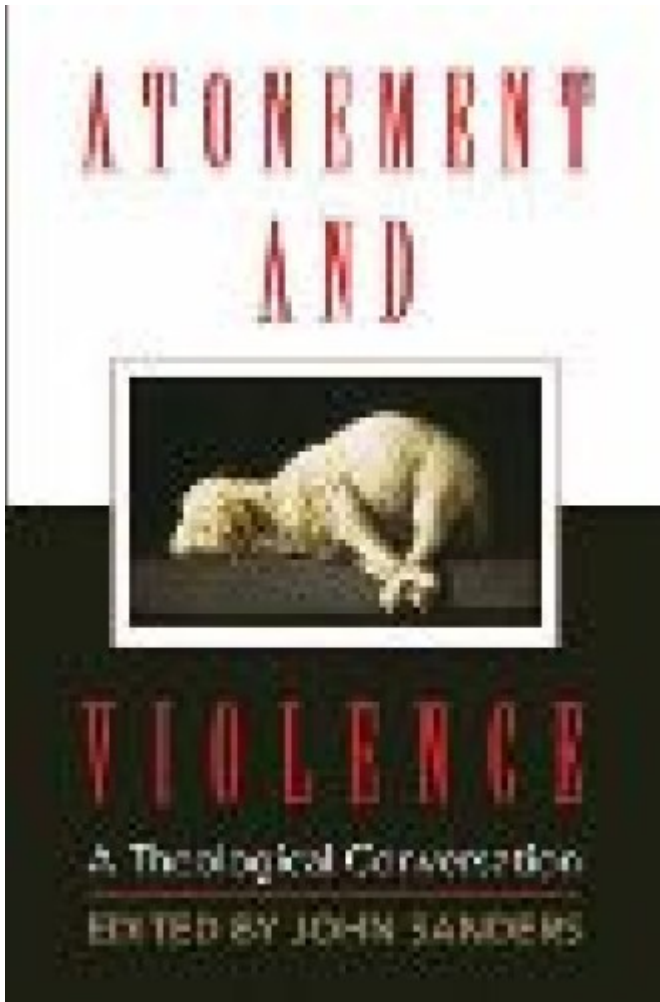


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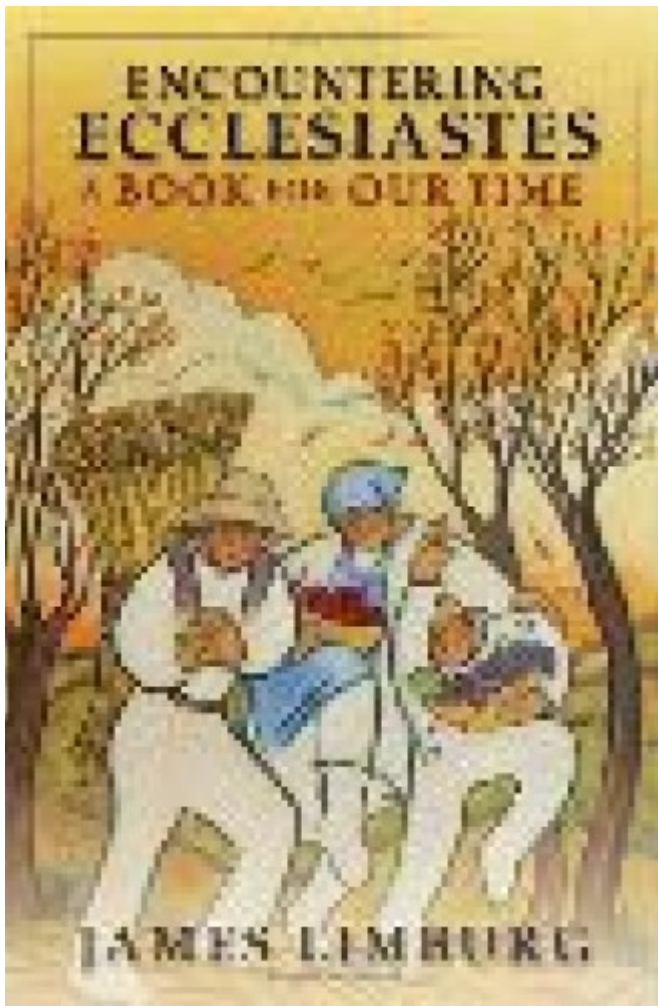
Books in the [November 28, 2006](#) issue

In Review



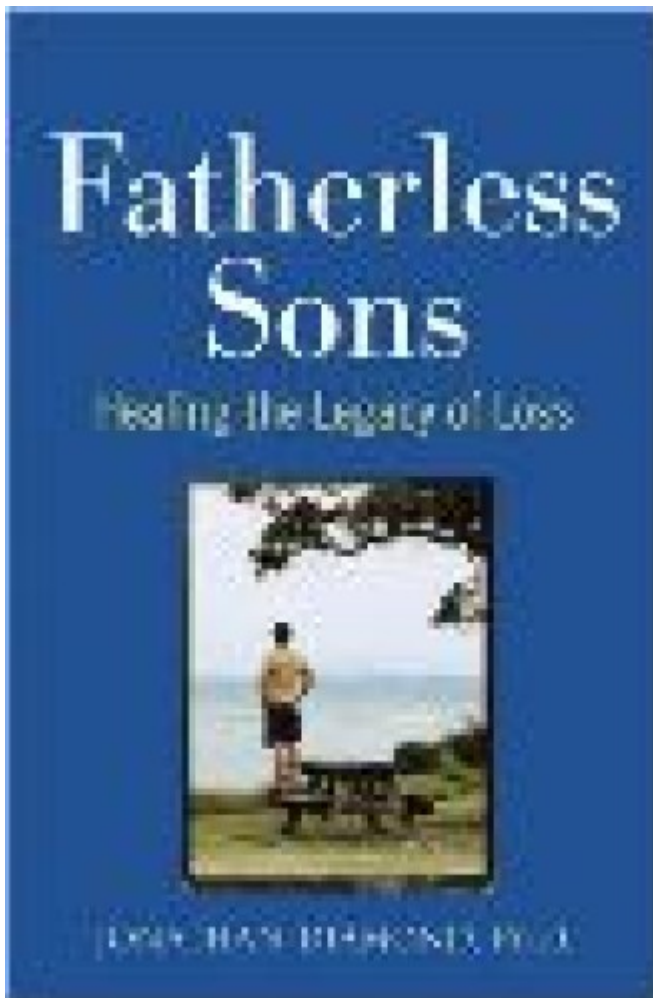
Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation

John Sanders
Abingdon



Encountering Ecclesiastes: A Book for Our Time

James Limburg
Eerdmans



Fatherless Sons: Healing the Legacy of Loss

Jonathan Diamond
John Wiley

This series of thoughtful essays by evangelical and Mennonite scholars explores alternatives to the Anselmian account of what Christ did to save us. Hans Boersma looks for a way to preserve some form of the substitutionary concept of the atonement but with less emphasis on violence. J. Denny Weaver and Thomas Finger explore variations on the *Christus Victor* model. T. Scott Daniels discusses how liturgy affects thought about the atonement and draws on the work of René Girard to point in some new directions. Each essayist responds to the other three. Traditional theories of substitutionary atonement are under wide challenge these days, and this book helpfully sets out the problems and some of the proposed solutions.

Qoheleth seems like such a dismal and dark book to many Christians. And indeed, the theme of *hevel* (vanity), which suggests that life is without substance and is fleeting, runs through this book like a pedal point in an organ composition. But Limburg, emeritus professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, who has spent a life studying and teaching Ecclesiastes, argues that this constant “bass note” is not the book’s main theme. Rather, what Qoheleth teaches is that we should joyfully embrace life—in the face of our own mortality—while revering and remembering the God who created us. Written for laypeople, this work would make a good choice for an adult Bible study group.

Diamond is a psychotherapist whose father, a popular Princeton University professor, was abusive. Hence, Diamond deals with the loss of fathers not just through death or abandonment, but also through emotional distance or abuse. Woven into his wise counsel about how to heal the hurts and losses in the father-son relationship are Diamond’s own stories and the stories of many of his clients, with the hopeful message that sons don’t have to repeat the sins of their fathers.