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Witherington's "The rest of life: Rest, play, eating, studying, sex from a Kingdom perspective" (Book Review)

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many Christians still operate as if Christianity is the state religion, a false assumption nurtured by Christian thinkers since the reign of Constantine. The attempts of modern church leaders to mirror secular calls for ‘peace and justice’ and lobbying Congress to legislate their vision of justice, per Hauerwas and Willimon, are the marks of a disempowered church. While *Resident Aliens* primarily addresses the problems of mainline Protestantism, the authors equally condemn the conservative Religious Right’s assumption that the United States is an inherently Christian nation. A quarter century after its original publication, *Resident Aliens* is still a highly relevant critique of modern American Christianity. Neither liberal nor conservative factions of the church have managed to truly transform the dominant culture before or since then. *Resident Aliens* is a relevant book for all Christians who are hungry for an authentic, countercultural community that is neither a sounding board for progressive causes nor an Erastian apparatus of the state.

Reviewer

Seth Allen, Bryan College

Witherington III, B. (2012). *The rest of life: Rest, play, eating, studying, sex from a Kingdom perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans. 168 pp. \$18.00. ISBN 9780802867377

This is a very understandable and thought provoking offering in Ben Witherington’s practical Kingdom Perspective series. As he looks at each topic, Witherington considers Old and New Testament teachings, which bring light to the topic under discussion. For example, in studying the concept of rest, Witherington points to the Old Testament practice of keeping the Sabbath. He then explores the discussion of rest in Hebrews 3 and 4 in the New Testament. He looks at the need for withdrawal from our daily work; he questions the concepts of retirement and nursing homes. He closes the section on rest with a consideration of the gift that rest is and explores how it is a foretaste of the Kingdom.

Both play and food are somewhat touchy topics for Christians. Considering play, Witherington says, “Just because something is neither rest nor work nor worship doesn’t make it a waste of time” (p. 43). Witherington sees play as an opportunity to practice ethics and as a time to do something just because you like doing it. Eating is considered from the moral aspect of caring for the Temple of the Holy Spirit. He says “gluttony, once described as one of the seven deadly sins, is now seen as the guilty pleasure of choice, even by many Christians” (p. 73). Witherington looks at the biblical teachings on drinking wine and alcohol. Then he discusses Christians’ use of food in a world plagued by poverty.

In the chapter on *studying*, Witherington talks about studying the Bible. Once again, he begins with the Old Testament and provides many Psalm references. Then he moves to the New Testament and Hebrews, Mark, and Revelation, both to show how to learn God's word and why. Witherington says: "If the great commandment is to love God with all our hearts and *all our minds*, loving God with all our minds necessarily involves studying diligently God's Word throughout our lives so that we may see him more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly day by day" (p. 112).

This title is strongly recommended. For libraries that have other titles in the series, this book is necessary. And as suggested on the book jacket, the topics in this book would be ideal for small-group discussion.

Reviewer

Kathleen Kempa, Southeastern University

Mitchell, E., & Seiden, P. (Eds.) (2015). *Reviewing the academic library: A guide to self-study and external review*. Chicago: ACRL. 334 pp. \$65.00. ISBN 9780838987834

Legitimate demand drives libraries to participate in self-study and review nearly continuously. Perhaps this hinders creation of literature for systematic reflection and appraisal on the process itself? Recognizing the difficulty of finding "any publication from the past several decades focusing on the review process for academic libraries," Mitchell and Seiden assembled "key thinkers and leaders" to draw "sufficient practical and applicable information" together with contextualized "advice ... current theory and approaches" into "blueprints" for self-study and review (p. xi). One key part of that advice is affective reorientation; by flipping a mandated labor on its head, practitioners can choose to view review as an "illuminating and rewarding" process instead of a mere imposition (p. xv).

Accordingly, Mitchell and Seiden arrange their experts' presentation in three parts. The four chapters comprising Part 1 focus on the 'rationale for self-study' (p. xi): with Crystal A. Baird and Ellie A. Fogarty introducing the six major accrediting agencies; Debra Gilchrist examining how libraries might profitably respond to each agency's differing and evolving approaches (29); Patricia L. Thibodeau and Steven J. Melamut distinguishing standards and processes of "programmatic" accreditors (like the American Bar Association among an "extensive list of agencies" to be considered), to guide libraries among (pp. 62-3); and Joseph Lucia and Jillian Gremmels' reporting their research (via survey and subsequent interviews of college library directors) in internal, "ad hoc," or "non-mandated" reviews (a variety very little represented in the literature) (pp. 85-86).