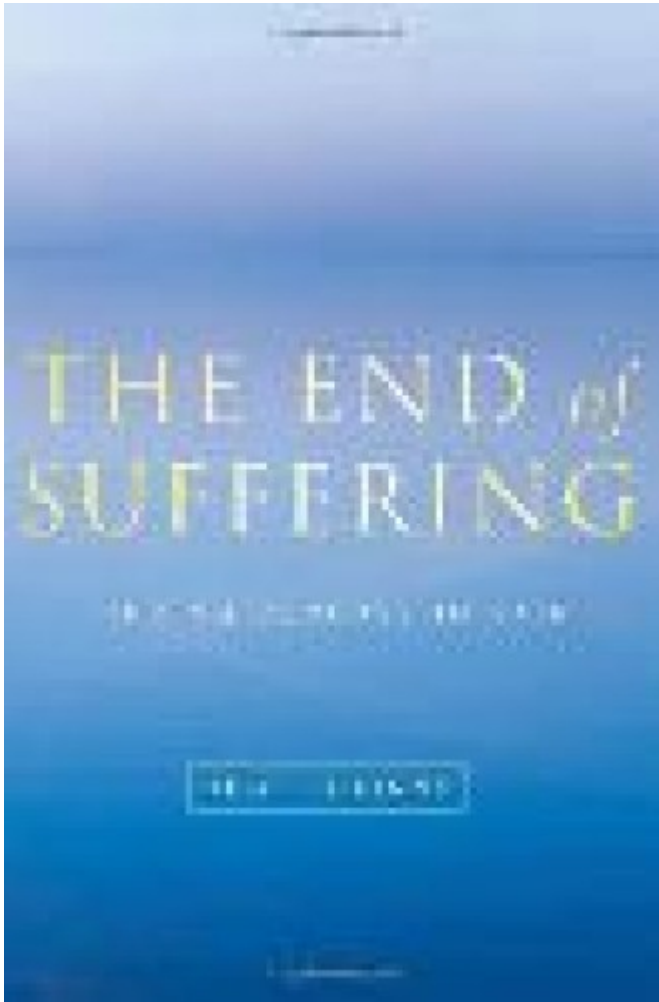


# BookMarks

Books in the [January 12, 2010](#) issue

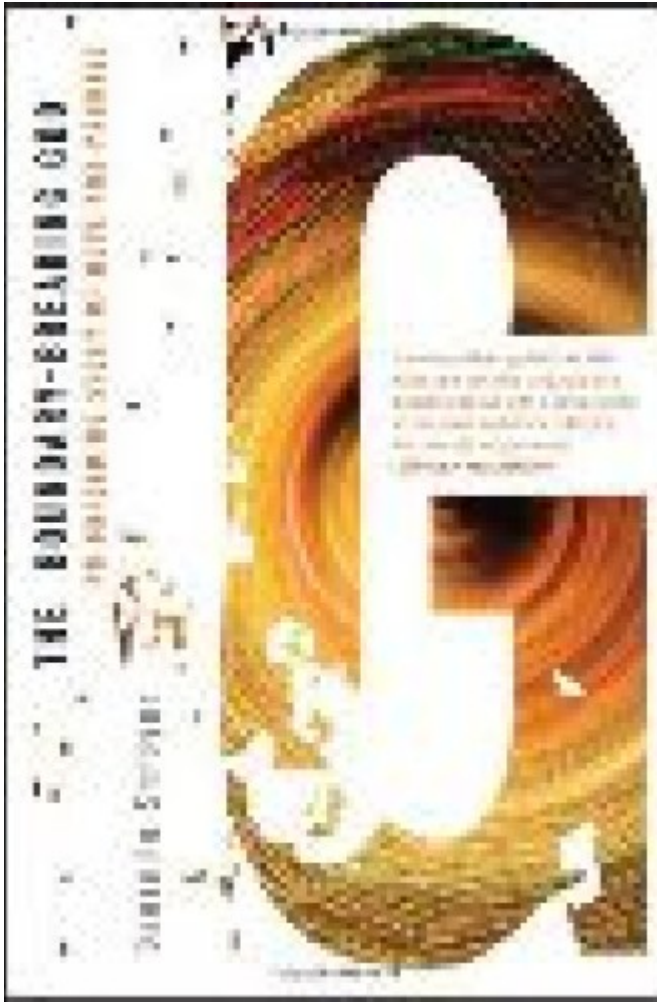
## In Review



### **The End of Suffering: Finding Purpose in Pain**

Scott Cairns

Paraclete



## **The Boundary-Breaking God: An Unfolding Story of Hope and Promise**

Danielle Shroyer  
Jossey-Bass

Cairns draws extensively on Eastern Orthodox teachers to discuss the “problem of pain.” Pain, Cairns says, is a great teacher, a way of coming to life and awakening. All pain that is experienced in the world is our pain, and we are both the cause of that pain and the remedy for it. “An isolated individual does not a person make,” he writes, noting that he himself spent a “good—or rather a decidedly *bad*—ten years or so without a body; I was a severed member, languishing alone.” The only, and deepest, remedy for our pain is to use it to propel ourselves into communion with other people and with God. Cairns is a good teacher, humble and forthright. At times, especially at the beginning of the essay, his thick language is a slog, but ironically, as the theology deepens, the pace quickens.

Shroyer, an evangelical pastor and a leader at Emergent Village, says that God has been and continues to be in the business of crossing boundaries and breaking down barriers: the biblical story “is always expanding, growing, moving, and being created, even this very moment.” This is a breezy, fast-paced book. While Shroyer notes up front her dependence on Jürgen Moltmann’s “theology of hope,” Moltmann never becomes a visible conversation partner. Instead, she alternates stories from her own experience with the biblical story. While the book is theologically progressive, it also shows a pre-critical sensibility. In its simplicity, this book reminds us that God is not static, and that our hope lies in the work of God, who pushes onward into the future, beckoning us to follow. At a time when many people simply don’t know the biblical story, Shroyer provides an excellent, brief introduction.