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Yount's "The Teaching Ministry of the Church" (Book Review)

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In the college or university setting, it would be an excellent study for individual dorms, or, in larger settings, dorm floors (or similar) to build community within the university or to build relationships between “Town and Gown” in a new, more personal way.

Feeding souls while feeding bodies – what could be more Christ-like?

The Teaching Ministry of the Church,

edited by William Yount. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2008. 464 pp.

\$39.99. ISBN 9780805447378

Reviewed by Shelia Gaines, Head of Circulation, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

In his foreword, Daryl Eldridge, editor of the first edition of this title, emphasizes the seriousness of the mission of discipleship. He describes this book as a “guidebook not just for those responsible for the teaching and administration of the discipleship ministries of the church but for anyone who is passionate about seeing Christians grow in their faith. It provides a biblical and theological rationale for the teaching ministry of the church” (p. xii).

Parts one and two explore the theological and biblical foundations for the teaching ministry, while parts three and four focus on preparation and structuring.

In an introductory format, the editor begins the first chapter with his own first foray into Christian education and concludes with a thorough explanation of the Disciples’ Model, which has an outer circle that represents the Holy Spirit as Teacher, “the One who holds all the other elements together in a balanced synergism which rest on the two foundations of the Bible (eternal truth) and needs of learners (present needs).” Yount describes this model as his teaching compass; it uses three pillars – think, grow, and value – to define the process of spiritual growth (pp. 8-9).

All succeeding chapters of this work end with discussion questions, bibliographies and/or suggestions for additional readings and include the elements of the Disciples’ Model; including appropriate chapters such as *God as Teacher*, *Jesus*, *The Master Teacher*, *The Holy Spirit as Teacher* and *The Bible as Curriculum*. One contributor’s conclusion proposes, “We teach to change lives. Our goal is to see life as God does. We need to renew our understanding, to adjust our thoughts and actions so we can understand God’s will” (Rom. 12:2; p. 42).

This sentiment is echoed throughout the work and includes a wealth of Bible-based teaching concepts and guidance for preschoolers through adult learners.

While all contributors have a good grasp of the academic value of the subject matter, the narrative voice and language of the work make it equally valuable to scholar and lay person alike.

Ten Questions About Prayer Every Christian Must Answer,

by Alex McFarland and Elmer L. Towns, Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2014.

152 pp. \$14.99. ISBN 9781433682179

Reviewed by Noelle C. Keller, Technical Services Librarian, Adrian College, Adrian, MI

Co-authors Alex McFarland and Elmer L. Towns offer a scholarly approach to their book, *10 Questions About Prayer Every Christian Must Answer*. Towns brings his academic credentials as co-founder of Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, and Dean of its School of Religion to bear on the topic. McFarland hosts the radio program, *Exploring the Word*, and is a prolific speaker and author. Other titles by McFarland in the same vein include: *10 Questions Every Christian Must Answer: thoughtful responses to strengthen your faith* and *10 Answers for Atheists: how to have an intelligent discussion about the existence of God*, etc.

In the preface, Christian prayer is defined as communication with the heavenly Father per Jesus in Matthew 6:5-8. It is a function of a Christian's relationship with God.

This book is intended as "an apologetic approach to prayer" (p. vii). The authors seek to address 10 questions of non-Christians and Christians regarding prayer with an intellectual defense. The structure of the book is clear. Each chapter presents a question offering an antithesis or problem that the author then addresses based on biblical perspective with scriptural examples and references. Each chapter concludes with principles that can be applied to one's prayer life along with endnotes.

The authors' answers aim to strengthen the faith and prayer practice of Christians by encouraging a thoughtful and rational approach to addressing misconceptions and doubts regarding prayer. The book's format should help the Christian answer skeptics, critics, or seekers with a reasoned defense. It would be appropriate for personal study – layperson through undergraduate.