

Book Reviews_22105

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Book Reviews

The Intentional Family: Simple Rituals to Strengthen Family Ties

by William J. Doherty (*Perennial Currents*)

The definition of traditional family seems to take on new meaning daily. William Doherty's delightful book *The Intentional Family* is a great resource for helping us with efforts to create strong, healthy families. Drawing on experience with his own family and the families he works with, Doherty believes that everyday family rituals, seasonal celebrations, special occasions and community involvement keep today's family connected.

Twenty-first century families are assaulted on every front. Divorce, dual-career households, technological advances, children's school, and social and sporting activities leave us screaming for more family time. Families are being pulled apart, and it is increasingly difficult to connect meaningfully. Doherty states, "Only the intentional family has a fighting chance to maintain and increase its sense of connection, meaning and community over the years. An intentional family is one whose members create a working plan for maintaining and building family ties and then implement the plan as best they can. An intentional family rows and steers its boat rather than being moved only by the winds and current."



What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to books@baptiststandard.com.

The Intentional Family offers proven and practical strategies for creating family rituals that promote open communication and understanding. No matter what your family structure, married or single, this book is a guide that will help you make the most of family relationships.

Gloria Martin

Licensed marriage and family therapist,

licensed professional counselor

Dallas

Why Religion Matters

by Huston Smith (HarperSanFrancisco)



Says Huston Smith, missionary kid from China and longtime world religions professor in various high-end academic institutions: Imagine a four-story house built of glass. On the ground level lives an atheist. In the room are all sorts of physical things -furniture, magazines, bric-a-brac-and himself. The glass ceiling to his room is silvered; it is a one-way mirror. He can see nothing above him. When he talks to his friends who live on the other levels and hears them talk about things “above” him, he looks up and sees only reflections of the world he already knows, the world of physical things and selves who can process physical data through their senses. He is not a

scientist, but he trusts what they say, because all they talk about is the world he knows.

Just above the atheist lives a polytheist. Her glass floor is the back of the atheist's mirror; she can look down and see everything in the atheist's world just fine. But the polytheist's world includes souls and ancestors and spirits, which the atheist thinks are just projections of selves and natural objects and forces, because he can't see them.

On the third story lives a monotheist. He talks about the one god to the polytheist, who can sort of imagine such a thing but assumes it is a distant abstraction; her room has many spirits. The monotheist knows these to be angels and demons, decidedly subordinate to God. Of course, the monotheist can look right through his clear glass floor and see the polytheist's spirits and the atheist's things, but he sees them from a God-oriented perspective.

On the top floor lives a mystic. She's never been to ground level and sees everything below her as part of the floor of her own room.

The atheist's world only has things; the polytheist's has spirits, too. The monotheist's puts all that under one god. The mystic's world only has god in it.

Smith is no evangelical, but you will find very few more humorous, engaging, personable and pithy explanations of worldviews, postmodernism, and the problem of science “versus” religion than in this quick-read book. No reliable guide to doctrine, Smith is nevertheless very quotable and helpful for organizing one's thoughts on these subjects.

Mark Thames, pastor

Lower Greenville Community Church

Dallas

The One Year Devos 4 Sports Fans

by John Hillman and Kathy Hillman (Tyndale House)



“I learned all I know about ethics in sports,” Albert Camus wrote in *Existence, Rebellion, and Death*. One cannot separate the sacred from the secular. That is why some of the greatest sports moments in history help us see God in fresh new ways. John and Kathy Hillman have done exactly that in their new book *The One Year Devos 4 Sports Fans*.

The Hillmans' 365 “training sessions” prepare readers to win the game of life. From my experience as sports chaplain coordinator for Baylor University, the book works as a great tool for athletes. Biblical principles come alive through short vignettes of victory and defeat. As the father of sports-minded teenagers, I appreciate the cutting-edge approach that includes extreme sports like snowboarding, Gravity Games and mountain biking. Last, as a minister, I need perspective. These devotions challenge and motivate me to “run with perseverance the race marked out” as I reminisce about a sweet victory. After all, that is what it's all about—reminiscing about the victory we find in Jesus!

Byron Weathersbee, executive director

Legacy Family Ministries

Waco

A Fish Out of Water

by George Barna

The title of the book caught my eye, but the content captured my interest. This is not a book of standard leadership principles but rather focuses on what God has done in each of our lives that he will use to lead others to where he is at work. The book centers on a plaque given to a leader by Mother Teresa. It reads, "Obedience, Not Success." I asked myself, "Am I obedient to the Father?"

Leo Smith, executive director

Texas Baptist Men

Dallas

Epic: The Story God is Telling and the Role That is Yours to Play
by John Eldredge

A church member/friend gave me a copy of this little book, and I was immediately captivated by the writing style of John Eldredge. He believes life is a story—a majestic, continuous story. We are plunged into the drama of life, which is obviously larger than our own life. He assumes we have tumbled into it and are being swept along by it. The question answered by this book is "What role do we play in this grand epic?" He answers that by employing many illustrations from familiar stories such as The Lord of the Rings, The Matrix, Macbeth and others. However, his greatest illustration comes from the Bible—a truly grand epic, through which our role is revealed.

Bob Campbell, pastor

Westbury Baptist Church

Houston

Confronting Reality: Doing What Matters to Get Things Right

by Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan

This book instructs managers of companies to look at their business in a holistic manner. The authors give examples of how to be effective by not taking subtle things for granted. The application for the church and faith ministries is evident. Our ministries must always look at ways to know the truth about our efforts and organizations. Unless we are doing what really matters to touch more lives for Jesus, we are really failing those he called us to serve. The book doesn't give answers to our questions, but it does help us know what questions we should ask.

Ken Hall, president

Buckner Baptist Benevolences

Dallas

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.