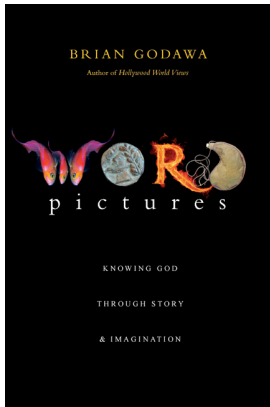


# Q&A

## AUTHOR INTERVIEW



Brian Godawa helps you break free from the spiritual suffocation of heady faith in his new book *Word Pictures*. Without negating the importance of reason and doctrine, Godawa challenges you to move from understanding the Bible “literally” to “literarily” by exploring the poetry, parables and metaphors found in God’s Word. Weaving historical insight, pop culture and personal narrative throughout, Godawa reveals the importance God places on imagination and creativity.

*Word Pictures: Knowing God Through Story and Imagination*, 204 pages, paper, \$16, 0-8308-3709-0, September 2009

  
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### **What inspired you to write *Word Pictures*?**

**Brian Godawa:** In recent years I went through a change of mind in how I understand theology and my faith. I have always been an artist, but in my theology and faith I overemphasized rationality and underplayed imagination. I learned that this was more a product of my culture than of the Bible, which utilizes a vast amount of imagination to communicate God’s truth. I think *Word Pictures* is needed because it provides a biblical basis for renewing a lost emphasis on imagination in our theology.

### **What is the main point of *Word Pictures*?**

**Brian:** The Bible is not a systematic theology of abstract propositions or a treatise on doctrinal correctness. It is a collection of narratives, poetry, images and metaphors that convey God equally through rationality *and* imagination. If we want to know God more biblically, as well as be more persuasive to a postmodern world, we must embrace the power and mystery of imagination in our approach to and understanding of God.

### **How does *Word Pictures* tie into discussions regarding the Emergent church?**

**Brian:** The Emergent church is rightfully challenging Christians to become less obsessed with rational discourse and systematic theology and more involved in the imagination and narrative expressions of theology. Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, and Donald Miller are the left wing version of this challenge. Brian Godawa is the conservative and Reformed version of this challenge.

### **What do you hope readers take away from *Word Pictures*?**

**Brian:**

1. The Bible considers imagination to be of equal value with rationality in our understanding and communication of God.
2. Our knowledge of God (theology) is incomplete and distorted without an aesthetic or theory of beauty.
3. Biblical theology is not always clear and distinct ideas, but often ambiguous and mysterious metaphors. Therefore, it is okay for us to have mystery and uncertainty in our theology. This uncertainty should breed humility in our claims to knowledge and doctrine.
4. As Christians, we must stop being suspicious of artistic imagery and embrace it as a positive biblical counterbalance to rational propositions.
5. Christian communicators should not retreat from cultural narratives as worldly, but should enter the cultural narratives, retell the narratives through a Christian worldview, and thereby capture the cultural narratives for Christ.

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