



**DANCING DOVE**  
LOS ANGELES

INTRODUCING A NEW CHRISTIAN JEWELRY BRAND

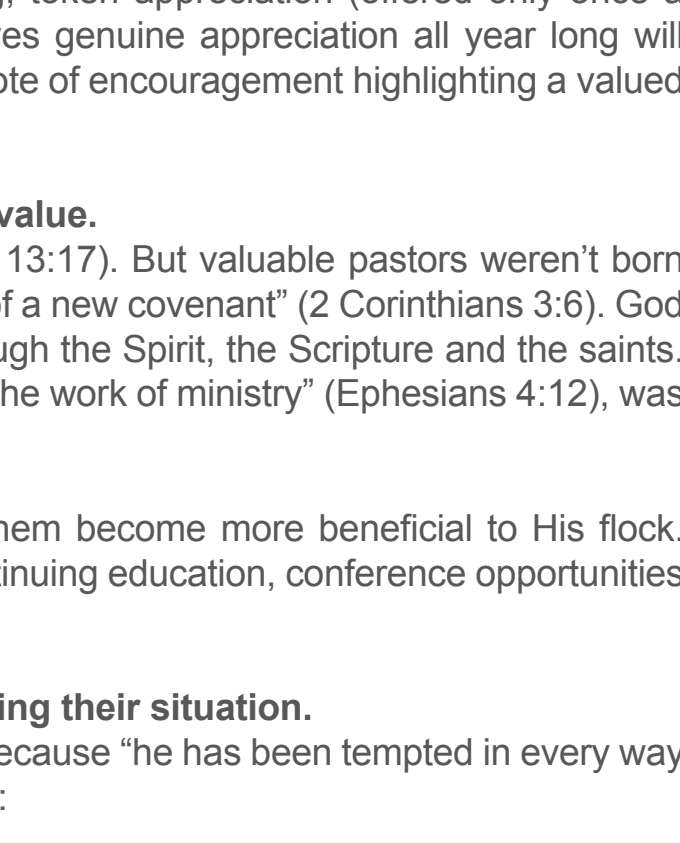
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**FOCUS ON RETAIL**

**How Jesus Appreciates Pastors—and You Can Too!**

by Eric Schumacher

It's Pastor Appreciation Month! So what should we do? That depends on our definition of "appreciation," which can mean recognizing something's full value, increasing in value, or fully understanding a situation. Here's the good news: we don't have to choose. Jesus does all three, and so can we.



**1. Jesus appreciates pastors by honoring them.** Peter encourages faithful pastors with a promise—"when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:4). Jesus will honor faithful pastors and calls the church to do the same (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

While an appreciation Sunday may be encouraging, token appreciation (offered only once a year) can feel like an insult. The pastor who receives genuine appreciation all year long will hardly miss a special Sunday. Each month, write a note of encouragement highlighting a valued aspect of your pastor's ministry.

**2. Jesus appreciates pastors by increasing their value.** Good pastors are "profitable" to a church (Hebrews 13:17). But valuable pastors weren't born that way. God makes us "competent to be ministers of a new covenant" (2 Corinthians 3:6). God calls, strengthens, appoints and equips pastors through the Spirit, the Scripture and the saints. Every pastor, given by Christ "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12), was once a saint being equipped for ministry.

Jesus never stops "appreciating" pastors, helping them become more beneficial to His flock. Consider "appreciating" your pastor by providing continuing education, conference opportunities or intentional sabbaticals.

**3. Jesus appreciates pastors by fully understanding their situation.** Christ is able "to sympathize with our weaknesses" because "he has been tempted in every way as we are" (Hebrews 4:14-16). Jesus can appreciate:

- being hated for no good reason (Matthew 2:16).
- facing Satanic assaults (Matthew 4:1-11).
- exhaustion (John 4:6).
- being criticized for your company (Matthew 9:11).
- depending on others' generosity (Luke 8:2-3).
- being rejected by family (Mark 6:1-4; John 7:5).
- hearing, "That's not how we've always done it!" (Mark 7:1-5).
- desiring solitude but being hounded by needs (Matthew 14:13).
- being celebrated and condemned within a week (Matthew 21-27).
- grieving unresponsiveness (Matthew 23:37-39).
- facing ministry-ending plots (Matthew 26:2-4).
- profound sadness over a ministry assignment (Matthew 26:38-39).
- being betrayed by friends and mistreated by authorities (Luke 22:47-23:25).
- receiving unjust condemnation, mockery and abuse (Matthew 27).

The list could go on, but suffice it to say, the Great Shepherd understands every challenge that pastors face.

We can grow in sympathy by serving alongside our pastors, asking good questions and listening to understand. But, most importantly, we should point pastors to Jesus who can help them because He can appreciate them. "For since he himself has suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). Remind your shepherds of the Shepherd who lived, died, rose again and reigns on a throne of grace at which "we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Beginning today, take practical steps to regularly "appreciate" pastors in every sense of the word!

**Eric Schumacher** is an author, podcaster, songwriter and has served in pastoral ministry for over two decades. He is currently the pastoral ministry director for the Baptist Convention of Iowa. Along with Elyse Fitzpatrick, he is the coauthor of *Worthy* and *Jesus and Gender*, and the sole author of *Ours and My Last Name*. Eric and his wife, Jenny, live in Iowa with their five children.



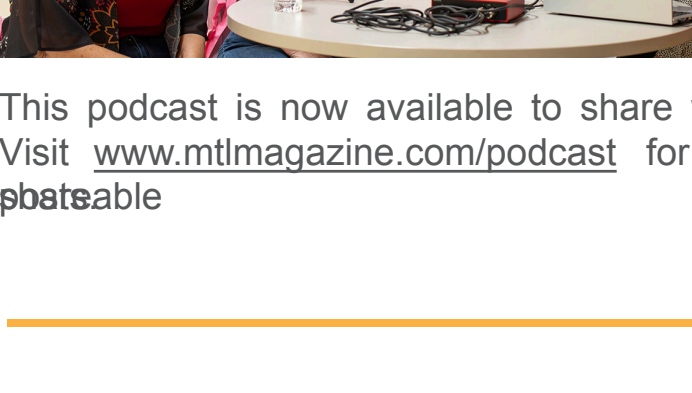
*God designed our weakness to draw us closer to Himself*  
The Good Gift of Weakness by Eric Schumacher helps believers learn to accept weakness in order to experience true strength. To order, contact your sales rep today.



**BESTSELLER LIST**

**Monthly Bestsellers List**

Each month, the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA) publishes a list of the top 50 bestselling titles in Christian retail. To help retailers boost sales, CRA has provided a link on our website to the complete list of bestsellers. That list will now be included in the monthly newsletter.

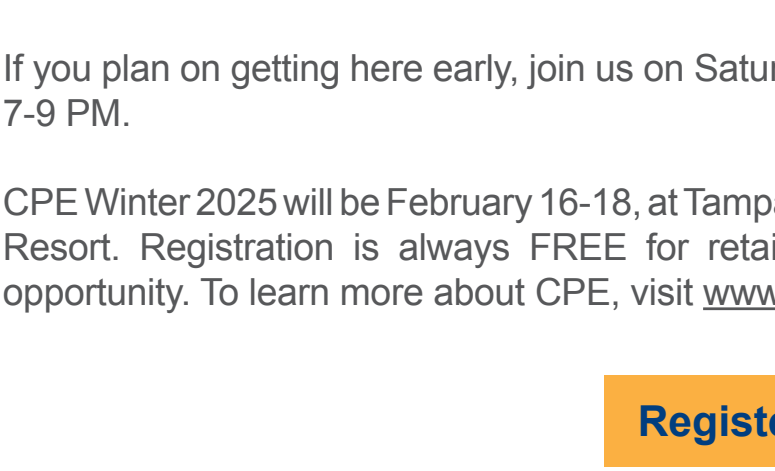


Below are the top 5 Christian bestsellers for September.

1. *What Happens Next* by Max Lucado (9781400260003) Thomas Nelson Publishers
2. *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer (9780593193822) Waterbrook, an imprint of Penguin Random House
3. *A Crown That Lasts* by Demi-Leigh Tebow (9781400343584) Thomas Nelson Publishers
4. *The 5 Love Languages* by Gary Chapman (9780802412706) Moody Publishers
5. *KJV Standard Lesson Commentary® Large Print Edition 2024-2025 Standard Publishing* (9780830786633) David C Cook

The ECPA Bestsellers Lists rank the bestselling books published by ECPA members from the previous month, as reported to NPJ BookScan. For the full list of titles appearing on the Christian Bestsellers Lists, visit [www.christianbookexpo.com/bestseller](http://www.christianbookexpo.com/bestseller) or [www.christianretailassociation.org](http://www.christianretailassociation.org).

**MEDIA ALERT**



Season Four of the More to Life podcast kicked off with a double header. We got to sit down with bestselling authors and best friends Colleen Cobe and Denise Hunter at CPE and chat with them about how they met, what it's like to write with other authors, their latest projects and where they are in life right now.

This podcast is now available to share with customers and to post on your social feeds. Visit [www.mtlimagazine.com/podcast](http://www.mtlimagazine.com/podcast) for the podcast link or [facebook.com/mtlimag](https://facebook.com/mtlimag) for photoable

**CPE UPDATE**

**Register Early for Your Chance to Win!**



All retailers registered by October 31, will be entered into a drawing to win an additional **\$100 in cash** reimbursement. Retailers, invite your vendor friends and fellow retailers. Vendors, invite your retail friends and customers.

CPE Winter 2025 is expected to be one of the largest attended shows to date, so be sure to register and book your rooms before it's too late. You must book using the link on the CPE website in order to qualify for reimbursement and receive CPE's discounted room rates, which includes a discounted valet fee and waived resort fee.

Saddlebrook Resort is currently under construction and under new management. Renovations are set to be finished by January 2025, and Saddlebrook already has events booked prior to our tradeshow. CPE attendees will be some of the first guests to enjoy this completely refurbished resort!

During the Florida "winter," temperatures can range from highs in the 70s to lows in the 50s, the humidity is down and the insects and reptiles go into hiding. Of course, you may still be able to see the baby alligator that is a resident on property.

Saddlebrook's picturesque golf courses, pickle ball courts, pools and spa, plus the newly renovated deluxe guest rooms and suites, make this one of Florida's premier meeting and vacation destinations.

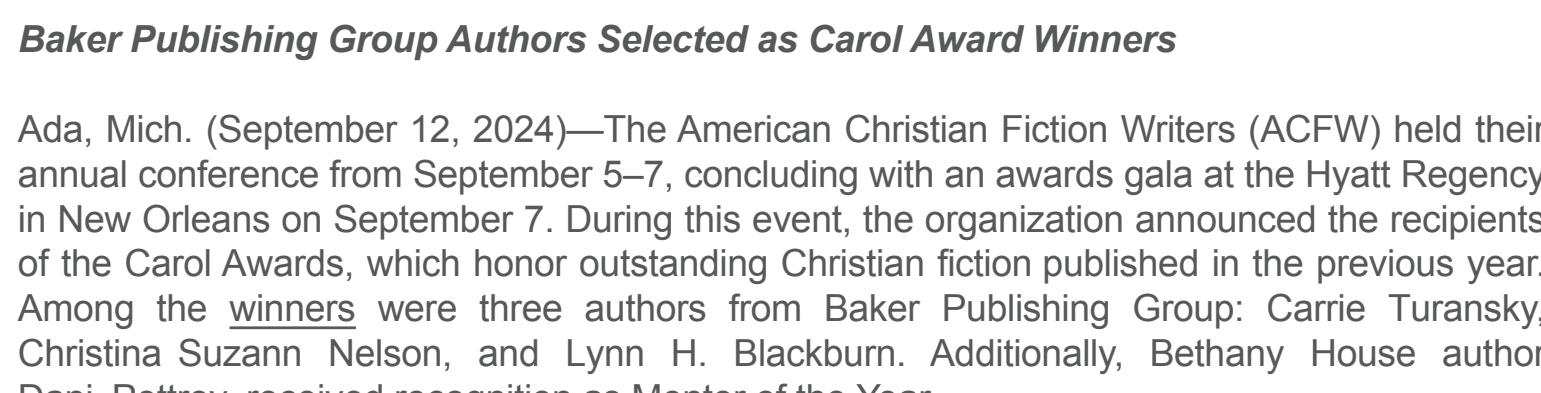
If you plan on getting here early, join us on Saturday, February 15, for a welcome reception from 7-9 PM.

CPE Winter 2025 will be February 16-18, at Tampa's world-class golf resort and hotel, Saddlebrook Resort. Registration is always FREE and includes a generous reimbursement opportunity. To learn more about CPE, visit [www.cpeshow.com](http://www.cpeshow.com).

[Register Today](#)

**INDUSTRY NEWS**

**Christy Award Finalists Announced**



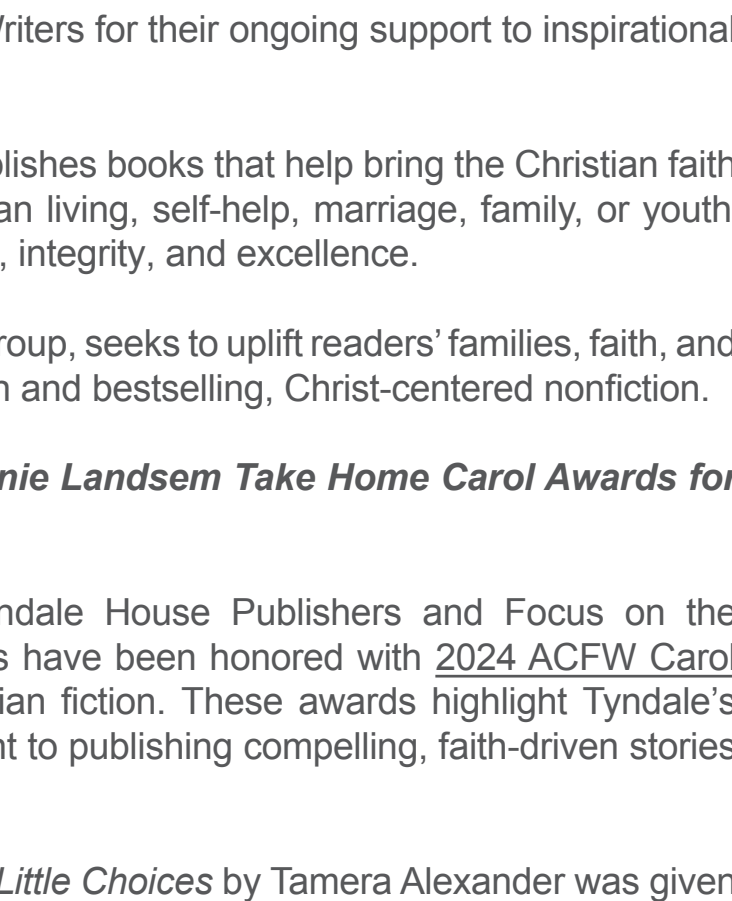
On September 12, the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA) announced the 2024 finalists for THE CHRISTY AWARD program in an online webcast hosted by Christy Hall of Fame author Chris Fabry and ECPA president Jeff Crosby. The Christy Award exists to celebrate excellence in the art of Christian fiction and to honor the power of faith in story.

The Christy Award is the foremost award honoring and promoting excellence in Christian fiction since 1999, and is named for Catherine Marshall's novel, *Christy*, which has sold over 10 million copies since its publication in 1967. ECPA assumed ownership and administration of the award in 2017 to focus and grow the unique opportunity of fiction in Christian publishing. [TheChristyAward.com](http://TheChristyAward.com) FB: [ChristyAward](#) X: [@ChristyAward](#) IG: [@thechristyaward](#)

**MEMBER BENEFITS**

**CRA Partners with the Gift Market**

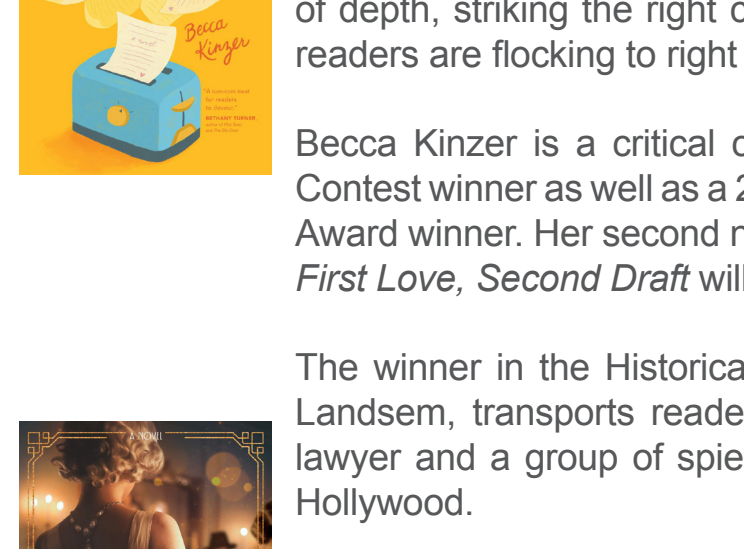
This summer, CRA and the Munce Group partnered with and attended the Gift Market in Atlanta. According to *Gifts & Decorative Accessories*, they were two of the nearly 15 buying groups and trade associations to attend. According to Karen Olson, Atlanta Market Andmore executive vice president and chief marketing officer, "These collaborative initiatives offer a unique chance for both members and non-members to engage directly with influential industry organizations and buying groups."



CRA serves as a representative at the Gift Market. Board members and Munce Group staff look for the latest product trends in gifts and home décor and bring those findings to CPE through retail training sessions and exhibitors on the show floor. And as an industry partner, CRA retail members were able to receive up to two nights complimentary hotel at the Atlanta or Vegas Summer Gift Markets.

**INDUSTRY TRENDS**

**Almost the Most Popular Holiday Decorating Season**



Not that long ago, decorating for Halloween only went as far as putting a light in a carved pumpkin on the porch. Now, it's a full-blown production with orange house lights, motion-sensor animatronics and 13-foot tall inflatables.

According to the *National Retail Federation*, 73 percent of people plan to celebrate Halloween this year, with an \$11.6 billion in total dollars spent. Costumes and decorations are the top two spending categories, closely followed by candy.

In her article "[How to Take Advantage of America's Next Great Decorating Holiday](#)," retailer Carol Schroeder talks about the best way a small store can take advantage of this opportunity. Although costumes and candy are the top-selling category, the only way a small store could effectively compete in this arena would be to offer a wide selection of costumes and discounted bulk candy. Even though costumes and candy are a big part of trick-or-treating, one thing that Christian retailers can offer that other stores cannot are tracts. Many people who shop in tracts retail view trick-or-treating as an evangelistic opportunity. Make sure you have some tracts on hand as Halloween approaches.

Still, the NRF reports that decorations actually rank higher than candy in total spending. According to Schroeder, "This is a category in which a specialty shop can really excel." This Halloween, she suggests carrying décor that could easily transition into the next season, Thanksgiving. Consider decorations with pumpkins or anything that has the word pumpkin, such as "Hey Pumpkin" pillows, mugs, yard flags and door signs. Even with the hype of Halloween, Christian retailers can still find a way to be a light in their community and successfully turn this holiday into a profitable selling season.

**PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Publishers Announce Carol Award Winners**

**Baker Publishing Group Authors Selected as Carol Award Winners**

Ada, Mich. (September 12, 2024)—The American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW) held their annual conference from September 5-7, concluding with an awards gala at the Hyatt Regency in New Orleans on September 7. During this event, the organization announced the recipients of the Carol Awards, which honor outstanding Christian fiction published in the previous year. Among the winners were three authors from Baker Publishing Group: Carrie Turansky, Christina Suzann Nelson, and Lynn H. Blackburn. Additionally, Bethany House author Dani Pettrey received recognition as *Mentor of the Year*.

**HISTORICAL ROMANCE**  
*The Legacy of Longdale Manor* by Carrie Turansky  
Bethany House; September 26, 2023; ISBN 9780764241055; Ebook ISBN 9781493443710; \$16.99; Paper  
Art historian Gwen Monroe is evaluating paintings at a British estate when she uncovers a connection to the father she never knew through a 100-year-old journal. In 1912, Charlotte Harper struggles with a painful family secret that she can only confess in her journal, which shatters her faith and leaves her wondering if she can ever trust in love again.

**MYSTERY/SUSPENSE/THRILLER**  
*What Happens Next* by Christina Suzann Nelson  
Bethany House; January 17, 2023; ISBN 9780764240409; Ebook ISBN 9781493440689; \$18.00; Paper  
Popular podcaster and ex-reporter Faith Byrne has made a name for herself telling stories of greatness after tragedy—but her real life does not mirror the stories she tells. When she's asked to spotlight her childhood best friend's missing person case on her podcast, she uncovers desperate secrets and must face the truth before she can move forward.

**ROMANTIC SUSPENSE**  
*Under Fire* by Lynn H. Blackburn (Defend and Protect #3)  
Revell; March 7, 2023; ISBN 9780800737979; Ebook ISBN 9781493439676; \$16.99; Paper  
Special Agent Tessa Reed left her demons in the past, but when she reconnects with USSS Agent Zane Thacker during a presidential fundraiser, one of those old adversaries comes to collect. These best friends must work together to protect the President and guard their own hearts.

Baker Publishing Group offers their congratulations to all the Carol Award winners and would like to acknowledge the American Christian Fiction Writers for their ongoing support to inspirational fiction authors.

Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, publishes books that help bring the Christian faith to everyday life. Whether through fiction, Christian living, self-help, marriage, family, or youth books, each Revell publication reflects relevance, integrity, and excellence.

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, seeks to uplift readers' families, faith, and free time with our library of industry-leading fiction and bestselling, Christ-centered nonfiction.

**Tamera Alexander, Becca Kinzer, and Stephanie Landsem Take Home Carol Awards for Fiction Excellence**

Carol Stream, IL (September 23, 2024) – Tyndale House Publishers and Focus on the Family proudly announce that three of their titles have been honored with 2024 ACFW Carol Awards, which recognize the year's best Christian fiction. These awards highlight Tyndale's and Focus on the Family's continued commitment to publishing compelling, faith-driven stories that inspire and uplift readers.

Focus on the Family's *A Million Little Choices* by Tamera Alexander was given the award in the Contemporary category. The book follows two women of different centuries living in the same house who share strikingly similar journeys.

"I've been a member of ACFW since its origin over two decades ago and wouldn't be writing today without the relationships I've made and encouragement I've received through this stellar writers' organization," Tamera says.

Tamera Alexander is a *USA Today* bestselling author and Christy Award Hall of Fame inductee. She is known for her rich characters and thought-provoking plots.

Tyndale received the Carol Award in the Debut category for *Dear Henry, Love Edith* by Becca Kinzer. In this romantic comedy, Kinzer delivers a heartwarming story of mistaken identities, second chances, and finding love in unexpected places.

Tyndale senior acquisitions editor Elizabeth Jackson says, "Becca's stories deliver a great balance between a fun sense of humor and a refreshing amount of depth, striking the right chord for fans of contemporary romance, a genre readers are flocking to right now."

Becca Kinzer is a critical care nurse and a 2018 ACFW First Impressions Contest winner as well as a 2019 Genesis Contest winner and a 2021 Cascade Award winner. Her second novel, *Love in Tandem*, released in April 2024, and *First Love, Second Draft* will release in April 2025.

The winner in the Historical category, *Code Name Edelweiss* by Stephanie Landsem, transports readers to 1933, revealing the true story of a Jewish lawyer and a group of spies who uncovered Adolf Hitler's plan to take over Hollywood.

"I've loved Stephanie's work from her first release with us. I hope this recognition brings new reader attention to this title and her previous works as well," says the Tyndale fiction publisher, Karen Watson.

Stephanie Landsem has traveled the world to learn about women of the past and writes to honor their lives and to bring today's women hope and encouragement.