



Southwestern

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Christ and Culture Revisited



EDITORIAL

The Spring 2022 issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* is focused on the theme of “Christ and Culture Revisited.” Richard Niebuhr wrote a classic work titled *Christ and Culture* in 1951. In the book, Niebuhr provided a thorough overview and analysis of five different approaches that Christians have taken throughout church history in their response to and engagement with culture through the years. Christians currently find themselves in a key cultural moment, a time described by philosophers and sociologists as “a secular age.”

In a recent article in *First Things*, Aaron Renn notes that secularization in America has now entered a third phase. During phase one, which he labels the Positive World, being a Christian was viewed as a force for good. During the second phase, called the Neutral World, Renn observes that society was generally ambivalent about the Christian faith, seeing it as one option among several others in a pluralistic context. In this current phase, Renn claims that being a Christian is now understood as something quite negative, even a threat to the public moral good. Considering these developments, it seems appropriate to once again revisit the question of the relationship between the church and culture.

Ted Cabal, professor of philosophy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has helpfully provided the first article in this issue on the topic of “Christ and Culture Revisited Again in the 2020s.” Timothy Padgett, who serves with the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, insightfully explores the issue of “Evangelicals and Politics.” Borrowing from his highly regarded publication on *Cultural Intelligence*, Darrell Bock, senior research professor of New Testament and executive director of cultural engagement at Dallas Theological Seminary, has offered a thoughtful piece on “Cultural Intelligence and Engagement.”

Two outstanding Baptist thinkers have given us updates on two important Baptist characteristics. Nathan Finn, provost and dean of the faculty at North Greenville University, has authored “Church and State:

A Baptist Perspective.” Malcolm Yarnell, research professor of theology at Southwestern, has addressed the important theme of religious liberty by using the work of George Truett as a lens through which to think about this topic.

Two Southwestern Seminary faculty members have written our two final articles for this issue. Ashley Allen, assistant professor of women’s ministries, with conviction, has contributed an article on “The Sacredness of Life in a Culture of Death.” New Testament professor Jim Wicker has employed his interpretation skills and his knowledge of New Testament backgrounds to help us think wisely about the topic of “Christian Citizenship.” We are grateful to each of these fine scholars for outstanding contributions to this issue of the journal.

This issue also includes several book reviews on a variety of topics. At the conclusion of this issue, readers will find the results of the second annual *SWJT* Book of the Year Awards. The members of the Southwestern Seminary faculty have once again evaluated dozens of significant publications from 2021 and have selected the substantive work by Douglas J. Moo, of Wheaton College, on *A Theology of Paul and His Letters* (Zondervan). Several outstanding volumes have also been selected in the other key categories. We congratulate Professor Moo and these other gifted authors.

I want to offer my sincere thanks to associate editors Andrew Streett and Robert Caldwell on their conscientious work on this important issue. Additional appreciation is expressed to James A. Smith Sr., Ashley Allen, and Wang Yong Lee for their careful oversight of the various processes related to this publication. We pray that readers will find this timely issue to be helpful in their lives and their service.

Soli Deo Gloria

David S. Dockery