



Volume 57 | Issue 2

Article 24

2014

Crear's "In the Zone" (Book Review)

Amy C. Rice
Northwest Nazarene University

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit [//www.acl.org/](http://www.acl.org/)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl>

Recommended Citation

Rice, Amy C. (2014) "Crear's "In the Zone" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 57: Iss. 2, Article 24.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.1422>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *The Christian Librarian* by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

Smith's book is meant to be a commentary on Taylor's book. Taylor's book "offers a genealogy of the secular and an archaeology of our angst" (ix). Taylor basically disagrees with the modern secular thesis that with more reason and rationality we have less and less religion. Taylor argues that the secularization thesis is "a long-held thesis that hypothesized that religious belief would decrease as modernity progressed" (20). Smith argues that this has not happened. In contrast, Taylor offers an alternative theory that can be detected in his definition of a secular age: "A society is secular ... insofar as religious belief or belief in God is understood to be one option among others, and thus contestable and contested" (22).

Most of the book is a narrative on how we went from a religious age (the Middle Ages) to a secular age (modernity). Taylor and Smith describe the different characteristics of a secular age. A major characteristic of secularists and the secular age is closing off transcendence. However, even then, secularists are haunted by ghosts. Smith notes, "But almost as soon as unbelief becomes an option, unbelievers begin to have doubts – which is to say, they begin to wonder if there isn't something more" (61). Smith's *How (Not) to Be Secular* does a good job of guiding the reader through a very important book. It shows how we reached this secular age. It shows the different characteristics of modern life. It also shows that even unbelievers are haunted by doubts. Taylor's alternate theory of the need for transcendence in modern life is convincing. This book is recommended for all libraries.

In the Zone,

by Mark Crear. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014.
128 pp. \$16.99. ISBN 9781426772023

*Reviewed by Amy C. Rice, Access Services Librarian,
Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, ID*

It comes as no surprise that two-time Olympic medalist, life coach, and certified counselor Mark Crear would be writing a book aimed at helping others achieve their goals. He writes that some components in an athlete's training regimen may be used by non-athletes to achieve their personal and spiritual goals. Simplified, these components are purpose, preparation, passion, permission, prayer, and practice. Crear intersperses the practical elements of goal achievement with stories of his successes and failures. Yes, failures. *In the Zone* is not likely to give anyone false hope that achieving his or her goals will be easy, but the author includes plenty of encouragement that despite those obstacles, one will succeed.

What is most impressive about *In the Zone* is Crear's clear focus on the goal achievement process, always reiterating that serving God should be foremost in any person's mind. This is no prosperity gospel, and many of Crear's suggestions strongly resemble classic spiritual disciplines. This book may be appropriate for institutions with a leisure nonfiction collection, or for those interested in a faith-based motivational book that has a less formulaic feel than many that can be found in the nearest Christian bookstore.

Making it Plain: Liberating Black Church History,

by Juan M. Floyd-Thomas. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014.

163 pp. \$17.99. ISBN 9780678332755

*Reviewed by Paul A. Roberts, Director of Library Services,
Southeastern Bible College, Birmingham, AL*

The author's purpose in writing this volume is to raise key issues and critical insights within the broad history of the Black Church tradition as viewed through the perspectival lens of Black liberation theology (pg. 10). With this purpose in mind, the author divides the book into three sections: (1) the Black Church tradition from enslavement to emancipation, (2) the Black Church tradition from segregation to the Civil Rights Movement, and (3) the Black Church tradition from Black liberation theology to Barack Obama.

In the introduction to his work, the author takes great pains in setting the record straight regarding the study of the past that has served to oppress African-Americans. As the title suggests, the *making it plain* for the author means looking back at the problems, prayers, progress and promises of his forbearers to gain the diverse tapestry of the African-American religious history. The rest of the book seeks to answer the questions who is the God that we call God? How do we imagine this God, and how does that affect our experience of that God? And, in turn, our relationships with one another? Without the benefit of being raised in the African-American tradition, it is difficult to understand and appreciate the emphasis the author presents. There is no attempt to explain to those outside the Black context to help everyone understand, learn, and appreciate what has taken place.

With this stated, I recommend that everyone read this book. Those who will benefit the most from the reading are from the African-American tradition. The bibliography will point the reader to excellent sources to fill in the gaps created by the text.