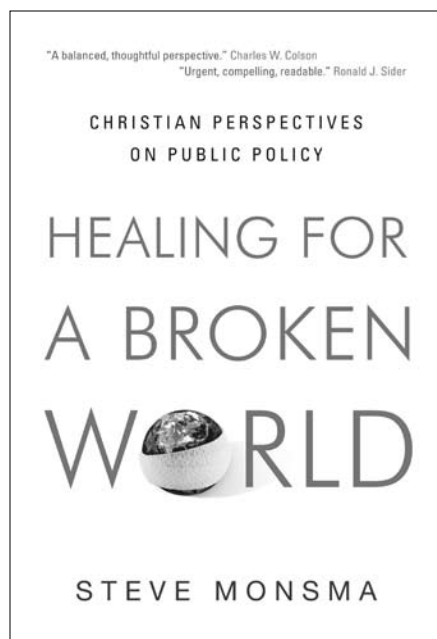


# THE BOOK REPORT

WINTER/  
SPRING 2008

## NEW BOOK INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS UPDATE FROM CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES

Crossway Books & Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers • 1300 Crescent St., Wheaton, IL 60187 • 800.323.3890 • www.crossway.org



### Healing for a Broken World

*Christian Perspectives on Public Policy*

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-961-0, 224 pages, \$16.99

**STEVE MONSMA** is a senior research fellow at the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College and professor emeritus of political science at Pepperdine University. He has published widely in the fields of church-state relations and faith-based nonprofit organizations.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** In the public policy arena, Christians are known for their stance against abortion and same-sex marriage, but what should we be known for?

**STEVE MONSMA (SM):** The problem is not that we are known for our stance against abortion and same-sex marriage but that too often they are all we are known for. When our positions on public policy issues are truly guided by God's Word, we will continue to be against abortion and same-sex marriage, but we will also—by our actions as individuals and churches and

by the public policies we support—favor the protection of God's creation, oppose the extinction of species God created, offer help to those whose lives are mired in poverty and who are suffering from HIV/AIDS and other threatening diseases, oppose religious persecution wherever it is taking place, and more. And our opposition to abortion will be bracketed by offering help to young girls and women experiencing problem pregnancies and single mothers who have chosen to give birth and now struggle to raise a child alone.

**CBB:** Why is this book especially timely in 2008—an election year?

**SM:** Every election year candidates for public office appeal to our biases and to our self-interest. My book seeks to give us a defense against such appeals. All of us have certain political biases, or predispositions, based on our family background, the area of the country we grew up in, and our educational and income levels. It's easy to unthinkingly follow these predispositions—and politicians will do their best to appeal to them. They will also appeal to our self-interest: tax cuts for many, jobs for the unemployed, government contracts for certain industries, subsidies for farmers, grants for economically depressed areas, and on and on. Few will talk about justice for all or the common good. Yet a biblical perspective will direct our thoughts, not first of all to us and our own personal welfare, but to the welfare of our neighbors and of our society as a whole. It will lead us to ask what candidates are supporting policies that will bring greater justice to rich and poor, to worker and employer, to citizen and alien, to inner city resident and suburbanite—and to base our votes on their answers.

**CBB:** What can we learn from William Wilberforce about the difference between being a good citizen and a good *Christian* citizen?

**SM:** A good citizen will obey the law, vote, and contribute in other ways to his or her community. But for a good Christian citizen, the direction of all of this will grow out of his or her walk with Christ and a mind that has been renewed by Christ (Rom. 12:2). William Wilberforce can serve as an example. He was used by God for much good in his day, first, because his life as a member of the British House of Commons and his life with Christ were one, and, second, because he decided what causes to support only after much thought, study, prayer, and discussions with fellow Christians. Both were crucial to him and should be to us today in our lives and thinking as Christian citizens.

**CBB:** How is government a part of God's provision for his world?

**SM:** Both the Bible and our experience testify that government is indeed a part of God's kindly provision for a world that, since the fall of Adam and Eve, is broken by sin. Paul in Romans writes that the one who governs "is God's servant for your good. . . . He is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer" (Rom. 13:4). Other passages of Scripture carry a similar message. And experience can also instruct us. Look at Iraq and what happened there when we removed Saddam Hussein's existing government, as evil as it was, and no effective government replaced it. A breakdown of order and horrendous bloodshed resulted. History has often taught us this same lesson.

**CBB:** What qualifies you to write this book?

**SM:** God has blessed me with an education

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and a lifetime of experiences that, while not qualifying me to pronounce the exact public policies our government ought to pursue, do enable me to point out some basic biblical principles that should guide our lives as citizens, and to illustrate how they can and should be used to better understand the issues we as Christian citizens face today. I have a PhD in political science, and I studied political science at three different institutions (evangelical, Catholic, and secular). But more importantly and more helpfully, I taught political science for twenty-eight years, interacting with, teaching, and learning from my students; and for twelve years I was active full-time in the political arena myself: as a state representative and senator in Michigan for eight years and for an additional four years as an appointee of the governor in two executive branch departments. I have often said that I ought to be granted a second PhD in political science from my years in active politics—I learned as much, and maybe more, during those years as I did in the classroom!

**CBB:** What do you see as the key public policy questions facing our world today?

**SM:** There are, of course, many I could mention, but the four I would put at the top of my list are as follows (not necessarily in order of importance). One is the enormous problems of disease and poverty facing Africa today. Some 2 million persons are dying of AIDS every year; 800,000—mostly children and pregnant mothers—are dying from malaria. And poverty seems overwhelming. Yet Africa is also the continent where the church is growing faster than any other place on earth. We need to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ as they deal with great challenges—and we need to urge our government to do all it can to help.

A second problem is continuing poverty here at home. Often the poor seem to fall between those who advocate more “handouts” and those who ignore their needs. Creative public policies are needed that offer genuine opportunities to the poor to move into jobs that pay enough to support them and their families. No one can read the Bible with a discerning mind and not come away convinced that Christ calls his followers to have a deep concern for the poor—and to act on that concern.

A third crucial issue is proper care for God’s creation. People are dying from diseases resulting from man-made pollutants; plants and animals God created, and in which he takes delight, are being driven to extinction by our actions; and the earth is warming—most likely from human actions—with unknown but negative consequences. A concern for what God has created, and for our fellow human beings of this and future generations, counsels an urgent, persistent effort by Christians to change what is occurring today.

Fourth, I must mention abortion and the horror of thousands—even millions, if one takes a global perspective—of unborn children who are never allowed to take their first breath or to fulfill the purposes God intends for all his image bearers. If justice means anything, it means governments should protect pre-birth human beings.

“A concern for what God has created, and for our fellow human beings of this and future generations, counsels an urgent, persistent effort by Christians to change what is occurring today.”

~Steve Monsma

**CBB:** You describe three traps Christians need to avoid. What are they?

**SM:** One trap is the misguided effort trap. When Christians become actively involved in public policy issues, whether as citizens and voters or in more active forms, there is the danger we will take the wrong position on the issues of the day, or will focus on issues of secondary importance while ignoring more weighty ones. Another one is the Christian nation trap. This is to assume that the chief reason for Christians to become involved as citizens is to use the force of law to impose Christian standards of morality and symbols onto our nation, and that as we do so, God will bless America in a special way. In the Old Testament God indeed worked through a special people he had called: the Israelites. But today’s equivalent of Old Testament

Israel is not the United States or any other nation, but it is the church, which knows no national, racial, or geographic boundaries. A third trap is the trap of despair—viewing government and its leaders as so fallible, and perhaps so corrupt, and the problems we face as so deep-seated, that we come to believe that trying to improve our nation or our world by way of public policies is hopeless. But we need to remind ourselves that God, not evil, is in charge; Christ has come, and his redeeming, saving work is ongoing.

**CBB:** Who are the “new evangelicals,” and what do they bring to the table?

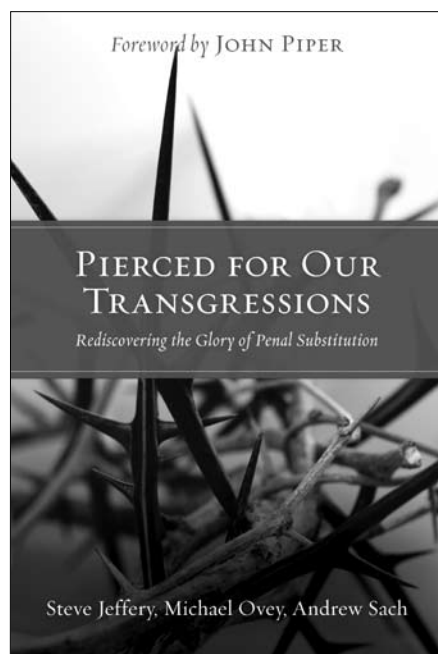
**SM:** Something very important and, I believe, very encouraging is happening among evangelicals today. “New evangelicals” is a term that is being used to describe many evangelicals who, while not giving way on bedrock issues such as abortion, are recognizing that God’s Word speaks to a host of other issues. Poverty, HIV/AIDS, creation care, religious persecution, sex trafficking, prison reform, and more are coming to be seen as vital issues about which the Bible speaks and about which we should care deeply. And these “new evangelicals” are not always taking predictably right-wing stances on these issues. They are committed to a limited role for government in dealing with such issues, but they also recognize that sometimes we do need to call on government, an institution God intends to help limit evil and work for greater justice in our broken world. The exciting thing is that these “new evangelicals” are not merely lurching from the political right to the political left—something we have seen too much of in the past—but are seeking to stake out their own positions, guided by a worldview rooted in Scripture. My hope is that my book may help Christians as they seek new paths that neither the political left nor the political right is now promoting.

**CBB:** How do you envision churches using this book?

**SM:** It’s ideal for use in church classes and small group discussion sessions. It is divided into twelve chapters of about fourteen pages each, so they are easy for people hard-pressed for time to read. Many examples are used throughout in order to make the ideas in the

book concrete and easy to understand. Each chapter ends with four or five discussion questions that will stimulate discussion. There is also a video available, and it has a ten-minute introduction to each chapter, which makes the book even more useful in church discussion groups and classes.

To obtain a copy of the DVD, go to [www.calvin.edu/henry](http://www.calvin.edu/henry) or [www.crossway.org](http://www.crossway.org).



### **Pierced for Our Transgressions**

*Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*

TPB, ISBN 978-1-4335-0108-1, 384 pages, \$25.00

**STEVE JEFFERY** is studying theology at Oak Hill Theological College, London, in preparation for full-time Christian ministry. He earned a PhD in physics from Oxford University.

**MICHAEL OVEY** is principal-designate of Oak Hill Theological College. He holds a PhD in Trinitarian theology from King's College, London.

**ANDREW SACH** studied theology at Oak Hill Theological College and is now on the staff of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, in central London. He received his PhD from York University.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** How do you define the doctrine of penal substitution in this book?

**STEVE JEFFERY (SJ):** The doctrine of penal substitution states that God gave himself in the person of his Son to suffer, instead of us, the death, punishment, and curse due to fallen humanity as the penalty for sin. Jesus' death

was "penal"—he suffered the penalty for sin; and it was a "substitution"—he died instead of us.

**CBB:** What do you consider to be the "glory" of penal substitution, and why do we need to rediscover it?

**SJ:** Penal substitution lies right at the heart of the gospel. It is the ultimate demonstration of God's love, and it provides the answer to the greatest human problem—God's wrath at rebellious people. It is intricately connected to numerous other vital biblical themes, including the doctrines of sin, the Trinity, and God's justice. It lies at the turning-point of God's plan to redeem and glorify his creation. All this, and much more besides, will be lost if we abandon this glorious doctrine.

**CBB:** There are many books available that defend this doctrine. How is yours distinct?

**SJ:** Mike, Andrew, and I have benefited greatly from the work of great men like J. I. Packer and Leon Morris. However, it nonetheless seemed that there was a gap in the literature. We wanted to write a book that could be understood by people without formal theological training, but which was still substantial enough to treat the subject in detail. We wanted to bring to a popular audience some theological and historical material that has remained buried in theological libraries for a long time. And, most importantly, we wanted to give the church the resources to respond to the contemporary criticisms of the doctrine by tackling head-on every objection that we could find. The whole of Part II is written in this objection-response format.

**CBB:** What are some of those contemporary criticisms, and what underlies recent evangelical criticism of the teaching of this doctrine?

**SJ:** The criticisms that have been leveled against penal substitution are numerous. Some of the most common contemporary objections include these: it fails to address the social and political consequences of sin; it entails the unjust punishment of an innocent man; it is just a "model" of the atonement, inappropriate to the contemporary world; and even that it amounts to "cosmic child abuse." Some of the criticism seems to stem

from serious theological misunderstandings. For example, the claim that penal substitution entails the punishment of an innocent man completely ignores the pivotal (though neglected) doctrine of union with Christ. Others, like the "child abuse" slur, are simply cheap shots at caricatures of the biblical doctrine. However, there were some more cogent criticisms, which for many years have been gathering pace in the liberal scholarly academy, such as the claim that the vocabulary of "atonement," so prominent in Leviticus, does not have the propitiatory overtones traditionally recognized by evangelicals. A far more sophisticated response was needed to address these concerns, and so we interact with each of them in the book.

**CBB:** How widespread is the dissension among evangelicals on this topic?

**SJ:** It seems fairly widespread, although that may be in part because of the dilution of "evangelicalism" in recent years. Many people who today identify themselves as "evangelical" would have been (rightly) described as liberals just a generation ago. On the positive side, we have been greatly encouraged by the strong expressions of support for the doctrine from many different sectors of evangelicalism.

**CBB:** How does engaging the objections of your critics help readers?

**SJ:** As a basic act of Christian charity and respect, we wanted to take critics of penal substitution seriously. Every objection deserves a response. We hope and pray that some who have felt uncomfortable with penal substitution will find their concerns allayed and their objections answered. We also wanted to encourage faithful believers who have been unsettled by contemporary criticisms of the doctrine, and to embolden them to respond in an informed way.

**CBB:** How does church history factor into your theme?

**SJ:** There's a myth going around that penal substitution was a late addition to the pages of Christian history, unknown in the early church. This objection has gained credence from two standard works on historical theology, Grensted and Bethune-Baker, which take precisely this view. Most Christians lack access to primary patristic texts and are

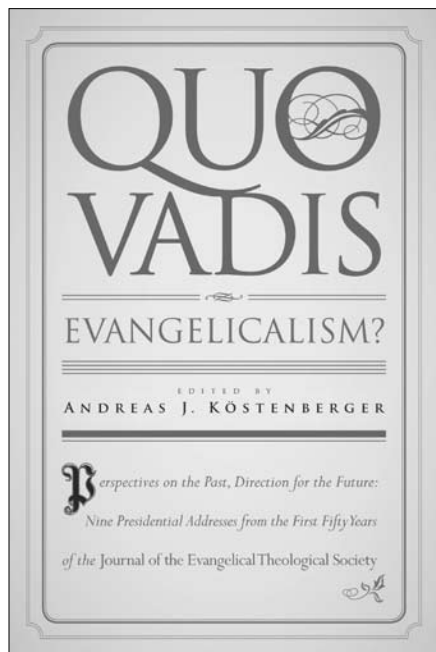
therefore unable to respond adequately. We decided to go back to the sources, and we discovered that penal substitution was clearly taught from the earliest days of the Christian church. We hope this gives confidence to contemporary Christians—penal substitution is not a theological innovation.

**CBB:** What’s your response to those who say that the violence involved in penal substitution amounts to “cosmic child abuse”?

**SJ:** In a climate where so many children are subjected to appalling mistreatment, it’s hard to imagine a more emotionally charged objection. We don’t want to raise the temperature with an equally emotional response. However, we must insist that Christ’s death simply was not a form of child abuse. Child abuse is perpetrated against the will of the victim, for the sole gratification of the abuser. By contrast, Christ died willingly (John 10:17–18), in order to bring glory to himself (John 17:1). The difference could hardly be greater.

**CBB:** Why include a personal note to preachers in the Appendix?

**SJ:** All three of us preach regularly and are therefore acutely aware of the pressures that preachers face. We wanted to help in this awesome task of laying spiritual food before the people of God. D. A. Carson and Garry Williams, two contemporary advocates of penal substitution, have observed that some illustrations common in sermons could easily lead to misunderstanding of penal substitution, and hence to criticism of the doctrine. We wanted to help preachers in their ministry by suggesting ways in which this problem might be avoided. The church is where the action is, and preachers are right at the heart of it. We want the book to be a resource for the men on the front line.



### Quo Vadis, Evangelicalism?

*Perspectives on the Past, Direction for the Future: Nine Presidential Addresses from the First Fifty Years of the “Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society”*

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-968-9, 240 pages, \$22.00

**ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER** is director of PhD studies and professor of New Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He is also the editor of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, as well as the author or editor of numerous books, including *God, Marriage & Family and Whatever Happened to Truth?*—both published by Crossway.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** Tell us a little bit about how this volume was conceived.

**ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER (AK):** The fifty-year anniversary of the publication of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* seemed a fitting occasion to celebrate with a special volume showcasing the importance of the *Journal* in the life of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS). ETS, of course, is the major evangelical scholarly society in the United States, and so the idea was born to trace the development of the evangelical movement by featuring several selected ETS presidential addresses on the topic of “evangelical identity.” The purpose for this is not merely archival—chronicling the past—but forward-looking as well. In the conviction that we can learn from the past in order to understand our own identity as evangelicals better in the present and move into the fu-

ture, these presidential addresses are important “guiding visions” that shed light on where we have been, where we are, and where we should be going.

**CBB:** Which criteria did you use in selecting the nine presidential addresses that are included in *Quo Vadis*?

**AK:** Once “evangelical identity” was chosen as the guiding theme of the book, selecting the nine presidential addresses was comparatively straightforward. There were about fifty presidential addresses to choose from, and many of these addresses, though excellent, were on other subjects. An example of this is Carl F. H. Henry’s presidential address on the topic of justification. In the end, the nine presidential addresses that were selected fell nicely into three periods: “The Early Years” (1958–1970), “The Maturing Movement” (1971–1999), and “Recent Reflections” (2000–2007), with contributions by Ned Stonehouse, Warren Young, and Gordon Clark; Stan Gundry, Alan Johnson, and Moisés Silva; and Darrell Bock, Millard Erickson, and Craig Blaising respectively. While there are, of course, recurring themes such as a focus on, and a proper definition of, inerrancy, I was able to detect certain characteristics of the group of essays in a given period and to discern a certain progression from “the early years” to the “recent reflections” on evangelical identity as I edited these pieces.

**CBB:** What surprises did you encounter while preparing the volume? Is there anything you learned that you didn’t already know?

**AK:** Well, yes, there were several things I discovered that I didn’t already know, even though I have edited the *Journal* now for almost ten years. One of the things I learned was that several ETS presidential addresses were never published in the *Journal*! Examples of this are the addresses by Kenneth Kantzer and Gleason Archer. Several of these addresses would have been suitable for inclusion in the volume, so I did my best to locate them, but unfortunately I was unable to do so. Also, in my quest to find Carl F. H. Henry’s banquet address delivered at the very first meeting of the ETS, I came across

the volume *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, published in 1950, which still repays careful reading, even though it was not suitable for inclusion in *Quo Vadis?* since it is a 100-page manuscript in its own right.

**“I believe many who will read these essays will be surprised that they are not only insightful and worth pondering but also, in many cases, entertaining and spiritually nurturing.”**

~Andreas J. Köstenberger

**CBB:** What is your personal assessment of the future of evangelicalism?

**AK:** Good question. I talked about this in more depth in my ETS banquet address at the 2007 annual meeting in San Diego. The entire banquet program revolved around *Quo Vadis, Evangelicalism?* and featured addresses by Alan Johnson (representing Sam Schulz's tenure as *JETS* editor), Ronald Youngblood (who edited the *Journal* for twenty-three years), and me. This occasion also included the formal presentation of the volume by Crossway president Lane Dennis.

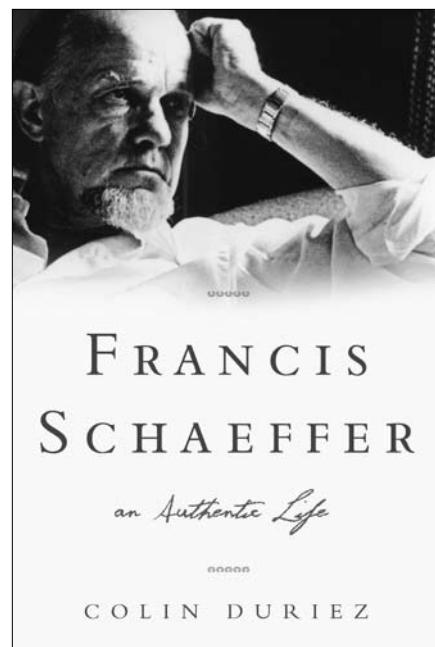
With regard to my assessment of the future of evangelicalism, this is hard to answer in one or two sentences! In short, I believe a building is only as strong as its foundation, and in my perusal of these ETS presidential addresses, it has become clear that a high view of Scripture, and inerrancy in particular, is a vital and distinctive foundation for our Society in particular and for our movement at large (though not everyone who identifies himself as an evangelical believes in inerrancy, which is an interesting question in its own right). At the same time, even the best of foundations still needs a building on top of it. So, as I think people will be able to see when reading the volume, ETS presidents have addressed the question of evangelical identity with increasing sophistication. We have also seen a change to a new generation of leaders in recent years, which has brought new approaches and ideas to the table. Personally, I think the future of evangelicalism can be

bright if we remember that God's kingdom includes people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. This means we must become more globally minded—"missional"—and willing to move beyond our own confines to have our ranks reflect more accurately the makeup of Christianity at large.

That said, evangelical scholarship should continue to strive for academic excellence. I, for one, think inerrancy is not a hindrance in this regard, but rather constitutes an indispensable foundation. For scholarship to be vibrant, however, I believe there must be a certain amount of freedom for new insights to be discussed, a theme that recurs as well in the presidential addresses included in *Quo Vadis?* Speaking in terms of scholarship, boundaries are vital, but not if they become a straitjacket that stifles academic work and engenders a spirit of fear and suspicion.

**CBB:** One final question: Who should buy and read *Quo Vadis, Evangelicalism?*

**AK:** I would recommend the book to anyone who is interested in evangelical identity—in who we are as evangelicals—and in the future of evangelicalism and Christianity in the United States and around the world. This includes pastors, seminary professors and students, and others committed to seeing the gospel spread to the ends of the earth for the glory of God. In fact, I believe many who will read these essays will be surprised that they are not only insightful and worth pondering but also, in many cases, entertaining and spiritually nurturing. I, for one, am grateful for these guiding visions of past ETS presidents and am looking forward to seeing what God will do in and through evangelicalism in the future.



**Francis Schaeffer**

*An Authentic Life*

**HC, ISBN 978-1-58134-857-6, 240 pages, \$24.99**

**COLIN DURIEZ** has appeared as a commentator on several mainstream documentaries, has authored biographies of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, and studied for several months under Francis Schaeffer in Swiss *L'Abri* before reading English and philosophy at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. He writes books, edits, and lectures.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** What is it that draws you to writing biographies on such Christian greats as J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and now Francis Schaeffer?

**COLIN DURIEZ (CD):** Christ has called his followers to be in the world yet distinct from it. Christians who retreat into a comfortable subculture become irrelevant in today's world. Lewis, Tolkien, Schaeffer, and other culture-shapers had the courage to engage and critique the contemporary world spirit by doing what they were best at in the best possible way—Tolkien and Lewis as scholars and storytellers, Schaeffer as pastor to those in the arts, media, and intellectual world, or broken by the world spirit. I admire them as people and that they made a difference—ironically, becoming relevant by following what seemed a backwater vision, walking the road less traveled.

**CBB:** What did you do to ensure an accurate and reasonably objective portrait of Schaeffer?

**CD:** Much of the existing telling of Schaeffer's

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life has been by immediate family members, mainly, Edith his wife, and his son Frank. Edith, of course, has lived a longer span, and recorded events as they happened, in letters or squirrel-like hoarded documents on which she based her books. Frank interpreted events very much from his own point of view, either via fiction or very subjective memoir. To have a more objective corrective, with the collaboration of Christopher and Paulette Catherwood, numerous people were interviewed who had known Schaeffer at different points in his life. In addition I interviewed his three daughters, whom Schaeffer succeeded in encouraging to become very independent in their thinking. I also made use of archive material, including Schaeffer's early writings no longer in print, as well as accounts of the separatist movement responding to the surge in theological liberalism, particularly in the '30s. Furthermore, I encountered Schaeffer and his teaching upon leaving high school, studied under him on several occasions in the later '60s, and kept in touch with him in later years. Many of my friends, some of whom became or were writers, artists, media people, or academics, were touched by his life and teaching. My research allowed me to continue to challenge my own memories and impressions in the light of what I discovered from others.

**CBB:** What strikes you as Schaeffer's greatest legacy to American evangelicalism? How has he most influenced you?

**CD:** His gift to American evangelicalism—and to the church worldwide—is his commitment to truth, to God, to the human, and to the physical environment in which God has placed us—the environment both of our immediate bodies and the material universe. As a pastor and evangelist he inculcated a listening attitude to those prepared to engage with his teaching: listening to others, and to the culture in which we find ourselves. This was listening for its own sake (because this is the proper thing to do), as well as in order to be able to communicate God's message and his love effectively and relevantly. The authenticity of his life, given his flaws and faults, powerfully backed up his teaching. He passionately lived what he believed, which made him simultaneously simple and complex.

He influenced me initially as a charismatic teacher, so that I began to see through his eyes while (as he wished) retaining my own voice and take on things. Then in later years, his presence in my thinking became a corrective to the all-pervasive influence of the modern world spirit. He also provided a theology of failure—a healthy corrective to triumphalism in the Christian arena, which seems to forget that the central problem of human life and endeavor is sin.

**“Believing in God as the Person behind all things made him consistently try to treat all people he encountered as bearing God's image and thus of enormous value.”**

~Colin Duriez

**CBB:** What about him allowed Schaeffer to influence people of all ages, cultures, economic levels, and educational backgrounds?

**CD:** Schaeffer was very aware of his shortcomings and imperfections. He was thoroughly authentic in attempting to live out as well as think rigorously and painstakingly about Christian truth and understanding (expressed in a distinctive worldview). He saw truth (both in theory and practice) as one truth, true to the real human being and to the real universe in which we find ourselves—true to the common experience of all people as humans. Believing in God as the Person behind all things made him consistently try to treat all people he encountered as bearing God's image and thus of enormous value. This wasn't done as an evangelistic strategy but because it was the right, proper, and truthful thing to do. Yet he was firstly a Christian pastor—this was his way of reaching out to what he felt was the crisis of modern, post-Christian humanity. Those he encountered tended to respond to his remarkable and inclusive pastoral concern.

**CBB:** What will surprise readers most about this complex man?

**CD:** Our cultural tendency is to surround

ourselves with mirrors rather than windows. In this biography I've tried to give an open window for the reader to look through. Many people see their own Schaeffer, or have only heard about him under a label—Schaeffer the fundamentalist, Schaeffer the founder and inspiration of L'Abri, Schaeffer the prophetic commentator on the contemporary world, Schaeffer the right-wing activist. Readers, I think, might well be surprised by the man himself as they get to know him more fully through this book. There is a consistency behind his work as it unfolded through much of the twentieth century, from his years as a youthful pastor in America. This consistency is explained by his growth and spiritual and intellectual struggles. It is the pilgrimage of a truly great Christian whose flaws and faults, as must be the case, were confronted and not denied—he lived an authentic life. In his life, I think, we can see the hand of God working in contemporary history, using as he does apparently ordinary and unremarkable people with extraordinary vision, in constantly unexpected ways.

**CBB:** Some writers have portrayed “two or three Schaeffers,” but you portray an undivided, though very complex, man. Why?

**CD:** Abstract labeling of Schaeffer has, I think, become too dominant in characterizing him, and also too parochial. Biography, like history, can and should make the abstract and general concrete—indeed, bring together the general and the particular. There is a strong continuity in all of Schaeffer's development as a person—from near failure at high school to earning a eulogy at his death from the president of the most powerful nation on earth. It is this continuity which is the secret of the man, and which is the proper theme of an accurate and authentic biography. It is of course quite proper in analyzing his thought and theology (a very different kind of book) to label the stages of his intellectual and theological development, which can easily be characterized in three phases—that of the separated pastor, the person present at and shaping L'Abri, and the relatively brief but dramatic final political activism. The causes of his actions in these three phases, however, lie in who he was, and in his passion and vision for God. His succession of well-worn and heavily annotated Bibles underlies his cry of *Sola scriptura*. The existence

of the man, dominated by his prophetic vision, preceded and was the condition of what people consider to be his achievements.

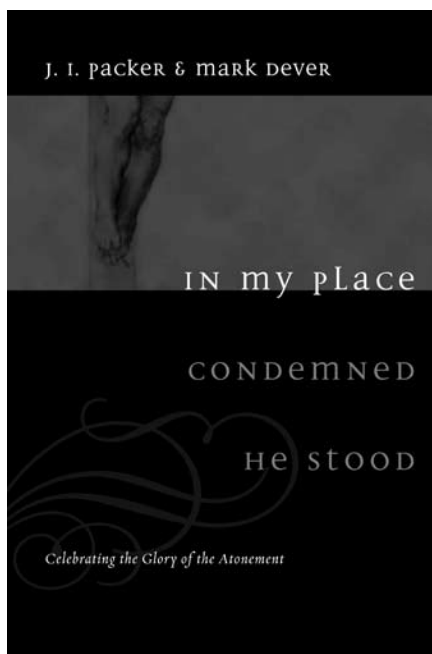
**CBB:** What would you say is the “essence” of Francis Schaeffer?

**CD:** The burning conviction of Schaeffer, established early in his life, was that belief in God (as fully revealed in Jesus) was to do with truth—the truth about who I am, about why evil tears apart relationships and societies, about the real universe that is so important to understand, and about what is behind human history. He was totally serious about truth in this full sense, which is why he felt such a genuine affinity with artists and thinkers of our time who experienced the sorrow at the heart of our culture, rather than escaping into what he dubbed “personal peace and affluence.” He saw the latter as the problem of the middle-class church.

The essence of Schaeffer was that he lived, thought, and believed authentically. This makes him stand out as a great Christian leader. People responded to him because today, more than ever, we need to have an authentic Christianity in our lives, in our thinking, and in our understanding of our modern world—a Christianity which, as Schaeffer always insisted to his last days, is marked by genuine, costly love. Anything less is fluff that will be blown away.

**CBB:** Of all the stories you’ve heard about him, what’s your favorite?

**CD:** Maybe this story means so much to me because I had a sister with very severe learning difficulties; but one that typifies the man for me was a story I heard from his daughter Susan only after I finished the book. In his early years as a young pastor, Schaeffer had taught some children with Downs Syndrome about such things as counting, colors, and Jesus. One of these children, a boy, had grown up, only to die in his early twenties. When the young man passed away, Schaeffer was informed that he still loved Jesus at his death. In the last days of Schaeffer’s life, Susan asked her father what was one of the most significant things in his whole ministry. Tears came to his eyes: “Danny,” he said.



**In My Place Condemned He Stood**

*Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement*

**TPB, ISBN 978-1-4335-0200-2, 192 pages, \$16.99**

**J. I. PACKER** is a professor of theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. Dr. Packer has written many books, including *Knowing God*, and also served as general editor for the *English Standard Version Bible*.

**MARK DEVER**, author of several books and articles, serves as the senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC. Along with his pastoral responsibilities, Dr. Dever is also the executive director of 9Marks.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** Why is a book on the atonement especially important right now?

**MARK DEVER (MD):** Several recent books and public statements have stirred up uncertainty about this historical biblical doctrine. Even among people who call themselves evangelicals, the idea of substitutionary atonement is under attack. And yet, at the very heart of the gospel is the atonement Jesus made on the cross. Therefore, if the doctrine of penal substitution is being in any way slighted or confused, then Dr. Packer and I wanted to encourage evangelicals to think biblically about the atonement and the gospel.

**CBB:** Why is the idea of propitiation at the heart of the gospel?

**MD:** If there is no propitiation, then there is no gospel. To have a gospel without wrath is to

have a gospel with no reality to it, because God doesn’t exist. Propitiation is essential because the God with whom we have to do is a good God. He is not merely committed to fulfilling some external law, but his own character is represented in his law. When we break that law, when we are unholy, when we sin, God has a personal—and appropriate—response to it: wrath. Propitiation satisfies that wrath.

**CBB:** What are some current objections to the doctrine of substitutionary atonement?

**J. I. PACKER (JIP):** One stream of thought claims that God’s holy, just nature does not require any form of propitiation at all. Another claims that for God to expose, and indeed direct, his Son to suffer as a substitute for sinners would be divine child abuse.

**MD:** Many critics have even suggested that we proponents of penal substitution are trashing all other views, or at least ignoring them. I’m not sure I’ve ever read a book on the atonement which does that. Their argument is, I think, theological caricature. The truth is that there’s a soundly biblical and logically compelling case for considering various biblical images of the atonement, and that the image of penal substitution is legitimately considered central. That is a more subtle argument, and Jim Packer makes it superbly in this book.

**CBB:** You coin the term “anti-redemptionism” as that which the church is up against today. What exactly is anti-redemptionism?

**JIP:** It’s the view that God forgives or ignores our sins without requiring their punishment. It was the Father’s wisdom to make his incarnate Son our representative substitute who endured the punishment due to us. Liberal Christianity regularly denies this.

**MD:** One simple way to understand it is the view that people are basically okay, and that we don’t have to have anything quite as dramatic as redemption to fix what needs fixing. Because no name exists for the unorthodoxy we have in view in this book, we labeled it anti-redemptionism. Its essence is sidelining—and in some cases actually denying—the work of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, who did all that had to be done to save us from hell, in favor of the idea of Jesus as teacher, model, and pioneer of godliness.

**CBB:** Why is an understanding of the Trinity crucial to understanding penal substitutionary atonement?

**JIP:** Understanding the Trinity is essential because it is impossible to focus the atonement properly until the biblical mode of trinitarian and incarnational thought about Jesus Christ is embraced. The three divine persons who are the One and Only God and who always act together were in fact together in the making of atonement through the cross—the Father as planner, the Son as achiever, and the Spirit sustaining the Son.

**CBB:** Why must we grasp both God's love and his justice in order to rightly understand the doctrine of penal substitution?

**JIP:** The suffering of Christ on the cross for us must be seen as an expression of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit for us, and understood as a tasting of not only physical but spiritual death (i.e., God-forsakenness, hell)—all that in justice we deserved, and would ourselves have suffered, had Christ not died in our place.

**MD:** If you just have a God who is holy, but not loving, there's no motivation for God to plan the atonement for us—we're creatures who just need to be punished. But because we have the God of the Bible, both holy and merciful, he will act to not only save us but also to uphold what is right and what he has committed to us. Both his love and his holiness are exhibited in Christ's substitute for us.

**CBB:** You write that "true Christ-centeredness is and ever must be cross-centeredness." Why is this so?

**MD:** Jesus is our sacrifice, our Passover Lamb, who came specifically to die for us. So if you try to tell the story of his life without the cross, you distort his life story. If you look at the Gospels, 25-50 percent are the last week of his time on earth—the events leading up to the cross. Therefore, even as the evangelists write of him, it's clearly the cross that is the center of his life and ministry. The same should be true in our understanding.

**CBB:** Included in this book is Dr. Packer's essay on John Owen's *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. Why has Owen's work proven so influential in shaping the church's

understanding of redemption? How have you been shaped personally?

**JIP:** Owen's argumentation, based on an exhaustive survey of the biblical witness, is so cogent and convincing that it has certainly shaped my understanding. I do not know of a clearer or stronger statement of the particularity (the "pro me") of substitutionary atonement according to the Bible.

**CBB:** Why do you see Calvinism as "a whole worldview" rather than just "five points"?

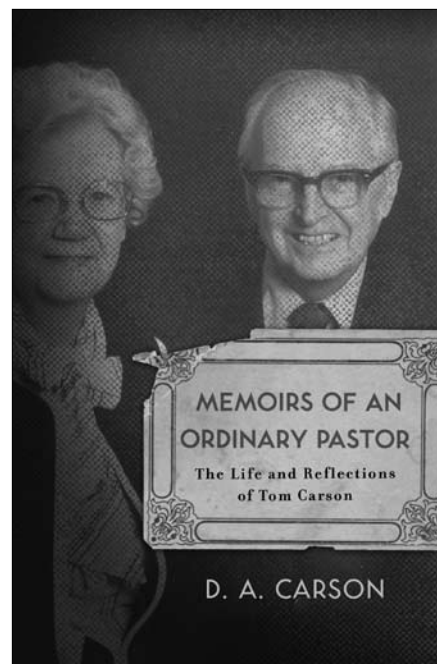
**JIP:** Calvinism is a label for the biblical understanding of our sovereign God in relation to everything that he has made. The "five points" are responses countering the "five points" of the revisionist Arminian "Remonstrance," which was the agenda item of the pan-Reformed Synod of Dort, 1618-19.

**MD:** The implications of God's sovereignty and our being fully, happily subject to him are huge, running into every sphere of our lives. I can't name any hour of my day that isn't significantly affected by the meaning of God's sovereignty. If things are going well, Paul said to the Corinthians, it's God that gives the growth. So as a pastor, I don't take credit if things are going well in my church. And if things are hard in my family, I still know that God is good and that he is sovereign over it all, and that he wills my good. That's a wonderful source of hope and joy, courage and confidence for my daily life. And it gives me the strength to persevere in the difficult times.

**CBB:** What do you most hope will come about from publishing this collection of essays?

**JIP:** My desire is that this book will produce more understanding of, praise for, trust in, and consensus about the truly staggering achievement of just justification and full, free pardon for us through the cross of Christ.

**MD:** That people will have more confidence in the centrality of the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, that these articles will help pastors preach the cross more effectively, and that Jim's essays will become more widely known.



### **Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor**

*The Life and Reflections of Tom Carson*

**TPB, ISBN 978-1-4335-0199-9, 160 pages, \$15.99**

**D. A. CARSON** is research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he has taught since 1978. He has served as a pastor and has done itinerant ministry in Canada and the United Kingdom. Carson is an active guest lecturer in academic and church settings around the world and has authored or edited more than forty-five books.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** What prompted the idea for this book?

**D. A. CARSON (DAC):** When Dad died just over fifteen years ago, I was left with all his papers, and I wondered then whether something useful might be done with them. Christians in the English-speaking world know so little about French Canada. Moreover, the Christian virtues that Dad and Mum represented stand nicely against the grain of contemporary triumphalism. An invitation to speak at John Piper's conference on the topic "Pastors as Fathers and Sons" became the final impetus.

**CBB:** Your father was a pioneer church planter during an influential but little-known time in French Canadian history. Give us a little background.

**DAC:** That's really what the first, rather short chapter of the book is about. But to summarize, in the first half of the twentieth century,

Québec was the most Roman Catholic “nation” in the world, if that can be assessed by the per capita numbers of priests and nuns it sent out as Catholic missionaries to other countries. Evangelical witness was extraordinarily difficult, even beyond the cultural, linguistic, and religious differences within the province: between 1950 and 1952, Baptist ministers spent a total of eight years in jail for preaching the gospel (though the charge was inevitably something like “inciting to riot” or “disturbing the peace”). By contrast, today Québec is astonishingly secular, even anti-clerical. Dad’s life spanned the years of dramatic change—though rarely at the time did he or other ministers fully grasp the significance of the changes through which they were living.

**CBB:** Faithfulness is a recurring theme throughout the book and is certainly one of your father’s legacies. How has his “ordinary” life of faithfulness inspired you in ministry?

**DAC:** That’s the sort of thing that is impossible to measure, of course, even though I’d be the first to insist that modeling Christian virtues, not least in the home, is of paramount importance. The worst sort of home to be brought up in is the one where spiritual pretensions are high and performance is low; the best sort of home is the one where spiritual pretensions are low and performance is high. That was the kind of home in which I was reared.

**CBB:** This is also an account of marital faithfulness. What stands out most to you about your parents’ marriage?

**DAC:** It would be easier to list twenty or thirty things that stand out. But whatever tensions arose from time to time, whatever pressures they faced from ministry, ill health, or anything else, there was not a flicker—not one—that suggested the marriage might break up. I do not think we adequately appreciate what sort of stability is being passed on to children when the thought that their parents might, just might, divorce each other never once crosses their mind.

**CBB:** What does *Memoirs* offer to pastors’ wives?

**DAC:** Although this book is primarily about Dad, there are quite a few snippets about

Mum that will doubtless prove directly helpful to pastors’ wives today. In addition, (a) a lot of lessons from Dad apply to all Christians, men and women alike; (b) some of the peculiar pressures on pastors need to be understood by their wives, and this book might help; and (c) the patterns of mutual self-sacrifice, and sometimes confrontation, needed in an enduring marriage that is committed to living under the lordship of Christ are exemplified.

**CBB:** What could young pastors learn from your father’s day-to-day struggles in ministry?

**DAC:** Faithfulness, the importance of regular Bible reading, long-term commitments, gospel centeredness, maintaining good relationships and avoiding bitterness, the place of prayer, and transparent care for the good of the people in your charge.

**CBB:** Your father endured denominational crises and personal attacks, as many pastors do. What did he do right amid these challenges?

**DAC:** Above all, he acted with principle and without rancor, and afterwards he avoided bitterness like the plague.

**CBB:** What are some of the most important things that ordinary pastors can teach their celebrity counterparts?

**DAC:** Make sure the central things are the central things, value faithfulness above influence, and strive to find your approval in God, not in the praises of parishioners.

**CBB:** How did Tom Carson respond to the sweeping changes he witnessed in his culture and ministry?

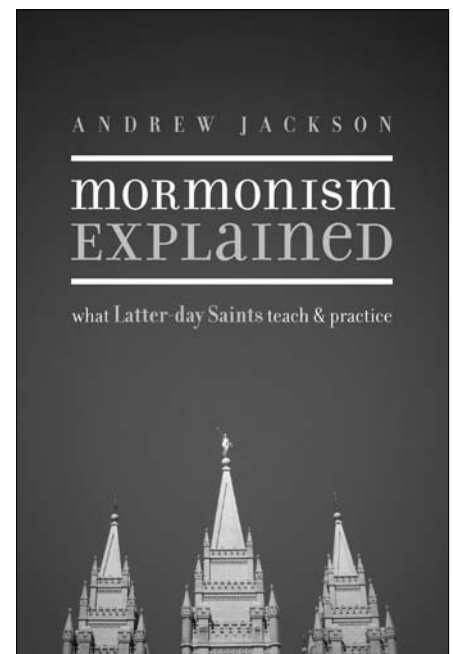
**DAC:** In some ways he was not highly exemplary in this domain, as he tended not to think profoundly about strategic issues. On the other hand, he did quietly adapt to the changes without abandoning the utter centrality of the gospel. In other words, what he got right was that he was never swept away by cultural change, never making the study of cultural change more important than a full-blown grasp of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**CBB:** What part does self-knowledge play in a pastor’s personal and ministry effectiveness?

**DAC:** Some, but not as much as some people think. Self-knowledge is helpful if it does not become self-focus, or an excuse for failures in obedience. But more important than self-knowledge is knowledge of the living God.

**CBB:** What do you wish you could say to your dad now that this book is finished?

**DAC:** Thank you.



### Mormonism Explained

*What Latter-day Saints Teach and Practice*

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-935-1, 208 pages, \$12.99

**ANDREW JACKSON** earned his MDiv at Fuller Theological Seminary, and is a seminary professor and senior associate pastor of discipleship and leadership development at a large non-denominational church in Mesa, Arizona. He has traveled to the original homelands of all the primary religions of the world, taught world religions on the college level, and is a frequent blogger and author.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** It seems you have been uniquely equipped to write about Mormonism. Tell us a little about your experiences.

**ANDREW JACKSON (AJ):** Many Latter-day Saints (LDS)—although not all—will dismiss my book simply because I am not Mormon and have never been a Mormon. They seem to believe that only Mormons should have the privilege of writing about what the LDS teach and practice. However, I did not write

this book in complete ignorance, in distant abstraction, or from a socially or theologically detached position. I have lived among and interacted with Mormons and Mormon culture for over a decade now as I serve as a pastor in a church in downtown Mesa, Arizona, which is one block from the historic Arizona temple. The city of Mesa itself was pioneered and founded by the Mormons in January 1878. In fact, the large grassy park that separates our church campus and the Arizona temple is named “Pioneer Park,” memorializing the early Mormon pioneers of Mesa. As a result of living in the East Valley of the Phoenix area, I have many Mormon neighbors, acquaintances, and friends.

**CBB:** What were some of the research challenges that confirmed to you that Mormonism does indeed need to be explained?

**AJ:** In writing this book, I experienced several research challenges. Probably the greatest one was determining what written, online, and individual Mormon resources I should primarily use to determine what Latter-day Saints actually teach and practice. Following is a short description of my experience in engaging in this Mormon resource search.

First, it became clear early on that average Mormons—not unlike many Christians—are simply not able to accurately and thoroughly provide a systematic explanation of their beliefs. Second, young Mormon missionaries, part of the landscape in Phoenix’s East Valley, are also actually quite theologically uninformed in the LDS faith, as LDS professor Dr. Stephen Robinson himself has attested. Third, Mormons seem to portray a pride in the fact that their church leaders are volunteers and are not paid. And this is true, but you quickly discover that the leaders are also not biblically or theologically trained, and I did not find them to be a collective informed resource for my book either. Yet some of the unofficial yet informed LDS apologists and their web sites were somewhat helpful, especially certain members of the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR), who graciously engaged in periodic e-mail interactions with me. I did find it frustrating at times that Mormon apologists and others would want to passionately tell me what the LDS church really teaches and practices,

but then be very quick to qualify that they in no way spoke for the LDS church. In the end, I must say that for someone attempting to write a well-researched book on the teaching and practices of the LDS church, the discovery that most average Mormons, Mormon missionaries, and Mormon leaders were not quality resources of credible information and insight provided quite a challenge.

**CBB:** In describing their beliefs, Mormons use words such as *righteousness*, *salvation*, and *Savior*. What dangers does this pose for seekers?

**AJ:** It is essential that we first understand what the LDS church really means by the word *salvation*. Otherwise, things can become very confusing and puzzling, especially for Christians. Without this clarity of terminology, Mormon salvation cannot be properly understood and contrasted with biblical salvation in the God-accepted righteousness of Jesus Christ alone.

**CBB:** What are some of the topics you focus on in this book?

**AJ:** *Mormonism Explained* is a comprehensive introduction to what Latter-day Saints teach and practice. I cover the historical origins of Mormonism, the details of the dramatic western journey of Mormons from New York to Salt Lake City, the LDS claim that they are the one and only true church on earth, the topic of “Gods” and the Mormon gospel of deification, the complex doctrine of LDS salvation, and how the dead are saved in Mormonism.

**CBB:** What is the basis for Mormon teaching and practices today?

**AJ:** This is a key question. How does a researcher and writer actually discover the official teaching and practices of the LDS church, especially given the challenges I mentioned above? In my case, I decided to lean on the statements made by LDS professors Dr. Stephen Robinson and Dr. Robert Millet, which I quote in the book, and which reveal that Mormon teaching and practices today are based primarily in the continual divine revelations and interpretations of the LDS President and Prophet and other top apostles, and only secondarily in Mormonism’s

four written scriptural books: the Bible (King James Version only), Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. In Mormonism, all contemporary experiences of revelation and interpretation by the LDS President and Prophet surpass all past written records of revelation in authority, including the Bible. So in the Mormon mind, what God communicated in the past—even if identified as Holy Scripture—is always secondary to what God is saying to ordained Mormon apostles and prophets today.

**CBB:** How do Mormons and Christians differ in their understanding of the Bible?

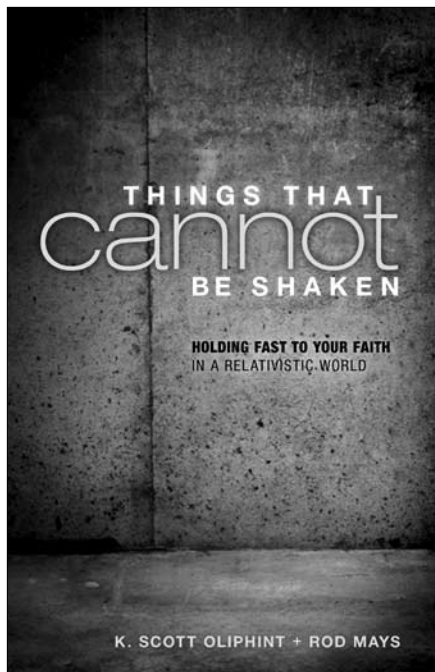
**AJ:** Although Mormonism values the Bible, the LDS church also states that the Bible has been corrupted, contains errors, and is missing many plain and precious truths concerning salvation because they have been taken away or excluded from the original Bible by apostate Christians. As a result, within Mormonism, the Bible is not only fundamentally incomplete but functionally subordinate and subject to clarification and revision by the Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.

**CBB:** Explain the teaching that you describe as the “Grand Canyon divide” between Christianity and Mormonism.

**AJ:** Mormonism teaches that God was once a human being, and that human beings can become gods. “As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become” is for Christians a very startling statement, made by Lorenzo Snow—the fifth Mormon President and Prophet. Some Mormons even speak about humans as “Gods in embryo.” President Snow’s theological statement is accepted as doctrinal restoration by the majority of Latter-day Saints today. This troubling declaration summarizes for us the official Mormon teaching concerning the past human nature of God and the future potential for humans to become gods. One of the deepest theological divides between Christianity and Mormonism concerns the identity and nature of God and man.

**CBB:** You say that Mormonism is “much more than just another religion; it is a full-fledged worldview.” What’s the significance of this?

**AJ:** Mormonism and Christianity advocate two deeply contrasting and conflicting worldviews. As Fuller Theological Seminary president Richard Mouw correctly states, “At the heart of our continuing disagreements, I am convinced, are the very basic worldview issues.” BYU professor Dr. Stephen Robinson makes the same general point: “The real sticking point is not what the LDS think about Christ and his gospel, but rather the different ontological frame or view of the nature of the universe into which the Mormons fit the gospel.”



### Things That Cannot Be Shaken

*Holding Fast to Your Faith in a Relativistic World*

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-849-1, 160 pages, \$12.99

**K. SCOTT OLIPHINT** is professor of apologetics and systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and has written three books and numerous scholarly articles.

**ROD MAYS** is the national coordinator of Reformed University Ministries, the campus ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America. He has also served as senior pastor of Presbyterian churches in South Carolina, Mississippi, and West Virginia.

**CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB):** What are the issues that most often threaten to “shake” Christians on the secular campus, in the classroom, and in the workplace?

**SCOTT OLIPHINT & ROD MAYS (SO/RM):** The issues all have their particular application, depending on the individual, but surrounding them

all is the issue of authority. Though as old as Genesis 3, the crisis of authority is now expressing itself in a particularly virulent form today, personally, culturally, spiritually. On the secular campus, it is manifested in every kind of disparate view, as well as every doubt and criticism, being offered in the classroom; in the workplace, it focuses itself in questions of meaning and calling. Even within Christianity, there are “new” attacks on the authority and clarity of Scripture. These all combine to produce significant anomie in people, culture, and the church. The need of the hour, then, is that we recognize again that there are, because of who God is and what he has done, things that cannot be shaken, things that will anchor us in the confidence of Christ and his work.

**CBB:** How does this book equip Christians to face those challenges?

**SO/RM:** We thought the hymn “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” was particularly suited to address some of the most basic problems that Christians seem to find themselves in these days. Using this hymn, we were able to address the issue of authority, of the work of Christ and of his Spirit, and of the promise of the future for those who are in Christ. We were able to highlight the fact that Christianity alone can offer “solid joys and lasting treasures.” It can do this because God has spoken in Christ and has come to earth to bring us to himself. It shouldn’t be ignored, either, that in using Newton’s hymn to address these issues, we’re also noting, implicitly at least, that the issues today are the same as they’ve always been. The “particulars” of the issues are different, but sin is sin in any culture, even if the means to the end might be different.

**CBB:** How can the fact that these struggles are not new to our times encourage Christians?

**SO/RM:** If, as doubts, uncertainties, and questions arise, we begin to believe they are new, then we might be tempted to think that the Bible is not equipped to address the problems that we go through. How many times have we heard the excuse, with respect to a particular sin, that we are simply ill-equipped to understand what has happened because it is unique to that person, or the person’s circumstances? The good news of the gospel is that Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are (Heb. 4:14), and that there is no new tempta-

tion to be had by us (1 Cor. 10:12). So now the gospel, which may have seemed so archaic in the midst of our “postmodern” struggles, comes right to the heart of those struggles and addresses them head-on. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, the Lord alone is able to address and conquer whatever permutation of sin seems to oppress us at the moment.

**CBB:** You say that Christians not only have to acknowledge but “own” the truth of God’s Word. What do you mean?

**SO/RM:** James tells us that the demons themselves believe certain truths about who God is. Even those who are eternally condemned acknowledge who God is. So to “own” the truth of who God is and of what he has said is to possess it in such a way that it becomes ours—and becomes central to who we are, how we think, and how we live; it is not simply a group of propositions to be affirmed. If the Bible’s truths become central, then the uncertainties that will always surround those who are outside of Christ will not influence us in such a way as to cause us to question what God has said.

The first temptation subtly and craftily instilled doubt in that very thing (Gen. 3:1). Every temptation and sin following that first sin has the same question at its root. But if we “own” God’s Word, we do not doubt that he has spoken, nor do we doubt what he has said. This kind of doubt—of God and his Word—is unfortunately all the rage in some Christian circles today. But it is the polar opposite of what God requires of his people.

**CBB:** In chapter 2, you talk about how our denial of the knowledge of God causes us to self-destruct as we seek to get our needs met. Will you give us an overview here?

**SO/RM:** John Calvin, in his monumental and pastoral work, the *Institutes*, begins by stating the inextricable relationship between the true knowledge of God and the true knowledge of ourselves. The two necessarily go hand in hand. We can think of it this way: Strip every superficial accoutrement away, and who are we really? There is only one answer: we are the image of God, and thus we find our only and ultimate rest in him. But that image has been twisted and distorted by sin, which

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produces a desire to hide from God and attempt to live on our own. What we often fail to understand, however, is that in trying to run from God we are at the same time running away from who we really are. Thus, to the extent that we are successful in denying God, to that extent we deny our true selves.

Perhaps this is best illustrated in the recent movie *Into the Wild*, a true story about a young man, Christopher McCandless, who wanted nothing more than to go to Alaska, on his own, to explore the stark beauty of the wild country there. In spite of numerous opportunities to turn away from his goal, he would not. In the end, however, he recognized what he wrote in his journal: “Happiness is only real when shared.” His obsession to run away wound up destroying him, and it made him realize, too late, that he should have maintained the relationships he had. Our sinful obsession to run away from God will destroy us as well. It is important to realize this before it is too late.

**CBB:** What are some forms of darkness that are especially present in today’s cultural climate, and why are they so dangerous?

**SO/RM:** Perhaps the most dangerous, pernicious, and persistent form of darkness in Western culture today is the Internet. This is not because the Internet is inherently evil. The problem is that this kind of technology tends to sneak up on us (and by “us” here, I mean primarily the church) such that we neglect to think through the proper use of it. The Internet has, for the first time, provided almost unlimited access to private, sinful behavior that caters to a Western, individualistic mind. If we can convince ourselves that when we are

by ourselves we are really alone (i.e., that God is not there), it is a very short step to feeding our temptations in such a way that we can begin to “love the darkness” in a way that was unavailable before. This includes not only the obvious sexual perversions that can be so easily engaged on the Internet but also the kinds of discourse that happen there. As conversations become less and less personal—making it easy to lodge all kinds of malicious attacks against others as if they are objects to be used, abused, and discarded—so also does discourse between Christians take up the same patterns, if the church does not carefully and thoughtfully remember our interactions in light of the image of God and what the Lord requires of those who follow him.

**“If the Bible’s truths become central, then the uncertainties that will always surround those who are outside of Christ will not influence us in such a way as to cause us to question what God requires of his people.”**

~K. Scott Oliphint & Rod Mays

**CBB:** How does Christian joy factor in the book?

**SO/RM:** Christians often define the concept of joy by describing their hope and quest for personal happiness: “What outcome (from this current situation, illness, conflict) will make me happy? What will make me feel better?” But this definition is narrow and shallow and

easily collapses. In the hymn “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken,” Newton wrote of “solid joys.” True joy is “solid” in that it covers every area of our lives. It is deep and runs through our hearts even when our minds and bodies are wracked with physical and emotional pain. True joy is built on the firm foundation of Jesus’ sacrifice for us, the Holy Spirit’s indwelling us, and God’s allowing us to come to him because his Son says it’s all right and his Spirit intercedes for us with “groaning too deep for words” (Rom. 8:26).

When the worst has happened, when it cannot be undone, how can you find joy? God has promised that everything will work together for our good. Everything? Yes. The resurrection of Jesus guarantees that real joy is at the end of betrayals, grief, physical and financial struggles, molestation, abuse, and the anger of others, for one day everything will be made new and restored. Our stories do not end in the “here and now.” There is one end, written by God, where all our stories come together, for our good and his glory. It is a sure thing because God has said it.

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