

Curriculum Vitae for J. Todd Billings

J. Todd Billings

Gordon H. Girod Research Professor of Reformed Theology

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EDUCATION

Harvard Divinity School

Th.D., Theology

Cambridge, MA

2005

Fuller Theological Seminary

M.Div.

Pasadena, CA

1999

Wheaton College

B.A., *cum laude*

Majors: Philosophy, English

Wheaton, IL

1995

DISSERTATION

“Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ”

Advisor: Professor Sarah Coakley, Harvard Divinity School

PUBLICATIONS

Books

The End of the Christian Life: How Embracing Our Mortality Frees Us to Truly Live (Brazos Press, 2020). Korean edition published in 2023 by the Duran Academy.

Remembrance, Communion, and Hope: Rediscovering the Gospel at the Lord's Table (Eerdmans Press, 2018).

Rejoicing in Lament: Wrestling with Incurable Cancer and Life in Christ (Brazos Press, 2015).

Korean edition, published by The Blessed People Publishing Company, 2019. Chinese edition (traditional script) published by A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries, 2022.

Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church (Baker Academic, 2011).

Korean edition, published by Christian Literature Crusade in 2014.

The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture (Eerdmans, 2010). Spanish edition, published by Publicaciones Kerigma, 2019.

Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ, in “Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology” Series with Oxford University Press (2007). Korean edition, published Jireh Publishing Company, 2021.

Edited Book

Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities, co-edited with I. John Hesselink (Westminster John Knox Press, 2012).

Select Peer Reviewed Journal Articles and Academic Book Chapters

“Reformed Catholicity,” chapter in *The New Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Michael Allen (Cambridge University Press, 2022) 330-351.

“Union with Christ,” chapter in *The Oxford Handbook to Reformed Theology*, ed. R. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Oxford University Press, 2020) 497-513.

“Resurrection Hope and the Dying,” *Trinity Journal* (vol. 28, 2017): 7-27.

“Scripture,” chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformed Theology*, ed. Paul Nimmo and David Fergusson (Cambridge University Press, 2016) 11-27.

“The Sacraments,” chapter in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. R. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Baker Academic, 2016) 339-62.

“Catholic and Reformed: Rediscovering a Tradition,” *Pro Ecclesia* 23:2 (Spring 2014): 132-46.

“The Lord’s Supper and the Church’s Public Witness: Bringing Together Heaven and Earth, Living Between Gift and Promise,” *Theology Today* 67:1 (April 2010): 7-14.

“John Calvin’s Soteriology: On the Multifaceted ‘Sum’ of the Gospel,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11:4 (October 2009): 428-447.

SELECT RECENT PLENARY ADDRESSES

“Healing, Hope, and Salvation Amidst Chronic and Degenerative Illness,” Plenary address at Templeton-funded Dabar Conference: “Theological and Scientific Explorations in Human Personhood” (Deerfield, IL: May 20, 2022).

“A Surprising Hope: Barren Wombs and Unexpected Fruitfulness,” Plenary address for Theology Matters Conference (Hilton Head, SC: October 7, 2021).

“Death and the Christian Life,” Paideia Center Annual Conference (Webcast: January 7-8, 2021).

“A True Anatomy of the Soul? Calvin and ‘Distracting Emotions’ in Lament Psalms,” Plenary address to the Calvin Studies Society Colloquy (Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, IL: April 13, 2019).

“The Cross and Theology After Darwin,” Plenary address for Center for Pastor Theologians colloquy, (Oak Park, IL: March 5, 2018).

“The Alpha and Omega, and Our Uncertain Future,” Commencement address (Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, IL: May 6, 2017).

“Disability, Cancer, and Theological Education: Reflections from a Theologian in New Terrain,” Plenary address for the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability (Holland, MI: May 24, 2016).

“Rejoicing in Lament: Wrestling with Incurable Cancer, Cancerous Racism, and Life in Christ,” co-presentation at Calvin Symposium on Christian Worship (Grand Rapids, MI: January 28, 2016).

“Hope for Mortals: The Church’s Witness in the Midst of Dying and Death,” Carl Henry Lecture (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL: October 21, 2015).

ARTICLES FOR POPULAR AUDIENCES (Selected from over 50 published articles)

“’Tis Mystery All! The Immortal Dies! How Can We Even Begin to Understand this Astonishing, Amazing Love?” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 20, 2022.

“Vaccine Skeptics Need a Dose of Creation Theology: Medicine Has Limits. But as John Calvin Knew, It Can Be an Extraordinary Gift from God” *Christianity Today*, May 6, 2021.

“Good News, Tomorrow We Die: Our Mortality Offers Surprising Encouragement,” *Christianity Today*, October, 2020, 56-60.

“An Individual Paradise Is Not Enough: How Our Contagious World Aches for a Cosmic Hope,” feature article for *Mere Orthodoxy*, April 20, 2020.

“The Church, A Union with Christ,” cover article, *Theology Magazine*, Summer 2019.

“Can Anger at God be Righteous? The Psalms Show Us How to Faithfully Protest to God,” *Christianity Today*, January/February 2019, 55-58.

- “The Loneliness of the Pastor-Theologian,” co-authored with Stephen Shaffer, *Christianity Today Pastors*, fall 2018 issue, 34-38. (Listed as one of the top 15 *Christianity Today Pastors* articles of 2018.)
- “The New View of Heaven is Too Small,” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 15, 2018.
- “How Learning to Lament Can Help Fight Racism,” *Relevant Magazine*, feature article online, May 5, 2016.
- “The Hermeneutics of Lament,” two-part *Reformation 21* articles in July and September 2016.
- “Cancer, Where Is Your Sting?” *Christianity Today*, April 16, 2016.
- “A Luminous Mystery,” *The Banner Magazine*, cover article, 150:9, October 2015, 18-20.
- “Mortality and the Limits of Medicine,” *Comment: Public Theology for the Common Good*, Fall 2015, 58-63.
- “Why Does God Turn to Poetry? A Dialogue with Christian Wiman,” *Huffington Post*, September 8, 2015.
- “Praying for Someone with Incurable Cancer,” *Leadership Journal*, Spring 2015, 35-38.
- “Undying Love [On Divine Impassibility],” *First Things*, December 2014, 45-49.
- “Recovering Our Confessions: Coming to Know and Love the RCA’s Standards,” *RCA Today* magazine, Winter 2013, 32-37.
- “Adopted into God’s Family,” *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought*, October 2012, 11-13.
- “The Problem with ‘Incarnational Ministry’: What If Our Mission Is Not to ‘Be Jesus’ to Other Cultures, but to Join with the Holy Spirit?,” *Christianity Today*, July/August 2012, 58-63.
- “Premodern Biblical Exegesis: Why Does it Matter for Preachers and Teachers Today?,” *Catalyst: Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives for United Methodist Seminarians*, vol. 38.1, November 2011.
- “How to Read the Bible: New Strategies for Interpreting Scripture Turn Out to Be Not So New—and Help Deepen Our Life in Christ,” cover article, *Christianity Today*, October 2011, 24-30.

“Calvin’s Comeback? The Irresistible Reformer,” cover article, *The Christian Century*, December 1, 2009, 22-25.

“What Makes a Church *Missional*? Freedom from Cultural Captivity Does Not Mean Freedom from Tradition,” *Christianity Today*, March 2008, 56-59.

“On Giving and Receiving: How Can Christians Live Out the Commands of Matthew 25 – Without the Pity,” *Sojourners Magazine*, April 2007, 48-51.

“The Problem with Mere Christianity: We Jettison ‘Nonessential’ Theology at Our Own Peril,” *Christianity Today*, February 2007, 46-47.

“The Promise of Catholic Calvinism,” *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought*, April 2006, 12-15.

TEACHING, PROFESSIONAL, AND ECCLESIASTICAL POSITIONS

Gordon H. Girod Research Professor of Reformed Theology Western Theological Seminary	2013-Present
Hope College-Western Seminary Theology Seminar Co-Founder, Co-Convener	2010-Present
Associate Professor of Reformed Theology Western Theological Seminary	2009-2013 Holland, MI
Theology Commission (elected member) Reformed Church in America	2007-2013
Reformed Theology and History Group Steering Committee American Academy of Religion	2007-2012; 2014-17
Ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament The Reformed Church in America	2007-Present
Assistant Professor of Reformed Theology Western Theological Seminary	2005-2009 Holland, MI
Homeless Shelter Staff First Church Shelter (UCC)	2000-2005 Cambridge, MA
Elder in Presbyterian Church USA First United Presbyterian Church	2002-2005 Cambridge, MA

ACADEMIC HONORS AND GRANTS

“Top Ten Books of the Year” award in 2021, for *The End of the Christian Life*, selected by the Academy of Parish Clergy.

Project Grant for Researchers Award, Louisville Institute (\$25,000 grant), “Congregational Life and the Dying: Cultivating Resurrection Hope Among the Dying in a Congregational Context Today,” 2016-17.

Awards for “A Luminous Mystery,” *The Banner Magazine*, cover article in October 2015:
Best “Theological Reflection,” Associated Church Press, 2016 Award
Best “First Person Article,” Evangelical Press Association, 2016 Award

Starred Review for *Rejoicing in Lament* in Publisher’s Weekly, Five Star Review in *Christianity Today*, Jan./Feb. 2015 issue.

Winner of “Award of Merit in Theology and Ethics” in the *Christianity Today* Book Awards in 2012 for *Union with Christ*.

Winner of the 2011 Center for Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue Book Prize for *The Word of God for the People of God*.

John Templeton Award for Theological Promise in 2009, for *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*. Awarded for the most outstanding first books by junior scholars in biblical, theological, and religious studies internationally.

Wabash Center Summer Research Fellowship, “Introducing Theological Interpretation: Scripture, Revelation, and Interpretation,” Summer 2008.

Theological Scholars Grant (Lilly), “Participating in Christ: The Eucharistic Doorway to a Catholic-Reformed Vision of Salvation,” The Association of Theological Schools, 2007-2008.

Wabash Fellow, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning, 2007-2008.

Dean’s Dissertation Fellowship, Harvard Divinity School, 2004-2005.

Harvard Divinity School Grant and Stipend, Harvard Divinity School, 2000-2003.

Dean’s Scholar Award, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996-1999.