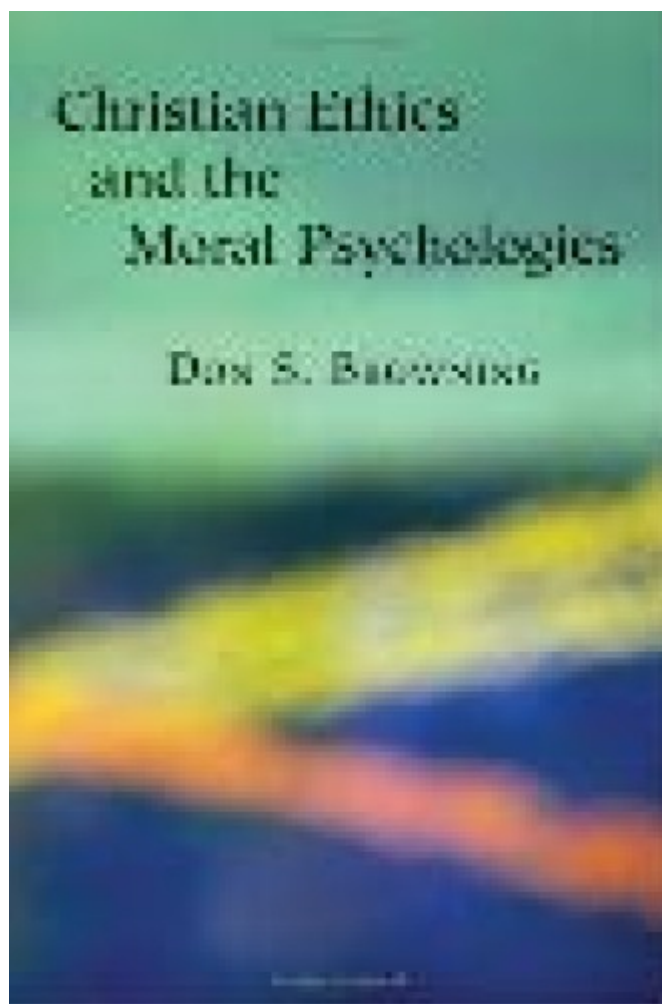


Take and read

selected by [Robin Lovin](#) in the [May 1, 2007](#) issue

In Review



Christian Ethics and the Moral Psychologies

Don S. Browning
Eerdmans



God's Joust, God's Justice: Law and Religion in the Western Tradition

John Witte Jr.
Eerdmans

OVERCOMING OUR EVIL

Human Nature and
Spiritual Exercises in
Xunzi and Augustine

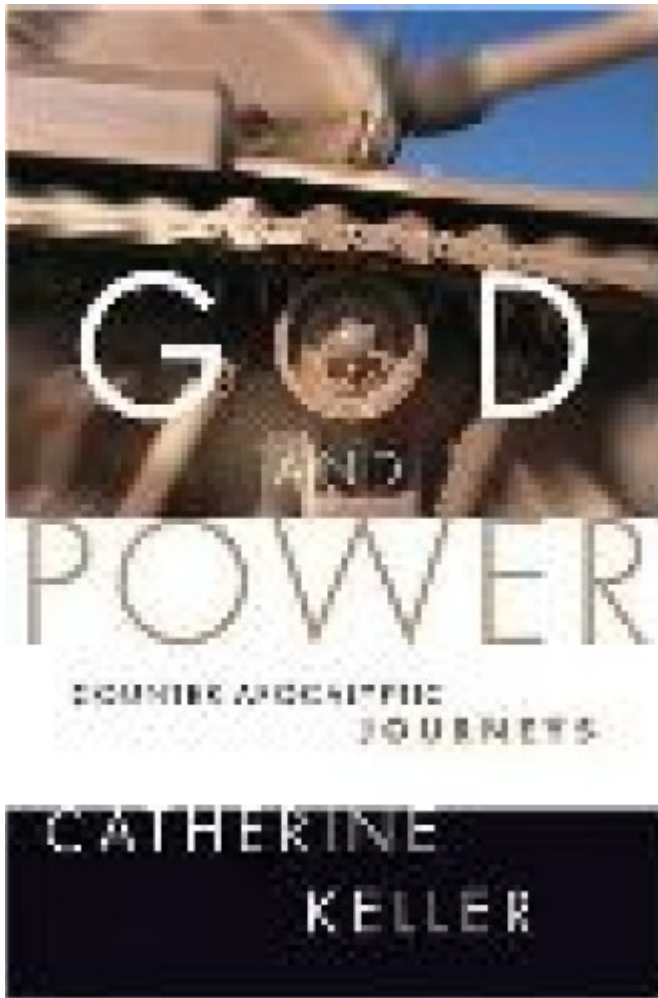
Overcoming Our Evil: Human Nature and Spiritual Exercises in Xunzi and Augustine

Aaron Stalnaker
Georgetown University Press



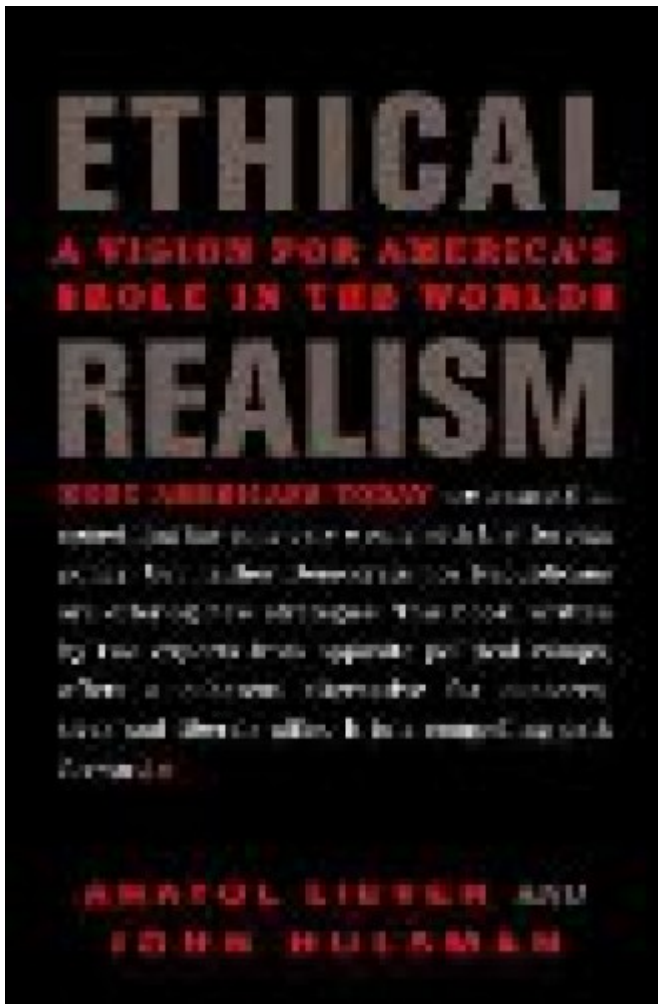
Apocalypse Now? Reflections on Faith in a Time of Terror

Duncan Forrester
Ashgate



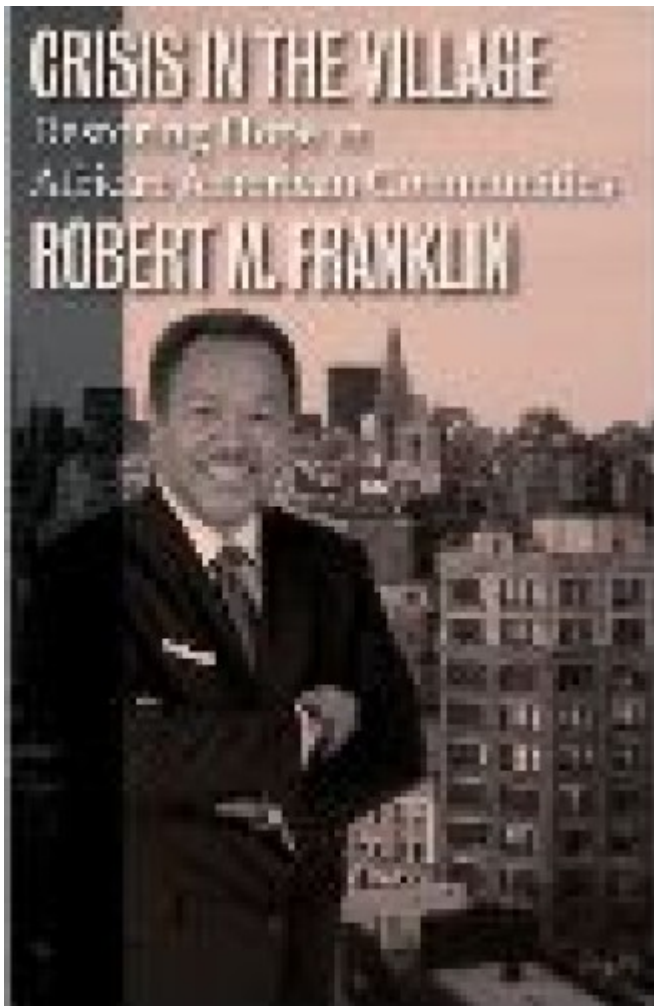
God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys

Catherine Keller
Fortress



Ethical Realism: A Vision for America's Role in the World

Anatol Lieven and John Hulsman
Pantheon



Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities

Robert M. Franklin
Fortress



Justice in a Global Economy: Strategies for Home, Community, and World

Pamela K. Brubaker, Rebecca Todd Peters and Laura A. Stivers, eds.
Westminster John Knox

Comparative and interdisciplinary studies provide important new perspectives on Christian ethics in these books. Browning offers a masterful survey of the interaction of psychology and ethics in Freud, Erikson, Kohlberg, Gilligan and others. The wide range of theories coheres around Browning's own integration of psychological and ethical ways of interpreting human experience. Stalnaker has his own way of tackling the difficult questions of comparative method, but he engages Augustine and Xunzi on their terms and provides a fresh perspective on Augustine's understanding of evil.

Whereas Browning and Stalnaker develop new approaches to the study of Christian ethics, Witte demonstrates the value of thorough knowledge of familiar material. In topical essays dealing with human rights, American history and the family, Witte traces the development of Western thought about religion and law, concentrating on the period from the Reformation to the present. There is much in this volume that clergy, lawyers and political activists should discuss together.

The search for a workable global politics after 9/11 continues. These two books argue that the war on terrorism has taken on the apocalyptic image of a battle between good and evil, with disastrous results for faith and ethics. Forrester, whose global perspective has given us important studies of justice and human dignity, now turns his attention to the political and religious battle lines that have formed since 2001. In *Apocalypse Now?* he criticizes political claims that turn the war on terror into a religious crusade while ignoring the judgment on imperial power that is central to the Christian apocalypse. Keller focuses more closely on American politics and culture in *God and Power*. She explores apocalyptic ideas that have become part of our consciousness and affect political choices in ways that those who deploy the language of good and evil do not fully understand. Forrester and Keller both have a postmodern critical perspective on our political thinking, so it is surprising that both of them also find new value in the work of Reinhold Niebuhr, whose political realism included a counterapocalyptic warning about the temptations of idolatry in international politics.

Reinterpretations of Niebuhr for a post-9/11 world also appear in more secular works. In *Ethical Realism*, Lieven and Hulsman offer a detailed prescription for a foreign policy based on Niebuhr's realism that would be appropriate for today's world. While their policy study understandably does not focus on Niebuhr's theology, Lieven and Hulsman reinforce Keller's reminder that religious ideas, apocalyptic or realistic, are deeply embedded in the ways that Americans think about their global political choices.

Hope and fear have not disappeared from the domestic political landscape during the war on terrorism. Franklin brings these issues back into the spotlight in *Crisis in the Village*, focusing on African-American families, churches and colleges. These key institutions have nurtured pride, independence and hope in the community, and Franklin proposes a restoration of that mission. Each chapter begins with a section on "what everyone should know" about African-American families, churches and colleges. The book is written for a wide audience; all churches and community

leaders will find important ideas in this guide to renewal.

Academic ethics tends either to lead or to lag behind public concern about specific issues. Michael Northcott, Ted Peters, Sallie McFague and others led a theological reassessment of our thinking about the environment that predated widespread interest in climate change and global warming. Today we await new work in Christian ethics that will connect in practical and critical ways to this growing public discussion. One recent book that will be a great help to those who want to both educate and act is *Justice in a Global Economy*. This collection of essays focuses equally on strategies that can be used in individual households, local communities and public policy settings. Constituting far more than a how-to manual, the essays provide an introduction to the theological, economic and scientific questions involved in creating a sustainable and equitable global economy.