



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on December 10, 2013

Christmas Books

As Christmas approaches, the shopping mall can become a shopping maul. One of the ways of buying gifts for family and friends, without becoming part of a mob scene in the stores, is to shop on the Internet. However, for many kinds of gifts, you want to be able to see it directly, and perhaps handle it, before you part with your hard-earned cash for it.

One gift for which that is unnecessary is a book. Books are ideal Christmas presents from the standpoint of saving wear and tear on the buyer.

There are the traditional coffee table books, featuring marvelous photographs by Ansel Adams or the moving human scenes in the paintings of Norman Rockwell, both of which are very appropriate books for the holiday season. But there are also more serious, or even grim, books that some people will appreciate as they read them in the new year.

One of these latter kinds of books is the recently published *Why We Won't Talk Honestly About Race* by Harry Stein. It is a bracing dose of truth, on a subject where sugarcoated lies have become the norm.

This book says publicly what many people say only privately, whether about affirmative action, Barack Obama or the ongoing obscenity of gross television shows about paternity tests, to determine the father of children born to women whose lifestyle makes it anybody's guess who has fathered their children.

Hopeful signs from the past and the present are also covered, along with honest and insightful people like Bill Cosby and Shelby Steele. But the abuse to which such people have been subjected is a sobering reminder that it is still a struggle to confront racial issues.

A very different book, but one with the same goal of getting at reality, despite society's prevailing fog of rhetoric, is *Choosing the Right College*. For both students and their parents, this book can be enormously valuable. It is by far the best college guide, for both its honesty and its insights.

Unlike other college guides, *Choosing the Right College* is judgmental. For example, it says that Boston College has a "Terrific political science department" and its graduates in "finance have a fast track to jobs in big Boston firms" but "Education and sociology departments are mediocre hotbeds of radical activism."

That kind of information not only helps when deciding which college to attend, it also helps in choosing which courses to seek out and which to avoid after you have enrolled. Too many colleges have a narrow and intolerant politicized atmosphere, with professors giving low grades to students who do not go along with the leftist vision.

Barnard College is described as having "doctrinaire leftism" that "pervades every nook and cranny of campus." But MIT is credited with a politically "diverse or neutral" environment where the students "are too busy for activism."





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Unlike most other colleges, Hillsdale College still has “single-sex dorms, with firm visitation rules” and a “very extensive well-taught core curriculum.” It also has “almost unanimous political conservatism” that may not be for everyone. Nor is its isolated location “in a very cold part of the country.”

In short, the 900-plus pages of *Choosing the Right College* lay out in plain English the pluses and minuses of colleges and universities across the country, calling a spade a spade. They report, you decide what is right for you.

With so many people already speculating as to who might be the “front runner” for the Republican nomination for president in 2016, Wisconsin governor Scott Walker’s new book, *Unintimidated*, may be especially worth reading. It shows a man of real depth, and with an impressive track record that ought to overshadow the rhetoric of others, especially among the Washington Republicans.

Unlike the Washington Republicans, Governor Walker has been tested and has come through with flying colors. His ending the labor unions’ sacred cow status in Wisconsin, in spite of union thuggery in the capitol and death threats to himself, his wife and his children, tells us what kind of man he is.

Merry Christmas to all.

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