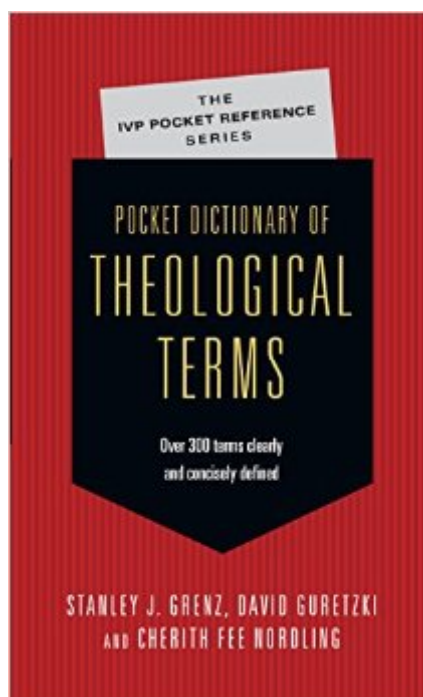


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# Pocket Dictionary Of Theological Terms



## Synopsis

Beginning to study theology is like stepping into a conversation that has been going on for two thousand years. How do you take part in this conversation—or even make sense of it—if you don't understand the vocabulary or know the contributions made by other participants? The Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms is the perfect companion to your theological studies. Among its three hundred-plus definitions are English terms, from accommodation to wrath of God; foreign terms, from a posteriori to via mediatheological movements and traditions, from the Alexandrian School to Wesleyanism; theologians, from Anselm of Canterbury to Ulrich Zwingli. Here is an affordable and easily accessible resource for your theological readings, lectures and writing assignments. It's a must-have for every theological student. Now Available in the IVP Pocket Reference. The complete text of the Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms is now also available in the IVP Pocket Reference, a mobile app for both iOS and Android. Search, follow links, add your own notes and terms, and share definitions—it's "a library in your pocket."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms is a small, slim (122 pages) book which typically devotes five or six lines each to theological terms, major theologians, and theological movements and traditions. It need hardly be said that a book which tries to squeeze a world of theology into a mere 122 pages will have its limitations. Nonetheless, it is surprisingly comprehensive, and refreshingly clear and concise. So, for example, it covers the Council of Nicea, the theology of Karl

Barth, the meaning of fundamentalism, and more than 300 topics besides. The authors state that their purpose is simply to "provide you with a foundational, working knowledge of the concepts". In this they certainly succeed - and with language that should be within the scope of most beginners. While most of their definitions would find general acceptance, they state that they give preference to a "broadly evangelical, Protestant perspective". The one obvious shortcoming of the book is that it would sometimes seem to be capricious in its selection of terms. For example, salvation is defined, yet mission is not. The *imago Dei* is defined, yet the *imitatio Christi* is not. Adolf von Harnack receives an entry, yet Jürgen Moltmann does not. And finally - wait for it - Protestantism is defined, yet Roman Catholicism is not! Having said this, many of the omissions (e.g. Roman Catholicism) would come into focus with a complete reading of the book, and this does not seriously detract from the usefulness of the book as a whole. A full theological dictionary can "cost a ton", besides being difficult for beginners to cope with. This small book provides a cheap and handy alternative, and has the endorsement of leading evangelical seminaries. For what it is worth, it is a good reference work well written.

I have several theology dictionaries which are helpful, but none give such pithy definitions. The definitions are short and to the point, without giving a lot of parallel information. Sometimes you just need a simple definition, not one that is pages long. This book does just that. I found that, while being short, each definition does not limit the meaning of the word too much. There is a good balance between giving open definitions and ones that still mean something. A most helpful resource that I use often.

With its 300 entries, this pocket companion addresses the most commonly used theological terms. I was hoping to find definitions for some of the more specialized terms used by some sects and denominations, but that is beyond the scope of this dictionary. However, a person looking for "the basics" would find this dictionary both useful and convenient.

For an itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny book it sure goes a long way in helping you understand the most common (yet curious) terms that you encounter in theological books and articles. For those laymen who may feel just a little embarrassed when your friends come over and see an encyclopedia length dictionary of theological terms on the shelf next to your Bible when they know that you still get confused between Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1, this may be the book for you. It also has the distinct advantage of not requiring a day's wages in order to obtain it. A great value. Get it while it is still in

the single digits.

For the price and the size, this dictionary is an excellent buy for a bible college student, and for all those working as pastors, in youth ministry, discipleship educational ministries (formally called Church Education) and so forth. At last I've been able to find a dictionary with terms like pragmatism, predestination, panentheism, and other such terms I cannot recall at this moment. Many people do not understand the differences between a bible dictionary and theological dictionary, so for a long time I did not know that a theology dictionary existed. My only gripe is that there are theological terms not in this book (natural evil, free will theory, etc..) and many of the terms in this book are way too concise. However I did find an expanded dictionary on theological terms at the local Christian Bookstore, but it cost over \$50 and was not pocketable. So my conclusion is. If you just need a simple dictionary that is both cheap, and does not weigh 50 pounds, then buy this dictionary.

I have this ready-reference for meetings with my fellow pastors when someone uses a theological term with which I am unfamiliar (for instance, "hypostatic union"). I also have it on-hand when I have an "Ask the Pastor" night at my church. I have orthodox beliefs, just don't know sometimes that they've been given complex titles, historically (I fell asleep sometimes in Church History classes). This book really is really handy and thorough, given its size. A great bargain and resource! I thoroughly recommend it.

In my studies, I have frequently used Millard J. Erickson's book, Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology (Baker Books), ever since it was first published in 1986. Because I consider Erickson's work a real gem, this later title caught my eye: Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms (Intervarsity Press). It prompted a comparison between the two. As the names of the publishers would indicate, the authors of these two small dictionaries can be described as evangelicals with basic aims that are similar. Both books seek to help students of theology who would otherwise be put off by specialist vocabulary. The main difference between the two is obvious: while Erickson's Concise Dictionary contains over 2,900 entries of about two sentences each, the work under review, Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms, contains nearly 500 entries that are longer and that offer more detail. For example, under the letter "Q", Erickson has eight very short entries, including "quadriga," "qualitative distinction," "Quenstedt, Johannes Andreas," and "Qumran" (but not "quest of the historical Jesus"). By comparison, Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms contains only one entry, "quest of the historical Jesus," which runs to well over a hundred words and provides a good

summary. So, for quick reference I will continue to use Erikson first, mainly because of its wider scope. I am just more likely to find what I'm looking for in that reference work. But I will sometimes also pick up the Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms to see if it gives further help, or has an entry where Erikson does not. Teachers of theology can recommend either or both of these works to their students. Preachers and teachers in a church setting will find either of them very useful in their ministries.

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