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978-0-521-51462-0 - Practices of Belief: Selected Essays, Volume 2

Nicholas Wolterstorff

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PRACTICES OF BELIEF

Practices of Belief, the second volume of Nicholas Wolterstorff's collected papers, brings together his essays in epistemology from 1983 to 2008. It includes not only the essays which first presented "Reformed epistemology" to the philosophical world, but also Wolterstorff's latest work on the topic of entitled (or responsible) belief and its intersection with religious belief. The volume presents five new essays and a retrospective essay that chronicles the changes in the course of philosophy over the last fifty years. Of interest to epistemologists, philosophers of religion, and theologians, *Practices of Belief* should engage a wide audience of those interested in the topic of whether religious belief can be responsibly formed and maintained in the contemporary world.

NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORFF is Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology, Yale University, and Senior Fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia. His many publications include *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (1995), *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief* (1996), and *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology* (2001, 2004).

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EDITED BY

TERENCE CUNEO



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Editor's introduction

This is the companion volume to another collection of Nick Wolterstorff's papers, *Inquiring about God: Selected Essays Volume I*, also published by Cambridge University Press (2009). As with *Inquiring about God*, Nick and I had many essays to choose from when assembling the present volume, indeed, over forty-five years' worth of them! In choosing the essays for this volume, we have employed the same principle of selection used with its companion: include only those essays that have minimal overlap with each other and with the content of the various books that Nick has published. There are, however, two differences between this volume and *Inquiring about God* worth noting.

First, most of the essays in *Inquiring about God* saw only light revisions. While all of the essays included in this collection have also been revised, some essays, such as "Ought to believe – two concepts," "Religious epistemology," and "Once again, evidentialism – this time social" have been either revised or amended substantially. Second, this volume includes five essays that were previously unpublished and represent Nick's latest views on the topics they cover. Chapter 1, "The world ready-made," is a revised version of one of Nick's Gifford Lectures, delivered in St. Andrews during the spring of 1995. Chapter 2, "Does the role of concepts make experiential access to ready-made reality impossible?" is a revised version of a paper Nick delivered at a conference on realism and anti-realism hosted by William Alston at Calvin College in the spring of 2000. (These papers are better characterized as papers in metaphysics and philosophy of mind, broadly speaking. Still, as Nick notes in his introduction, his aim has been to develop a position that is a combination of metaphysical realism and non-classical foundationalism. These essays give the reader a fuller picture of that view.) Chapters 4 and 11, "Entitlement to believe and practices of inquiry" and "On being entitled to beliefs about God," are also revised versions of parts of Nick's 1995 Gifford Lectures. When combined with Alvin Plantinga's work on warrant and William Alston's

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work on justification and perception of God, they provide the most complete picture of so-called Reformed epistemology to date. Finally, chapter 13, "Are religious believers committed to the existence of God?" is a condensed and revised version of the Tate-Willson lectures Nick delivered on Wittgensteinian fideism and Reformed epistemology at Southern Methodist University in 1991.

When viewed together, the essays in this book fall into three parts. The first part (chapters 1 through 5) is dedicated to systematic issues in epistemology, especially gaining a better picture of that epistemic merit that Nick calls *entitlement*. The second part (chapters 6 through 13) treats matters in the epistemology of religious belief. The third and shortest section is historical, being concerned to elucidate aspects of Thomas Reid's views on common sense and perception. Finally, we have included a postscript, "A life in philosophy," which Nick delivered as the first Dewey Lecture at the American Philosophical Association in 2006.

For their help, especially with knocking into shape some of the computer-scanned versions of the essays included here, I wish to thank the following people: Dan Christian, Sean Christy, Donna Kruithof, Klaas Wolterstorff, and Nancy Zylstra. Jim Bratt at the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship was kind enough to provide a summer stipend to help defray costs associated with producing this book. Finally, thanks go to Nick himself. It has been a great pleasure to work together and especially to see the unpublished work included here finally see daylight.

TDC

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“Ought to believe – two concepts” (chapter 3) is a revised version of “Obligations of belief – two concepts,” which originally appeared in Paul A. Schlipp and Lewis E. Hahn, eds., *The Philosophy of Roderick Chisholm*. Portions of that essay are reprinted by permission of Open Court Publishing Company, a division of Carus Publishing Company, Peru, IL, from *The Philosophy of Roderick Chisholm*, edited by Paul A. Schlipp and Lewis E. Hahn, Library of Living Philosophers Series Volume XXV, copyright © 1997 by The Library of Living Philosophers.

“Entitlement to believe and practices of inquiry” (chapter 4) incorporates material from “Obligation, entitlement, and rationality,” which originally appeared in Matthias Steup and Ernest Sosa, eds., *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, 326–38. Reprinted with the permission of the publisher.

“Historicizing the belief-forming self” (chapter 5) is a revised version of an essay by the same title that originally appeared in Thomas Crisp, Matthew Davidson, and David Vander Laan, eds., *Knowledge and Reality: Essays in Honor of Alvin Plantinga*. Philosophical Studies Series 103, New York: Springer-Verlag, 2006, 111–35. Reprinted with the kind permission of Springer Science and Business Media.

“Epistemology of religion” (chapter 6) is a revised version of an essay by the same title that originally appeared in John Greco and Ernest Sosa, eds., *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999, 303–24. Reprinted with the permission of the publisher.

“Epistemology of religion” (chapter 6) incorporates material from “Religious epistemology,” which originally appeared in William J. Wainwright, ed., *The Oxford Handbook to the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford University Press, 2005, 245–71. Used with the permission of the publisher.

“The migration of the theistic arguments: from natural theology to evidentialist apologetics” (chapter 7) originally appeared in Robert Audi

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“Can belief in God be rational if it has no foundations?” (chapter 8) is a revised version of an essay by the same title that originally appeared in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983, 135–86. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

“Once again, evidentialism – this time social” (chapter 9) is a revised version of an essay by the same title that originally appeared in *Philosophical Topics* 16, 2 (Fall 1988): 53–74. Published by the University of Arkansas Press. Used with the permission of the publisher, www.uapress.com.

“The assurance of faith” (chapter 10) originally appeared in *Faith and Philosophy* 7 (1990): 396–417. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

“Reformed epistemology” (chapter 12) is a revised version of an essay by the same title that originally appeared in D. Z. Phillips and T. Tessin, eds., *Philosophy of Religion in the 21st Century*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, 33–63. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

“What sort of epistemological realist was Thomas Reid?” (chapter 15) originally appeared in the *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 4 (2006): 111–24. Reprinted with permission of the editor.

“A life in philosophy” (postscript) originally appeared in the *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 81 (2007): 93–106. Reprinted with the permission of the publisher.

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