

# Church. Libraries

\$10

Spring 2013



Sigmund Brouwer

## Story Is Everything

BOOK ROUNDUP

## Contemporary Heroes of the Faith

PROMOTION

## Music-box Reading Club

EDUCATION

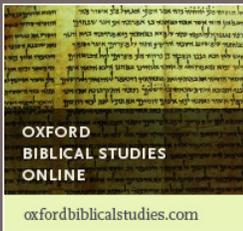
## Old Books, New Life

PROMOTION

## 4 New Bulletin Boards and Posters

EDUCATION

## Creating Continuity



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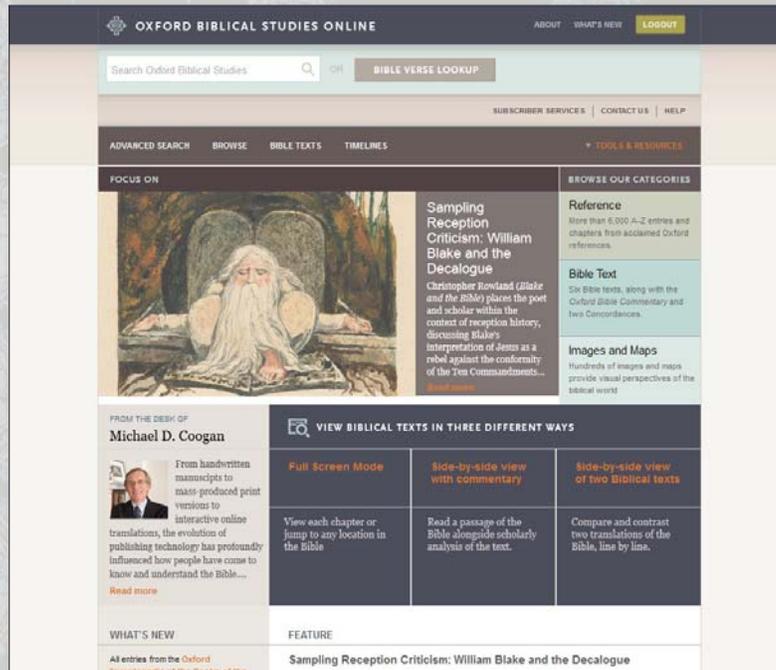
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# ECLA

## 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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## Book Updates

### Repackaged

*The Berenstain Bears Bear Country Blessings* by Jan & Mike Berenstain (combination of *The Berenstain Bears: God Bless Our Home*, *The Berenstain Bears: All Things Bright and Beautiful*, *The Berenstain Bears: Get Involved*; Zonderkidz)

### Reprinted

*Advice for Seekers* by Charles H. Spurgeon (New Leaf, originally American Sunday School Union)

*Animal Tales from the Bible* by Nick Butterworth & Mick Inkpen (Zonderkidz)

*Favorite Parables from the Bible* by Nick Butterworth & Mick Inkpen (Zonderkidz)

*Understanding Jesus* by Stephen M. Miller (Barbour)

*A Violent Grace: Meeting Christ at the Cross* by Michael Card (InterVarsity, originally Multnomah)

### Retitled

*The Art of Falling in Love* by Joe Beam (Howard, originally *Your Love Path*)

## Save the Date!

Annual ECLA Conference  
October 18-19, Chicago area

Friday: Dinner With Local Authors  
Saturday Keynote Speaker: Stan Guthrie  
Workshops to help you with your ministry  
Book Giveaway

## Promotional Hooks

### MAY

Get Caught Reading Month  
2: National Day of Prayer  
12-18: Reading Is Fun Week  
13-19: Children's Book Week  
([www.bookweekonline.com](http://www.bookweekonline.com))  
16: Biographers' Day

### JUNE

Fiction Is Fun Month  
Audiobook Month  
National Bathroom Reading Month

### JULY

National Antiboredom Month  
28: National Parents Day

## New Phone Number

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## ResourceMate Introduces New Family of Products

**R**esourceMate is a Windows-based library automation software solution for cataloging, searching, circulating and reporting any type of collection. With six main products, Lite, Lite Plus, Essential, Essential Plus, Extended, and Premium, any type and size of organization can benefit from this new family of ResourceMate products.

The new family of products has a number of new features:

- The ability to process a list of ISBNs (not available for Lite or Essential) makes the cataloging process much quicker.
- Including patron pictures helps to be able to identify patrons easily.
- The ability to drag and drop fields allows you to set up ResourceMate the way you want it.
- Searching in any field allows you to access information about specific items

in your collection quickly.

Customers can choose from six different versions, depending on their situation:

- Essential is ideal for places of worship.
- Essential Plus is also ideal for places of worship that wish to have more advanced features, such as the ability to barcode books; store multimedia objects like pictures, documents, video clips, and files; have volunteers enter items; import/export MARC records; and have more extensive security.
- Extended is an excellent fit for schools because of additional features, such as the ability to import and manage textbooks and establishing circulation rules and restrictions.
- Premium is designed for corporations and organizations with a larger database. This version starts with three shared database users and three

additional OPAC licenses. More licenses are available for purchase.

- Jaywil Software also offers a Lite and Lite Plus program for those organizations with limited budgets and limited resources.

With increased demand for cloud software, Jaywil offers hosting options for all of their programs.

All programs are available for download at the company's website ([www.resourcemate.com](http://www.resourcemate.com)), through their toll-free number at 800-815-8370, and through several major library supply companies in Canada and the U.S. Costs for the programs range from \$295 to \$1,695. A free demo and tutorial is available at the website. Jaywil also offers networking and hosting options. The hosting option makes this program available to MAC, iPad and PC users alike.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Why not put a little spring in your step, and hop on in to our library for some fantastic new choices in books to read!

—Phyllis Jones, librarian

First United Methodist Church, Lawrenceville, Ill.



# Story Is Everything

by Lynn MacKaben Brown

Writing is difficult for me," said Sigmund Brouwer. Yet he has authored more than 50 adult novels, plus several series for children. Dozens of his books have appeared on the recommended reading lists of Scholastic Canada, Junior Library Guild, and the Accelerated Reading Program.

Brouwer grew up in Red Deer, Alberta, the oldest of six kids and the son of Dutch immigrants. "I always loved story, but writing has been difficult. I barely passed my English classes. The seventh-grade teacher, who read the first story I'd ever written, read it out loud to the class and said it was the stupidest thing he'd ever heard.

"When I went to the university, I managed to postpone my freshman English class until my third year. My professor told me he thought my writing was good and encouraged me to write more. Of course, it helped that he ignored my bad spelling and punctuation and grammar. But again, that's where I draw the line so distinctly between storytelling and writing."

## Pursuit of Publication

After graduating with a commerce degree, Brouwer was the despair of his mother, who hoped he would get a career job. Instead, Sigmund spent off-work hours writing and racking up one rejection slip after another. This

situation went on for 10 years.

"I have no idea why I didn't quit. Had I been a husband and father, I wouldn't have been chasing that dream. It would have been irresponsible."

But a day finally came when Brouwer almost quit. "I called my girlfriend and told her I was going to throw in the towel. She said, 'It's about time you joined the real world, Sigmund. Not everyone can have his dream.' That made me angry. Our relationship didn't survive, but my pursuit of publication did.

"Months after that, I sold my first book. *The Mystery Tribe of Camp Blackeagle* is still my favorite book because it was my first. It's also my worst. Writing improves with practice."

## Participation With His Family

Brouwer is married to musician/composer Cindy Morgan. "We met at a breakfast event where we both were appearing on behalf of Word Publishing. We hit it off well and followed up with long telephone conversations during several months. I had school speaking engagements scheduled in Nashville, where she lived, allowing us to be together again. It just kept getting better. We were married a year and a half after we met."

Cindy Morgan's 1992 debut album, *Real Life*, garnered her six Dove Award nominations; and her next album



Sigmund Brouwer

earned her another nomination. In 2001 she took a break from touring to dedicate her time to rearing the couple's two daughters, but she continued to compose. She has now returned to touring. As Cindy Brouwer, she is half of the duo billed as St. Lola in the Fields.

"We use each other as sounding boards in our careers," said Sigmund. "And I found, much to my irritation, that when Cindy disagrees with me about something artistic, she's right. So I'm getting a little better about taking her advice.

"We have two daughters. Olivia is 12. She's sassy and mischievous. Savannah, who is nine, is sweet and quiet and determined. They brought our attention to our environmental responsibility by reminding us to turn out the lights and be sure the water taps were completely off when not in use. Justine McKeen, the elementary school environmentalist of my series, is a combination of both of my daughters."

## Penchant for Variety

Brouwer writes one adult novel each year, which takes six or seven months. The rest of the year he devotes to writ-

# AUTHOR PROFILE

ing for kids and speaking at schools. He also manages to squeeze in college visits and conventions for teachers and librarians.

"My main focus when speaking to school and church librarians is library advocacy. I want to encourage librarians and reinforce the importance of their roles. I also bring up ways to help reluctant readers. My website for librarians, [www.story-diva.com](http://www.story-diva.com), includes a song for them. At every school, I play the song and present the librarian with a T-shirt.

"Even my fictional character Justine McKeen has joined the cause. In *Justine McKeen, Pooper Scooper*, she springs into environmental-friendly action when her school librarian's hours are cut due to budget constrictions."

Brower's adult books include mysteries, suspense, and historical fiction. *The Leper* retells the biblical story of the outcast leper but is set in the 19th century. Brower explained, "I had a specific goal. I wanted it to end with hope. That limited my time options. If I wrote it any earlier, there was no hope for healing from a medical standpoint. If I wrote it as a modern novel, the healing would be no surprise. There would be no emotional impact. I set it at the time when only a very few medical professionals knew the cure."

An adult trilogy of historical fiction covers the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in the first century. *The Last Temple* is the final book of this series that Brower coauthored with Hank Hanegraaff. "I've always loved history, for the reason that history is a single, unfolding story. I have degrees in commerce and journalism; but if I would have a chance to return to school, I would love to earn a degree in history.

"The view of Revelation on which the trilogy is built comes from my Christian Reformed faith. I'm grateful to Hank for helping me see prophecy through the eyes of first-century Jews and Christians."

Sigmund's kids and teen books also

*The kids who tug  
on Sigmund's heart  
most are reluctant  
readers.*

include a variety of genres and series. For instance, in *Seven the Series*, written by different authors, Brower wrote *Devil's Pass*.

In the novel, teen Jim Webb, an aspiring musician, is challenged by his grandfather's will to complete the hazardous journey through *Devil's Pass* in the Canadian Northwest Territories for a reward at the end of the trail. So Jim packs his J45 Gibson guitar and heads into the wilderness. At the end of the trek, he finds a note from his grandfather telling him of an arrangement for Jim to go to Nashville and have his tunes produced.

"Four songs were produced to go along with the book, said Sigmund. "Then Cindy found a talented young man who played Jim Webb in a music video. Now I can take that video into schools and tie the story to both the video and the book,"

## Passion for Reluctant Readers

But the kids who tug on Sigmund's heart most are reluctant readers. "I didn't even know there were reluctant readers when I first visited schools. I've always been a voracious reader, especially drawn to C. S. Lewis and Dick Francis. One day a teacher enlightened me, and I became one of the first authors to write for that group. My goal in school assemblies is to reach one reluctant reader.

"Story is everything. If it is written at a seventh or eighth grade interest level but at third-grade reading level and given a cool cover that the reader

isn't ashamed to be seen with, he will read. Most reluctant readers are guys, so most of my books are about sports."

Appropriately, his bestselling book is for reluctant readers. *Rebel Glory* was the first of his hockey series. Like all of his sports books, it is a mystery with a sports setting, in the style of Dick Francis.

## Programs for Students

To further encourage reading, Sigmund spends time doing school assemblies. "School programs teach that everyone loves story. Story can be told in various ways: music, videos, and books. Storytelling is easy. Writing, however, takes practice."

Administrators, teachers, librarians, and students are enthusiastic about the assemblies. Joan Oster, elementary vice principal of Cole Valley Christian Schools said, "His assembly was one of the best motivational presentations I have ever seen. Sigmund's unique presentation inspired our students to use their God-given talents at a higher level.

"With the use of tasteful pop music samples, he incorporated a fun-filled message about how music produces emotion and good books and good writing do the same. He also did an excellent job integrating God's purposes for reading and writing into his talk. Our students left the assembly with smiles on their faces and an increased desire to read and write."

Tyndale is currently covering the presentation fee for Cool2Read assemblies for Protestant and Catholic schools. A similar assembly, *Rock & Roll Literacy*, is available for public schools. Plus kids can benefit from Sigmund's Young Writer's Institute, an intensive workshop where they even get to help him with the book he is currently writing.

Because story is everything.

*Lynn MacKaben Brown is a freelance writer and speaker in Indiana.*

# Music-box Reading Club

by Jeanetta Chrystie

**M**usic-box collections are fun to own and view due to their variety in looks and catchy tunes. Some people collect music boxes according to tune, such as tunes by a particular artist, all classical music, all show tunes, or all inspirational music. Some people collect by item, such as all Disney brand, trains, dogs, snow globes, or wooden boxes.

Other people collect by occasion, such as Christmas, anniversaries, travels, and births. These boxes become family heirlooms and their stories part of the family's genealogical records.

Some people even collect music boxes by the type of musicality, including moving parts like rotating drums that play multiple tunes, doors and clockworks that open and close, or additional bells that ring at particular places in a tune.

Children like listening to music boxes and watching their moving parts, making this an attractive reading-club theme that works well any time of the year.

## Planning and Precision

A beautiful music-box tune and a well-organized reading club require planning. The following reminders will speed you along your way to a well-designed club.

Choose beginning and ending dates. Plan a start date that "plays well" with other events on the church calendar.

Review any of your previous reading-club rules to see if you need to revise them. Will you limit the club to certain age groups? Do you want patrons to sign up ahead of time to participate?

Decide how you will track everyone's reading progress. An easy option is a large poster-board chart to display prominently in or near the library. Who will make the poster? What decorations will you use on it?

Determine whether you want to hold a kickoff party. If so, play games like letting children pretend to be part of a music box and move to music, musical chairs, and pretending to be "popcorn" and alternately move up and down in a circle as a music box (or piano) plays. Try to find a few sturdy

music boxes to show the children, so they can see how a real one (not electronic) makes music.

Design and prepare enrollment sheets. Do you want to encourage a certain number of books to be read in various subject areas for selected age groups? Decorate the sign-up sheets with musical note stickers. You can also find simple coloring-book-style pictures of music boxes using an Internet search. This visual reminder of the club's theme helps create enthusiasm among participants.

Determine your available budget and ways to save money. Church members might donate poster board, colorful sign-up paper, and certificates of completion. Craft-minded volunteers might create a sample music box or two.

If you have music-box collectors in your church, ask them if you may exhibit a few from their collection in a locked display area for the duration of the club.

Also borrow books about music boxes from your public library for display purposes.

## Running the Club

Initiating interest in a reading club is great fun. One month before the beginning date, place music-box items, such as actual music boxes, pictures of music boxes, and books about music boxes, in your display area. Point them

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*Children like listening to music boxes and watching their moving parts, making this an attractive theme.*

---

out to children, and watch their curiosity grow.

Encourage children to learn more about music boxes from public-library books. Older children may enjoy supervised Internet searches for information about the history and types of music boxes and to find favorite music-box tunes.

Place a request in your church newsletter or bulletin for materials donations and for volunteers to help run the reading club.

Temporary volunteers can take care of many simple preparations, such as creating the progress poster and sign-up sheets. They can set up displays and tell stories about music boxes to increase interest in the reading club. As an added bonus, you may discover that some of them will want to join your staff.

Follow up with weekly Sunday-school handouts. Or place announcements in your church bulletin or newsletter about a contest, such as creating the most words from the letters in the sentence *I love music boxes*. Advertise a “due date,” ask children to place their contest entries in the library collection box, and display the longest lists on the library windows or bulletin board. Let owners collect their contest entries the next week.

## Playing the Closing Tune

A music-box tune, like a reading club, eventually winds down. Hold an awards party to give out certificates of participation and any prizes for the most books read.

Take time to share humorous anecdotes, show snapshots of volunteers, and allow participants to enjoy their moments in the spotlight. Remember to thank all the volunteers.

Follow the awards party with a library staff meeting to discuss the good and not-so-good aspects of the club. What can you change to help a reading club run more smoothly next time?

Now you have earned a rest, so en-

joy a good book, perhaps with background music from a music box.

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

## Music-box Trivia

**A**dvertise your reading club with these music-box trivia facts. Include them on handouts, on signs, or in announcements.

- The original Chip character in the Disney movie *Beauty and the Beast* was intended to be a music box, which was supposed to be a musical version of Snow White's dwarf Dopey. Then, when the character's role was expanded, the music-box character was dropped. However, you can briefly see the music box on a table next to Lumière just before the fight between the enchanted objects and the villagers.
- In Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, a music box was made for the anniversary of Triton and Athena.
- Watchmakers usually made the early music boxes, powered by clock-works.
- Music boxes were popular as a way to play tunes, some of them long, without needing a band or orchestra present.
- Some of the first music boxes used metal disks to trigger the notes of a tune lasting several minutes.
- In the late 18th century, music boxes changed to metal cylinders to trigger notes. This construction allowed removable cylinders to play different tunes. Later the cylinders were designed so they could be offset a bit to play a different tune.
- Some music boxes have tuned bells that strike during specific places in a tune.
- Music boxes became ornate pieces of furniture.
- Other music boxes are huge and run elaborate action displays.
- Replaceable metal-disk music boxes soon gave way to paper-tape movement, followed by player pianos.

—Jeanetta Chrystie

**There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all.**

—Jacqueline Kennedy

# Contemporary Heroes of the Faith

by Cindy Grabill

As many Christians can attest, reading biographies contributes to spiritual growth. Although we often think of them as stories of historical figures, many focus on contemporary Christian heroes.

Several of the people in this book roundup tell of how difficult times strengthened their faith. Others are spreading the gospel in the places to which God has called them. But all these biographies show how God blesses totally committed followers. They will inspire readers to put Him first, develop their own talents, and make a difference in their own worlds.

## CHOOSING TO SEE

by Mary Beth Chapman & Ellen Vaughn

Revell, 978-0-8007-2085-8, PB, 288 pages, \$16.99

A freak accident killed the five-year-old daughter of Mary Beth and musician Steven Curtis Chapman. She shares how she literally wrestled with God as she sought to understand why and tells of the family's battles with Satan, who was out to destroy their faith. She recounts how they learned to depend on God and find "beauty among the ashes."

This sad but compelling story is painfully honest and provides encouragement and hope. Chapman stresses that we learn to trust in and depend on God fully when we experience

trouble and reminds readers that "spring is coming." Recommend this book to families suffering the loss of a child.

## GIFTED HANDS: The Ben Carson Story

by Ben Carson with Cecil Murphey  
Zondervan, 978-0-310-33290-9, HB, 240 pages, \$18.99

Through his mother's encouragement, this African-American overcame poverty and discrimination to become a renowned pediatric neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins Medical Center. He presents case studies of children whose lives he saved, including Siamese twins joined at the head.

This uplifting biography shows readers how to "think and act big" as they go after their own dreams. Carson's mother serves as a role model to other mothers raising sons. God can use anyone, no matter how "disadvantaged."

*These biographies show how God blesses totally committed followers.*

## GOD'S SMUGGLER

by Brother Andrew with John & Elizabeth Sherrill

Baker, 978-0-8007-9301-2, PB, 256 pages, \$14.99

## LIGHT FORCE

by Brother Andrew & Al Janssen

Baker, 978-0-8007-3104-5, PB, 352 pages, \$24

Brother Andrew realized his childhood dream of becoming a spy when God chose him to smuggle Bibles and tracts into Communist countries. He learned to depend on God alone and to watch Him work miracles as border patrols repeatedly missed the "contraband." With God's help, Andrew reached many people with the gospel.

*God's Smuggler* shows God at work and emphasizes how He uses available people. In *Light Force*, Andrew tells of how he traveled to war-torn Lebanon where he helped rebuild burned-out churches and showed people how to replace hatred with love and forgiveness. The unforgettable horror stories are detailed and graphic, yet the concept of trading love for hate reminds readers about how God wants them to treat their enemies.

## INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURES SERIES

by various authors

YWAM, PB, \$14.99

Each tale in this series tells the story of lesser-known missionaries who trav-

# BOOK ROUNDUP

eled to foreign and often primitive countries to spread the gospel. For instance, one couple is helping abandoned children in Brazil. Another set of missionaries serve as God's undercover agents in Albania where the people despise God. An older teenager evangelized a tribe of South American Indians.

These books read like suspense fiction that can't be put down. Each delves deeply into the particular culture and includes valuable lessons on such topics as perseverance, materialism, unconditional love, and the power of prayer.

## **JUST AS I AM: The Autobiography of Billy Graham**

by Billy Graham

HarperOne, 978-0-0611-7106-2, PB, 800 pages, \$19.95

This mammoth volume includes numerous stories of Billy's early life on a North Carolina farm, how he met Christ, and his courtship and marriage to Ruth Bell. He speaks of his struggle to know God's will, his years with Youth for Christ, and his interim presidency at Northwestern Schools. Graham emphasizes the impact of his numerous crusades and his influence with key leaders, such as Dwight D. Eisenhower, Winston Churchill, and Richard Nixon.

Some of his stories are witty, e.g., Graham assured God he would be neither preacher nor undertaker. Others are honest as he shares lessons learned from past mistakes. Yet he sets the example for godliness through constant prayer, simple trust in God for every detail, and willingness to obey God fully. His life will inspire anyone desiring to know God better.

## **KISSES FROM KATIE**

by Katie Davis with Beth Clark

Howard, 978-1-4516-1209-7, PB, 288 pages, \$15.99

When she was 19, Katie traveled to Uganda to serve as a missionary, teach-

*They will inspire readers to put Him first, develop their own talents, and make a difference in their own worlds.*

ing orphans and slum children. She describes the extreme poverty, dire medical conditions, and each child's heart-wrenching story. She shares how she told the girls about Jesus as she bathed them and bandaged their wounds. Later she found sponsors to help with their schooling and expenses. Katie's adopted family includes 14 girls.

Katie's example defines unconditional love and total surrender to the Lord Jesus and reminds readers of how obedience brings blessing. Her contagious enthusiasm will inspire readers to seek God's will for their own lives. Recommend this book especially to older teen girls wanting to make their lives count too.

## **LET'S ROLL!: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Courage**

by Lisa Beamer with Ken Abraham

Tyndale, 978-0-8423-7418-7, PB, 346 pages, \$14.99

Todd Beamer, a businessman, died when terrorists hijacked Flight 93 to a Pennsylvania field on 9/11. His wife recalls their childhood, romance, and marriage. She outlines their struggles, including Todd's workaholicism, and describes how they managed more time alone together. Todd's final phone call reveals what happened on that day and his solid faith even at the end.

This book is a strong reminder of the

fragility and brevity of life. Today could be our last day on Earth, so we need to make every minute count. The ideas Lisa used to allow her and Todd more time together will help other married couples reassess their values.

## **PLAYING WITH PURPOSE SERIES**

by Mike Yorkey

Barbour, PB & HB

These collective biographies (the ones about Tim Tebow and Mariano Rivera are standalone titles) highlight outstanding Christian football, basketball, and baseball players who maintain excellent playing records. Yet as Yorkey points out, numbers mean nothing to God. Yorkey first shows them as children, developing their skills, and pinpoints obstacles they overcame and challenges they faced. He traces their career histories so far and demonstrates how they live their faith both on and off the playing field or court.

These athletes serve as role models to both men and older boys. They pursued and met the goal of excellence and aren't afraid to let others know they are Christians. Many are using their money to help others. The short chapters make these books ideal for reluctant readers.

## **REBEL WITH A CAUSE**

by Franklin Graham

Nelson, 978-0-7852-7170-8, PB, 336 pages, \$14.99

This son of Billy and Ruth Graham tells of his life as a prodigal son and how he came to know Christ. He shares stories of his work with Samaritan's Purse, an organization to help refugees meet both physical and spiritual needs. Many of these stories are funny, others suspenseful, some inspirational. Several provide underlying messages for readers.

Graham shows his mother to be a formidable, yet humorous woman. (Don't miss the scene in which she crawls around on the roof to play a

# BOOK ROUNDUP

practical joke.) How he presents the gospel in face-to-face encounters with terrorists reveal a lot about Satan's tactics, witnessing, and courage.

Recommend this book to parents who pray daily for wayward teens. Graham's life teaches us that God can turn anyone's life around.

## SEAL OF GOD

by Chad Williams with David Thomas Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6874-0, PB, 304 pages, \$14.99

Williams entertains readers with stories of his dangerous escapades as a youth. He later chose to become a Navy SEAL. *Seal of God* traces his journey toward his career goal, including the brutal and sleepless hell week during which most of his cohorts dropped out. Upon completion, Williams, a new Christian, shared his faith during tours of duty in such locations as Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

This engaging, easy-to-read book depicts a lesser-known aspect of the military. Through his life, Williams demonstrates perseverance through great trials and shows God's sovereignty. Williams is now an evangelist. Military-minded patrons will be able to relate to his experiences.

## WHEN I LAY MY ISAAC DOWN

by Carol Kent NavPress, 978-1-5768-3474-9, HB, 168 pages, \$19.99

A middle-of-the night caller informed the Kents their godly son had murdered his wife's ex-husband. Kent tells of the agonizing days following that call as she and her husband, like Abraham, prepared to give up their

son. She traces her journey from complaining to rejoicing, outlines instances of how her faith deepened, and tells of the blessings resulting from this unspeakable incident.

This work emphasizes how God can use any event for good. Kent's dealings with Satan are powerful and applicable. ("I know the end of the story. I win. You lose. Leave my family alone.") She sets an example for godly suffering and paints the picture of an ever-present, loving God. Recommend this book to sufferers who need to be reminded of God's love, faithfulness, and omnipresence.

## ZONDERKIDZ BIOGRAPHIES

by various authors Zonderkidz, PB, \$5.49

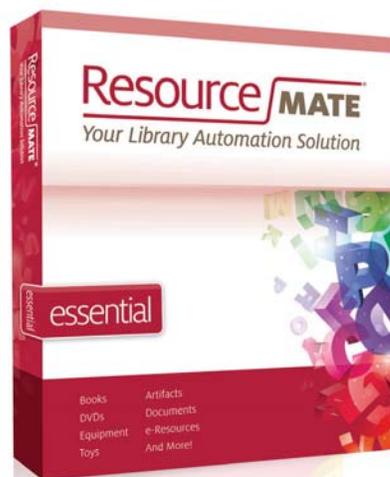
Most of these books for ages 8-12 highlight Christian sports figures, in-

cluding Trevor Bayne, the youngest race-car driver to win the Daytona 500, and Dominique Dawes who used her motto of "determination, discipline, and desire" to win numerous Olympic medals. Their sports are different, yet they share common characteristics. As children, they identified and developed their skills, learned to practice hard, and didn't quit. They are now top stars in their fields and have learned that with God nothing is impossible.

These quick reads are informative and inspirational. Sidebars present histories of the sports and "fun facts" about the people. Kids will be inspired to go after their dreams and let God work more than they ever thought possible.

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

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# Old Books, New Life

by Janice S. Garey

**C**lear the way! Here come the boxes. Another church family received e-readers for Christmas and expects you to joyfully welcome their treasured books.

Do those boxes contain books you can't use for various reasons? Do your overflowing shelves require forceps to pry books loose? Two ministries stand ready to assist. Both help God birth spiritual life through placement of gently used Bibles and Christian books into needy hands.

Although the ministries of Christian Library International and Love Packages serve two different populations, they both report the same results: Recipients accept Jesus as Lord and grow in their Christian faith as a result of donated books.

## Christian Library International

Christian Library International (CLI) operates out of the main office in Raleigh, N.C., and through a branch office in Brownfield, Colo. The ministry's goal, according to its purpose statement, is "to glorify the Triune God by providing books, Bibles and other Christian resources to adult and youth inmates for the purpose of turning their hearts to Him through Jesus Christ in love and faithful service."

Prisoners throughout the United States, as well as internationally, recognize the love of Jesus pouring into their cells through this ministry.

CLI, founded by Kathleen Skaar in 1996, continues to expand its outreach. After receiving Jesus at a women's retreat in 1995, Kathleen found her faith growing through reading Christian

books in addition to her Bible. Her heart's desire was for others to have a similar experience through readily available Bibles and writings that honor and glorify God.

The first outreach of CLI began with a community library in the YMCA. In 2002 Kathleen's husband, Anders, reached out to prison chaplains with extra books for placement. The chaplains' enthusiasm was so great and the prison population's need was so desperate that in 2006 the focus of CLI was refined to help those with the most potential for dramatic life change. The key for opening prisoners' hearts to God's Word was found in their confinement.

On October 4, 2012, a fund-raiser held in Atlanta included a testimony from a former prisoner, Kyle Bass, who

now works part-time as a prison chaplain. He spoke about new life through Jesus via CLI ministry efforts.

In and out of prison for serious crimes, including manufacture of methamphetamine, he had totally lost any reliability with his family. His son, Austin, had grown weary of hearing promises from his dad to do better and not continue in a life of crime. Ultimately, his father's imprisonments resulted in a life resigned to hatred for him. But God, working through CLI, had greater plans for the prisoner and his son.

In order to receive materials through CLI, prisoners must fill out an application. In his testimony, Kyle said he did not like applications because in the past they meant only one thing: "We don't want you." Finally, he found



CLI founder Kathleen Skaar and her husband, Anders, with Kyle and Austin Bass. Kyle became a Christian and grew in the Lord in prison as a result of books CLI sent there.

# EDUCATION

someone who wanted him. He found Jesus through CLI and discovered his gift of reaching other prisoners for Christ while serving time.

He was also able to reconcile with his family. Austin came up while his father was giving his testimony, and they hugged. Austin told what a change the efforts of CLI had enabled in his dad. They now are working together in youth ministry.

Jesus said that people who visit prisoners are doing it for Him (Matthew 25:34-40). We can't all physically visit prisoners, but we can all reach a prisoner through a Bible, book, or financial donation to CLI.

## Love Packages

Love Packages operates out of offices in Butler, Ill. The ministry began in 1975 when Steven Schmidt keenly felt God directing him to use excess Christian resources to meet the needs of third-world Christian workers who had no teaching materials.

Steven had found salvation in Christ simply by reading the Bible on his own. Consequently, he realized the importance of Bible ownership. And his heart was opened to respond to God's call to help people who had no Christian resources.

As a child unaware of Jesus, Steven told his grandmother, "I'm going to be a missionary in India." At the time, he had no idea that as an adult he would supply Bibles and Christian literature to missionaries around the world.

Love Packages' shipping containers carry the precious cargo of Jesus' love in tangible forms: Bibles, books, Sunday-school curriculum, daily devotionals, magazines, and even workbooks.

According to the ministry's January/February newsletter, "in the past 7 years we have shipped out 6,264 tons of literature to the nations. How much is that really? It is over 350 million pieces of literature. This very day there are hundreds of thousands of people



Children in Bangladesh enjoy the art materials from Love Packages.

reading our literature, and God is at work."

Isaiah 55:11 says God's word will not return empty when it goes out, and testimonies come in daily verifying the truth of that pronouncement. Two examples of testimonies appeared in donor newsletters last year:

Philippines: "Thank you very much for the books and the Bibles that you always send to us. To read these books it makes us to know more about our Lord Jesus. They make us to grow more spiritually and to know what is wrong and right so that when I go out I will choose the right road."

Jamaica: "Thank you for the DL Moody books. Secret Power. I have been using them as I preach at various churches. I will be giving some away to leaders tonight. We shared the VBS materials with nearly 500 churches. It met a real big need!"

Love Packages has no boundaries of outreach. Approximately 20 people read each donation that goes out. Not everyone is able to read resources in English; however, many countries teach English in the schools. People who can read it then share what they've learned about Jesus.

Through donations of books and Christian materials or financial gifts to Love Packages, people who can't physically become foreign missionaries can take part in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

*continued on page 33*

## Send Your Donations

### Christian Library International

3800 A Hillcrest Dr.

Raleigh, NC 27610

919-212-8122

[www.christianlibraryinternational.org](http://www.christianlibraryinternational.org)

Download a cartoon to publicize your book drive: [www.christianlibraryinternational.org/files/CLI%20Cartoon.pdf](http://www.christianlibraryinternational.org/files/CLI%20Cartoon.pdf).

### Love Packages

220 Union St.

Butler, IL 62015

217-532-6701

[www.lovepackages.org](http://www.lovepackages.org)

# Creating Continuity

by Jeanetta Chrystie

Does panic or chaos follow when a longtime library worker announces he or she is “retiring” or taking a break from working in the church library?

This response is often due to each worker carrying a select amount of knowledge or skill in a certain aspect of the library’s functions. Businesses call this corporate knowledge, and companies often suffer when a key person leaves.

We can avoid this problem by taking preventative steps to preserve everyone’s knowledge.

## Stage 1: Document Responsibilities

Most churches have more than one volunteer working in the library. To document each person’s contribution (responsibilities) in the smooth functioning of the library, take these essential first steps to preserve your library’s “organizational knowledge.”

### Step 1: Job Titles

If your library already has a job title for each person who serves in any capacity, then skip this step. Sometimes one person may handle multiple functions, which is fine. Just create a title for each person, so you are ready for step 2.

Examples of titles include:

- Head librarian, reports to the church staff.
- Assistant librarian for facilities, fills in when the head librarian is absent and monitors the physical aspects of the library.
- Assistant librarian for materials, may

also substitute for the head librarian on selected days and monitors overdue and damaged materials.

Additional titles might include:

- Acquisitions librarian, handles the money and guides purchases.
- Scheduling librarian, assigns and tracks who is working and when.
- Records librarian, handles accessions and cataloging.
- Shelf reader, checks that books and other materials are in the right places.
- Children’s librarian, takes charge of the children’s section and promotion.
- Audiovisuals librarian, handles DVDs, multimedia Bible studies, posters.
- Repairs and maintenance specialist.
- Publicity and displays specialist.
- Bible-study resources specialist
- Library helper (s).

While it may seem odd or silly to create titles for each worker, it is an essential preparation step.

### Step 2: Reporting Structure

Determine a hierarchy or reporting structure among the staff. Do specialists report to the head librarian or to an assistant librarian? For instance, if you have a large library with several volunteers, your reporting structure might look similar to this:

- Head librarian reports to a church staff member, often an assistant pastor or deacon.
- Assistant librarian for facilities, assistant librarian for materials, and children’s librarian report to the head librarian.
- Shelf reader, equipment librarian, and publicity and displays specialist report to the assistant librarian for facilities.
- Acquisitions librarian, records librarian, audiovisuals librarian, and Bible-study resources specialist report to the assistant librarian for materials.

Alternatively, the acquisitions librarian may report to the head librarian. Or the head librarian may serve both roles.

Avoid thinking you must use these example position titles. They are merely to get you started thinking about possible descriptive titles for each person’s unique contributions to your church library.

For instance, people tend to gravitate toward doing similar activities each time they are in the library. Some tend to help at the checkout desk, others prefer to catalog or repair books.

Simply create titles that reflect the activities in your library. The title is not the important point. The goal is to have some kind of title for each worker to

*Document each person’s contribution (responsibilities) in the smooth functioning of the library.*

*The time invested will preserve valuable how-to knowledge from the library staff and provide activities guidance when a need arises for a new volunteer to take over for a longtime “irreplaceable” worker.*

provide clarity for the remaining stages of documentation.

## **Stage 2: Document Current Processes**

### ***Step 3: Regular Duties***

When each library worker has a title, even if it is unofficial as far as the church is concerned, you are ready to list all of that person’s activities.

For each position title, create a “Regular Duties” section. Start by listing regular activities, such as *checks out books on first and third Sunday mornings*. Include with each listed item when that person does the activity. Perhaps all cataloging work happens on Wednesdays at 4:00-5:00 P.M. before the church dinner. Or overdue materials notices are sent after an item is two weeks overdue.

### ***Step 4: Optional or Seasonal Activities***

After listing regularly recurring activi-

ties with what to do and when to do it recorded beside each, then list optional activities.

Perhaps all volunteers do shelf reading if they are working at the checkout desk and no patrons are in the library. Simply state in each position description, under the “Optional Activities” section, that during inactive times library workers are to check the shelves for misplaced books or the checkout box for misfiled book cards.

Also included in this section are worker activities that relate to a specific church event, holiday, or other annual event, such as Christmas open houses and reading clubs.

If possible, designate someone other than the head librarian as the go-to person for reading-club planning, questions, and activities. Doing so allows that person to focus on overall library planning, monitoring operations, and reporting to the church staff—without being overwhelmed with the additional duties of running a reading club.

## **Stage 3: Review Processes for Best Practices**

### ***Step 5: Review for Completeness***

After completing steps 1-4, you are ready for the final stage. This is when all workers read everyone else’s list. Then answer the following questions:

- Is each list complete?
- If not, what current activities are not documented on anyone’s list?
- Who is currently doing each of these undocumented activities?

When you are satisfied that every activity is documented, continue to step 6.

### ***Step 6: Check for Appropriateness***

Look at each person’s activities list and determine if that position title is the best fit for each activity.

- Does each activity belong in that position title’s list?
- If this is the best person to do that

activity, should the position title be altered to reflect that responsibility?

- If the activity should be moved to another position title’s list, which one?
- If someone else is going to take on an activity, does the person need training?

## ***Step 7: Monitor and Update These “Living” Documents***

Now that you’ve completed all the position descriptions, review them monthly for a year. Doing so provides two benefits:

(1) It aids in catching omissions that no one thought of until that activity came around again, so they can be documented.

(2) It helps workers write down basic instructions about their process and timing for doing each activity, shortly after doing it while it is still fresh in their minds.

By the end of a year, these “living” documents for each position title should include a list of regular and optional activities, with when and how-to instructions for each one. This list is not a replacement for training, but it should provide enough guidance to help other workers keep the library running smoothly during someone’s absence.

Following these steps in the three documentation stages will take time. But the time invested will preserve valuable how-to knowledge from the library staff and provide activities guidance when a need arises for a new volunteer to take over for a longtime “irreplaceable” worker. And avoid panic and chaos.

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

## Bible & Theology

### **ABRAHAM: The Tests of Faith**

by **H. Ray Dunning**

**Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-2880-4, PB, 126 pages, \$11.99**

Could you serve God while knowing next to nothing about Him? Dunning explores the character of a man who not only did, but did so in an exemplary way. He traces Abraham's life from his departure from Mesopotamia to the near-sacrifice of his son, dwelling on tests God laid forth for Abraham in molding his faith.

Dunning, a retired theology professor, does an admirable job of fleshing out Abraham, illustrating the doubts he must have experienced and the transformation he underwent in his travels. In a bit of a confounding move, the author often compares Abraham's experiences to those of John Wesley. The book's pacing suffers after the chapter on the sacrifice of Isaac when it ends abruptly. Overall, despite some blunt stylistic truncations and odd modern comparisons, the investigation of Abraham is solid, offering valuable insight into one of the most influential men of faith. EPN

### **HOW TO SURVIVE THE END OF THE WORLD**

by **Bob Hostetler**

**Leafwood, 978-0-8911-2325-5, PB, 205 pages, \$14.99**

With fears of nuclear holocausts, global pandemics, and political apocalypses, the end of the world is scary to think about. This book attempts to confront those fears with the book of Revelation. Hostetler wrote, "The end of the world is near. But it doesn't have to be the end, if you only know how to survive it." This book attempts to explain where we need to put our trust and what to expect in coming days.

Hostetler is a pastor, speaker, and popular writer. His style makes the passages easy to understand and inspiring. The book covers elements of politics, commerce, economics, war, famine, and even environmental issues. The 12 chapters, each with a concluding prayer, are perfect for a group study. Thorough notes and an appendix end the study. This book is detailed, contemporary, and biblically solid but not lightweight. KSI

### **INERRANCY AND THE GOSPELS: A God-Centered Approach to the Challenges of Harmonization**

by **Vern Sheridan Poythress**

**Crossway, 978-1-4335-2860-6, PB, 238 pages, \$17.99**

Despite the title, this book is more about harmonizing the four Gospels than the inerrancy of Scripture. It contains 29 short chapters in seven parts: challenge of, principles for, attitudes in, and special issues in harmonization, as well as cases and speeches in the Gospels.

The text seems to be loosely organized and, in sections, difficult to read and repetitive. But there's a lot of good content. Professor Poythress cites mostly Reformed theologians, so I recommend this book only for Reformed and Presbyterian church libraries. LRK

### **LEADING THE WAY THROUGH DANIEL**

**978-0-7369-5164-7, 222 pages**

### **LEADING THE WAY THROUGH EPHESIANS**

**978-0-7369-5162-3, 170 pages**

### **A Devotional Commentary for Everyone**

by **Michael Youssef**

**Harvest House, PB, \$12.99**

These two volumes are part of a new series of readable commentaries that are ideal for new Christians and people who have not read other commentaries. I suspect they began as sermons. Pastor Youssef quotes the English Standard Version, then paraphrases it in

modern English, so readers can understand the verses. Then he adds excellent contemporary applications.

Youssef doesn't show that he has read any of the great commentaries on Ephesians or Daniel. In fact, in his endnotes he refers more often to websites than to books. And the books are only occasionally religious. Surprisingly, he shows no influence of his doctorate in social anthropology and little of his master's in theology. But I highly recommend these commentaries for your church library because they are so well written that anyone can read them and understand these Bible books better. LRK

### **MISREADING SCRIPTURE WITH WESTERN EYES: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible**

by **E. Randolph Richards & Brandon J. O'Brien**

**InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3782-3, PB, 240 pages, \$16**

This is a delightfully provocative book. The authors compare our misunderstandings to an iceberg with three parts: "Above the Surface" (mores, race and ethnicity, language), "Just Below the Surface" (individualism and collectivism, honor/shame and right/wrong, time), and "Deep Below the Surface" (rules and relationships, virtue and vice, it's all about me instead of us). The authors emphasize that the Bible is a non-Western book and when we read it with Western presuppositions, we often misinterpret it.

Richards has experience with a non-Western culture; he was a missionary in Indonesia for years before he became a dean and Bible professor. He and O'Brien write as if they're speaking directly to readers. The book is easy to read, and every page is fascinating. I enthusiastically recommend it for every church library. But don't be surprised if some of your favorite verses are given new interpretations. LRK

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## READING THE NEW TESTAMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME

by **Ronald J. Allen**

**Eerdmans, 978-0-8028-6735-3, PB, 202 pages, \$16**

Allen states this book is “for people who have never picked up a copy of the New Testament.” He provides vast research in regard to the connection between Judaism and Christianity. But so much space is devoted to that topic that the rest of the book suffers from a lack of additional content breadth.

Despite its conversational tone, ability to clear up some common biblical misconceptions, and occasional clever turns of phrases, this book fails to deliver overall. Allen, A New Testament professor, is quick to point out that there are many other scriptural interpretations, but he believes they are wrong. To that end, unfortunately, he underscores his interpretations by offering forced analogies, needless personal information, and strong biases.

What we have here is a compendium of Allen’s opinions regarding limited passages in the New Testament, not an omnibus of standard, accepted interpretations of the parables, sermons, and chronologies of the collected books. MM

## REAL FAITH: What’s at the Heart of the Gospel?

by **John Murray**

**Ambassador, 978-1-62020-042-1, PB, 206 pages, \$13.99**

Theology books can seem dense and complex with no apparent application to real life, but that is not the case with this one. Pastor and theologian Murray presents Christianity 101, using simple language and a conversational tone to answer basic questions about Christianity, such as why we believe, what Christian conversion is, and why being a Christian is so difficult.

As Murray moves from the abstract pillars of our faith to the concrete expectations of a believer, he uses personal stories to make the reading en-

gaging and relatable. Each chapter leads into questions for group discussion to generate more thought and dialogue. Whether one is a new believer or a 50-year follower, this book is a great source of uncomplicated explanations to the questions we have all asked or been asked. CP

## RISEN: 50 Reasons Why the Resurrection Changed Everything

by **Steven D. Mathewson**

**Baker, 978-0-8010-1514-4, PB, 143 pages, \$10.99**

Christians spend a lot of time surveying the wondrous cross, as they rightly should. However, there is more to our salvation than Christ’s death. We are also witnesses to His resurrection. This is the focus of *Risen*, a book that’s part devotional and part resurrection study. It may be read as a private devotional during the 50 days of Pentecost, be used as a group Bible study, or read as a theological text.

Each chapter is reinforced by historical and biblical research, allusions, and personal illustrations. Some parts overlap slightly and could have a sharper focus, but it’s still a thoughtful message with many points worthy of consideration. Pastors, teachers, and librarians will find this to be a solid reference source related to the resurrection. KH

## Biography & Memoir

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SENT

by **Hilary Alan**

**WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73157-9, PB, 243 pages, \$14.99**

Have you ever ignored a calling? The Alans thought they had. Despite money in the bank, nice cars, and a beautiful home, they felt poor in spirit. Oddly enough, when God called them to give up everything to become mis-

sionaries in a third-world country, they felt blessed, enriched, and fulfilled. This book chronicles their decision, challenges, trials, and triumphs. Their story is part personal testimony and part adventure saga.

Alan states repeatedly that God will reveal His plan for each person’s life and until each Christian yields to the call, neither victory nor peace will be gained. Is it easy? No. But as Alan points out, it wasn’t easy for the New Testament disciples and apostles either, yet they persisted and were able to do great things for God’s glory. She believes similar opportunities exist today via teaching, preaching, witnessing, serving, feeding, clothing, and building. Just as her family discovered a whole new sense of community, readers can find equal harmony by using prayer and Bible study to discover and fulfill a calling. People seeking God’s will for their futures will find this story informative. ALG

## SLEEPING COCONUTS

by **John & Bonnie Nystrom**

**Wycliffe, 978-0-938978-05-3, PB, 251 pages, \$12.99**

While a family of translators is on sabbatical in the States, a tsunami of three gigantic waves hits the village they call home. With the devastation leaving the town flattened and those left alive exposed to the elements, the Nystroms fly back to survey the damage and do what they can to help. This book details what happened and how God used the destruction to bring the people of the Apop village in Papua New Guinea closer to him.

Although the writing is not excellent, anyone interested in missions or translation work will enjoy this book. It includes chapters of translated accounts from nationals, maps, and even a glossary of terms pertaining to the culture. The Nystroms have served with Wycliffe for more than 25 years, translating multiple languages in Papua New Guinea. KSI

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Children

### Picture Books

#### BIBLE DETECTIVE

by Peter Martin

Lion, 978-0-7459-8276-4, HB, 27 pages, \$14.99

Imagine *Where's Waldo?* goes biblical. A two-page drawing shows an elaborately detailed scene, "Abraham's Nomadic Encampment," filled with appropriate pictures. On the sides of the page it says, "Look for a boy carrying his little brother" and "Spot a baby cradled in a hammock." The child then has to scrutinize the drawing to locate these specific items. It's a storybook, game, and history lesson all rolled into one. Other scenes depict Noah assembling his vast array of animals, Moses constructing the tabernacle, Paul preaching in the middle of Corinth, and Jesus taken to the tomb after His crucifixion.

At the back of the book are small drawings numbered in sequence to show where each item is located on the larger, color drawings in case the child cannot find any. The book allows parents to educate children about Bible stories because there are small scenes, such as Jesus upsetting the tables of the moneylenders. This book is both challenging and educational. Kids will love it. DEH

#### GOD GAVE US EASTER

by Lisa Tawn Bergren

WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73072-5, HB, 32 pages, \$10.99

Little Cub asks his polar bear father why Easter is so important. The father uses everyday objects to explain the significance of Easter. Picking up an Easter egg, he explains that a baby chick eventually breaks free of the confining shell and exits to live. Likewise, Jesus broke free of the tomb and rose

from the dead, our living sacrifice. Also, just as big trees drop pine cones that seem to die, they can be born again when they sprout into new seedlings. Similarly, anyone dead in sin can be born again through the salvation Christ offers and begin to grow and prosper and thrive.

This book's simple theology is easy for youngsters to follow and is biblically accurate. The colorful artwork shows scenes of nature. The themes of home, security, love, and faith will resonate well with children. DEH

#### MY FIRST BIBLE STORIES

by Christina Goodings

Lion, 978-0-7459-6342-6, HB, 22 pages, \$12.99

Targeted at young children, this book is a homogenized presentation of Bible stories and history. The drawings are basic circular and square images in bright colors. Only positive aspects of the Bible are included in each vignette.

For instance, the Garden of Eden is shown as a paradise for Adam and Eve; but no mention is made of them being expelled from it for sin. Noah and his family and the animals ride safely in the ark during the flood; but no mention is made of millions of people drowning, only that "it's time

to start the world again." In New Testament stories, there are scenes of Jesus with children. But His parables are presented as stories on their own, not delineated as lessons or Bible events.

Obviously age sensitive, this book is a way of introducing preschoolers to aspects of Scripture. In-depth theology it is not, but this age group can't understand it anyway. DEH

## Juvenile

#### 1001 BIBLE QUESTIONS KIDS ASK

compiled by Sarah Krueger

Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72515-2, PB,

352 pages, \$6.99

For any parent or grandparent with curious youngsters who present baffling, yet serious theological questions, this handy reference text can be a rescuer. Divided into sections for the Old and New Testaments, it takes on the challenges of explaining elements of the Bible that may seem strange to modern readers. Krueger examines culture, such as the question of how David could say he loved Jonathan "more wonderful than a woman," by explaining that women were considered inferior in those days and wives were possessions, rather than equals.

She also interprets language, such as answering a question about what sackcloth is by explaining that the Hebrew word *sak* means coarse, rough, dark cloth. In examining geography, she explains that the "town of David" is a pseudonym for Bethlehem. Other questions explain foods, sacrifices, marriage, worship, politics, commerce, and music.

Each answer is concise, and each question provides a Bible verse as a reference point. Young readers can easily follow the text. DEH

## Early Readers

### SERIES UPDATES

I Can Read! The Berenstain Bears

by Stan & Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain

Zonderkidz, \$3.99

*God Made the Colors*

978-0-310-72507-7

*Thank God for Good Health*

978-0-310-72503-9

# BOOK REVIEWS

## ALONE YET NOT ALONE

by Tracy Leininger Craven

Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-73053-8, PB, 160 pages, \$9.99

You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only option you have. This novel, set during the French and Indian War, follows Barbara's journey of bravery. Two Indians capture Barbara and her sister after murdering the girls' father and brother. The sisters are separated when taken to live among different tribes. In danger of being forced to marry a brave, Barbara escapes to safety with three other captives.

Craven excels at description, but forced dialogue and clichéd Christian elements detract from the story. The plot is jerky, with months to years elapsing between scenes. The characters are emotional, but they lack depth. Suitable for readers who enjoy historical fiction. ES

## LIFE WITH LILY

The Adventures of Lily Lapp #1

by Mary Ann Kinsinger & Suzanne Woods Fisher

Revell, 978-0-8007-2132-9, PB, 280 pages, \$12.99

Kinsinger and Fisher shine a new light on Amish life in a way kids will enjoy. We join Lily and her little

brother as they discover new and exciting things to do on their family's farm and in their community.

As readers follow Lily helping with food preparations, learning to sew, working in the garden, tending the animals, caring for younger children, and attending worship services, the Amish way of life is revealed in a showing, rather than telling manner. Along the way, Lily sometimes gets into mischief by being a curious child, which makes the stories humorous and realistic.

Each chapter is a stand-alone short story until the final quarter of the book when all the events pull together for a closing sequence that prepares readers for the sequels. Targeted at 8- to 10-year-old readers, this book shares religious values while explaining a distinctive culture. Children will be entertained and enlightened. FB

## THE TRUE ACCOUNT OF ADAM & EVE

by Ken Ham

Master Books, 978-0-89051-670-6, HB, 56 pages, \$15.99

This is a long, detailed book, despite the fact that half the pages are brightly colored paintings of biblical scenes. Ham, noted historian and archeologist, presents the story of creation, adding some of his own twists. For instance, his writing and the supporting artwork suggest that dinosaurs (vegetarians) lived in the Garden of Eden

Ham rigorously attacks theories that say Adam and Eve were metaphors of what was evolutionary evolving of humans. He insists they were real people, documents their actions and decisions, and explains that Adam is blamed for sin instead of Eve because God appointed him head of the family. When telling of the shedding of animal blood to provide clothing, Ham shares the gospel message of Christ's blood shed for atonement of mankind. He also explains genealogies related to Noah after the flood and lists

nine Bible books that refer to Adam.

This is simplified but not easy reading. However, it will help ground older elementary kids in the biblical doctrine of creation as opposed to evolution. DEH

## Christian Education

### DODGEBALL THEOLOGY: A Youth Worker's Guide to Exploring Play and Imagination

by Blair Spindle

Barefoot, 978-0-8341-5114-7, PB, 126 pages, \$14.99

There are many ways to play dodgeball. All players have to do is use their imaginations, and fun follows. This same game strategy can be used in youth ministry, resulting in a theology filled with play and imagination, just as Jesus used imagination to energize people. Youth workers can love their students and offer God's compassion integrated into imaginative ministry. Dodgeball theology can be foundational in the formation of a youth's faith.

Thirteen chapters are divided into two sections on theory and practice. Topics include a creative God, authentic play, freedom in Christ, God-ordained moments, the Sabbath, creative worship, devotions, and trips. Four examples of imaginative play adventures are presented with two different outcomes for each one.

Spindle has 20 years experience in youth ministry and a doctorate in child, youth, and family studies. The text is biblically sound, contains lots of quotes from respected theologians, and is written with a conversational style. Recommended for church and school libraries and youth leaders. LGM

## SERIES UPDATES

The Adventures of Lily Lapp

by Mary Ann Kinsinger &

Suzanne Woods Fisher

Revell, 978-0-8007-2133-6, \$12.99

#2 *A New Home for Lily*

The Enchanted Attic

by L. L. Samson

Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72799-6,

\$7.99

#3 *Dueling with the Three Musketeers*

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Curriculum

**CHASE: Chasing after the Heart of God**

by Jennie Allen

Nelson, 978-1-4185-4934-3; kit with study guide, leader's guide, DVD, and conversation cards; \$39.99

We pursue things we think will make us happy, but nothing brings satisfaction. Women can chase after God as David did, and find Him filling the empty space in their hearts. David's example shows what God wants from us, and this exciting guide goes deep into the study of his life and prayers.

Seven interactive lessons involve reading Scripture, writing, listening to God, and completing projects. Each lesson can be worked on throughout the week, concluding with a group meeting. Conversation cards (Scripture questions) start a deep time of discussion and sharing. The leader's guide includes teaching tips, info on what to watch out for, and types of learners.

Once again, Allen cuts to what really matters between God and us. Scripturally sound research on David and personal illustrations provide simple, yet profound truths. Well-written words pierce the heart. Allen has a master's degree in biblical studies. Highly recommended for women's study groups. LGM

## Christian Living

**24/6: A Prescription for a Happier, Healthier Life**

by Matthew Sleeth

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-7228-0, PB, 204 pages, \$12.99

When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, he expected believers to follow all of them—not half, not

three-quarters, not even nine out of 10. Why is this seemingly simple task so hard? Sleeth writes about the difficult, yet much needed task of honoring the fourth commandment by keeping the Sabbath holy. A medical doctor, he describes the impact setting aside a day of rest has on our bodies, relationships, and world and the importance of not negating that special day. He says a day of rest provides relaxation, family community, emotional composure, mental focus, and spiritual discipline.

Sleeth effectively gets his point across by applying his principles to events that happened to him. His arguments fly in the face of modern time-management theories, but they are solidly in line with biblical teachings. HS

**BUYER BEWARE: Finding Truth in the Marketplace of Ideas**

by Janet Parshall

Moody, 978-0-8024-0561-6, PB, 190 pages, \$14.99

How do we live biblically in the marketplace of ideas? Parshall, a radio talk-show host and speaker, examines several important and sometimes controversial topics with the help of scriptural truth, the core of which comes from the prophet Jeremiah. Topics range from evangelism to marriage to treachery and even deception.

She begins by introducing John Bunyan, who is referenced throughout because his book *The Pilgrim's Progress* focused on temptations, personal disciplines, and the lure of a fallen world. She shows parallels to modern temptations related to Internet pornography; illegal drug use; prostitution; crass music lyrics; legalized abortion; and provocative language, clothing, and behavior.

Her reactions and perspectives show that what Jeremiah warned about related to a debased society and what Bunyan presented as an allegory are all too prevalent today. Only a return to God-honoring morals will heal our present situation. DH III

**DESTINY: Let God Use You Like He Made You**

by Tony Evans

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4997-2, PB, 199 pages, \$12.99

Many Christians wonder what God's plan is for their lives, and *Destiny* addresses this important issue. Splitting his book into three segments, pastor Evans wrote about the importance, ingredients, and imperatives of a Christian's destiny. Using biblical evidence, he laid out the essentials for understanding God's will. With prayer for discernment, planning in following God's teachings, and obedience in Christian service, individuals can find their specific callings in life.

*Destiny* is elementary in style but powerful in application. Loaded with Scripture and pertinent anecdotes, this book gives a practical explanation for determining what one's destiny is and how it relates to God. Unfortunately, elements of the book are tired, and sometimes Evans seems to stretch the context and meaning of verses in order to enforce his own ideas. His book is not an end-all but a good, basic, starting point for seeking God's will. JD

**DIRTY GOD: Jesus in the Trenches**

by Johnnie Moore

Nelson, 978-0-8499-6451-0, PB, 204 pages, \$15.99

Jesus never presented himself as a big-city guy with a lifestyle bent on impressing people. Instead, He chose to live amidst a broken, sinful world. Moore outlines the doctrine of grace while introducing readers to a Jesus who reaches out to us even when we are at our worst. Moore assures us we serve a God who will go into the darkest trenches to show us His love.

Unfortunately, in straining to make his metaphor work, Moore's logic is often shallow; and some of his anecdotes completely miss the mark. Additionally, the readership is polemic, in that the illustrations are focused on young people but the theology as-

# BOOK REVIEWS

sumes readers have been entrenched in the Bible for decades. Scripture references are pertinent, but the elucidation by the author is difficult to follow. Thus, the intent of this book's message is genuine; but its delivery is convoluted. RMM

## **FRESH AIR**

by Chris Hodges

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-7125-2, HB, 219 pages, \$19.99

Often we lose fire for God and sink into the mundane and can't find a way out. Pastor Hodges says, "The purpose of this book is to put wind in your sails again. To get you unstuck. To move you through the storm. To help you reclaim your compass and redirect your course."

This book provides helpful thoughts for regaining the right perspective in being alive in God, including a more intentional prayer life, service to others, intensive Bible study, a tithing challenge, and improved health. Although this is not exactly a self-help book, it provides well-thought-out, organized instructions in each chapter to help readers enhance their spiritual growth. KS

## **GOD'S UNLIKELY PATH TO SUCCESS: How He Uses Less-Than-Perfect People**

by Tony Evans

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-3998-0, PB, 192 pages, \$12.99

Throughout history God has chosen some of the most unlikely people to be heroes in His plan for redemption. Pastor Evans illustrates this point, urging readers to remember that if God can use murderers, prostitutes, and liars, he can certainly use them as well.

Evans's style is direct, engaging, and often humorous. He tells the story of each character well and uses Scripture clearly and effectively to reveal new depth in old stories. He approaches readers' fears and feelings of hopelessness with sensitivity, while also en-

couraging them to believe in God's promises and step out in faith. This book holds important reminders many Christians need to hear and could be the inspiration they need to reclaim hope and purpose in their lives. MJ

## **JESUS: PURE & SIMPLE**

by Wayne Cordeiro

Bethany, 978-0-7642-0351-0, HB, 202 pages, \$19.99

Many Christians have become consumed by a subculture that revolves around a burdensome checklist of good deeds and merchandise in order to prove their faith. Pastor Cordeiro reveals the simplicity of everything as measured by comparison to Jesus and in relationship with Him.

Cordeiro uses anecdotes and personal stories to deliver a devotional-style message on how to get back to Jesus. Using Christ as the standard, he explores everything from involvement in ministry to personal contentment with one's career, family, church, health, and goals. His book is simple in delivery but not in content, as it provides a fresh view of the "real stuff" of Christianity. Each chapter ends with applicable questions for reflection and discussion. This book will minister to anyone who feels life is complicated and too demanding. Simplification, peace, and contentment are revealed herein. CP

## **LETTING GO: Becoming Who You Are Meant to Be**

by Steven L. King

OakTara, 978-1-60290-328-9, PB, 172 pages, \$15.95

Life coach King proposes getting rid of toxic emotions that impair our lives through redemptive "self-talk" and "letting go," including a symbolic physical "scooping away" of negative reactions from our bodies.

Consider this a crossover self-help book. King informs readers he is a Christian but uses only one Bible quotation. In chapter 2, he says his method

can be combined with other "healing modalities, conventional and alternative, for maximum benefit." He adds his method will work "with any belief system and will not compromise any system, spiritual or religious," and that it will help readers "no matter what your understanding and experience of God is." Although the book holds a helpful mirror to negative mindsets, these comments, plus teachings on dreams, were red flags for me. Not recommended for church libraries. JZ

## **PURSUING JUSTICE: The Call to Live and Die for Bigger Things**

by Ken Wytsma with D. R. Jacobson Nelson, 978-0-8499-6466-4, HB, 328 pages, \$19.99

Wytsma explains the meaning and purpose of sacrifice as it applies to the Christian life. The emphasis is on the duty Christians have to follow Jesus' example of self-denial as a model of living for others. Although it goes against human nature to put others before oneself, doing so sets Christians apart. If Christ could wash people's feet, cook fish over an open fire for His disciples, and labor as a carpenter, we should be able to develop a servant's heart too.

This book examines a crucial aspect of faith that many Christians fail to understand, much less follow. Wytsma's message is a wake-up call for Christians everywhere to show the world that cooperation, fellowship, assistance, and love lead to lives that serve God's purpose. Written in an easy-to-follow style, this is the common person's theology, neither threatening nor admonishing, only encouraging and enlightening. NC

## **SONS AND DAUGHTERS: Spiritual Orphans Finding Our Way Home**

by Brady Boyd

Zondervan, 978-0-310-32769-1, PB, 254 pages, \$14.99

Many Christians, according to Pastor Boyd, live as if they are parentless,

# BOOK REVIEWS

even in the embrace of their loving heavenly Father. Boyd begins by explaining why followers of Jesus often try to earn His love. Then he focuses on the freedom of adoption into God's family.

The book is written clearly, without complicated theology, and is brimming with compassion. The chapter organization makes it easy to follow Boyd's examination of "spiritual orphanage." He reaches conclusions through biblical references, as well as personal anecdotes, with an emphasis on the story of the prodigal son. However, the book's length, combined with the relatively narrow topic, makes for a slightly repetitive narrative. And frequent examples pulled from Boyd's counseling experiences in the ministry might make this text a better choice for pastors, rather than a more general readership. VT

**UNLEADER: Reimagining Leadership ... and Why We Must**  
by Lance Ford  
Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-2885-9, PB, 186 pages, \$14.99

According to Ford, Christian leadership books are a dime a dozen. Everyone is enthralled with the idea of being a leader, boss, or commander. But Ford explains how being a servant is equally as important in the eyes of Jesus as being a leader.

Despite its somewhat repetitive nature for the sake of emphasis and enthusiasm, *Unleader* delivers an important message that puts the focus of leadership back on service to Jesus, rather than on the one leading the Christian service. Specific lessons focus on the power of humility, leading by example, trusting enough to delegate, and sharing praise. Many of the biblical examples are already familiar, but some of the more contemporary examples of lay leaders with servants' hearts are interesting and applicable. Men, particularly, will gain new perspectives from this book. MALT

**WALKING ON WATER WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE DROWNING**  
by Tommy Nelson & Steve Leavitt  
Tyndale, 978-1-5899-7722-8, PB, 158 pages, \$14.99

Feeling frustrated or overworked? Are you depressed or anxious about the future? Pastor Nelson and coauthor Leavitt have been there too. Readers who have fallen into despair will be able to relate to the stories they tell. This book explains how even a Christian can fall into depression and anxiety. It answers questions depressed people frequently ask and shows how to seek help from God for recovery. The message of Psalm 34:18 is repeated throughout the text: "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted."

This book is written in a way that puts readers at ease and makes them feel less alone. It is easy to understand, yet powerful. Seeing that Jonah, Job, Noah, Jeremiah, and even Jesus could be driven to the point of tears shows that human depression is not something sinful, only sad. It needs to be faced and dealt with in ways that are sympathetic, realistic, and positive. This book points in those directions. KSI

**WHEN LIFE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE: Real Answers for Tough Times and Tough Questions**  
by Leslie Haskin  
Bethany, 978-0-7642-0995-6, PB, 230 pages, \$13.99

Death, pain, and suffering are topics most people, including Christians, don't enjoy discussing. However, these topics, as well as violence, betrayal, illness, failure, and social disorder, are the kinds of subjects Haskin tackles.

Combining scriptural references with personal experiences, Haskin fearlessly addresses the many "problem" questions that plague Christians today. Haskin is a survivor of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. She relates her near-death experience with honesty and initiates anecdotal discussions about the pur-

pose of real faith in God. Readers will appreciate her wisdom and connect with her straightforward perspective of the Christian life. Note, however, that Haskin takes a strong charismatic stance, which may make some readers uncomfortable. The book is realistic, yet upbeat. For suffering individuals, it may provide encouragement and restoration of faith. KLT

**WHY HOLINESS MATTERS: We've Lost Our Way—but We Can Find It Again**  
by Tyler Braun  
Moody, 978-0-8024-0507-4, PB, 161 pages, \$13.99

Maintaining holiness is a mysterious command from God, which has been discussed and researched for generations in Christian circles. Braun explains what holiness is and how it may be obtained. His purpose is to look at how God shows holiness and how Christians are to follow. Specifically, he addresses how holiness is connected to shame, God's wrath, love, community, values, and artistry. He also mentions previous opinions of what being holy has been viewed as in past generations.

At times, Braun, a worship pastor and counselor, respectfully presents differing views, using Scripture, personal experience, and research. His comments are iconoclastic, original, and thought provoking. I recommend this book for church classes and individual Christians willing to take another look at what holiness can be for modern believers. SCC

**WRECKED: When a Broken World Slams into Your Comfortable Life**  
by Jeff Goins  
Moody, 978-0-8024-0492-3, PB, 169 pages, \$13.99

To find meaning in life, you must get wrecked. You must encounter the brokenness of this world and allow it to hurt you; break you; and, ultimately, change you. This is the message that Goins declares.

# BOOK REVIEWS

Goins, a blogger, traveler, and non-profit worker, writes from personal experience. He tells the story of the first time he was wrecked during a study-abroad program, then describes how that experience changed him and his lifestyle. With crisp, vivid writing, Goins uses stories from his personal adventures, as well as from his friends, to move readers past their initial “wrecked” experiences toward purposeful, compassionate lifestyles that involve both short and long-term commitments. This inspirational book is a good choice for people returning from short-term mission trips, nonprofit volunteers or employees, and anyone who has been wrecked and wants to know the next step. RAB

## **YEARNING FOR MORE: What Our Longings Tell Us about God and Ourselves**

by Barry Morrow

**InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-5636-7, PB, 192 pages, \$15**

If life can be tough, death can be even harder. Many people today are questioning what the point of life is, and they wonder if there is something after time on Earth. Morrow delves into these questions, discussing a range of reasons why individuals exist, work, plan, achieve, study, share, teach, and reproduce themselves to sustain future generations. Drawing on sources as diverse as King Solomon and C. S. Lewis, he presents a positive outlook on life. Ultimately, he makes a strong case that in being created for fellowship with God, we have innate importance. We should appreciate that truth by expanding life, not living in fear of it.

This book is best read a little at a time, for Morrow can be direct and sobering in some of his assessments and challenges. It takes time to weigh what he shares. However, for a subject as important as the meaning of life, it is good that the text is content heavy and solid. BKB

## **Evangelism**

### **Apologetics**

#### **COLD-CASE CHRISTIANITY: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels**

J. Warner Wallace

**Cook, 978-1-43470-469-6, PB, 288 pages, \$16.99**

Are the New Testament Gospels eyewitness accounts or forgeries? This is the question homicide detective Wallace attempts to answer in this comprehensive investigation. He examines the claims of the Gospel writers and attempts to build a convincing, circumstantial case in favor of them. After establishing his methods of investigation, he tries to answer four vital questions: Were the Gospel writers present at events they recorded? Were they corroborated? Were they accurate? Were they biased?

Wallace treats his investigation like the cold-case homicides he works daily. He dissects every aspect necessary for a full investigation and shows that the Gospels stand up through rigorous tests. Anyone questioning the Gospels or looking to find sturdier ground to stand on should read this book. MDP

### **Evangelism**

#### **BOLD AS LOVE**

by Bob Roberts, Jr.

**Nelson, 978-1-4002-0420-5, PB, 191 pages, \$16.99**

Addressing Christians who are hindered by fear as they try to love everyone, Roberts presents positive aspects of the multifaith journey, underscoring the mandate that Christians should love even their enemies. He explains how he has implemented a system within his church to bring Jews, Muslims, and Christians together under

one roof by using open dialogue, obtaining knowledge about the basis of other religious sects, and offering love and service before attempting conversion.

The first half drags because it is material from a pastoral paper that researched immigration patterns and religion. The second half, however, features interviews and profiles of people who have used bold love and been successful in reaching the lost for Christ. This is when the book becomes more pragmatic and functional for lay readers. Although the topic is an important issue today, the author’s critical tone and admonishing rhetoric may offend readers and make them defensive. This book may be of help to pastors wanting insights on how to make their churches more open to non-Christians, but it has limited appeal to a general readership. CT

#### **THE INVESTED LIFE**

by Joel C. Rosenberg & T. E. Koshy  
**Tyndale, 978-1-4143-7637-0, PB, 278 pages, \$9.99**

Jesus commands us to make disciples of all nations, which means reaching out to people both across the sea and across the road. To help us, the authors build a discipleship model based on Matthew 28:18-20. They provide specific steps and advice on how to use Scripture, befriend unbelievers, share one’s own faith experience, and engage in insightful but not confrontational conversations.

Each chapter contains discussion questions that will be helpful for a small group or Sunday-school class working through the book. Also included are testimonials from the authors, their wives, and their friends. Rosenberg is a best-selling author of end-times novels and Koshy is a pastoral theologian.

Whereas the goal of global evangelism seems to be lofty, the average person can reduce the principles in this book to functional, basic procedures

# BOOK REVIEWS

that make one-on-one witnessing more comfortable and intimate. Church leaders or people wishing to start discipleship groups will find this book to be a handy reference source. KB

**WHAT JESUS STARTED: Joining the Movement, Changing the World** by Steve Addison  
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3659-8, PB, 192 pages, \$15

This book is an in-depth analysis of Christ's ministry and the outreach of his disciples. Addison uses four sections to examine Jesus' influence on both ancient and modern culture, growth and impact of the disciples' ministry, Paul's work with Gentiles, and what ministry can be today.

Addison's practical and well-researched work is detailed but easy to follow. Each section is broken into six concepts that reinforce his overall message. His writing stays interesting because he supports his claims with Scripture and anecdotal examples. The content sometimes seems more academic than personal, however, as there are only a few contemporary illustrations. The included study guide is excellent for small groups and general discussions. I recommend this book to church leaders looking to start ministries and missionaries looking to revitalize their current outreach, which may be too narrow an audience for a church library book. TN

## Family

### Marriage

**FIGHT YOUR WAY TO A BETTER MARRIAGE: How Conflict Can Take You to Deeper Levels of Intimacy** by Greg Smalley  
Howard, 978-1-4165-4483-8, HB, 246 pages, \$21.99

Smalley says marital conflict at its

core is the many faces of fear (feeling disrespected, rejected, or not validated, etc.), and working through these fears will help marriages and spouses grow. Laying out common hot-button issues and explaining the tendency to fight or flight, he suggests applying a LUVE-tAlk approach (Listen, Understand, Validate, Empathize, and Apologize) for dealing with conflict.

Smalley brings this topic to layman's level with several charts, using everyday language to describe emotional reactions. Candid stories about his own marriage and past counselees help validate his points. He has good credentials as executive director of Marriage and Family Formation at Focus on the Family. Recommended. JZ

**LIFELONG LOVE AFFAIR: How to Have a Passionate and Deeply Rewarding Marriage** by Jimmy Evans with Frank Martin Baker, 978-0-8010-1478-9, HB, 233 pages, \$19.99

Want to have a great marriage? Commit to a daily process of dying to self. Ultimately, we need to give our marriages to God. To do so, Evans discusses such topics as God's plan for marriage, vision retreats, communication, the influence of friends, Ephesians 5, and the importance of the love journey. Also included is an eight-week study guide for couples or small groups.

Evans presents biblically sound advice in a conversational format. He dynamically illustrates content with relevant quotes from Scripture, notable people, and personal testimony from his own marriage plus stories from acquaintances and his couple's ministry. This resource is full of practical help and wisdom for marriages. Jimmy and his wife, Karen, founded Marriage Today Ministries and hold marriage and family conferences. Highly recommended for church libraries, couples' study groups, and marriage partners. LGM

## Parenting

**21 WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR KIDS** by Kathi Lipp  
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2967-7, PB, 203 pages, \$12.99

Lipp opens this book by assuring parents they are better at parenting than they realize. She gives readers a pep talk, saying we all have insecurities as parents, and encourages them, above all, to trust God and pray. As the title suggests, Lipp offers 21 suggestions for meaningfully connecting with children, such as cooking together, family projects, and game night. Each chapter includes comments related to specific situations like teen challenges, step-children, and single parents. She provides a child assessment, so parents can connect with their children based on each child's unique personality, and lists 50 gender-specific bonus ideas for connection.

This book is well written and organized. Lipp writes from her own experience of having a blended family with four children. She is a popular conference and retreat speaker. Highly recommended for parents. AKD

**INTENTIONAL PARENTING: Auto-pilot Is for Planes** by Sissy Goff, David Thomas, & Melissa Trevathan  
Nelson, 978-0-8499-6454-1, PB, 256 pages, \$15.99

Most parents bemoan the fact that no owner's manual is issued when they welcome a child into their families. Sometimes things go smoothly; more often, they do not. Eliminating pressure on parents to be "successful" or "effective" is a primary goal. Each author takes four chapters to discuss different parenting aspects, such as being consistent, encouraging, and balanced.

Goff, Thomas, and Trevathan are the brain trust at Daystar Counseling

# BOOK REVIEWS

Ministries in Nashville. They bring more than 50 years of counseling experience to the writing of this book that seeks to dispel common parenting myths. Recommended for the parenting section of any church library. JAW

**LOVE NO MATTER WHAT: When Your Kids Make Decisions You Don't Agree With**  
by Brenda Garrison with Katie Nelson, 978-0-8499-4741-4, PB, 204 pages, \$15.99

We all have perfect children. Wrong. No one is perfect or has perfect sons or daughters. *Love No Matter What* acknowledges that our children can, and often do, make wrong decisions, immature decisions, and decisions we didn't want them to make. Using Scripture, Garrison shows parents how to respond wisely to their children in order to maintain a lifelong relationship. She addresses parental guilt, common parenting types/mistakes, and showing God and His love to your children.

Garrison has written an excellent book for parents of struggling children and adults. She and her daughter Katie provide transparency as they recount the difficulties in their relationship as Katie went through the teen and early adult years. She points parents first to their own relationships with God and then to the task of maintaining relationships with their children who are making poor choices. Recommended. JA

**STRAIGHT TALK WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT SEX**  
by Josh & Dottie McDowell  
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4992-7, PB, 202 pages, \$11.99

Here's a strategic guide parents can use to counter what their children are mistakenly learning about sex from the media and friends. The McDowells present effective tools to raise children with a godly understanding of sex. Part one deals with sex as God's design and discusses boundaries, relationships,

and God's image. One chapter expands the seven building blocks for healthy relationships. Part two contains ideas and tips for conversations and answers 24 common questions parents have about talking with their kids about sex. The last chapter deals with six ways wise parents can be successful communicators.

Scripturally and ethically sound, this well-written guide is full of personal illustrations from young people and the McDowells. They conducted a lot of research into the subject of kids, sex, parents, today's society, and God's design. Josh has done much to strengthen people's faith and understanding of Scripture. Highly recommended for all parents. LGM

**A PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING TEENAGE BRAINS**

by Mark Oestreicher

978-0-7644-8461-2, 69 pages

**A PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING TEENAGE GIRLS**

by Mark Oestreicher & Brooklyn Lindsey

978-0-7644-8460-5, 64 pages

**A PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING TEENAGE GUYS**

by Mark Oestreicher & Brock Morgan

978-0-7644-8459-9, 54 pages

**Simply for Parents Group, PB, \$6.99**

These small books are loaded with vital information for modern parenting. In *Understanding Teenage Brains*, Oestreicher strives to give physiological insight into why teenagers do what they do. During the teen years, we witness many outwardly physical changes; but the more significant changes take place inside their brains. Having this insight and knowing how to effectively guide teens through the challenges of these changes, parents hopefully can be more engaged in the lives of their teens.

In *Understanding Teenage Guys*, the authors discuss the myriad of issues

facing teen boys in this world, such as easy access to pornography. They also struggle with demands on their time, isolation, anger, apathy, and hurt. Oestreicher and Morgan assure parents that, while they may act tough on the outside, teen boys long for their parents to be active in their lives.

*Understanding Teenage Girls* is similarly written but deals more with friendships, dating, and the craziness involved with raising a teen girl.

The authors all are both youth ministers and parents. They rely on their own experiences to encourage parents in the difficult task of raising teens. This series is well written, biblically based, and highly recommended for parents and youth leaders. AKD

## Singles

**SINGLENES, MARRIAGE, AND THE WILL OF GOD**

by J. Robin Maxson with Garry Friesen

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4549-3, HB, 396 pages, \$24.99

Singleness and marriage are two of the biggest issues Christians face today. Maxson delves deep into the topics and compares how we can match God's will to our relational lives. He tries to find an answer to the question, "What does God want for me?"

Pastor Maxson breaks down misconceptions and ideas about marriage (social equality, financial preparation, religious compatibility, age issues, and love expectations). He then builds, from the ground up, beliefs that should be foundational for searching Christians, backing his claims with significant theological and biblical references.

He makes it clear that this is not a book on dating but a book to prepare Christians for relationships of all kinds but, most importantly, a relationship with God. I recommend it to people who are trying to figure out God's will in their spiritual and social lives and

# BOOK REVIEWS

to single Christians looking for someone significant. TN

## Fiction

### ALL THINGS NEW

by Lynn Austin

**Bethany, 978-0-7642-0897-3, PB, 416 pages, \$14.99**

Mercifully, the War Between the States has ended. But now the vanquished must return home and try to restore their lives amid profound cultural and financial changes. Award-winning novelist Austin turns her skills to writing about the Reconstruction era of our country's history. Austin's tale is told from the perspectives of three women: Josephine; her mother, Eugenia; and their newly freed slave Lizzie. Each woman has her own set of obstacles to overcome, hopes to grasp, and solid faith—sometimes a lack of faith—on which to rely.

Recommended for the historical fiction section of church and homeschool libraries. JAW

### ASHTON PARK

**The Danforths of Lancashire #1**

by Murray Pura

**Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5285-9, PB, 352 pages, \$13.99**

Set in post-Edwardian England, this novel follows the adventures of the Danforth family in true English fashion, complete with aristocratic titles, large mansions, and endless servants. The dialogue and historical accuracy can pluck readers out of their chairs and drop them right into the muddy trenches of World War I in one moment before whisking them back away to the posh countryside of Ashton Park.

Through his deeply developed characters, Pura presents readers with a wonderful story about the importance of family and holding on to faith through the darkest of times. Full of romance, intrigue, and adventure,

*Ashton Park* also presents biblical lessons in forgiveness and hope. It is both entertaining and inspiring. EEL

### BAND OF SISTERS

by Cathy Gohlke

**Tyndale, 978-1-4143-5308-1, PB, 422 pages, \$13.99**

During the height of immigration to America, Maureen O'Reilly and her sister arrive from Ireland, hoping to claim the life their father was promised 20 years earlier. When they find out their benefactor has died and his family has no intentions of fulfilling his promise, Maureen struggles to make her way. Eventually employed in a high-class department store, she discovers the store holds a dark secret that threatens the safety of women in the city. Under a band of sisters, led by the daughter of their would-be benefactor, Maureen is helped to fight the injustices women faced in the late 1800s.

In a suspenseful and dramatic novel, Gohlke gives a realistic portrayal of life for an immigrant to America. As Maureen struggles to make her way, she learns to lean on God and trust that He accepts her, dark past and all. Recommended for women and teen girls. CR

### BORDERS OF THE HEART

by Chris Fabry

**Tyndale, 978-1-4143-4862-9, PB, 404 pages, \$13.99**

J.D. Jessup finds a wounded woman, Maria, close to the Mexico border. She had crossed to deliver a package but was attacked. J.D. rescues her, and they work together to find the truth about the package. They initiate a friendship, hiding from drug lords in a power struggle. Both characters confront their pasts and reluctantly learn to trust each other. This adventure/mystery novel, in which characters confront immigration and racial differences with the gospel, is about sacrifices, mercy, and purpose. They share a message from 1 John about real

love, God's love, and how it affects humanity.

Themes of life-changing decisions that trigger a series of adventures drive the plot. At times, the story could show more instead of telling the story. The ending might seem too neat, but it is a good conclusion to the adventure. I recommend this book to readers who enjoy plot twists and are interested in a Christian's relationship with people from different cultures. SCC

### THE DEPOSIT SLIP

by Todd M. Johnson

**Bethany, 978-0-7642-0986-4, PB, 357 pages, \$14.99**

What would you do with a mysterious deposit slip that indicates you are in line to inherit more than a million dollars? Erin Larson finds herself in such a sticky situation when she discovers a slip—that was claimed to be a fake—with \$1,315,400 written on it in her late father's safety deposit box. Searching for a lawyer who will stand behind her and uncover the money proves difficult until she meets Jared Neaton. While struggling with a debt crisis at his law firm and his client Erin facing death threats, Neaton has to choose how far he wants to go to find the truth. He turns to prayer, the law, and common sense, in that order.

Johnson does a fantastic job of sustaining suspense in every chapter. Though the beginning is a bit slow, the reader can't help but keep turning pages after chapter two. The character development is realistic, and the plotline is plausible. Also, the reader is given an inside look into courtroom operations and legal procedures. This is a thriller with a dash of romance and an influx of journalistic realism. EE

### FLORA'S WISH

**The Secret Lives of Will Tucker #1**

by Kathleen Y'Barro

**Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5210-1, PB, 352 pages, \$13.99**

Fatal Flora, as Flora Brimm is known

# BOOK REVIEWS

as, has lost four fiancés and is on her fifth. His name is Will Tucker; and he has something to hide, something that Lucas McMinn intends to discover. As Lucas tracks down Flora's intended and discerns how she became involved with Will, he realizes he wants to be involved in Flora's life himself. But what Flora wants to know is whether Lucas or Will is the right one for her.

The story is a bit predictable, seeing as the two main characters develop a romantic interest in each other. Flora is intriguing with her southern charm and obstinate nature, whereas Lucas is mysterious, charming, and appealing. The two characters work together to find Flora's fiancé, with different motives in mind. In the end, everything works according to God's purpose. I recommend this book more for younger women who still believe in romantic adventures. KC

## FOOTPRINTS

adapted by Terry Burns

OakTara, 978-1-60290-323-4, PB, 144 pages, \$14.95

What happens when a child loses his mother to an accident, loses his father to abandonment, and lives with his dysfunctional grandparents? *Footprints* shows us what happens when that child becomes a man. Based on a true story, it tells the story of David Hyler who grew up with this loss and struggled to function in his adult life.

Enter Cadie, an abused and neglected German shepherd who seemed destined to never have a home as she was returned to the shelter time after time. Will David be the one to make a difference in her life—and will Cadie make a difference in David's life? As a shorter novel, *Footprints* tells David's story minus many subplots and with less-than-ideal character development. However, the book offers a story of redemption that is encouraging and a good read. Recommended. JA (See the DVD section for the movie review from which this novel is adapted.)

## A HEARTBEAT AWAY

by Harry Kraus

Cook, 978-1-4347-0257-9, PB, 370 pages, \$14.99

After receiving a heart transplant, emotionless surgeon Victoria Taylor has nightmares of a murder she never witnessed. Believing her donor's memories to be transmitted through her new heart, she embarks on a search for the truth about her donor's death. As she searches, she struggles with a newfound sensitivity and a new interest in God, which she believes are also results of the heart.

Written by a missionary surgeon, the book is medically precise; and the plot grips the reader to the end. Realistic characters and well-developed growth of Victoria's acceptance of Christ are engaging and thought-provoking, inspiring readers to greater compassion and faith in a God who loves in difficult circumstances. I highly recommend this book for all adults, especially women who enjoy suspense and romance. EJS

## HIDDEN IN THE HEART

by Catherine West

OakTara, 978-1-60290-329-6, PB, 230 pages, \$16.95

After a miscarriage and the loss of her adoptive mother to cancer, Claire Ferguson searches for her biological mother. Armed with a few photographs and a name, she travels to Tara's Place, a country inn in Bethel, Maine. When she discovers the owners are her grandparents, her real mother seems near, yet she has no desire to relive the past, including her connection to Claire. In time, mother and daughter attempt to reconnect, hoping that hurts hidden in the heart can be healed by time and forgiveness.

West presents her characters' struggles boldly and honestly, making them three-dimensional and real to readers. Christian themes related to avoiding judgment, offering forgiveness, and seeking to restore a lost soul

are at the forefront of the plot. This is a story with raw emotional energy and redeeming acts of mercy. EEC

## ONE GLORIOUS AMBITION: The Compassionate Crusade of Dorothea Dix

by Jane Kirkpatrick

WaterBrook, 978-1-4000-7431-0, PB, 400 pages, \$14.99

Born to a shiftless father and an emotionally distant mother, Dorothea Dix learns early in life what it is like to do without. As a teenager, she is offered a chance at a new life; but she never forgets her past. Motivated by compassion and faith, Dorothea seeks her "one glorious ambition," the one great task God has given her to do.

The historical figure of Dorothea, famous today for her work on behalf of the indigent insane, comes to life through Kirkpatrick's writing. Though this story is based on historical facts and characters, it is written as a novel and is both realistic and entertaining, revealing both Kirkpatrick's detailed research and her experience as the author of more than a dozen novels. *One Glorious Ambition* is a wonderful choice for history lovers who prefer novels over biographies. RAB

## PLACEBO

Jevin Banks #1

by Steven James

Revell, 978-0-8007-3425-1, PB, 406 pages, \$15

What would you do if you discovered it is possible to kill someone telepathically? Jevin Banks, a former stage magician, and his friends must find the answer when an investigation into a scientific research center goes horribly wrong, resulting in two people's deaths. Suddenly, Jevin finds himself in a plot involving pharmaceutical firms, psychic twins, and a presidential assassination.

This book has some slightly disturbing imagery involving parasitic insects that might bother some readers. Be-

# BOOK REVIEWS

## SEQUEL

to *The Still of Night*  
by Kristen Heitzman  
Bethany, 978-0-7642-1042-6,  
\$14.99

*The Breath of Dawn*

## SERIES UPDATES

Alaskan Courage  
by Dani Pettrey  
Bethany, 978-0-7642-0983-3,  
\$14.99  
#2 *Shattered*

Amish Vines and Orchards  
by Cindy Woodsmall  
WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73004-6,  
\$14.99  
#2 *The Winnowing Season*

Avenue of Dreams  
by Olivia Newport  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2039-1, \$14.99  
#2 *The Dilemma of Charlotte Far-  
row*

The Bliss Creek Amish  
by Kelly Irvin  
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5318-4,  
\$13.99  
#3 *Love's Journey Home* (final  
book)

The Cadence of Grace  
by Joanne Bischof  
Multnomah, 978-1-60142-423-5,  
\$14.99  
#2 *Though My Heart Is Torn*

Crime Scene: Houston  
by DiAnn Mills  
Zondervan, 978-0-310-33322-7,  
\$14.99  
#2 *The Survivor*

The Dawn of Hawaii  
by Linda Lee Chaikin  
Moody, 978-0-8024-3751-8, \$13.99  
#3 *Jewel of the Pacific*

The Grand Tour Series  
by Lisa Bergren  
Cook, 978-1-4347-6432-4, \$14.99  
#2 *Grave Consequences*

Homeward on the Oregon Trail  
by Melody Carlson  
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4873-9,  
\$13.99  
#2 *A Dream for Tomorrow*

Hugh de Singleton  
by Mel Starr  
Monarch, 978-0-85721-250-4, \$14.99  
#5 *The Tainted Coin*

The Midwives  
by Laurie Alice Eakes  
Revell, 978-0-8007-1986-9, \$14.99  
#3 *Choices of the Heart*

The New Beginnings Series  
by Mary Ellis  
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-3867-9,  
\$13.99  
#2 *Love Comes to Paradise*

Sisters at Heart  
by Ann Shorey  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2073-5, \$14.99  
#2 *When the Heart Heals*

Snapshots in History  
by Murray Pura  
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5170-9,  
\$13.99  
#3 *Whispers of a New Dawn*

Stoney Ridge Seasons  
by Suzanne Woods Fisher  
Revell, 978-0-8007-1989-0, \$14.99  
#3 *The Lesson*

Westward Winds  
by Amanda Cabot  
Revell, 978-0-8007-3460-2, \$14.99  
#2 *Waiting for Spring*

Wives of the Patriarchs  
by Jill Eileen Smith  
Revell, 978-0-8007-3430-5, \$14.99  
#2 *Rebekah*

sides that, it has believable characters and good plot development. James shines in his dialogue and vivid descriptions. Biblical ethics related to capital punishment, restitution, forgiveness, and discipline are examined as the plot progresses. Most churches and high schools should have no problem with this book. NS

## RESURRECT

**The Resurrect Trilogy #1**  
by David E. Stevens  
Monarch, 978-0-85721-249-8, PB, 383  
pages, \$14.99

Navy fighter pilot Josh Logan is resurrected from a fatal crash by a mysterious, supernatural entity and given a new body and identity. His old life is gone, and his new mission is his life. He must assemble a team of scientists

and military minds to prevent a massive comet from destroying Earth in two years.

This military-science thriller is in the vein of Clive Cussler. Stevens was a Navy fighter pilot and knows the military and intelligence-agency worlds inside and out. The book is plot-oriented, and the romantic subplot is underdeveloped. Also, little about God is stated, but implied. Stevens writes

# BOOK REVIEWS

from an old-Earth viewpoint with God still involved. Because of the military setting, some content is a bit edgier than typical Christian fiction. Nonetheless, *Resurrect* will keep hearts pounding and curiosity wanting more. ARM

## TANGLED ASHES

by Michèle Phoenix

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6840-5, PB, 371 pages, \$12.99

In wartime France, Nazi forces occupy an ancient manor, using it to house an abundance of medical equipment and, even more mysteriously, dozens of pregnant women. When two housemaids named Marie and Elise uncover the Nazis' intentions for this makeshift maternity ward, they are forced to wrestle with divided loyalties and devastating options. Fifty years later, Marshall Becker is employed to renovate the castle. As he discovers the intrigue in the castle's history, he begins to confront the darkness of his own past.

Although the novel's primary narrative is Becker's, it is the historical narrative that propels the action. Marie and Elise are more interesting protagonists than the brooding, alcoholic Becker; and their tale has a focused drive that the modern story sometimes lacks. Spiritually centered dialogue is frequently clumsy, although sincere and biblically accurate. *Tangled Ashes* is a suspenseful story, enjoyable as entertainment. PW

## TRINITY: Military War Dog

A Breed Apart #1

by Ronie Kendig

Barbour, 978-1-61626-594-6, PB, 352 pages, \$12.99

After an accident leaves military dog-handler Heath Daniels with a traumatic brain injury, he determines to overcome the symptoms and get back to the field of battle. When opportunity arises, Heath and his dog, Trinity, are thrown into a mission to retrieve a military intelligence officer from the

clutches of the vengeful Chinese government. Thus begins a roller-coaster ride of espionage, combat, spying, search and rescue, and even medical challenges.

The plot is never predictable. And the characters, though in the military and under extreme duress, hold to Christian values. The dialogue is masculine, realistic, and fast-paced; and the ending is edifying without being smarmy. Men, particularly, will find this book to be a page-turner. SF

## TRUTH-STAINED LIES

Moonlighter Series #1

by Terri Blackstock

Zondervan, 978-0-310-28313-3, PB, 336 pages, \$14.99

The police do not believe Jay when he explains that a clown killed his ex-wife. When he is arrested as a prime suspect, his family and friends use their resources to seek the murderer and clear Jay's name. The stakes rise when the murderer strikes again and a second life hangs in the balance.

Coming from a biblical worldview, Blackstock tackles the subjects of death, grieving, suffering, and the value of life. Without using off-color language, gratuitous violence, or graphic sex scenes, Blackstock presents an entertaining suspense novel that causes readers to think about their moral beliefs. Her characters are realistic and show positive growth throughout the story because of their struggles. While the target audience is adults, teens will enjoy this book as well. Containing minimal romance and limited violence, it is ethical and intriguing. SER

## VANISHED

Private Justice #1

by Irene Hannon

Revell, 978-0-8007-2123-7, PB, 336 pages, \$14.99

Moira Harrison suspects a kidnapping has occurred when the police find no trace of either the girl she thought she ran over with her car or the man

who offered to get help. She enlists the assistance of handsome private investigator Cal Burke. The clues lead to an unlikely person: Dr. Ken Blaine, a local philanthropist with a dark past. Meanwhile, Cal and Moira's budding romance helps them heal from past heartbreaks.

This book doesn't fail to please, even though its plot and characters seem recycled from other mystery novels. The love story is sweet, and the villain's motivation is both unusual and believable. Punchy, short sentences in the narration propel the pace forward, though it lags as Cal and Moira's relationship develops. Strong Christian messages permeate the pages. Pick up this book for a quick, light, and clean story with equal parts mystery and romance. HW

## WHEN JESUS WEPT

Jerusalem Chronicles #1

by Bodie & Brock Thoene

Zondervan, 978-0-310-33593-1, PB, 324, \$14.99

Lazarus was more than the friend Jesus resurrected. He was a vineyard owner and Jew during Jesus' time. This story follows Lazarus's life during the time when he knew Jesus. It guides the reader from Jesus' baptism to His triumphant entry into Jerusalem before His crucifixion, all through the eyes of Lazarus.

The book is well written and includes many common Jewish phrases, making the dialogue realistic. The characters are likable and fully developed, although sometimes it feels as though they were stretched to fit into as many biblical stories as possible. The plot is interesting, is easy to follow, and mirrors the Bible closely. The perspective of a vineyard owner brings new insights into how God uses and shapes the church body by comparing Jesus to a vinedresser caring for his vines. I recommend this book for a church library as a thought-provoking, yet entertaining book for adults. AG

# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE YELLOW PACKARD

by Ace Collins

Barbour, 978-1-61626-752-0, PB, 319 pages, \$12.99

In the midst of the Great Depression, Helen Meeker is trying to establish a name for herself at the FBI. Her latest case involves a mustard-colored car that has left a trail of bodies in its path. The car's previous owner was a healthy spinster who died suddenly. Now its new owners find their newborn daughter kidnapped and the car gone as well.

Collins created great primary characters who deal with ethical issues related to honesty, trust, possessions, and ambitions. The historical setting is vivid and fun, but there are so many secondary characters it's difficult to transition between points of view. Also, because of a lot of backstory, this mystery takes quite a while to get revved up to full intensity. Whereas it is not the next great classic mystery, this book will be enjoyable for lovers of cozy mysteries. KSI

## Finances

**SUCCESSFULLY UNEMPLOYED: Finding or Creating Your Dream Job**  
by Alan G. Sherwood

OakTara, 978-1-60290-337-1, PB, 224 pages, \$15.95

A brief glance at a local newspaper or TV news show will confirm that these are not the best of economic times. Politicians can debate and decide how to best fix the big picture. But, in the meantime, the recently unemployed must formulate and execute a plan to find the next job. This book guides them in doing so.

Sherwood is president of his own consulting firm, but he draws from memories and journal entries during the days following his firing from a hospital executive position. He offers practical advice, concrete steps to take, and negotiating tips. Although clearly

written from a Christian perspective, this book focuses on practicalities, rather than spiritual enlightenment. A timely addition for any library. JAW

## Health

**THE LIFE OF THE BODY: Physical Well-Being and Spiritual Formation**  
by Valerie E. Hess & Lane M. Arnold  
InterVarsity, 978-0-8303-3571-3, PB, 201 pages, \$15

What does the body mean for Christian? Hess and Arnold seek to answer the question of whether or not physical health and spiritual health are related. They take readers through biblical examples and passages referring to the importance of the body. Plus they discuss such topics as the maturing of our bodies, dealing with physical pain, and using our bodies for worship.

This book gives a solid, biblical perspective on the culturally popular topics of health, fitness, and image. It features personal illustrations, as well as emotionally deep reflection exercises and sample prayers. Four appendices include a small-group study guide. The authors have experience with the topic of spiritual health, one being a spiritual director and the other a spiritual formation instructor. I especially recommend this book to women seeking biblical information about the connection between physical and spiritual well-being. TG

## Men

### SERIES UPDATE

**Bold Men of God**

by Steve Farrar

Cook, 978-1-4347-6867-4, \$14.99

*Real Valor* (Boaz)

## Potpourri

**A PERFECT WORD FOR EVERY OCCASION**

by Liz Duckworth

Bethany, 978-0-7642-1022-8, PB, 157 pages, \$12.99

The power of personally written notes has an advocate in Duckworth, an author whose book offers suggestions for notes sent in all sorts of life situations from happy to difficult. For each category, she gives guidelines for finding the right words, suggested wordings, appropriate Scripture and quotations, and a humorous "what-not-to-do" section featuring the imaginative Aunt Me-me.

Some chapters update etiquette for the electronic age. Others offer counsel for writing meaningful notes in difficult situations, such as bereavement, terminal illness, and apologies. Add this book to your church library, and let known note-writers in the congregation know about it to validate and enhance what they're already doing. JZ

## Science

**THE GENIUS OF ANCIENT MAN**  
edited by Don Landis

Master, 978-0-89051-677-5, HB, 109 pages, \$16.99

What causes advocates of evolution to wake up screaming every morning? It could be the thought that the educated people from Jackson Hole Bible College were able to compile enough evidence about intelligent humans of the past to write this compelling book. It assimilates geographical, historical, cultural, and theological records in a way that supports the idea that cultural differences were directly a result of the tower of Babel separation of people because of language variations.

Admittedly, the information can get

# BOOK REVIEWS

dry when drawings or photographs are absent from the page. But the archeological research is consistent and has the backing of two years of the Bible college's research. The photos of artifacts, landmarks, and relics make this book especially powerful. They are useful for comparisons, as well as for clearly validating the evidence of the research. I recommend this book because the pictures testify plainly what writers can struggle to describe, and the research is evident and biblically sound. AB

## Teens

### NIGHT FLIGHT

Truth Seeker Series #1

by Diane & David Munson

Micah, 978-0-9835-5902-3, PB, 216 pages, \$9.99

Gregg and Glenna have adopted a new dog that turns out to be a retired counterfeit-money sniffer. After accidentally busting a counterfeit ring, the family retreats to the home of its grandparents in Florida as the trial unfolds. While there, they discover their new friend Mason has been diagnosed with leukemia and needs money for a transplant. Gregg and Glenna race against the clock to find money while also helping a girl find her family. Along the way, they discover why the captain of the rogue ship *Mischief* is so mean.

*Night Flight* is a chaotic but somewhat heartwarming book that shows the power of prayer and God's benevolence. Gregg and Glenna's determination to do the right thing, to help a friend, and to further their relationship with God are all inspirational acts for young adults to emulate. The story twists confusingly into several different focus points for a time, but the overall plot is adequate entertainment for young adults. BKB

### OBSESSED: Breaking Free from the Things That Consume You

by Hayley DiMarco

Revell, 978-0-800-73306-3, PB, 151 pages, \$12.99

Your obsession determines your destiny, argues DiMarco. All people are obsessed with something—fear, love, loss, guilt, justice, materialism, self, comfort, or success—whether they know it or not. DiMarco shares from personal experience the destructive power of these obsessions and tells how to identify which ones might be controlling your life. Christians are called to be obsessed with Christ, the only obsession that fully satisfies. Whereas all other obsessions enslave, God frees.

*Obsessed* is directed toward junior-high girls, although the general truths it teaches are relevant for all young adults. Five chapters examine a diverse selection of harmful obsessions and conclude with an explanation of how to pursue a God-obsessed lifestyle. Although *Obsessed* is not a step-by-step guide to breaking current obsessions, it does introduce a new way of thinking and challenges readers to reevaluate their priorities. AS

### UNSEDUCTED AND UNSHAKEN: The Place of Dignity in a Young Woman's Choices

by Rosalie de Rosset

Moody, 978-0-8024-0564-7, PB, 238 pages, \$13.99

Even teen girls know they weren't designed for a casual, haphazard life. But in a world where femininity is confined to and defined by the cover of a magazine, it's hard to know how to live as a dignified woman. This collection of essays encourages young women to break out of their cultural conditioning and educate themselves to speak, read, think, and live well; to reflect God's character; and to establish their theology in all aspects of life, even in play.

Each chapter focuses on a targeted

## SERIES UPDATES

Code of Silence

by Tim Shoemaker

Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-73499-4, \$14.99

#2 *Back before Dark*

Halflings Novel

by Heather Burch

Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72824-5, \$14.99

#3 *Avenger*

Life at Kingston High

by Melody Carlson

Revell, 978-0-8007-1961-6, \$12.99

#3 *The Prom Queen*

Merlin's Immortals

by Sigmund Brouwer

WaterBrook, 978-1-4000-7155-5, \$7.99

#2 *Fortress of Mist*

theme related to Christian femininity and ends with discussion questions and suggested readings. Scripture and classic literature are strongly woven throughout, and the book ends with a categorized list of resources for further study. De Rosset, an English professor, and several of her friends who contributed essays, have produced a book that is excellent for women striving to live God-designed, self-possessed lives. SHW

## Women

CRADLE MY HEART: Finding God's Love after Abortion

by Kim Ketola

Kregel, 978-0-8254-3928-5, PB, 216 pages, \$13.99

Cradle. Abortion. Two words that don't normally belong together. This

# BOOK REVIEWS

outstanding book for women who've had an abortion guides them to the love and forgiveness available through our Savior to help them recover spiritually from an abortion. As one who has had an abortion, Ketola writes from firsthand experience and suffering. She shares her journey, along with those of other women who have had abortions. Using several biblical stories couched initially in modern format, she draws the reader in and shares stories of healing through Jesus.

Each chapter ends with three helpful sections: "Reflect" (Scripture), "Request" (prayer), and "Respond" (exercises, steps, and songs for spiritual growth). Ketola is a speaker and presenter of conferences for counselors. Buy this book for your library. JA

**EVERYTHING: What You Give and What You Gain to Become Like Jesus** by Mary Demuth  
Nelson, 978-1-400-20398-7, PB, 204 pages, \$16.99

The word *everything* means all that exists or all that is important. Demuth redefines it as "what you give is what you gain to become more like Jesus." Using a personable tone, she expertly weaves her own experiences with Scripture, references to pop culture, and quotes from famous people. Her recommendations come across as heartfelt, as does her prayer that the reader will live the everything life with Jesus Christ.

Demuth, a speaker and full-time writer, reinforces her honest stories with a multitude of allusions to both current events and biblical examples. She knows all about surrender in the face of suffering and the subsequent joy that comes from giving everything to God.

*Everything* is ideal for small discussion groups or Bible studies because of the questions included at the end of each chapter. Women will enjoy this book as they learn to become more like Jesus. GG

**FEARLESS DAUGHTERS OF THE BIBLE**

by J. Lee Grady  
Chosen, 978-0-8007-9531-3, PB, 238 pages, \$14.99

Many Christian women have received the message that they are to be subjective in all matters, serving in secondary roles. This book challenges that concept by looking into the lives of 22 women in the Bible and showing that God calls and enables His daughters to achieve amazing deeds by gifting them with creativity, wisdom, boldness, and leadership.

This book does a great job of making the lives of these biblical women applicable to women's lives today. Each chapter has an explanation of a biblical woman's life and calling, how she acted with courage and confidence, and then some practical ways modern women can adapt these qualities to current challenges. Discussion questions are provided, along with a motivational section titled "Message from Your Heavenly Father." This book not only empowers women with greater self-confidence, it also clears up some misunderstandings about the role of God-honoring women of all times. RMM

**THE GOD INTERVIEWS: Questions You Would Ask; Answers God Gives** by Julie-Allyson Ieron  
Leafwood, 978-0-89112-352-1, PB, 220 pages, \$14.99

"God, what do you want from me? Why did you make me the way I am? What purpose do you have for me?" These are the questions every woman nearing middle age is asking and the questions author and speaker Ieron believes God answers. She creates a fictional "interview session" with God. As each character steps up to inquire something of God, Ieron steps in with a few passages from the Bible as guidelines and insights.

Words from the Word, along with the author's personal experiences,

make this book an encouraging and challenging text on aging, retirement, love, finances, worship, and Christian service. Written with wit, patience, and joy, it is something women 40 and older will be entertained by yet also find pragmatic and instructive. LVO

**HOPE FOR TODAY, PROMISES FOR TOMORROW: Finding Light Beyond the Shadow of Miscarriage or Infant Loss**

by Teske Drake  
Kregel, 978-0-8254-4218-6, PB, 144 pages, \$12.99

Traveling through grief is never an easy journey. However, Drake draws from her own experience and the stories of other women who have endured miscarriage or infant loss to point hurting women to the promises of God in His Word. She strongly encourages readers to journal as they read each chapter, and the book is peppered with "verses to live by" and "hope for today."

Drake is cofounder of Mommies with Hope, a support ministry for women who've experienced infant loss. This book is a worthwhile addition to a church library's women's section and as a ministry resource for group or individual study. JAW

**LET IT GO: How to Stop Running the Show and Start Walking in Faith**

by Karen Ehman  
Zondervan, 978-0-310-33392-0, PB, 224 pages, \$14.99

We often hear the advice "Let it go and give it to God." Easy to say, harder to do. Ehman provides women with an instruction manual that will guide them through their controlling personas and ultimately allow them to let go of the reins and pass them to God.

With her fun-loving, conversational writing style and unique descriptions, Ehman effectively places readers at ease while tackling the widespread issue of control in women's lives. Her lively and enjoyable stories help her to

# BOOK REVIEWS

connect with readers. She provides self-evaluation opportunities for women to understand where their need for control in marriage or micro-managing at home comes from. This book takes women on a refreshing, soulful walk that helps them trust God for ultimate control while still accepting normal responsibilities. EEL

## **UNEXPECTED LOVE: God's Heart Revealed in Jesus' Conversations with Women**

by Julie Zine Coleman

Nelson, 978-1-400-20424-3, PB, 205 pages, \$15.99

Ever wonder what was behind

Jesus' interactions with women? Understanding His conversations with the women He met is an important part of recognizing what women mean to Him today. Each chapter begins with a Bible passage; a short summary and overview of the situation in the passage; Coleman's analysis and interpretation of the passage with application; and elements of theology, philosophy, sociology, and culture that may pertain to the passage and its circumstances. Following all this are discussion questions and a prompt to help readers do some self-exploring via journal writing.

Coleman has a master's in biblical

studies, has taught theology for 20 years, and is a conference and retreat speaker. This is a solid book for use in women's Bible-study groups and for individual study and reflection. SCC

## **Old Books**

*continued from page 13*

### **Getting Involved**

These two ministries both reach out with the hands, heart, mind, and feet of Jesus. You may want to do fund-raisers and book drives through your library to help them. According to Kathleen Skaar, the most successful fund-raisers "have someone share their story to see how the organization has helped."

Steven Schmidt said, "I always encourage churches to do Bible drives for us. Give us some of those Bibles you're not using because there are people all over the world that don't have any, and they want them."

So go ahead and accept all those donations. Then send the books and other materials you don't need or can't use to one of these two ministries that will find new homes for them. The ministries provide for collection and shipment, while God provides the ultimate destination.

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*Janice S. Garey is a freelance writer who volunteers on an as-needed basis at the Clairmont Hills Baptist Church Media Center in Decatur, Ga.*

## **Reviewers**

Julie Agen, church librarian

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Felicity Boepple, writer

Alecia Bonson, writer

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Ruth Anne Burrell, writer

Sarah C. Cespedes, writer

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Paula Weinman, writer

Helen Wilbers, writer

Jeanne Zornes, writer

## DVD REVIEWS

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### Narrative

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#### FOOTPRINTS

**New Shepherd, 100 minutes, \$19.99**

A dog whose history of being abused tugs at your heartstrings and a boy whose young life of loss does the

same come together in the now grown-up David Hyler's story. Initially, the film alternates between scenes of David as a boy and adult, before settling on his adult life.

This wholesome, family-friendly film, based on a true story, aims to tell an inspirational story of redemption. However, the redemption theme

seems at times confusing and incomplete. With a feel-good ending, the film should leave you feeling satisfied but doesn't. Recommended only if you have a large DVD budget. JA (*Order from [www.footprintsmovie.com](http://www.footprintsmovie.com). See the fiction section for the review of the novel based on this screenplay.*)

## MUSIC REVIEWS

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### Contemporary

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#### HEAR ME

by Kyle Sherman

**Ray Lynn, 819-3-630-1000-3, \$9.99**

Sherman offers an album worthy of road trips home and moments of reflection. Acoustic and electric guitars, soft drums, and lilting piano riffs create the subdued but soulful atmosphere for Sherman's sound. He offers 12 original compositions that remind listeners of God's strength, dependability, beauty, and love. A shift to a slightly more upbeat gospel flair now and then adds some variety to an album that is both calming and uplifting. The title lyrics focus on worshipping God, humanity's need for Jesus' grace and mercy, everlasting life, and the glory of God.

Sung with an earnest voice, the tunes are relatable, honest, and filled with hope. Sherman's vocals are easy to listen to or sing along with. Older listeners will appreciate the biblically based lyrics, and younger listeners will enjoy the catchy rhythms and arrangements. SCC

#### HYMNS FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

by Keith & Kristyn Getty

**Getty Music, 8-04879-26812-3, \$13.99**

Known for writing modern hymns for the church, the Gettys expand this category of music to celebrate God's involvement in all of life. This collection includes songs that focus on Christ, like the triumphant "Christ Is Risen, He Is Risen Indeed" and "In Christ Alone"; family relationships in "A Mother's Prayer" for her child to walk with God; and offering our work to the Lord in "Before You I Kneel." "Simple Living," the story of the rich young ruler and the widow's penny, ends with a plea for contentment with what we own and giving generously.

The lyrics are strong reminders that we can pray about anything and everything—and God cares. The Celtic music and Kristyn's Irish accent are a joy to listen to, whether it's the familiar hymn "Nothing but the Blood" or the quiet praise and prayer of "The Perfect Wisdom of Our God." Several guest vocalists, including Ricky Skaggs and Moya Brennan, join her. Add this one to your music collection. LJ

#### KINGS & QUEENS

by Eddie Kirkland

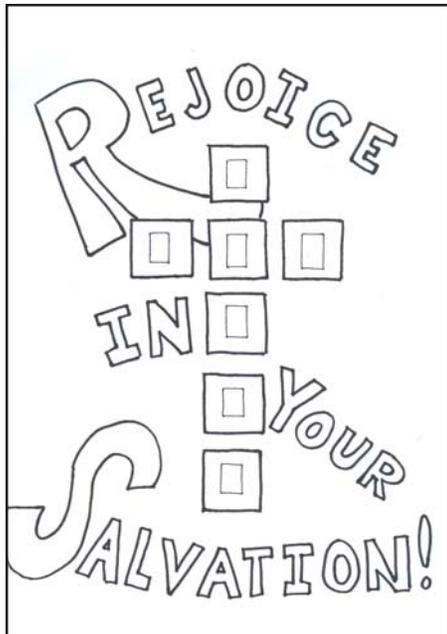
**North Point, 5-099995-68062-0, \$9.99**

From the opening cry to the Lord in "Here and Now" to the closing prayer of "Have Your Way" ("This I pray, Lord, have Your way/In everything/In all of me/Take it all/Lord, have Your way"), this CD is focused on God's love and a desire to walk with Him no matter what. For instance, "The Solution" is a strong declaration of belonging where God places us in order to be a light to the world. And when we're "weary and longing and sore distressed," "Keep Holding On" reminds us to cling to God.

The tempo is upbeat; and the lyrics are encouraging, focusing attention on God and our relationship with Him. Long after the CD finished playing, the catchy tune and phrases of "Lights of Manhattan (Let It Rise)" were still running in my mind, reminding me of how inadequate my praise is for a God as great as ours. Highly recommended. LJ

# POSTER/BULLETIN BOARDS

by Arlene Walker



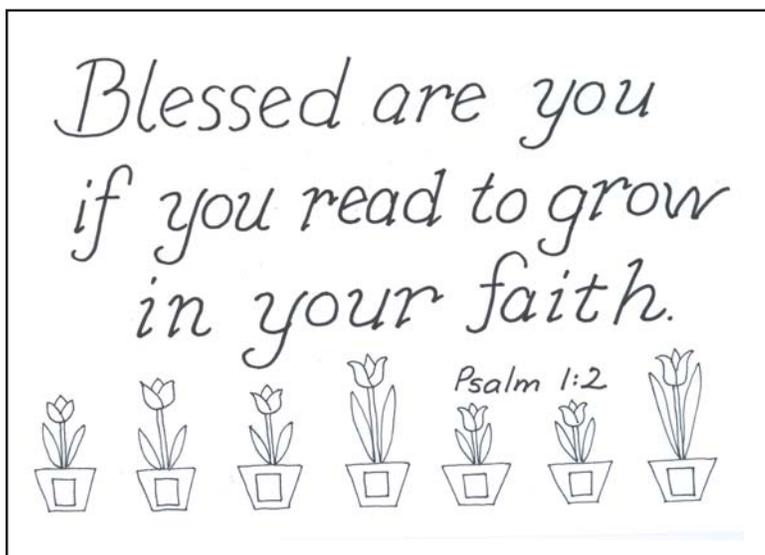
## Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with pale yellow paper or cloth. Use purple paper to cut seven squares, approximately 9-12 inches, a size in proportion to the size of the board. On each square, mount a color copy or book jacket of a devotional book. Then mount the squares as shown. Cut letters for the caption from aqua paper, so they fill much of the space around the cross-shape.



## Poster

Draw a large white circle for the clock face. Use a pencil to draw hour marks and hands on the clock, then trace them with a black marker. Cut away part of the bottom and right side so the remaining part of the clock will fit in the lower right corner of a piece of bright green poster board. Glue in place. With a pencil and ruler, draw letters for the caption; and trace them with a black marker.



## Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with pale pink paper or cloth. Cut letters for the caption from black paper, and mount them on the board. Cut flower pots from clay-colored paper. Cut flowers, stems, and leaves of various heights. Glue them behind the pots. Copy covers of books that challenge spiritual growth, and mount each on a pot as shown. Mount the pots of flowers along the bottom of the board.

Arlene Walker is a freelance writer and retired teacher.

## ECLA Conference CDs

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## Wanted

**W**anted: Pictures of your bulletin boards, posters, and displays.

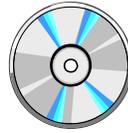
You can give other librarians promotional ideas by submitting your photos for publication in *Church Libraries*. Email them as attachments to [linjohnson@eclalibraries.org](mailto:linjohnson@eclalibraries.org). Include the following information in the message:

- what it is (e.g., poster)
- name and position of the person who created it
- church name, city, and state.

# Helps for Your Library

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

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

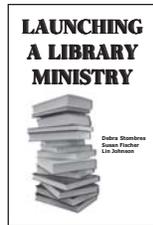


## **CDs**

See order form on inside back cover.

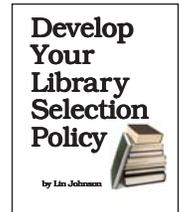
## **Launching a Library Ministry by Debra Stombres, Susan Fischer, & Lin Johnson—\$7**

Clear, concise guidance for writing a  
mission statement, staffing your library,  
furnishing and equipping the room,  
selecting books and other media, and  
processing and classifying those materials.



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

This pamphlet will help you determine  
what to put in your library and what to  
leave out and to tailor a written policy for  
your library.



## **Church Library Classification System by William B. Haburn—\$13**

Dewey Decimal system adapted  
for church libraries.

Book/pamphlet prices include shipping & handling in U.S.  
E-mail [mary@eclalibraries.org](mailto:mary@eclalibraries.org) for extra shipping costs to other countries.

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Check the titles you want, fill in your contact information, and send this form with a check or money order payable in U.S. funds to ECLA. Mail to ECLA, P.O. Box 353, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138-0353.

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- Church Library Classification System, \$13

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