



Navigating Student Ministry: Charting Your Course for the Journey. Edited by Timothy McKnight. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic. 2022. 349 pp. \$34.99. paper.

Review by Frank Trimble, director of training and consulting at Family Time Training in Littleton, Colorado.

Tim McKnight, Ph.D., serves as associate professor of Christian Studies at Anderson University and pastor of Mosaic Church of Anderson in South Carolina. His experience in academia, pastoral ministry, and military service make him a fitting editor for this in-depth guide for student ministers. *Navigating Student Ministry* is intended to function as a practical guide that student ministers can use as they begin or continue their vocational journey (p. 3–4).

McKnight begins the book with a biblical defense of student ministry in chapter one. In chapter two, Sam Totman describes the vocational call of the student pastor and the qualifications necessary for the role. In chapter three, McKnight discusses the importance, quality, and substance of the student minister's daily life. Chapter four features Chandler Vannoy's explicating the essential elements of leadership development in student ministry. In chapter five, McKnight treats the importance and function of the student ministry team. Paul Kelly, in chapter six, engages adolescent development and its implications for student ministry practice. In a similar tone, Karen Jones, in chapter seven, addresses the unique cultural and social realities of teenagers. In chapter eight, Timothy Paul Jones discusses the value and role of the family in connection to student ministry. Justin Buchanan, in chapter nine, articulates the significance of evangelism in the lives of students and the student minister. In chapter ten, R. Scott Pace presents the importance and holistic nature of discipleship in student ministry. Totman, in chapter eleven, evaluates the use of technology in student ministry and offers a strategy for how to do so well. In chapter twelve, Troy Temple engages in what he calls "Student Ministry Next," examining the adjustments and innovations of student ministry's past to best approach

its future. In the concluding chapter, McKnight outlines a plan of implementation based on the contents of the book. Two appendices regarding historical precedents for age-organized ministry and the importance of active partnerships with parachurch organizations close the volume.

Navigating Student Ministry supplies a thorough treatment of various topics related to student ministry practice. The contributors have offered their respective expertise for the benefit of student ministers. One of the more laudable traits of the book is its insistence upon the cruciality of families and the larger congregation regarding the spiritual development of teenagers. Additionally, the volume highlights just how essential it is that the student ministry be connected to the congregation—even in vision and mission.

Although the book features plenty of helpful content, some of its claims may give readers pause. For example, in chapter one, readers may find themselves asking what student ministry is. That is, what does the author mean by the term? In addition, though McKnight clearly holds a high view of Scripture (chapter ten), the passages he treats do not directly support the institution of student ministry. Noteworthy is the author's use of Deuteronomy 6:4–9 as a foundational passage supporting student ministry. McKnight derives much application from the fact that the entire nation of Israel was gathered to hear Moses. This national gathering is used to support Levitical and community involvement in the discipleship of children (p. 14). However, more exegetical work concerning Deuteronomy 6 is needed to substantiate the author's claims.

Once McKnight moves to the New Testament, he treats passages that mandate disciple-making (Matthew 28:16–20), model the evangelistic practices of Paul (1 Corinthians 9:19–23), describe the role of church leadership and structure (Ephesians 4), and prescribe intergenerational discipleship (Titus 2). Again, though these passages should be applied to the evangelism and discipleship of teenagers, they do not directly support or prove the validity of the institution of student ministry. This chapter runs the risk of overstating its claims. Scripture does describe and prescribe the discipleship of children and youth in the home and in the community of faith. However, the scriptural mandate to disciple teenagers does not require the use of the institution of student ministry to accomplish its mission. Hence the defense of the institution must begin with a firm biblical

grounding in the roles of the congregation, the office of overseer, and parents to see the institution continue to benefit churches.

Further, chapter 12 provides a positive bias concerning the historical development of the field of student ministry. Temple finds the historical developments that led to modern youth ministry to be lacking and suggests that only the advent of youth ministry corrected such deficiency. An observation of this development overstates the effectiveness of modern youth ministry and understates the effectiveness of the church prior to the twentieth century. Also, the author does not substantiate his historical claims with any primary sources.

Although there are a few topics that require greater substantiation, overall, *Navigating Student Ministry* will serve student ministers well. The book is largely excellent and should be utilized for the future health of the discipleship culture within a church. Particularly notable are the chapters and appendices authored by Timothy Paul Jones, Paul Kelly, and Karen Jones. Additionally, the volume features worthwhile practical content regarding personal holiness, delegating, qualifications for ministers, disciple-making, evangelizing the lost, and technology.



Equipping Fathers to Lead Family Worship by Kenneth S. Coley and Blair D. Robinson. Nashville, TN: Randall House. 2021. 115 pp. \$14.99. paper.

Review by Frank Trimble, director of training and consulting at Family Time Training in Littleton, Colorado.

Kenneth Coley, Ed.D., served Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forrest, North Carolina, for twenty-five years as a senior professor of Christian Education. He also served as the director of the seminary's Doctor of Education program. He has authored and edited several books, including *Teaching for Change: Eight Keys for Transformational Bible Study With Teens* (2017). Blair Robinson, D.Min., is the lead pastor of First Baptist Church of Irving, Texas. He previously served as

the discipleship pastor of First Irving and as the associate pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Raleigh, North Carolina.

In the present volume, Coley and Robinson offer a guide for pastors to use in equipping fathers to lead family worship in their homes—though the book can also serve fathers directly (p. 3). The book is broken up into three parts. Part one covers the biblical and historical precedent of family worship (chaps. 1–2) as well as provides an overview of the elements of family worship (chap. 3). The biblical precedent chapter offers readers foundational texts that describe or prescribe the practice of family worship and other elements of home discipleship. The chapter on historical precedent lays out early church examples of family worship and explains the emphasis on family worship through the Protestant Reformation, the Puritans, and specific figures such as Richard Baxter and John Knox. The authors do not simply offer accounts of notable historical figures; they also include helpful breakdowns of key teachings from them that can serve fathers today.

In part two, Coley and Robinson provide pastors with practical guidance on how they can equip fathers to prioritize private devotional disciplines (chap. 4), lead their families through key elements of family worship (chaps. 5–6), and model Bible study methods to their families (chap. 7). The authors offer practical guides and breakdowns so that pastors have a palatable way to equip the fathers in their congregations.

Part three concentrates on how pastors can implement the training of fathers and provide continual oversight for them as they lead family worship in their homes. In chapter 8, the authors provide a framework for a four-week training plan in which pastors intentionally train fathers and launch them in the practice of family worship. Chapter 9 is concerned with how pastors can provide accountability and support for the fathers in their congregations. At the end, the authors offer a note of challenge and inspiration directly to fathers.

The book also features three appendices that list helpful resources for further study and cover basic learning concepts.

Coley and Robinson successfully achieve their goal of providing a guide for pastors to equip fathers to lead family worship in their homes while also making the resource accessible for fathers themselves. The size of the book is noteworthy: at 115 pages, the book is a quick read. Further,

the authors have produced a resource that is relentlessly practical yet substantive.

For readers who have not been exposed to the biblical and historical precedent for family worship, this book provides an appropriate introduction to the practice while highlighting its importance. At the same time, however, the book is written in an engaging manner; the authors frequently employ personal illustrations and give practical how-to breakdowns for pastors aiming to lead and equip fathers. The book also avoids pretention and assumes nothing about readers' prior knowledge of the subject matter. Hence, this book would be a great fit for any Christian father regardless of his spiritual maturity level.

Out of the book's many strengths, two rise to the surface; its emphasis on the personal holiness of the father and its humble yet firm advocacy of complementarianism (p. 10). Since the book focuses on fathers, it emphasizes their biblical role. The premise of the book illustrates that God has a specific design for what the father is supposed to do vis-à-vis home discipleship. However, throughout the volume, mere ritual is decried, and unhealthy forms of masculinity are nowhere to be found.

In *Equipping Fathers to Lead Family Worship*, Scripture, church history, real experience, and practical instruction undergird Coley and Robinson's mission. This resource would benefit any congregation that is willing to put its principles into practice. Pastors are encouraged to consider implementing a training regimen that resembles what can be found in chapter 8. However, the authors are under no illusion that their approach is the only appropriate method. In short, the book provides a way to be intentional with the equipping (Ephesians 4:11–12) of those who are called to lead their homes. The authors have provided a plan, and readers are left to consider whether or not they will follow it.



The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution by Carl R. Trueman. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. 432 pp. \$23.00. Hardcover.

Review by Steve Vandegriff, Ed.D., professor, adjunct faculty, and online instructional mentor at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia.

One does not have to look very far, when it comes to current cultural nuances, to discover overt sexual messages that cause most people to shake their head in disbelief. One that has captured the attention of our culture in grandiose fashion is transgenderism. More and more corporations have aligned themselves with this issue, including Adidas, Disney, and Target, to name a few. Even Barbie has her own transgender Barbie doll. This causes many parents and grandparents, along with critical thinkers of faith and practical theology, to ask an important question: Where on earth did this transgender movement come from? Carl Trueman answers that question in *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*.

Carl Trueman, Ph.D., is a professor of biblical and religious studies at Grove City College and is a recognized church historian, as well as a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. He has authored or edited a number of books. *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* is not only a thorough treatment of the topic, but also extraordinarily timely. To be clear, while timeliness can have the perception that this will become dated sooner than later, that is not the case with this book. This book is timely with regard to the urgency of awareness with Trueman's address, as well as the potential long-term consequences.

Although Trueman engages a subject as diverse as the "sexual revolution," he filters through the LGBTQ+ movement while accentuating the normalization of transgenderism. The author skillfully walks the reader back through history, in order to learn from it. Readers will quickly realize that this is a deep dive, not just into the historicity of sexualized thought and philosophy, but also how these writers and thinkers changed the trajectories of how culture(s) manifested their thoughts and ideas. These writers

and thinkers were not just spouting banal words to acquiesce some and placate others. Their intentions were often to create change in cultural thinking, particularly in the context of sexuality, while anticipating the formation of some type of social/political enclave, often at the expense of all things related to Christianity.

Readers will find themselves engulfed in the midst of notable philosophical writers and thinkers (Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Darwin, Freud, to name a few). Trueman introduces readers to philosophers who emphasized psychological and sociological thought. This philosophical evaluation then leads toward the political, for without the political piece, change and acceptance (whether volitionally or not) could not take place. Trueman makes it clear that this outcome is worth a clarion call because what will become politically expedient (the normalization of transgenderism) is the endgame. It should be noted that Trueman does make note of those sexual moorings that our culture still rejects (i.e. pedophilia) but whether one likes to admit it or not (Trueman admits this), even these sexual moorings could be compromised by political oppression that has been swayed simply due to current cultural distaste of the nuclear family.

Before the reader gets too far into Trueman's book, it will become apparent that this book is not a biblical response to a disturbing trend in our sexualized culture. In fact, the reader will only find one reference to the apostle Paul and only one biblical reference, in the book. However, to be a bit editorial, that is by design. Trueman has made it clear that our current cultural way of thinking, specifically on the topic of sexuality, has been shaped by disgruntled and religiously void writers of different generations. Reasoning with Scripture would be futile simply due to its juxtaposition to all things religious. In addition, Trueman also demonstrates that our current culture is anti-historical, which not only means that history is a false narrative and needs revision, but it also demands the "destruction of history and its replacement with nothing of any significant substance" (p. 91).

So where do those people of faith and family go from here? The Epilogues and Prologue are worth the price of this book as Trueman concludes with a word of hope (p. 404) and a call to the church (p. 402–407). It is a call to, as Rod Dreher wrote in his foreword, "find ways to keep the true light of faith burning in this present darkness, which comprehends it not" (p. 13).



Biblical Worldview: What it Is, Why it Matters, and How to Shape the Worldview of the Next Generation by Josh Mulvihill. Renewation. 2019. 233 pp. \$14.54. paper.

Review by Charles Carpenter, Ph.D., who serves as professor of Humanities and dean of students at Texas Baptist College. He has served in Christian Higher Education and in pastoral and campus ministries and has significant experience teaching and coaching in Christian Secondary Education.

In a society known for its shifting definitions and reappropriation of competing ideas about God, family, and work, a reaffirmation of what the Bible says concerning these matters is necessary and warranted. *Biblical Worldview*, by Josh Mulvihill, Ph.D., offers an introductory foundation for leaders (parents, grandparents, church leaders, and academics) to train and equip young people and adult leaders to follow Christ more faithfully, defending their faith and knowing how to use the Scriptures with wisdom.

He argues that one's "ship-wrecked faith" is directly tied to how much one reads, understands, and applies the Scriptures. Because, as he maintains, there is a drift from scriptural meditation and core biblical doctrines, he calls churches, families, and academic institutions to "prioritize discipleship over athletics and academics, and for Christian schools to prioritize maturity in Christ over college prep or academic rigor." Moreover, he writes, concerning his book, "*Biblical Worldview* is a serious call to shape the next generation's beliefs with the Bible." Mulvihill argues, that in order to hold back the tide of shifting definitions and faulty perspectives on foundation matters, leaders must offer a biblical worldview pervasive enough to answer the questions young people face today (e.g. creation, marriage, divorce, Jesus, gender education, abortion, parenting, flat earth, Islam, immigration, and vaccines).

Mulvihill divides his book into three parts, with each part containing about four chapters. The book is about half the height of an average book

containing 223 pages with a ten-page appendix, consisting of an annotative bibliography of books and resources that treat specific worldview issues.

In his *Biblical Worldview* text, he stresses the importance of the family to establish a biblical world without diminishing the role of the church or the school. Further, he gives examples where the Bible treats an issue, and how the average Christian fails to know how to apply the clear, reasonable, and logical teaching of Scriptures. Each chapter is an “easy-to-read,” “Cliffs-Notes” introduction to a “high-view-of-Scripture” intended to “equip” the Christian leader “to make a real and lasting difference” as he/she stresses the importance of discipleship to establish a pervasive, biblical worldview for young people today.

In “Part 1: Introduction to Biblical Worldview,” he establishes the “Why,” “What,” and “Who” in the establishment of a biblical worldview. Mulvihill directs the reader to the Scriptures to answer each of these interrogative pronouns, recognizing that a proper interpretation and relationship with the Bible assures a good foundation for a Christian worldview. Even before a child can read, Christian leaders must model how the Bible addresses the contemporary issues of the day. This is how Christian leaders train young people “to love God’s Word, trust God’s Word, and live by God’s Word.” He reminds the reader that “A child’s belief system, his or her worldview, is almost fully formed by the age of twelve.” It is for this reason that everyone, “parents, other family members, typically grandparents, teachers and coaches, friends and pastors or religious leaders,” is vital in passing on a Christian worldview to the next generation.

This vital group of people are those who are to model and teach the importance and implementation of a Christian worldview. The implementation of a Christian worldview begins with the establishment of a biblical framework for addressing challenging issues. For Mulvihill the biblical framework has four main parts: Creation, Rebellion, Salvation, and Restoration. Answering these four truths from the Scriptures allow children to be “rooted and built up in Christ” and gives them a starting point for good Bible interpretation.

In “Part 2: The Biblical Foundation,” he offers a guide to help young people establish a way to understand the Scriptures in order to “Develop a love for the Bible.” For children to grow up to a maturity in Christ and

develop a love for the Scriptures, Mulvihill contends, he/she must find ways to apply the Bible in the proclamation of “the gospel, communicating wisdom [and] warning, teaching the Bible, ... asking questions, testimony telling, communicating a blessing, ... prayer, [and] memorizing ... the Bible.” As a young person prioritizes the message of and the meditation on the Scriptures, he/she will trust in the “authority,” “sufficiency,” and “efficacy” of God’s Truth.

Even though Mulvihill centralizes on the priority of the Scriptures itself, he offers some helpful resources and guides to address current challenges to laying a good foundation to become “mighty in the Scriptures.” He encourages reading the Bible inductively and having a basic commentary, Bible dictionary, concordance, and Bible Atlas to aid in proper examination of the biblical text. Additionally, he encourages the biblical student to frame questions about biblical themes in a way for Christians to know how the Bible is consistent and reliable. He does this by using a series of charts that address key ideas and biblical passages which address central themes. Colossians 2 is the foundation for these key ideas, which, for Mulvihill, is a guide “to receive Christ,” “walk in His way,” ... [and] become “deeply rooted in the faith.” Using Colossians as a guide he lays a foundation “to offer a good [worldview] ... and drive out bad” ones.

In “Part 3: The Bible’s Big Story,” he articulates the main doctrines which shape the Scriptures and one’s biblical understanding of the world and eternity. With this section, he seeks to ward off narrow worldviews which relegates the Bible to specific areas of conversion, life, and application. Mulvihill writes, “many homes, churches, and schools only teach a narrow worldview that is limited to rebellion and salvation but does not concern itself with the broader Christian life and thinking.” He illustrates how non-biblical worldviews counterfeit and mask what the Bible offers as “the true account of history from the beginning of time until eternity.” The truthful account of the Scriptures offers a unity from the beginning with creation and ending with restoration. Deviating from this account of Scripture leads to one buying into the counterfeits like evolution, relativism, humanism, secularism, socialism, moralism, and Islam.

For Mulvihill, the pervasive message of the gospel is not only how a single biblical passage addresses a particular issue or how many passages deal with a central doctrine, but also the thematic principle that begins

with creation and ends with restoration. This thematic principle addresses competing worldviews like Marxism, Hinduism, Socialism, and Islam. This pervasive message begins with personal salvation; personal salvation is not the only goal for a Christian. For Mulvihill, personal salvation is the starting point from which one can treat difficult worldview issues. Mulvihill explains how salvation “is the answer for sin,” but the Gospel mandates the believer to restore and reconcile the world back to God through the pervasive message of Christ and His work. Even though this pervasive message begins with a personal, even private repentance, and faith unto salvation, one’s “faith belongs in the public arena of education, politics, social media, and the workplace.”

The pervasive message of the Gospel and the grounding of Scripture is the strength of Mulvihill’s work. He challenges leaders to address every issue with the Gospel in mind and the tools of the Scripture. Moreover, before he closes each chapter, he directs leaders to asking probing questions while addressing particular passages of Scripture. In several places, he summarizes the key beliefs of a competing worldview while briefly explaining how the particular worldview directly opposes a biblical worldview. Even though these are strengths of the book, they are its weaknesses as well. Summarizing a competing worldview, the way he does, makes the particular worldview seem trite, superficial, and inane. This off-handed approach could lead to arrogance and limited understanding of one’s worldview. Similarly, he suggests that there are simple and singular answers to difficult issues like marriage, vaccinations, schooling, and the like. It would be helpful for Mulvihill to at least offer a footnote or a sentence occasionally showing that good, biblical, and wise Christians wrestle with these issues, and if one differs from the other, the one should not characterize the other as having a non-biblical worldview.

In conclusion, Mulvihill’s work is needed and helpful as a primer to worldview thinking. He encourages believers to think reasonably and pervasively about the Scriptures and how they address social and cultural issues.



For the Faith of the Next Generation: A Resource for Ministry Leaders and Parents by Julie Kurz with Scott Turansky, Joanne Miller, Carri Taylor, and Kirk Weaver. Nashville, TN: D6 Family Ministry. 2022. 262 pp. \$24.99. paper.

Review by Jeff Nichols who is the current state director for Child Evangelism Fellowship of Tennessee, assuming that role after 25+ years on staff at The Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a former children's pastor, youth pastor, and executive pastor with 30+ years of ministry experience who loves his kids, his grandkids, and kids all around the world.

I could not help but ask myself if there was more we could do in children's ministries. Why, after years of being in Sunday School, learning about God's plan for their lives and seemingly making commitments to follow Jesus, couldn't we keep our children from falling away in such spectacular fashion?

With this piercing question on page one of the Introduction, Julie Kurz lays out a problem she has spent years trying to answer. And she is not new to this struggle. With more than 30 years of experience in children's ministry as a children's ministry director, consultant, coach, and a children's ministry specialist for Church Assistance Ministries, she knows well the joys, struggles, and challenges of ministry leaders and parents. Kurz launched Reconnect Ministries in 2006 with the express purpose of establishing a biblical model for passing faith to the next generation. This model recognizes the home as the primary source of spiritual development for children and sees the church as coming alongside parents, not replacing them.

Kurz notes that her writing style is meant to be more like a letter to a dear friend than a book. This book does read more like a letter than a dissertation and her casual writing style is an easy read. As she explores a wide range of topics related to answering the big question asked in the introduction, she deals with the hard facts and statistics that show the preferred method of reaching children over the last few decades has not had

the desired effect or impact on those children when they grow older in life or in faith.

She relates examples of her years of experience in children's ministry to support this premise. Kurz has developed ministry strategies with specific spiritual targets, then ministered within that setting long enough to evaluate whether or not the target was hit. A realization came to her when she was confronted with the fact that many of the children who had grown up in her ministry were not attending church when they got to high school. This made her ask, "Could I really be responsible for the spiritual foundation of children growing up in our church?"

This refrain occurs over and over throughout the book as she dealt with the reality of the limited influence a few hours a week at church can have on children. This kind of honest examination sheds a light on a weakness of the current methodologies and approaches to ministry that she is not afraid to address. The book peels back the layers that have contributed to this current state of affairs, but it also provides plenty of assistance for anyone wanting to do something about it.

One of the most amazing benefits of reading this book is the list of resources referenced and cited throughout the book. Many books will refer to a source that has served as mental fodder to arrive at a certain conclusion, but Kurz does more. Throughout the book she will not only refer to another source but give a summary of the key thought that served to push her in her thinking about a certain topic or issue. Seldom do you buy a book just for the bibliography, but this may be the exception. The reader is the recipient of the overflow of vast reading by Kurz. She even allows subject matter experts in fields such as heart-based approach to parenting, family time devotions, and the impact of divorce and remarriage on the family to write entire chapters on their subjects. Turansky, Miller, Weaver, and Taylor provide clear insight in these areas which are important factors in constructing a ministry to children that is parent-partner focused.

While not an exhaustive list of all that is covered in the last half of the book a few themes occur over and over, such as:

- The need to teach children the Bible as one story, as one book. She gives a good list of curriculum publishers that have taken this approach in their teaching material. Again, Kurz is a fount of good suggestions on where to find valuable resources.

- How to avoid “performance-driven” faith.
- Is salvation an event or a journey? This question is considered from several different angles as Kurz wrestles with the age-old challenge of children’s ministry—how to lead children to Christ without making it about a moment in time at a big event. This is a valuable exercise for any parent or children’s ministry leader to work through as they consider how they want to guide children who want to place a saving faith in Christ.

This book is a worthy read by anyone wanting to take the responsibility of spiritually shepherding children seriously.



Big Things Start Small: How Small Groups Helped Ignite Christianity’s Greatest Spiritual Awakenings by Joe M. Easterling. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021. 196 pp. \$25.00. Paperback or eBook. \$40.00. Hardcover.

Review by Jerry Calvin McKinney, Ed.D., who serves as adjunctive professor of Christian Education and administrator for the Doctor of Education Studies Office at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

Joe Easterling gives a robust review of the history of church revivals from the time of biblical writings, through the Reformational period, into the Great Awakenings during the early development of the United States, and into the more modern revivals of the 20th Century. This survey of revivals focuses on those taking place in the United States but launches from a historical viewpoint tracing the major events in Western world history. Easterling brings a fresh wind to the topic of revival as he sweeps through a review of some of the great names in modern church history.

Joe M. Easterling, Ph.D., serves as assistant professor at the Liberty University School of Divinity in Lynchburg, Virginia, and also as discipleship pastor at Northside Church in Wilmington, North Carolina, where his wife and two daughters are also members. *Big Things Start Small* is his first published book that emerged from his research while pursuing a sec-

ond doctoral degree. Easterling's research provides a launching pad for students interested in learning about small groups and their impact upon the advancement of the kingdom, especially here in the United States.

In Chapter 1, he covers small groups in Scripture and the early days of the church when house churches were common. Easterling writes, "The house-church model was so successful during the New Testament time that virtually every instance in the book of Acts of a local church meeting refers to the gathering being in someone's home" (p. 13). He goes on to give a detailed rationale for this New Testament style of worshipping Yahweh as it morphed into the love (agape) feasts that are described in the writings of Paul.

In Chapter 2, Easterling launches from the small group practices of the early church into the impact that small groups had on the Reformation. Here he covers the stories of great names like Waldo, Wycliffe, Huss, and Luther. He then contrasts them with the Anabaptists who "centered on the doctrine of baptism" (p. 41) to distinguish themselves from other groups.

In Chapters 3–6, he shares the development of small group formation that led up to each of the four Great Awakenings, examining the socio-economic, religious, and moral conditions, and how these small groups helped to sustain the effects of the revivals from one to the next. Easterling's treatment of the spread of revival across college campuses makes an interesting undercurrent in his argument. From college campuses to camp meetings and Sunday school, young people feature strongly in the great moves of God throughout the United States, Wales, and Korea. Notably, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Jesus People Movement, and coffeehouses became primary foci for spreading the revival spirit across the land.

At the end of their respective chapters, Easterling provides tables showcasing key observations of the catalytic small groups during each of the four major awakenings. He wraps up his book with an epilogue that ends with a table summarizing small group features, leaders, and proponents among other interesting observations. These data tables give helpful snapshots of Easterling's data gathering and conclusions, thus making it easier for the reader to follow along with his argument.

Easterling concludes with six small group features for igniting the flames of revival again: Focus on studying the Bible; Focus on praying;

Focus on discipleship & holiness; Focus on worshipping with music; Allow gatherings to overflow into culture; And focus on transformational awakening instead of logistics.

While Easterling paints a historically accurate portrayal of the role of small groups in catalyzing revivals throughout American history, he stops just short of speaking to the many moves of God that have happened since the Mid-Century Revival (1949–1979). With more than 40 years of current church history in the United States. left untouched, Easterling leaves the door open to writing another book that could follow up on more recent developments in various denominations across the Unites States. Furthermore, he could expand his research to speak to the impacts of small groups on revivals that are currently occurring in many places across the earth.



The Biggest Story Bible Storybook: 104 Engaging Bible Stories for Ages 6–12 by Kevin DeYoung (Illustrated by Don Clark) Wheaton, IL: Crossway. 2022. 528 pp. \$21.43. hardcover/dustjacket.

Review by Tony A. Rogers, D.Min., senior pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Bowie Texas. Tony also serves as the executive director of Jeremiah 20:9 Ministries in Bowie Texas.

Kevin DeYoung and Don Clark provide an invaluable service to both the home and the church with this treasure-trove of child-friendly Bible stories. DeYoung (Ph.D., University of Leicester) is the author and serves as both pastor (Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, North Carolina), and professor (Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina). He and his wife Trisha have nine children. Clark (cofounder of Invisible Creature) serves as illustrator and is an award-winning artist. He and his wife, Erika are the parents of three and live in Seattle, Washington. These are stories from God’s Word designed for ages 6–12, but parents will certainly enjoy this work as well.

DeYoung introduces this collection with insightful “Notes to Parents” (pp. 10–11). He informs readers that this “is a story book about the Bible,

but it is not the Bible ... if you have to choose between reading the Bible or reading this book, by all means read the Bible” (p. 10). He defines his parameters, “Although I’ve tried hard not to take creative blessings with the text of Scripture, I’ve not simply repeated it either. What you have in this book is our theologically minded and redemptively focused interpretation of the main stories in the Bible” (p. 10). He offers advice to those who participate in this undertaking, “allow time for spontaneous questions, to ask good questions, to talk about the pictures, and to discuss not just what of the story but the why, the how, and the Who” (p. 11).

One hundred and four theological adaptations unfold in seven sections: Part 1: The Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy 20 stories), Part 2: History (Joshua-Esther 16 stories), Part 3: Poetry (Job-Song of Solomon 4 stories), Part 4: the Prophets (Isaiah-Malachi 12 stories), Part 5: the Gospels (Matthew-John 32 stories), Part 6: Acts and the Epistles (Acts-Jude 16 stories), and Part 7: Revelation (4 stories). These chapters are not intended to stand alone but are meant to reveal the grand narrative of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation framed in a kid-friendly way. Each story ends with a prayer that is applicably grounded in that story. The artwork is captivating, and the authors are aware of the inherent dangers of bringing the words of Scripture to life with the corresponding designs. This is especially true in the presentation of Jesus. The author and illustrator sought to be neither culturally unrealistic, cartoonish, or idolatrous; instead, they simply present the main character artistically stylized as opposed to silhouettes and shadows (p. 11).

This book presents several positive features. First, DeYoung ably places theology on the lower shelf where children can reach it with such gems as, “Although the Lord loved the world He had made, He didn’t love how worldly it had become” (p. 34) or “After twenty years, Jacob was starting to change. Because God’s promises were not” (p. 73). One of the most rewarding sections is the “Snake Crusher is Crushed for Us” (Mark 15) (pp. 418–425).

Second, the book indelibly etches phrases, titles, and concepts on the mind. Phrases like, “Every other hero is a mixed bag—like a sack full of jelly beans and baby carrots” (p. 128) or “the fruit of the off-limits tree” (p. 26) or the “live-forever tree” (p. 30). Scintillating are *The Miraculous Catnap* (Daniel 6) (pp. 244–249) and modernizing Psalm 23 to rhyme (p. 208).

Next, sometimes conveying death to children can be challenging. The authors are commended for doing so truthfully without being gratuitous, still being faithful to the sacred text (e.g., Red Sea swallowing up the Egyptians [pp. 90–91], John the Baptist beheaded [p. 338], death of Sapphira and Ananias [pp. 450–453], and the depiction of Hell [pp. 520–521]).

Lastly, if a picture is worth a thousand words, then Clark's illustrations speak volumes, especially his depictions of Noah (pp. 36–39), Sodom and Gomorrah (pp. 60–61), Elijah's chariot of fire (pp. 170–171), Ezekiel's valley of dry bones (pp. 227–231), and the Holy City that John saw (p. 525).

This volume will alter your family altar and serve well in several church settings. This edition serves as a vital addition to the *Biggest Story Suite* featuring *The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden* (Crossway, 2015); *The Biggest Story: The Animated Short Film* (Crossway, 2016); and *The Biggest Story ABC* board book (Crossway, 2017). "When the best stories are told for children—in their idiom and at their level—they are still captivating for adults. They teach children and adults at the same time. I'd love for this book to do the same" (p. 11). DeYoung and Clark rightly perceive that Jesus is the Biggest Story—the theme, goal, and good news, (p. 13) and they are always pointing to Him. They are not seeking to replace Scripture, rather they are providing yet another means to do what the great hymnwriter Fanny Crosby longed for: "Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every word; tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard."