

# Church. Libraries

\$10

Fall 2012



Edinbrook Church, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

## Focused on Growth

**Update  
Your New  
Testament  
Commentaries**

**Celebrate  
Church Library  
Month**

**BOOK ROUNDUP  
Historical  
Biographies:  
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Volume 41, Number 1

Fall 2012

ISSN: 0739-0297, SAN: 690-1832

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*Church Libraries* is published quarterly by the Evangelical Church Library Association, P.O. Box 353, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138-0353; 630-375-7865; Judi@eclalibraries.org; www.ECLALibraries.org.

Subscriptions are a benefit of membership in the Evangelical Church Library Association. Membership fees: individuals, churches, and schools: \$40 per year; publishers/suppliers: \$100. All memberships must be paid in U.S. currency.

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**Cover photo:** Phyllis Hedberg, librarian of the Edinbrook Church Resource Center, Brooklyn Park, Minn. (Photo by Joyce K. Ellis.)

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# ECLA

## Evangelical Church Library Association

The Evangelical Church Library Association is a fellowship of individuals, churches, and publishers for the purpose of enriching lives through the ministry of well-organized church and school libraries and media centers. Founded in 1970, ECLA is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

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brochure and workshop descriptions.

## Promotional Hooks

### SEPTEMBER

Library Card Sign-up Month  
Read a New Book Month  
Children's Books Month  
National Literacy Month  
Women of Achievement Month

### OCTOBER

Church Library Month  
National Book Month  
National Book Fair Month  
National Reading Group Month  
Antiboredom Month  
2-8: Great Books Week  
2-8: Mystery Series Week  
14-20: Teen Read Week  
25: International School Library Day  
29: Biographies Are Beautiful Day

### NOVEMBER

Religion Books Month  
1: National Author's Day  
1: National Family Literacy Day  
12-16: National Young Readers Week  
14: National Young Readers Day  
18-25: National Bible Week  
19: National Day of the Bible  
29: C. S. Lewis's Birthday

### DECEMBER

Read a New Book Month  
10: Dewey Decimal System Day  
8-16: Hanukkah  
25: Christmas

## @ Church Libraries

Thank you for the article on summer reading programs which was posted in the Spring 2012 *Church Libraries*.

The article made me think that my church, Upland Community Church, Upland Ind., needed to host something like a reading program. Since I am the librarian, I met with the children's ministry director and another elementary school teacher who has run a summer reading program; and we decided to give it a try.

"Building Kingdom Readers" has been a hit! We were hoping for 30-40 summer readers in grade 1-6 but as of last Sunday have 58 signed up and reading. Some mothers even protested because kindergartners weren't included, so we opened it up to any youngster/parent wanting to participate.

We arranged our program around a bingo card. Each card has categories

of books to read that are appropriate to grade level, but also Bible passages that will be covered during our summer Sunday School program. There are 25 squares on the bingo card. Readers earn "dollars" to spend in the "store" when a column is completed.

Our UCC reading program has been a hit. Thank you for the article and the information.

I read the book review section thoroughly and have my library helpers read and recommend titles reviewed also. It is our main source for reviews. With a limited budget, one doesn't want to spend money on books that will not be read.

Thanks again for the help and publication.

Marsha L. Becker  
Librarian, Upland Community Church

## Book Updates

### Reprinted

*Debt-Proof Your Christmas* by Mary Hunt (Revell)

### Revised

*The Cycle of Victorious Living* by T.

Scott Daniels with Earl & Hazel Lee (Beacon Hill)

*You Can't Make Me (But I Can Be Persuaded)* by Cynthia Ulrich Tobias (WaterBrook)

## Use Our Reviews

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## BULLETIN BOARD



### Not a Little Light Reading

—Lisa Kern, librarian  
College Church, Wheaton, Ill.

# Focused on Growth

by Joyce K. Ellis

A tiny, white-haired woman, leaning heavily on a cane, hobbled into the Edinbrook Resource Center (ERC) and approached one of the library volunteers. “Do you have any books on prayer?” she asked. “I need to understand more about praying.”

“Do we have any books on prayer?” The staffer chuckled. “We have dozens.”

Leading the woman to the proper section, she made a few recommendations and gave her time to browse.

Several minutes later, the tiny woman approached the checkout desk with an armload of books to help her grow a deeper prayer life.

That’s one of the stories that came up recently when the resource center committee tried to devise a plan for weeding out some of the more than 7,200 books and other resources to make room for newer additions. Although some of those books hadn’t been checked out for years, they met one woman’s spiritual-growth needs that particular morning.

## Inviting Surroundings

The ERC, just inside the entrance of the Edinbrook Church building in Brooklyn Park, Minn. (a suburb of Minneapolis), occupies a large room with two windows looking out to the foyer and natural light from outside windows on the opposite wall. A warm, inviting place, this media center features a children’s corner to the left of the entrance. Some parents read books to their children who need a break from

Sunday morning activities. Others enjoy time picking out books with their kids.

In addition to books, the center contains scores of VHS tapes, CDs, DVDs, and other media. The staff has phased out cassette tapes, donating them to the cassette ministry of a blind member of the church. VHS tapes for adults seldom get checked out, so they will soon be phased out too. But the children’s titles still get good use.

Comfortable reading chairs around the room allow patrons to get a feel for a book before checking it out—or simply enjoy reading a Christian magazine, such as *Biblical Archaeology Review*

and *Thriving Family*.

Tables with chairs in the center of the room provide study space, display areas for featured items, and workspace for the Wednesday afternoon work team. A large checkout desk near the door offers plenty of elbow room for two volunteers on duty for each of the Sunday morning services, as well as during AWANA clubs on Wednesday nights.

When the ERC is closed, a wooden book return with pullout bin stands guard outside the door, ready to receive returned material.

A member of the church who enjoys woodworking made and donated



(Photo by Joyce K. Ellis.)

# LIBRARY PROFILE

many of the beautiful wooden shelves and even the desk and book return.

## Humble Beginnings

When Phyllis Hedberg, current and longtime chairman of the resource center committee, came to Edinbrook as Christian education director in the mid nineties, she found in her new office piles of books almost to the ceiling—stacks that looked as if they would topple over any minute.

Phyllis loved books from childhood when she would often walk one-and-a-half miles to the town library with her sister. As an adult she worked in an elementary-school library. So books were precious to her, and she hoped for a suitable home for those towering stacks.

The church had gone through a transition, sold its building, met in a school for a time, and finally built a new building. But there was no library to put the books in. Many books had to be thrown out, but eventually the rest found a home on shelves around the perimeter of a small room with a kitchenette—also a meeting room and Sunday-school classroom.

Another woman with a heart to build the library asked Phyllis to help her reprocess the books, creating a new categorization system they liked better than the Dewey Decimal System. This “kitchen library” didn’t get a lot of use, but Phyllis was hooked. She was always looking for ways to make it better, more helpful to the people of the church.

When Edinbrook outgrew its new facilities and a building committee convened for the next-phase addition, one elder statesman advocated strongly for a large, easily accessible library people could actually use. The library committee had input on design and furnishings, and they visited resource centers of other area churches of varying sizes for ideas.

Phyllis was thrilled when they finally moved their collection into their



Vern Louis, a longtime ERC Wednesday worker, and staffer Mary Weekley recommend books at the book fair. (Photo by Joyce K. Ellis.)

new, spacious room. “I can’t believe how much it has grown since then.”

## Steady Growth

With ERC’s increased visibility as worshipers come in and out of services, “the people of the church have really taken an interest in it,” Phyllis said.

And it has grown in a number of ways:

**Donations.** Most direct donations are books. The resource center sometimes receives a book at a time, sometimes large boxes of donations at a time. Some are random, some strategic. Sometimes a patron gets hooked on the first book in a fiction series, for example, and buys the subsequent titles to read as soon as they come out, then gives them to the ERC.

One ERC volunteer joined a Christian book club and buys specific titles to fill in missing books in fiction series already on the shelves. Another volunteer aims to replace existing VHS

tapes with DVDs.

Staff members keep track of donations and send thank-you notes, indicating how many of each type of media were donated for donors’ tax purposes.

The ERC doesn’t accept everything. The committee has worked hard to hammer out its donation policy and procedures. (See “Edinbrook’s Donation Policy” on page 7.)

“I have actually turned down some books that are good books—wonderful books,” Phyllis said, “because they are not specifically Christian oriented.” She cited children’s books in particular, as an example. “They may have a nice little lesson in them, but they’re not spiritually oriented.”

Most books from reputable Christian publishers are accepted. But when red flags arise from staff or patrons, various designated readers—mature Christians with godly discernment—read through the books or view the

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DVDs and note any content that might not fit the ERC mission statement. Unsuitable items are returned to the donor or given to a local thrift shop that funds a missions organization.

One of the designated readers is particularly diligent and detailed. She might write something like this: "This book definitely should *not* be in the library. Look at page [xx]." Then she'll give her rationale: the language used, the lessons, or worldview. Sometimes she just doesn't like the whole thing. She might say, for instance, that the

author's true colors come through; and you can tell he's not interested in spiritual things.

Sometimes the pastor helps with the process. Once, when a patron objected to the theology expressed in a book, the pastor explained that the church didn't have to agree with everything in every author's book. But he felt it was important to allow people to have access to that author's point of view.

Phyllis gave another example regarding edgier authors. "I appreciate Ted Dekker, but I can't read any of his

books. They just hit me the wrong way." But she finds no theological reason to exclude them; and she knows there is a strong readership of his books within the church, so the ERC provides them for his followers.

**Direct purchases.** The church's annual budget underwrites some supplies and new resources, and sales of Edin-book bags made by volunteer seamstresses (see "It's in the Bag," Winter 2009-10) provide additional funds.

**Book fairs.** A local Christian bookstore allows the church to buy—at a church discount and on consignment—resources of all types for an annual book fair. The committee displays these materials in the church foyer, and people can buy a particular item or items to donate. The purchaser gets to check out that resource first.

Last year for the book fair the committee found some quality resources on sale, as well as other full-price items. Donations covered almost all of the nearly \$2,500-worth of books and DVDs for the library—for a fraction of the overall retail value.

**Wednesday workers.** Almost every Wednesday a handful of committed volunteers come to work at the ERC for a couple of hours. And work they do: processing new items, deciding how to categorize them, entering them into the church's Microsoft Access program to track inventory, following up on overdue items, repairing items, even sometimes rearranging entire shelving units, and more.

**Other volunteers.** Volunteers staffing the ERC during the AWANA program often finish projects started by the daytime workers, such as shelving newly processed books.

Sometimes ERC volunteers involve their families as well. Married couples fill the two staff slots during a Sunday morning service. One young mom with a daughter learning to read let her find the right spots to file cards in the card file box, working with her to make sure

## Edinbrook's Donation Policy

A lot is a judgment call," Phyllis Hedberg said of the Edinbrook Resource Center's decisions regarding the suitability of materials. "But it's our library.

"The item doesn't necessarily have to appeal to everyone. If there's a readership within the church and if it doesn't violate our principles, it's OK. It doesn't have to agree with our theology on every point. The fundamental beliefs have to be in agreement with ours, but secondary ones give us something to think about sometimes."

Donations, first and foremost, must meet the ERC's mission statement: *The Resource Center is designed to bring the entire Edinbrook Church community into a closer relationship with God by providing Christian literature and resources for enjoyment, encouragement, instruction, and spiritual growth.*

The ERC also gives out a flyer outlining donation procedures:

*The Resource Center welcomes donations of new or gently used books, videos, DVDs, and CDs. In order to avoid duplication of books, etc., we have established two ways you can donate materials:*

*1. Bring in a list of the books you want to donate, including the title, author, and your name and phone number in case we have questions. The Committee will review the list and let you know which books we can use.*

*2. Bring the books you want to donate to the Resource Center, including a slip of paper with your name and phone number so we can contact you. The Committee will consider the books and let you know which books we can use. If there are any books we cannot use, we will ask you to come by and pick them up.*

*If you have any questions, feel free to ask any Committee member. Thank you for your interest in helping us build our Resource Center!*

—Joyce K. Ellis

# LIBRARY PROFILE

she got it right. Another mom let her two school-age children help during her monthly shift; and her daughter, now in high school, oversees the children's section, making sure books are shelved properly and more.

Phyllis emphasized the importance of willing volunteers. "I love to work with people, but the people who've come to work in the library are a special type. A lot of them have been long-time members of our staff."

## Common Challenges

Phyllis admits to a common frustration: Though the committee encourages ERC team members to help with various tasks, and some people bring great ideas of their own, not everyone follows through due to the busyness of life. "I don't have a lot of people who have accepted specific jobs."

For instance, it has been difficult to find someone among their teenage readers who will serve as the teen-section coordinator. Another person who had agreed to watch over the needs of the Bible and theology section has left the church, and the committee hasn't yet found a replacement.

But the biggest need in the library is proper lighting, and the church budget doesn't allow for that right now. So that item remains on ERC's wish list.

## Ultimate Focus

The ERC team is also still working on how to decide which books they can part with to make room for new additions—while still making sure the best resources are there to help those coming in and out each week like the tiny woman with the white hair. After all, the staff's ultimate delight is to help others grow.

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*Joyce K. Ellis is a former ERC volunteer at Edinbrook Church. She is also a speaker and writer; her books include The 500 Hats of a Modern-Day Woman. Contact her at [www.joycekellis.com](http://www.joycekellis.com).*

## Shelf Reading

The Edinbrook Resource Center committee tries to ensure that each shelf in the library is checked at least once a month, a process called shelf reading. This entails making sure books and other media are shelved accurately—and in the right sections—but also keeping books uniformly spaced about a thumb's width from the front of the shelf.

A bulletin board behind the checkout desk lists the shelf numbers. During times when staff aren't helping patrons, they're encouraged to "read the shelves," note that on the list, initial it, and add the date.

Some volunteers are more conscientious about doing this than others, but the committee continues to make this once-a-month goal a priority. Shelf reading often enables staff to find books previously thought missing and keeps the resource center tidy.

—Joyce K. Ellis

## BULLETIN BOARD



**Look What's Falling Onto a Book Shelf Near You!**

—Lisa Kern, librarian, College Church, Wheaton, Ill.

# Update Your New Testament Commentaries

by Dr. Leslie Robert Keylock

*Editor's note: Dr. Keylock wrote a roundup of Bible commentaries that appeared in the Summer 2003 issue. "Complete Your Commentary Section" is posted (password-free) on our Web site at [eclalibraries.org/churchlibrariesonline.html](http://eclalibraries.org/churchlibrariesonline.html). Look for the sequel to this article, "Update Your Old Testament Commentaries," in the next issue.*

Is your reference section showing signs of aging? Are most of your commentaries more than a decade old? Then this article is what you need. I'm not recommending that you cull all commentaries more than 10 years old, but you need to add more recent ones too.

Hundreds of New Testament commentaries have been published in the last decade, written by well-known preachers and less-well-known scholars. I have focused on the most thorough ones that emphasize the meaning of the biblical text because these are the most useful for Sunday-school teachers and other members of your congregation who are serious about Bible study.

I reviewed volumes from nine publishers of evangelical commentaries on the New Testament: Eerdmans, Zon-

dervan, InterVarsity, Moody, Thomas Nelson, Crossway, Kregel, B&H, and Baker. If you purchase these commentaries, your church library reference section will be stronger and more up-to-date. A number of new commentary series has been published too. (See the chart on page 11 for series and abbreviations.)

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*Hundreds of New Testament commentaries have been published in the last decade, written by well-known preachers and less-well-known scholars.*

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In fact, commentaries are published to fit just about every interest and need, such as those from different ages (early church, Reformation, classics) and different ethnic groups (Africa Bible Commentary). If you're interested in a specific series, go to the publishers' Web sites and find all the volumes in it.

Hardcovers are more durable, but paperbacks may be all your budget allows for, so I kept that situation in mind.

## Gospels

### *Matthew*

I looked at commentaries on Matthew's gospel from Myron S. Augsburger (PC, Nelson), J. C. Ryle (CCC, Crossway), and the two-volume revised and expanded commentary by Frederick Dale Bruner (Eerdmans).

My pick is either the new commentary by Grant R. Osborne (ZECNT, Zondervan) or the magisterial commentary by R. T. France (NICNT, Eerdmans). France comments at length on every verse and all the significant words of every verse, so anyone will understand Matthew's gospel better.

### *Mark*

If you want to know what the church

# BOOK ROUNDUP

fathers from the first few centuries of Christianity said about Mark, go to Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall's commentary (ACCS, InterVarsity). Or if you want a preacher's commentary, choose David L. McKenna's (PC, Nelson). The paperback version of Morna D. Hooker's older commentary is available too (BNTC, Baker).

The paperback I recommend if your church needs a less specialized commentary than Hooker's is Ronald J. Kernaghan's (IVPNTC, InterVarsity).

## **Luke**

Several new commentaries on Luke have been published: John MacArthur's (2 vols., MNTC, Moody), Bruce Larson's (PC, Nelson), Charles R. Swindoll's (SNTI, Zondervan), Darrell L. Bock's (IVPNTC, InterVarsity), and R. Kent Hughes's (2 vols., PW, Crossway).

I recommend adding David Garland's commentary (ZECNT, Zondervan) to your library if you can afford a hardcover.

## **John**

John, too, has several commentaries produced in the last decade: Roger L. Fredrickson's (PC, Nelson), John MacArthur's (2 vols., MNTC, Moody), Joel C. Elowsky's (ACCS, InterVarsity), and Charles Swindoll's (SNTI, Zondervan).

Clearly the best commentary on John for your church library is the masterful, 1,121-page book by J. Ramsey Michaels (NICNT, Eerdmans).

## **Acts**

Acts is well served in the last decade with worthwhile commentaries by John Calvin (CCC, Crossway), R. C. Sproul (SAEC, Crossway), John Phillips (JPCS, Kregel), and Lloyd John Ogilvie (PC, Nelson).

But you should add to your reference shelves the thorough commentary by David G. Peterson (Pillar, Eerdmans) before them.

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*Commentaries are published to fit just about every interest and need, such as commentaries from different ages (early church, Reformation, classics) and different people groups (African Bible Commentary).*

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## **Paul's Letters**

### **Romans**

Romans is one of the most important letters of Paul on which to have a comprehensive commentary in your library. In the last decade, R. C. Sproul (SAEC, Crossway), Charles R. Swindoll (SNTI, Zondervan), and Stuart D. Briscoe (PC, Nelson) have issued commentaries on this book.

If, however, your library budget allows only a paperback, Grant R. Osborne's (IVPNTC, InterVarsity) is the one to buy. But if you can afford it, I endorse the Australian Colin G. Kruse's detailed one as the most thorough (Pillar, Eerdmans).

### **1 and 2 Corinthians**

The most practical of Paul's letters is probably 1 Corinthians. John Phillips (JPCS, Kregel) and Kenneth Chafin (on

both 1 and 2 Corinthians, PC, Nelson) have written helpful commentaries.

Again, if you can afford only a paperback, Alan F. Johnson (IVPNTC, InterVarsity) has written a careful one. But pride of place clearly belongs to the exhaustive commentary by Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner (Pillar, Eerdmans).

Other than the half-volume by Kenneth Chafin (PC, Nelson), the only other commentary on 2 Corinthians is the meticulous one by Linda L. Belleville (IVPNTC, InterVarsity). I recommend that you add it to your library.

### **Galatians**

Galatians is often combined with other prison letters of Paul. That's true of the commentary by Maxie D. Dunnam (PC, Nelson), a paperback that combines his comments on Galatians with those on Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon and Gerald L. Bray's hardcover commentary that is combined with Ephesians (RCS, InterVarsity).

The provocative older commentary by James D. G. Dunn has been reissued in paperback (BNTC, Baker). Two paperback commentaries are devoted exclusively to Galatians: Samuel M. Ngewa's (ABC, Hippo/Zondervan) and G. Walter Hansen's paperback (IVPNTC, InterVarsity).

My choice of the newer commentaries is Thomas R. Schreiner's (ZECNT, Zondervan).

### **Ephesians**

For Ephesians, other than the books mentioned in the previous section, John MacArthur's insightful commentary (MNTC, Moody) is useful.

But my preference for your church library is either Frank Thielman's admirable one (BECNT, Baker) or Clinton E. Arnold's (ZECNT, Zondervan).

### **Philippians**

My favorite letter by Paul is Philip-

# BOOK ROUNDUP

## Commentary Series

Abbreviation	Series Name	Publisher	Comments
ABC	Africa Bible Commentary	Hippo/Zondervan	Written by an African but good for anyone.
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture	InterVarsity	Gives the early church comments. Excellent but too specialized for most church libraries.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament	Baker	Excellent series, rivals NICNT and Pillar.
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary	Baker	Older series newly published in paperback.
CCC	Crossway Classic Commentaries	Crossway	Older commentaries updated for today's users.
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentary	InterVarsity	Excellent paperback series.
JPCS	John Philips Commentary Series	Kregel	A good commentary series by one person.
JWPC	John Walvoord Prophetic Commentary	Moody	Excellent in what it does, by the major dispensationalist leader.
MNTC	MacArthur New Testament Commentary	Moody	The best of the commentaries by a pastor.
NAC	New American Commentary	B&H	Southern Baptist commentary series, usually excellent.
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament	Eerdmans	My vote for the best series of all of these.
Pillar	Pillar Commentary on the New Testament	Eerdmans	Rivals NICNT but newer.
PC	Preacher's Commentary	Nelson	Some of the best preachers wrote commentaries in this series.
PW	Preaching the Word	Crossway	Equivalent to PC.
RCS	Reformation Commentary on Scripture	InterVarsity	One of the newest series. Does for Luther, Calvin, and other Reformers what ACCS did for the earlier period.
SAEC	St. Andrews Exegetical Commentary	Crossway	This is a relatively new series.
SNTI	Swindoll's New Testament Insights	Zondervan	For Swindoll's devotees.
THNTC	Two Horizons New Testament Commentary	Eerdmans	Includes theological interpretation of the text.
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary	InterVarsity	This has long been the best set for beginning students of Scripture.
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament	Zondervan	Almost approaches NICNT and Pillar.

# BOOK ROUNDUP

pians; it has been well served with commentaries, which indicates that others, too, love this letter. Stephen F. Fowl offers a section-by-section commentary that seeks to bridge the gap between exegesis and systematic theology (THNTC, Eerdmans). John MacArthur again has contributed his insights (MNTC, Moody).

If your budget dictates paperbacks only, Gordon D. Fee's is an excellent one (IVPNTC, InterVarsity). Only slightly longer is the hardcover by Moisés Silva (BECNT, Baker). My recommendation is the in-depth hardcover by G. Walter Hansen (Pillar, Eerdmans).

## **Colossians and Philemon**

Colossians is almost always combined with Philemon, as it is with all of the three volumes from the past decade I received from the publishers. Again, John MacArthur is helpful if your preference is the New American Standard Bible (MNTC, Moody).

Marianne Meye Thompson is the one to get if you lean toward paperbacks though (THNTC, Eerdmans). But if you can afford and prefer hardcovers, Douglas J. Moo's is the one to buy (Pillar, Eerdmans).

## **1 and 2 Thessalonians**

1 and 2 Thessalonians are usually combined, as they are with all the volumes from the last decade I'm mentioning. Gary W. Demarest (PC, combined with 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, Nelson), John F. Walvoord and Mark Hitchcock (JWPC, Moody), and John Phillips (JPCS, Kregel) have written commentaries on these letters.

I recommend the indefatigable Ben Witherington III (Eerdmans) for those of you who welcome paperbacks, but the most painstaking book is Gordon D. Fee's (NICNT, Eerdmans).

## **1 and 2 Timothy, Titus**

On the pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), I received Samuel M.

## One-volume and Multivolume Commentaries

Although I didn't ask publishers for one-volume or multivolume commentaries, I received a variety in various formats. Here's a selection to consider for your library.

### One Volume Commentaries

#### Hardcovers

- *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* by John MacArthur (Nelson)
- *The New Matthew Henry Commentary* by Matthew Henry, edited by Martin H. Manser (Zondervan)
- *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* by John MacArthur (Nelson)
- *The King James Version Bible Commentary* by Edward G. Dobson, et al. (Nelson)
- *Zondervan King James Version Commentary: New Testament* edited by Edward E. Hindson and Daniel R. Mitchell (Zondervan)
- *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible* by Matthew Henry (Nelson)

#### Paperbacks

- *Nelson's Student Bible Commentary* edited by Earl Radmacher, Ron Allen, and H. Wayne House (Nelson)
- *NIV Bible Study Commentary* by John H. Sailhamer (Zondervan)
- *Bible Commentary: New Testament* by Warren W. Wiersbe (Nelson, Nelson's Pocket Reference Series)
- *Compact Bible Commentary* edited by Earl Radmacher, Ron Allen, and H. Wayne House (Nelson). Contributors to this volume span the evangelical spectrum. Every member of your congregation should have this book, so you may want one in your library.

### Multivolume Set

The complete revision of Zondervan's *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* will be finished in November. Volumes 9 to 13 are on the New Testament. Some of the commentaries on individual Bible books are book length, e.g., D. A. Carson's Matthew commentary is now 670 pages. These five volumes are excellent if you want hardcover commentaries but don't have the budget for all the one-volume books I recommended in this article.

—Leslie Robert Keylock

Ngewa's (ABC, Hippo/Zondervan) and Charles R. Swindoll's (SNTI, Zondervan). Ben Witherington III's hardcover is combined with his commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John.

Much more exhaustive is Philip H. Towner's painstaking commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus (NICNT, Eerdmans).

*continued on page 19*

## Old Library, New Library

# Phase Three: The Happy Ending

by Jerusha Agen

*Editor's note: "Phase One: The Plan" appeared in the Spring 2012 issue, and "Phase Two: The Move" appeared in the Summer 2012 issue.*

The library facility has been designed and planned down to the last detail. The transportation of media items to the new location is complete. And "they all lived happily ever after," right? Not so fast.

The fiction section may be one of the most popular in your church library, but fairy-tale endings aren't always so common in real life. Usually, there's at least some degree of difficulty and foiled expectations along the way.

After the move to the newly expanded building of New Hope Presbyterian Church in Green Bay, Wisc., we librarians came face-to-face with such inevitable challenges.

The truth I wish we had known ahead of time is that a library staff's work does not end with the move of media items to the new facility. In some ways, that's only the beginning.

A task as large as designing and moving to a new location is bound to produce unforeseen difficulties and a lengthy time frame for completion, even with meticulous preparation and planning. With the right attitude, however, this fact needn't be discouraging.

### Meeting Challenges

The biggest trial that unexpectedly confronted us was the absence of adequate shelving. Only limited shelving along the outer walls had been installed in time for the library's moving date. Sudden and unexpected deficits in the expansion budget, as well as the all-too-common problem of communication error, led to the abrupt discovery that the remaining shelving units, which were to fill the rest of the library, had not been ordered. It looked like the planned design for the library interior would no longer be a reality.

Faced with the grim prospect of media sitting indefinitely packed in storage containers on the shelf-less floor of the new library, we rushed to take action. A search of local hardware stores turned up usable shelving units that were immediately attainable and, with the financial support of a few church members, affordable.

Though not as ideal as the planned shelving units, these prefabricated models met the library's need in a time of crisis. However, because all the shelving units were not in place for the moving date, books that had been temporarily housed on other shelves and in boxes then had to be transferred again to the new shelves after they were installed, causing extra hassle.

Unexpected setbacks and problems

are, unfortunately, an inevitable part of a new library facility construction and move. Even so, the excited anticipation of the benefits and advantages the library will have in its new location can carry you through the rough spots. Keeping the end goal in mind should be motivation to help you solve any complications that may arise, even if the solutions involve a compromise or change of plans.

### Staying Diligent

As you weather difficulties and transition into your new facility, patience

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*The truth I wish we had known ahead of time is that a library staff's work does not end with the move of media items to the new facility.*

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# EDUCATION

and diligence are the two qualities that will be your greatest assets. Even with careful preparation for the move, transporting library media to the new space will inevitably result in a degree of chaos and clutter.

Patience will be your weapon against the criticism you may receive or your own desire to have the library shipshape right away. Rest assured that you will get everything organized the way it should be, but it may take some time. Recognize that any move is a monumental task. It's more important to take the time to organize from the start, rather than causing lasting disorder by haphazardly throwing media here and there, just to get rid of boxes.

If you and your staff diligently work to complete the transition to the new space, you will make progress and be assured you are making the best use

of the new facility. This process is an enjoyable journey during which you may be surprised by the many realizations that come with the change to a new location.

Some old library policies or display methods that made sense in the former space may no longer be required or may need to be modified to suit the new facility. The change of setting can spark an exciting number of unanticipated updates to the library's daily operations.

## Reaping Benefits

A library expansion or entirely new construction is at once an exciting and enormously daunting task for any library director or committee. With careful planning for the library design and actual move, you can avoid most of the potential pitfalls.

However, any transition of this mag-

nitude is bound to bring some unexpected challenges. Armed with that knowledge in advance, you'll be able to face any problems head-on with a positive attitude that will help you weather them well.

Finally, understanding that the move continues well past the actual transport of media to the new space will enable all members of the library staff to enjoy the process. If the staff is open to the possibilities of the new facility and the changes it may inspire, the move can breathe new vitality into the library that will last well into the future.

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*Jerusha Agen is a freelance writer and has served in church libraries for 18 years. She worked with the library director at New Hope Presbyterian Church when the library was moved to a new location.*

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# Our Church Has Talent

by Jeanetta Chrystie

The popularity of televised talent shows, including singers from all music genres, jugglers, and dancers, make a talent theme an exciting way to encourage the children in your church to read more. Images of glittery stages and surprised winners may induce them to sign up, but the biblical truths they'll learn will help them grow spiritually.

## Find the Right Notes

Just as people dare not try to compete without first preparing, a reading club needs to begin with planning. Start with typical club plans.

First, choose the beginning and ending dates, and select the ages of children who are eligible to participate. Decide whether you will track the books read using stickers on individual markers or writing children's names on a chart and stamping designs, such as a musical note, after their names for each book read. Children may read books to reach the "winners circle" or cross the "finalists line."

Second, fine tune your rules. Determine whether certain types of books may be required for older children. Select the number of books each age group must read to reach its goal. Will you promote specific subject areas by requiring a selected number of books about missions, biography, Christian growth, or other topics? Will you have winners for each age group you have defined?

Third, check your available budget. List materials and prizes you can request as donations to minimize ex-

penses. You may even want to create a short book list, and ask church members to donate funds toward the purchase of those books. If so, consider making a poster with pictures of the book covers, then ask people to sign up to purchase or donate toward each book. This is a great way to use the reading club to update or increase the number and range of children's books in your library.

## Practice and Preparation

Design your enrollment sheets. Prepare the progress chart on which to list children who enroll in the club.

Create and post a simple set of reading-club rules near the circulation desk and by the display where you will track progress as children read books. This reminder can help avoid misunderstandings or disappointment as the club progresses.

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*A reading club  
based on a  
talent-show theme  
... will increase  
book circulation  
and interest  
in the library.*

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Create advertising materials, and design completion certificates. Enlist the help of church members who are not regular library-staff members, including people in the youth department. Encourage them to participate in making prizes to give children during the awards party.

You may also want to preprint completion certificates for participants to receive at the conclusion of the club. If you plan to award additional prizes to children who complete a specified number of books, then also purchase or begin creating those prizes now.

## Enjoy the Performances

Next, initiate curiosity and interest. Select and create a few of the activity sheets listed below, or develop your own ideas for preclub activity handouts.

During the two months prior to the starting date, hand out an activity sheet to children or their parents each week, reserving some of the sheets for use as incentives during the course of the reading club. You may also want to provide them to Sunday-school teachers to distribute to children who may not frequent the library. Have extra activity sheets available in the library.

It's a good idea to create, print, and store your activity sheets, so they are ready for use at a moment's notice.

*Activity sheet 1:* Let children decorate a drawing of an empty stage with side curtains. You can draw this free-hand, and photocopy it.

*Activity sheet 2:* Let children write a paragraph to "nominate" their favor-

ite singers or musicians.

*Activity sheet 3:* Create a find-the-word puzzle. Hide several words in a jumble of letters by placing them horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. Children then locate and circle these words. Words having to do with a talent-show theme include singer, dance, juggle, ballet, America, talent, winner, cheerleader, magician, gymnastics, jump, and balance.

*Activity sheet 4:* Create a coded message or Bible verse, using musical notes to replace some of the alphabet letters (similar to a partially completed *Wheel of Fortune* puzzle). Then children can decode the message, using a few hints from the letters you provide. You may want to create a different message in length and level of difficulty for different age groups.

*Activity sheet 5:* Provide informative resource handouts with facts about several talents, such as singing, juggling, writing, gymnastics, and playing musical instruments. This information is readily available by searching the Internet.

Let younger children draw a picture of something they learned from one of the handouts. Suggest to older children that they write a paragraph to describe their drawing (or instead of a drawing). A child who does not know what talents he or she may possess could become interested in trying something new.

*Activity sheet 6:* Let older children make up a short story about a talent they think they have or something they would like to try. Some examples are learning to play the guitar, singing a song from memory, or learning to skate.

*Activity sheet 7:* Ask children to write a paragraph about a talent they have or a talent of a parent or friend.

Some of your church members may want to share about their talents at a kickoff party. Ask children to volunteer to share a talent at the celebration party, such as singing together, tum-

*Each activity that brings children and their parents into the library increases your opportunities to serve the church.*

bling or doing cartwheels (on a carpet), performing a magic trick or juggling small net scarves, or playing an instrument.

You may want to display the results of some of the activity sheets in the library. Each activity that brings children and their parents into the library increases your opportunities to serve the church.

### **Best-of-show Awards**

A reading club based on a talent-show theme can serve three purposes. First, it will increase book circulation and interest in the library. Second, it may increase everyone's awareness of how God gives talents to every person. Third, it can increase the number and variety of available children's books in your library.

When the reading club is over and the materials are stored or recycled, enjoy the delight of knowing the club's positive effects will last far beyond the length of the reading club and distribution of certificates at a celebration party.

*Jeanetta Chrystie is a freelance writer, college professor, and church-library volunteer at University Heights Baptist Church in Springfield, Mo.*

## **Celebrate Church Library Month**

**D**oes your circulation slow down over the summer? Do back-to-school and Sunday-school activities compete for your patrons' attentions? October is the perfect time to draw distracted readers back to the church library as you celebrate Church Library Month. Gain new readers this fall, and you'll reap benefits all year long.

Why not host an open house during Church Library Month? This is an ideal activity to promote your library. Start simple, but begin planning today. Post notices in the church newsletter; put up flyers and colorful displays throughout the building. On the day of the open house, offer treats and beverages to lure visitors in. If resources permit, continue the celebration throughout the month with contests, extended library hours, or giveaways.

October can also be a great time to ask for gifts to support the library. Set out a donation jar at your open house, or ask your church leaders if a special offering for the library may be taken one Sunday. If you have enough volunteers to help, you could also hold a fundraiser, such as a used-book sale.

Designating an entire month to promote your church library is an excellent way to draw church attendees into your library. If you miss individuals or families one Sunday, you can catch up with them the next.

Celebrate Church Library Month every October, and your congregation will begin to look forward to it each fall.

—Lin Johnson

## Historical Biographies

# Learning From the Past

by Cindy Grabill

**F**ive missionaries entered the jungles of Ecuador and never came out. A man with a heart for children housed 10,000 orphans. A Dutch woman traveled through 60 countries, telling others about Jesus. An athlete refused to run on Sunday because he loved God more than track.

Historical biographies let readers meet and learn from heroes and heroines like them. They put God first and let Him use them in extraordinary ways.

### 50 PEOPLE EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW

by Warren Wiersbe

Baker, 978-0-8010-7194-2, PB, 400 pages, \$17.99

Wiersbe, a former pastor, highlights lesser-known figures, including G. Campbell Morgan and Katie Luther, most of whom were pastors. Each bio includes details of that person's early life, anecdotes, and noteworthy accomplishments. Plus Wiersbe includes suggestions for further study.

These chapters prove God can use anyone, including blind hymn writer Fanny Crosby and Charles Spurgeon who once "smoked for the glory of God." They will encourage laypeople to develop their God-given talents.

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE MÜLLER

by George Müller

Whitaker, 978-0-88368-159-6, PB, 237 pages, \$8.99

God's plan for this former prodigal

son included establishing orphanages in Bristol. Through the years Müller housed 10,000 children. These journal entries indicate his extreme poverty but also his moment-by-moment dependence on a faithful God who satisfied every need.

Müller's life exemplified the child-like faith that God asks of us. His stories of how God answered specific prayers will inspire readers to pray deeply and watch Him work in their own lives. Recommend this book to nonbelievers, too, since they will see Christ at work in it.

### BONHOEFFER: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy

by Eric Metaxas

Nelson, 978-1-5955-5136-2, PB, 592 pages, \$19.99

Newly elected Hitler ordered synagogues burned, exterminated Jews and the disabled, and required pastors to

swear allegiance to him. Most complied since refusal could mean instant death. Yet a small band of conspirators, which included Rev. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, sought to assassinate this devilish ruler. Their plot failed, and they were executed.

Metaxas, a *New York Times* bestselling author, paints a vivid picture of Hitler, the terrors of Nazi Germany, and the adventurous youth who developed into the courageous man. Bonhoeffer's determination to combat evil will inspire readers to face their own giants. History buffs will find this work intriguing.

### CHRISTIAN HEROES THEN AND NOW

by Janet Benge & Geoff Benge

Ywam, PB, approximately 200 pages, \$8.99

Young Nate Saint loved airplanes and became a missionary pilot when he grew up. C. S. Lewis loved books; his own changed lives. William Carey used his gardening skills to keep his family from starving. Gladys Aylward failed missionary school; but determined to succeed, she raised money and went on her own. These books begin with childhood, so kids ages 10-14 watch these people develop their talents, use those skills for God, and change the world.

This series of 39 books explains the time period and locale in detail and will excite kids about history. Janet was an elementary-school teacher, and Geoff has a degree in history. The peo-

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*Historical biographies let readers meet and learn from heroes and heroines of the past.*

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# BOOK ROUNDUP

ple profiled are ones kids can identify with. They got into similar mischief as children, yet become heroes as adults. These tales show how ordinary people become extraordinary as they allowed God to use them. Ordinary kids can do extraordinary things for God too.

**A CHANCE TO DIE: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael**  
by Elisabeth Elliot  
Revell, 978-0-8007-3089-5, PB, 384 pages, \$16.99

Amy Carmichael served as a missionary in India for 53 years without furlough. There she sheltered millions of unwanted and abused children and shared Christ with an anti-Christ world. Elliot's description of India, its culture, and its idolatrous customs will make readers appreciate their blessings.

Through Amy's journal entries, we see her dependence on God despite intense struggles, her refusal to settle for mediocrity, and obedience at all costs. Applying these principles to our own lives will help us grow. Short chapters make this book an easy read.

**THE CROSS AND THE SWITCH-BLADE**  
by David Wilkerson with John & Elizabeth Sherill  
Chosen, 978-0-8007-9446-0, PB, 240 pages, \$14.99

Rev. Wilkerson followed God's call to New York where he shared his faith with violent gang members and freed drug users of their addictions. His numerous stories of God's provisions and answered prayers will cause readers to laugh, cry, and exclaim, "Go, God!"

David's story demonstrates what God can do with someone totally yielded to Him. Readers will be inspired to leave their own comfort zones as they follow God's direction. His success with drug addicts provides hope to modern-day users and warns teenagers of drugs' dangers and consequences.

*These tales show  
how ordinary people  
become extraordinary  
as they allowed  
God to use them.  
Ordinary kids can  
do extraordinary  
things for God too.*

**FOXES' BOOK OF MARTYRS**  
by John Foxe  
Hendrickson, 978-1-5656-3781-8, PB, 416 pages, \$12.95

Foxe, a 16th-century Quaker, relates stories of numerous martyrs who were persecuted for their faith and lost their lives because they put God first. Among the many saints profiled are Jesus, John Wycliffe, Anne Askew, and Martin Luther.

Readers will examine their own hearts to determine who or what reigns and if they would be able to die for Christ. This book will cause them never to take religious freedom for granted.

**FROM JERUSALEM TO IRIAN JAYA: A Biographical History of Christian Missions**  
by Ruth A. Tucker  
Zondervan, 978-0-310-23937-6, HB, 526 pages, \$32.99

Tucker, a professor of missions discusses 2,000 years of missions chronologically and geographically. Each chapter contains an overview of the conditions in that country, such as war, and short bios of missionaries who served there, both well-known and obscure. Each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading.

Tucker presents an encyclopedic knowledge of this subject, yet she writes in a clear, readable style. The bios paint a clear picture of missionary life, including primitive conditions, language barriers, and discouragement. Their perseverance and focus on reaching the unsaved for Christ will inspire us to battle negative feelings as well. Recommend this book especially to patrons considering missionary work.

**HERO TALES: A Family Treasury of True Stories from the Lives of Christian Heroes**  
978-0-7642-0078-6

**HEROES IN BLACK HISTORY: True Stories from the Lives of Christian Heroes**

978-0-7642-0556-9  
by Dave & Neta Jackson  
Bethany, 978-0-764-05569, PB, 192 pages, \$14.99

Each book includes short biographies and three stories about 15 heroes and heroines, while explaining a Christian characteristic to help kids grow. They will learn, for example, how Martin Luther King lived nonviolence, how Adoniram Judson persevered with the difficult task of translating the Bible into Burmese, and how David Livingstone learned thankfulness when a lion almost mauled him. Each tale concludes with appropriate Scripture and discussion questions.

These stories are short, easy to read, and filled with adventure. The discussion questions test reading or listening comprehension and help children apply the principles to their daily lives. Recommend these books to parents to use for family devotions.

**THE HIDDEN SMILE OF GOD**  
by John Piper  
Crossway, 978-1-4335-0189-0, PB, 172 pages, \$15.99

John Bunyan chose prison when asked to give up preaching, William Cowper battled extreme depression,

# BOOK ROUNDUP

and David Brainerd died young from tuberculosis. Rev. Piper outlines each man's afflictions, identifies how these calamities strengthened their faith, and includes excerpts from each man's writings.

Consider this book a training manual on suffering. The excerpts emphasize the men's perseverance and hope in God who will make all things right. Piper also includes reassuring promises from Scripture to comfort and strengthen readers. Recommend this book to people who are having a hard time.

## THE HIDING PLACE

by Corrie Ten Boom with Elizabeth & John Sherrill

Baker, 978-0-8007-9405-7, PB, 224 pages, \$12.99

**TRAMP FOR THE LORD: The Story That Begins Where the Hiding Place Ends**

by Corrie Ten Boom with Jamie Buckingham

CLC, 978-0-87508-986-7, PB, 224 pages \$11.99

The Ten Booms, a Dutch family, made and sold watches in their store and worked undercover hiding Jews, smuggling Bibles into forbidden territories, and stealing ration cards.

Many Jews reached safety through their efforts during World War II. Corrie alone survived the concentration camp following their arrest. She then "tramped" through 60 countries, spreading the good news of God's love.

These books are fast paced and rich in history. Through its example, this family has much to teach us about leaving comfort zones, suffering, and witnessing. Corrie might even inspire readers to witness to unsaved friends.

## HUDSON TAYLOR'S SPIRITUAL SECRET

by Dr. & Mrs. Howard Taylor

Moody, 978-0-8024-5658-8, PB, 272 pages, \$7.99

Taylor's son and daughter-in-law,

*Readers will  
examine their own  
hearts to determine  
who or what reigns  
and if they would be  
able to die  
for Christ.*

also missionaries to China, tell of how he founded the China Inland Mission in the 1850s through which millions of pagan Chinese met Jesus. We see how he drew on God's resources for his needs, "put to test" the promises of God, and stayed calm through numerous storms.

The writing is beautiful, almost poetic, e.g., "When he came to the end of himself, to a place where only God could deliver." We see a man living for God but with the same weaknesses and struggles we face. We watch him using God's power to defeat Satan and trusting Him for every need. Through his example, the Howards challenge readers to make Christ Lord, trust Him for everything, and maintain peace. It's important message.

## SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY

978-1-5985-6249-1, \$16.95

## THROUGH GATES OF SPLENDOR

978-1-5985-6469-3, \$17.95

by Elisabeth Elliot

Hendrickson, HB, 272 pages

Elliot, a former missionary and best-selling author, shared her husband's journal in *Shadow of the Almighty*. We see a man "hid with Christ in God," who saturated himself in Scripture, shared his heart with God, and was

willing to die if other men could be saved.

*Through Gates of Splendor* continues Jim's story as he and four companions followed God's call to Ecuador to witness to the Auca Indians. The men learned the language and showered savages with gifts. The Aucas believed them to be cannibals and speared them to death.

Through their example, these men show readers how to die to self and do God's will. Elliot filled these pages with applicable, life-changing principles, especially the men's devotion to God, their unconditional love of strangers, and their wives' strong faith following the tragedy of their deaths. Older teen guys will relate to several of the same issues they dealt with.

*Cindy Grabill is a freelance writer and oversees her church's book table.*

## Commentaries

*continued from page 12*

### Hebrews

Although many scholars do not believe Paul wrote Hebrews, it usually is classified with Paul's letters. It hasn't fared well in terms of commentaries over the last decade, however. Louis Evans, Jr., wrote a paperback (PC, Nelson).

I recommend, however, the hardcover by David L. Allen (NAC, B&H).

### General Letters

#### James

James is combined with 1 and 2 Peter and Jude in Paul A. Cedar's commentary (PC, Nelson) and Charles R. Swindoll's (SNTI, Zondervan). The paperback format of Douglas J. Moo's 1985 commentary was reprinted in the last decade (TNTC, InterVarsity) and is the selection I would choose if you

*continued on page 34*

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Bible & Theology

### THE BIBLE QUESTIONS

by Hal Seed

InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-5612-1, PB, 192 pages, \$15

This book answers many of the basic questions any new Christian will have about the Bible. Consequently, the content is rudimentary, especially in the first section. The mature believer can also learn, though, gaining essential biblical knowledge of dates and historical events in the Bible. The book concludes with a small-group study guide.

Each chapter addresses a commonly asked question about the Bible (e.g., salvation, communion, tithing, baptism) and answers it in a conversational, factual manner. Assignments ask the reader to think about a specific Bible passage and then analyze what it says. Several of the follow-up questions to the passages are a bit vague. But by the end, readers find themselves challenged, yearning to know the Bible better and determined to spend more time in the Word. LSS

### GRACE: More Than We Deserve, Greater Than We Imagine

by Max Lucado

Nelson, 978-0-849-92070-7, HB, 240 pages, \$24.99

Grace is a word Christians use frequently, but how often do we stop to consider the meaning behind it? Lucado delves into grace with his usual straightforward approach. He illuminates his topic from every angle—forgiveness, forbearance, peace, understanding, calmness—presenting readers with a clear picture of a word that is frequently misunderstood.

With simple language, but far from simplistic concepts, pastor Lucado offers profound insight. He weaves per-

sonal stories into each chapter and makes a point to support all his claims with Scripture. A study guide provides more in-depth reading. Though Lucado makes a case for eternal security at the end of the book, he generally avoids controversial doctrinal issues. This book explores a term that is at the foundation of Christian beliefs but is often not fully grasped by believers. Lucado helps provide needed insight without engaging in heavy theology. KS

### THE MOST MISUSED VERSES IN THE BIBLE

by Eric J. Bargerhuff

Bethany, 978-0-7642-0936-9, PB, 172 pages, \$12.99

Commonly used Bible verses have been taken out of context for years, and few people have been aware of this misuse. Bargerhuff takes well-known verses and clearly shows how they have been misused or misinterpreted. This is a Bible analysis text, as well as a well-researched and intriguing theology book.

Pastor Bargerhuff has a doctorate in biblical and systematic theology. At first glance, this book may appear starchy. But it is eye-opening in its use of history, culture, and religion to gain a true interpretation of a verse's meaning. It's a good text to initiate discussions during Bible studies or youth retreats. Anecdotes combine personal stories and examples with solid lessons from the Bible. IK

### STEPHEN M. MILLER'S BIBLE SNAPSHOTS

by Stephen M. Miller

Barbour, 978-1-60260-689-0, PB, 512 pages, \$19.99

Whether seeker or servant of Jesus, everyone should be able to find something new about the Bible in this colorful reference tool. Miller, a news journalist with a seminary degree, admitted he didn't write for Christians but, rather, for those who are search-

ing, curious about the Bible and Christianity. He organized the first half into attention-grabbing topics, such as "Christianity: Fast Pass," "10 Tough Questions Atheists Ask," and "What the Bible Says About ...," (from abortion to zealots). "Bible Snapshots: Genesis to Revelation" occupy the second half of the book.

A hallmark of Miller's books is the fascinating illustrations, photography, paintings, maps, and timelines. Definitely recommended as money well-spent for church libraries. JAW

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR BIBLE IN 15 MINUTES A DAY

by Daryl Aaron

Bethany, 978-0-7642-0962-8, PB, 187 pages, \$12.99

Let's face it: The Bible can be confusing. To alleviate some of this confusion, Aaron addresses many questions people have about the Bible and some they may not have considered. From "Why Should I Read the Bible?" to "What Will I Find in the Epistles?" he covers a variety of topics, using history, theology, and context to amplify the meaning of the Bible as a whole.

Although some information may be elementary for readers more advanced in theology, this book is a perfect fit for anyone looking to build a basic understanding of Scripture or wishing to review certain aspects of dogma or church tradition. Aaron, a theology professor, answers each question in a straightforward manner, always including several biblical examples. He defines terms and speaks in laypersons' language. This book can be a study guide, but it is also a stand-alone text for anyone who enjoys biblical history. Indices and endnotes help with referencing. JK

### WHO IS THIS MAN?

by John Ortberg

Zondervan, 978-0-310-27594-7, HB, pages, \$22.99

Have you ever tried to describe the

# BOOK REVIEWS

God/Man Jesus and His influence in the arts, government, and medicine cogently? Ortberg considers who He was, how He was perceived during his lifetime and through history, what His message is, and how He is received. Ortberg states his purpose is to present a more complete view of Jesus and His importance in the world.

Insets enhance a conversational and readable style. Pastor Ortberg sets Jesus into time and space, using a topical approach (e.g., Jesus and women, Jesus and Caesar) and then guides readers to His contributions and challenges over time. He focuses on the last three days of Jesus' earthly life at the end of the book and what they mean to readers. Ortberg provides chapter sources while interweaving classical stories and art with contemporary movies, plays, books, etc. Recommended. BLE

## Biography & Memoir

### CALL OF A COWARD

by **Marcia Moston**

**Nelson, 978-0-849-94730-8, PB, 194 pages, \$15.99**

"God, I'll follow you anywhere, but don't send me there," Moston prayed when God called her family to Guatemala. She records her journey toward trusting God completely in His plan for her life. She recounts her discovery of God's faithfulness and the truth that His dreams for her were better than any she had dreamed for herself.

Moston uses personal experiences and humorous descriptions to engage readers. She takes the typical missionary story a step further, though, weaving the book around the central theme of trusting God. From an unbiased theological standpoint, Moston relates her experiences without assuming the

role of teacher. She offers her story as encouragement for those struggling to trust God in seemingly hopeless situations. This book would be a fantastic addition to any library shelf, whether school or church, because it is genuine, sincere, uplifting, and encouraging for those who feel cowardly in their faith at times. KS

### THE EDGE OF PARADISE

by **Martin De Lange with Belinda Lamprecht**

**Monarch, 978-0-85721-230-6, PB, 191 pages, \$12.99**

The Turkish church needs prayer and support. This book is De Lange's testimony about his mission work in Turkey. Despite the daily risk of arrest or death, he distributed Bibles and ministered to a country blanketed with Islamic belief, all while rearing a family in this danger zone. However, the constant pressure by the Turkish government eventually forced him and his family to leave the country and the people they love.

This book is heart wrenching, honest, and inspiring. Despite some edgy theology and disturbing content (e.g., descriptions of an autopsy, C-section, police beatings, and murder), De Lange's humor, strong faith, and passion for God and the Turkish people shine through the distressing events. This book is not for light reading, but any Christian will be encouraged by work happening in Turkey. JP

### LOVE ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HURT

by **Christi Paul**

**Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6737-8, HB, 278 pages, \$22.99**

This friend-to-friend conversation describes the emotional and sometimes physical pain Paul endured when her dream marriage became a devastating story of emotional abuse. Readers travel into the fear-filled life and self-accusation period of this woman who didn't know where to turn in the face of her husband's violent, profane ti-

rades. With God's help, some unconventional therapy, and support from her family and friends, she broke the abuse cycle and regained her self-worth.

This true account provides tools, encouragement, and faith-filled answers that brought Paul above the abuse and into the process of rebuilding her self-image and gaining control of her life. Her story and four helpful appendices may well be the weapons that enable other women to discover what true love is and how they can find it. This book belongs in every church library. BWR

### PLAYING WITH PURPOSE

by **Mike Yorkey with Jesse Florea & Joshua Cooley**

**Barbour, 978-1-63626-490-1, HB, 255 pages, \$19.99**

Satan will eventually strike all of us in some way or another, and people in the public spotlight are no exception. An all-star team of writers compiled insightful biographies of Christian professional baseball players to encourage, convict, and inspire youth and adults alike. In each chapter, they excellently blended the public careers of the players with their personal lives and hardships. This style makes it easy to connect to each athlete's life story and walk away with a distinct and personalized lesson. The only drawback is the cookie-cutter style of each biography, which makes it difficult to enjoy this book cover-to-cover.

The most compelling part of this book is the ease of reading. Readers varying from baseball fanatics to amateurs will be able to comprehend the spiritual lessons without fear of overly complex terms. *Playing with a Purpose* is a must-have for any library that desires young readers and sports fans to admire godly role models who are effectively and boldly living out their faith. JG

# BOOK REVIEWS

**THAT'S WHY I'M HERE: The Chris and Stefanie Spielman Story** by Chris Spielman with Bruce Hooley Zondervan, 978-0-310-33614-3, HB, 224 pages, \$24.99

What happens when a football-is-everything NFL linebacker learns his high-school-sweetheart wife has cancer? *That's Why I'm Here* chronicles the heartbreaking journey of four-time Pro Bowler Spielman and fashion-model wife through her roller-coaster, 12-year battle with cancer while raising four children.

Well-written and transparent, this book details Chris's obsession with being the best in football, his deepening love for Stefanie, and the growth of his faith. And amid the tragedy they each find their life purpose.

This book inspires perseverance, provides cancer education, shows how the Stefanie Spielman Fund for Breast Cancer Research is helping others, and encourages readers to discover their life purpose too. Filled with football action and stats, as well as tear-jerking details of Stefanie's final days, it has enough testosterone-soaked football-speak to rivet male sports fans but enough heart to touch the emotions of both men and women. JKE

## Children

### Preschool & Early Readers

**I COULDN'T LOVE YOU MORE** by Jason Ingram & Matt Hammitt Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6739-2, HB, 29 pages, \$15.99

This book is a visual interpretation of the lyrics to "I Couldn't Love You More," written by Hammitt (lead singer for Sanctus Real) and Ingram. The song's theme reflects how Ham-

mitt felt when his son, Bowen, was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome and had to undergo two heart surgeries as an infant. The child lived, but the near-death experience made Hammitt realize that as much as he loved Bowen, Jesus loved both of them even more.

Using bright watercolors that depict puppies, chicks, ducklings, piglets, and bear cubs, the story shows that all parents deeply love their offspring and would make any sacrifice for them. However, when Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross, He portrayed the greatest sacrifice and love ever known. All youngsters can rest safe and secure, knowing Jesus loves them and wants the best for them. This book is easy to read, colorful, and touching. DEH

## Juvenile

**SON OF A GUN** by Anne de Graaf Eerdmans, 978-0-8028-5406-3, PB, 127 pages, \$8

Eight-year-old Lucky and his 10-year-old sister, Nopi, are ordinary, happy children who live in relative prosperity in Monrovia, Liberia. A civil war has been raging for most of their lives, but it has never affected them.

### SERIES UPDATES

**Alice London Series**  
by Stephanie Perry Moore & Derrick Moore  
Moody, 978-0-8024-0414-5, \$6.99  
#4 *Winning the Battle*

**The Enchanted Attic**  
by L. L. Samson  
Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72797-2,  
\$7.99  
#2 *Saving Moby Dick*

**From Sadie's Sketchbook**  
by Naomi Kinsman  
Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72668-5,  
\$7.99  
#4 *Brilliant Hues*

Then rebel soldiers burst into their school and kidnap them and their classmates. They are forced to become child soldiers. Based on the true stories of former child soldiers, this book is an eye-opening and thought-provoking narrative of real lives torn apart by war.

This story makes distant events personal and empathetic by putting faces on tragic circumstances and challenging Christians to make the plight of these children a matter of serious prayer. It draws the reader in with the confiding tone of its intimate, first-person narration. This story gives a realistic portrayal of life as a child soldier but without any gratuitous violence. It addresses the reality that even though the pieces of a shattered life can be gathered up and put back together, they can never again fit quite the way they used to. SH

### SERIES UPDATES

**The Princess Parables**  
by Jeanna Young  
Zonderkidz, \$12.99  
*Princess Charity's Courageous Heart*  
978-0-310-72701-9  
*Princess Faith's Mysterious Garden*  
978-0-310-72703-3  
*Princess Hope and the Hidden Treasure*  
978-0-310-72699-9

Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers.

—Harry S. Truman

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Christian Education

**DREAMING OF MORE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Lifetime Faith Ignited by Family Ministry**  
by Michelle Anthony  
Cook, 978-1-4347-0016-2, PB, 219 pages, \$14.99

Family ministry starts with intentional discipling of parents, spiritually equipping them in their own lives and roles as parents. Dr. Anthony discusses the seven pillars of family ministry, cultivating spiritual parents, forming faith, the Holy Spirit in motion, hearing and doing, redemption, creating times to remember and celebrate God's work, worship as response, transitions, and staff development. Each chapter closes with an assessment for the reader on reflection, response, and dreams (ideas).

This inspirational resource is filled with biblical guidance; the author's personal experiences; and lots of team leaders', parents', and children's testimonials for illustrations. Anthony is the family ministry architect at David C. Cook with more than 25 years of church family ministry experience. Her book is well written and easy to follow. Highly recommended for church libraries, parents, and youth leaders. LGM

**EQUIP: A Youth Worker's Guide to Developing Student Leaders**  
by Tim Milburn  
Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-5062-1, PB, 123 pages, \$14.99

Programs do not necessarily develop student leaders. It's a process. We learn not by watching but by doing. Milburn guides youth workers in personal reflection and discernment of what type of student leader needs to be developed in their church situations.

Information is included on creating space, so students can step up and be leaders. The book is divided into three sections: development of a youth worker into a leader, development of student leaders, and details of the process.

Milburn has more than 24 years of experience in developing student leaders. His guidebook is an easy, yet informative read in a conversational style with lots of personal and biblical illustrations and theological soundness. Recommended for church libraries and youth leaders. LGM

**FIELD GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS**  
by Sam O'Neal  
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-1091-8, PB, 216 pages, \$15

Here is the ultimate guide to leading small-group meetings. Part 1 explains what a small group is, its purpose, a leader's role, hospitality, and learning styles. Part 2 discusses identifying the subject for each meeting, icebreakers and activities, discussion questions, worship and prayer time, final plans, and the danger of unintended curriculum. Part 3 explores tips on leading discussions, fellowship and other activities, handling common problems, deeper application, and leader encouragement. Two appendices offer resources on SmallGroups.com and sample icebreakers.

Writing with a conversational style, O'Neal offers much-needed advice from his many years of leading small groups. In researching, he also refers to many other authors on appropriate subjects. O'Neal is Bible study editor for LifeWay and editorial advisor to SmallGroups.com. This book is an easy read full of tips, strategies, and illustrations. Recommended for church libraries and small-group leaders. LGM

**HEART-DEEP TEACHING: Engaging Students for Transformed Lives**  
by Gary Newton  
B&H, 978-0-8054-4776-7, PB, 212 pages, \$14.99

This motivational resource encourages teachers and students to dig deep in biblical and educational levels. Part 1 explains the problem of shallow teaching in the church, and part 2 explains the process of heart-deep teaching and how to study the Bible inductively. Part 3 contains steps to designing deeper learning experiences and includes a variety of multisensory methods of instruction. Part 4 deals with how to organize and structure the lesson. Each chapter explains a different phase of the lesson from beginning to end. The inspiring conclusion discusses the benefits and joys of heart-deep teaching.

This biblically sound text will benefit all teachers who want their students to grow in Christlikeness. Not for light reading, Newton's analytical style and up-to-date research culminates in many references from other authors plus his personal illustrations. He is a professor of discipleship ministries and director of discipleship and family ministries at Crown College. Recommended for church libraries and teachers. LGM

## Curriculum Resources

### SERIES UPDATE

**Christmas Program Builder**  
Lillenas, 978-0-8341-8184-7,  
\$5.99

**Christmas Program Builder No. 65**

compiled by Heidi Petak

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Christian Living

### BREAKTHROUGH

by **Tim Clinton & Pat Springle**  
Worthy, 978-1-61795-073-5, HB, 279 pages, \$19.99

This textbook-type guide discusses how to break through to better relationships by understanding destructive patterns and exchanging them with healthy ones. The book is designed for individual study with questions at the end of each chapter. However, it is better if used in a group study or professional counseling format. An appendix includes several aspects of effective parenting for individuals, along with a group-study guide.

Dr. Clinton is president of the American Association of Christian Counselors and a professor of counseling. Springle, co-author of the classic work *Codependency*, has helped to produce a book that some pastors, counselors, and lay leaders may find helpful. However, the common reader will find it difficult and uninviting. BWR

### DESPERATE FOR HOPE

by **Bruce W. Martin**  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2054-4, PB, 224 pages, \$13.99

Are you sailing through a “perfect storm”? *Desperate for Hope* explores suffering through the lives of the author and others, while assuring readers of God’s deep love. At the end of each chapter, Rev. Martin provides “Your Life Story” questions for readers to evaluate their lives.

Due to the topic, tough subjects like cancer, rape, infertility, and depression are delved into. Although the chapters are short, they are packed with powerful and thought-provoking experiences. *Desperate for Hope* is a book for any Christian looking to find “hope in the face of suffering.” JP

**DISCOVERING LECTIO DIVINA: Bringing Scripture into Ordinary Life**  
by **James C. Wilhoit & Evan B. Howard**  
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3570-6, PB, 148 pages, \$15

This study book taps into the resurgent interest in *lectio divina* (“divine reading”), the ancient approach of applied Bible study that traditionally includes *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio* (reading, meditation, prayer response, and resting in God’s presence). The authors add a fifth aspect, *tentatio* (trials of life), from teachings of early churchmen.

The authors’ scholarship (Wilhoit teaches at Wheaton College, and Howard directs a spiritual center) is evident in their frequent references to early church fathers. Rather than jump immediately into *lectio divina* “methods,” they first establish the inspiration of Scripture and the Spirit’s role in change effected through Bible study. Personal illustrations warm the text without getting in the way. Consider buying it if you have a core of more biblically mature patrons. JZ

### GREATER

by **Steven Furtick**  
Multnomah, 978-1-60142-325-2, HB, 224 pages, \$19.99

Furtick takes readers on a life-changing journey that will help them understand God’s calling in their daily lives. He starts out by explaining that God has a greater purpose for every human being, including things that sometimes may appear impossible or don’t seem to make sense. Using inspirational Bible passages and stories of the prophet Elisha, Furtick gives step-by-step instructions for uncovering God’s greater purpose.

Furtick is effective in the way he divides the book into small units and exercises, including personal experience and biblical stories to further explain each lesson and action item. The way the book is organized makes it not

only doable but also easy for readers to achieve the goal of becoming greater. Readers at all stages of life, both chronologically and spiritually, can benefit from this message. KML

### A LIFE THAT MATTERS

by **P. K. Hallinan**  
Kregel, 978-0-8254-4199-8, PB, 176 pages, \$12.99

Does anything we do really matter? Most of us have wondered this more than once. Hallinan explains that working hard, going in the strength you have, finishing what you start, being patient, and helping other people along the way will help achieve a life of purpose. Using biblical role models to exemplify lives of sacrifice, service, and obedience, he shows the joy of expanding oneself to a greater mission than mere personal indulgence. Referenced Bible verses support his themes.

Pastor Hallinan writes with a warm and sometimes humorous tone that is genuine and honest, featuring lessons from his life and insights from friends. In a few spots, the book contains references to debatable theology, but the overall message is unaffected. *A Life That Matters* is for any Christian tired of theorizing and wanting to do something significant. JP

### THE SEASONS OF GOD

by **Richard Blackaby**  
Multnomah, 978-1-60142-418-1, PB, 260 pages, \$14.99

Throughout our lives, we experience the pattern of seasons. It’s not spring only when we are children and winter when we are elderly. Pastor Blackaby shows how God works this pattern in all aspects of our lives.

This excellent book helps us understand the patterns of our lives, whether encompassing identity, relationships, roles, or faith. Using personal anecdotes, along with Scripture examples, Blackaby walks us through each of the seasons in our friendships, faith walk, etc. Each chapter ends with a “Reflect

# BOOK REVIEWS

and Respond" section that is helpful in assimilating the material. Highly recommended. JA

**SHREWD: Daring to Live the Startling Command of Jesus**  
by Rick Lawrence  
Cook, 978-1-4347-0073-5, PB, 240 pages, \$14.99

Most people would agree that the first definition of the word *shrewd* that comes to mind has negative connotations attached to it. However, *Group* editor Lawrence seeks to change that perception, based on Jesus' parable of the shrewd manager in Luke 16.

Replete with personal examples, this book shows that followers of Jesus are to be as shrewd as Satan and, at the same time, as innocent as the Holy Spirit. Using the right force in the right place at the right time can influence a situation for good. It's a provocative, worthwhile read and recommended for church libraries. JAW

**SPARK: Transform Your World, One Small Risk at a Time**  
by Jason Jaggard  
WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73062-6, HB, 224 pages, \$14.99

Are you ready to take a risk? Have you been wanting to make a change but haven't known where to start? Then *Spark* is the book for you. Jaggard suggests that every great thing in life starts with a single risk, a "spark." All you need to do is try. But don't worry if this sounds scary because the book is full of tips on how to overcome fear of change, such as starting small, working with a partner, and finding a mentor. Noah took a risk. David took a risk. As Peter proved, you cannot walk on water unless you risk stepping out of the boat.

The appeal of this book is how personable the writing is. Professor Jaggard makes the reader feel like a friend through the use of personalized stories and relatable experiences. It's an easy, enjoyable, and informative

book with biblical applications presented all along the way. AY

**TRANSFORMED BY GOD: New Covenant Life and Ministry**  
by David G. Peterson  
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3977-3, PB, 192 pages, \$20

What does the New Covenant have to do with my daily Christian life? Professor Peterson connects the two, using the book of Jeremiah and other passages. He provides structure by using five foci: Israel and the nations renewed, renewal of worship, New-Covenant ministry, transformed hearts and lives, and the transforming knowledge of God. The first four chapters are from lectures in London. Each chapter explores the topic with extensive commentary, academic sources, and endnotes.

Peterson made a concerted effort to provide a balanced presentation of alternate views and his critiques. The text has a researched approach with a detailed Scripture reference index and two and a half pages of abbreviations for commentaries, texts, and experts. Each chapter's conclusion includes a targeted emphasis on pastoral ministry/application of the information and a summary of the chapter. Recommended only if you have academic patrons. BLE

**WHEN LIFE GOES DARK: Finding Hope in the Midst of Depression**  
by Richard Winter  
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3468-6, PB, 253 pages, \$15

Even Christians are susceptible to depression, making this book an excellent one to have available in your library. Dr. Winter intermingles clinical details, real-life stories, and biblical truth to create a deep, but understandable treatise on one of society's better-kept secrets. The first part explores "the roots of sorrow," and the second is encouragingly named "Coping with the Dark and Moving Toward the Light."

Each chapter adequately addresses its topic and then concludes with questions for reflection and discussion, making it ideal for both individual and group use.

Winter has the credentials to write this book: psychotherapist, counselor, seminary professor, and one who has known depression. The writing is both flowing and punctual, perhaps reflecting his British origin. Family members and friends of those suffering from depression and even people who are living in gloom will find this book enlightening and encouraging, though many in the throes of depression might find more empathy than understanding. It belongs in every church library BR

**WHEN YOU NEED A MIRACLE: How to Ask God for the Impossible**  
by Linda Evans Shepherd  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2108-4, PB, 208 pages, \$12.99

Can reading a book increase your chances of receiving a miracle? That is what Shepherd claims will happen for readers. This book is a mix of spiritual self-help and Bible study. In each chapter, Shepherd explains different issues that hinder prayers for miracles and how readers can combat these problems. A reader's guide and applicable prayers and verses provided for every chapter make this book conducive to small-group studies.

Though the title presents it as an attractive resource, the book doesn't deliver. Shepherd does not discuss theology overtly. Instead, she presents many of her arguments as biblical truth but without offering any scriptural references to support her claims. She seems to suggest God is a vending machine, and readers need only push the correct buttons to receive their miracles. Due to the lack of a biblical foundation, as well as preachy writing, I cannot give this book a strong recommendation. KS

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Evangelism & Missions

### Apologetics

#### **CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE: An Introduction to Defending the Faith**

by Chris Sinkinson

InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3786-1, PB, 240 pages, \$16

Have you ever wanted your defense of the gospel to flow from topic to topic without missing a beat? Professor and pastor Sinkinson has felt this need and supplied a primer to meet that need. He aims to help the novice feel comfortable presenting the gospel and provides the basic content needed. Additionally, the book helps readers know more about their Christian position.

Readers will feel they are at Moorlands College, considering this information comes from classes there. As such, there is a logical, step-by-step approach with considerable content. Beginning by establishing the setting for novices, Sinkinson moves to the content they need to address these situations with authority. He provides current information and references to Christian and non-Christian thinkers, as well as further reading suggestions and notes. Recommended for churches with or beginning an apologetics ministry. BLE

#### **THE JESUS SCANDALS**

by David Instone-Brewer

Monarch, 978-0-85721-023-4, PB, 191 pages, \$12.99

Would Jesus be gossiped about today? Would people be scandalized if He lived next door or went to church with them? Instone-Brewer makes a case that, yes, many Christians would find Jesus scandalous. He begins from the point of view of those living in Jesus' day and finishes with comments

and challenges for today's Christians.

The book is separated into three parts with short chapters. The first considers the scandals of Jesus' life, such as His birth and being an ineligible bachelor. In Part 2 the scandals focus on Jesus' friends, such as sinners and prostitutes. Part 3 includes discussion of Jesus' teaching, such as divorce. An index completes the book.

Beware: An explicit description of crucifixion is not easy to read. Pastor Instone-Brewer is a specialist in early rabbinic Judaism. Recommended. BLE

#### **A SHOT OF FAITH TO THE HEAD**

by Mitch Stokes

Nelson, 978-1-59555-435-2, PB, 256

pages, \$16.99

What reasons can a Christian give for believing? Though faith is our foundation, it's usually not enough to convince a skeptical atheist. Stokes discusses basic skills for arguing logically and goes on to face two of the biggest issues the world has with Christianity: Science proves God does not exist, and suffering proves God does not exist.

Stokes's writing is sharp and clear, even though many of the concepts he discusses are deep. He spans history, philosophy, and theology but keeps a touch of humor. While he gives many good arguments for Christianity, he also reminds readers of the necessity of faith. Recommended to anyone interested in apologetics. KH

### Evangelism

#### **GO AND DO: Becoming a Missional Christian**

by Don Everts

InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3822-6, PB, 199 pages, \$15

Based on Jesus' command to the lawyer at the end of the parable of the Good Samaritan, *Go and Do* is a plea for churchgoers to leave their comfortable pews; give up safe, happy, successful lives with which the Lord has

blessed them; and serve Him as missional Christians. It's a directive to follow Jesus' example and see the world through sober eyes and enter it with helpful hands, ready feet, and a compassionate heart. The fruit of such labors will be a joyful soul.

Readers will find much practical help from the vignettes of people God used as they accepted the responsibility of reaching out. Discussion questions for each chapter and a reading list are helpful features. This book should be required reading for every believer who has been sitting comfortably on the sidelines instead of getting involved with the lost world. Its message needs to be read, digested, pondered, and then put into practice. It's great for individual study but would be better with a group where accountability could become a factor. Highly recommended. HIM

#### **MIRACULOUS MOVEMENTS**

by Jerry Trousdale

Nelson, 978-1-4185-4728-8, PB, 208 pages, \$9.99

God is still reaching Muslims through dreams, miracles, and testimonies like He has for centuries. Trousdale presents how Jesus' method of evangelism has been misunderstood over the centuries by providing the steps used with reaching Muslims that result in conversions. He includes many first-person accounts.

Each chapter is formatted with a beginning quote and story of how God is moving in the Muslim world. Additionally, each chapter has an intercession section and methods for preparing Muslim hearts to receive Christ, as well as notes. The first appendix suggests Bible studies for non-Christians while the second appendix provides information regarding City Team International, which is a reference for this movement. And Trousdale has years of experience with Muslims. Recommended for patrons interested in reaching Muslims for Christ. BLE

# BOOK REVIEWS

**TALKING WITH MORMONS: An Invitation to Evangelicals**  
by Richard C. Mouw  
Eerdmans, 978-0-8028-6858-9, PB, 99 pages, \$12

This brief, well-documented, book by the president of Fuller Seminary presents Mormonism as a dynamic religious culture, not a cult. That understanding stems from his participation in more than a decade of Mormon-evangelical dialogue. While Mormons do not accept the Bible to be the completed Word of God, they do believe in the Trinity. A genuine relationship with Jesus comes before a complete understanding of Scripture. Before we scream about Mormon beliefs we don't accept, we need to recognize the traditions we observe that are not backed up by Scripture.

Mouw's advice is for Mormons, as well as evangelicals. Let's cut each other some slack and keep the door of conversation open for interaction. This quick read in laymen's language is a timely starting place for those who are concerned about Mitt Romney's Mormon faith. Highly recommended for your library and adult studies. HIM

**TELLING THE GOSPEL THROUGH STORY: Evangelism That Keeps Hearers Wanting More**  
by Christine Dillon  
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3794-6, PB, 224 pages, \$15

This book from an experienced church planter gives practical guidance in shaping a meaningful Bible story for evangelistic ministry to people unmoved by prepackaged gospel presentations. Dillon peppers her book with personal examples of how story provides a solid biblical foundation. People listen, understand, apply the message to their lives, and respond to the gospel. Then they eagerly repeat the stories, so others come to know them.

Readers are shown how to choose and prepare Bible stories, how to get

out and tell them, how to train others to do likewise, and how to adapt stories to various audiences. Storytelling is not a quick route to evangelizing the world, but it is a sound path that produces committed believers. This practical, how-to book needs to be in your library and taught in adult classes. HIM

## Family

### Marriage

**ALTARED**  
by Claire and Eli  
WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73073-2, PB, 237 pages, \$14.99

An anonymous couple shares their journey toward matrimony, revealing details of their meeting, courtship, and ultimate revelation that both were more in love with the idea of marriage than they were with each other. Occasional words of profound truth pepper the text. However, the book comes across as a soul-purging finale to a failed relationship: A couple meets, thinks this is "it," calls "it" off, then writes a book to warn others away.

Despite some good writing, I can't quite pin down the intended audience: starry-eyed romantics in need of a jolt of reality; singles seeking solace in their solitude; or people in less-than-ideal or broken marriages looking to say, "See, I told you so." The cover states the book is not about marriage or singleness but of love and discipleship. Unfortunately, it lacks as both. BR

### Parenting

**MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS: Mending a Strained Relationship**  
by Teena M. Stewart  
Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-2836-1, PB, 160 pages, \$13.99

Often people assume mothers and

daughters will have natural, close bonds. But Stewart was surprised to learn that the strained relationship she had with her mother was more common than she thought. She polled her friends and discovered their mother-daughter relationships included "smother love," even deep hurts from severe dysfunction.

In this practical, easy-to-read book, Stewart shares the life experiences of several of the women she interviewed, as well as her research into mending this most basic human relationship, using scriptural guidance. At the ends of chapters are "Healing Thoughts," questions that allow the book's use in personal or group study. Recommended. JAW

**TROPHY CHILD**  
by Ted Cunningham  
Cook, 978-0-7814-0763-2, PB, 224 pages, \$14.99

Is childrearing success measured by trophies, performances, straight A's, and glowing newspaper articles or by children following God's leading as they mature? Cunningham's book is a wake-up call for parents striving to raise children in our materialistic, success-driven culture.

Families today often revolve around the children and their nonstop activities. But is that God's plan? Cunningham provides helpful insights to avoid trophy parenting, while focusing the family on what God wants for each member. Each chapter concludes with a "Parent Gut Check," asking questions about such topics as guilt, relationships with Jesus, family priorities, family meals, playing together, and parenting types. Pastor Cunningham believes strongly in family devotional time and has included 26 devotionals created and used with his children. Highly recommended. JA

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Fiction

### CHASING THE WIND

by Pamela Binnings Ewen

B&H, 978-0-8054-6431-3, PB, 352 pages, \$14.99

Three strangers' lives are intertwined when they witness a ray of sunshine shooting through New Orleans at the speed of light in a literal and symbolic piercing of the darkness. Ewen winds back the clock to New Orleans of 1970, artfully depicting the heritage of the city, including a true mystery from then.

The plot flows smoothly with surprises and twists. The moral of trust and truthfulness is clearly presented, yet isn't overbearing. The characters are well crafted but are too numerous to get attached to. Although the writing is reflective, it's also repetitive and bound by long sentences with little dialogue to balance it. Crude humor further took away from some of the quality, but the story sustains itself. NP

### DYING TO READ

The Cate Kinkaid Files #1

by Lorena McCourtney

Revell, 978-0-8007-2158-9, PB, 320 pages, \$14.99

Cate Kinkaid's life has not been progressing smoothly. Dangerously close to the dreaded 30-years-old, she has had one dead-end job after another, coupled with fizzled romantic relationships and an anemic bank account. Working as an assistant private investigator under her Uncle Joe's tutelage, Cate stumbles onto a suspicious death and is thrust into the center of a mystery filled with unique characters and persons of interest.

An award-winning mystery writer, McCourtney again serves up a buffet of distinctive characters, intriguing plot, and often humorous prose. Although Cate has few human accomplishments to be proud of, readers will

remain in her corner as she seeks to handle life's curve balls. Recommended. JAW

### FIELD OF DAISIES

by Barbara Hattemer

OakTara, 978-1-60290-321-0, PB, 231 pages, \$16.95

Centered on Andrea Mulder's perfect existence with her husband and two children, life suddenly takes an enormous curve when her father dies and her mother is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Andrea is forced to make a devastating decision between caring for her sickly mother and devoting time to repairing her failing marriage. In a turn of events that is both suspenseful and emotional, readers feel every ounce of Andrea's pain in this roller-coaster ride based on the author's life.

This story is best suited for women, for they will empathize with the emotional turmoil presented. The dialogue is a bit stilted and awkward in places, but the themes are God-honoring and real to life. The flow of the story keeps readers intrigued, and the lessons learned are insightful, if even a bit harsh at times. GD

### FIVE MILES SOUTH OF PECULIAR

by Angela Hunt

Howard, 978-1-4391-8204-8, PB, 364 pages, \$14.99

Do you have that one relative whom you just can't stand? Hunt can relate. She tells a cute story of how to move on when it feels like your world is crashing down, focusing on grown twins, the Caldwell sisters, who live far apart in different states. She tells their stories separately as the novel opens but later dovetails them into one plotline.

With dashes of romance, as well as homespun comedy provided by Doc Hensley, the local veterinarian, this story provides entertainment and solid insights on how to restore broken relationships. Hunt does not clobber read-

ers with biblical quotations. Instead, she shares Christian ethics and beliefs via the actions, words, and deeds of the central characters. Although targeted more for middle-aged, female readers, the story has elements that will appeal to younger women too. AF

### GLAMOROUS ILLUSIONS

The Grand Tour Series #1

by Lisa T. Bergren

Cook, 978-1-4347-6430-0, PB, 440 pages, \$14.99

Reading *Glamorous Illusions* is a treat, as Bergren puts you into the changing world of Cora Diehl. Cora's life is flipped around when she finds out she is the illegitimate daughter of wealthy copper king Wallace Kensington. She leaves her simple life on her adoptive parents' farm to travel around the world with her new family. Cora experiences a glamorous life of romance, danger, and self-discovery. She enters a love triangle, deals with self-doubt, and tries to learn to trust the Lord in all circumstances.

This book is perfect for women from teenagers to grandmothers because it explores timeless aspects of feminine hopes and quests, including the desire to be accepted in a family, hope of finding a life's ambition, and yearning for a loving relationship with God. It is easy to read and enlightening as it describes the great cities of Europe. KW

### THE GUEST BOOK

by Marybeth Whalen

Zondervan, 987-0-310-33473-3, PB, 336 pages, \$14.99

If you have ever felt unloved, overwhelmed by grief, or yearning for hope, you'll identify with Macy. After her father's death, her mom struggles with grief and her brother, Max, copes with alcoholism. After 10 years of the dad being gone, Macy, her mother, and Max decide to return to a beach house they stayed at during a summer when the dad was alive. They hope to move past their grief and make new memo-

# BOOK REVIEWS

ries. This vacation changes their lives.

Overall, this book is well written. The dialogue is so true to life it feels like you are a fly on the wall. Not only is it an understandable, intriguing story of spiritual and emotional struggles, but at the end of the book are questions that put the reader in the character's place in order to drive home certain themes, such as God being the ultimate artist. This book will appeal to older teens and women because it deals with complicated issues related to Christian growth and personal maturity. MW

## **HARVEST OF RUBIES**

by **Tessa Afshar**

**Moody, 978-0-8024-0558-6, PB, 372 pages, \$14.99**

The adventure begins in the eighth year of King Artaxerxes's reign during 457 B.C. in Persia, a time when it was unheard of that a Jewish girl could read and write. But because of a life of radical and unusual experiences, Sarah is a woman of varied talents (and some shameful memories). She finds herself in the position of senior scribe of the queen. Being this close to power, yet a bondservant, Sarah is confused and downcast, having doubts about her self-worth. Her life is threatened, and her achievements are of no value to her. However, by finding a way to turn back to God, she eventually realizes all her life's turmoils have put her in a place to serve God in a mighty way.

Sarah's journey will inspire, as well as challenge, readers' relationships with the Lord. The story is well written with inspiring anecdotes and direct quotes from Scripture. Sarah's story is appealing to young and older Christian women, and Afshar leaves them encouraged and craving more. AJS

## **HER GOOD NAME**

by **Ruth Axtell**

**Moody, 978-0-8024-0627-9, PB, 288 pages, \$14.99**

Set in the late 1800s, this story tells

of a love that crosses social boundaries of the time. Warren Brentwood, heir to his father's businesses, begins to seek God's will in his life after being part of a church group formed to help the community. He eventually goes against his family's wishes and attends seminary to become a pastor. Espy, a poor girl, leaves the town in disgrace after refusing the advances of her boss. But in leaving, she finds true faith in God. Eventually, they find each other in the big city and return to Holliston together and with their honor intact.

The characters are relatable, and I felt myself drawn into the story. I enjoyed rooting for the love between this unlikely pair and seeing them grow in their relationship with God. RLW

## **ILLUSION**

by **Frank Peretti**

**Howard, 978-1-4391-9267-2, PB, 497 pages, \$26.99**

What is truth and what is simply illusion? Peretti seeks to answer this question. Dane Collins loses his wife, Mandy, in a tragic accident. At the same time, a confused, 19-year-old Mandy is inexplicably transported from 1970 to modern times. When Dane comes across the young Mandy, who has not met him yet in her own lifetime, his sanity and faith are put to the test.

With a personal writing style that places readers in the mind-bending plot, Peretti symbolically describes the quest of all believers to find eternal comfort in the promise of Jesus. This novel rings true with men and women of all ages, especially young adults who are struggling to define themselves as Christians and want to see through the illusions and deceptions of this world to the truth underneath. The dialogue is crisp, the action is fast paced, and the plot is intriguing. AL

## **LEGACY ROAD**

by **Graham Garrison**

**Kregel, 978-0-8254-2671-1, PB, 215 pages, \$11.99**

Wes Watkins is learning who he is in life. After being rejected by his girlfriend, Emmy, he is forced to reconnect with his father. Faced with the decision to trust and forgive his dad, while simultaneously attempting to repair his relationship with God and Emmy, Wes undergoes a spiritual journey mirroring that of the prodigal son. Wes receives guidance from a godly professor and also draws on memories of Michael Gavin, a hometown hero. Through prayer and a proper focus on righteous ethics, Wes evolves into a man who can be admired and trusted.

*Legacy Road* teaches personal courage, faith in God, and genuine optimism. The smooth flow of the book makes the story easy to follow, and the development of the central character offers lessons all can learn from. MO

## **MAN IN THE BLUE MOON**

by **Michael Morris**

**Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6842-9, PB, 314 pages, \$13.99**

Ella, a single mother of three, is still trying to recover from the Great Depression. She promised her late father that she would never allow the local con-artist banker to obtain their farmhouse and land. Now into the 1940s, Ella prays for divine help; and a crate arrives for her. Inside is Lanier, who is running from the law, having been accused of murdering his wife. He begs Ella to let him stay; and having no other man to help her, she agrees.

Ella discovers Lanier has the gift of divine healing. He saves Ella's son's life and heals their cattle. When word gets out about his gift, people swarm to Lanier, seeking healing. He insists that prayer be involved and glory be given to God, but he becomes overwhelmed by the demands on him. It is then that he and Ella must decide what God's intent for their lives is.

# BOOK REVIEWS

Although clever in plot concept, this book is so poorly structured it is too difficult to read and enjoy. Plots and subplots overlap, time sequences become blurred, and numerous characters become jumbled among themselves. The result is a confusing hodgepodge of writing. AD

## THE NEXT TARGET

by Nikki Arana

Cook, 978-0-7814-0431-0, 389 pages, PB, \$14.99

Austia Donatelli uses Arabic-English classes to witness secretly to Muslim women. But when a former student is killed for converting to Christianity, her mission becomes life-threatening. Through deception and an unlikely friendship, Austia needs God's help to outwit a terrorist group.

As with Arana's other books, this

one will appeal to women who like relationship-based plots. Suspense readers will appreciate the clever plot twists and touches of peril but may be frustrated by the slow pace and messy handling of plot repetition and shifting points of view. The book succeeds in its goal to make the Christian-Muslim conflict more understandable in a sometimes heavy-handed but, nonetheless, sympathetic manner. A section at the end provides additional insights from the author. DGR

## A PLAIN DEATH

Appleseed Creek Mystery #1

by Amanda Flower

B&H, 978-1-433-7697-0, PB, 340 pages, \$14.99

*A Plain Death* is pretty much that: plain. Chloe, a young computer wiz moves into a small, Amish town. There

she meets an Amish girl who recently left the faith and her family. The girls experience culture clash but are forced to unite efforts when they become part of a murder investigation.

This book's weakness is in follow-through. Flower opens cultural doors, such as Amish traditions and beliefs but doesn't pursue these aspects of her character's back story. Similarly, when discussions of Christian worldview are presented, instead of showing Amish perspectives, she glosses over matters and avoids controversy.

The story is written in simple language, the settings are vivid, and the creation of opposite personalities as main characters is clever. However, without character analysis or plot depth, the story remains shallow and plain. KC

## SEQUELS

to *The Blessed*

by Ann H. Gabhart

Revell, 978-0-8007-3455-8, \$14.99

*The Gifted*

to *Lion of Babylon*

by Davis Bunn

Bethany, 978-0-7642-0906-2, \$14.99

*Rare Earth*

## SERIES UPDATES

Alaskan Skies

by Bonnie Leon

Revell, 978-0-8007-3361-2, \$14.99

#3 *Joy Takes Flight*

The Baxter Family

by Karen Kingsbury

Zondervan, 978-0-310-26624-2, \$14.99

*Coming Home*

The Books of Mortals

by Ted Dekker & Tosca Lee

FaithWords, 978-1-59995-358-8, \$24.99

#2 *Mortal*

The End

by Tim LaHaye & Craig Parshall

Zondervan, 978-0-310-32646-5, \$24.99

#3 *Brink of Chaos*

Guardians of Justice

by Irene Hannon

Revell, 978-0-8007-3458-9, \$14.99

#3 *Lethal Legacy*

The Last Disciple

by Hank Hanegraaff & Sigmund

Brouwer

Tyndale, 978-0-8423-8446-9, \$13.99

#3 *The Last Temple* (final)

Pacific Coast Justice

by Janice Cantore

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-5848-2, \$12.99

#2 *Abducted*

Precinct 11

by Jerry B. Jenkins

Tyndale, HB: 978-1-4143-0909-5,

\$24.99; PB: 978-1-4143-3584-1,

\$14.99

#3 *The Breakthrough* (final)

Shipshevana Amish Mystery

by Vannetta Chapman

Zondervan, 978-0-310-33045-5,

\$12.99

#3 *Material Witness*

Stoney Ridge Seasons

by Suzanne Woods Fisher

Revell, 978-0-8007-1988-3, \$14.99

#2 *The Haven*

Sweethaven Circle

by Courtney Walsh

Guideposts, 978-0-8249-3171-1,

\$13.99

#2 *A Sweethaven Homecoming*

# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE REASON

by William Sirls

Nelson, 978-1401-68736-6, PB, 399 pages, \$12.99

Kenneth, a Jesus figure, comes into the lives of the other characters and brings them hope. A pastor who was blind and healed, a single mother with a son fighting leukemia, and the doctors who are treating the boy are only some of the characters who learn the importance of belief, forgiveness, and following God in the face of difficult circumstances. In the end, the boy dies but is brought back to life, miraculously healed.

I could hardly put this book down to get anything else done. The plot is riveting, and the characters become friends as you read. The story is set in modern times, and the miracles seem impossible. But the questions the characters ask about who God is and how He works in the world are ones Christians regularly wrestle with themselves. Highly recommended. RLW

## THE SERPENT'S GRASP

by C. Kevin Thompson

OakTara, 978-1-60290-252-7, PB, 314 pages, \$19.95

A yacht with an adulterous couple aboard is attacked by a giant sea monster. The man is eaten, but the woman survives to alert authorities. The Coast Guard and FBI enlist the help of a marine institute, where the wife of the dead man is chief scientist. The story takes us through the attacks on the yacht, an ocean liner, and a Russian submarine. A mad man wanting to clone an army capable of waging World War III wants the sea creature to go away. It finally dies, but not before eating that man who posed as an FBI agent.

*The Serpent's Grasp* is labeled suspense but hovers between science fiction and mystery. Unfortunately, it falls short on all counts. There is plenty of action, but everything is too contrived to create the story. The monster

is supposed to refute evolution, but I would not have figured that out had a character not told me. The budding love relationship between the heroine and a Coast Guard captain awkwardly comes on the tail of her unfaithful husband's death. Too many elements were unbelievable, making this a book that was easy to put down. Not recommended. BR

## THE SOUL SAVER

by Dineen Miller

Barbour, 978-161626-582-3, PB, 317 pages, \$12.99

Lexie Baltimore works for God. With her hands being guided by Him, she creates sculptures of the unknown people He wants her to help. However, she struggles with the fact that the one person she cannot help is her husband, who is an unbeliever. Conflict in her marriage arises when the face of her sculpture leads her to a widowed pastor suffering under the hold of demonic forces. She battles between her attraction for this man and her desire to save her marriage and the soul of her husband. It comes down to complete trust in God.

This story is not only well written and relatable, but it offers a great example of the power of prayer and demonstrates the spiritual warfare going on in our world. The characters are well developed and show spiritual growth throughout the book. The plot had many twists, but the story flows smoothly. RS

## STARDUST

by Carla Stewart

FaithWords, 978-1-455-50428-2, PB, 300 pages, \$13.99

After the loss of her husband, Georgia Peyton must gather her strength to overcome her problems. In this story set Texas in the 1950s, Georgia learns how to forgive and uses strength from God in order to provide for those she must have the grace to forgive. Along the way, she encounters problems of

dealing with the death of an unfaithful husband, a mother-in-law who thinks her son was perfect and is distraught over the loss of him, inheriting a rundown hotel, and dealing with a polio epidemic.

Stewart's strong, main character displays grace in the face of many difficult circumstances while still showing her human weaknesses. The other characters are also multidimensional and relatable. This story, which shows the hardships of a woman trying to support her family in the midst of the culture of the time, will appeal to women. RLW

## STILL LIFE IN SHADOWS

by Alice J. Wisler

Moody, 978-0-8024-0626-2, PB, 304 pages, \$14.99

Gideon is a man who has yet to heal from the problems of his past after leaving his Amish roots behind. Now he helps others who choose to leave the faith too. Many of the characters are dealing with problems stemming from hoarding, autism, child abuse, alcoholism, drug use, discrimination, and dysfunctional families. Over time Gideon is reunited with his brother and then must face his family past when his brother dies of a drug overdose. In doing so, he learns the power of forgiveness.

While this story is well written, the numerous problems characters deal with seem to bog down both them and the story. Most of the problems are not resolved but are used to explain the character's quirks and choices. I had a hard time wading through this book. RLW

## TWO CROSSES

978-0-7814-0500-3

## TWO TESTAMENTS

978-0-7814-0499-0

## Secrets of the Cross Trilogy #1-2

by Elizabeth Musser

Cook, PB, 464-496 pages, \$14.99

In *Two Crosses*, a nun, an Algerian

# BOOK REVIEWS

harki, an atheist teacher, and a Protestant exchange student work together to rescue Pied-Noir and Harki children from a revengeful man in Algeria, with the symbol of the Huguenot cross leading the way.

In *Two Testaments*, even with the Hugo mission nearly complete, the cease-fire and call for independence in Algeria leave many Pied-Noir and Harki families without a place to call home. The French do not want them, and those loyal to Algeria see them as traitors and foreigners.

This series introduces readers to a dark spot in France's history. Combining unique characters, compelling dialogue, and an intriguing plot, Musser teaches readers about struggles and uncertainties civilians of France and Algeria dealt with in 1961 during the French-Algerian war. With a strong, consistent writing style, Musser tells an amazing story about courage, love, faith, and forgiveness. She informs readers about a piece of history they may not know, showing that minorities should not be taken for granted. NED

**WALK WITH ME: Pilgrim's Progress for Married Couples**  
by Annie Wald  
Moody, 978-0-8024-0593-7, PB, 278 pages, \$15.99

Peter and Celeste travel as a married couple to the King's City, joined by several little travelers as they make their journey. Along the way, their love and commitment both to each other and to the King are challenged. These challenges speak to the heart of Christians in a marital relationship in today's world.

I loved this book! It is inspiring, is interesting, and keeps you riveted like fiction should. Even though most of us have read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, from which this book is a takeoff, it is a fresh look at old truths and puts the spiritual journey of married couples in a new perspective that may help partners draw closer to each other and to

the Lord. *Walk with Me* is an excellent addition to any church library, recommended to those anticipating marriage, as well as to "old married couples." CC

**WEDDED TO WAR**  
**Heroines Behind the Lines: Civil War #1**  
by Jocelyn Green  
Moody, 978-0-8024-0576-0, PB, 397 pages, \$14.99

Charlotte and Ruby, though of opposite classes, live under male supremacy during the Civil War. Charlotte is determined to become a nurse, admirably and continuously standing up for herself. However, Ruby is restrained by limitations set on refined women of the time, so she is about to give up on finding a personal identity.

The book is so focused on female liberation and political emancipation that it is shallow on actual combat scenes. And aspects of mature romance are either toned down or alluded to off-stage. However, Green has an obvious agenda of making the plight of women something that should be visited frequently. She is more of a sociologist than a storyteller. Overall, this book might make a conversation starter at a women's book club (it even has discussion questions in the back), but it's not rousing reading. However, it includes biblical virtues of service to others, family loyalty, and faith in Christ. LP

**A WEDDING TRANSPIRES ON MACKINAC ISLAND**  
by Cara C. Putman  
Barbour, 978-1-61626-535-9, PB, 318 pages, \$12.99

Attorney Alanna Stone left Mackinac Island, vowing never to return after her brother was implicated in the death of one of his classmates. When her father faces long-term hospitalization, she comes home to find someone to run the family gallery until her mother is free to do that. Much to her dismay, she discovers her neighbor, Jonathan, is her first love who betrayed

her. She is determined not to let him back into her life. The latter is one "case" she doesn't win; and, in time, both she and Jonathan are accused of another murder.

A beguiling cover image makes up for a lackluster title for this layered, contemporary, romantic suspense story. The characters are unique, the action is fast, and the dialogue realistic. By the grace of God, Alanna survives the unearthing of the past to bring about healing in the present. This is one more riveting novel from a practicing attorney who is active in women's ministry. Recommended for recreational reading for teen and adult women. HIM

## Teens

**FAILSTATE**  
by John W. Otte  
Marcher Lord, 978-1-9359-2948-2, PB, 426 pages, \$15.99

What if a superhero wasn't a put-together powerhouse in a cool costume but an awkward teen trying to fit in? Rob and his brother, Ben, are secretly competing on the local hit reality show *America's Next Superhero*, where Ben's flashy alter-ego, Gauntlet, wins votes and girls' hearts. Rob as himself and his dorky alter-ego, Failstate, must solve the murder of another contestant, come to grips with his own destructive power, win the new girl back from Ben, and somehow remain on the show.

The first couple of chapters are an awkward introduction to the city of New Chayton, *Failstate's* fictional setting. The characters take for granted the existence of superheroes and superpowers, and readers who don't understand this quickly will be confused. Once set up, however, the plot is less complex and thrilling, full of twists and action. Preteens and teens hooked on the superhero genre will love this book. ARM

# BOOK REVIEWS

## FINDING MY SMILE

by Janice K. Davice

OakTara, 978-1-60290-261-9, PB, 222 pages, \$16.95

Alayna Rayburn struggles to find her smile. In this narrative, we journey with her to find love, happiness, and God. Alayna, an orphaned girl, battles with understanding God and the circumstances that have shaped her. She quickly befriends Miss Lottie, an older lady at a nursing home, who shows her truths about God and His universe. As the novel progresses, Alayna learns the meaning of unconditional love, family loyalty, and personal worth as someone who was created by a caring and all-wise God.

The characters in this narrative are believable, as is the plot. I recommend this book for teen girls who are dealing with issues of self-acceptance, personal worth, and worries about future plans. It provides biblical assurance and wise teaching. ACC

## GRACEFUL: Letting Go of Your Try-Hard Life

by Emily P. Freeman

Revell, 978-0-8007-1983-8, PB, 174 pages, \$12.99

Freeman challenges Christian girls to rethink normal and discover their identity in Jesus. She uncovers eight typical ways "good girls" hide and eight lies behind these masks. Each lie sprouts from fear. Freeman encourages girls to let go of the falsehoods they believe and trust God's loving grace. Countering each deceptive voice with God's truth, she presents a strong, moving, and inspiring case that is grounded in Scripture.

The conversational tone of this well-written book gives it an attitude of familiarity, and personal examples and stories make it clear and interesting. Interactive sections push readers to process and personalize what they read, as do insightful study questions included in the back of the book. Young Christian women, especially high

schoolers, who strive for perfection will love this book's invitation to learn to dance gracefully to God's music for their lives. EW

## LIVE TO GIVE: Letting God Turn Your Talents into Miracles

by Austin Gutwein

Nelson, 978-1-4003-1993-0, PB, 199 pages, \$14.99

What talent or gift are you ready to give God, so you can make a difference in the world? God used Gutwein's hobby of basketball to provide medical clinics, water, computers, and more to areas of Africa and India. Gutwein references the lives of biblical characters, such as David, Elijah, and the boy with the loaves and fishes, to show how God used them in marvelous ways.

Besides Scripture, Gutwein uses his personal stories of making a difference through Hoops of Hope. A teen himself, he is an encourager to teens, breaking down the steps to making a difference into manageable portions. *Live to Give* is a lifelong challenge to all Christians. Highly recommended for school and church libraries. JA

## THE ORPHAN KING

Merlin's Immortals #1

by Sigmund Brouwer

WaterBrook, 978-1-4000-7154-8, PB, 213 pages, \$7.99

Thomas has been raised in a monastery, and the words of a dying woman change his life as she tells him he must destroy the circle of evil. Set in medieval England, an ancient order tightens its dark and threatening grip on power. Thomas's quest is to bring light into this mysterious world. He has three unusual companions: an enigmatic knight; a child thief; and a beautiful, silent woman who seems to have or to be a secret. None of them are quite what they seem, and Thomas struggles with going it alone or trusting his fellow travelers.

*The Orphan King* is a rather convoluted tale, which, particularly in the

beginning, is hard to follow. However, I recommend it for church libraries that have good readership among young teens and those interested in this type of high adventure, knights, and the mystical. The ending is definitely the best part of the book and will leave readers clamoring for more. CC

## SURVIVING YOUR FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE

by Michael A. Kipp & Sandy Kipp

Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-5063-8, PB, 128 pages, \$12.99

Kipp and wife, Sandy, guide readers through the scary and exciting world of college, targeting Christians in their late teens who soon will be attending college. They provide advice on a variety of subjects, including how to make dorm rooms functional, get along with roommates, and budget study time.

The Kipps use a direct and conversational style that makes this book readable, especially for males. Michael is a college professor and does a stellar job of using personal examples to illustrate many of the book's topics. However, one glaring flaw in the format is the postscript section, which contains additional advice that could have been easily incorporated into the rest of the book. Nevertheless, the Kipps's ability to offer spiritual advice

## SERIES UPDATES

Dragons of Starlight

by Bryan Davis

Zondervan, 978-0-310-71839-0,  
\$9.99

#4 *Liberator*

Universally Misunderstood

by Kristin Billerbeck

Revell, 978-0-8007-1974-6,  
\$12.99

#3 *Perfectly Ridiculous*

# BOOK REVIEWS

on maintaining a prayer life, finding time to read the Bible, and going to church, along with advice on finances, class selection, and dating, make this a great reference tool for freshmen. JMR

## Women

### A SUDDEN GLORY

by Sharon Jaynes

Multnomah, 978-1-60142-408-2, PB, 224 pages, \$14.99

We go to Bible studies, attend church, say our prayers, and do our devotions. Yet we constantly feel like we're letting God down. Many Christians go through the motions, know all the biblical stories, but still feel as though something is missing in their spiritual walks with Christ. In response, Jaynes writes about the "glory ache" that comes in wanting to serve God more.

Her book is a devotional study specifically for women, helping to show them how to become closer to God. With uplifting quotes from famous people, as well as inspiring passages of Scripture, this book can be used for individual devotions or as a mentoring guide between women. It is written in common language and offers wise insights to real-life circumstances. Anyone seeking more intimacy with the Lord will find this book both enlightening and inspiring. CEF

*Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.*

—*Emilie Buchwald*

*Reading aloud with children is known to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills they will eventually require for learning to read.*

—*Marilyn Jager Adams*

## Reviewers

Julie Agen, church librarian  
Ceil Carey, church & public librarian

Kelli Collins, writer  
Andrea C. Crook, writer  
Gabriella Darmetko, writer  
Amelia DeSteno, writer  
Nicole E. Dynes, writer  
Dr. Bianca L. Elliott, teacher  
Joyce K. Ellis, writer, editor  
Anna Farrell, writer  
Caitlin E. Fielding, writer  
Jeff Grogan, writer  
Claire Hadley, writer  
Kacey Heinlein, writer  
Dr. Dennis E. Hensley, writer  
Sarah Holmes, writer  
Jessica Keys, writer  
Isabelle Kroeker, writer  
Kaitlynn M. Large, writer  
Austin Lindner, writer  
Hope Irvin Marston, writer  
Lynda Gail McCracken, church librarian

Alexandra R. Mellen, writer  
Marshall Oppel, writer  
Leann Parker, writer  
Nicole Parks, writer  
Jeremy Paul, writer  
Jerrod M. Reed, writer  
Barbara Winslow Robidoux, editor

Deborah G. Rocheleau, writer  
Bob Rose, pastor  
Kristin Schwartz, writer  
Rachael Schwulst, writer  
Levi S. Simonton, writer  
Alexandria J. Stokes, writer  
Judy A. Waggoner, church librarian

Megan Wall, writer  
Rebecca Love White, teacher  
Ellen Williamson, writer  
Kati Woodward, writer  
Austin Yoder, writer  
Jeanne Zornes, writer

## Commentaries

*continued from page 19*

are limited to paperbacks. Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell have done a hardcover commentary on James alone.

But the comprehensive one by Scot McKnight (NICNT, Eerdmans) is the hardback I recommend.

### *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*

The only recommended commentary, a paperback, on 1 Peter alone is by Joel B. Green (THNTC, Eerdmans). However, a hardcover by Thomas R. Schreiner (NAC, B&H) combines 1 and 2 Peter and Jude and has about as much commentary on 1 Peter as the other one.

2 Peter and Jude are usually combined in commentaries, as they are in the paperback book by Ruth Anne Reese (THNTC, Eerdmans) and the hardcover by Peter H. Davids (Pillar, Eerdmans). I recommend both.

### *1, 2, and 3 John*

The only commentary on the three Johannine letters that I received is combined with Revelation in the one by Earl F. Palmer (PC, Nelson).

## Revelation

The book of Revelation has not fared well in the last decade. Neither the one by James H. Hamilton, Jr. (PW, Crossway) nor the one by John Walvoord that was revised and edited by Philip E. Rawley and Mark Hitchcock (JWPC, Moody) are outstanding. But you may want to add them to your library if there is a lot of interest in your church in this Bible book.

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*Dr. Leslie Robert Keylock is the retired vice president for academic affairs and graduate professor of New Testament at Evangelical University and Seminary and former professor of Bible and theology at Moody Bible Institute.*

# DVD REVIEWS

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## Narrative

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### ONE HIT FROM HOME

Pure Flix, 8-93261-00154-7, 98 minutes, \$14.99

Jimmy Easton is a has-been, Major League baseball player who, because of a bar fight, gets assigned to do community service as the coach of a college team on a losing streak. Brandon, the star of the team, is talented; but he'll never make the big time until he learns to hit a curve ball. Both men need lessons in humility.

I admire the scriptwriter's intent for this film to portray two men who are able to use Christian ethics and morals to rebuild their lives and help establish worthy life goals for themselves. Also, the camera work is impressive; the settings are visually appealing and story appropriate; and the costuming is natural for the characters, locale, and story line. Unfortunately, the actors cannot "sell" the story. They make unnatural facial expressions, deliver lines awkwardly, overgesticulate, and overdramatize certain movements. They often become caricatures of characters found in other movies, such as the washed-up former sports hero turned drunk. Thus, the

story is a rehash of too many other movies; and the actors are amateurish. This movie was a noble effort, but it didn't succeed. DEH

## Teaching

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### JESUS REVEALED: Encountering the Authentic Jesus

Vision Video, 7-27985-01448-7, 3 discs, 135 minutes, \$59.97

The unusual format of Andy Frost delivering biblical commentary interspersed with dramatic reenactments of Jesus' life is an effective tool for this series of teaching films. Each of the seven segments is 12-15 minutes long. Frost is an effective speaker whose teachings work nicely with the mostly well-done dramatic scenes.

For example, "Hero" is based on Matthew 27:24-54. We see Jesus arrested, suffering, and on the cross with Frost communicating the truth of the crucifixion and Resurrection. "Wrestler" is based on Matthew 26:36-45 with Jesus in Gethsemane, wrestling with His call to the cross.

Frost is the director of Share Jesus International. A PDF discussion guide is available for downloading. Recom-

mended for church libraries, small groups, and Christian-education classes. However, you should preview this set to determine if the presentations would be appropriate for your congregation. JA

### PEOPLE OF FAITH: Christianity in America

Vision Video, 7-27985-01437-1, 2 discs, 180 minutes, \$29.99

*People of Faith* is a good combination of interviews, drawings, photos, and beautiful panoramic views of our country, detailing the story of how Christianity shaped life in the United States. The variety of formats keeps the viewer interested. Divided into six episodes, this set covers such topics as homegrown saints, from monarchs to the marketplace, and the future of Christianity.

The presentation is balanced, including all religions that shaped America; and the commentary covers scholars from evangelical, mainline Protestant, and Catholic perspectives. It covers the 400 plus years of history of Christianity in our country from before the Pilgrims until the present time. This DVD set would be a good addition to any library with a bent toward church history or as a reference tool. CC

# MUSIC REVIEW

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## Contemporary

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### REBEL TRANSMISSION

by Newworldson

Platinum Pop, 7-96745-09762-6, \$9.99

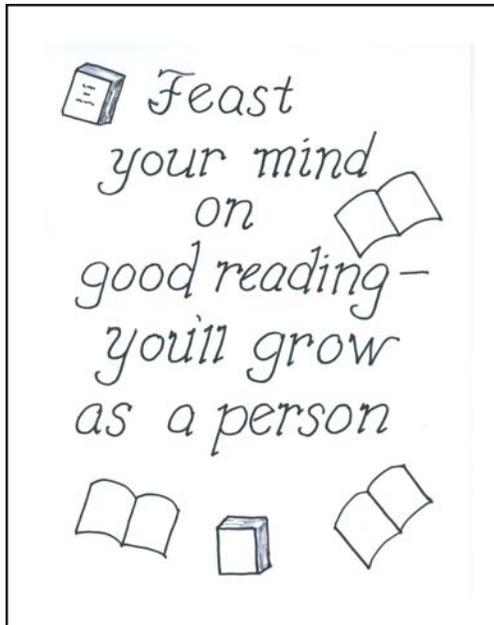
Newworldson is beyond category, transcending definition or classification. *Rebel Transmission* has a big-band flair with loud trumpet solos in "Home-

less Child" and "Shake, Holy Spirit"; but other songs reflect a bluesy/pop side. Rather than come off as a hodgepodge of random music, the group's goal is to present a variety of sounds for a variety of messages and moods. For praise music, the group uses brass, drums, and electric guitars. But hymns and meditative messages are accompanied by acoustic and folk instruments and soft, harmonic blends of voices.

The lyrics to these original songs are catchy, causing listeners to sing along and be inspired. Some of the messages are surprising as they stir listeners to indulge in Christianity and rebel against complacent religiosity. The album's message is Christian through and through; but its musical style is not repetitive, predictable, or mundane. CH

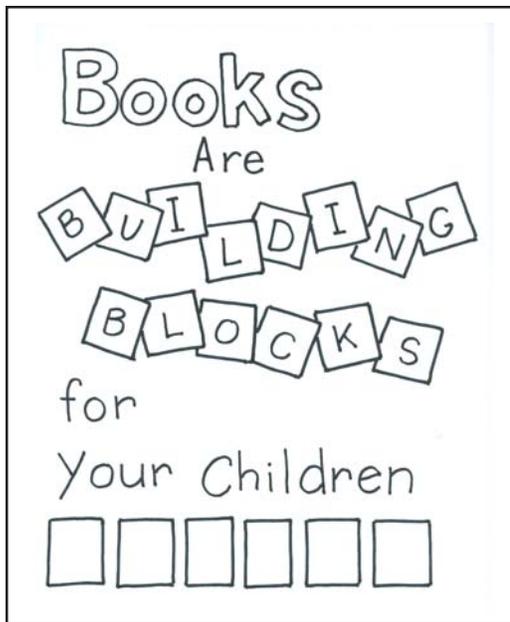
# POSTER/BULLETIN BOARDS

by Arlene Walker



## Poster

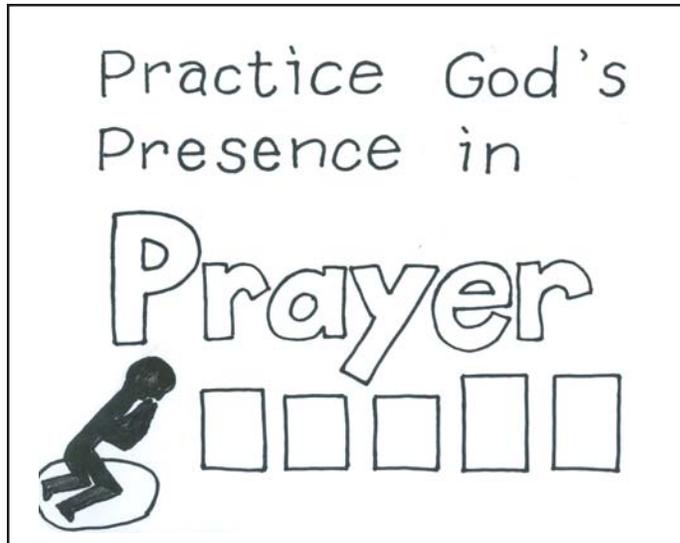
Use a piece of tan poster board. With a ruler and pencil, write the letters of the caption, spreading out the words, so they are centered as evenly as possible on the board. Trace the words with a black marking pen. Draw book shapes in the spaces around the words.



## Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with bright yellow paper or cloth. Trace and cut letters on green paper for these words in the caption: Books Are for Your Children. Cut 4-5" squares from primary colors: red, blue, green, and orange. Use a marking pen to letter each block to spell the words *BUILDING BLOCKS*. Arrange all the letters on the board as shown.

Cut out pictures of children from magazines, or use photos of children in your church. Staple them along the bottom as shown by the rectangles.



## Bulletin Board

Use a soft shade of aqua blue paper or cloth to cover a bulletin board. Cut letters for the caption from dark purple paper, and embellish the word *Prayer* with silver glitter. Make a pattern of the silhouette of a person praying, then use it to cut the silhouette from black paper. Cut a prayer rug from bright yellow paper. Mount the person and rug in place. Display copies of book jackets from books on prayer in the remaining space. If it is available, include a copy of *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence.

Arlene Walker is a freelance writer and retired teacher.

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- Nourishing Your Dream, Lynn Austin
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## October Bible Drive

**B**ible Foundation is promoting the October Bible Drive. People around the world are begging for Bibles. Even damaged and parts of old Bibles have use and value. Everyone can help. Old Bibles can feed hungry hearts.

English is widely used around the world, and Bibles have been sent to more than 75 countries. They go to hospitals, nursing homes, inner-city churches and ministries, rescue missions, ship ministries, prisons and jails, homeless shelters, street ministries, ethnic neighborhoods, migrant camps, individual ministries, remote villages around the world, homes, schools, bus stations, railway stations, small churches, halls and open air meetings, and refugee camps. Many lives are transformed.

The October Bible Drive is the annual focus of the ongoing, year 'round Bible program that makes it possible to help people like the person from Nigeria who wrote, "I am begging you, please, please, Sir, help us with Bibles for distribution."

Just about anyone can help in some way. Detailed information is available at [bf.org/bibledrive](http://bf.org/bibledrive). A list of collection centers, quotations from many countries showing the need and appreciation, suggestions for collecting Bibles and promoting the efforts, insight on how others have helped, plus much more is on the Web site.

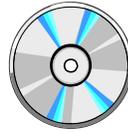
Check the Web site, [bf.org/bibledrive](http://bf.org/bibledrive), for more information. Or contact Bible Foundation at 503-538-4897, P.O. Box 908, Newberg, Oregon 97132.

*Editor's note: Your church library is a logical collection point for your congregation.*

# Helps for Your Library

## **Library Software Solutions by Debra Stombres—\$6**

Library software reviews from  
Winter 2010-11 *Church Libraries*.

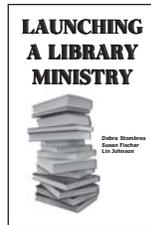


## **CDs**

See order form on inside back cover.

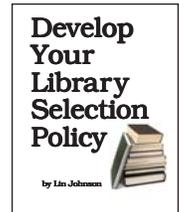
## **Launching a Library Ministry by Debra Stombres, Susan Fischer, & Lin Johnson—\$7**

Clear, concise guidance for writing a  
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processing and classifying those materials.



## **Develop Your Selection Policy by Lin Johnson—\$3**

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what to put in your library and what to  
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