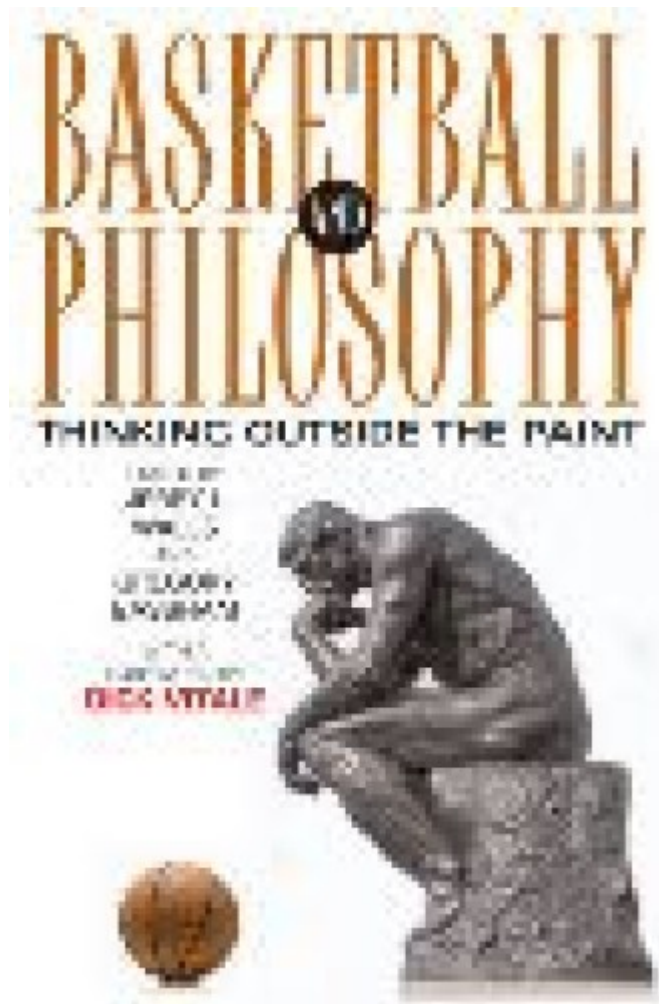


BookMarks

Books in the [August 12, 2008](#) issue

In Review



Basketball and Philosophy: Thinking Outside the Paint

Jerry L. Walls and Gregory Bassham, eds.
University Press of Kentucky



God Against Religion: Rethinking Christian Theology Through Worship

Matthew Myer Boulton
Eerdmans

The impulse to philosophize about sports is often best suppressed—or confined to the back porch. But this essay collection offers some useful and entertaining reflections on such hardwood issues as: Are intentional fouls unethical even if they are strategically effective? What is the connection between luck and skill? What is the difference between an individualistic and a communitarian approach to basketball—and is one approach better than the other? The book even offers an imagined dialogue between Dick Vitale and Billy Packer on what makes the game beautiful.

Faith is grounded in acts of worship, yet patterns of worship are also supremely human constructs and, inevitably, prideful attempts at self-justification before God.

Worship is part of what Karl Barth had in mind when he said that God is “against religion” and that religion itself is “the occasion of sin.” By grace, however, all-too-human worship can also be the occasion for meeting and being reconciled to God. Boulton explores this paradoxical theme with helpful readings of Luther, Calvin and Barth. He draws especially on Luther’s notion of the Christian as simultaneously justified before God and a sinner, applying this insight to worship: it is God who transforms fallen worship into true praise and reconciliation.