

Beyond the Modern Age: An Archaeology of Contemporary Culture

Available May 23, 2017

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“Even beyond our students, our sense is that many people today lack a coherent worldview that could enable them to better understand today’s turbulent, wounded world and work toward healing and solutions. What about you?”

Is There a Way Out of the Crises of Modernity?

Bob Goudzwaard and Craig G. Bartholomew have spent decades listening to their students and reflecting on modern thought and society. In *Beyond the Modern Age*, they explore the complexities of modernity and seek solutions to the crises of the current era. Through an archaeological investigation and critique of four modern worldviews, Goudzwaard and Bartholomew demonstrate the need for new ways of thinking and living that overcome the relentless drive of progress. They find guidance in the work of René Girard on desire, Abraham Kuyper on pluralism and poverty, and Philip Rieff on culture and religion.

“The need we are addressing is the widespread unease with modernity and what to do about it,” the authors write. *Beyond the Modern Age* includes the following distinctive features:

- Pushes readers to a nuanced analysis and evaluation of modernity
- Brings together ancient and modern resources for moving beyond modernity
- Grounded in dialogue with students from around the world about key perspectives on contemporary life
- Demonstrates the interrelatedness of modern problems such as poverty, insufficient health care, economic inequality, and environmental destruction
- Takes time to focus on climate change in particular, showing how such a challenging modern problem is not insoluble

The combination of expertise and life experience the authors bring to this book sets the groundwork for the honest, interdisciplinary, and global dialogue needed for nuanced engagement with the ideologies and worldviews shaping the modern age.

Goudzwaard is professor emeritus of economics and social philosophy at the Free University in Amsterdam. He is a member of parliament in the Netherlands and has been deeply involved in international development issues, including chairing a two-year consultation between the World Council of Churches, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. He lives in South Africa and is the author of *Capitalism and Progress* and *Hope in Troubled Times*.

Bartholomew is H. Evan Runner Professor of Philosophy and professor of religion at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. He was born and grew up in apartheid South Africa. He is dean of the St Georges Centre for Biblical and Public Theology as well as adjunct faculty at Trinity College, Bristol. He has written and edited numerous books, including *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, *The Drama of Scripture* (with Michael Goheen), *Old Testament Wisdom Literature* (with Ryan O’Dowd), and a commentary on Ecclesiastes.

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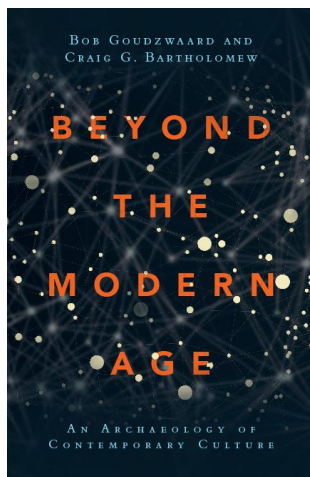


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“A Prophetic Prescription for Our (Post)modern Malaise”

“If you want to know about water, don’t ask a fish’ applies to the Western church perhaps more than any other. If you want to know about Western culture, don’t ask Western Christians, because they are swimming in it. And this is so dangerous because the gospel is embodied in this culture and thus vulnerable to accommodation to cultural idolatry. Goudzwaard and Bartholomew are two of the very best at interpreting Western culture. They dig deep to the religious foundations of our culture, which is so important for the church’s mission today. This is a very important book!”

— **Michael W. Goheen**, director of theological education, MTC, scholar-in-residence, Surge Network, author of *A Light to the Nations* and *Introducing Christian Mission Today*

“This new book by Bob Goudzwaard and Craig Bartholomew provides an insightful analysis of the world in which we live — its paradoxes and the various worldviews that undergird our beliefs and practices. This timely book also offers a prophetic prescription for our (post)modern malaise, including both an honest critique of what ails us and hope-filled guidance about practical ways forward. Richly informed by the Bible and the Christian tradition, this urgent call to faithful countercultural discipleship is highly recommended.”

— **Steve Bouma-Prediger**, professor of religion, Hope College, author of *For the Beauty of the Earth*

“*Beyond the Modern Age* is essential reading for all seeking to navigate their way through the complex cultural and worldview issues associated with the modernization of our world. Offering skillful and insightful analysis shaped and informed by the Kuyperian tradition, Goudzwaard and Bartholomew guide readers through the worlds of philosophy, economics, politics, theology, and culture in a compelling way. This volume is vitally important not because all readers will agree with the proposals and conclusions offered, nor because the authors provide us with a final word, but because Goudzwaard and Bartholomew have constructively advanced the conversation and modeled the kind of serious intellectual engagement needed by thoughtful Christians in our day.”

— **David S. Dockery**, president, Trinity International University

“This is an invaluable contribution to the necessary conversation about the worldviews shaping modernity and its cultures; it is an important primer for living in a confessionally pluralistic Western society. More importantly, it articulates the way an authentically Christian worldview can disclose the fault lines of contemporary worldviews and open up

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alternative and constructive paths forward from the seemingly intractable problems we face.”

— **Bruce J. Clemenger**, president, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

“As a consequence of the process of globalization, the inner contradictions of modernity have become apparent. In particular, the affirmation that modernization inevitably leads to secularization is being questioned in view of the so-called ‘return of religion.’ People are beginning to critically review the basic assumptions of the modern worldview, looking for new perspectives of meaning in the highly confusing contemporary world. The new publication *Beyond the Modern Age* by Bob Goudzwaard and Craig G. Bartholomew offers a constructively critical approach to the economic, social, and environmental challenges facing the globalized society. Both authors are rooted in the ‘reformational,’ neo-Calvinist tradition of Christian social thinking initiated by Abraham Kuyper. The book grew out of a course for students that Bob Goudzwaard has taught for many years. It has retained the attractive character of an argument developed in dialogical partnership with students drawn from different parts of the world. The authors take the reader through an informed review of the historical origins of the modern worldview and the main efforts to critically adjust it in response to its inner paradoxes. Taking their cues from contemporary scholars like José Casanova, Philip Rieff, René Girard, and Lenn E. Goodman, they seek to move beyond the ideological constraints of the modern worldview by arguing for a biblically rooted perspective from ‘outside’ that opens up constructive ways of thinking and acting while respecting the plurality of worldviews. The book can be recommended as an excellent textbook for courses in contemporary Christian social philosophy.”

— **Konrad Raiser**, former general secretary of the World Council of Churches