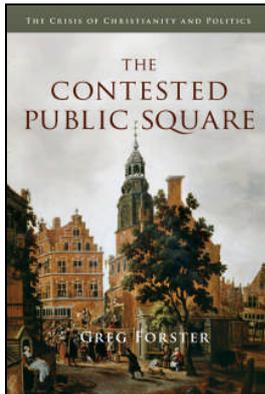


## BOOK DETAILS



*The Contested Public Square: The Crisis of Christianity and Politics*

280 pages, paper, 6 x 9  
978-0-8308-2880-7, \$24.00  
Available **November 2008**

**Greg Forster** (Ph.D., Yale University) is director of the Program in American History, Economics & Religion in the Kern Family Foundation. He is also the author of *John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus* (Cambridge University Press). Forster has contributed to leading scholarly journals such as *History of Political Thought* and *Political Theory, Religion & Politics*. His articles have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. He is also a senior fellow at the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice.

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## Forster provides readable backstory of Christian political thought

Christian political thought did not begin with the Moral Majority. Nor, as it happens, does it end there. But how Christians engage in the political process today should be informed by the long history between believers and the state since the church began.

Enter Greg Forster and his highly accessible new book, *The Contested Public Square: The Crisis of Christianity and Politics*. While Forster originally set out to write a book on the political thought of America's founding fathers, he soon realized that he could not make a sufficiently persuasive case without referencing historical events in a backwards leapfrog through time.

"I couldn't explain Madison without explaining Locke; I couldn't explain Locke without explaining Luther; I couldn't explain Luther without explaining Aquinas; and I couldn't explain Aquinas without explaining Augustine, Clement, Paul, Peter, Aristotle, Plato and Socrates," Forster explains.

Thus in *The Contested Public Square*, Forster traces the development of Christian political thought from the beginning, producing not so much a compendium of dusty facts, but rather an engaging narrative that frames the harrowing relationship between Christians, Scripture and governments throughout the ages. It is only in light of this history, Forster contends, that we should proceed to navigate the ongoing tension between religious freedom and liberal democracy today.

Forster highlights such key events and concepts as:

- The persecution of the first-century church and its affect on political identity
- How early theologians interacted with old philosophers
- Augustine's concept of "dual citizenship"
- The Medieval church's significant articulation of natural law
- How the reformers interacted with their respective nation-states
- The Enlightenment and the duty of toleration
- The Revolutionary War and justified rebellion against the government
- The crisis of totalitarianism in the twentieth century (plus Romanticism, Marxism, utilitarianism, pietism and traditionalism!)

Whether it's a first-time look or a helpful refresher course, Forster's latest work will be of help to all who seek a thorough knowledge and understanding of the major players and big ideas of Christian political thought.

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