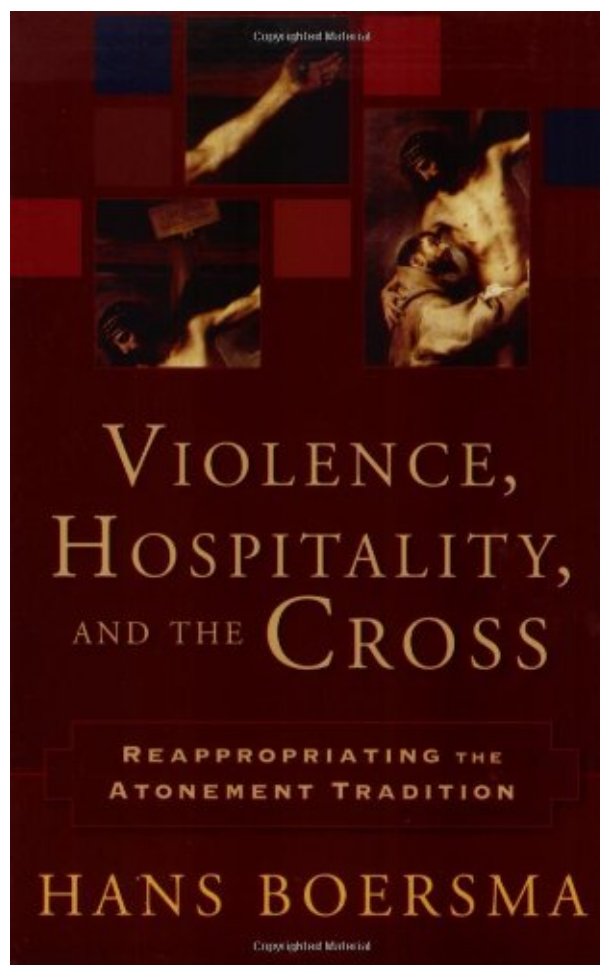
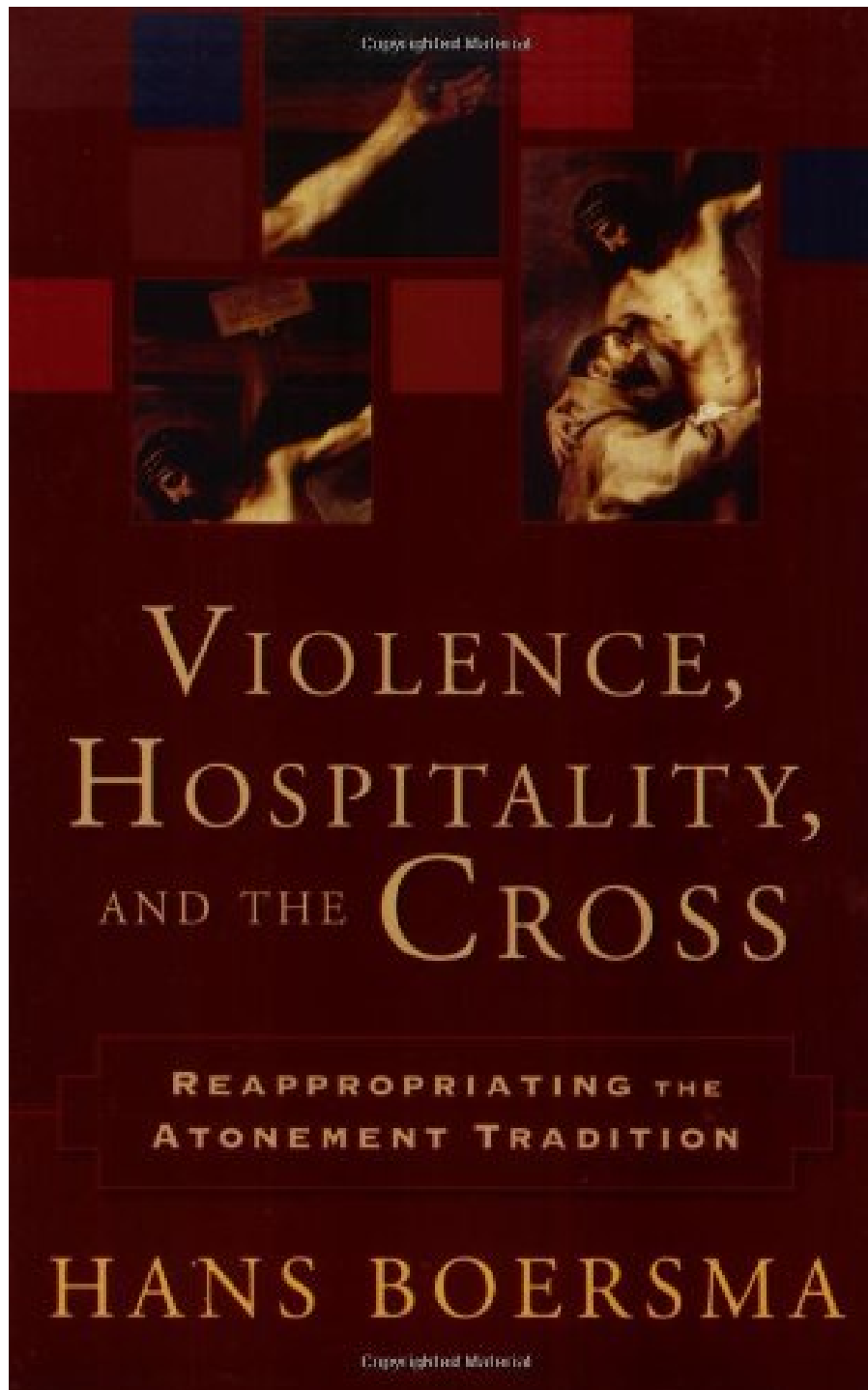


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Review

"This is generous evangelicalism at its best....Boersma does a fine job of bringing Scripture and tradition to bear on the contemporary situation all for the sake of the church's participation in the divine hospitality."

About the Author

Hans Boersma (PhD, University of Utrecht) holds the J. I. Packer Chair of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He is the author or editor of several books, including *A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in Its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy*.

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The cross is central to understanding Christian theology. But is it possible that our postmodern setting requires a new model of understanding the cross?

Hans Boersma's *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross* proposes an understanding of the atonement that is sensitive both to the Christian tradition and to the postmodern critiques of that tradition. His fresh approach draws on the rich resources of the Christian tradition in its portrayal of God's hospitality in Jesus Christ.

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- 288 pages

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57 of 61 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Introduction to an Important Discussion

By Michael J. Pahls

Boersma's volume represents an extremely helpful introduction to an important theological discussion and a welcome reappropriation of the traditional Reformation-era penal substitution theory.

A couple of issues to ponder as you read:

I am still mulling over the particulars, but I'm not sure if Boersma does sufficient justice to the divinity of Jesus and the cross as God's "self"-offering. Historically, the penal-substitution theory can tend to emphasize too much God's violence against Jesus as "other" to the neglect of the ontological unity of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Second, by starting with a philosophical analysis of "hospitality" drawn from Levi-Strauss, Derrida, Levinas, et.al, Boersma risks the imposition of non-biblical concepts of hospitality on the biblical text. This is not necessarily the case, but I am concerned that contemporary modernist/postmodernist agendas not drive this debate as much as Scripture and Tradition. While interacting with contemporary thought, theology must retain its integrity as a distinctive language game with a unique grammar and vocabulary.

Likewise with Boersma's employment of the *munus triplex christi* as a macroscheme to reconcile moral influence, Eastern (Christus Victor), and Western (Penal) concepts of the Atonement. This manner of composing Christology, while being rooted biblically, is a 16th Century strategy of John Calvin. Hence the reconciliation of biblical, patristic, and Medieval data under this rubric seems potentially anachronistic.

That said, however, the Church should welcome Boersma's relatively new theological voice. As a Reformed evangelical, he is to be particularly commended for integrating Roman Catholic, Orthodox, anabaptist, and pentecostal voices into his treatment of the discussion. While not uncritical of his own Dutch-Calvinist heritage (note his discussion of Canon #3 of Dordt), Boersma displays it in its best and most catholic light and successfully overcomes the confessional inbreeding that plagues most conservative Presbyterian and Reformed theologians.

Warmly recommended reading!

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Helpful, regardless of stance

By Linda B. Nelson

It's not that I agree with all the author's conclusions; but this is a very thorough, clear, well-written argument. It is worth a read to understand what many do propose as atonement theory.

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

An excellent read regarding the Atonement

By M. A. Lafler

This book gives an ecumenical overview of the three traditional views of the atonement: Moral-Influence, Penal-Substitution, and Christus-Victor. With much reliance on St. Irenaeus, Boersma approaches the topic from a Reformed view but holds value in all traditions. He discusses ideas regarding the relationship between violence and hospitality from modern and patristic levels. A bold book in the face of the political and theological challenges of today, Boersma does a fine job at portraying an ecumenical Reformed approach. I highly recommend this book.

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