

## **Theology and Popular Culture: Resources for Going Deeper**

**TC509, Fuller Theological Seminary, Steve Rabey (2008)**

### **1. Culture and Theology**

#### **Recommended:**

- Vanhoozer, Anderson, and Sleasman, *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*, Baker Academic, 2007
- Dick Staub, *The Culturally Savvy Christian*, 2007
- Andy Crouch, *Culture Makers: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, 2008
- Mars Hill Audio Journal (bimonthly, [www.marshillaudio.org](http://www.marshillaudio.org))
- Steve Turner, *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts*, 2001
- Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 1985
- Neal Gabler, *Life: The Movie*, 1998
- H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 1951
- Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination*, 2000

#### **Also:**

- [imagejournal.com](http://imagejournal.com)
- Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*, 2000
- Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, 1998
- Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*, 2001
- Carl Honore, *In Praise of Slowness: Challenging the Cult of Speed*, 2004
- Rodney Clapp, *Johnny Cash and the Great American Contradiction: Christianity and the Battle for the Soul of a Nation*, 2008
- Shane Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture*, 2005
- Daniel Radosh, *Rapture Ready: Adventures in the Parallel Universe of Christian Pop Culture*, 2008
- James Gleick, *Faster: The Acceleration of Just About Everything*, 1999
- Christopher Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 1978
- Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) getting By in America*, 2001
- Carole Coleman, *Alleluia America: An Irish Journalist in Bush Country* (2006)
- Brian D. McLaren and Tony Campolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel*, 2004
- Gergory Wolfe, *The New Religious Humanists: A Reader*, 1997
- Bob Briner, *Roaring Lambs*, 1993
- Franky Schaeffer, *Addicted to Mediocrity*, 1981
- Franky Schaeffer, *Sham Pearls for Real Swine*, 1990
- T. M. Moore, *Culture Matters: A Call for Consensus on Christian Cultural Engagement*, 2007
- Michael Card, *Scribbling in the Sand: Christ and Creativity*, 2004
- Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a*

- National Icon, 2003
- Morris Merman, *The Twilight of American Culture*, 2000
- Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 1988
- Os Guinness, *The Gravedigger File: Papers on the Subversion of the Modern Church*, 1983
- Frank E. Gaebelien, *The Christian, the Arts, and Truth*, 1985
- T.S. Eliot, *Christ and Culture*, 1939, 1948
- Jules Henry, *Culture Against Man*, 1963
- William Irwin Thompson, *The American Replacement of Nature*, 91

## 2. Youth Culture

### Recommended:

- Lynn Schofield Clark, *From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media, and the Supernatural*, 2003
- Walt Mueller, *Understanding Today's Youth Culture*, (cpyu.org)
- *The Lost Children of Rockdale County* (video, pbs.org)

### Also:

- Lauren Sandler, *Righteous: Dispatches from the Evangelical Youth Movement*, 2006
- Quentin Schultze, *Dancing in the Dark: Youth, Popular Culture and the Electronic Media*, 1991
- Susan Lynn, *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*, 2004
- Alissa Quart, *Branded: the Buying and Selling of Teenagers*, 2004
- Tipper Gore, *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society*, 1987
- Robert G. DeMoss, Jr., *Learn to Discern*, 1992
- *Plugged In* (Focus on the Family)
- Theodore Baehr and Pat Boone, *The Culture-Wise Family: Upholding Christian Values in a Mass Media World*, 2007

## 3. Pop Culture and Theology

### Recommended:

- Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, 2005
- William Romanowski, *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*, revised 2007
- William Romanowski, *Pop Culture Wars*, 1996
- Jane and Michael Stern, *Encyclopedia of Pop Culture*, 1992
- *Entertainment Weekly* (ew.com)

### Also:

- Walt Mueller, *I Want to Talk with My Teen About Movies, Music & More*, 2006
- Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture*, 2003
- Ken Myers, *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes*, 1989

- David Dark, *Everyday Apocalypse: The Sacred Revealed in Radiohead, The Simpsons, and Other Pop Culture Icons*, 2002
- Andrew M. Greeley, *God in Popular Culture*, 1988
- H. Michael Brewer, *Who Needs a Superhero: Finding Virtue, Vice, and What's Holy in the Comics*, 2004
- Stefan Fastis, *Word Freak: Heartbreak, Triumph, Genius, and Obsession in the World of Competitive Scrabble Players*, 2001
- Jianying Zha, *China Pop: How Soap Operas, Tabloids, and Bestsellers Are Transforming a Culture*, 1995
- *Journal of Popular Culture* (Popular Culture Association)
- [mediafellowship.org](http://mediafellowship.org), [lowculture.com](http://lowculture.com), [smokinggun.com](http://smokinggun.com), [thunderstruck.com](http://thunderstruck.com)
- Barry Taylor, *Entertainment Theology: New Edge Spirituality in a Digital Democracy*, 2007

#### **4. Movies/Film**

##### **Recommended:**

- Jeffrey Overstreet, *Through a Screen Darkly: Looking Closer at Beauty, Truth and Evil in the Movies*, 2007
- Craig Detweiler, *Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century*, 2008
- Spencer Lewrenz and Barbara Nicolosi, *Behind the Screen: Hollywood Insiders on Faith, Film, and Culture*, 2005
- Mark Pinsky, *The Gospel According to Disney: Faith, Trust and Pixie Dust*, revised 2007
- Robert K. Johnston, *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*, revised 2006
- Jeffrey L. Staley and Richard Walsh, *Jesus, the Gospels, and Cinematic Imagination*, 2007
- Catherine M. Barsoti and Robert K. Johnston, *Finding God in the Movies: 33 Films of Reel Faith*, 2004

Also:

- [www.allmovie.com](http://www.allmovie.com), [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com), [www.mrqe.com](http://www.mrqe.com), [videoeta.com](http://videoeta.com), [hollywoodjesus.com](http://hollywoodjesus.com)
- Movie guides by Leonard Maltin, Roger Ebert
- Christian movie guides from Focus on the Family, Baehr, Herx, Schultze, Veerman
- Ron Austin's *In a New Light: Spirituality and the Media Arts*, 2007
- Greg Garrett, *The Gospel According to Hollywood*, 2007
- Robert K. Johnston, *Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus for an Emerging Discipline*, 2007
- J. Stephen Lang, *The Bible on the Big Screen*, 2007
- John C. McDowell, *The Gospel According to Star Wars: Faith, Hope, and the Force*, 2007
- Phil Vischer, *Me, Myself & Bob: A True Story About Dreams, God, and*

- Talking Vegetables, 06
- Kim Paffenroth, *Gospel of the Living Dead: G. Romero's Vision of Hell on Earth*, 2007
  - Edward N. McNulty, *Faith & Film: A Guidebook for Leaders*, 2007
  - Timothy B. Cargal, *Hearing a Film, Seeing a Sermon*, 2007
  - John Gregory Dunne, *The Studio*, 1968
  - Donald J. Drew, *Images of Man*, 1974
  - R. Douglas Geivett and James S. Spiegel, editors, *Faith, Film and Philosophy: Big Ideas on the Big Screen*, 2007
  - Brian Godawa, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom & Discernment*, 2002
  - John R. Rice, *What's Wrong with the Movies?*, 1938
  - Kinnard and Davis, *Divine Images: A History of Jesus on the Screen*, 1992
  - Leff and Simmons, *The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s*, 1990
  - Kathryn Bernheimer, *The 50 Greatest Jewish Movies*, 1998
  - Michael Medved, *Hollywood vs. America*, 1992
  - Mark C. Carnes, ed., *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies*, 1995
  - K. L. Billingsley, *The Seductive Image*, 1989
  - Alan MacDonald, *Movies in Close-Up*, 1992
  - Robert Jewett, *Saint Paul at the Movies*, 1993 (and sequel)
  - Thomas Patterson, *At a Theater Near You*, 1994

## 5. Music

### **Recommended:**

- All Music Guide, *All Music Guide to Rock* (latest editions)
- Christenson and Roberts, *It's Not Only Rock & Roll: Popular Music in the Lives of Adolescents*, 1998
- Andrew Beaujon, *Body Piercing Saved My Life: Inside the Phenomenon of Christian Rock*, 2006
- Bill Friskics-Warren, *I'll Take You There: Pop Music and the Urge for Transcendence*, 2005
- Michka Assayas: *Bono in Conversation with Michka Assayas*, 2005
- Seay and Neely, *Stairway to Heaven: The Spiritual Roots of Rock 'n' Roll*, 1986
- Byron Hurt, *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats And Rhymes*, DVD, 2006, [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)

### **Also:**

- Jeremy S. Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music*, 2007
- Jeffrey B. Symynkywicz, *The Gospel According to Bruce Springsteen: Rock and Redemption, from Asbury Park to Magic*, 2008

- Granger, ed., *The 100 Greatest Albums in Christian Music*, 2001
- Rolling Stone ([www.rollingstone.com](http://www.rollingstone.com)), *Billboard*, CCM
- Steve Turner, *The Gospel According to the Beatles*, 2006
- Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven, Rock 'n' Roll and the Search for Redemption*, 1995
- Steve Turner, *Amazing Grace: The Story of America's Most Beloved Song*, 2002
- Christian Scharen, *One Step Closer: Why U2 Matters To Those Seeking God*, 2006
- Steve Stockman, *Walk On: The Spiritual Journey of U2*, 2001
- Steve Stockman, *The Rock Cries Out: Discovering Eternal Truth in Unlikely Music*, 2004
- Mark Allan Powell, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*, 2002
- Dimitri Ehrlich, *Inside the Music: Conversations with Contemporary Musicians About Spirituality, Creativity, & Consciousness*, 97
- Steve Beard, *Spiritual Journeys (Bono, Lauryn Hill, etc.)*, 2003
- Michael J. Gilmour, *Tangled Up in the Bible: Bob Dylan and Scripture*, 2004
- Christopher Ricks, *Dylan's Vision of Sin*, 2004
- Richie Furay with Michael Roberts, *Pickin' Up the Pieces: the Heart and Soul of Country Rock Pioneer Richie Furay*, 2006
- Pat Boone, *Pat Boone's America: A Pop Culture Journey through the Last Five Decades*, 2006
- Smithouser and Waliszewski (*Plugged In*), *Chart Watch*, 1998
- Ted Libbey, *The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection*, 1994
- Patrick Kavanaugh, *The Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, 1992
- Patrick Kavanaugh, *The Music of Angels: A Listener's Guide to Sacred Music from Chant to Christian Rock*, 1999
- Roger A. Bullard, *Messiah: The Gospel According to Handel's Oratorio*, 1993
- David Fillingim, *Redneck Liberation: Country Music as Theology*, 2003
- Cheri Fuller, *How to Grow a Young Music Lover*, 1994

## 6. TV

### **Recommended:**

- Alex McNeil, *Total Television: (latest edition)*
- Mark Pinsky, *The Gospel According to the Simpsons*, revised 2007 (leader's guide, 2002)
- Jana Riess, *What Would Buffy Do?: The Vampire Slayer as Spiritual Guide*, 2004
- Thomas Bertonneau and Kim Paffenroth, *The Truth is Out There: Christian Faith and the Classics of TV Science Fiction*, 2006
- Gabriel McKee, *The Gospel According to Science Fiction*, 2007

Also:

- Jamey Heit, *The Springfield Reformation: The Simpsons*,

- Christianity, and American Culture, 2008
- Chris Seay, The Gospel According to Tony Soprano, 2002
  - Tony Schwartz, The Responsive Chord, 1973
  - Ken Auletta, Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way, 1991
  - Quentin J. Schultze, Redeeming Television, 1992
  - Quentin J. Schultze, Television: Manna from Hollywood?, 1986
  - Quentin J. Schultze, Televangelism and American Culture, 1991
  - Donald Warren, Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio, 1996
  - Hadden and Shupe, Televangelism: Power & Politics on God's Frontier, 1988
  - Wildmon and Nulton, Don Wildmon: The Man the Networks Love to Hate, 1989
  - John Ankerberg and Dillon Burroughs, What Can Be Found in LOST? Insights on God and the Meaning of Life from the Popular TV Series, 2007

## 7. Art

### **Recommended:**

- Francis Schaeffer, Art and the Bible, 1973
- H. R. Rookmaaker, Modern Art and the Death of a Culture, 1970
- Roger Lipsey, An Art of Our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth Century Art, 1988

### **Also:**

- Ross King, Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling, 2003
- William A. Dyrness, Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue, 2001
- John Dillenberger, The Visual Arts and Christianity in America, 1989
- Edith Schaeffer, Hidden Art, 1971
- Robert L. Short, The Gospel According to Peanuts, 1965
- Neil MacGregor, Seeing Salvation: Images of Christ in Art, 2000
- Jane Daggett Dillenberger, The Religious Art of Andy Warhol, 1998

## 8. Internet, computers, technology

### **Recommended:**

- Bill McKibben, The Age of Missing Information, 1992
- Chris Anderson, The Long Tail, 2006
- John Battelle, The Search: How Google and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture, 2005
- Erik Davis, Technosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information, 2000
- David F. Nobel, The Religion of Technology, 1997
- Edward Tenner, Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences, 1996

**Also:**

- Doug Groothuis, *The Soul in Cyberspace*, 1997
- Jeff Zaleski, *The Soul of Cyberspace*, 1998
- Nicholas Negroponte, *Being Digital*, 1995
- Brenda Brasher, *Give Me That Online Religion*, 2001

**9. Advertising, marketing, public relations**

**Recommended:**

- *The Persuaders*, Merchants of Cool (videos from pbs.org)
- Jean Kilbourne, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*, 1999
- Tyler Wigg Stevenson, *Brand Jesus: Christianity in a Consumerist Age*, 2007
- *Advertising Age*, *Adbusters* (magazines with web sites)
- Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders*, 1957

**Also:**

- Al Ries and Jack Trout, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, 1981
- Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays*, 1995
- Tom Beaudoin, *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are with What We Buy*, 2003
- Cynthia Crossen, *Tainted Truth: The Manipulation of Fact in America*, 1994
- Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, 1994
- Erik Larson, *The Naked Consumer: How Our private Lives Become Public Commodities*, 1992
- Douglas Atkin, *The Culting of Brands: When Customers Become True Believers*, 2004
- Sam Van Eman, *On Earth as It Is In Advertising: Moving from Commercial Hype to Gospel Hope*, 2005
- *You Say I'm a Bitch Like It's a Bad Thing*, 2004 (ad images from 50s, 60s)

**10. Literature and Publishing**

**Recommended:**

- Warren Chappell, *A Short History of the Printed Word*, 1970
- Nicholas A. Basbanes, *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books*, 1995
- Michael Korda, *Making the List: A Cultural History of the American Bestseller*, 2001
- C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961)

**Also:**

- Paul Elie, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage*, 2003
- Frederick Buechner, *Speak What We Feel (Not What We Ought to Say): Reflections on Literature and Faith*, 2001
- Alfred Kazin, *God and the American Writer*
- Sven Birkerts, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (1994)
- Bernard Goldberg, *Bias* (2001) and *Arrogance* (2003)
- John Dart, *Deities & Deadlines: A Primer on Religion News Coverage*, 1998 ([www.freedomforum.org](http://www.freedomforum.org))
- Wesley G. Pippert, *An Ethics of News: A Reporter's Search for Truth*, 1989
- Peter Prichard, *The Making of McPaper: The Inside Story of USA Today*, 1987
- James D. Squires, *Read All About It!: The Corporate Takeover of America's Newspapers*, 1993
- Christians, Fackler and Rotzoll, *Media Ethics*, 1995
- Marvin Olasky, *Prodigal Press: The Anti-Christian Bias of the American News Media*, 1988
- C. John Sommerville, *How the News Makes Us Dumb*, 1999
- William Proctor, *The Gospel According to the New York Times*, 2000

**11. Humor/Comedy**

- Lawrence J. Epstein, *The Haunted Smile: The Story of Jewish Comedians in America*, 2001
- Gerald Nachtman, *Seriously Funny: The Rebel Comedians of the 1950s and 1960s*, 2008
- Larry Wilde, *The Great Comedians Talk About Comedy*, 1968
- Jim Holt, *Stop Me If You've Heard This: A History and Philosophy of Jokes*, 2008

**12. Misc.**

- James Martin, *A Jesuit Off-Broadway: Center Stage with Jesus, Judas, and Life's Big Questions*, 2007

**13. Pop Culture on Pop Culture**

I've just started this section on pop culture works that critique pop culture. I welcome your recommendations.

13a. Movies

- *The Player* (Tim Burton, director: Robert Altman)
- *The TV Set* (David Duchovny)