



Volume 59 | Issue 2

Article 39

2016

Dean and Hearlson's "How youth ministry can change theological education – If we let it" (Book Review)

Terry L. Christian
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Christian, Terry L. (2016) "Dean and Hearlson's "How youth ministry can change theological education – If we let it" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 59: Iss. 2, Article 39.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.1124>

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.

Joustra, R., & Wilkinson, A. (2016). *How to survive the Apocalypse; Zombies, cylons, faith and politics at the end of the world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company. 198 pp. \$16.00 ISBN 9780802872715.

Joustra and Wilkinson examine what recent popular culture says about our modern/postmodern society and politics. One reason the authors give for writing about this topic is, “Both of us teach college students and know keenly the ways that their imaginations and ours have been molded by the shows and movies we watch and the conversations we have with others about them.” (p.7) They delve into the fields of philosophy, political science and sociology, as well as religion for their analysis. Since many of these stories include apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic and dystopian elements, the authors provide some historical context for these terms.

The authors offer compelling insights on the themes of shows from *Battlestar Gallactica*, and *The Walking Dead*, to *Mad Men*. They also discuss the movie *Her*, and *The Hunger Games* franchise. They point out that our society seems to be increasingly fragmented and people are looking for truth or “authenticity,” and identity, as they have lost their faith in institutions. People also have more choices than ever. According to Joustra and Wilkinson, “Making good choices for our survival in our secular, pluralistic society is complex. There is no silver bullet” (p. 150). How should we then live? The authors point to the example of Daniel, who was used by God to influence Babylonian society.

This work may be difficult for an undergraduate audience to digest all at once, without providing more context. Joustra and Wilkinson recommend reading Charles Taylor’s books *The Malaise of Modernity* and *A Secular Age*, as well as *How [Not] to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*, by James K.A. Smith as additional sources (p. 4).

Reviewer

Cynthia Hammell

Dean, K.C., & Hearlson, C.L. (Eds.). (2016). *How youth ministry can change theological education – If we let it*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing. 331 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 9780802871930

In an increasingly activity-centered culture, our youth enjoy the privilege and possibility of participating in several extracurricular pursuits, such as sporting or musical interests. Oftentimes these activities establish summer camps at schools of higher learning where young people spend days involved in not only improving

necessary skills and knowledge in their particular pursuit, but experiencing a beneficial social aspect engaging a group of individuals who share the same bent. Where can students interested in discovering cogent theological training or demonstrating natural Christian leadership seek to enhance their skills and knowledge? Enter the Lilly Endowment's High School Theology Programs, or HSTPs, which "help teenagers fall in love with theology and inspire, challenge, and shape the next generation of Christian leaders for the church and for the world" (p. 4).

Kenda Creasy Dean, the Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church, and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* and *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*, along with Christy Lang Hearlson, an ordained Presbyterian pastor and PhD candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary, are editors of *How Youth Ministry Can Change Theological Education – If We Let It*. All thirteen contributors of the chapters in the book reviewed were "written by people who have actually designed, created, and/or led one of the programs" (p. xi).

HSTPs go beyond the typical "let's have as much fun as we can" summer camp ideology, although the beneficial social aspect should not be dismissed summarily. They go beyond the helpful, yet commonplace, spiritual gift inventory as well. Reading these chapters will uncover anecdotally how this program challenges youth to dig deeper into theological truths, and how these truths are implemented with the help of mentors, the church, and ultimately the Christian community. The program is definitely not a "Fisher-Price version of theology" (p. 23). Specifically, three main forms of Christian leadership are endorsed in HSTPs: "servant, witness, and steward...these images take on various hues depending on the theological tradition of the host program" (p. 43). At the printing of this book, over thirty programs are active according to Appendix C (p. 299–300) in seminaries and colleges across the nation and Canada.

Not all participants consequently pursue vocations as clergy in their respective churches, "yet some research suggests that an astonishing one in four HSTP alumni have graduated from, are currently enrolled in, or plan to attend seminary – and another 28 percent say they 'are considering' attending seminary" (p. 4). Additionally, even though many do not continue onto formal theological education, "forming a body of committed young congregants who are accustomed to engaging their faith deeply is no small thing" (p. 21).

Unquestionably, *How Youth Ministry Can Change Theological Education – If We Let It* is an important read for all involved in youth ministry. However, being an "extraordinary feeder system" (p. 21) similar to sports camps and band camps,

seminary presidents, deans, professors, and denominational leaders alike should read and consider the insightful information found within its pages. Drawing interested youth into a more challenging exploration of and reflection upon theology will help identify and develop future leaders of our congregations as well as produce strong members. The church would do well encouraging its youth and remembering the words of Benjamin Disraeli, “The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity.”

Reviewer

Terry L. Christian, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Quarles, C. L. (2014). *Illustrated life of Paul*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group. 300 pp. \$29.99 ISBN: 9780805494532

Although there have been many fine books written on the life of the Apostle Paul, one might question whether it is necessary for another to be written. After reading this book, my vote is a resounding “YES.” Professor Quarles has taken great care to incorporate the latest archeological discoveries as well as including many colorful photos of the places visited by Paul on his missionary journeys.

Written with the lay person in mind, the author penned the life of Paul based on the information given in the scriptures. For those interested in digging deeper into various aspects of the apostle’s life, endnotes provided by the author provide the necessary information needed to conduct further research. As the title indicates, there are plenty of illustrations throughout the book to guide the reader to the locations where Paul traveled and people to whom Paul ministered.

So why should you purchase this book for your library? You probably have material on the apostle’s life in other books so why would you want to add another one? I thought the same thing when I started the book, but I soon changed my mind as the author drew me into the story. The historically accurate background information based solely on Scripture coupled with photos, maps, and charts neatly bring together the message and theology of this important apostle. I would highly recommend you add this book to your collection.

Reviewer

Paul Roberts, Southeastern Bible College