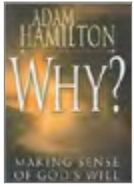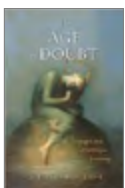to read, this book may be most helpful to persons raised in churches strict on doctrine and hostile to questions. Thielen gives them permission and reasons to rethink, even disregard, particular beliefs. A free leader's guide is available online. Rating: 3 —DKW

WHY?: Making Sense of God's Will. Hamilton, Adam. 98p, paper, Abingdon 2011, 9781426714788 [231.5]
The question of theodicy, or "If God is good and all-powerful, then why does evil exist?" is one of the thorniest that Christianity faces. The author is a senior pastor at a large church and he has had to face this question many times. He offers some thoughts in this book. The four chapters are: Why do the innocent suffer?, Why do my prayers go unanswered?, Why can't I see God's will for my life? and Why God's love prevails. He basically says that God does not cause evil and suffering, but when they happen, He is with us and sustains us. One of the author's favorite quotes is from Frederick Buechner: "Resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing." This book won't end the debate or answer all the questions, but it is very helpful. Rating: 4 —JC
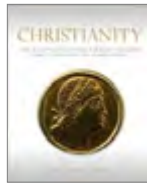
CHURCH HISTORY

THE AGE OF DOUBT: Tracing the Roots of Our Religious Uncertainty. Lane, Christopher, 233p, Yale University Press, 2011, 9780300141924 [234]
The first great Age of Doubt was the Victorian era. This book presents a scholarly look at that time and the ramifications echoing in our present day inability to recognize the value and necessity of doubt. Lane present portraits of many of the scientific, literary and intellectual icons of the 19th Century who grappled with the religious orthodoxy prevalent in England at that time and the growing body of scientific knowledge that cast doubt on those beliefs. Many Victorians came to view doubt as inseparable from belief and as a conduit to clarifying their beliefs. Lane explores how
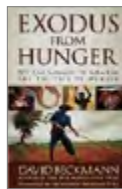
today's extremes, from Richard Dawkins' atheism to the Biblical literalists behind the Creations Museum, deny individuals the freedom to embrace doubt. This thought provoking book would be an enlightening read for anyone, no matter where on the spectrum from atheism through Biblical literalism they may be. Rating 4 —AL

CHRISTIANITY: How a Tiny Sect from a Despised Religion Came to Dominate the Roman Empire. Hill, Jonathan. 256p, Fortress 2011, 9780800697778 [270.1]
Here is a perfect book for your church library—and your own. The topic, Christianity, is of interest to all church libraries. The scope of the book is just right—the first 400 years. The creeds had been formulated and the major Christian doctrines had been pretty well set by then. Jonathan Hill's writing is clear and interesting to read. And the book is a delight to the eye, with many full-color photos, charts, and maps. This is the best book on the history and development of Christianity I have ever seen. Rating 4 —RO

ETHICS & SOCIAL JUSTICE

EXODUS FROM HUNGER: We Are Called to Change the Politics of Hunger. Beckmann, David. 206p, paper, Westminster John Knox 2010, 9780664236847 [261.8]
Exodus From Hunger is a significant, hopeful book by the president of Bread for the World, the world's largest Christian anti-hunger organization. Rev. Dr. David Beckmann believes we can end world hunger in our lifetime primarily through political advocacy of faith communities. He states "it is impossible to food-bank our way to the end of hunger." Funding from our U.S. government for relief programs and development projects has reduced hunger and poverty in the past and will do so again when we change the politics of hunger. He uses stories of success, such as a major global aid reform bill that resulted when a small church group

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