

2011

Review of Paul's "Close Enough to Hear God Breathe: The Great Story of Divine Intimacy"

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Review of

Close Enough to Hear God Breathe: The Great Story of Divine Intimacy

Greg Paul

Ken Badley

In this book Toronto urban ministry leader Greg Paul sets out to make some of the central concepts in Christian theology accessible to readers who would otherwise never pick up a book of theology. After describing Creation he explains the fall of our original parents into sin and some of its effects on human affairs. Then he recounts God's plan to bring redemption through the work of Jesus and God's plan for the ultimate consummation of history. Paul works through each of these four themes in turn, always light on explanation and heavy on stories.

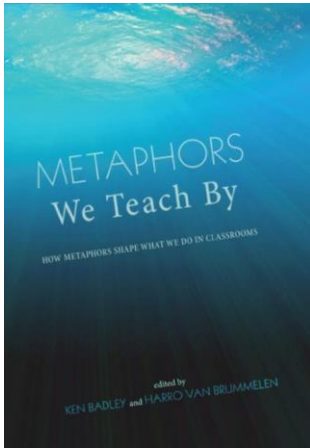
Did the author succeed at making theology accessible? Yes, in fact, perhaps too well.

Anyone writing theology as creative non-fiction will have to face the reality that readers will judge it on two sets of criteria. *Close Enough to Hear God Breathe* has moments of brilliance, moments when the author's stories make theology sing. But, on my reading, such moments were few. More often the writing felt to me a bit strained, as if the stories – some of which are quite powerful – didn't quite fit the theological categories, but the author insisted on their inclusion.

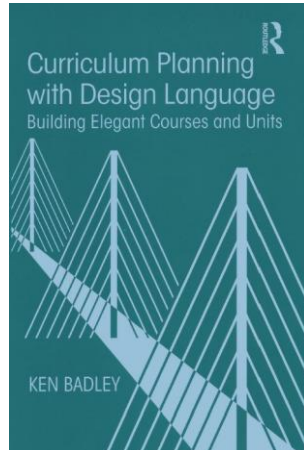
At many points I found myself wanting Paul to skip the story and give me the theology. But I reminded myself that my own familiarity with theology meant I was not his target audience – and that others would perhaps understand theology better as he unfolded it from the stories he told.

As accessible theology, Paul's book is spot on. He even includes a chapter-by-chapter reader's guide at the end, with questions to aid his readers in their reflections. People who are new to Christianity will certainly find this book a fresh and accessible introduction.

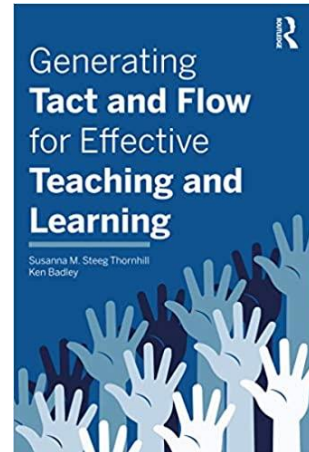
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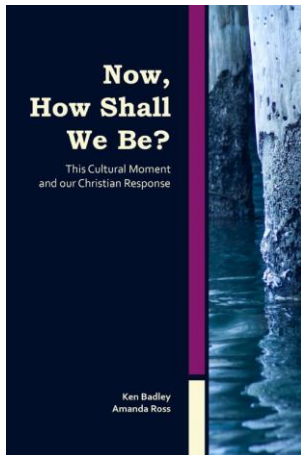
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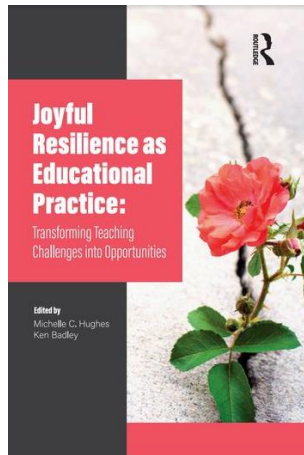
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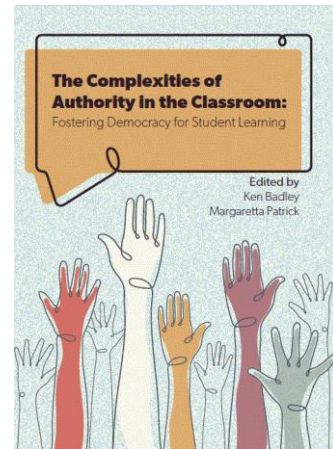
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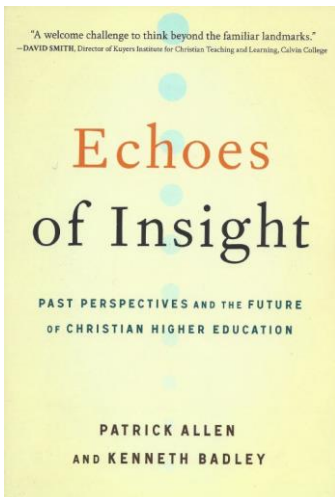


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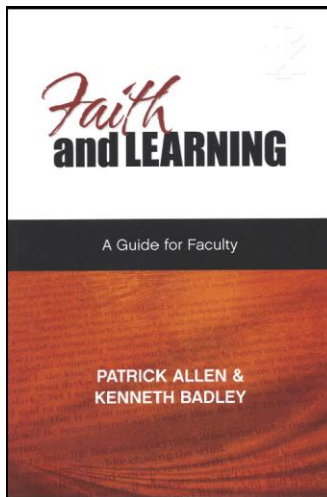


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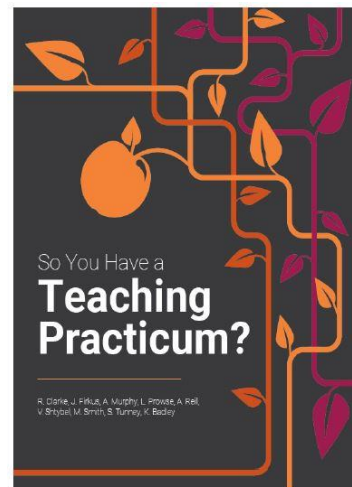


2014



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