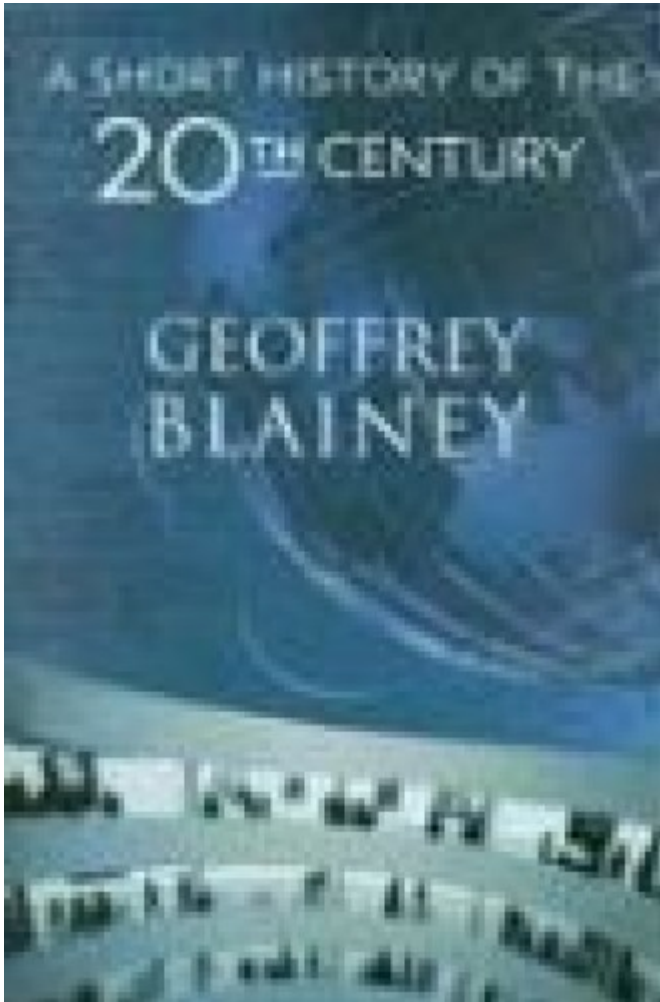


# BookMarks

Books in the [June 12, 2007](#) issue

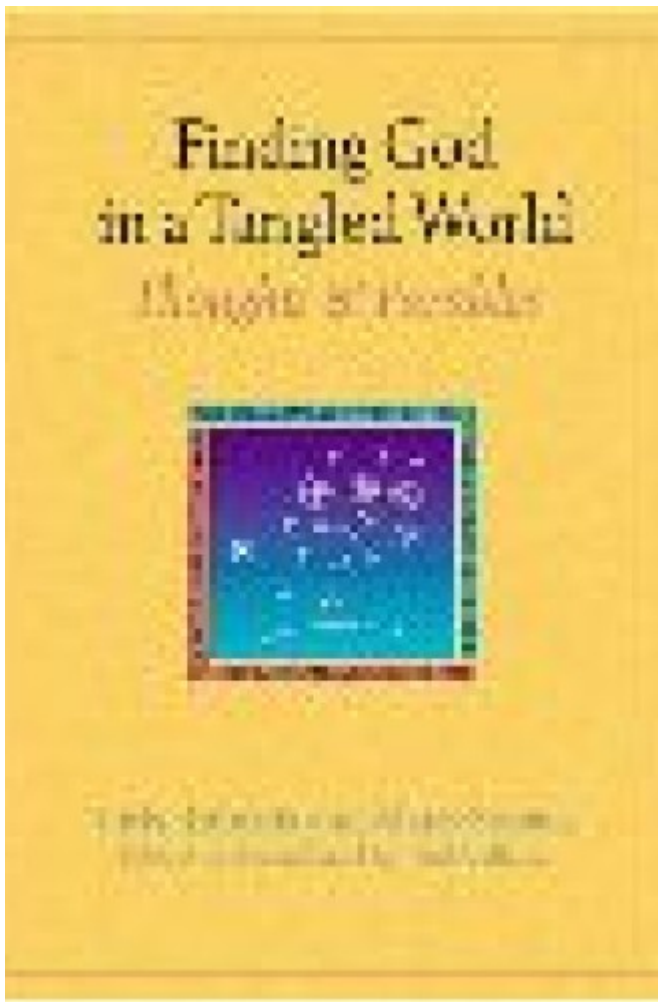
## In Review



### **A Short History of the Twentieth Century**

Geoffrey Blainey

Ivan R. Dee



## **Finding God in a Tangled World: Thoughts and Parables**

Juris Rubenis and Maris Subacs  
Paraclete

This is not history for dummies. Writing with great sophistication and grace, Blainey weaves together the momentous events of the 20th century with insights into what life was like for common people and the effects of new technologies and medical advances. He is not content simply to narrate what happened; he also points out the often ironic consequences of historical events. Appropriately enough, he ends the narration with the resurgence of Islam and the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Blainey, an Australian historian who has taught at Harvard, might be faulted for being too Eurocentric, and yet it was Europe, along with the United States, that shaped the 20th century for good and ill. Although the book has no footnotes, Blainey includes selected resources for each chapter at the back.

Juris Rubenis is pastor of the Martin Luther Church, a fast-growing congregation in Riga, Latvia. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union he was already a public figure, having taken a lead role in Helsinki-86, a human rights organization. Rubenis has developed a ministry with young adults in a post-Marxist society through the use of almost koan-like, pithy sayings in the form of parables, stories and aphorisms: "Reverence for reality spells the end of atheism." "The world makes crèches to make amends for the real Bethlehem." "The world devises pretty crucifixes so that Christianity can base itself on something beautiful, not on something monstrous where you see the evil of the world." This collection of his sayings has sold hundreds of thousands of copies in Latvia.