

Davie's article reminds us that we cannot escape struggles and disagreements within Christian theology. He sets out a helpful framework in which to interpret these and to be faithful in our thinking and speaking about God.

Andrew Goddard

Craig Smith writes:

The vision for these articles began as I reflected on the three simple words Jesus shared on a hill beside the Sea of Galilee, 'love your enemy'. These are simple words but constitute a profound message. I believe that this is a vital message for today given the present situation globally and nationally. Jesus' mandate raises two questions. Who is my enemy? How do I love him or her or them?

The first question about who is my enemy is an important one but one which will not be addressed in this series of articles. Jesus assumes that one knows who one's enemy is and I will make the same assumption. Nevertheless, it is important when considering this topic to keep the words of Solzhenitsyn close at hand:

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?

There will be four articles in this series. The first three articles will focus on the second question – how do I love my enemy? – and look at the issue from the New Testament. In the first article, John Nolland lays the foundation by focussing on the specific command to love our enemies in Matt. 5:43-48. Building on this, in issue three, Howard Marshall will trace through Acts the response of the early church to pressure exerted by its religious enemies. I will follow this in issue four by looking at how the church is exhorted to respond to the spiritual enemy and in fact how it did respond. Next year, in the final piece, Ron Boyd-MacMillan examines how to preach this difficult and sensitive issue. The goal of these articles is to help you, the reader, engage in the issue more deeply in order that you might fulfil Jesus' exacting command.
