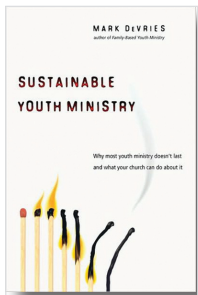


Coming of Age in Religion

by Kristine Morris

With time and distance come perspective, and hopefully, a bit of understanding. Unfortunately, in these early years of the twenty-first century, our adolescent and teenage children are coming of age in one of history's more breathless, complex periods. Will they find room for religions formed more than two-thousand years ago? The following three books look at contemporary efforts to bring our nation's youth into the religious fold.



Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What You Can Do About It

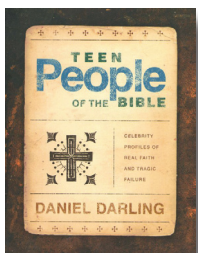
Mark DeVries
InterVarsity Press
Softcover \$16.00 (224pp)
978-0-8308-3361-0

Mark DeVries has discovered a startling pattern: "Most churches have chosen to do youth ministry with a model best described as gambling."

Hoping that *this time* will be different, they cross their fingers and hope they will find a "superstar youth director" who will change everything quickly, or that the "right" curriculum, meeting, or convention will bring in throngs of young people eager for all their church has to offer. Unfortunately, this approach has not worked, and its continued failure can bring churches to despair of ever having a viable youth ministry.

DeVries shows that churches often fail to consider the true needs of those they are trying to serve: surveys of young people reveal that what they are seeking may best be described as communion (the desire to be known and recognized for who they are and to know others the same way), transcendence (a call to apply their energies and idealism to something greater), and fidelity (the ability to trust that others will "be there" for them for the long haul). He offers an approach that encourages churches to invest in a long-term plan that requires more patience than many of them appear to have, but is predictable in its success at creating thriving youth ministries.

Mark DeVries is the founder of Youth Ministry Architects, a coaching service for churches. He oversees the youth ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and is the author of *Family-Based Youth Ministry*.



Teen People of the Bible: Celebrity Profiles of Real Faith and Tragic Failure

Daniel Darling
New Hope Publishers
Softcover \$13.99 (254pp) 978-1-59669-088-2

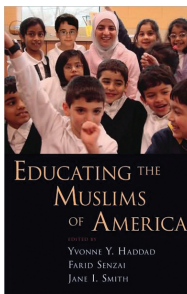
Teens may be intimidated by the Bible, finding it to be filled with larger-than-life characters and situations that don't have much relevance

to their daily lives. Author Daniel Darling shows how Biblical teens were much like today's youth in their strengths and weaknesses and in the difficult choices they had to make. Written in workbook format and addressing questions like: "Am I important to God, or am I just another random person?" and "Can I trust God to keep

His promises?" the book takes a conversational tone to address the major concerns of today's Christian teens.

Darling assures teen readers that, while he does not claim to have all the answers, there is a God who does, and who cares about and desires to have a relationship with each one of them. He advises using his book together with Bible reading, and suggests a "100-day challenge" to integrate God's word into one's life. The author presents several ways to make the Bible come alive for teens, including meditating on scripture, and imagining oneself "in the shoes" of the teen in the Bible. Daily journaling, and reading past journal entries to discover how one's attitudes may have changed over time or how God may have answered one's prayers.

Daniel Darling, pastoral ministry graduate of Dayspring Bible College, is a writer and managing editor for Victory in Grace Ministries. He is active in the youth ministry, local prison ministry, and worship team of his local church.



Educating the Muslims of America

Edited by Yvonne Y. Haddad, Farad Sensei, and Jane I. Smith
Oxford University Press
\$29.95 (296pp) 978-0-19-537520-6

Islamic schools face many challenges in post-9/11 America. Muslims are now regarded with suspicion, and their schools seen as possible breeding grounds for extremists. Yet the number of Islamic schools in the United

States is growing as Muslim parents seek education that honors and is in accord with their ethical and moral values and religious beliefs. Additionally, many of them fear placing their children in the public or parochial school environment, where their differences may make them targets for discrimination, harassment, and possibly harm. Sharing the concerns of all faith-based schools for sustainability and healthy development, Muslim educators, parents, and religious leaders are proposing ways in which to "provide sound religious education in a pluralist society."

The challenges for Islamic schools as they work to educate Muslim youth include producing a school curriculum that provides quality education, especially with regard to the faith and practice of Islam; certainty that they are teaching their faith in a way that is true to its essence yet absent of the extremism that could result in acts of terrorism; and educating a wary American public about Islamic faith and practice.

Educating the Muslims of America presents essays that illuminate the issues currently facing Muslims as they attempt to live as Americans, while holding to their distinctive beliefs and nurturing "a new generation of American Muslims that now has the task of being bridge builders to the larger community." (February) **F**