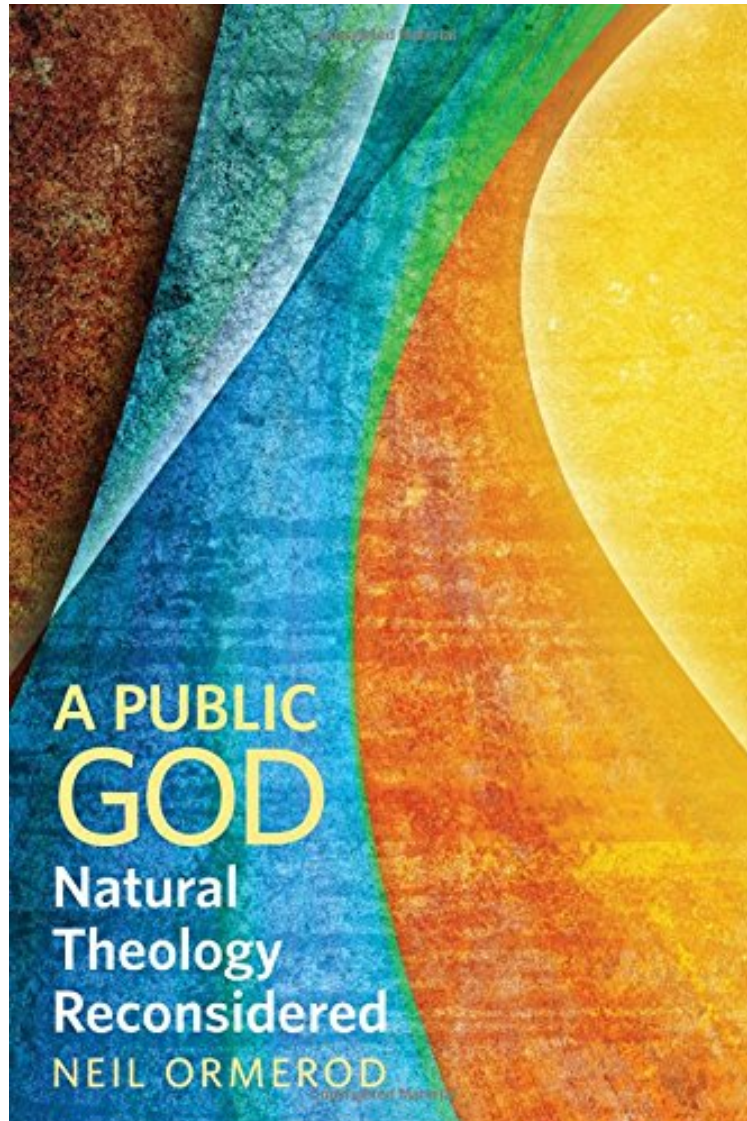


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## A Public God: Natural Theology Reconsidered

*Neil Ormerod*

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**Neil Ormerod : A Public God: Natural Theology Reconsidered** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Public God: Natural Theology Reconsidered:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Craig A. BaronA good introduction to the contemporary conversation about natural theology and possible connections with science.0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Nothing new here.By Tim JoslingI don't see much if anything new here. What is see is the same type of arguments I am now used to seeing from the Catholics / right to lifers in respect of euthanasia, straight from Aristotle's "Rhetoric" the first PR handbook.I have recently been studying science. The contrast in rigor and

intellectual integrity with this book was very striking.\* He is completely out of date on philosophy of science (Popper? Really? He is seen as quaint and simple falsification as naive; the Bayesian revolution has transformed our understanding of the scientific process).\* All his knowledge of science seems to be from popular books and he gets a lot of things completely wrong. Generally he fails to understand the things he is talking about and spouts pseudo insights that have been fully dealt with (eg the alleged superfluous intelligence of humans, he mischaracterizes the relationship between physics and chemistry).\* "Not even wrong" on Nietzsche (p 111 the will to power is the desire for dominance over others!) Again fails to actually understand what he is talking about.\* Large slabs of papal quotes treated as definitive.\* Passive aggressive intellectual arguments e.g. he whether evolution could have produced such high human intelligence. Without actually checking up whether anyone has looked into this issue. This is on the same tier as climate science deniers who whether climate scientists realize that the climate has always fluctuates.\* Quote mining e.g. Hitchens on 9/11.\* Treating introspection as an inherently reliable source of knowledge (it may be a starting point but as with vision we know that introspection is wildly wrong about many things - a point he simply ignores). Of course this is fundamentally necessary - otherwise they would need to admit that faith is a profoundly unreliable source of knowledge.\* Many cases of verbal opacity and obfuscation in lieu of actual arguments, usually at the critical point. This is the philosophical equivalent of the advertising maxim "If you have something to say, say it, otherwise use showbiz".\* Many unworthy euphemism e.g. dismissing the rape of little boys by priests and others as "sexual aberrations".\* Approvingly quoting the pope when he asked for forgiveness for various elliptically referenced sins. Ignoring the utter failure here. You should probably never ask for forgiveness, let alone demand it (as has happened to many victims of priests). But if you do it should only follow a) Full disclosure of the truth of the matter b) A sincere and all-out effort to prevent it from happening again c) Full and ungrudging compensation d) Asking the victims if there is anything else they can do. Unfortunately we have not cleared any of these hurdles yet so asking for forgiveness is insensitive at best and revictimizing at worst. But if this book is any guide he is blind to all this.\* The argument that materialists think we are made of atoms therefore they think we are "merely" atoms. Again this is not even wrong.Perhaps we need a new word for this kind of work. We have the term "truthiness " for things that seem true but are not and are used to deceive.Perhaps something good could come from this book if the term "philosophyness" came into use as material that sounds like serious philosophy but is not that actually. This term could also be applied to William Lane Craig's apologetics as well.

Natural theology is a philosophical site that is hotly debated and controversial it is claimed by Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Evangelicals as a crucial vantage point for the intersection of theology, philosophy, science, and politics, while it is, simultaneously, strongly contested by some theologians, such as those influenced by Karl Barth, as well as some philosophers and scientists, especially of the new atheist variety. This volume steers through these troubled waters, arguing for reclamation of a natural theology that withstands the challenges from within and without the Christian tradition and accrues to a vital public and political witness. Drawing on Bernard Lonergan's notions of intellectual and moral conversions and contemporary scientific findings, it engages with key assertions from the new atheists to highlight their tensions and inconsistencies, while putting forward a positive proposal for a form of natural theology that is public, contextual, and political; engaging in publically accountable discourse; drawing on our contemporary scientific and social context; and aware of the political ramifications of undertaking the project of natural theology.

"An important and welcome contribution to the resurgence of interest in natural theology in recent years. Ormerod makes an excellent case for developing a natural theology that is publicly credible and accountable." --Alister E. McGrath, University of Oxford"Written in a clear and fresh style, this welcome book argues for a natural theology that attends to the political consequences of religious belief. It draws on Bernard Lonergan to present God as known through publicly accessible reason." --Gerald O'Collins, SJ., Emeritus, The Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome"Professor Ormerod's book is timely, courageous, and bracing in its range of reference. Public discourse on religion has become hesitant and rarefied, just when, under the assaults of quasi-scientific forms of atheism, reference to God in the public domain has become timid and defensive. In the meantime, when the ability to speak of God as foundational to all intelligent, moral, and aesthetic discourse is notably diminished, an ominous superficiality pervades political and moral deliberations. When the cultural conversation no longer allows for what matters most, Ormerod calls on us not to leave the public sphere to the idols and demons of our time. Readers will welcome this book, and find insight, not only on God, but also on the conscience, personal and social, needed to combat evil in all of its forms. A Public God, maturing over many years, is definitely worth waiting for: a splendid achievement." --Anthony J. Kelly, Australian Catholic UniversityAbout the AuthorNeil Ormerod is professor of theology in the School of Theology and member of the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry at the Australian Catholic University in Strathfield, Australia. He is coauthor with Cynthia Crysdale of *Creator God, Evolving World* (Fortress Press, 2013) and author of *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology* (Fortress Press, 2014).