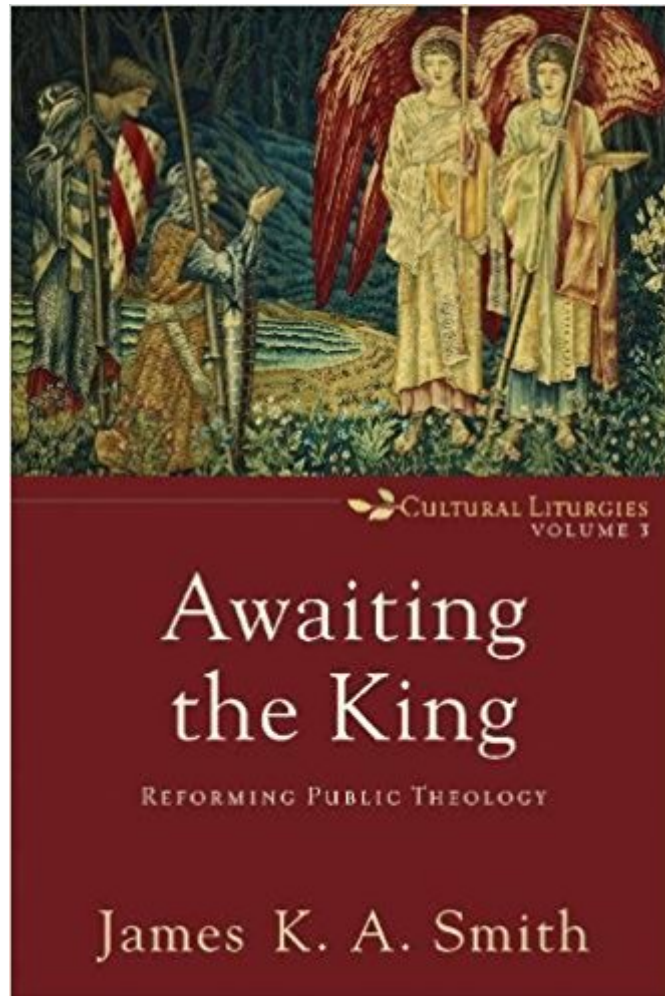


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# Awaiting The King: Reforming Public Theology (Cultural Liturgies)



## Synopsis

In this culmination of his widely read and highly acclaimed Cultural Liturgies project, James K. A. Smith examines politics through the lens of liturgy. What if, he asks, citizens are not only thinkers or believers but also lovers? Smith explores how our analysis of political institutions would look different if we viewed them as incubators of love-shaping practices--not merely governing us but forming what we love. How would our political engagement change if we weren't simply looking for permission to express our "views" in the political sphere but actually hoped to shape the ethos of a nation, a state, or a municipality to foster a way of life that bends toward shalom? This book offers a well-rounded public theology as an alternative to contemporary debates about politics. Smith explores the religious nature of politics and the political nature of Christian worship, sketching how the worship of the church propels us to be invested in forging the common good. This book creatively merges theological and philosophical reflection with illustrations from film, novels, and music and includes helpful exposition and contemporary commentary on key figures in political theology.

## Book Information

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A Political Theology of Culture"Smith has written an essential guide to social life aimed at his fellow Christians but essential reading for all of his fellow citizens. His core insight, that the human being is created to pursue solidarity but must then be ceaselessly formed and re-formed to achieve and sustain it, is at least as bracing a critique of modern politics as it is a critique of the deficiencies of

political theology."--Yuval Levin, editor of National Affairs and author of The Fractured Republic"With characteristic verve and clarity--as well as honesty and nuance--this climactic volume of Smith's trilogy offers a broadly Augustinian perspective on public life that takes us beyond genealogy and modernity criticism. It is a much-needed intervention in evangelical political thought. Appreciative yet critical of contemporary alternatives, Smith offers a liturgical and missional focus that represents a distinctive contribution from a leading public theologian."--Eric Gregory, Princeton University"Negotiating his way through the mass of confusions known as political theology, Smith has written a superb book that develops a constructive and nuanced position in the Reformed tradition. He has done so, moreover, by engaging in conversations with Oliver O'Donovan and Jeff Stout. This is a book that should be read widely by anyone interested in addressing the fundamental questions of church and politics."--Stanley Hauerwas, Duke Divinity School"In this masterful work, Smith engages an impressive array of conversation partners as he explores the implications of the liturgical theology of culture he's developed throughout his Cultural Liturgies project for the public realm. The result is a constructive work of political theology that helps us imagine how to firmly root our political engagement in Christ while giving careful attention to the complex realities of our time."--Kristen Deede Johnson, Western Theological Seminary; coauthor of The Justice Calling"In Awaiting the King, Smith sets out to reform Reformed political theology. With his usual clarity, creativity, and verve, he accomplishes just that, hitting the right notes of both affirmation and critique by refocusing political theology on the polis of the church and its formative liturgical practices. Awaiting the King is a satisfying final movement in Smith's Cultural Liturgies symphony and a crucial contribution to the wider conversation in political theology."--Peter Leithart, president, Theopolis Institute, Birmingham, Alabama

James K. A. Smith (PhD, Villanova University) is professor of philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he also holds the Gary and Henrietta Byker Chair in Applied Reformed Theology and Worldview. He is the editor of *Comment* magazine and is a popular speaker. Smith has authored or edited many books, including *Imagining the Kingdom*, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, and the Christianity Today Book Award winners *You Are What You Love*, *Desiring the Kingdom*, and *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*

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