

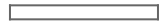
Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

[Before You Plan Your Wedding ... Plan Your Marriage](#) by **Greg and Erin Smalley (Howard Books)**



Little girls dream of wearing flowing white dresses and lovely sheer veils. Brides and grooms, along with their families, spend hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars making the fairy tale ceremony and reception come true. But all too often, they forget that marriage for a lifetime is more important than wedding for a day.

Before You Plan Your Wedding ... Plan Your Marriage offers guidance for building a lasting Christlike union. In chapters ranging from “Will You Forgive Me?” to “If Only We Had Known,” psychologists Erin and Greg Smalley share principles for making marriage work. “Couple exercises/homework” conclude each chapter, as the authors suggest activities such as focusing on each other (and not the wedding) 20 minutes a day.



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

The Smalleys manage to tackle tough issues and differences in male-female communication and expectations with humor and personal stories. They share that early in their dating, Gary called Erin for a defining-the-relationship talk. Over dinner, he indicated he felt pressured. Erin left the restaurant assuming they had broken up—a suspicion confirmed when he didn't call for some time. So she started dating another guy, much to Greg's surprise when he returned from a long trip he forgot to mention to Erin.

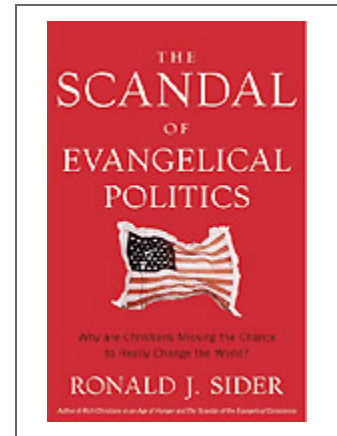
Before You Plan Your Wedding ... Plan Your Marriage would be a great engagement gift and should be required reading for anyone planning a wedding and a marriage.

Kathy Robinson Hillman, former president

Woman's Missionary Union of Texas

and Holly Hillman (soon-to-be Smith), Waco

***The Scandal of Evangelical Politics* by Ronald J. Sider (Baker Books)**



Two good reasons propel evangelical Christians into political action: They know political decisions make a difference in people's lives, and they believe Jesus is Lord. But too often, author Ron Sider insists, evangelical political engagement has lacked both a wise methodology and a solid biblical foundation.

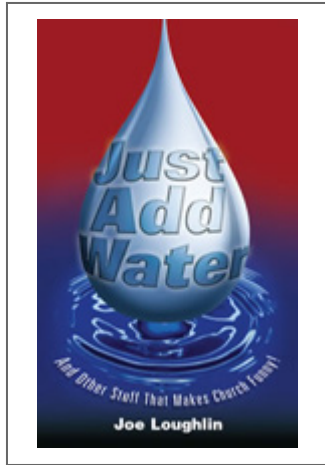
As a proposed remedy to this scandalous failure, he offers a framework for evangelical political activity. That framework begins with an understanding of overarching biblical principles, and it also involves historical perspective and societal analysis. Rather than looking to biblical prooftexts for a detailed political blueprint, Sider challenges evangelicals to develop a political philosophy shaped by the broad themes in the biblical story of creation, fall, salvation and restoration. He deals forthrightly with questions about what kind of laws the state has the right and responsibility to pass and the degree to which evangelicals should try to use the powers of the state to shape a better society.

Ultimately, Sider counsels politically engaged evangelicals to act with humility and integrity—good advice that cuts across all political and religious lines.

Ken Camp, managing editor

Baptist Standard, Dallas

Just Add Water by Joe Loughlin (Infinity Publishing)



We Baptists seem to see church as serious and sometimes dull. Joe Loughlin has been willing to risk opening windows into his ministry to reveal the funny side of church.

God will be smiling as you journey with this pastor through some of his baptisms, weddings, Lord's Suppers, personal times with members, and even funerals as he exposes the humor he has experienced. Loughlin is able to take the ordinary events involving ordinary church members and unfold the funny side of being a part of the family of God.

You will enjoy this funny side from Just Add Water. Take time to smile as you read. Remember, laughter is a gift from God, and he wants us to enjoy it.

Leo Smith, executive director

Texas Baptist Men, Dallas

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