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## Smith's "Doctrine that Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life" (Book Review)

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The early chapters of the book lay the groundwork for the thesis of the book. Dr. Smith says that if we ask ourselves four questions (who are we, where are we, what is wrong, and what is the answer), then believers will be getting back to what God wants us to do with our lives. The problem has developed because American Christians have adopted popular cultural norms. Applying the four questions to scriptural examples shows the reader how to apply the questions to their own lives. The author realizes that simply “reading and doing” isn’t going to happen and he spends a lengthy chapter on barriers to developing a biblical mindset.

In sum, I heartily recommend this book. I believe the author has broached a topic that needs a clear answer. Rather than a theological treatise, the author has challenged those who accept the Bible as the authority in their lives, to allow God to work that truth into their lives.

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**Doctrine that Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life,**

by Robert Smith. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. 224 pp. \$19.99.  
ISBN 978080446845

*Reviewed by Sherill L. Harriger, Library Director, Warner University, Lake Wales, FL*

When I started reading the book *Doctrine that Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life* by Robert Smith Jr., I found that the first thing I had to do was rethink the word “doctrine.” Being raised in the church all of my life I thought of doctrine as the edicts, guidelines, or mandates of this particular denomination or that particular denomination. However, Smith does not speak of denominational doctrines, those things that divide us, but the doctrine of Jesus Christ that is outlined in the Bible and those things that should unite us and transform us, namely that the “Old Testament proclaimed that Jesus is coming (and) the New Testament announced that Christ has come and will come again” (p. 23).

I am sure Smith wrote this book primarily for preachers, but I know that even as a layperson this book spoke to me. As I read *Doctrine that Dances* I was constantly highlighting and making notes in the margins because Smith makes everything so very clear and concise. He took such a simple premise as dancing to lead the reader to a better understanding of authentic worship where the members of the congregation are the actors and the worship leaders are the promoters but that God is the audience.

Through this book I have learned how to better present Jesus to others and Smith's words have given me focus and clarity in so many areas that were fuzzy to me before. Consequently, I have shared so many things from this book with others – everyone from fellow members of my church, to my pastor, to university professors who teach Bible, and every one of them has been touched, strengthened, and encouraged by Smith's words.

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**Does Altruism Exist? Culture, Genes, and the Welfare of Others,**

by David Sloan Wilson. New Haven, CT: Yale University/Templeton Press, 2015.

180 pp. \$27.50. ISBN 9780300189490

*Reviewed by Lisa Cutforth-Anderson, Learning Resource Coordinator and  
Old Testament Professor, Alberta Bible College, Calgary, AB*

David Sloan Wilson has written a thought-provoking volume on altruism. He proposes to trace the evolutionary development of altruism in various insect and animal species, culminating in the presence of altruism in *Homo sapiens* as demonstrated through group theory. *Does Altruism Exist?* is well-written, easy to read, and contains documented research and a helpful index. Wilson raises the question whether altruism exists at the thought and feeling level, or exists only in outward deeds; he also questions previous research strategies and claims about altruism. His questioning results in the evidence that several altruistic acts actually stem from selfish motives, even though prosocial acts are evident. He offers several convincing arguments for and about prosocial actions, but one of his major arguments builds from a faulty claim.

He claims that religious altruism, including Christian altruism, does not exist. He purports religious adherents are only altruistic because they exchange altruism for salvation and eternal life. As the founding president of the Evolution Institute and a SUNY Distinguished Professor of Biology and Anthropology, he may be qualified to speak about evolution, but his claims about various world religions and their tenets are not valid or researched. Even the evolutionary claim that he bases his evolutionary theory on is highly suspect, particularly in its wording: “[s]ome of my conclusions are provisional, but others follow from evolutionary theory at such a basic level that they are unlikely to be wrong” (149). For a conclusion based on evolutionary theory, he should have included more support for his evolutionary theory, and why it is unlikely to be wrong.

This book is for a limited audience: evolutionists. His claims about religious adherents and their altruistic motives are unfounded, and unless one is currently an evolutionist, there is little in this volume to convince one of the evolutionary process necessary for the evolution of motives, thoughts and actions.