

***Christian Fiction Readers:
Worth Pursuing, Worth Keeping***
Research Report

May 2015

Commissioned by:



THE parable GROUP

Produced by:

Jet Marketing

Christian Fiction Reader Survey
Research Report
May 2015

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Christian Fiction Reader Survey

Research Report

May 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Fiction Reading and Purchasing Habits

- Christian fiction readers are heavier book readers than American readers in general. Nearly 50% of Christian fiction readers read over 10 books a year; by comparison, 36% of American adults who read books read more than 10 books per year (based on a 2014 Pew Research study).
- Top Christian fiction genres are historical fiction, romance, contemporary fiction and romantic suspense. The Christian fiction genres that are least popular with readers are Fantasy/Sci-Fi, Futuristic/Prophecy and Paranormal.
- Trade paperbacks are the most popular format for reading Christian fiction; eBooks are the second most popular format.
- Most Christian fiction readers borrow (or download for free) at least some Christian fiction titles as they read more Christian fiction books than they purchase.
- Nearly 50% of Christian fiction readers are purchasing more Christian fiction titles today than five years ago.
 - The main reasons cited for an increase in purchasing are more time to read and generally finding Christian fiction enjoyable.
 - The main reasons cited by those who have decreased their purchasing of Christian fiction over the past five years are having less time to read and the cost of buying books.
- The majority of Christian fiction readers also read secular fiction; most read more Christian than secular fiction.
- Over the past five years, Christian fiction readers have either maintained or decreased the number of secular fiction books they purchase.

B. Christian Fiction Information and Selection Factors

- The top Christian fiction sales drivers are:
 - the story itself
 - the desire to keep reading a story in a series
 - recommendations regarding a specific book
 - author familiarity
- Of the social media tools employed by publishers and authors, Christian fiction blogs are the most often visited while publisher Facebook pages and publisher websites are rarely visited.
- Most people read Christian fiction because they want to be entertained.
- Christian fiction readers are happy with the quality of Christian fiction. They not only buy it for themselves, but also buy it as gifts and tell their friends/relatives about books they like.
- Most Christian fiction readers don't want their Christian fiction stories to include sex, bad language or violence.

C. Christian Fiction Purchase Locations and Factors

- Top locations for Christian fiction purchasing are local Christian bookstores and online stores such as Amazon; buying books through an eBook device is also a common purchasing option.
- Most Christian fiction purchasers buy more print titles than eBook titles; however, nearly one-third buy more Christian fiction in eBook than print format.
- Low prices, convenience and broad selection are the dominant factors when selecting where to purchase Christian fiction.

D. Christian Fiction eBooks

- Most respondents read at least some of their Christian fiction in eBook format.
- Almost 50% of Christian fiction eBooks are downloaded for free rather than purchased.
- Less than 20% of non-eBook readers anticipate reading Christian fiction in eBook format in the future.

E. Christian Bookstore Shopping Data

- Nearly 80% of respondents shop at a local Christian bookstore.
- Top reasons for shopping at a Christian bookstore:
 - supporting the concept of a Christian store
 - appreciation of the atmosphere
 - the breadth of products offered
- Respondents would purchase more books at their local Christian bookstore if:
 - prices were lower
 - the book selection was better
 - the store was more conveniently located
- Among respondents who have a local Christian bookstore but don't shop there, the top reason given was a preference for shopping online.

Christian Fiction Survey

Research Report

May 2015

INTRODUCTION

A. Overview of Research

This research study was conducted to gather information from Christian fiction readers regarding the following:

- Fiction reading and purchasing habits
- Christian fiction information and selection factors
- Christian fiction purchase location data
- Christian fiction eBooks
- Christian bookstore shopping data

Date conducted: April/May 2015

Research conducted and report written by: Jeannette Taylor, JET Marketing

B. Research Details

Methodology

This research was conducted via SurveyMonkey – an online survey technology provider. The survey was written by Jeannette Taylor of JET Marketing with approval from David Lewis of Baker Publishing Group, Cynthia Ruchti of ACFW, Eric Grimm of CBA, Randy Ross of The Parable Group and others in their respective organizations. The survey was set up on the online site and analyzed by Jeannette Taylor.

Sample Design

The respondents to this survey were drawn from two lists:

- Parable's proprietary list of Christian fiction purchasers – 45,000 emails
- ACFW's member list – 2,500 emails

The first question of the survey was a screener question to ensure only people who read Christian fiction completed the survey.

Data Collection

The survey was developed using SurveyMonkey online tools. The survey was not conducted blind – Baker Publishing Group, ACFW, CBA and Parable were all identified as the survey sponsors.

The survey was launched on April 17 and closed on May 9. Parable sent an initial blast and a reminder blast.

Data Analysis

Response data for this online survey was downloaded from the SurveyMonkey website. SurveyMonkey tools and Excel tools were used for data analysis.

Completed Surveys

The survey was started by 1,690 people (988 from the Parable list/702 from the ACFW list) and completed by 1,451 people (799 from the Parable list/652 from the ACFW list).

Response Rate

Based on survey starts, the response rate for the Parable list was 2.2% and the response rate for the ACFW list was 28%.

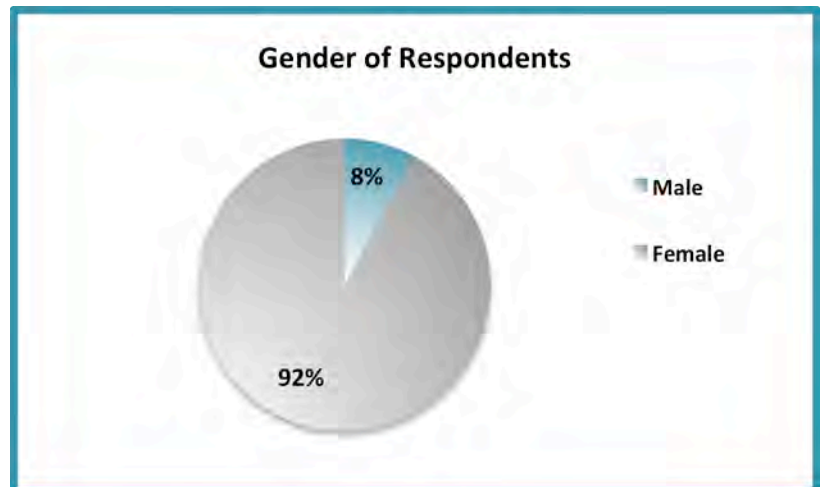
Statistical Validity

The sample error for the survey overall at a 95% confidence level is +/- 2.6%.¹ Note that sample error changes with sample size and that questions that yield a non-normal distribution of responses result in a higher sample error percentage.

C. Profile of Respondents

1. Gender of Respondents

The respondents are skewed heavily female at over 90%. (Note: n = 1,459.)

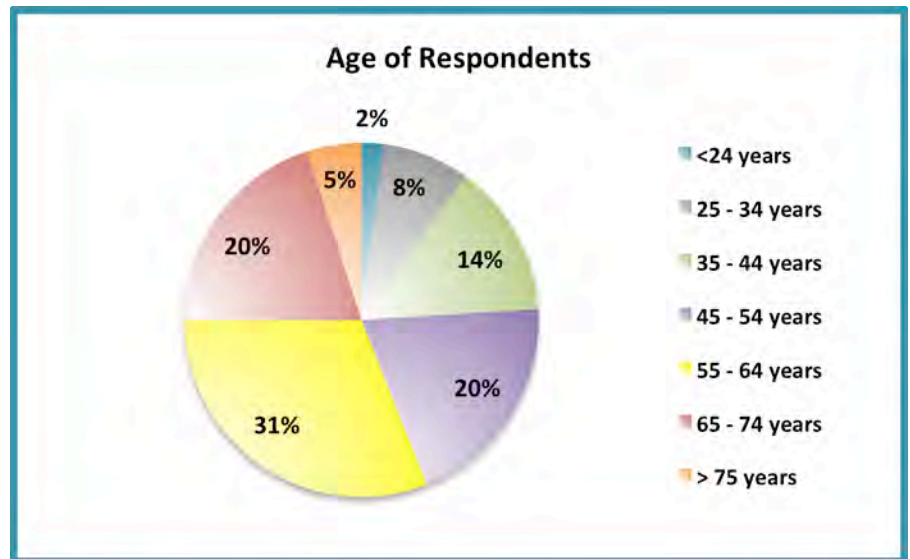


¹ Note: based on the sample error calculator available on this website:
<https://www.dssresearch.com/KnowledgeCenter/toolkitcalculators/sampleerrorcalculators.aspx>

2. Age of Respondents

The respondents are skewed older – over half over 54-years-old

Nearly one-third of the respondents (31%) are 55 – 64 years-old. Twenty percent are 45 – 54 years-old and 20% are 65 – 74 years-old. (. (Note: n = 1,459.)

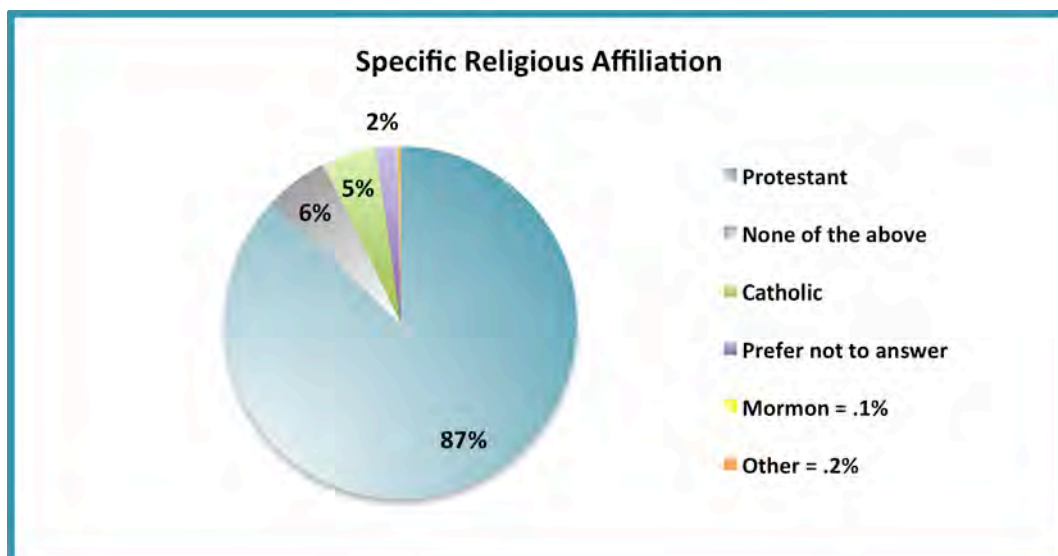


3. Religious Affiliation of Respondents

Virtually all of the respondents selected Christianity as the religion they most closely identify with. (Note: n = 1,448.)

Among those who listed “Christianity”, most – 87% – cited Protestant as their specific religious affiliation. Catholic account for 5% of the respondents. See the table at right for details. (Note: n = 1,448.)

Religion Respondents Most Closely Identify With	
Christianity	98.8%
Judaism	0.7%
Islam	0.7%
Mix of religions	0.7%
Prefer not to answer	0.5%
Other	0.5%



5. Geographic Location of Respondents

The most heavily represented states in this study are Michigan, Texas, and New York. (Note: n = 1,451.)

State/Province Location of Respondent							
State/ Province	# of respondents		State/ Province	# of respondents		State/ Province	# of respondents
Alabama	14		Minnesota	18		Vermont	0
Alaska	2		Mississippi	14		Virginia	25
Arizona	17		Missouri	22		Washington	22
Arkansas	9		Montana	5		West Virginia	3
California	59		Nebraska	68		Wisconsin	38
Colorado	47		Nevada	29		Wyoming	2
Connecticut	2		New Hampshire	38		Wash. DC	0
Delaware	0		New Jersey	7		Alberta	5
Florida	41		New Mexico	18		British Columbia	4
Georgia	46		New York	117		Manitoba	2
Hawaii	1		North Carolina	26		New Brunswick	1
Idaho	5		North Dakota	29		Newfoundland	0
Illinois	36		Ohio	82		Northwest Territories	0
Indiana	54		Oklahoma	15		Nova Scotia	0
Iowa	61		Oregon	16		Nunavut	0
Kansas	12		Pennsylvania	24		Ontario	2
Kentucky	19		Rhode Island	1		Prince Edward Island	0
Louisiana	11		South Carolina	12		Quebec	1
Maine	2		South Dakota	4		Saskatchewan	2
Maryland	8		Tennessee	18		Yukon	0
Massachusetts	4		Texas	154		Other	14
Michigan	160		Utah	3			

RESEARCH REPORT

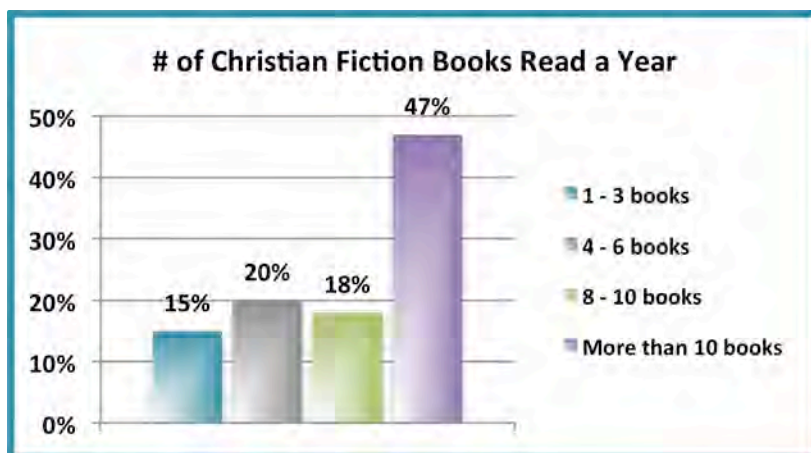
A. Fiction Reading and Purchasing Habits²

1. Christian Fiction Reading Habits

Summary: Christian fiction readers are heavier book readers than the average American. According to a 2014 Pew Research study, 36% of American adults who read books read over 10 books per year³; by comparison, nearly 50% of Christian fiction readers read over 10 books a year. Top Christian fiction genres are historical fiction, romance, contemporary fiction and romantic suspense. Trade paperbacks are the most popular format for reading Christian fiction followed by eBooks.

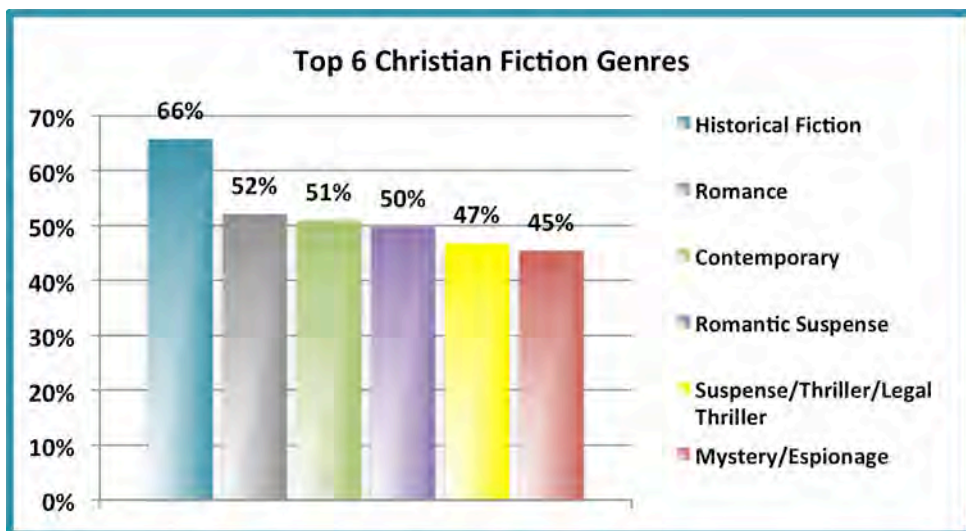
a. Number of Christian Fiction Books Read a Year

Most Christian fiction readers are actively reading Christian fiction. Nearly 50% of Christian fiction readers read more than 10 Christian fiction books a year; an additional 18% read 8 – 10 Christian fiction books a year. (Note: n = 1,690.)



b. Types of Christian Fiction Respondents Enjoy Reading

Two-thirds of Christian fiction readers cite historical fiction as a genre they enjoy reading. Over half enjoy reading romance or contemporary fiction, half like romantic suspense and nearly half like suspense/thriller or mystery/espionage titles. See the chart at right and the table on the following page for details.



² People who do not read any Christian fiction were screened out of the survey.

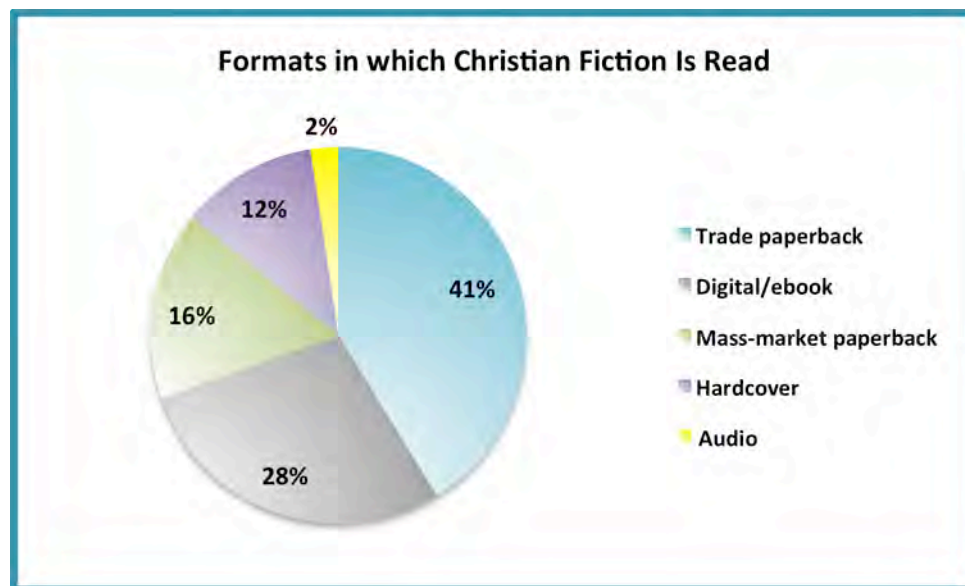
³ <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/01/the-decline-of-the-american-book-lover/283222/>

Ranking: Types of Christian Fiction Respondents Enjoy Reading		
Rank	Type	% selecting
1	Historical Fiction	65.8%
2	Romance	52.1%
3	Contemporary	51.0%
4	Romantic Suspense	49.8%
5	Suspense/Thriller/Legal Thriller	46.9%
6	Mystery/Espionage	45.5%
7	Biblical Fiction	39.2%
8	Family Drama	35.9%
9	Amish	28.9%
10	Literary/Classical/Allegorical Fiction	22.0%
11	Fantasy/Sci-Fi	18.2%
12	Futuristic/Prophecy	16.4%
13	Paranormal	7.7%
14	Other	8.1%

Top “other” categories: Young adult, dystopian, and women’s fiction.

c. Preferred Christian Fiction Book Formats⁴

Christian fiction readers most often read their books in trade paperback format, followed by eBook format. (Note: n = 1,539.)



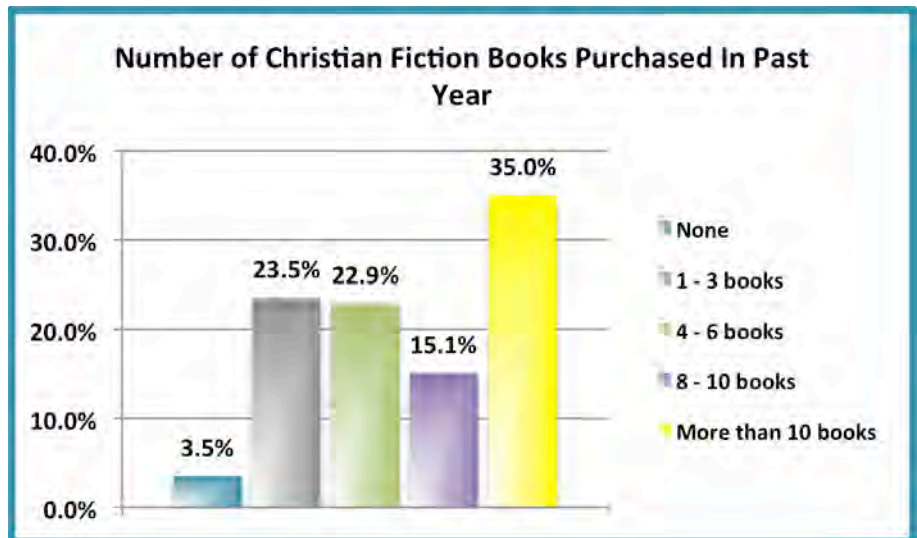
⁴ Respondents were asked to estimate a percentage for each format based on their reading habits.

2. Christian Fiction Purchasing

Summary: Most Christian fiction readers must borrow (or download for free) at least some Christian fiction titles as they read more Christian fiction books than they purchase. Christian fiction readers are three times as likely to indicate their annual purchases of Christian fiction have increased rather than decreased over the past five years. The main reasons cited for an increase in purchases of Christian fiction are more time to read and generally finding Christian fiction enjoyable. Respondents who have decreased their purchasing of Christian fiction cited having less time to read and the cost of buying books as key reasons.

a. Number of Christian Fiction Titles Purchased in Past Year

Between three and four percent of Christian fiction readers didn't purchase any Christian fiction titles in the past year. Over one-third purchased more than 10 Christian fiction titles during this time frame. (Note: n = 1,627.)



b. Change in Christian Fiction Purchasing Over Past Five Years

Purchasing of Christian fiction books shows a generally positive trend over the past five years; nearly half of the Christian fiction readers surveyed indicated their annual purchases of Christian fiction have risen over this timeframe while only 16% indicated their Christian fiction purchases have decreased. (Note: n = 1,627.)



(1) Reasons Cited by Respondents Purchasing More Christian Fiction Titles Compared to Five Years Ago

Respondents whose Christian fiction purchases have risen over the past five years offered a wide range of reasons. Top reasons included having more time to read, finding Christian fiction enjoyable/wholesome/interesting, new Christian fiction authors, and eBook reading options. See the table at right for a complete list of reasons. (Note: n = 754; some people offered multiple reasons.)

Reasons Christian Fiction Purchases Have Increased Over Past 5 Years	
More time to read	14.9%
Christian fiction is enjoyable/meaningful/wholesome/interesting	14.9%
New authors/more authors	12.5%
Bought/use a Kindle/e-reader	8.8%
Christian fiction has improved	7.8%
Became a writer/writing	6.2%
Just read more/interest in reading increased	5.6%
Know the authors/like to support them	4.5%
Change of interest	4.2%
More choices/selection/variety	4.2%
Non-Christian fiction is offensive	4.1%
Want to draw closer to God/grow in my faith	3.7%
More money to spend on books	3.4%
Digital download are less expensive	2.3%
Life circumstances have changed	2.1%
Work-related; book reviewer; have a blog	2.1%
Sales/reasonable prices	1.9%
Joined a book club	1.7%
Enjoy reading new books/series	1.6%
Teenagers/young people enjoy Christian fiction	0.8%
Like to own my own books	0.8%
Miscellaneous comments	0.8%
Buy books as gifts/buy more for myself	0.8%
More options, more accessible	0.7%
Christian fiction isn't always accessible at the library	0.7%

(2) Reasons Cited by Respondents Purchasing Less Christian Fiction Titles Compared to Five Years Ago

Respondents whose Christian fiction purchases have decreased over the past five years cited less time to read, the cost of purchasing books, and using libraries or other free options as top reasons for their decline in purchasing. (Note: n = 261; some people offered multiple reasons.)

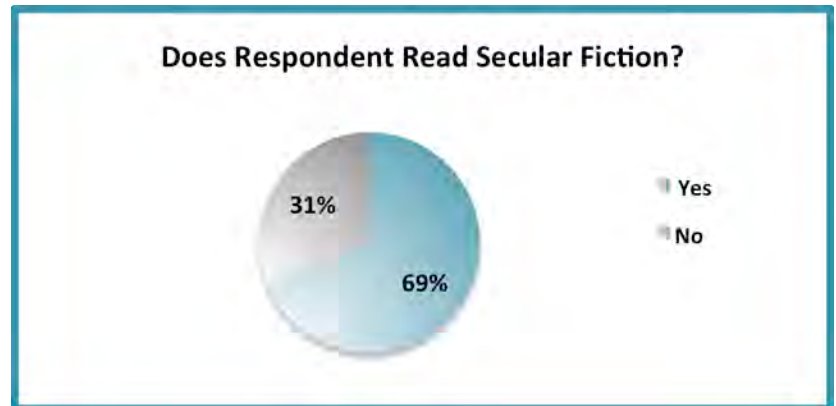
Reasons Christian Fiction Purchases Have Decreased Over Past 5 Years	
Less time to read/too busy to read	20.7%
Books are too expensive/can't afford books	19.5%
Use the public/church library	17.2%
Can get books for free	13.0%
Not as appealing	11.9%
Use a Kindle/e-reader	8.0%
Disappointed in Christian fiction	6.9%
Less interest in Christian fiction/also reading non-fiction /secular fiction	6.5%
Life circumstances changed	3.8%
Christian bookstore closed/too far away/don't go there as often	1.9%
Christian market does not offer enough young adult fiction	1.5%
Geared toward younger audience	0.4%
Don't like "Christian fiction" handle	0.4%

3. Secular Fiction Reading Trends

Summary: The majority of Christian fiction readers also read secular fiction, though most read more Christian than secular fiction. Over the past five years, Christian fiction readers have either maintained or decreased the number of secular fiction books they purchase.

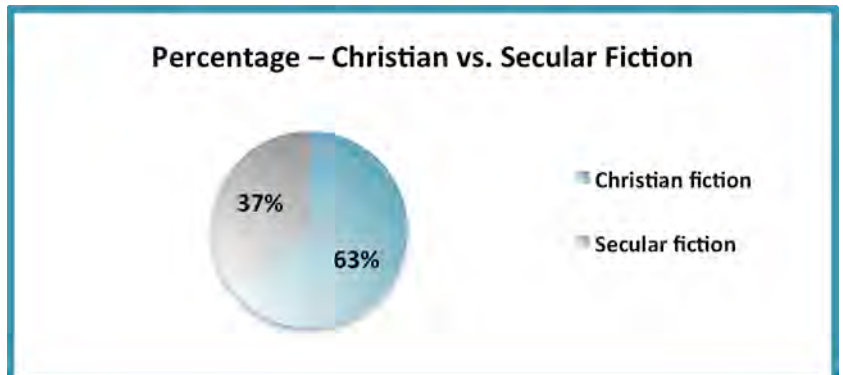
a. Do Christian Fiction Readers Read Secular Fiction?

The majority of Christian fiction readers – 69% – are also secular fiction readers. (Note: n = 1,034.)



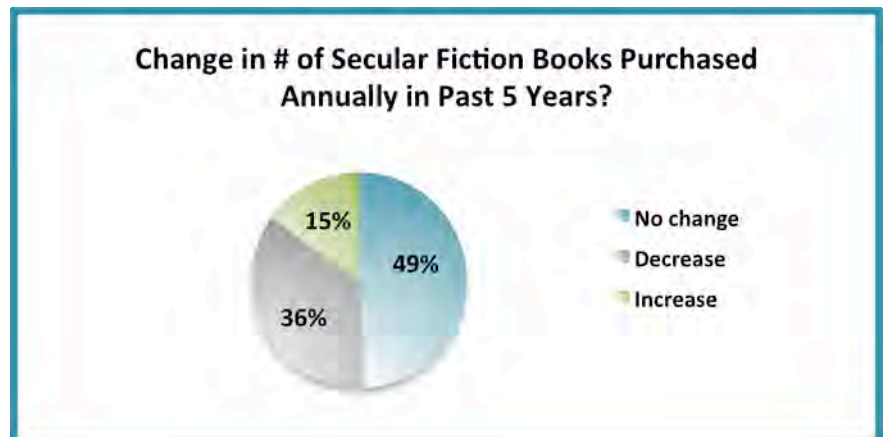
b. Percentage Breakdown – Christian vs. Secular Fiction

Christian fiction readers who read both Christian and secular fiction read a higher percentage of Christian fiction than secular fiction books. (Note: n = 1,253.)



c. Change in Secular Fiction Purchasing Over Past Five Years

Purchasing of secular fiction books by Christian fiction readers has been stable to negative over the past five years. (Note: n = 1,253.)



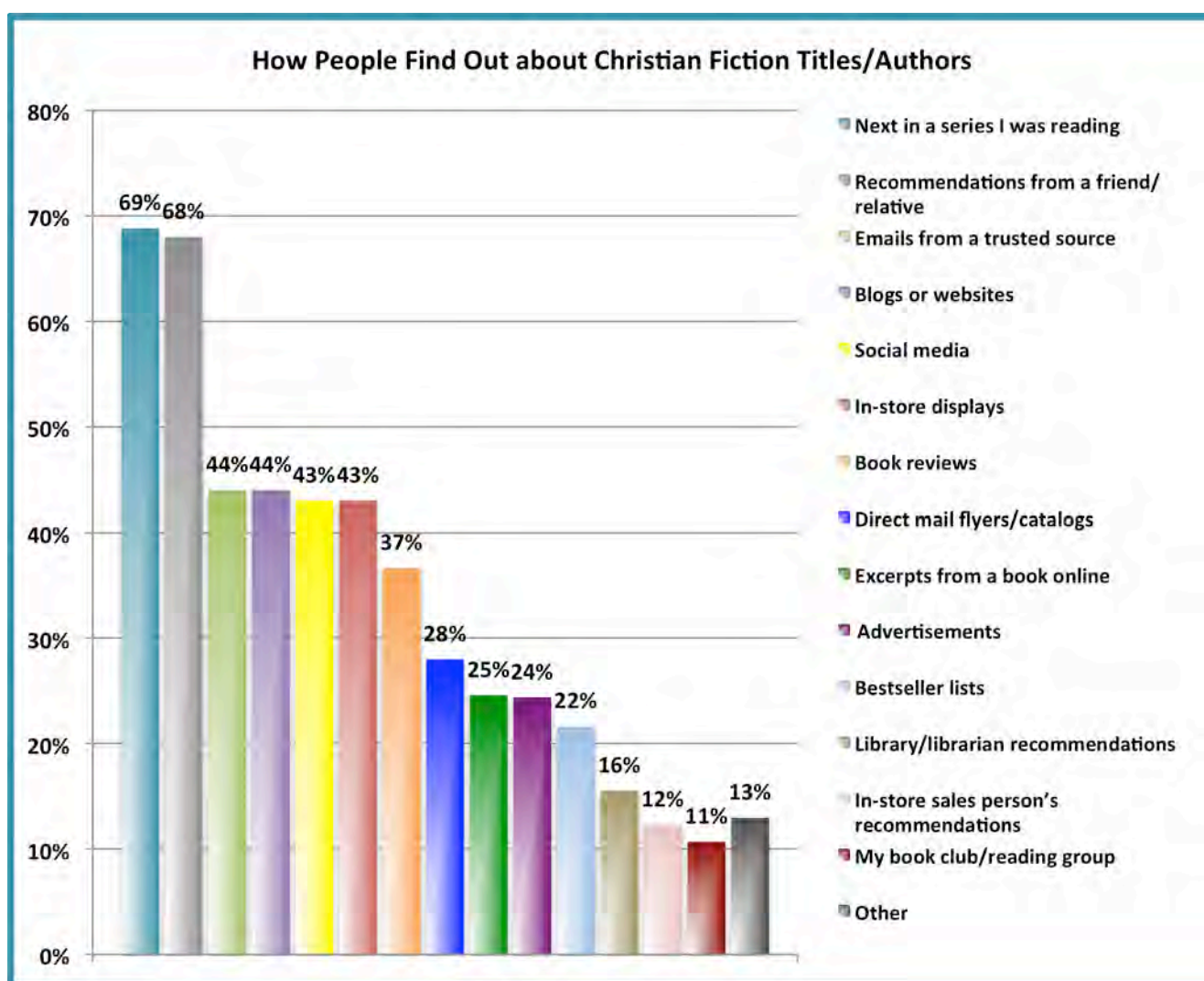
B. Christian Fiction Information and Selection Factors

1. Christian Fiction Information Sources and Key Purchase Decision Factors

Summary: The top Christian fiction sales drivers are the story itself, the desire to keep reading a story in a series, recommendations regarding a specific book, and author familiarity. Of the social media tools employed by publishers and authors, Christian fiction blogs are most often visited while publisher Facebook pages and websites are visited quite infrequently.

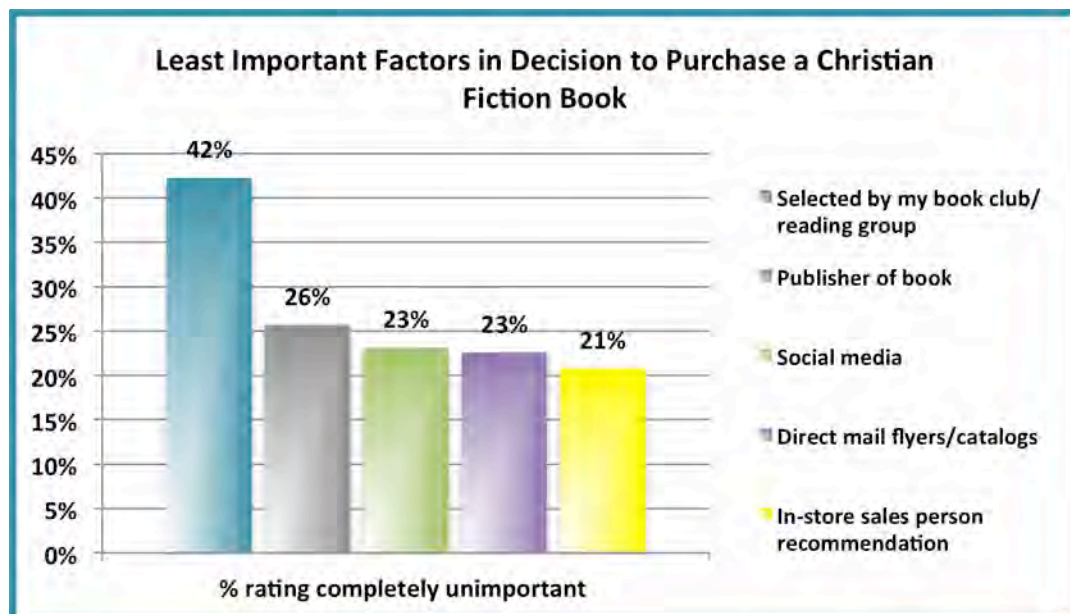
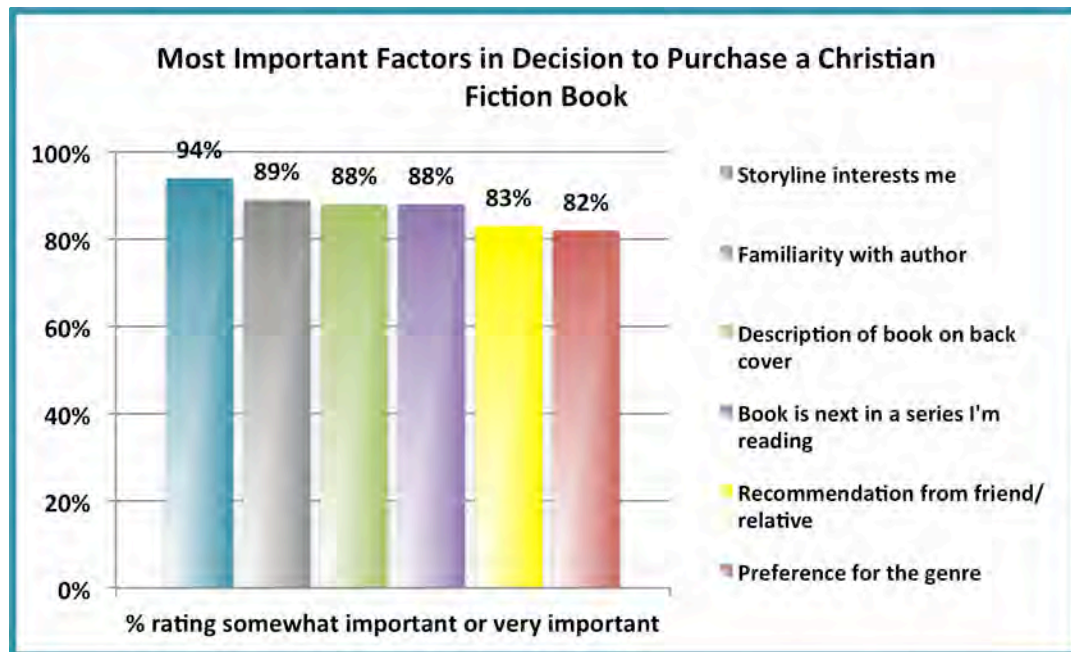
a. How People Find Out about Christian Fiction Books/Authors

The information sources used by Christian fiction readers to find out about books and/or authors can be broken into three tiers. Tier one information sources are following a series and word-of-mouth. Tier two includes online tools such as emails, blogs/websites, and social media as well as in-store displays and book reviews. All other information sources land in tier three. (Note: n = 1,504.)



b. Importance of Various Factors in Decision to Purchase a Christian Fiction Book

The most important factor in a Christian fiction purchase decision is the storyline itself. Other important factors include familiarity with an author, back ad copy, book as part of a series, recommendations from friends/relatives, and preference for a genre. The least important factors in Christian fiction purchasing are the selection of a book by a reading group/book club and the publisher. See the charts below for details and Appendix B for complete rating information.



c. Frequency of Visiting Online Sites

Nearly 20% of Christian fiction readers read a Christian fiction blog weekly or more often; 18% visit Christian author Facebook pages weekly or more often. Nearly two-thirds of Christian fiction readers never visit publisher Facebook pages. (Note: n = 1,487.)

Frequency of Visiting Online Sites							
	Rarely / Never	Less than once/month	1 - 3 times/month	Weekly	Several times/week	Daily	Total - weekly or more often
Visit Christian fiction author websites	31%	30%	24%	8%	4%	2%	14%
Visit Christian fiction author Facebook pages	44%	20%	18%	8%	7%	3%	18%
Visit publisher websites	55%	28%	12%	4%	1%	0%	6%
Visit publisher Facebook pages	65%	19%	10%	3%	2%	1%	6%
Read a Christian fiction blog	41%	20%	19%	8%	7%	4%	19%

2. Opinions, Preferences and Behaviors of Christian Fiction Readers

Summary: Most people read Christian fiction because they want to be entertained. They're happy with the quality of Christian fiction – enough so that they not only buy it for themselves, but also buy it as gifts and tell their friends/relatives about books they like. Nearly 50% of Christian fiction readers don't want their Christian fiction stories to include sex, bad language or violence.

a. Level of Agreement re: Various Statements about Christian Fiction

Over 90% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they read Christian fiction to be entertained. The majority believes that the quality of Christian fiction compares favorably with the quality of general fiction and that reading Christian fiction is, in fact, a better use of their time than reading general fiction. Many respondents want their Christian fiction books to hold to a different standard than secular fiction; a plurality of respondents disagreed with the statement, "If very carefully handled, some profanity/ cursing, violence, and/or sexual situations are acceptable in Christian fiction."

Level of Agreement with Statements Re: Christian Fiction						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Top Two Boxes
I read Christian fiction for entertainment	3%	1%	7%	50%	42%	92%
In general, the characters in Christian fiction are as well developed as the characters in general fiction.	3%	9%	16%	43%	29%	72%
In my experience, storylines in Christian fiction are as well developed as storylines in general fiction.	3%	9%	16%	42%	30%	72%

Level of Agreement with Statements Re: Christian Fiction, cont.						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Top Two Boxes
Overall, the writing in Christian fiction is as good as the writing in general fiction	3%	10%	17%	38%	33%	71%
I feel reading Christian fiction is a better use of my time than reading general fiction	3%	8%	19%	33%	38%	70%
I read Christian fiction to deepen my relationship with God	2%	8%	31%	40%	19%	58%
If very carefully handled, some profanity/cursing, violence, and/or sexual situations are acceptable in Christian fiction	23%	24%	18%	28%	7%	35%
I prefer reading a Christian fiction series to reading stand-alone Christian fiction books	3%	15%	54%	20%	9%	28%

b. Comments re: Christian Fiction Statements

While respondents offered comments regarding all of the statements listed above, the two statements that generated the highest number of comments were:

- Overall, the writing in Christian fiction is as good as the writing in general fiction
- If very carefully handled, some profanity/cursing, violence, and/or sexual situations are acceptable in Christian fiction

See the tables below for a summary of the comments offered regarding these two statements.

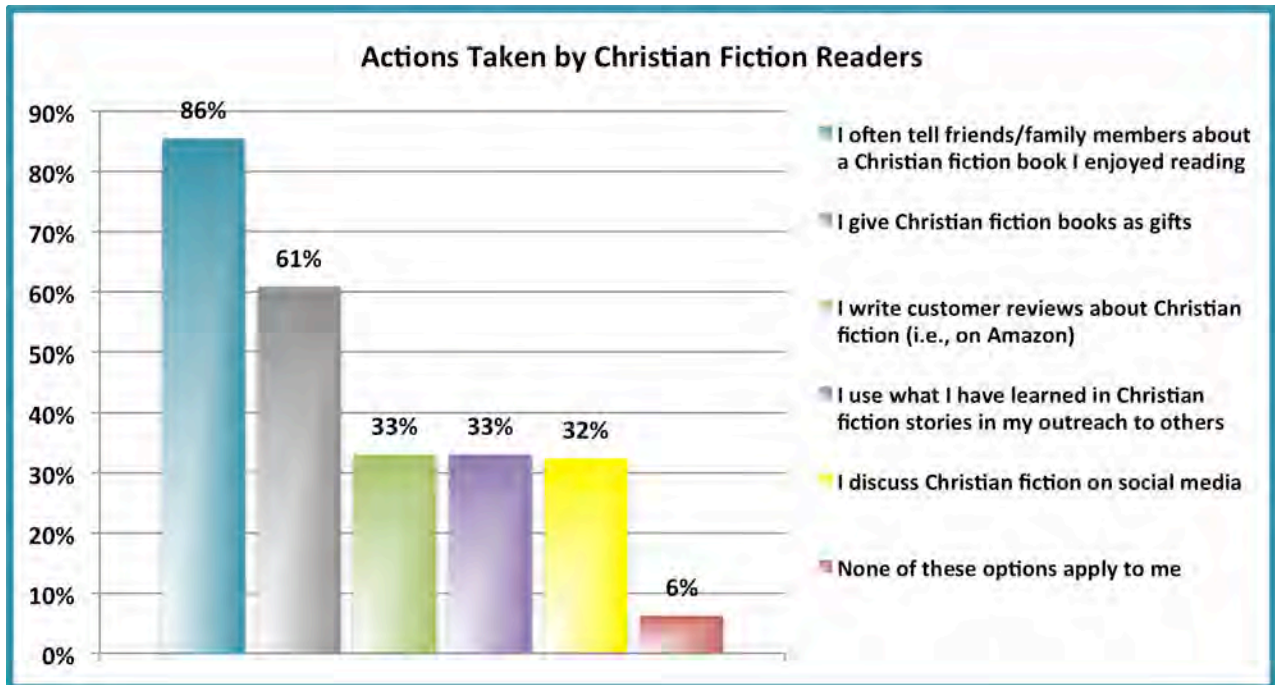
Overall, the writing in Christian fiction is as good as the writing in general fiction	
Comment Category	# of comments
Enjoy Christian fiction	18
Christian fiction needs to reflect more real world issues	16
Christian fiction is better/just as good as secular fiction	14
Christian fiction not as well written as secular fiction	14
Depends on author	14
Getting better but still room for improvement	13
Need quality writing	12
Some Christian fiction is good, some not	11
Christian fiction has improved	11
Better editing needed	9
Difficult to compare Christian vs. secular fiction	7
Need more Christian genre	6
Not too thrilled with Christian fiction	5
Enough with Amish fiction	5
Christian fiction should be re-named	4

Overall, the writing in Christian fiction is as good as the writing in general fiction, cont.		
Comment Category		# of comments
Being a Christian doesn't necessarily make you a great author		3
Need/like Christian authors		3
In your face format is a turn-off		1
Meaning of general fiction		1
Good books left unpublished		1
Christian books cost more than secular books		1
Like historical fiction the best		1

If very carefully handled, some profanity/cursing, violence, and/or sexual situations are acceptable in Christian fiction		
Comment Category		# of comments
Don't want profanity/violence/sexual situations in Christian fiction		58
Profanity/violence/sexual situations OK depending upon context and presentation		35
No profanity but some violence and/or sexual situations OK if handled carefully/not graphic		19
Profanity not necessary		14
No profanity or sexual depictions but some violence OK		11
Not bothered by profanity/violence/sexual situations in books		5
Sexual content should be handled with the most discretion		4
Author is the key to how profanity/violence/sexual situations are presented		3
What does "carefully" mean?		2

c. Actions Taken by Christian Fiction Readers

Christian fiction readers are enthusiastic about Christian fiction. Nearly 90% often tell friends/family members about Christian fiction they like and over 60% purchase Christian fiction books as gifts. These respondents demonstrated less interest in using online tools to express their enthusiasm than personal encounters; just one third are writing online reviews or discussing Christian fiction via social media. (Note: n = 1,487.)



d. Additional Comments re: Reading/Purchasing Christian Fiction

Additional comments about Christian fiction were offered by 260 respondents. The most common additional comment focused on an appreciation for Christian fiction. Concerns about the cost of books and a desire for a local Christian bookstore were also frequent comments.

Additional Comments about Reading or Purchasing Christian Fiction		
Comment Category		# of comments
Appreciate Christian fiction		40
Cost of books is a factor in purchasing		28
Wish we had a local Christian bookstore		20
Need quality Christian fiction		19
Like e-books		16
Christian fiction wish list		15
Buy books online		10
Christian fiction lacking in some areas		10
Like hardcopy books		10

Additional Comments about Reading or Purchasing Christian Fiction , cont.		
Comments		# of Comments
Love our Christian bookstore		10
Borrow books from the library		9
Christian bookstores are lacking in some areas		9
More access needed to Christian fiction		8
Christian fiction needs to be more true to real life		6
Like Christian bookstores		6
Favorite authors/books		5
Selection of Christian fiction at bookstores is dwindling		5
Would like more than Amish/historical romance		5
Difficult to find authors/books		4
Don't like free e-books		4
Don't read much fiction		3
Enjoy audio books		3
Like to support Christian fiction/authors		3
Christian publishers should not change standards of decency and morality		2
Don't have a lot of time to read		2
Publishers need to help further the Christian fiction market		2
Share books with others		2
Some great Christian books not available/not marketed as Christian fiction		2
Author platform doesn't impact book sale		1
Better editing is needed		1
Donate books		1
Need new sources		1

C. Christian Fiction Purchase Locations and Factors

1. Christian Fiction Purchase Locations

Summary: Top locations for Christian fiction purchasing are local Christian bookstores and online stores such as Amazon but purchasing through an eBook device is also a common purchasing option. Most Christian fiction purchasers buy more print titles than eBook titles; however, nearly one-third buy more Christian fiction in eBook than print format.

a. Where Is Christian Fiction Purchased?

Most respondents (72%) buy at least some Christian fiction at a local Christian bookstore. Over 60% buy Christian fiction through online stores such as Amazon; 45% buy Christian fiction through their eBook device. General bookstores, big box retailers, and online Christian sources also represent significant purchase locations for Christian fiction. (Note: n = 1,469).

Christian Fiction Purchase Locations		
From a Christian bookstore in my area		72%
Online through an online-only general source (such as Amazon)		62%
Through my eBook device		45%
From a general market bookstore like Barnes & Noble		38%
From a big box retailer like Wal-Mart, Target, Sam's Club, etc.		34%
Online through an online-only Christian source (i.e., ChristianBooks.com)		30%
Online through a general bookstore's website (such as B&N.com)		20%
Online through a Christian bookstore's website		17%
Order by phone or mail from a print catalog		8%
Used bookstores/thrift shops/garage sales		6%
Conferences/conventions/events		1%
Other		6%

b. Recent Christian Fiction Buying Habits

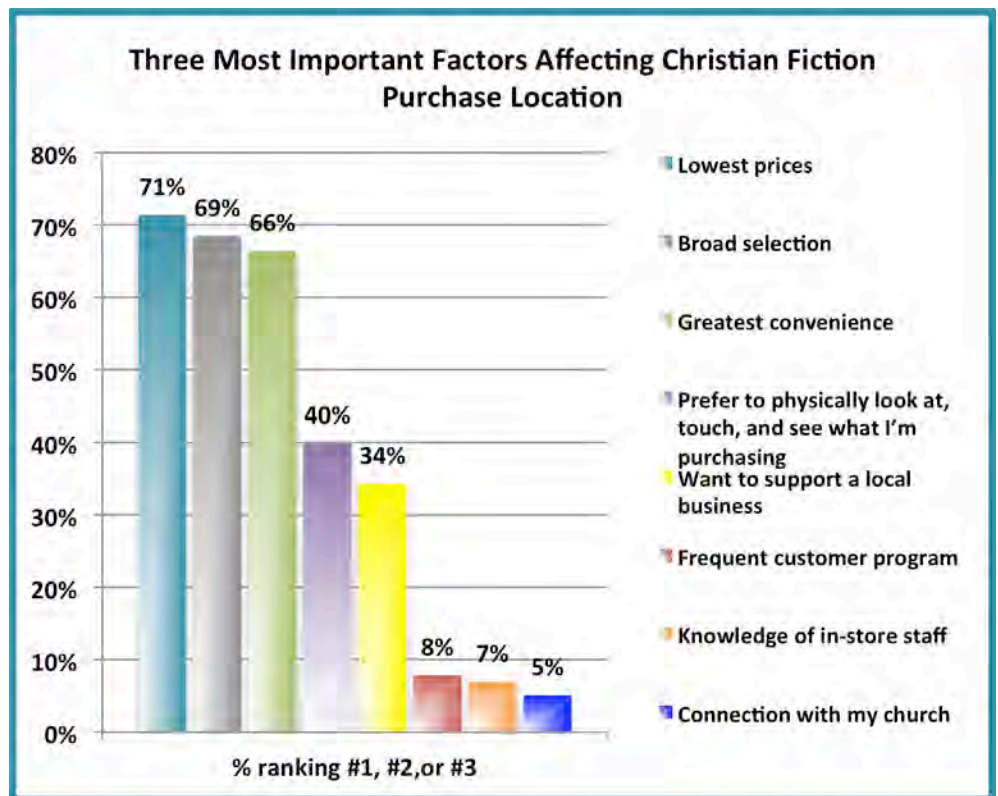
When asked about Christian fiction purchasing habits in the past year, just over 3% of the respondents indicated they hadn't purchased any Christian fiction titles. Among those who did purchase Christian fiction, nearly 70% of respondents indicated that most of their purchases were print books, whether from a physical store or an online store. Just under 30% of respondents who purchased Christian fiction in the past year indicated that most of their purchases were eBooks. (Note: n = 1,469; 1,418 purchased Christian fiction in the past year.)

Christian Fiction Buying Habits - Last Year (based on respondents who purchased Christian fiction in the past year)		
Most of my Christian fiction purchases are print books from a physical store		36.5%
Most of my Christian fiction purchases are eBooks		28.3%
Most of my Christian fiction purchases are print books from an online store		17.3%
Most of my Christian fiction purchases are print books with an even split between physical store purchases and online purchases		14.7%
My Christian fiction purchases are an even split between print book and eBooks online		1%
Other		2.2%

2. Most Important Factors When Choosing Christian Fiction Purchase Location

Summary: Low prices, convenience and broad selection are the dominant factors when selecting where to purchase Christian fiction.

Over 70% of Christian fiction purchasers cited “low prices” as one of the three most important factors when deciding where to purchase Christian fiction. Nearly as many – 69% – cited broad selection as a top-three factor, and two-thirds of respondents selected greatest convenience as a top three factor. (Note: n varies from 1,410 to 1,437 as some people wrote in “other” options.)



The 3 Most Important Factors in Choosing Christian Fiction Purchase Location

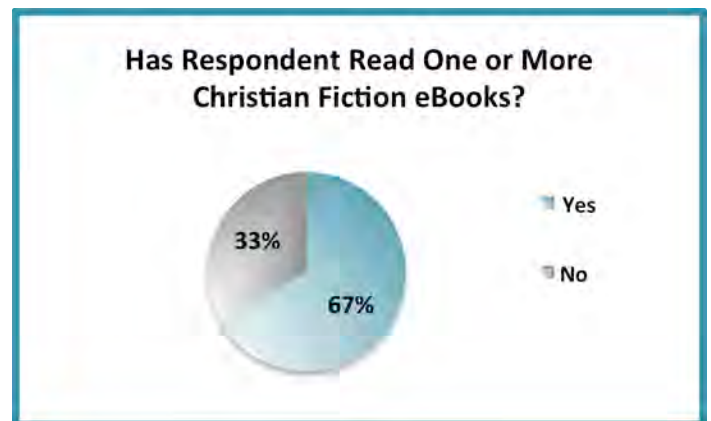
	% ranking #1	% ranking #2	% ranking #3	% ranking #1, #2, or #3
Lowest prices	26%	27%	18%	71%
Broad selection	21%	23%	26%	69%
Greatest convenience	25%	22%	19%	66%
Prefer to physically look at, touch, and see what I'm purchasing	15%	11%	14%	40%
Want to support a local business	9%	12%	14%	34%
Frequent customer program	2%	2%	4%	8%
Knowledge of in-store staff	2%	3%	3%	7%
Connection with my church	1%	2%	2%	5%

D. Christian Fiction eBooks

Summary: Most respondents do at least some of their Christian fiction reading in eBook format; almost half of these eBooks are downloaded for free rather than purchased. Less than 20% of non-eBook readers anticipate reading Christian fiction in eBook format in the future.

1. Do Respondents Read Christian Fiction eBooks?

Two-thirds of the respondents have read one or more Christian fiction books in eBook format.
(Note: n = 1,469.)



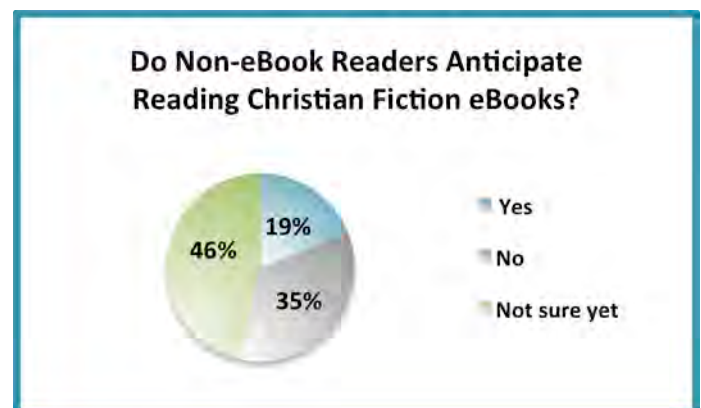
2. Fiction eBooks Purchased vs. Downloaded for Free

A significant percentage – 45% – of Christian fiction eBooks are downloaded for free. (Note: n = 979.)



3. Anticipation of Future Christian Fiction eBook Reading by Current Non-eBook Readers

Most of the respondents who are not currently reading Christian fiction in eBook format either don't anticipate reading in Christian fiction in this format (34.5%) or aren't sure if they will or not (46%). (Note: n = 484.)



E. Christian Bookstore Shopping Data

Summary: Nearly 80% of respondents shop at their local Christian bookstore; of these respondents, over 80% do so, at least in part, because they support the concept of a Christian store. They also like the atmosphere and the breadth of products offered at Christian bookstores. Lower prices, a better selection of books, and a more convenient location would encourage more book purchases at local Christian bookstores. Among respondents who have a Christian bookstore in their area but don't shop there, the top reason given was a preference for shopping online.

1. Do Respondents Shop at a Local Christian Bookstore?

The majority of respondents – 79% – shop at a local Christian bookstore at least occasionally. (Note: n = 1,462.)



2. Christian Bookstore Shopping Data

a. Reasons for Shopping at Local Christian Bookstore

The most commonly selected reason for shopping at a local Christian bookstore is the desire to support Christian bookstores. Other top reasons include liking the Christian atmosphere, the option to purchase products there other than books, and seeing more Christian products there than at other stores; see the table below for details. (Note: n = 1,155.)

Why Do Respondents Shop at Christian Bookstore?	
I support the concept of a Christian store	81%
I like the Christian atmosphere	64%
I can purchase other products there in addition to books	63%
I see more Christian products there than at other stores	63%
The selection is great	43%
I like the service they offer	40%
The staff is knowledgeable	38%
Their products are competitively priced	27%
I like what happens in the store, special events, author signings, etc.	19%
Convenience	2%
Like to support local stores	1%
Like hands-on shopping	1%
Other	2%

b. What Would Encourage More Book Purchasing at Christian Bookstores?

Current Christian bookstore shoppers were asked what would encourage more book purchasing at their local Christian bookstore. The top response was lower prices followed by a better selection of books. A more convenient location and better in-stock conditions were also cited as a means to encourage more book purchasing. Note that 15% of the respondents to this question stated that nothing could encourage more purchases at their local Christian store. (Note: n = 1,155.)

What Would Encourage More Christian Books Purchasing at Local Christian Bookstore?	
Lower prices	57%
A better selection of book titles	32%
A more convenient location	25%
Better in-stock conditions – I often can't find the book I'm seeking	24%
The option to purchase products online from their website	16%
Nothing would encourage more book purchases at my local Christian bookstore	15%
More knowledgeable store personnel	5%
Other	5%

3. Reasons for NOT Shopping at a Local Christian Bookstore

a. Respondents Without a Local Christian Bookstore

Eleven percent of respondents do not have a local Christian bookstore in their area. (Note: n = 1,462.)



b. Reasons for Not Shopping at a Local Christian Bookstore – among Respondents with a Store in Their Area

Respondents who have a local Christian bookstore but don't shop there cited a preference for shopping online as the top reason. The second most commonly cited reason is the store is not conveniently located. (Note: n = 146.)

Reasons for Not Shopping at a Local Christian Bookstore	
I prefer to shop online	75%
While we have a local Christian bookstore, it is not convenient for me to get there	51%
The local Christian bookstore doesn't carry the books I want to purchase	37%
I prefer to shop at a general bookstore in my area	14%
I'm not comfortable with the atmosphere at my local Christian bookstore	11%
Other	12%

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many Christian fiction readers are more than readers – they are fans. They:
 - read a lot of Christian fiction books
 - are reading more Christian fiction titles today than in the past
 - buy Christian fiction as gifts for others
 - talk about Christian fiction with their friends/family members
 - use online tools to discuss and find Christian fiction
- While Christian fiction readers clearly want their Christian fiction books to have a Christian message, what is desired most is an entertaining read. The story itself is the most important driver of sales.
 - **“Many of the Christian authors are better than secular fiction authors. Because they don’t use sex and profanity to sell books, they have to write better stories. Robin Jones Gunn, Dave and Neta Jackson, Brock and Bodie Thoene, and many more are exceptional authors!”**
- Many Christian fiction readers choose to read Christian rather than secular fiction specifically because they don’t like the profanity, sexual content and violence often found in secular fiction.
 - **“I feel the actual use of profanity/cursing within Christian fiction is completely unacceptable. We're supposed to be set apart and our stories should reflect that. A reference of "the villain swore" is acceptable, but overly sensual romances and overt violence is not something I'd want to read. I want to enjoy my stories, not be embarrassed by them. There should be a standard for Christian fiction and trying to make our stories more like "the world's" only degrades it. Writers can be realistic without being offensive or mimicking the vulgarity that we're forced to endure in this world.”**
- Despite the enthusiasm expressed for Christian fiction, book prices do matter to people. When deciding where to purchase Christian fiction books, “lowest prices” is the number one factor.
 - **The economic downturn impacted us to the point that books are a luxury item. Now, I frequent the library and obtain free Kindle books, which impacts what I buy.**
- Christian fiction eBook reading growth appears to be flattening. While Christian fiction eBook reading and eBook downloading is significant, most people who haven’t tried eBooks don’t anticipate doing so.
- Christian bookstore shoppers are drawn to Christian stores as much (or possibly more) by the store’s intangibles – the Christian nature of the store, the Christian atmosphere – as they are by tangibles such as product selection and staff knowledge.
 - **“I love visiting the local Christian bookstore. I love the atmosphere.”**



APPENDIX A

2015 CBA READER SURVEY

This survey is sponsored by:

The Christian Booksellers Association
American Christian Fiction Writers
Baker Publishing Group

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We value your input and greatly appreciate your time. Everyone who completes this survey is eligible to win one of 20 Christian fiction book packages. Each package includes 50 different Christian fiction books.

1. On average, how many Christian fiction books do you read in a year?

0
1-3
4-6
8-10
More than 10

2. How many Christian fiction books did you purchase in the past year?

0
1-3
4-6
8-10
More than 10

3. How has the number of Christian fiction books you purchase in a year changed in the past five years?

No change – I purchase about the same number of Christian fiction books today as I did five years ago
It has increased – I purchase more Christian fiction books today than I did five years ago
It has decreased – I purchase fewer Christian fiction books today than I did five years ago

4. Why has the number of Christian fiction titles you purchase changed over the past five years?

5. Do you read secular fiction?

Yes
No – skip to Q. 8

6. Approximately what percentage of your fiction reading is Christian fiction and what percentage is secular fiction? (Express your percentage as a whole number, i.e., 25% should be written as 25. Note that the total needs to add to 100.)

_____ Christian fiction
_____ Secular fiction

7. How has the number of secular fiction books you purchase in a year changed in the past five years?

No change – I purchase about the same number of secular fiction books now as I did five years ago
It has increased – I purchase more secular fiction books today than I did five years ago
It has decreased – I purchase fewer secular fiction books today than I did five years ago

8. Which of the following types of Christian fiction do you enjoy reading? (Check all that apply.) ROTATE RESPONSES

Amish
Biblical
Contemporary
Family Drama
Fantasy/Sci-Fi
Futuristic/Prophecy
Historical Fiction
Literary/Classical/Allegorical fiction
Mystery/Espionage
Paranormal
Romance
Romantic Suspense
Suspense/Thriller/Legal Thriller
Other, please specify: _____

9. In what format do you read Christian fiction? Please estimate a percentage for each of the following format options. (Express your percentage as a whole number, i.e., 25% should be written as 25. Note that the total needs to add to 100.)

_____ Mass-market paperback (a smaller paperback usually at a lower price, often displayed on racks and through drugstores, airports, and supermarkets or via direct-to-consumer programs)
_____ Trade paperback (A paperback book that is typically of better production quality, larger size, and higher price than a mass-market edition)
_____ Hardcover
_____ Digital/ebook
_____ Audio

10. How do you find out about new Christian fiction books/authors? (Please check all that apply.) ROTATE RESPONSES

Advertisements
Bestseller lists
Book reviews
Direct mail flyers/catalogs
Excerpts from a book online
Emails from a trusted source (e.g., retailer, publisher, blogger, etc.)
Blogs or websites that feature information about an author or a book
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) that mentions an author or book
My book club/reading group
Recommendations from a friend/relative
Library/librarian recommendations
In-store sales person's recommendations
In-store displays
Next in a series I was reading
Other, please specify:

11. How important are each of the following factors in your decision to purchase a Christian fiction book?

(ROTATE RESPONSES)

Completely unimportant Somewhat unimportant Neither important nor unimportant Somewhat important Very important

Advertisements

Bestseller lists

Book reviews

Direct mail flyers/catalogs

Excerpts from a book online

Emails from a trusted source (e.g., retailer, publisher, blogger, etc.)

Blogs or websites that feature information about an author or a book

Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) that mentions an author or book

My book club/reading group

Recommendations from a friend/relative

In-store sales person's recommendations

In-store displays

Cover design

Description of book on back cover

Price (book is sale priced)

Publisher of book

Storyline interests me

Book is next in a series I am reading

Familiarity with author

Preference for the genre

12. How often do you....?

Rarely / Never

Less than once per month

1 - 3 times per month

Weekly

Several times a week

Daily

Visit Christian fiction author websites

Visit Christian fiction author Facebook pages

Visit publisher websites

Visit publisher Facebook pages

Read a Christian fiction blog

13. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (ROTATE RESPONSES)

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

I feel reading Christian fiction is a better use of my time than reading general fiction

I read Christian fiction to deepen my relationship with God

I read Christian fiction for entertainment

I prefer reading a Christian fiction series to reading stand-alone Christian fiction books

In my experience, storylines in Christian fiction are as well developed as storylines in general fiction.

In general, the characters in Christian fiction are as well developed as the characters in general fiction.

I prefer fiction that does not include profanity/cursing, violence, and/or sexual situations

If very carefully handled, some profanity/cursing, violence, and/or sexual situations are acceptable in Christian fiction.

Overall, the writing in Christian fiction is as good as the writing in general fiction

14. If you like, please comment on your response: _____

15. Where do you purchase Christian fiction? (Please select all that apply.) (ROTATE RESPONSES)

Online through a Christian bookstore's website
Online through a general bookstore's website (such as B&N.com)
Online through an online-only Christian source (such as ChristianBooks.com)
Online through an online-only general source (such as Amazon)
From a general market bookstore like Barnes & Noble
From a Christian bookstore in my area
From a big box retailer like Wal-Mart, Target, Sam's Club, etc.
Order by phone or mail from a print catalog
Through my ebook device
Other _____

16. Where do you most often purchase Christian fiction? (Select the one best answer.) (ROTATE RESPONSES)

Online through a Christian bookstore's website
Online through a general bookstore's website (such as B&N.com)
Online through an online-only Christian source (such as ChristianBooks.com)
Online through an online-only general source (such as Amazon)
From a general market bookstore like Barnes & Noble
From a Christian bookstore in my area
From a big box retailer like Wal-Mart, Target, Sam's Club, etc.
Order by phone or mail from a print catalog
Other, please specify:

17. What are the three most important factors in choosing where you purchase Christian fiction? (Rank your top three options. Rank the most important factor #1, the second most important factor #2, and the third most important factor #3.)

Broad selection
Lowest prices
Greatest convenience
Frequent customer program
Knowledge of in-store staff
Connection with my church
Want to support a local business
Prefer to physically look at, touch, and see what I'm purchasing

18. Thinking of the Christian fiction books you purchased in the past year, which of the following statements most accurately describes your Christian fiction buying habits? (Note: if you didn't purchase any Christian fiction books in the past year, please select that option only.)

Most of my Christian fiction purchases are print books from a physical store
Most of my Christian fiction purchases are print books from an online store
Most of my Christian fiction purchases are print books with an even split between physical store purchases and online purchases
Most of my Christian fiction purchases are ebooks
I didn't purchase any Christian fiction books in the past year
Other, please explain: _____

19. Have you read one or more Christian fiction ebooks?

Yes
No – Skip to Q. 21

20. Please indicate the percentage of fiction ebooks you have purchased vs. those you have downloaded for free. (Express your percentage as a whole number, i.e., 25% should be written as 25. Note that the total needs to add to 100.)

_____ % of fiction ebooks purchased

_____ % of fiction ebooks downloaded for free

Skip unconditionally to Q. 22

21. Do you anticipate reading Christian fiction ebooks at some point in the future?

Yes

No

I'm not sure yet

22. Which of the following statements apply to you? (Please mark all that apply. If none of these options apply to you, select that option only.) (ROTATE RESPONSES)

I often tell friends/family members about a Christian fiction book I enjoyed reading

I give Christian fiction books as gifts

I discuss Christian fiction on social media

I write customer reviews about Christian fiction (i.e., on Amazon)

I use what I have learned in Christian fiction stories in my outreach to others

None of these options apply to me

23. Do you shop at a local Christian bookstore?

Yes – **Skip to Q. 25**

No

24. Why don't you shop at a local Christian bookstore? (Please select all that apply. If you don't have a Christian bookstore in your area, please select the top option only.)

We don't have a local Christian bookstore

The local Christian bookstore doesn't carry the books I want to purchase

I'm not comfortable with the atmosphere at my local Christian bookstore

While we have a local Christian bookstore, it is not convenient for me to get there

I prefer to shop online

I prefer to shop at a general bookstore in my area

Other, please specify:

Skip unconditionally to Q. 27

25. Why do you shop at your local Christian bookstore? (Check all that apply.) (ROTATE RESPONSES)

I support the concept of a Christian store

I like the service they offer

I like what happens in the store, special events, author signings, etc.

The staff is knowledgeable

The selection is great

I see more Christian products there than at other stores

I can purchase other products there in addition to books

Their products are competitively priced

I like the Christian atmosphere

Other, please specify:

26. Which of the following would encourage you to purchase more Christian books at your local Christian bookstore? (Please select all that apply. If nothing would encourage more book purchases at your local Christian bookstore, please select that option only.) (ROTATE RESPONSES)

A more convenient location

A better selection of book titles

Better in-stock conditions – I often can't find the book I'm seeking

Lower prices

The option to purchase products online from their website

More knowledgeable store personnel

Nothing would encourage more book purchases at my local Christian bookstore

Other, please specify:

27. If you have any additional comments about reading or purchasing Christian fiction please list them here:

28. What is your gender?

Male

Female

29. What is your age?

< 24 years

25 – 34 years

35 – 44 years

45 – 54 years

55 – 64 years

65 – 74 years

> 75 years

30. Which of the following do you most closely identify with?

Christianity

Judaism – **Skip to Q.33**

Islam – **Skip to Q.33**

Buddhism – **Skip to Q.33**

Hinduism – **Skip to Q.33**

Mix of religions

No religion – **Skip to Q.33**

Prefer not to answer – **Skip to Q.33**

Other (please specify): _____

31. What is your religious affiliation?

Protestant

Catholic

Mormon

None of the above

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify): _____

32. In total, how many times in a typical month do you attend a church service, Bible study, small group, etc?

4 or more times a month

1 - 3 times a month

Less than once/month

Rarely/never attend

33. Where do you live? (Drop down list of states and provinces)

34. If you would like to have your name included in a drawing to win one of 20 Christian fiction packages (each package includes 50 Christian fiction books) please provide your email address: _____

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