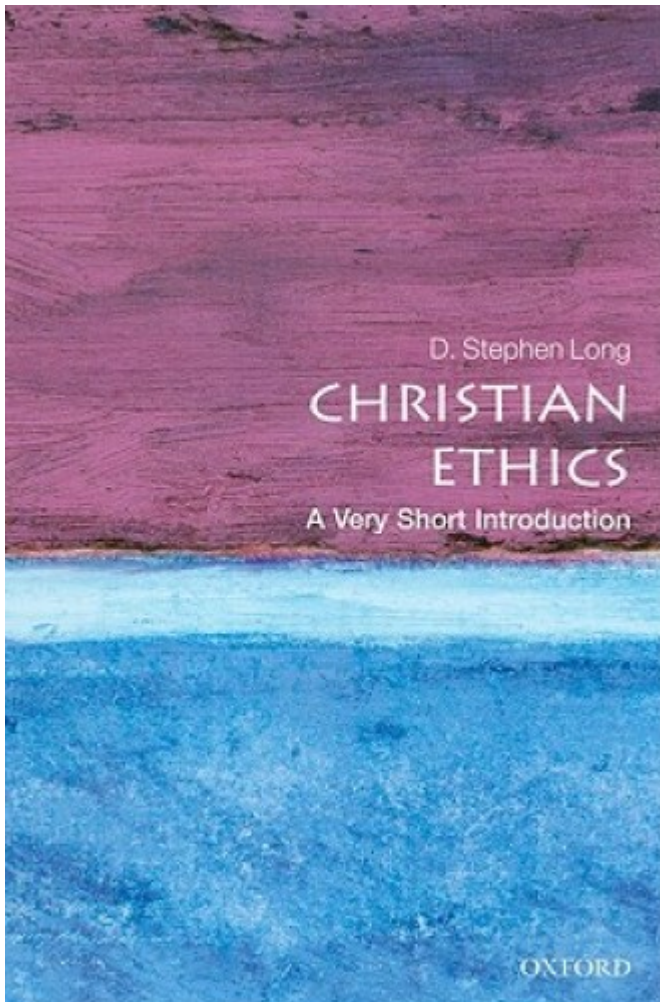


# Ethics

selected by [D. Brent Laytham](#) in the [May 3, 2011](#) issue

## In Review



## Christian Ethics

By D. Stephen Long  
Oxford University Press

ESTHER D. REED



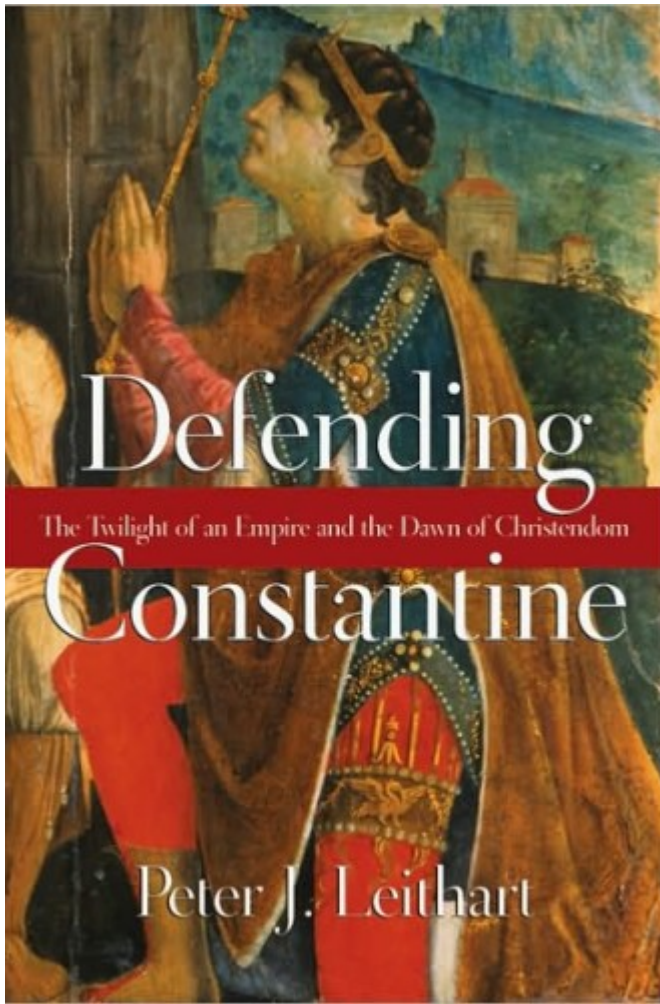
# Good Work

CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN  
THE WORKPLACE

## **Good Work**

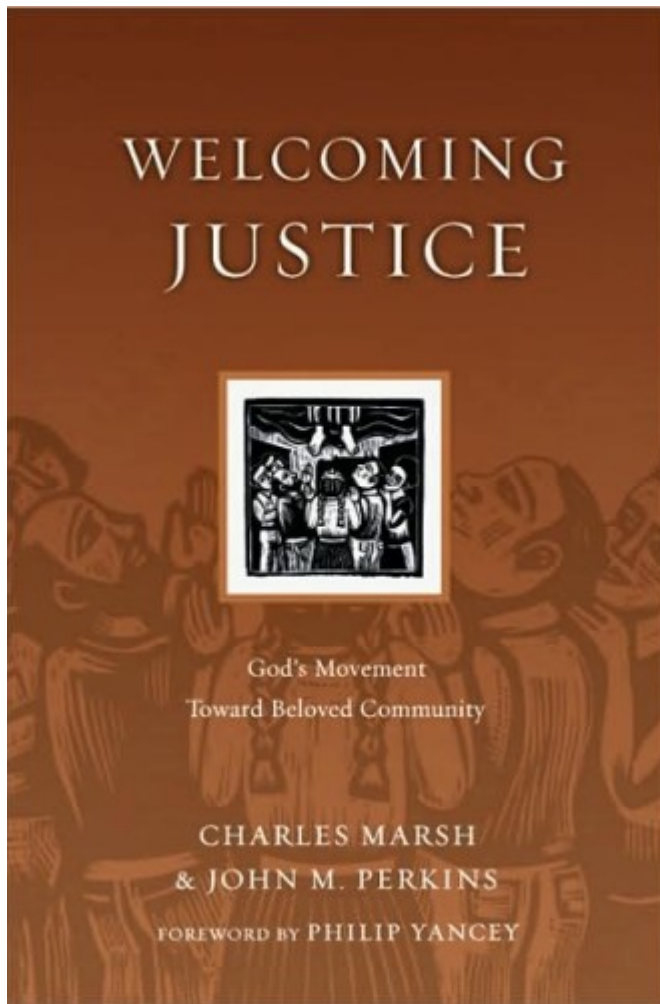
By Esther D. Reed

Baylor University Press



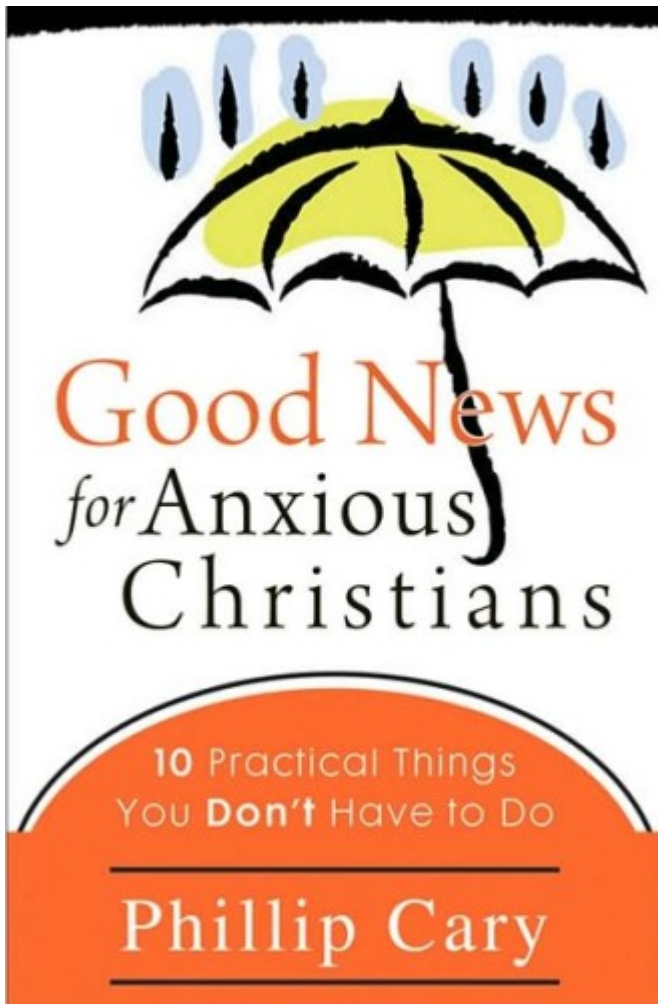
## **Defending Constantine**

By Peter J. Leithart  
IVP Academic



## **Welcoming Justice**

By Charles Marsh and John Perkins  
IVP Academic



## **Good News for Anxious Christians**

By Phillip Cary  
Brazos

MICHELLE A. GONZALEZ

# shopping

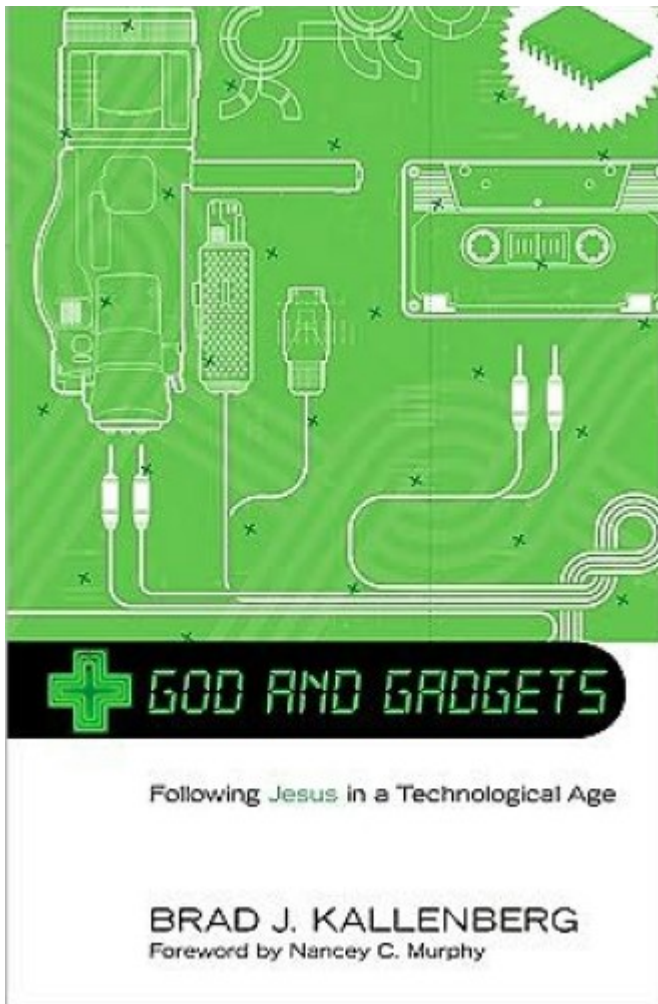
COMPASS

Christian Explorations of Daily Living

## **Shopping**

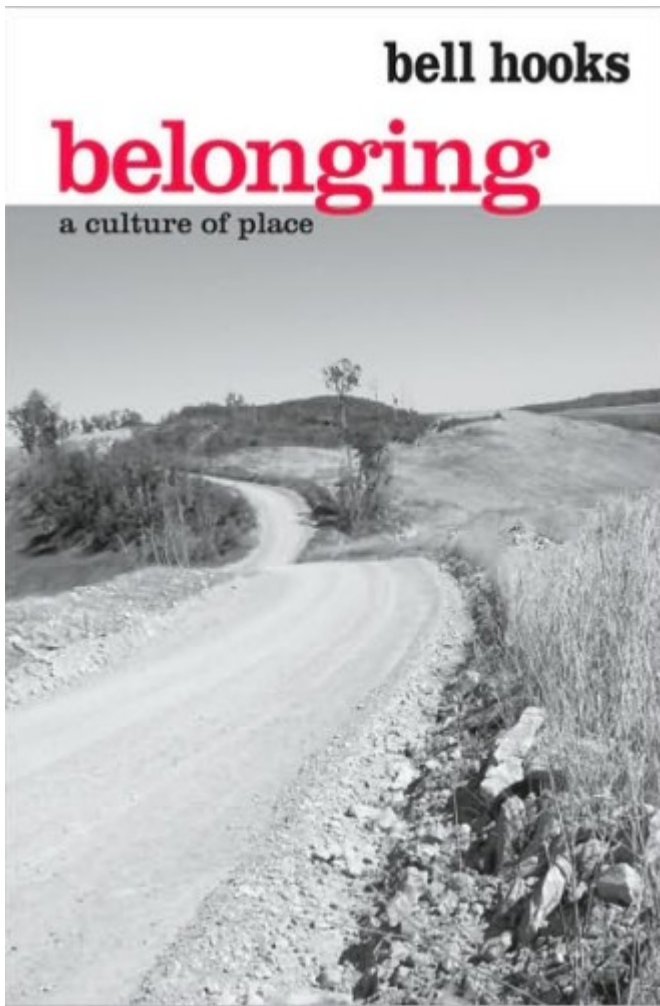
By Michelle A. Gonzalez  
Fortress





## God and Gadgets

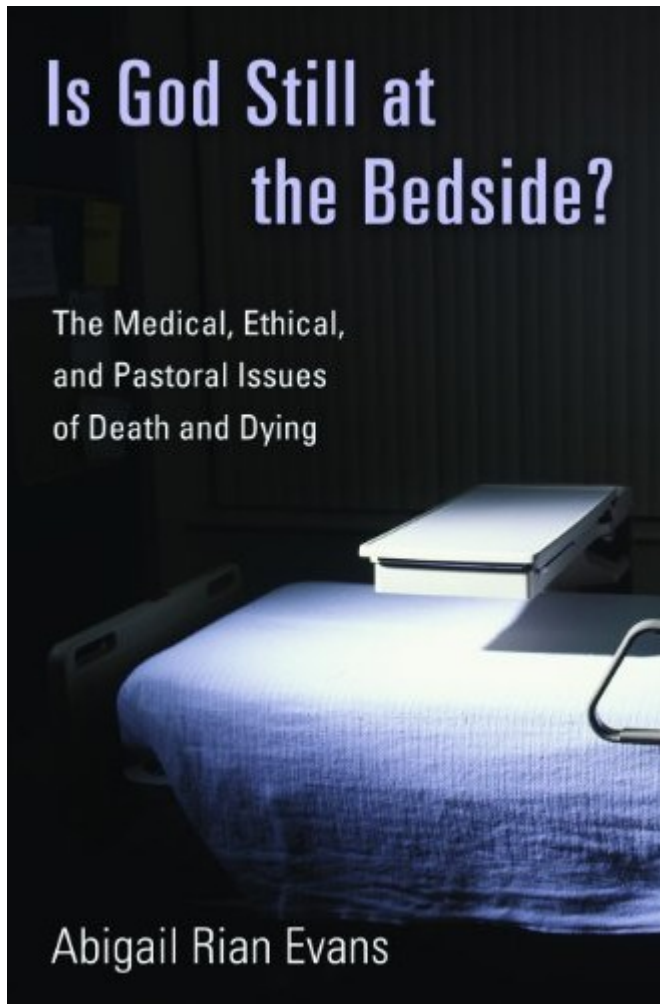
By Brad J. Kallenberg  
Cascade



## **Belonging**

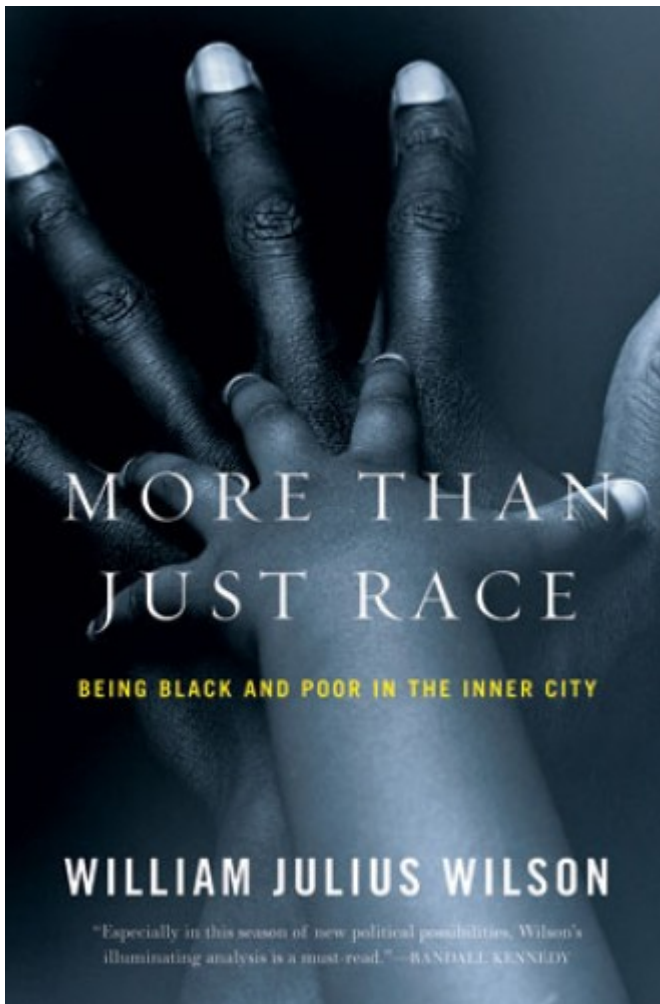
By bell hooks  
Routledge





## **Is God Still at the Bedside?**

By Abigail Rian Evans  
Eerdmans



## **More Than Just Race**

By William Julius Wilson  
Norton

*Christian Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*, by D. Stephen Long. Beginning with the challenge pressed by atheist Christopher Hitchens and engaging Christianity's historic failures, Long brings elegant clarity to the project of Christian ethics. The book is especially strong in mediating the Jewish origins of Christian ethics, in focusing on ethics' theological center and in unveiling the conundrumlike logic of modern and postmodern critiques. For Long, Christian ethics is about the journey of a people and all creation toward God's holy city.

*Good Work: Christian Ethics in the Workplace*, by Esther D. Reed. Thinking about work is a kind of work—needed and difficult, yet refreshing when it is done as well as Reed has done it here. She theologizes about work in relation to Sabbath rest and

Christ's resurrection, demonstrating along the way that worship properly shapes work, that work properly fosters justice and that heaven's rest frees us for the work of mending the world. Her thoughtful discussion of vocation refuses individualism, classism and clericalism by affirming the priority of the church's calling to serve the gospel.

*Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*, by Peter J. Leithart. This magisterial salvo has the form of a theological biography of Constantine. Its content is that and much more. Leithart defends Constantine by launching a polemical attack on John Howard Yoder's historical accounts of Constantinianism. Because Yoder's history is wrong, Leithart argues, his social ethics are too. Leithart proposes "a *purified* Constantinianism" in which the church is Jesus' true city, his death is the one true sacrifice and his people are "baptized for battle." Friend or foe, every reader will find this argument provocative in crucial ways.

*Welcoming Justice: God's Movement Toward Beloved Community*, by Charles Marsh and John Perkins. In this book, alternately authored chapters narrate the authors' respective journeys toward beloved community, which also turned out to be a journey toward one another. Along the way, they offer a theologically critical reading of what God did in the civil rights movement and of what God is still up to in the face of ongoing injustice. Marsh affirms the deep need for church, contemplation and humility, and Perkins reaffirms the centrality of place. Together they challenge us to recognize that welcoming justice will require that we be converted.

*Good News for Anxious Christians: 10 Practical Things You Don't Have to Do*, by Phillip Cary. Cary takes aim at what he calls the "new evangelical theology" because in his view it undermines psychological health, moral character and spiritual life. Each chapter dispels a distorted understanding of Christian discipleship, such as "hearing God's voice in your heart," "letting God take control" and "finding God's will for your life" and "applying it." Cary liberates persons enthralled by a god of spiritual techniques and practical sermons. Century readers may not generally need Cary's antidote, but they know and love plenty of people who do; this is medicine for ministry.

*Shopping*, by Michelle A. Gonzalez. Shoppers are sinners (like everyone), but not all shopping is sinful. Such is the balanced approach Gonzalez offers. Deftly weaving personal narrative, statistics and a description of the commercialization of the *quinceañera* (the special celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday among many

Hispanics), she reveals the theological dimensions of materialism and globalization. Turning to scripture and Catholic social teaching, she connects social justice and everyday living (including shopping). Finally, with Augustine and Irenaeus as guides through the world of fashion, Gonzalez invites us to celebrate bodies and beauty one purchase at a time.

*God and Gadgets: Following Jesus in a Technological Age*, by Brad J. Kallenberg. Kallenberg reveals to us the moral yet invisible character of technology, beginning with the bewitching power of light bulbs, and subsequently New York City bridges, the St. Francis Dam, virtual reality and Twitter. Technology invites reductionistic views of the world, standardizations that diminish our humanity and instrumental notions that it is always morally neutral or that it can save us. Reading this book might save us from presuming that communicating and living the gospel is compatible with any and every technology. That would be true only if technology were not among the principalities and powers that do not yet fully serve God.

*Belonging: A Culture of Place*, by bell hooks. The ability of bell hooks to weave analysis of race, gender, class, economy, culture and environment into seamless narratives of discovery should hold us rapt. The problem, however, is that these days—in a culture that valorizes autonomy and an economy that prizes mobility—nothing much can hold us at all. In 20 essays that circle around the necessity of place, family, memory and wholeness, hooks tells and retells her return to Kentucky as an invitation to the restoration of hope. Her two chapters of "healing talk" with Wendell Berry invite us to hear "beneath our words the possibility of making beloved community."

*Is God Still at the Bedside? The Medical, Ethical, and Pastoral Issues of Death and Dying*, by Abigail Rian Evans. This massive resource offers a tour through the theological, medical, experiential and pastoral dimensions of dying. The entire work grapples with the moral meaning of death and dying. Evans situates her project on theological bedrock: life is a gift from God. This provides a perspective from which to explore contemporary conundrums such as end-of-life choices, organ donation and euthanasia. The book is rich with material from various ecclesial bodies, as well as ten appendices with resources for clergy and congregants.

*More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*, by William Julius Wilson. In the nature versus nurture debate, Wilson argues both sides, and in a sociologically sophisticated way. Framing the question as the causal impact of social structure and cultural forces on inequality and poverty, he repeatedly shows that

culture matters but that structure matters even more. Moreover, damaging cultural forms—like the culture of distrust among inner city residents—are structurally generated. Yet because "the hand of racial prejudice is not readily visible" in many of the structures that presently create and sustain black poverty in the inner city, political debates have polarized over rather than coalesced around the linkage of race and economic inequality. Wilson's book goes a long way toward reforging that link.