

I N S I D E

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Karl Barth & the Pietists
Eberhard Busch traces out the early years of Barth's interaction with the German Pietists of his day.

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The History of Christian Thought Investigate the church fathers, the Byzantine Empire, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the modern era and the twentieth century with Jonathan Hill.

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What exactly is a questionable Christian? An outright pagan? And why would your students want to study the ideas of these dubious characters? Find out from Steve Wilkens on page six. Note: you will be tested on this!

Introducing the New Testament with Both Scholarship and Ministry in Mind



David deSilva

This April, IVP will release David deSilva's *Introduction to the New Testament*. DeSilva, professor of New Testament and Greek at Ashland Theological Seminary and author of *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, focuses his text on socio-rhetorical context, exegetical methods and ministry formation. IVP's academic sales manager, Emily Varner, caught up with deSilva and discussed his new book.

VARNER: How did the concept of this introduction come to you? What prompted you to focus on context, methods and ministry formation?

DESILVA: I noticed that almost every introduction had a particular strength, but I really needed several different textbooks to combine enough "strengths" to enable the students to learn what I wanted them

to get out of my class. So I determined that, when I wrote my own introduction, I would attempt to combine these various foci into one textbook.

I have always derived great benefit from studying the social, cultural, political and ideological worlds of the first century, and my students often remark that this facet of my courses tends to open up the texts to them in fresh ways.

Exegetical methods account for a large part of my work as a professor and my students' work in all of our biblical studies classes. It seemed quite natural to devote a fair amount of space to explaining and modeling these skills in a textbook, all the more as exegetical papers are standard requirements in courses in New Testament introduction in seminaries across the world.

The "Ministry Formation" sections came in response to two factors—my own calling and my students' passion. I came into teaching in response

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Salvation, the Unevangelized & the Religions

Terrance L. Tiessen's *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* bids to become one of those books that sets new terms for evangelical discussion of a significant topic. Gerald McDermott calls it "a sensitive, patient, sophisticated evangelical response to evangelical questions concerning the religions." And Christopher Wright says, "Few books I have read have been so doctrinally thorough, closely and cautiously argued, and thought-provoking on the twin subjects of the destiny of the unevangelized and the status and role of religions in the purposes of God." IVP editor Dan Reid recently interviewed Tiessen about the book. (To see the full text of this interview, visit the IVP website at www.ivpress/academic.)

REID: What's Irenaeus got to do with it? Tell us about how you got into this topic.

TIESSEN: In the early 1980s I became aware that scholars were identifying some second-century theologians as early forerunners of Karl Rahner's concept of "anonymous Christianity." I chose to write my Ph.D. dissertation on



Terrance Tiessen

Irenaeus's theology of revelation, with particular attention to the question of the salvation of the unevangelized. In the course of that study, I concluded that Irenaeus had no concept of the "unevangelized," because he assumed the world to have been reached through mission by the apostles. Nevertheless, I asked Irenaeus a question he had never considered and was surprised by my own conclusion that Irenaeus's doctrines of revelation and salvation would have made him optimistic about the possibility that

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to a call to ministry, and even more specifically as a result of hearing my fellow seminarians lament the gap between our core courses in theology and biblical studies and the work of ministry for which they were preparing. I determined early on in my vocation to contribute to the bridging of that gap wherever possible. My students have helped me tremendously in this regard, always bringing the practical question of how all the material I teach them intersects with and informs real situations in parish life, in counseling and in other areas of ministry.

VARNER: A major premise of your work is that the New Testament is eminently practical, which seems only natural—New Testament authors were engaged in pastoral work, after all! But there is a lot of careful study going on behind the apparently seamless applications to ministry formation. Were these sections particularly challenging to write?

DESILVA: These sections forced me to think beyond the strictly “academic” and historical study of the New Testament, to listen to the kinds of challenges facing my seminary students in their work as pastors, counselors and lay ministers, to reflect on my own experiences in ministry and discipleship, and to try to connect the results of academic study of the Bible with the work of ministry. They were challenging in that they involved me in reading and reflecting on areas outside my discipline, but these sections quickly became a kind of refreshing reward as I finished each chapter, giving me energy to begin the next phase of study and writing. I began to see how this textbook might have a positive impact not only on students’ understanding of New Testament studies, but on their formation as ministers and even on those they would serve. I don’t pretend that these sections provide the definitive word on how the New Testament shapes vital ministries, but I do hope they will stimulate interdisciplinary discussions in the classroom and invite students and professors to put the disciplines of practical theology and biblical studies in closer conversation with each other.

I MYSELF ALWAYS LEARNED A NEW SKILL BEST WHEN I COULD SEE IT IN OPERATION AND PRACTICE IT MYSELF, RATHER THAN SIMPLY READING ABOUT THE THEORY OF HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE.

VARNER: Each New Testament “book” chapter has a section introducing at least one exegetical method. What do you think are the advantages of teaching exegesis this way?

DESILVA: I myself always learned a new skill best when I could see it in operation and practice it myself, rather than simply reading about the theory of how it should be done. I find that many of my students have a similar learning style when it comes to trying to put together those first, daunting exegesis papers. Students have also responded better when they are given a little more time to reflect on and practice each skill, rather than being introduced to a host of them in the short space of a few weeks. By integrating the presentation of individual exegetical skills into the discussion of a particular New Testament book, moreover, I am able to show students how the application of a particular skill enhances our understanding of that particular

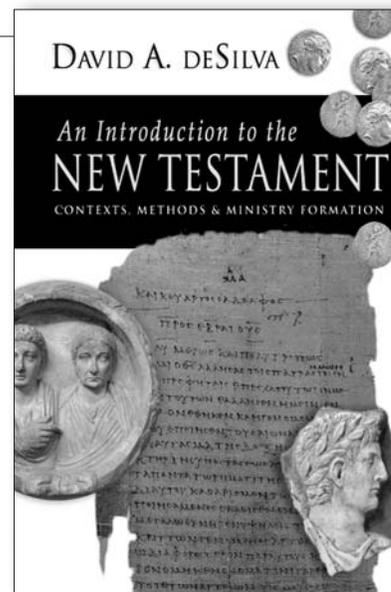
text, giving students a sense of the “payoff” and relevance of each skill for biblical interpretation.

VARNER: Twenty or thirty years ago, there weren’t very many New Testament introductions to choose from. That has certainly

changed! Without naming names, where do you see your introduction fitting into the menu of options available?

DESILVA: I want my readers to leave with a strong sense of how each text formulated responses to particular issues, questions and challenges faced by the early church. The emphasis rests on analysis of the message of each text rather than summary. In this regard, my book differs from several other introductions that concern themselves only with the traditional questions of authorship, date, provenance and structure, but never help students dig into the meat of the texts themselves.

Several introductions attempt to teach exegetical methods all at the outset, delaying students’ engagement with the New Testament while still not providing adequate coverage of the range of exegetical and hermeneutical approaches available (nor providing models of these methods at work). This introduction exposes students to everything from textual criticism to postcolonial



criticism, but in a measured way that allows them to “soak in” each method over the whole course.

To my knowledge, no introduction tries to facilitate seminary students’ interaction with the kinds of questions that bring them to the course in the first place—formulating a vision for ministry.

VARNER: How have you used this material with your students in the last few years?

DESILVA: Something students have valued greatly is breaking into small groups every other week and working together through a particular exegetical skill on the passage they have chosen for their exegetical paper. This gives them steady progress toward, and greater confidence approaching, their final papers. We have greater liberty to cover some of the more interesting critical issues (the quest for the historical Jesus, the question of “Q,” for example) in the form of small group preparation for debates in class. Because I teach at a seminary where many students are already engaged in full-time ministry, we also focus on the “Ministry Formation” sections with an eye to critique and expansion of what students find there. With the experience of so many students from widely varying traditions, these discussions tend to be very fruitful and energizing for the whole class.

VARNER: How do you envision pastors and teachers using what you have written in their ministries?

DESILVA: My own pastor always consults standard New Testament introductions and reads through at least one critical commentary in preparation for preaching. I hope that my

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some who are ignorant of the gospel might be saved. That was not my own understanding of Scripture, but it seemed clear to me that it was where Irenaeus was headed. The subject continued to be of interest to me, and I continued to read and think about it in the years that followed.

REID: You have chosen the term *accessibilism* to describe your position. How did you arrive at that term?

TIESSEN: I came across the term *accessibilism* in an article by William Lane Craig and decided that it captures nicely the essence of what I now believe to be biblical. About ten years ago, I became convinced, much

ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO, I BECAME CONVINCED, MUCH TO MY OWN SURPRISE, THAT GOD MAY SAVE PEOPLE WHOM HE DOES NOT REACH WITH THE GOSPEL.

to my own surprise, that God may save people whom he does not reach with the gospel. For some years I expressed my thought in terms of the widely used typology of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. For my own purposes, a particular problem arose because of confusion about the definition of *inclusivism*. Some writers use it to describe merely the belief that the unevangelized can be saved, but others include the belief that the religions of the world are instruments that God uses to bring people to salvation. By the first of these criteria my position is inclusivist, but not by the second. *Accessibilism* struck me as capturing very nicely what I have come to believe. Salvation is accessible wherever God chooses to apply the work of Christ by his Spirit, and he can do this even where new covenant revelation is not known.

REID: Some evangelicals will wonder whether your proposal doesn't dull our motive for mission. But much of your life has been invested in missions. Briefly, how do you respond?

TIESSEN: I am well aware of the concern that the nerve of missionary motivation will be cut if we inform people that God can save people without the ministry of missionaries. In earlier years I shared that concern, and I appealed to people to go and send and pray for missionaries because without that human witness, people would be irrevocably damned. When I came to believe that Scripture did not support that view, I also noticed that the New Testament provides very strong motivation for missionary work without ever basing its appeal on this ecclesiocentric or restrictivist ground.

The good news concerning Jesus is God's

ordinary means for bringing sinners into relationship with himself and maturing them in communities of faith that provide a small foretaste of life in the kingdom of God. Evangelism is not just about getting individuals saved from eternal condemnation, it is about bringing into being new covenant communities of people in and through whom God is working to turn back the ravages of sin—personal and social—and to establish his reign on earth. It is hard to

overstate the blessing of knowing that we are God's people, who live in his love and constant care, and whom he gifts to be a blessing to other believers and to the world. If we really love people and want them to

flourish, we will want them to be part of the church and of God's continuing work of transformation in and through it. I believe that we should rejoice in the thought that some of God's elect are among those whom the church, in its weakness or disobedience, has not reached with the gospel, and at the same time be passionate about serving God's purposes for the well-being of those people, here and now. Few things are more exciting to a missionary than the surprise of finding that God has been at work before we arrive with the gospel and that people's hearts are already turned toward God and eager to receive his fuller revelation. Why would it disturb us that God may have saved some of those people, particularly ones who had lived and died in the years before we got there?

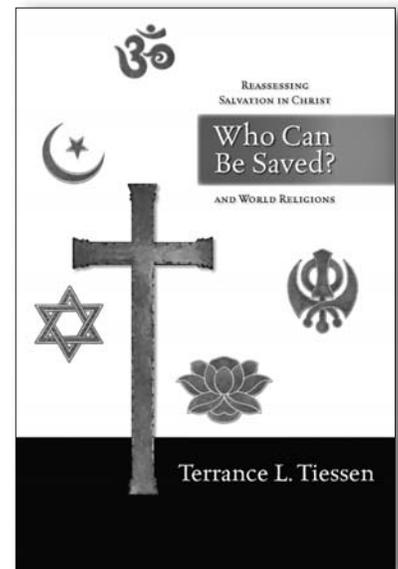
REID: You take very seriously the question of whether or not God saves infants or the unborn. What does this issue have to do with the salvation of the unevangelized?

TIESSEN: I have noticed that many Christians are reluctant to assert that the unborn or infants who die young are condemned to hell without benefit of Christ's saving work. Many evangelicals appeal to a doctrine of the "age of accountability" to deal with the fate of these people, but others state categorically that all these people are saved by Christ because of their inculpable ignorance or inability. It fascinates me though, that people who show this admirable sympathy for infants seem much less concerned about the large number of adults who live and die without any knowledge of Jesus. I see these as groups within the gen-

eral class of the "unevangelized." They are sinners who need salvation but who do not know the gospel. I argue that our doctrine of salvation should account for all of the groups of the unevangelized and that it should do so in a consistent way. I hear a clear biblical statement that every human being is a sinner who needs God's salvation and that the only means by which God ever saves anyone is by grace through faith. There are no exceptions to this principle and so we have to unpack how it works in the varied situations of human existence.

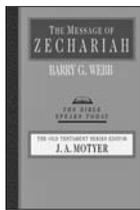
REID: What would your top five iterations of the following be? "I am not saying that _____."

TIESSEN: Now that is a really tough question. From previous experience, I know the perils of



being misunderstood and misrepresented. These come most immediately to mind: I am not saying that everyone will be saved, only that there is no group or class of people concerning whom we can say that none of them will be saved. I am not saying that anyone is saved by any means other than the saving work of Christ and God's gracious gift of repentance and faith that he gives by his Spirit. I am not saying that the various religions of the world are agencies that God has raised up as means of his saving work in the lives of any of their adherents. I am not saying that there is a second chance for people at or after death if they have rejected God's revelation up to the end of their lives, although I do postulate that some

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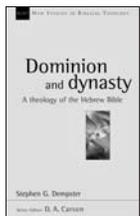


This spring Barry G. Webb explores *The Message of Zechariah* in this latest addition to The Bible Speaks Today Series. In oracles and visions Zechariah challenged his hearers to return to the coming kingdom, to cleanse themselves in anticipation of the cleansing fountain of God's grace and to restore the city of Jerusalem in preparation for its coming glorification.



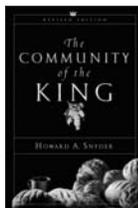
Ernest C. Lucas's *Exploring the Old Testament, Volume Three: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature* is the latest addition to the Exploring the Bible series. Like other volumes in the series, this one is accompa-

nied by numerous learning aids and is written in language that is easy for beginning students to understand. All of the major issues of contemporary scholarship are treated at the right level of detail. The background and artistry of these books are surveyed in a way that will sharpen beginning interpreters' skills and insights. Try it as a text. We don't think you'll be disappointed.



The New Studies in Biblical Theology series takes another look at the Scriptures this spring, this time with Stephen Dempster's *Dominion and Dynasty*, which applies literary method in an attempt to "read out" a single theme from the Old Testament as a whole text.

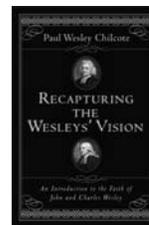
NEW & NOTEWORTHY



For over twenty-five years, Howard A. Snyder's *Community of the King* has set the standard for a penetrating look at the relationship between the church and the kingdom. For this new edition, Snyder has added a completely new chapter on developments in Christian thinking on the church since its first publication, as well as updated bibliography and revision throughout. Here is a useful survey for undergraduate students or beginning seminarians.



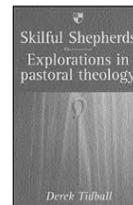
Steven A. McKinion's *Isaiah 1-39* is the latest addition to the distinguished Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. For the early church fathers the prophecy of Isaiah was not a compendium of Jewish history or theology but an announcement of the coming Messiah fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The interpretation of Jesus' ministry in light of Isaiah's prophecy was not a theological innovation on their part, but rather a following of the path blazed by the New Testament writers and Jesus himself.



In *Recapturing the Wesleys' Vision*, teacher and scholar Paul Wesley Chilcote has brought together the powerful hymnody of Charles Wesley with the preaching and writing of his brother John. The distinctive character of the Wesleyan contribution to Christian theology comes through simply and clearly. A great book for use by youth and adults on their own or in a class setting.



Since the late 1990s, Macintosh users have been asking IVP to release a Mac edition of *The Essential IVP Reference Collection* CD-ROM. We are excited to announce that *The Essential IVP Reference Collection: Macintosh Edition* is now available.



IVP is pleased to announce the availability of Derek Tidball's key pastoral theology text, *Skilful Shepherds*, as part of a distribution agreement with Apollos Books, an imprint of Intervarsity Press in the United Kingdom. In contrast to pastoral theology texts which focus on behavioral sciences on the one hand or management techniques on the other, Tidball's work seeks out a biblical foundation for the discipline through an extensive discussion of shepherding imagery found in Scripture. It then explores how that understanding can be applied to leadership today. ■

Exploring "Holiness" Dimensions of Karl Barth's Theology



Eberhard Busch is recognized as the premier biographer of theologian Karl Barth. It is less known, especially among English speakers, that Busch actually authored another book on Barth's theology published in German in 1978, *Karl Barth und die Pietisten*. In this work Busch traces out the early years of Barth's interaction with the German Pietists of his day. Daniel Bloesch, who has translated some of Bonhoeffer's works, has now translated this work into English.

While Barth's interaction with Pietist pastors and scholars was largely critical, he nevertheless regarded them as worthy of continuing engagement. And it seems that the longer Barth continued the discussion the more appreciative he became, tempering his original evaluation signifi-

cantly. This becomes even clearer in the appended essay by Busch, "Hope for the Conversion of the Converted: Karl Barth and Pietism," which covers Barth's later interactions and mature writing in *Church Dogmatics*. Barth's dialogue with the Pietists is not only instructive for those interested in German historical theology. North American evangelicals share some common roots with the Pietists, and their mixed reception of Barth has some interesting and illuminating parallels to the Pietists as well. This book especially sheds light on the biblical, "orthodox" and even "holiness" dimensions of Barth's theology that are often overlooked. It may very well go a long way toward explaining why, despite ongoing criticism, both liberal and conservative Protestant theologians continue to find Barth an invaluable dialogue partner. (And in case you're wondering, Daniel Bloesch is theologian Donald Bloesch's cousin!). ■

Wheaton Theology Conference 2004



The 13th Annual Wheaton Theology Conference will be held April 15-17, 2004, on the Wheaton College campus. This year's theme will be "The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology." Speakers will explore the perceived lack of a robust ecclesiology within the evangelical community. For more information, visit www.wheaton.edu/Theology/theologyconference.html or e-mail Theology.Conference@Wheaton.edu. ■

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who have previously been saved by faith (including infants and other unevangelized) will first place their faith in the person of Christ when they meet him at the moment of death. I am decidedly not saying that because God can and may save some apart from the church's witness to Jesus, we need not make costly sacrifices to bring to everyone in the world the gospel, which God uses with saving power and which marvelously transforms the lives of individuals and of whole communities.

REID: I can hear readers objecting that your proposal is too speculative, that at best we should claim an agnosticism when it comes to the salvation of the unevangelized. How do you respond?

TIESSEN: I invite these people to read my book with their Bibles open and an eagerness to hear the Spirit speak. As with all theological construction, I do make some second-order inferences and, admittedly, an occasional speculation, but I am convinced that the proposal I am putting forward arises out of Scripture. I will be delighted if this exercise expands the hopefulness of some of these agnostics and generates a new excitement about God's gracious saving program in this fallen world.

REID: The second part of your book delves into theology of religions, where you answer the question, "How do the religions fit into God's purposes in the world?" Why does your answer to "Who can be saved?" call for an answer to the second question—in the same book?

TIESSEN: Once we acknowledge that God is working in both grace and judgment outside of the church, we naturally begin to ponder the religions, the largest of which have been very unaffected by the church's missionary attempts among them. So I thought it necessary to speak to this issue as well. Sadly, many Christians who are optimistic about the extent

CHRISTIANS IN NORTH AMERICA HAVE FELT A NEW URGENCY TO FIGURE OUT HOW WE SHOULD ASSESS OTHER RELIGIONS AND HOW WE SHOULD RELATE TO THEIR MEMBERS. I HAVE TRIED TO UNPACK ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.

of God's saving work in the world also assume that the world's religions are the means God is using to achieve salvation, and they conclude that we should leave other religions alone and stop missionary work among them. On the other hand, since September 11, 2001, many Christians in North America have felt a new urgency to figure out how we should assess other religions and how we should relate to their members. I have tried to unpack answers to these questions that are consistent with the Calvinistic accessibilism that I put forward in the first part of the book.

REID: Finally, what are your hopes for this book?

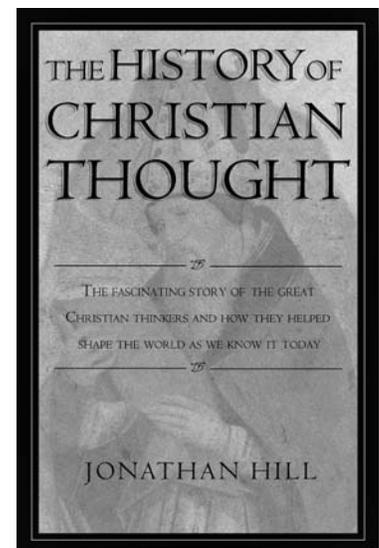
TIESSEN: My hopes for the book are different for different sorts of readers. I hope to help some readers to be more critically discerning about other religions and their members while opening up others to see God in places where they would not have looked for him before. I hope that Arminians will be happy to find that Calvinism need not be pessimistic about God's gracious purposes in the world. I also hope that Calvinists will be led to reconsider some of their own readings of Scripture. I would be happy to see "four-point" Calvinists reconsidering the consistency of their position as a result of my treatment of the trinitarian work of salvation. On the other hand, I think that my proposal concerning universal sufficient grace is a helpful tweaking of Calvinist soteriology, and I will be delighted if some Calvinist theologians give it serious consideration.

As always, I hope most of all that God will be glorified as a result of my writing this book and your publishing it. It troubles me that some people will probably think it dangerous, without even reading it. I am excited about God's great program of salvation and about the privilege he has given us to participate in its realization through gospel proclamation and demonstration. I sense an urgent need for Christians to do better as God's ambassadors in the context of the world's religions. I am praying that God may use this book in positive ways to further his purposes in these areas. ■

Access to History: From the Church Fathers Through the Twentieth Century

A society with no grasp of its history is like a person without a memory. In *The History of Christian Thought*, Jonathan Hill supplies an ideal introduction to the thinkers who have shaped Christian history and the culture of much of the world. Writing in a lively, accessible style, Hill takes us on an enlightening journey from the first to the twenty-first century. He shows us the key Christian thinkers through the ages—from Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine and Aquinas to Luther, Wesley, Kierkegaard and Barth—placing them in their historical context and assessing their contribution to the development of Christianity. Few books that cover such a wide swath of history are able to do so with such engaging writing and such solid, illuminating content.

Section headings include "The Church Fathers," "The Byzantine Empire," "The Middle Ages," "The Reformation," "The Modern Era" and "The Twentieth Century." Spread throughout the text are sidebar selections that give further background or insights into particular people, places, movements or events. Thus in the section on the church fathers, readers are introduced to Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople and the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. Added features include a glossary and annotated bibliography. All in all, this is an intro that your students will enjoy reading and that will whet their appetite for more. ■



The Intelligent Design Catechism

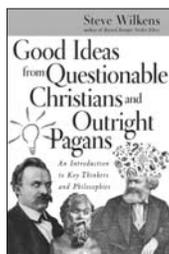


The Intelligent Design movement, or ID, as it has come to be called, has been around for a few years now. And most people know William A. Dembski as its leading theorist. Indeed, he has written two very technical books on design theory: *The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance Through Small Probabilities* (Cambridge University Press) and *No Free Lunch: Why Specified Complexity Cannot Be Purchased Without Intelligence* (Rowman & Littlefield). But over the years Dembski has also been engaging a much more general audience through other books and numerous lectures and seminars. In the course of debates in person and on paper he has fielded myriad questions to his argument that intelligence is essential to scientific explanations of certain natural phenomena and can be identified by means of the criteria of specified complexity. It became Dembski's conviction that the challenges had become crystallized to the point that it was time to address them one by one in a way accessible to both high level critics and the general

reader. Arranged in a question and answer format (leading one critic to call the book "ID's catechism"!)

The Design Revolution presents crisp, cogent replies to questions such as, "Even though intelligent design purports to be a scientific research program, isn't it really a theological enterprise?" "Is naturalism in any guise compatible with intelligent design?" and "In attributing design to biological systems, isn't intelligent design just arguing from ignorance?" There are some passages that might surprise both critics and sympathizers. Perhaps of most interest to those familiar with ID is the last part of the book in which Dembski explores eight implications of the new paradigm for a new kind of science that takes seriously the place of information and intelligence in scientific investigation. Written with candor, conviction and clarity this book will be helpful not only to those veterans who are looking for straightforward answers to some tough questions, but also for those who are just beginning to ask what all the debate is about and need some orientation. This is arguably the best articulation to date of what the ID movement is and is not all about. ■

Introducing Students to the Thinking of Questionable Christians and Outright Pagans



What kind of title is *Good Ideas from Questionable Christians and Outright Pagans*? Well, we hope it's one that gets the interest of undergraduate students (and their profs!) who might be taking their first course in philosophy. Students are often nervous about taking philosophy, sometimes because they aren't sure anyone with Christian conviction ought to be engaging in such activity. Steve Wilkens, who teaches undergrads at Azusa Pacific University and wrote *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics: An Introduction to Theories of Right & Wrong*, understands students' reservations and speaks directly to them in this very readable and, dare I say, enjoyable book. Without oversimplifying their views Wilkens clearly introduces key distinctive thinkers in Western intellectual history and brings out their most salient ideas with a pointed corresponding question. He shows how the questions they pose and to which they reply can be very helpful to Christians when thoughtfully considered.

Now you're probably asking who those outright pagans and questionable Christians are. Well, how 'bout a multiple choice quiz? I'll give you the list and you mark each item either A for "outright pagan" or B for "questionable Christian." OK, here's the list: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche and Sartre. You have two minutes to complete the quiz and it comprises 10% of the grade for this course. Answers should appear in the next issue of the *Alert*. ■

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introduction will become such a standard reference work for pastors and Christian educators as they prepare to teach and to supplement what they find in curricula. But I think the attention given to ministry formation throughout this book may also help refresh and expand pastors' vision for the health, growth and vitality of their congregations, and provide strategies for bringing that vision to pass. ■

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