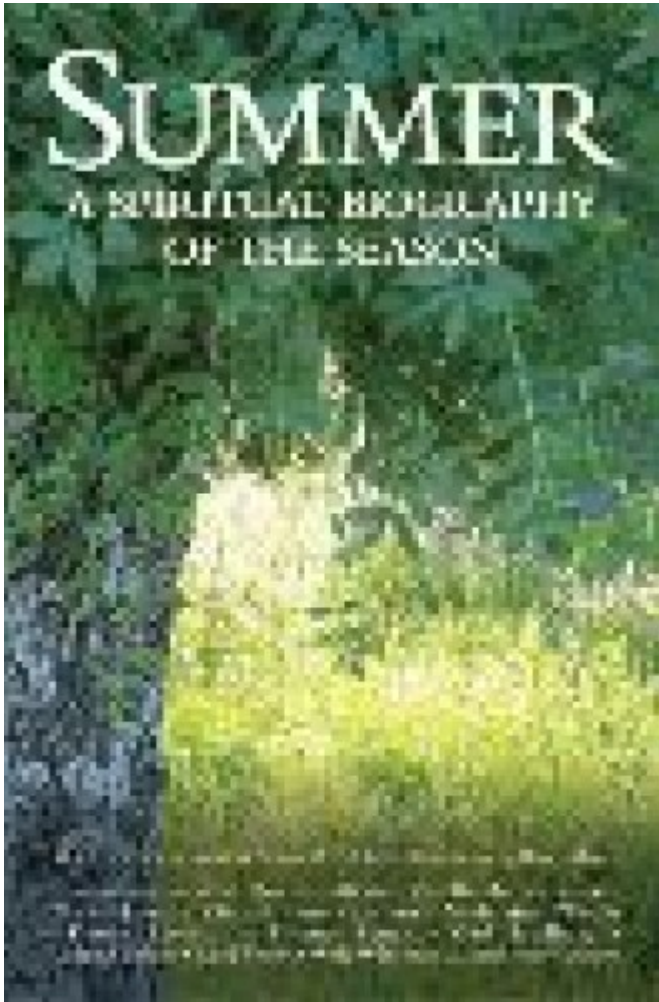


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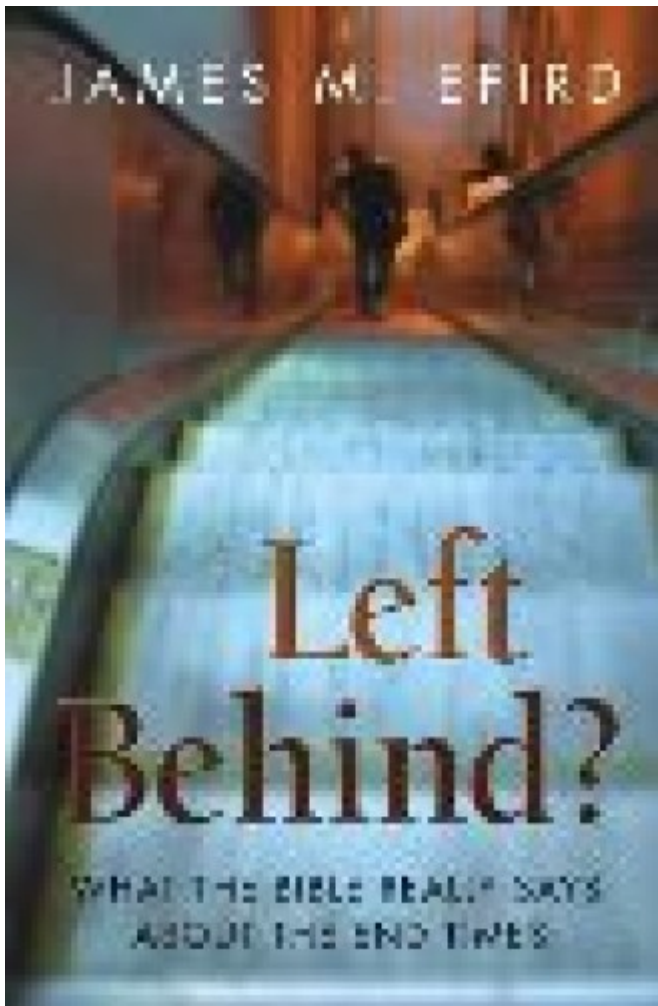
Books in the [May 16, 2006](#) issue

In Review



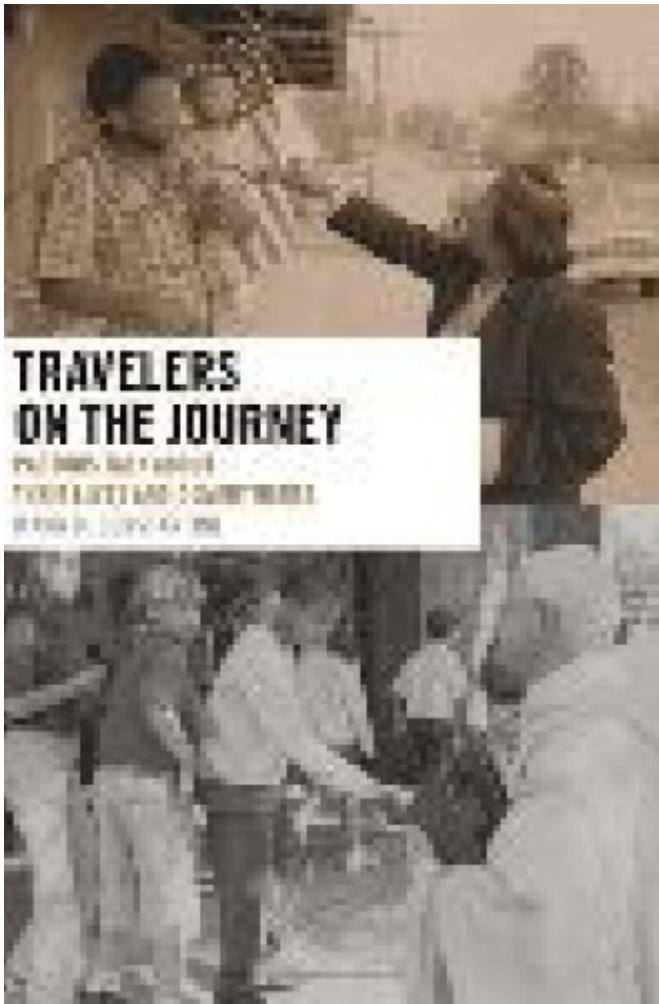
Summer: A Spiritual Biography of the Season

Gary Schmidt and Susan M. Felch
Skylight Paths



Left Behind? What the Bible Really Says About the End Times

James M. Efirm
Smyth & Helwys



Travelers on the Journey: Pastors Talk About Their Lives and Commitments

Mark D. Constantine
Eerdmans

Schmidt and Felch, both of whom teach literature at Calvin College, have produced anthologies of writings—including both prose and poetry—about each of the seasons of the year. *Summer* includes writers as disparate as Anne Lamott, Walt Whitman, N. Scott Momaday and Madeleine L'Engle. The editors contribute introductions to the sources that serve as spiritual reflections on the meaning of the seasons. Of summer, they say that time “does not seem to move; instead, time *collects*, or perhaps it might be better said to *pool*. One of the spiritual lessons of summer is just that: to allow time to pool. To halt in our headlong rush. To be fully in a particular time. To stop long enough to see what lies around us, rather than to be always merely glimpsing.

“Mickey” Efirm has taught a legion of seminarians and many more lay- people. His passion for teaching comes through especially in his teaching about the Bible’s apocalyptic books. He thinks there’s real homiletical gold there, which is being robbed by those he calls “Darbyists,” dispensationalists who follow the teaching of John Nelson Darby as propagated by Hal Lindsey and the Left Behind novels. Efirm provides an accessible history of that movement and the beginnings of a biblical response. Study questions and his readable style make this book ideal for ministers or laypeople.

This book offers a fascinating glimpse into the lives of six pastors who have rolled up their sleeves to engage in social-justice ministry in their widely diverse settings in the U.S. South. Constantine, a sociologist whose observations bookend the work, wisely lets the pastors speak for themselves: “It is far more compelling to hear . . . the daughter of sharecropper parents than to read a white, middle-class man’s interpretation of her experience.” The bulk of the book consists of long interviews with the six pastors themselves, including a Hispanic *pastora* from a large Congregational church in a southern university town, the pastor of a historically significant black church in Atlanta, and a Franciscan friar in a large parish in a postindustrial city where recently Hispanics became the majority. *Travelers on the Journey* is a resource for pastors seeking to expand their churches’ social-justice ministries without burning themselves out.