



Opening Hearts by Opening Minds: Reading Fiction That Changes Lives

Connie Wineland

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This book is for Christian readers of fiction who might experience difficulty trying to make an informed choice beyond what is being published by evangelical presses. Marketed to a specific target audience, evangelical fiction oftentimes leaves a reader with a strong emotional response but lacks the literary depth or the breadth of subject that could inspire life-changing spiritual growth. With this premise at the heart of her book, Connie Wineland includes her own story of conversion to Christianity by way of reading fiction.

During her late twenties and early thirties, particularly while in graduate school, Wineland became immersed in literary and rhetorical studies while also practicing an Eastern form of religion as well as Native American spirituality. However, despite all her training in literary theory, her readings in Romantic, Victorian, modern, and postmodern literature (which she explains), as well as her personal interest in mythology and world religions, kept her questioning the existence of God and the possible nature of God. Then, as a relatively new convert to Christianity, she faced several challenges at a small Christian college where she taught literature and writing courses. Eventually wanting to reach beyond the academic community, Wineland began a local Christian readers' group, which she ran for four years. She includes in this book resources and materials such as sample syllabi and study-guide questions, useful Web addresses, and plenty of how-to information for starting and running your own book club. Also included is an extensive list of annotated titles of recommended reading to get anyone started!



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