



Volume 58 | Issue 2

Article 87

2015

Deal's "The Smart Stepfamily: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family" (Book Review)

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Recommended Citation

Kubic, Schylon (2015) "Deal's "The Smart Stepfamily: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 58: Iss. 2, Article 87.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.1322>

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Simply Salsa: Dancing Without Fear at God's Fiesta,

by Janet Perez Eckles, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2011. 143 pp. \$13.99.

ISBN 9780917017019

Reviewed by Deborah L. Denison, Madigan Army Medical Center, Tacoma, WA

Janet Perez Eckles has written a book that invites women to accept God's call to dance. Despite losing her eyesight at age 32, suffering financial devastation, enduring the heartbreak of infidelity, facing incomprehensible grief after her son's murder and the anguish that followed the acquittal of the individual responsible, Janet lives a dance-filled life. Throughout *Simple Salsa*, Janet provides examples when busyness, tragedy, anxiety, guilt or fear threatens to silence the music within our hearts and the rhythm of our lives.

Eckles' writing style is passionate, humorous, engaging and creative. Spanish words and terms are liberally used, allowing the reader to better experience the "flavor" of Eckles' voice as an author. Her transparency in sharing her feeling of anger and bitterness towards God, especially after He did not heal her from blindness, is both relatable and admirable.

Despite being only 143 pages long, the ten chapters of *Simply Salsa* are chock-full of profound truths that speak to women at every level. A Spanish-language glossary is included. *Simply Salsa* is an inspiring book of hope for all *chicas*.

The Smart Stepfamily: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family,

by R.L. Deal. Ada, MI: Bethany House Publishers, 2014. 320 pp. \$16.99.

ISBN 9780764212062

Reviewed by Schylon Kubic, Women's Foundation of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City, MO

The Smart Stepfamily is a valuable contribution to the literature on the family ministry of the church and to living a Christian life. Deal, an experienced and highly regarded expert on stepfamilies, argues that churches have an obligation to devote greater time, energy, and love to the nurturing of stepfamilies. Although many churches have taken great strides forward in the work to minister to the needs and challenges of families, Deal maintains that nearly all of these efforts have intentionally or unwittingly excluded "blended" or stepfamilies. Stepfamilies, stepparents, and stepchildren face serious and unique challenges; having strong support from their churches can be an essential ingredient in the success and happiness of these families. Deal helpfully provides a number of concrete steps that churches and family ministries can take to serve the needs of stepfamilies. Although some of these steps are common sense, the

fact that they are not implemented by more churches suggests that their articulation here is necessary. The book is also strong in the guidance that it provides to stepfamilies themselves, identifying common experiences and challenges. Again, *Deal* provides readers with seven clear and realistic steps that they can take to overcome these challenges and ensure that the family's life is in alignment with biblical teachings. At times repetitive, the book may also frustrate readers by its propensity for directing them to accompanying workbooks or resource guides for more specific guidance. Nevertheless, *The Smart Stepfamily* should be praised for its willingness to focus attention on an often-overlooked aspect of family ministry and for unhesitatingly welcoming stepfamilies into the broader family of Christ.

St. Cyril of Alexandria: Three Christological Treatises,

edited and translated by Daniel King. (Fathers of the Church, 129). Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014. 191 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 9780813227054

*Reviewed by Stefana Dan Laing, Assistant Librarian,
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Houston, TX*

This primary source material by the indomitable Egyptian bishop, Cyril of Alexandria (d. AD 444), is the latest offering in CUA's excellent patristics series, which includes several other volumes of Cyril's works. This slim volume opens a window into the very heart of the Nestorian controversy, and provides some clear and revealing examples of the characteristic Christological concerns of Alexandria and Antioch. The book contains three works by Cyril dated in the year just before the Council of Ephesus (AD 431), and is therefore of immense importance in clarifying the Christological points at issue in the heated controversy.

The first treatise (AD 430), addressed to the eastern emperor Theodosius the Younger (d. AD 450), reads like a heresiology, treating six heterodox positions which Cyril rejected based on Scripture and the authority of the orthodox fathers. Cyril set himself up as a "constructor of orthodoxy" (p. 10), distancing himself from several heresies of which he had been accused (e.g., Apollinarianism). At the culmination of his work, he marshalled his objections to Nestorius' heretical two-nature (dyophysite) Christology (pp. 59-82).

The shriller and more aggressively polemical tone in the two latter documents (likely composed in AD 431 in the months leading up to the council) signaled the escalation of the controversy. When Pope Celestine stepped into the fray against Nestorius, Cyril "was emboldened to compose his famous twelve propositions," also known as the *Twelve Anathemas* against Nestorius (p. 5). The second and third treatises constitute Cyril's defense of his anathemas against Nestorius' supporter, the