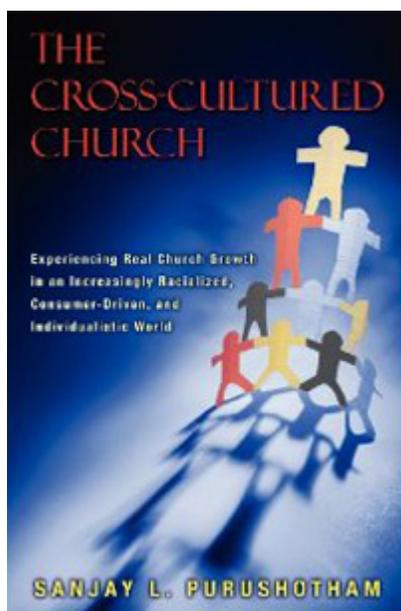


Book Reviews: The Cross-Cultured Church

February 21, 2013

[The Cross-Cultured Church](#) by Sanjay L. Purushotham (CrossHouse)



Sanjay Purushotham, pastor of Asian Indian Baptist Fellowship in Carrollton, takes the New Testament seriously when it speaks about believers from every tribe, tongue and nation gathered around God's throne—and he doesn't just see that as an unattainable heavenly ideal. Contrary to what many American churches practice, he remains convinced true evangelism means making disciples of all people-groups, not just gaining a sizable market share.

Purushotham believes racially and ethnically homogenous churches not only fall short of the biblical standard, but also leave Christians—particularly evangelicals in the United States—poorly equipped for missions and ministry in a diverse and pluralistic culture. He identifies three major influences that produce single-race churches in the United States—devotion to the church-growth movement's teaching about the homogenous unit principle that says people don't want to cross racial or ethnic barriers to worship; a consumer-driven view of religion guided more by marketing than Scripture; and a tendency for churches to be directed by individualistic cultural preferences.

Purushotham presents a challenging critique of the way many American

Christians “do church” and offers a compelling vision of Christian unity.

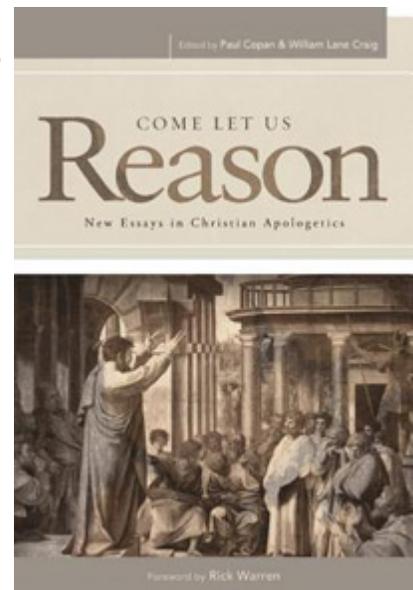
Ken Camp, managing editor

Baptist Standard

Plano

[Come Let Us Reason: New Essays in Christian Apologetics](#) by Paul Copan & William Lane Craig, editors (B & H Academic)

Philosophers Paul Copan and William Lane Craig return as co-editors with their third volume of apologetic essays by a variety of brilliant scholars, following 2007's *Passionate Conviction* and 2009's *Contending with Christianity's Critics*. As with the previous collections, *Come Let Us Reason* has plenty of thought-provoking and enlightening topics to keep the average layperson ruminating and discussing with friends for weeks.



Highlights include Gary Habermas' "The Silence of God," delving into God's hiddenness and asking "Is God active in the world today?" Mary Jo Sharp responds to a hot question: "Does the story of Jesus mimic pagan mystery stories?" Michael Licona answers agnostic scholar Bart Ehrman's challenge of the traditional authorship and validity of the New Testament Gospels in the essay "Fish Tales." Toni Allen's "Apologetically Blonde: The Struggle of Women to Defend Their Faith and What They Should Do About It" encourages women, and consequently, all of us, not to lean primarily on emotion and experience to justify our beliefs. Rather, she challenges Christians to develop reasoning skills and confidence to engage

nonbelievers with the gospel informatively, peacefully and tactfully.

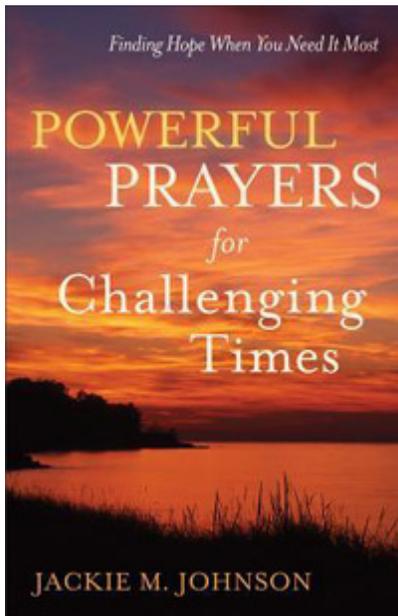
There are some weighty topics here, but the one I have most wrestled with mentally is by Matthew Flannagan: “Did God command the genocide of the Canaanites?” Recent research into ancient historical conquest accounts and the Old Testament itself may lead to surprising insights for many readers.

Greg Bowman, minister to students

First Baptist Church

Duncanville

**[Powerful Prayers for Challenging Times](#) by Jackie M. Johnson
(Revell)**



Jackie Johnson offers a book of prayers for the challenging times we all face on our journey with God. She writes to encourage people who are barely living, busy, broke or weary with life. She sees prayer as a powerful gift to mankind. Her poem “Pray On” provides the focus of the book.

Johnson builds the book around 21 areas of prayer needs. Examples include perseverance, courage, patience and fortitude.

The author has a good grasp of Scripture, which she uses throughout each

prayer. She chooses verses and prays them back to God. She also uses lessons from nature, such as a well-worn footpath, a stagnant pond and a mountain switchback. This makes her prayers very practical.

Johnson provides examples for anyone who wants to learn the disciplines of prayer. Readers will learn from her examples and use of Scripture to strengthen their own prayer life.

Power Prayers for Challenging Times will be a good addition to your prayer library.

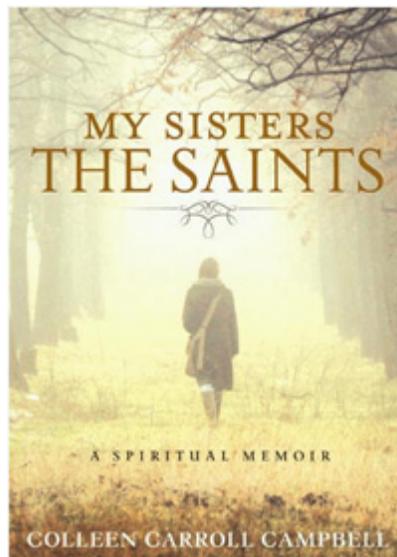
Leo Smith, retired executive director

Texas Baptist Men

Allen

[My Sisters the Saints: A Spiritual Memoir](#) by Colleen Carroll Campbell (Image Books, 2012)

In *My Sisters the Saints*, Colleen Carroll Campbell chronicles her spiritual journey through college, career, family illness, courtship and infertility. The former member of President George W. Bush's speech-writing team explains how at each juncture in the difficult trek, God gave her lessons from the lives of sister saints.



Among others, the author includes Thérèse of Lisieux, Maria Faustina Kowalska, Edith Stein and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. From Thérèse of

Lisieux, she learns about childlike dependence on God. Campbell discovers the steadfast trust of Faustina when facing the decision to leave the White House. She realizes the crucial question is not “Do I trust God?” but “Is God trustworthy?” Stein demonstrates courage in the face of death at Auschwitz. Mother Teresa strengthens Campbell as an example of caring for others in difficult situations as she walks through her father’s Alzheimer’s.

Campbell’s exceptionally strong writing enhances the journal-like account of her growth. Although the experiences reflect her Catholic faith, the lessons apply to all Christians. Baptists, too, can learn from lives well-lived as the Bible instructs to “Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

Kathy Robinson Hillman, 2nd vice president

Baptist General Convention of Texas

Waco