Mosaic covenant, its structure and use of repetition, its engagement of foreign nations, its use of typology and apocalyptic language, and its appropriation and already-but-not-yet fulfillment in the New Testament. Gentry helps us grasp how the prophets communicated their messages, and by doing so he empowers us to become better interpreters of God’s Word. I highly recommend this book.” Jason S. DeRouchie, Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology, Bethlehem College & Seminary

“Many people set out to read through the Bible but get bogged down in the Old Testament Prophets. Some push ahead anyway, others skip ahead—both missing out on the full counsel of God. But there’s hope—everyone should read Peter Gentry’s new book! Under seven key topics he asks the right questions, and his answers are the most insightful I’ve seen. Pastors and scholars: you’ll benefit too.” Brent Sandy, Former Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, Grace
College, Winona Lake, Indiana; coeditor, Cracking Old Testament Codes; coauthor, The Lost World of Scripture

*How To Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Crossway, 2017, 144 pages)

[We received an electronic review copy from Crossway]
Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World (Baker Books, 2017) by James Emery White is about our children and grandchildren, who White says, were born between 1995-2010. Based on those birth years members of Gen Z are already filling our schools and universities and beginning their careers. They will be the parents of a new generation and will lead business, education and government in the near future.

There are other researchers who date Gen Z a bit differently than White. Some date the births of this new generation from 1996-2012 or even to the present (2017). However, for the purpose of this book review I will use White’s dating.

White wrote that “the rise of the nones and the coming force of Generation Z will inevitably challenge every church to rethink its strategy in light of a cultural landscape that has shifted seismically. If the heart of the Christian mission is to evangelize and transform culture through the centrality of the church, then understanding that culture is paramount.” (White, James Emery. Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World (p. 12). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)

“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh.” Ecclesiastes 1:4 KJV
Part 1: The New Reality

White makes some strong arguments in his book about coming to a “pivotal time” in our culture. He quoted political strategist Doug Sosnik as saying that the United States is “going through the most significant period of change since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.’ Years from now, Sosnik argues, ‘we are going to look back at this period of time and see it as a ‘hinge’ moment . . . a connection point that ties two historical periods in time, one before and one afterwards.” (p. 18) White believes that members of Generation Z will be an important part of that change.

“So who is Generation Z? They are growing up in a post-9/11 world. They are experiencing radical changes in technology and understandings of family, sexuality, and gender. They live in multigenerational households, and the fastest-growing demographic within their age group is multiracial. But let’s unpack them a bit more slowly.” (p. 39)

White then shared what he called “five defining characteristics of Generation Z.”

1. Recession Marked
2. Wi-Fi Enabled
3. Multiracial
4. Sexually Fluid
5. Post-Christian
“The most defining characteristic of Generation Z is that it is arguably the first generation in the West (certainly in the United States) that will have been raised in a post-Christian context. As a result, it is the first post-Christian generation.” (p. 49)

White went into depth in Chapter 3 about how members of Generation Z are the children of Generation X – “a generation that was warned repeatedly not to become ‘helicopter’ parents (i.e., always hovering over their children). As a result, Generation Z has been given more space and more independence than any other generation. This means that Generation Z is very self-directed.” (p. 51)

White wrote that if Millennials were raised by overprotective parents, then Gen Z is being raised by “underprotective” parents.

“Reflect on this in relation to Generation Z. In other words, consider the effect of an underprotective family environment in a day of sexting and Facebook, bullying in schools and internet porn, cutting and hooking up. When children need to be protected as never before, they are met with a parenting culture that is less protective than at any other time in recent history.” (p. 53)
One of the most powerful statements in White’s book are these –

“One might be tempted to say the same of our own day, particularly in relation to how we are shaping Generation Z. There are many ways to characterize them, but in essence, two headlines must not be missed. First, they are lost. They are not simply living in and being shaped by a post-Christian cultural context. They do not even have a memory of the gospel. The degree of spiritual illiteracy is simply stunning.” (p. 64)

Think about that. The young people who are part of Generation Z do not even have a memory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It’s one thing to state the problem – it’s another to offer a solution.

Part 2: A New Approach

White’s “new approach” includes –

- The Countercultural Church
- Finding Our Voice
- Rethinking Evangelism
- Apologetics for a New Generation
- Decisions
Here are several quotes from White’s book that highlight this new approach:

“Those two ideas—church and counterculture—lie at the heart of reaching a post-Christian generation. The challenge is, first, to understand the ideas and, second, to engage them.” (p. 69)

“Our voice, as Christians, is clearly a minority report in the modern world.” (p. 89)

“Biblically, there are three primary voices speaking into culture: the prophetic, the evangelistic, and the heretical.” (p. 92)

“At this point in the journey, I am hopeful it is abundantly clear that approaches to evangelism used in the past must be ruthlessly reevaluated in light of the nature of a post-Christian culture and the generation it has spawned.” (p. 107)

“The church must rethink evangelism—no longer can we be simply event driven. The church must view evangelism as both a process and an event.” (p. 109)

“It’s simply a cultural reality that people in a post-Christian world are genuinely incredulous that anyone would think like . . . well, a Christian—or at least, what it means in their minds to think like a Christian. So of course they are going to ask: ‘What is up with not wanting two people
who love each other to get married?’ ‘What is up with thinking sex is so bad?’ ‘What is up with a loving God sending someone like Gandhi to hell?’ I’m sure you can think of any number of questions. Answering the ‘What is up with’ questions is what lies at the heart of modern-day apologetics, the pre-evangelism so missing in churches.” (p. 130)

Endorsements

“In Meet Generation Z James Emery White shares helpful insights into the generation that follows the Millennial generation in a clear, practical way. Pastors and church leaders seeking to better understand the world of their youth ought to read this text.” Ed Stetzer, Billy Graham Distinguished Chair, Wheaton College

“Meet Generation Z is much more than just another popular sociological interpretation of our current cultural moment, as important as such an analysis, in and of itself, may be. This new and outstanding work by James Emery White, characteristic of the excellence we have come to expect from his prolific publications, provides not only wise and thoughtful cultural interpretation but also important theological insight regarding the trends, ideas, and movements that have shaped our twenty-first-century world. Christian leaders who are not only serious about church and ministry but who also want to understand and engage culture in order to connect this post-Christian world with the claims of the gospel will find White’s work to be essential reading. Highly recommended!” David S. Dockery, president, Trinity International University/Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
“It’s clear that Jim has a white-hot passion for Generation Z to know God. His research, practical applications, and desire for all church leaders to get this right will inspire and challenge you.” Sue Miller, children’s ministry champion; Orange Conference staff; coauthor of *Not Normal: 7 Quirks of Incredible Volunteers*

**An Investment**

I hope we have whetted your appetite to read this book for yourself. It will be a great investment in the lives of Christian parents and children you know and their pastors and teachers. Every generation brings new challenges and opportunities for ministry.

LEAVING MORMONISM
Why Four Scholars Changed their Minds
Leaving Mormonism: Why Four Scholars Changed Their Minds (RatioChristiBooks/Kregel Publications, 2017) is the best book I’ve read about the inner workings of Mormonism, but it’s much more than that. Four former Mormons who are scholars in various academic disciplines also share their deep love for Mormons and their desire to help them understand the truthfulness of the Bible and the errors of the Mormon religion.

Drs. Corey Miller and Lynn K. Wilder are the book’s editors and co-wrote chapters with Drs. Latayne C. Scott and Vince Eccles. Their combined range of doctorates from Philosophical Theology to Education to Biblical Studies to Physics brings a special perspective that makes Leaving Mormonism a must-have guide for every Christian who wants to better understand Mormonism and for every Mormon who may be having doubts about their religion.

The Authors

Dr. Corey Miller grew up in Utah as a sixth generation Mormon and became a Christian in 1988. He is an Adjunct Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Religions at Indiana University-Kokomo. Dr. Miller is also the President/CEO of Ratio Christi (Latin for “The Reason of Christ”), which is a global movement that equips university students and faculty to give historical, philosophical, and scientific reasons for following Jesus Christ.
Dr. Lynn Wilder became a Mormon in 1977 and was a tenured professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. She became a Christian in 2006 and is now a Professor of Special Education at Florida Gulf Coast University in Ft. Myers, Florida.

Dr. Latayne C. Scott became a Mormon at the age of 11 and became a Christian as a young woman. She attended Brigham Young University and received a doctorate in biblical studies from Trinity Southwest University. Dr. Scott is the author of The Mormon Mirage and more than 20 other books.

Dr. Vince Eccles was born to parents with a rich Mormon heritage, but he drifted from Mormonism as a young man and became a Christian in 1975. He is a Research Scientist with the Center for Atmospheric and Space Sciences at Utah State University.

The Book

It is quickly evident upon reading Leaving Mormonism that the authors share a deep insight into the challenges of “being Mormon” and excellent reasons for leaving it. The first chapter, by Dr. Corey Miller, looks at “Contemplating Mormonism Lovingly, Credibly, and Truthfully.” He follows that with great insight into the “Search of the Good Life.” Dr. Latayne Scott wrote personally and powerfully about her life as a Mormon in “I Was There. I Believed.” Dr. Lynn Wilder wrote about the “Social Consequences of Mormon Teachings: Finding Post-Mormon Mental Health.” Dr. Vincent
Eccles wrote about his experiences as a Mormon and scientist in “Wrestling with Nature and God.” Drs. Miller and Wilder finish the book with an insightful look into the fact that many former Mormons become atheists in “Why Believe in God? Objections to Faith by the the New Atheism.”

Leaving Mormonism begins with an excellent Foreward by Dr. Richard Land, President of Southern Evangelical Seminary. Here are a few highlights –

“Leaving Mormonism is indeed a unique and valuable volume. As Dr. Corey Miller and Dr. Lynn Wilder, contributing authors and co-editors, explain, no other book on Mormonism is written by people who are former Mormons, are trained professional academics, and confessed followers and disciples of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Drs. Miller and Wilder explain the unique tenor of the book, which is not mean-spirited or hostile to Mormons as people. Speaking for the authors, Dr. Miller says, ‘As former insiders, we have a unique perspective. As scholars, we value truth. As Christians, our commitment to Christ compels us to genuine love without which we could not claim to be anything but mere critics . . .

Drs. Corey Miller, Latayne C. Scott, Lynn K. Wilder, and Vince Eccles are to be commended for producing a compelling narrative that will be invaluable in sharing the Gospel with Mormons and former Mormons, and in inspiring , informing, and equipping those who are seeking to defend the Gospel (especially in Miller and Wilder’s chapter 6).
I will keep two copies of this book in my library, one for reference and one to lend to others.”

One of the highlights of Leaving Mormonism is how each author shared their personal story from childhood. Origins are so important to who we become in life. As a former atheist, I also appreciated the last chapter of the book – “Why Believe In God? Objections To Faith By The New Atheism.” As the authors wrote –

“Truth, reasonableness, and morality are central to Christian faith. They matter to theists, and our thinking about them with our conscious minds should be sound.”

Each reader will certainly find something that will touch them at a deep level.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this review, Leaving Mormonism: Why Four Scholars Changed Their Minds is the best book I’ve read about Mormonism. I highly recommend it to you as you seek to love your Mormon friends and family members to the “real” Jesus Christ.
Publisher’s Description

“Leaving Mormonism offers the expertise and personal experience of four ex-Mormon academics to explain why the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints proved to be intellectually and spiritually lacking to them and to others.

No previous book has pooled the collective wisdom of people who are former members of the Mormon church and who also possess the highest academic credentials. Far from rehashing tired apologetic arguments, this book presents fresh, thoughtful, respectful, and challenging insights. Speaking to both the heart and mind, the four contributors share their stories of leaving the LDS church and their well-considered reasons for doing so.'

Drs. Corey Miller, Latayne C. Scott, Lynn K. Wilder, and Vince Eccles are to be commended for producing a compelling narrative that will be invaluable in sharing the Gospel with Mormons and former Mormons, and in inspiring, informing, and equipping those who are seeking to defend the Gospel (especially in Miller and Wilder’s chapter 6).”
“It is truly a great book. In fact, I have never seen anything like it. Miller and Wilder have brought together a team of very knowledgeable ex-Mormon scholars to share from various perspectives why they could no longer stay Mormons. And while many who leave Mormonism simply fall off the grid, the good news presented by author after author is that there is an intellectually and spiritually vibrant alternative: moving from Mormonism to historical Evangelical Christianity. The book is fair, irenic, and inviting. This is now the first place to go for anyone who wants an honest, serious critique of Mormonism, along with an alternative to consider. I give it my top recommendation.” —JP Moreland, Ph.D. Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

“Leaving Mormonism is a new kind of book that gives the inside story of four former Mormons who are now Christian academics. Each tells how they came to understand the Good News of God’s grace, what sort of questions and challenges—intellectual, emotional, personal and professional—they faced, and how they integrated their academic work with their new Christian faith. There is great wisdom for academics, young and old, who are also navigating this difficult transition.” —Ken Mulholland, Ph.D. President, Western Institute for Intercultural Studies, Former President, Salt Lake Theological Seminary
“For anyone with family, friends, or contact with Mormons and the LDS movement, many questions arise. If you are from a traditional or conservative Christian background, you find yourself struggling to reconcile the claims made by those within Mormonism with what the Bible and historic Christianity both teach and claim. Despite the insistence that we are all talking about Christian thought and ideas, as soon as one explores, compares, and considers carefully the actual claims of Christ, they stand in stark contrast to LDS teaching and claims. We are compelled to ask what is the truth? This unique volume is not only written by former “insiders”, who were all in their respective ways committed, but also by a group of deep thinkers who have taken the time to investigate and compare truth claims. Their histories, experiences, and education are all brought to bear on whether or not Mormon teaching is true, accurate, and reliable. As a resource to individuals, churches, or study groups, who will have to read carefully and thoroughly, this is a great tool. I learned much already from the insider view and experience which is a vital part of this work, as the ideas and teachings are rooted in a very demanding culture. I believe it deserves to be widely read, especially by those impacted or influenced by LDS teachings. It makes the Gospel clear by its amazing contrast. May that grace touch many as a result of this work.” —Stuart McAllister, D.D. Ravi Zacharias International Ministries
“Leaving Mormonism’ today all too often means rejecting Christianity entirely in the mistaken belief that if Mormonism isn’t true then no form of Christian faith is true. In Leaving Mormonism, four Christian scholars, each of whom also happens to be a former Mormon, show that faith in Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the Bible is intellectually and spiritually viable for disillusioned Latter-day Saints. The authors combine their authentic personal stories with scholarly analysis of critical issues and are not afraid to point out how evangelicals have sometimes failed to engage Mormons in a constructive manner. There is much for everyone to learn from this book.” —Robert M. Bowman Jr., Ph.D. Executive Director, Institute for Religious Research

“Leaving Mormonism provides a charitable and critical analysis of Mormonism by former Mormons who each reflect on their own stories of leaving the LDS Church and their reasons for embracing the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. The volume spans across the breadth of Mormon theology, plumbs into the depths of Mormon experience, and crosses through some of the murky waters that so many former Mormons have to navigate. Readers will be encouraged and challenged by the unique expressions of anecdote, testimony, and renewed faith.” —John Anthony Dunne, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of New Testament, Bethel Seminary
“This book makes a noteworthy contribution to the ongoing academic dialog between Latter-day Saints and evangelical Christians. Even though former Mormons offer a unique perspective to that dialog—as their life experience bridges the gap between both sides— their voice has been missing from that conversation from the start. But this is not just an academic work. It is a stirring combination of inspiring personal stories told by people with warm hearts and vibrant souls as well as sharp minds.” —Ross Anderson, D.Min. Teaching Pastor, Alpine Church, UT

“I’ve read and highly recommend Leaving Mormonism: Why Four Scholars Changed their Minds. As a Pastor in Utah we have a shortage of reliable resources that we can recommend without hesitation to those who are leaving Mormonism and making their way into Gospel Christianity. This is at the top of my list for that kind of resource. Because the greatest factor in ministering to former Mormons is trust, I’m grateful that we can partner with the authors in providing ‘trustworthy’ reading for our people.” —Paul Robie, D.Min. Lead Pastor, South Mountain Community Church, UT

“A one of a kind book blending powerful personal testimonies with persuasive reasons for the truth and goodness of Christianity and the falsity of the Mormon faith. Written with compassion, charity, and courage, this will be the go-to book for those interested in Christian-Mormon dialogue for years to come.” —Paul M. Gould, Ph.D. Associate
Professor of Philosophy and Christian Apologetics, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Leaving Mormonism is a unique book that combines both personal stories and first-rate scholarship. Regardless of where you are on your spiritual journey, you will be challenged and equipped by reading and studying this book.” —Sean McDowell, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Apologetics, Biola University

“Most who leave Mormonism leave faith altogether. With this understanding, Leaving Mormonism stands as a book like no other on this subject. Scholars formerly from within the ranks of the LDS community share not only their reasons for leaving Mormonism, but also the evidence for turning to the Christ of the New Testament.” —Steve Crane, D.Min. Senior Minister, Eagle Christian Church, ID

FOREWORD BY STEVE FULLER

THEISTIC EVOLUTION
A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique

Edited by
J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer,
Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger,
and Wayne Grudem
I have written many times during our ongoing series of Book Reviews that “you should buy this book.” I meant what I wrote about those previous books, but “you really should buy this book!” – *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique* (Crossway, 2017).

I was a strong Darwinian evolutionist in the 1960’s and saw no reason to believe in the existence of a “creator god” because science had “proven” one was not needed. So, it was scientific arguments for “creator/designer theism” that first caught my attention as a hard-core atheist. I followed the evidence from science to philosophy to historical to textual evidence and determined that the God of the Bible existed, that the Bible is a credible historical document, and that Jesus Christ came from Heaven to earth to offer us the gift of eternal life.

I benefited greatly from meeting Christians who presented me with scientific evidence for the designer God who created the Heavens and the earth. I have continued to read both sides of the argument since becoming a Christian and to stay up with relevant scientific discoveries and arguments.

However, there are Christians who believe the scientific evidence doesn’t support theistic creation and that’s what this new tome (1,008 pages!) addresses. Given the importance of this topic to my own conversion from atheism to Christianity, the conversion of many other former atheists, and the future conversion of non-believers, I view this new book of “vital” importance in the ongoing discussion about God and science.
One of the benefits of the book to many will be that the great number of arguments and evidence are located in one volume. The authors carefully reference quotes and materials, so conducting further investigation is made easier for Christian and non-Christian readers alike.

The Authors

The lineup of authors for Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique is outstanding:

Science

Stephen C. Meyer: former geophysicist and philosophy professor at Whitworth University, now directs Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture in Seattle

Douglas D. Axe: Director of Biologic Institute, a founding editor of BIO-Complexity, and the author of Undeniable—How Biology Confirms Our Intuition that Life Is Designed

Matti Leisola: professor emeritus of bioprocess engineering at Aalto University
James M. Tour: synthetic organic chemist, is presently the T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Chemistry, professor of computer science, and professor of materials science and nanoengineering at Rice University

Winston Ewert: intelligent design researcher and software engineer


Ann K. Gauger: Director of science communication at the Discovery Institute, and senior research scientist at Biologic Institute in Seattle

Paul A. Nelson: fellow of the Discovery Institute, and an adjunct professor for Biola University’s MA program in Science and Religion

Sheena Tyler: research director of the John Ray Research Field Station, current research interests and publications include aspects of bioelectric fields in morphogenesis and wound healing, egg surface structure, avian development, solar-electric power, and the biology of cork

Günter Bechly: paleontologist and senior research scientist at Biologic Institute
Casey Luskin: PhD student in science and an attorney

Ola Hössjer: professor of mathematical statistics at Lund University in 2000, has held the same position at Stockholm University since 2002
Colin R. Reeves: professor emeritus of operational research at Coventry University in the UK

Christopher Shaw: has held the positions of lecturer, reader, and professor in Queen’s University, Faculty of Medicine, and of professor of biotechnology in the University of Ulster, currently professor of drug discovery in the School of Pharmacy, Queen’s University

Philosophy

J. P. Moreland: distinguished professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University in La Mirada, California

Stephen C. Meyer: (see above)

Paul A. Nelson: (see above)

Stephen Dilley: associate professor of philosophy at St. Edward’s University in Austin, Texas
C. John Collins: professor of Old Testament at Covenant Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri

Garrett J. DeWeese: professor at large, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

Colin R. Reeves: (see above)

Tapio Puolimatka: professor of educational theory and tradition at the University of Jyvaskyla and adjunct professor of practical philosophy at the University of Helsinki, Finland

John G. West: vice president of Discovery Institute and associate director of the Institute's Center for Science and Culture, which he cofounded with Stephen C. Meyer

Theology

Wayne Grudem: research professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary

John D. Currid: Carl McMurray Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina
Guy Prentiss Waters: James M. Baird Jr. Professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi

Gregg R. Allison: professor of Christian theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky

Fred G. Zaspel: pastor of Reformed Baptist Church of Franconia, Pennsylvania, executive editor at Books at a Glance and associate professor of Christian theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

**The Book**

The book is a scientific, philosophical, and theological critique of “theistic evolution,” so it would be helpful to know the definition of what the book critiques.

“God created matter and after that did not guide or intervene or act directly to cause any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter until all living things had evolved by purely natural processes.” Editors

“The model for divinely guided evolution that we are proposing here thus requires no ‘intrusions from outside’ for its account of God’s creative process, except for the origins of the natural laws guiding the process.” Theistic evolutionists – Karl Giberson and Francis Collins
What do theistic evolutionists mean when they speak about “evolution”?

“Some proponents of theistic evolution openly affirm that the evolutionary process is an unguided, undirected process. Kenneth Miller, a leading theistic evolutionist and author of Finding Darwin’s God has repeatedly stated in editions of his popular textbook that ‘evolution works without either plan or purpose. . . . Evolution is random and undirected.’ Nevertheless, most theistic evolutionists, including geneticist Francis Collins, perhaps the world’s best-known proponent of the position, have been reluctant to clarify what they think about this important issue. In his book The Language of God, Collins makes clear his support for universal common descent. He also seems to assume the adequacy of standard evolutionary mechanisms but does not clearly say whether he thinks those mechanisms.” Scientific and Philosophical Introduction, Stephen C. Meyer, p 42
I especially enjoyed how the authors summarize each chapter and section. That is most helpful in developing an understanding of the issues. Here’s one example –

“In chapters 14 through 16 we have shown that,

• The fossil evidence shows an absence of intermediates between ape-like fossils and human ones, indicating that the story told by evolutionists of a well-documented continuous bridge between the two is false.

• The genetic evidence shows there are many more uniquely human elements in our genome than are commonly ascribed to it, significantly more than the oft-quoted 1 percent genetic difference between chimpanzees and us.

• Many of these elements come from what used to be called junk DNA, but are now thought to be functionally significant.

• There isn’t enough time for all these differences to have been selected and fixed in the ancestral human population by purely natural means.

• Population genetics models that say we had to come from an original population of thousands rather than two are subject to question, and can be tested against an alternative model starting with just two first parents. Taken together, our argument leads to the conclusion that it is un warranted to discard traditional interpretations of our origin.” Chapter 16
Another example –

“SUMMARY. People of faith should reject the call to affirm the Darwinian explanation of life and should instead affirm the traditional understanding of divine creative action, which defies reduction to natural causes. There are three good reasons for this. (1) Acceptance of Darwinism carries a substantial apologetic cost. Specifically, if Darwin was right that life can be explained by accidental physical causes, then we must forfeit the claim that all humans are confronted by God’s existence when we behold the wonders of the living world. (2) All accidental explanations of life, whether Darwinian or not, are demonstrably implausible. (3) The common justifications for accommodating Darwin’s theory within the framework of traditional faith are confused.” Chapter 1, Three Good Reasons for People of Faith to Reject Darwin’s Explanation of Life, Douglas D. Axe, p 83

As I wrote at the beginning of this review – “Buy this book!” It may be the best one-volume guide to understanding the scientific, philosophical, and theological reasons for rejecting theistic evolution.
Endorsements

“This volume fills a wide and expanding gap for Christians who continue to struggle with the relationship of evangelical Christianity to the claims of science. Specifically, for those who have rightly rejected the claims of unguided evolution, this book takes on the similar challenge of the possibility of theistic evolution. Scholarly, informative, well-researched, and well-argued, this will be the best place to begin to ferret out reasons for conflict among Christians who take science seriously. I highly recommend this resource.” K. Scott Oliphint, Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology and Dean of Faculty, Westminster Theological Seminary

“Theistic evolution means different things to different people. This book carefully identifies, and thoroughly debunks, an insidious, all-too-commonly accepted sense of the phrase even among Christians: that there is no physical reason to suspect life was designed, and that evolution proceeded in the unguided, unplanned manner Darwin himself championed.” Michael J. Behe, Professor of Biological Sciences, Lehigh University; author, *Darwin’s Black Box* and *The Edge of Evolution*

“Evangelicals are experiencing unprecedented pressure to make peace with the Darwinian theory of evolution, and increasing numbers are waving the white flag. The tragic irony is that evolutionary theory is more beleaguered than ever in the face of multiplying scien- tific challenges and growing dissent. Until now there has been no consolidated scholarly
response to theistic evolution that combines scientific, philosophical, and theological critiques. I was excited to hear about this ambitious project, but the final book has exceeded my expectations. The editors have assembled an impressive cast of experts and the content is top-notch. Theistic evolutionists, and those swayed by their arguments, owe it to themselves to read and digest this compendium of essays. This book is timely and necessary—quite literally a godsend.” James N. Anderson, Associate Professor of Theology and Philosophy, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte; author, What’s Your Worldview?

“Repeating the error of medieval Christianity, theistic evolution absolutizes the words of finite, fallible humans and relativizes the Word of an infinite, infallible God. As this tremendous and timely collection thoroughly demonstrates, scientific stagnation, circular philosophy, and heterodox theology are the inevitable results. This is simply the best critique of theistic evolution available.” Angus Menuge, Chair of Philosophy, Concordia University Wisconsin; President, Evangelical Philosophical Society; author, Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science; Editor, Reading God’s World: The Scientific Vocation

“This significant book persuasively argues that theistic evolution fails as a theory—scientifically, philosophically, and biblically. And with its broad-ranging collection of essays, it mounts a very impressive case. Strongly recommended, both for those who seek to defend Christianity intelligently and for those who find Christianity implausible because of
the claims of neo-Darwinism.” Michael Reeves, President and Professor of Theology, Union School of Theology

“The theistic evolution solution to the creation-evolution controversy herein encounters a substantial, sustained, and trenchant critique. The team of scientific, philosophical, and theological scholars assembled by the editors have joined to confront the venerable theory with a stinging challenge that its adherents will have to answer if they value their scholarly integrity. This is necessary reading for those who wrestle with the great questions surrounding the origins of life.” Peter A. Lillback, President, Westminster Theological Seminary

“The theory of theistic evolution is certainly not new. But as a vigorous antagonist to evangelical Christianity, it has leaped to new life on the cultural stage. Most Christians have the sense to reject the evolutionary model of Darwin with its pronounced atheism, but they are sometimes intrigued by the possibility of theistic evolution. In this book, evangelical believers are treated to a serious assessment of the claims of theistic evolution at the hands of some of the greatest thinkers God has ever given to the church. These assessments are thorough, exciting, and support the biblical creation story in unique and new ways. If you intend to read only one volume to bring you up to date on cultural challenges to Christianity, this book is the one you need to read.” Paige Patterson, President, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
“This landmark achievement contains an amazing collection of chapters by a powerful group of fully qualified experts in molecular biology, mathematics, philosophy, and theology. The chapters are clear, detailed in addressing all aspects of theistic evolution, and of a tone in keeping with 1 Peter 3:15: ‘with gentleness and respect.’ I consider this a must-have book for any Christian who wants to be able to give compelling answers to others who believe in theistic evolution.” Richard A. Carhart, Professor Emeritus of Physics, University of Illinois at Chicago

“This book offers a much-needed, comprehensive critique of evolutionary creationism (theistic evolution), covering its scientific, philosophical, theological, and biblical deficiencies. It devotes much space in particular to the scientific side. This focus is needed because of the common, unwarranted assumption that Darwinism is doing well as measured by scientific evidence. Several articles, from different angles, show how much Darwinism depends on seeing all biological evidence through the lens of a prior commitment to faith in the philosophy of naturalism—particularly the ungrounded assumption that unguided natural forces must suffice as a complete account of origins.” Vern S. Poythress, Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Westminster Theological Seminary
“‘In wisdom you have made them all,’ says the psalmist of God’s activities in nature (Ps. 104:24). But believers today, often blinded by modern science, fail to see that divine wisdom. This valuable volume challenges the assumptions of much scientific endeavor and proposes a fresh paradigm that is open to God’s involvement in nature. It deserves a wide and thoughtful readership.” Gordon Wenham, Emeritus Professor of Old Testament, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

“Few scholars even marginally knowledgeable regarding the nature of this debate could read objectively the lineup of scholars in this volume and not be impressed. Beyond the scholars’ academic credentials, the topics covered are both sophisticated and timely. For this reviewer, the experience caused me to respond time and again: ‘I want to start right there . . . or maybe there . . . wow—have to read that one first . . .’ The topic is not always an easy target, but after almost one thousand pages of critique across interdisciplinary lines, I do not think that it could be bettered. Kudos! Highly recommended.” Gary R. Habermas, Distinguished Research Professor and Chair, Department of Philosophy, Liberty University

“As the debate over the origins of the universe, earth, and humans continues, and Christians grapple to understand the relationship between science and Scripture, evolution and creation, the voices in this book need to be heard. Scientific data need not be in opposition to what the Bible teaches about God and his world. The big questions about life are simply beyond the reach of ‘objective’ analysis. This volume critiques
theologically and philosophically the flaws of positions that marginalize God from the process.” James Hoffmeier, Professor of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern History and Archaeology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“Theistic Evolution is a carefully crafted, academically sophisticated interdisciplinary challenge to the attempt to wed Christian theism to any version of the Darwinian project. I am awed by its scope and by the magnificent success of its intentions. Whether your interest is in the scientific deficiencies, the philosophical failings, or the theological dangers of Darwinism hitched to theism, look no further than this thorough analysis. Theistic Evolution is simply the most comprehensive and convincing critique of the topic I’ve ever read—a singular resource for careful thinkers—replacing a dozen books on my shelf.” Gregory Koukl, President, Stand to Reason; author, Tactics and The Story of Reality

“An increasing number of evangelicals are advocating theistic evolution as the best explanation of human origins, thereby denying the special creation of a historical Adam. Without taking any specific view as to the age to the earth, this important new book demonstrates that theistic evolution fails to take proper account of Genesis 1–3 as a historical narrative. Leading scholars from a variety of academic disciplines argue that theistic evolution is exegetically ill-founded, theologically damaging, scientifically implausible, and philosophically unjustifiable. Written with an irenic tone toward those it critiques, this book will help guard against false teaching in the church that undermines the gospel and will also
provide apologetic help for confident evangelism in a secular world.”

John Stevens, National Director, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, United Kingdom

“With the ‘death of God’ and the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ having captured the academy decades ago, the apologetic discussion moved decisively to the nature and origin of human beings. With this volume, the editors and contributors to Theistic Evolution have given us an important and much-needed resource for the conversation currently taking place within evangelicalism. Comprehensive in its breadth, specific in its critique, and confidently nuanced in its tone, each chapter contributes to a thorough rebuttal of the idea that theistic evolution is compatible with either historic Christian faith, sound reasoning, or rigorous science. But while written by specialists, Theistic Evolution is remarkably approachable to the average reader. I highly recommend this volume to students, pastors, educators, and anyone else who cares deeply about the discussion of human origins. This is a major contribution to one of the most important debates of our time.”

Michael Lawrence, Senior Pastor, Hinson Baptist Church, Portland, Oregon; author, Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church

“This volume is the most comprehensive study on the relation between evolution and Christian faith I have discovered so far. While opening up fascinating firsthand insights into cutting-edge scientific results, at the same time the book treats the reader to a bird’s-eye view, asking the fundamental philosophical and theological questions and delving into the underlying worldview assumptions. It provides a very substantial
contribution to the ever-ongoing dispute between naturalism and Christian faith in the areas of philosophy, theology, and the sciences.” Alexander Fink, Director, Institute for Faith and Sciences, Marburg, Germany

“Essentially, theistic evolution says Charles Darwin and Richard Dawkins got the science right, but that God is still somehow involved. Putting this view into the crosshairs, this book argues convincingly that the science of evolution is in fact wrong, and that any theistic gloss one puts on it is thus doubly wrong.” William A. Dembski, Former Senior Fellow, Discovery Institute; author, Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology; The Design Revolution; and Intelligent Design Uncensored

“Theistic Evolution is a major contribution to the very lively debate of exactly how to understand the ‘data’ from God’s revelation of himself in his Word with the ‘data’ from his revelation of himself in his world. Previous contributions to this debate have generally focused on the data from either science or Scripture. Theistic Evolution benefits from its comprehensive analysis from theologians, philosophers, and scientists in the same book. Whatever are your current views, Theistic Evolution will provide analysis from some of the most prominent critics in this conversation that should be helpful to people on both sides of this debate.” Walter Bradley, Former Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Baylor University
“The question of origins rarely fails to attract interest, not least because it is overloaded with worldview implications. For too long the increasingly shaky modern ‘Darwinian’ synthesis has been accommodated into theological thinking. This remarkable book exposes how scientifically and philosophically preposterous the notion of theistic evolution really is. An authoritative and vital contribution to the topic!” David J. Galloway, President, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow; Honorary Professor, College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, University of Glasgow

**Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique** (Crossway, 2017, 1008 pages)

[We received an electronic review copy from Crossway]