

The Warrior-Soldier's Commitment: A Resolute March Toward Christ the King and For His Kingdom

Rakotonindriana David Rolland¹²³, Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina Baholy¹²³⁴

¹University FJKM Ravelojaona - Antananarivo - Madagascar

²Reformed University of Madagascar - Antananarivo - Madagascar

³Interepistemological Doctoral School - Antananarivo - Madagascar

⁴Doctoral School of Industrial Agricultural and Food Process Engineering, University of Antananarivo, Antananarivo, Madagascar

Email: baholy.robijaona@univ-antananarivo.mg

Abstract:

The warrior's imagery lies at the very heart of Christian spirituality. The peaceful soldier embodies a fruitful tension: a fierce combatant against evil, yet a radical peacemaker toward every individual. This paradox is resolved through the literal demilitarization of the battle. The true enemy is not a human being, but the forces of darkness, sin, and the evil structures that enslave the world. The weapons of this war are divine, not physical, and are expressed through love, justice, and reconciliation. Christ's victory on the Cross, achieved through sacrifice and forgiveness, stands as the supreme model. Agape love thus serves as the primary strategy, capable of disarming the aggressor and breaking the cycles of hatred. This metaphor shapes both an identity and a theology. Analysis reveals a hermeneutic of conquest and a victorious eschatology that reinforce community cohesion and legitimize a hierarchical structure. The pastor becomes the commanding officer, and discipline is valued as a spiritual virtue. However, the use of this imagery carries inherent risks: it can engender spiritual anxiety, a Manichaean dualism, and a dangerous tendency toward blind obedience. The greatest combat for the believer is to use the language of war to advance the cause of peace, without ever betraying the core message of Christ. For the metaphor to remain faithful, clear boundaries must never be breached: the enemy is never a person, the weapons are exclusively spiritual, the objective is reconciliation, the model is the crucified and servant Christ. The Christ-soldier must remain a healer and a peacemaker, fighting with vigor against all that dehumanizes without ever becoming inhuman.

Keywords:

spirituality, military metaphor, soldier-pacific, reconciliation, eschatology.

I. Introduction

The central question, a foundational inquiry for the devout soul, concerns the deployment of military metaphor without betraying the core Christian message of divine love and grace. The resolution lies within a fertile paradox: the figure of the peaceful soldier. This archetype, far from being a contradiction, elevates the militarization of the spirit, transposing it onto a profoundly spiritual battlefield. This theological and philosophical transposition has been a subject of scholarly discourse, underscoring the richness of religious language (Ricoeur, 1976).

The initial phase of this spiritual campaign is the literal demilitarization of the conflict. The true adversary is not a human being but rather the forces of darkness that hold humanity in bondage. As the apostle Paul asserts, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the

spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12, as cited in New International Version Bible, 2011, Ephesians 6:12). This redefinition of the enemy is a crucial hermeneutical move, a key aspect of Paul's theology of spiritual warfare (O'Brien, 1999). The objective of this campaign is the liberation of souls, not their destruction, a core tenet of Christian soteriology (Packer, 1998).

The campaign's armaments are of divine essence (2 Corinthians 10:4, as cited in New International Version Bible, 2011). Their deployment relies not on physical might, but on the forces of love, justice, and reconciliation. These virtues manifest through aid to the oppressed and the dissemination of truth, constituting strategic spiritual assaults. The approach of active non-violence, championed by Martin Luther King Jr., represents a campaign of unyielding rigor, utilizing love to disarm injustice (King, 1963). This strategic framework aligns with a theological understanding that redefines conflict as a spiritual struggle for redemption, not domination (Yoder, 1972).

The ultimate objective of this campaign is restoration, not annihilation. Unlike terrestrial military logics that aim for the subjugation of an adversary, the purpose of the Christ-soldier is redemption and reconciliation. The foundational doctrine is the Christic command to love one's enemies and to pray for persecutors (Matthew 5:44, as cited in New International Version Bible, 2011). The model for this victory is the Cross, where triumph is achieved through sacrifice and forgiveness, rather than by force—a profound paradox at the heart of Christian soteriology (Packer, 1998).

The campaign's armaments are of divine essence (2 Corinthians 10:4, as cited in New International Version Bible, 2011). Their deployment relies not on physical might, but on the forces of love, justice, and reconciliation. These virtues manifest through aid to the oppressed and the dissemination of truth, constituting strategic spiritual assaults. The approach of active non-violence, championed by Martin Luther King Jr., represents a campaign of unyielding rigor, utilizing love to disarm injustice (King, 1963). This strategic framework aligns with a theological understanding that redefines conflict as a spiritual struggle for redemption, not domination (Yoder, 1972).

The ultimate objective of this campaign is restoration, not annihilation. Unlike terrestrial military logics that aim for the subjugation of an adversary, the purpose of the Christ-soldier is redemption and reconciliation. The foundational doctrine is the Christic command to love one's enemies and to pray for persecutors (Matthew 5:44, as cited in New International Version Bible, 2011). The model for this victory is the Cross, where triumph is achieved through sacrifice and forgiveness, rather than by force—a profound paradox at the heart of Christian soteriology (Packer, 1998).

II. Research Methods

2.1 Materials

In the spiritual campaign, victory is not secured through carnal force but through divinely-engineered equipment. The soldier of Christ must be outfitted with the full panoply of God, a kit designed not for earthly warfare but for resilience and divine authority (Ephesians 6:11, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). This gear serves both as defensive fortification and offensive armament, a testament to grace and a tool for combat.

a. The Defensive Armor: A Warrior's Protection

Each piece of this panoply provides essential protection for the light-bearer. The **belt of truth** serves as the foundational element, securing all other gear. It signifies a commander's unyielding adherence to divine revelation, a bulwark against hypocrisy and deception. Through this truth, an individual's operational base is established on an immovable reality (Wolterstorff, 2015).

The **breastplate of righteousness** safeguards the spiritual heart. It represents not merely the righteousness imputed by Christ but also an actively maintained, upright life. This formidable piece of gear shields the soul from the projectiles of condemnation and sin, ensuring an uncompromised moral stance (Horton, 2011).

The **shoes of the gospel of peace** provide both stability and mobility. They confer the unwavering assurance and strategic composure that accompanies the good news, enabling an unflinching march through hostile terrain. They symbolize a proactive peace that, far from being passive, is an operational force enabling forward movement without a single misstep. The **shield of faith** acts as the ultimate bulwark against enemy engagement. Its purpose is to intercept and extinguish the adversary's "flaming arrows" (Ephesians 6:16, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). This active confidence in God and His promises is the sole protection capable of neutralizing the assaults of doubt, fear, temptation, and accusation (O'Brien, 1999).

The **helmet of salvation** protects the command center of the mind. It instills an unshakeable certainty of redemption and a clear sense of identity in Christ, fortifying the intellect against the barrages of despair, intellectual doubt, and false doctrine. This piece is the guarantor of mental clarity and strategic vision.

b. The offensive armament: The Sword of the Spirit

In contrast to a terrestrial arsenal, the sole offensive armament is a unique weapon: the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). This close-quarters combat weapon requires precise mastery. The soldier must know the Scriptures intimately, wielding them with power under the command of the Holy Spirit to both repel attacks and launch the offensive (Vanhoozer, 2005).

c. The Command Channel: Prayer

Beyond the full panoply, the warrior's success depends on an unbroken communication channel: prayer. This is the direct line to Divine Headquarters. In all its forms—supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving—prayer is the means by which reinforcements are requested, orders are received, and intelligence on threats is conveyed. The Epistle to the Ephesians (6:18, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**) issues the standing order to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions." This spiritual communication system is the very lifeline of the operation (Grudem, 2000).

This spiritual equipment is offered by grace alone. It cannot be manufactured through human effort but must be donned daily through faith and disciplined adherence, ensuring every warrior is fully prepared for their march and their combat (Willard, 1988).

2.2 Methodological framework

A rigorous methodological framework is essential to address the phenomenon of the peaceful soldier. This requires moving beyond a simple pastoral exegesis to engage a full-

spectrum academic analysis that integrates theological, sociological, anthropological, and linguistic disciplines. The objective is to deconstruct this socio-religious phenomenon by examining its every dimension, from its origins to its contemporary manifestations.

a. Conceptual Analysis

Such an inquiry begins with a historical and theological exploration of the military metaphor within Christian tradition. A precise genealogy of the metaphor is required, tracing its usage from apostolic writings, particularly Ephesians 6:10-18 (**New International Version Bible, 2011**), to the works of the Church Fathers, notably Augustine's *City of God* (**Augustine, 1998**). The analysis must also encompass Reformation movements and modern currents such as the Salvation Army (**Fanning, 2018**). A concurrent doctrinal analysis will examine how this imagery structures key theological doctrines of sin, the Church, salvation, and eschatology. Furthermore, a rigorous lexicographical and semantic analysis is crucial. A study of the military lexicon within a corpus of relevant texts, sermons, and hymns will serve to precisely define terms like "combat," "armor," and "victory" (**Carson, 1993**). This detailed investigation ensures a conceptual clarity essential for any strategic discourse.

b. Empirical field deployment

An essential phase in this inquiry is the empirical field deployment. Ethnography, through prolonged immersion in one or more communities, allows for close-quarters observation of how the metaphor is embodied and lived out in practice. A meticulous examination of operational doctrines, such as prayer rituals perceived as "battles" or discipleship formations described as "training," is critical (**Spickard et al., 2002**). Symbols, body language, and ceremonial practices are all invaluable sources of intelligence.

c. Command-Level Interviews and Discursive Analysis

Semi-structured qualitative interviews with both "commanding officers" (leaders) and "rank-and-file soldiers" (members) are designed to capture their firsthand interpretations and lived experience of the metaphor. These targeted engagements seek to understand the theological motivations of leadership and the discourse's impact on a member's identity and their management of spiritual trials (**Patton, 2015**).

A concurrent analysis of textual and media corpora is equally necessary. The review of sermons, foundational texts, and both internal and external communication platforms (videos, social media) provides an overarching view of the official discursive production. This methodical review reveals the core operational doctrine guiding the community's mission and identity (**Bourdieu, 1991**).

d. Analysis and interpretation

The intelligence gathered through fieldwork and textual review will be processed through a socio-anthropological analysis. This strategic evaluation will first study the identitarian function of the metaphor, examining how it forges a powerful sense of force cohesion and distinction from the "secular world." The legitimizing function will also be scrutinized to understand how this operational doctrine justifies the command structure of pastoral authority and the strategic objective of proselytism. Finally, the management of suffering will be analyzed to see how physical and emotional setbacks are reinterpreted as the honorable "wounds of combat" (**Frankl, 2006**), a key mechanism for finding meaning within hardship (**Berger, 1967**).

e. Critical Discourse Analysis

A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be deployed to interrogate the power dynamics and underlying ideologies of the metaphorical language. This method seeks to determine precisely how this specialized discourse may legitimize conflictual positions or a Manichaean worldview, where the "enemy" is fundamentally evil and external to the "force" (Fairclough, 2003). Such analysis is paramount to understanding the full scope of this spiritual and social phenomenon.

f. Comparative analysis

A final comparative method will be deployed to contextualize the findings. A side-by-side analysis of the metaphor's usage and reception across different cultures (for instance, a Western congregation versus a community in Africa or Asia) will be conducted. This final layer of strategic intelligence is crucial for distinguishing between theological constants and culturally specific variables (Bowie, 2018).

g. Ethical Protocol

Such a comprehensive inquiry demands a robust ethical protocol. This includes strict adherence to **axiological neutrality**, ensuring that the analysis remains impartial and free from personal bias. The research will also be guided by an unwavering commitment to the strict confidentiality and anonymity of all participants, a fundamental principle of command integrity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results and analysis

At the core of the spiritual arsenal, the utilization of military metaphor is not mere rhetoric but a powerful and complex symbolic system. A rigorous strategic review reveals its profound functions, its operational benefits, and its potential liabilities.

a. Reconfiguration of Believer Identity

Theological analysis confirms that warrior imagery is not a neutral construct; it effects a fundamental reconfiguration of orthodoxy. Doctrines centered on spiritual combat, the authority of the leader, and the conflict between good and evil become primary markers of authentic faith, often eclipsing other spiritual postures such as contemplation or doubt (Horton, 2018). This establishes a hermeneutic of conquest, where Scripture is interpreted through the lens of conflict and victory, thereby transforming narratives from the Old Testament into operational paradigms for modern missionary deployment (Goheen, 2004). This vision is further reinforced by a victorious eschatology, which perceives history as culminating in the triumphal return of Christ, a powerful force multiplier for present effort and sacrifice.

b. Social functions and cohesion mechanisms

On a sociological level, this metaphor acts as a powerful operational mechanism for group cohesion. Ethnographic intelligence confirms that the external world is frequently perceived as "enemy territory," an outlook that fortifies internal solidarity and resistance to cultural assimilation (Coser, 1956). The metaphor also serves as a symbolic framework for the management of suffering and failure. Adversities, whether illness or setback, are frequently reframed as "wounds of combat," offering a profound sense of purpose and integrating hardship into a larger narrative of struggle and ultimate victory. As noted by the sociologist

Max Weber, this religious assignation of meaning to suffering is a powerful mechanism of theodicy that preserves the coherence of faith (**Weber, 1963**).

Furthermore, this military imagery legitimizes a hierarchical structure. The pastor is viewed as a "commanding officer" or "general," and both discipline and obedience are valorized as essential spiritual virtues, thereby naturalizing the authority structure within the corps (**Weber, 1947**).

c. Psychosocial impacts and operational risks

On an individual level, this discourse generates robust resilience and a clear mission-oriented purpose, thereby transforming everyday existence into a heroic campaign with cosmic significance. However, a rigorous analysis identifies significant operational risks related to psychological strain and dualism.

d. Risks of psychological strain

Constant tactical vigilance against a perceived "enemy" can engender a state of spiritual anxiety or a form of psychological paranoia. Such a perpetual state of alert is a known factor in creating religious strain and compromised well-being (**Pargament, 1997**). The emphasis on spiritual warfare can also lead to a strategic disengagement from civic affairs and a diminished capacity to operate in complex, ambiguous situations where good and evil are deeply intertwined (**Hauerwas, 1983**). This dualistic worldview, a critical risk, can hinder the soldier's ability to navigate the nuanced moral landscape of human existence (**Niditch, 2006**).

e. Critical tensions and operational risks

A critical discourse analysis reveals a fundamental tension between the offensive vocation and the message of peace. The manner in which communities reconcile the imperative of "conquest" (Matthew 28:19, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**) with the command of love (John 13:34, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**) is variable and can be agonistic. Potential operational abuses are also identified, notably the instrumentalization of discourse to legitimize unquestioning obedience, the stigmatization of "deserters," or the demonization of critics perceived as "enemy attacks" (**Foucault, 1980**). This misuse of language is a known risk in communities where authority is centralized and unquestioned (**Snyder, 1991**).

f. About the strategic review

In sum, the "soldier on the march" metaphor is a comprehensive symbolic system that shapes a community's worldview, theology, and anthropology. It serves as a powerful tool for group cohesion and motivation while also presenting a clear risk of dualism and abuse. The objective of such an analysis is not to render judgment but to offer a precise cartography of its mechanisms and inherent ambiguities.

3.2 Discussion

The operational tension between warrior rhetoric and the central message of the Gospel is not merely a theological curiosity; it is a critical issue for a believer's testimony and practice. The results of this analysis provide a strategic dialogue on the meaning, risks, and operational relevance of this powerful metaphor for the Christ-soldier.

a. A necessary and fertile tension?

The spiritual life is inherently paradoxical. On one front, Christianity proclaims peace, reconciliation, and unmerited grace. On another, it describes a demanding engagement, a spiritual combat against evil that requires discipline, courage, and sacrifice (1 Timothy 6:12, as

cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). A critical question arises: is this tension an operational weakness or, conversely, a strategic strength? It may well reflect the profound complexity of the human condition, where love and struggle must coexist in the soul of the believer (**Niditch, 2006**). The synthesis of these seemingly opposing forces is a core aspect of Christian sanctification, where the gift of grace is actively lived out through disciplined engagement (**Horton, 2011**).

b. The peril of externalizing the enemy

The most pressing operational peril lies in the transformation of a spiritual metaphor into a literal political or violent program. History is rife with tragic precedents of "holy wars," crusades, inquisitions, and colonial justifications, which demonstrate this catastrophic mission creep (**Jenkins, 2010**). The essential strategic question is how communities can institute effective safeguards against such doctrinal subversion.

c. Doctrinal Safeguards

The primary safeguard is a robust theological education. The commanding officers of faith must cultivate a preaching and teaching doctrine that encourages a serious yet non-literal exegesis of Scripture, emphasizing that the adversary is never a human being (**Fee & Stuart, 2014**). The true enemy consists of the spiritual forces of evil and the structures of sin that hold humanity in bondage, as confirmed by the apostolic doctrine (Ephesians 6:12, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**).

d. The weapon of love: Strategic reality or idealistic fervor?

The concept of deploying love, forgiveness, and prayer as "weapons" might appear utopian when confronted with the stark reality of global injustice and violence. A critical question arises: is this an over-spiritualization of the conflict that leads to disengagement from the concrete struggle? In operational reality, non-violent spiritual combat must be reconciled with a prophetic and tangible engagement against racism, poverty, and exploitation. Social action, political advocacy, and active non-violence are legitimate expressions of this metaphorical war, as they serve to liberate the oppressed (Luke 4:18, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). As the historian Walter Wink articulated, non-violence is not an act of passivity but a "force active" designed to fundamentally alter power structures (**Wink, 1992**).

e. A Psychologically Risky Metaphor?

The psychological impact of military language presents another critical point for discussion. For some, it provides a heroic framework for internal struggles against addiction or despair. For others, it can generate a state of permanent anxiety and a paranoid, Manichaeic worldview (**Pargament, 1997**). Under what conditions does this metaphor transition from a tool of resilience into a source of psychological peril? Pastoral discernment is crucial to guide individuals and prevent the metaphor from becoming a source of fear or judgment, thereby ensuring it does not lead to a simplistic view of a morally complex world (**Niditch, 2006**).

f. Relevance in a secularized world

In a post-conflict world still marked by the memory of religious wars, military language can be a tactical liability, perceived as both archaic and aggressive (**Giddens, 1991**). The question arises: should this language be abandoned in favor of other metaphors like "the path" or "spiritual growth"? Or, conversely, could a subversive reinterpretation of this

metaphor an army whose sole weapons are love and service constitute a truly radical witness in contemporary culture?

g. The Ultimate Model

Christ, by transfiguring the Roman Cross into a symbol of ultimate victory, provides the definitive operational model. The Christ-soldier's mission is to be an agent of healing and a strategic peacemaker, engaged in a most vigorous struggle against all that dehumanizes. This is the profound reinterpretation of spiritual warfare, where the ultimate objective is not conquest but restoration (Peterson, 2006; MacArthur, 2009).

h. Unbreachable limits

For the metaphor to remain faithful to its origin and purpose, a clear set of unbreachable limits must be enforced.

i. Unbreachable limits

The struggle ceases abruptly before the human being. Designating any group of people as the enemy constitutes an absolute betrayal of the core command to love one's neighbor (Matthew 5:44, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011; Yoder, 1972**). Furthermore, the legitimate arsenal is exclusively spiritual (2 Corinthians 10:4, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). Justifying physical violence or coercion in the name of faith is a disastrous historical deviation from this doctrine (Wink, 1992). The ultimate mission objective is reconciliation, not the annihilation of an adversary (2 Corinthians 5:18-19, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). The Gospel is designed to save the sinner, not to crush a human soul.

j. The Leadership and Psychological Protocol

The ultimate commanding officer is the crucified Christ, whose victory was accomplished through service and sacrifice, not through force (Mark 10:42-45, as cited in **New International Version Bible, 2011**). Any form of authoritarian leadership is a betrayal of this Christic model (Bonhoeffer, 1955). On a psychological and pastoral level, the metaphor must not cultivate a mentality of fear or a simplistic Manichaean worldview. The world and the human heart are complex, and a proper interpretation guards against spiritual anxiety and paranoia (Pargament, 1997; Niditch, 2006).

These boundaries do not render the metaphor useless but rather define its interpretation, making it a tool for spiritual growth and vigilance instead of a dangerous ideology. The greatest combat for the Christ-soldier may well be to deploy this symbolic system without betraying its Lord.

IV. Conclusion

The military metaphor in Christian discourse presents a necessary paradox. It powerfully underscores the demanding reality of spiritual engagement, requiring courage, discipline, and constant vigilance against evil. However, it also carries the inherent risk of a literal interpretation that would fundamentally betray the Gospel's core message of peace and grace.

The key to employing this imagery without perverting its meaning lies in a sustained and unwavering discernment founded on several unbreachable principles:

- a. Spiritualize the Combat: The adversary is never a human being, but rather sin and the forces of evil. The primary struggle is an internal, spiritual conflict aimed at sanctification, not the annihilation of others.
- b. Reverse the Weapons: The believer's legitimate arsenal operates in direct opposition to worldly logic. The instruments of this war are prayer, the love of enemies, forgiveness, truth, and service. The supreme weapon remains the cross, a final symbol of victorious sacrifice and love.
- c. Reconciliation as the Ultimate Objective: The final mission objective is not to destroy the adversary but to liberate and reconcile them. The goal is to combat sin in order to save the sinner, to deliver those held in spiritual bondage.
- d. The Christ-Servant Model: The commanding officer of this spiritual army is Jesus, whose victory was accomplished through radical service and sacrifice, not through domination. Authoritarian leadership is a direct betrayal of this Christic model.

The military metaphor remains powerful as long as it is confined to a spiritual allegory. It becomes a toxic and heretical ideology when used to justify violence, hatred, or domination. The greatest combat for the believer may be to wield the banner of faith without declaring war on their neighbor and to follow a Commander who conquered evil by turning the other cheek.

To live this tension is to embrace the full complexity of the Gospel: to be a soldier of peace whose only armor is that of love and whose only victory is that of grace. The strategic challenge is not to abandon this imagery but to discipline its use under the light of the Cross, so that it becomes a source of courage in the service of Love. The ultimate question remains: how can a believer fight with the greatest force against all that dehumanizes, without ever becoming inhuman themselves? The answer is found in the figure of Christ, who conquered violence by enduring it and death through life.

References

- Augustine. (1998). *The City of God Against the Pagans* (R. W. Dyson, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work circa 413-426 AD).
- Berger, P. L. (1967). *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor Books.
- Bonhoeffer, D. (1955). *Ethics* (E. Bethge, Ed.). SCM Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Harvard University Press.
- Bowie, F. (2018). *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Carson, D. A. (1993). *Exegetical Fallacies*. Baker Academic.
- Coser, L. A. (1956). *The Functions of Social Conflict*. The Free Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Routledge.
- Fanning, M. (2018). *Spiritual Warfare: A Theology of Christian Conflict*. Lexham Press.
- Fee, G. D., & Stuart, D. (2014). *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Zondervan.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (C. Gordon, Ed., C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, & K. Soper, Trans.). Pantheon Books.
- Frankl, V. E. (2006). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Beacon Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford University Press.

- Goheen, M. W. (2004). *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story*. Baker Academic.
- Grudem, W. (2000). *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Zondervan.
- Hauerwas, S. (1983). *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Horton, C. M. (2018). *Spiritual Warfare in an Age of Dis-ease: A Theological and Psychological Examination of the New Age and Christian Conflict*. Lexington Books.
- Horton, M. S. (2011). *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Zondervan.
- Jenkins, P. (2010). *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Believe*. HarperOne.
- King, M. L., Jr. (1963). *Letter from Birmingham jail*.
- MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2009). *The Believer's Armor: Equipping for Spiritual Warfare*. Thomas Nelson.
- New International Version Bible. (2011). Zondervan. (Original work published 1978).
- Niditch, S. (2006). *My Brother Esau Is after Me": Biblical Narratives as Training Ground for Ethical Leadership*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- O'Brien, P. T. (1999). *The Letter to the Ephesians*. Eerdmans.
- Packer, J. I. (1998). *God's words: Studies of key Bible themes*. InterVarsity Press.
- Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice*. Guilford Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. Sage Publications.
- Peterson, E. H. (2006). *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. Eerdmans.
- Ricoeur, P. (1976). *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. TCU Press.
- Snyder, H. A. (1991). *The Problem of Authority in the Church: A History of Authority in the Christian Faith*. InterVarsity Press.
- Spickard, J. V., Landres, J. S., & McGuire, M. B. (2002). *Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Study of Religion*. New York University Press.
- Vanhoozer, K. J. (2005). *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Weber, M. (1947). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. The Free Press.
- Weber, M. (1963). *The Sociology of Religion*. Beacon Press.
- Willard, D. (1988). *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. HarperOne.
- Wink, W. (1992). *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*. Fortress Press.
- Wolterstorff, N. (2015). *The God We Trust: The Christic Vision of a Good Life*. Cambridge University Press.
- Yoder, J. H. (1972). *The politics of Jesus*. Eerdmans.