

Church. Libraries

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Winter 2011-12



IN THIS ISSUE:

Author Profile: Cynthia Ruchti
Bring Authors to Your Patrons
So Many Novels—So Easy to Find

A Publication of the Evangelical Church Library Association

Evangelical Church Library Association's 2011 Conference



Bill Arvan with READ Ministries told about training church librarians in the former Soviet Union.



Donna Waln, president of the Evangelical Church Library Association, introduced publisher representatives who presented their new releases.



Ramona Tucker with OakTara talked with conferees at her exhibit booth.



Christopher Yuan, one of a dozen authors featured at the conference, spoke about his book.



Denise Mastalerz, with ResourceMate, led one of the workshops.



Conferees checked out the hundreds of books publishers donated to give away at the end of the day.

Church Libraries

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CONTENTS

DEPARTMENTS

News & Notes	3
Book Updates	3
Education	
So Many Novels—So Easy to Find <i>by Cynthia Ruchti</i>	6
Author Profile	
Cynthia Ruchti: Delighting in God First <i>by Sarah Sawicki</i>	7
Librarian to Librarian	
Library Provisions <i>by Jeanetta Chrystie</i>	9
Book Roundup	
Blending Families <i>by Cindy Grabill</i>	11

PROMOTION

Promotional Hooks	3
Bring Authors to Your Patrons <i>by Jodi M. Webb</i>	4
Poster <i>by Joyce K. Ellis</i>	30
Bulletin Board <i>by Lisa Kern</i>	30
Bulletin Board <i>by Lisa Kern</i>	31
Poster/Bulletin Boards <i>by Arlene Walker</i>	32

REVIEWS

Books	14
Bible & Theology	14
Biography & Memoir	15
Children	16
Christian Education	18
Christian Living	18
Church & Ministry	21
Evangelism & Missions	21
Family	22
Fiction	24
Men	27
Science	27
Teens	27
Women	29
Reviewers	29
DVDs	30
Children	30
Music	31
Contemporary	31

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ECLA

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Promotional Hooks

JANUARY

National Book Month
National Mentoring Month
National Hobby Month
Business & Reference Books Month
2: National Science Fiction Day

FEBRUARY

Library Lovers Month
Creative Romance Month
5-11: Children's Authors & Illustrators Week
14: Read to Your Child Day
27—March 2: Read Me Week
(www.bookem-kids.org)

MARCH

Read a New Book Month
1: World Book Day
2: Read Across America
4-10 Return Borrowed Books Week
16: Freedom of Information Day

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Book Updates

Reprinted

Getting Closer to God: Lessons from the Life of Moses by Erwin W. Lutzer (Kregel, originally Vine)
The Jesse Tree by Geraldine McCaughrean (Eerdmans)

Retitled

The Family Illustrated Bible retold by Sally Tagholm (New Leaf; originally *The Children's Bible*, DK Publishing)

Revised

The Pleasures of God by John Piper (Multnomah)

Wanted

Wanted: Pictures of your bulletin boards, posters, and displays.

You can give other librarians promotional ideas by submitting your photos for publication in *Church Libraries*. E-mail them as attachments to 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.



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Bring Authors to Your Patrons

by Jodi M. Webb

Nothing brings a book alive like meeting the author who crafted it. But unless you're located in a large city or the author's hometown, chances are that person won't be stopping by to chat. So how can you bring the excitement of an author visit to your library? It's time for a virtual visit.

During such a visit, the author isn't there in person but through the use of technology. Your library patrons can hear the writer speak; ask questions; and, in some cases, even see him or her.

Equipment Needed

Before you start worrying about the expense of a virtual visit, relax. Most likely you already have the equipment you need. Virtual visits can be set up two ways: phone or video.

For a phone visit, you need speaker-phone capabilities. Many business phones have this option, as do cell phones.

If you'll be using your cell phone, author Alice Wisler has this advice:

A month ago, I was invited to phone in to a book club in Michigan that was discussing my first novel, Rain Song. The group was seated around the hostess's living room with the cell phone in the middle of the table. I was put on speaker phone. The lively group asked me questions about my novel, and I answered.

They invited me to come up to Michigan; and right after I said I wouldn't

want to come in the cold winter months because I'm not fond of snow, the phone went dead. I wondered if they had cut me off because they didn't like my response to the question.

I called them back to learn that the phone battery had died. We continued the discussion, we laughed a lot, and I learned the importance of being fully charged during a phone discussion.

If you'd like more interaction, it doesn't take much to set up a video conference. Skype (www.skype.com) allows you to set up video conference calls for free. Your library patrons can gather around one or more computer screens to see and talk with an author. The only equipment you need are one or more computers with webcams. If your library computers aren't video ready, borrow laptops with webcams.

Your library patrons can hear the writer speak; ask questions; and, in some cases, even see him or her.

Audience Size

How many people can participate? As many as can squeeze around your cell phone or computer screen. In order to keep things from getting too confusing, I recommend no more than 20 participants.

Also, unless a writer will be discussing her children's book, this should be an adults-only event. If children must be present, have someone engage them in crafts and other quiet activities in a separate room.

Setting Up a Visit

You may contact most authors through e-mail to set up virtual visits. Although not every writer participates in this kind of activity, the sidebar on the next page lists Christian authors who are happy to meet their audiences this way.

When you contact an author, have a list of five or six possible dates and times. Also take into consideration time zones when choosing a time that will work for your patrons but not be inconvenient for the author.

Getting Patrons Interested

There are many ways to get your patrons interested in a virtual visit. Here are three:

1. Have the author's books available in your library. If they're books that have been on your shelves for a long time, gather them in a special display.

PROMOTION

Encourage readers to check out the books since you want them to have questions for the author when the visit is scheduled.

2. Feature an author in your library's book club. The virtual visit can then be a meeting of your club. If you don't have a book club, consider establishing a temporary one to encourage people to read the author's books. Perhaps your patrons will enjoy experiencing books as a group and decide to form a regular book club.

3. Schedule the virtual visit as part of a bigger celebration: a shipment of new books, a party celebrating the new year (isn't reading a great New Year's resolution?), perhaps a holiday like

October's Church Library Month or September's Library Card Sign-up Month or May's Get Caught Reading Month.

Ensuring Success

In addition to making sure your cell phone is fully charged, there are other steps you can take to make your virtual visit a grand success. For example:

- Make sure at least five or six people attending the visit have read the book.
- Encourage participants to think of questions they'd like to ask before the visit begins. You can even ask readers to submit questions and then appoint people to ask them. And always have

a list of possible questions in case your library patrons become tongue-tied when the visit begins.

- Appoint a leader to introduce your group, help the author guide the conversation, repeat questions if a library patron is soft-spoken, and keep track of time.

Like never before, we can reach out and meet the people who write the books we love. Bringing this experience to your library patrons will make reading even more appealing.

Jodi M. Webb is a freelance writer who is also a blog-tour organizer for WOW! Women on Writing.

Invite an Author

The following authors, primarily novelists, are willing to visit your library patrons via a virtual visit. If your patrons would like to talk with other writers, don't be afraid to ask them. Most authors are delighted to meet their readers and answer questions.

You'll find contact information on their Web sites, along with information about their books.

Tamera Alexander
www.tameraalexander.com

Wanda Brunstetter
www.wandabrunstetter.com

Melody Carlson
www.melodycarlson.com

Melanie Dobson
www.melaniedobson.com

Wanda Dyson
www.wandadyson.com

Pamela Ewen
www.pamelaewen.com

Shelley Shephard Gray
www.shelleyshepardgray.com

Jody Hedlund
www.jodyhedlund.com

Beverly Lewis
www.beverlylewis.com

Tracie Peterson
www.traciepeterson.com

Kim Vogel Sawyer
www.kimvogelsawyer.com

Anne Tatlock
www.annatatlock.com

Karen Witemeyer
www.karenwitemeyer.com

Alice Wisler
www.alicewisler.com

Cindy Woodsmall
www.cindywoodsmall.com

—Jodi M. Webb

So Many Novels— So Easy to Find

by Cynthia Ruchti

What's available in Christian fiction? Which storytellers are venturing into new genres? Which new voices are making themselves heard in Christian fiction? Who else writes with a similar flavor or on the same topics as a reader's favorite?

Where can those who appreciate and provide inspirational fiction find more titles to recommend?

The answer to all these questions is fictionfinder.com.

A "Find" Design

In response to a roundtable discussion with retailers in 2008, American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW) created fictionfinder.com, a Christian fiction database that is a free service to libraries, booksellers, book clubs, industry professionals, authors, and readers.

Fictionfinder.com invites site visitors to search for books by author, topic, setting, genre, content, and other search points. To help readers and librarians choose books that hold the strongest appeal for their tastes and preferences, books are rated for levels of content, such as action, humor, romance, spiritual impact, language, and violence.

Librarians and volunteers can quickly access answers to readers' questions about other books, other authors, or specific topics of interest. Publisher and ISBN information for each

book simplifies both research and purchasing.

When you consider new acquisitions and budgets, you can utilize this information source designed to assist in the process.

New and upcoming releases, as well as author bios, author contact information, brief summaries, reviews, and comparable books, provide data specifically focused on Christian fiction. The "Featured Author" interviews take a more in-depth look at authors with recent releases.

Thriller, mystery, historical, ro-

mance, romantic comedy, speculative, suspense, contemporary, literary, western, action/adventure are all represented on fictionfinder.com. This resource continues to expand as new books reach the market and additional Christian novelists or their publishers upload information.

Point and Click

Registering for an account takes less than a minute and makes return visits simple:

- Click on "Register" in the upper right-hand corner of the home page.
- Choose "Register as a reader."
- Add your name and e-mail address, and create a password. Then click on "Sign Up."
- An e-mail is immediately sent to your inbox with instructions for confirming your request to activate your account.
- You can then log in, manage your account information, manage your reading preferences, or begin utilizing fictionfinder.com's information.

Fictionfinder.com provides many connecting points through which to search for a book or author:

- Click on the "Books" tab to search and sort by publication date, author, ISBN, or title.
- On the far left of the page are access points to search by genre, target audience, and other options.
- Click on the "Authors" tab under the

continued on page 8

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to libraries . . .
and readers.*

Delighting in God First

by Sarah Sawicki



Cynthia Ruchti

Cynthia Ruchti did not set out to become a successful author. In fact, she stumbled on writing in a unique way. This wife and mother started out as a certified laboratory assistant for a chemistry lab in Wisconsin, where she worked for seven years. However, she always had an affinity for words, which she probably got from her father who used to read encyclopedias for fun.

She never dreamed, though, that one day she would publish full-length fiction.

Rejoicing in Family

By the time she was 12, Cynthia had lived in 12 different places. Her family finally settled in Lancaster, Wisc., where she stayed until she left for college.

*Above all else,
Cynthia's priority
is to make sure
she is doing what
the Lord wants
her to do.*

Some of her favorite childhood memories include piling into the family station wagon and singing in seven-part harmony all the way to wherever they were going. Since her father was a band director, she and her four siblings all played at least one instrument and all were vocalists. They loved music, traveling, and being together, so these family trips had the best of everything for them. "It's family bonding that I still treasure," she said.

A close-knit family, Cynthia, her two sisters, two brothers, and her mother and father may not have lived a charmed life, but certainly a blessed one. Abounding in love and patience, her parents taught her the importance of education and helping others and how to be excellent for the Lord above all else. This closeness did not cease when the kids grew up. On the contrary, they are now closer than ever.

"My sisters and I really do consider ourselves best friends. We would rather be with each other than just about anybody in the world, and we love our brothers dearly too," Cynthia said. Because of this closeness, all five siblings are still living in Wisconsin, within a few hours of one other.

Cynthia met Bill Ruchti, later her husband, not long after arriving in Lancaster. "I think we fell in love on day two," she recalled. They started dating as soon as they were old enough, got married two years after

Cynthia graduated from high school, and have been married for 38 years.

Bill, a year older, attended Moody Bible Institute, where Cynthia spent one year before transferring to a technical school in Wisconsin. "Looking back on it, I should have stayed for the entire three-year program. I was eager to get a good biblical foundation underneath me and felt I could do that in one year. I had no idea it would take a lifetime!"

Exploring Writing

Bill was, unknowingly, an integral part of Cynthia's rise to publishing success. She started taking writing courses, thinking they would stimulate her mind and give her a new hobby. Bill supported this idea fully, neither of them knowing where it would lead.

In time, her hobby became an active profession as she wrote stories for anthologies, became a monthly columnist for newspapers, and began to write a radio program that aired on several stations. She now produces that 15-minute radio show and its companion magazine, *The Heartbeat of Home* and *Backyard Friends*.

Cynthia was wary of pursuing full-length fiction, as she was plenty busy already with her radio broadcast. But she longed to write novels, and God gave her the confirmation she needed. In September 2008, *They Almost Always Come Home* placed second in American

AUTHOR PROFILE

Christian Fiction Writers' (ACFW) Genesis contest under the women's fiction category. By October, she had a contract with Abingdon Press.

This was not the only surprise God had in store for her that fall, however. Several members of ACFW asked her to consider letting her name be nominated for president of ACFW. She did and was elected. She began her two-year term in January 2009, a year before her debut book was released.

Her Christmas novella, *A Door County Christmas*, part of the Romancing America series from Barbour, came out in September 2010. At the end of 2010, *They Almost Always Come Home* was nominated for the RT Book Reviewers' Choice Inspirational Book of the Year Award.

The novel was inspired by the true story of Cynthia's husband's near-death experience on a nine-day canoeing trip with their son in the Canadian wilderness. She and her daughters had no idea that Bill was in danger until he made it to the hospital. To this day, the Ruchtis are unsure whether it was a gallbladder attack or pancreatitis. Either way, with Bill's diabetes, it was a dangerous situation. His blood sugar was more than 600 by the time a park ranger could get to him, and he had lost 25 pounds in six days.

After the initial shock and some time, Cynthia let her writer's mind toy with the situation. What if he hadn't come home? When would she have started to worry? What if she hadn't wanted him to come home? And what could possibly make a wife not sure she wanted her husband to come home? The novel was born from these musings.

"My husband's story was only the spark," she said. With Bill's expertise in the realm of the outdoors and the fact that Cynthia had accompanied him on one of his trips, she was able to create a realistic setting that made readers feel like they were in the middle of the story

Last year Cynthia started a newly created role with ACFW, professional relations liaison. Her main concern is to build and advance relationships between ACFW and leading industry professionals. Her goal is to work with these people in a synergistic way that helps authors, editors, and booksellers understand one another better.

As Cynthia said, "Rather than just staying in our own little camps and doing what we do best, without a consciousness of the needs and the expectations of the others, we want to work with camaraderie. It's an adventure!"

Enjoying Family

What does life outside of writing and working for ACFW look like for Cynthia? The free time she has is limited, but it is centered on her family. Whereas work and other responsibilities are important to Cynthia, her family always comes first.

She and her husband love to travel and see interesting places. All three of her children live within 15 minutes of her, so spending time with them and her five grandchildren is at the top of her list of things to do with her spare time. "I love the experience of grandparenting them," she said.

Delighting in God

Above all else, Cynthia's priority is to make sure she is doing what the Lord wants her to do. She cites Psalm 37:4 as a verse she focuses on frequently: "Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart."

She knows it doesn't matter what else she does in this world, she must be living for the Lord. So her main concern is always to delight herself in Him first, knowing the rest will come in time.

Sarah Sawicki is a professional writing major at Taylor University and a freelance writer. She has written reviews for Church Libraries.

So Many Novels

continued from page 6

banner to search by a specific author name or alphabetically.

- Under the main search box in the banner is an "Advanced Book Search" option. Choosing it allows a more detailed search by target audience, topic, issue, setting, or content.

Shelf-starter

"Church libraries are often the first point of connection for Christian fiction readers," noted ACFW's CEO and prolific author Colleen Coble. "Many Christian novelists can trace their own reading journeys to books they discovered in their church libraries. We're thrilled to offer fictionfinder.com to help libraries continue making those important connections."

In one resource, fictionfinder.com offers book providers easy access to the landscape of Christian fiction, celebrated for its continued development, expansion, and growth within the publishing industry and the hearts of its readers.

So many stories, now so easy to find.

Cynthia Ruchti is the author of They Almost Always Come Home and A Door County Christmas. She is the professional relations liaison for American Christian Fiction Writers.

The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read.

—Abraham Lincoln

The habit of reading is the only enjoyment in which there is no alloy; it lasts when all other pleasures fade.

—Anthony Trollope

Library Provisions

by Jeanetta Chrystie

The church library is our family meeting place. When an activity is completed, I go to the library to browse through the latest books and magazines, so my husband always knows where to find me. Invariably, I find a book to check out and read.

Other people pass the attractive window display and decide to look at new acquisitions, seasonal media, or a collection of books by a popular author.

People use the library in many ways, which make your ministry as a church librarian a valuable one to numerous people.

In-depth Research

Recently, a Sunday school lesson prompted my interest in further study of Barnabas. First, I read a remarkable paperback about him and I had to know more.

So I checked the library's catalog, which is on a computer, and found several other books about Barnabas. I also found books about Paul that included information about Barnabas. One librarian found references to Barnabas in a book about Peter. We discovered more about Barnabas in two books that are collections of information about several Bible persons. Information about Barnabas was also available in several reference books. The library even has children's books and DVDs that include Barnabas.

My church library is a gold mine for teachers and learners. Most Bible characters can be found, plus biographies,

missionary stories, and a large reference section. The library workers are always eager to help people find something to read. I enjoy their friendly smiles as they help me find materials to enrich Sunday school lessons and family Bible studies.

Variety for All Interests

My husband and I look to the library staff to provide classic and recent Christian-life-and-growth books, as well as a wide selection of entertaining Christian fiction. We are grateful so many volunteers devote their time and efforts to enrich our lives. I find books to help me share Christian ideas with, and better understand, unbelievers plus devotional books and books about marriage, parenting, and many general-life issues.

Children locate appropriate missions books and maps for their mission groups. They can enjoy the brightly decorated and inviting children's reading area, reread favorite old books, and discover new books the librarians display to catch their attention.

This year a friend's daughter read C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* books. She genuinely enjoyed them, and I remembered how I had enjoyed reading those books years ago.

It's great to be able to communicate with children on a deeper level of thought, share a common interest, and realize their growing Christian awareness is developing because of their experiences with good Christian books and DVDs.

Magazines are also available. The library carries some dedicated to fascinating biblical archeology topics with great pictures, current social issues, current Christian thoughts on leadership and cultural topics, family-related topics, and special holiday craft and recipe ideas. Many of the magazines are donated after people have read them, and some are placed on a give-away table after six months.

In addition to children's and youth DVDs, many of the women's and small

*What a ministry—
and what a
responsibility—to
choose the proper
books, magazines,
and other materials
that will best serve
the needs of all the
different members in
a church's
congregation.*

LIBRARIAN TO LIBRARIAN

groups' past Bible studies are added to the library for other people to study.

Around holidays and seasonal emphases my husband and I find not only pertinent books and magazines, but also CDs and DVDs we can check out. We listen to beautiful Christmas music while creating new holiday decorations together. We try out new recipes from the magazines and share them with family and friends. We can learn about holiday celebrations in other countries or plan a party around a theme from information that is readily available in our church library.

I rely on our library for books to ease a troubled mind and soothe an aching heart, as well as books to uplift, teach, inspire, and challenge. I've discovered the beauty of poetry, the emotion of a verse illuminating the soul in a succinct way other books can never touch. When I want to delve deeper into Christian theology, the library staff are ready to help. When I want light humorous reading to cheer a burdened time, they help me find just the right book.

Surprising Uses

When we first move to a new area, we visit several churches before joining one. I was impressed with the facilities and variety of materials available in the church library where we currently worship. My husband was particularly interested in a book he found about the founders and history of the church. It's a wonderful scrapbook to have available for members—old and new alike—to browse through and learn about the beginnings and subsequent development of their church.

When I need a gift for a friend or relative, whether it's for consolation in grief, rejoicing over an addition to a family through birth or adoption, congratula-

tions to a new high-school or college graduate, or welcoming new neighbors, I no longer start by trekking around the shopping mall. I start at my church library.

The librarians help me find appropriate materials for each occasion. Often they are more familiar with the contents of the books than most store clerks. In my library, I can sit at a table, relax, and look through books to my heart's content—no impatient shoppers, no suspicious store clerks, no crowded aisles, no aching feet. Whenever it's convenient, before or after church services, I can take my time to find how suitable each book will be for my intended recipient. Then I can confidently request it at a local Christian bookstore, knowing this gift conveys my feelings and fits the recipient well.

Welcoming Smiles

Our librarians volunteer their time to show people books and help answer their questions. Their warm smiles greet everyone who enters the library, revealing they like working with books—and people.

I wonder if patrons who want to learn about topics often prompt additional acquisitions. How many people wander into the library to pass the time or visit with a friend, then find something interesting and check it out to take home and enjoy? How many others ask for the latest release of a favorite author? How many children, teens, and adults bring vague questions to the church library in search of clarification and specific answers?

continued on page 13

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Blending Families

by Cindy Grabill

Divorce ends a marriage but not a family. Parents trying to blend two households soon discover they're not the *The Brady Bunch*. Instead, they may more closely resemble *[Re]married with [Angry] Children* as kids are shuffled between two households and undergo multiple losses. Often grandparents and in-laws become involved in the shuffle. Furthermore, adopted children may wonder where they fit in.

These authors share their stories and lessons learned about blended families, emphasizing that God loves families and will help make theirs work. Many people need the help these books provide, so add them to your library.

THE ADOPTION DECISION: 15 Things You Want to Know before Adopting

by Laura Christenson

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2000-1, PB, 242 pages, \$13.99

Christenson, an adoption educator and mentor, urges readers to count the costs before adopting. She addresses financial matters and discusses ways families' lives will change. She explains the role of the social worker and what that person will do during the home visit. She also includes information to consider when adopting an older child, one who is biracial, or one who has special needs. She defines pertinent terms and includes adoption stories, including her own.

Christenson informs, allays fears, and encourages as she tells readers

what to expect. Several stories tell of miracles, and others are tear-jerkers. They all show God at work, which will inspire readers to trust Him to work in their lives as well.

BEYOND THE BRADY BUNCH: Hope & Help for Blended Families
by Ray & Debbie Alsdorf
Cook, 978-1-4347-6645-8, PB, 240 pages, \$14.99

These biblical lay counselors share the difficulties and lessons learned as they depended on Christ to make their family work. They offer helpful advice

on practical topics like rules, discipline, and money issues and include interviews with their own children, which will cause parents to see divorce from the children's viewpoint.

The Alsdorfs speak honestly of their mistakes and provide spiritual truths to help grow one's faith. Foremost they stress HOPE: Heavenly Outlook Produces Endurance. Their message that God loves families connected to Him will inspire readers to connect with Him as well.

CAMP GRAMMA: Putting Down Spiritual Stakes for Your Grandchildren

by Judi Braddy

Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-2373-1, PB, 192 pages, \$14.99

This motivational speaker and grandmother compares Grandma's house to summer camp where children can create lasting memories. Braddy provides numerous ways for entertaining kids. For instance, grandparents can share silly songs or tell stories with morals; and she suggests baking and craft ideas. She helps grandmas get kids excited about God's Word and prayer and reminds them to develop a spiritual legacy.

Braddy supports many ideas with biblical wisdom and concludes each chapter with "Camp Gramma Clipboard" with additional ideas about books to read and places to visit. Her energetic style will inspire even the most reluctant grandmother to let the games begin.

These authors share their stories and lessons learned about blended families, emphasizing that God loves families and will help make theirs work.

BOOK ROUNDUP

CO-PARENTING WORKS!: *Helping Your Children Thrive After Divorce* by Tammy Daughtry
Zondervan, 978-0-310-32552-9, PB, 228 pages, \$14.99

Children heal faster following divorce if their biological parents relate well to each other. Through coparenting, parents and often stepparents meet regularly to discuss and agree on issues regarding their children. Topics include boundaries for discipline, toilet training, and school clothes. She includes strategies for each situation, including an absent, uncooperative, or even abusive parent.

Daughtry, a counselor, walks readers through every step of every plan. She helps them set up meetings and gives suggestions about what to say. Her ideas are creative. Who would have thought of a coparenting idea that includes an absent ex-spouse? Following her suggestions will mean faster healing for the children.

HELPING CHILDREN SURVIVE DIVORCE

by Archibald D. Hart
Nelson, 978-0-849-93949-5, PB, 200 pages, \$12.99

Since children imitate their parents, they learn quickly how to be angry, depressed, and resentful when their parents express those same feelings. Healing begins when Mom and Dad forgive each other, pray constantly, and show unconditional love. Hart, an educator and psychologist, presents specific ways parents can deal with each of their offspring's negative emotions and shows them how to replace love and kindness for hate and replace forgiveness for bitterness.

In a nonjudgmental way, Hart allows readers to see their divorce from the children's viewpoint. Parents will be convicted of the damage their destructive behaviors are causing and resolve to change. Hart explains how.

LIVING IN A STEPFAMILY WITHOUT GETTING STEPPED ON
by Kevin Leman
Nelson, 978-0-7852-6601-3, PB, 282 pages \$13.99

Children's birth order often changes when two families blend. A firstborn child in one family might be second-oldest in the new one. Leman, a psychologist, identifies personality traits of each "order" (e.g. firstborn, middle, youngest) and explains in detail "controllers," "martyrs," and those who aim to please. He shows families how to work together as teams and emphasizes the importance of a husband and wife developing their relationship first.

This different perspective explains why parents and children act as they do. Leman provides advice for every possible combination, e.g., how to keep two firstborns from "butting heads." Parents will know themselves and each other better and thus be better equipped to relate to their kids.

MY ADOPTED CHILD, THERE'S NO ONE LIKE YOU

by Kevin Leman & Kevin Leman II
Revell, 978-0-8007-1889-3, HB, 32 pages, \$12.99

Panda Bear must draw a family tree for a school assignment but doesn't understand how. He is adopted and doesn't even look like Mama and Papa Bear. Mama tells him how his own panda mom found parents for him when she couldn't take care of him. She reminds him that he is the "cub of her heart" and shows him how to draw a special family tree.

Psychologist Leman and his illustrator son have written a colorful, read-aloud picture book with a powerful message for 3- to 7-year-olds. Adopted children will find comfort knowing they are chosen and loved.

Parents trying to blend two households soon discover they're not the The Brady Bunch. Instead, they may more closely resemble [Re]married with [Angry] Children as kids are shuffled between two households and undergo multiple losses.

MOTHERS-IN-LAW VS. DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW: Let There be Peace
by Elisabeth Graham

Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-2532-2, PB, 144 pages, \$12.99

Graham traces the conflict between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law back to the biblical character of Rebekah and explains why such trouble exists. She shares her struggles with her own mother-in-law and how that relationship deepened as she embraced selflessness and gave the older woman the gifts of empathy, acceptance, and love.

This is quick reading that can change lives. The author's initial feel-

BOOK ROUNDUP

ings toward her mother-in-law are ones with which readers can identify—especially the anger and bitterness. But the lessons, particularly of giving up “my” wishes and loving the other person for the way she is, imitate the way Jesus wants us to treat others.

RAISING YOUR CHILDREN’S CHILDREN: Help for Grandparents Raising Grandkids
by Martha Evans Sparks
Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-2563-6, PB, 160 pages, \$14.99

Six million grandparents are raising grandchildren due to parental neglect or abuse. Sparks, a psychologist, defines and discusses pertinent legal terms and cites pros and cons for adoption. She includes help for those dealing with emotionally scarred children, discusses various drugs, and includes practical tips to help stretch already-strained finances.

This book provides quick answers to possible crisis situations. Sparks emphasizes God’s unending and unconditional love and His constant presence. He will strengthen them through this new and possibly terrifying experience.

THE REMARRIAGE CHECKUP: Tools to Help Your Marriage Last a Lifetime
by Ron L. Deal & David H. Olson
Bethany, 978-0-7642-0853-9, PB, 245 pages, \$16.99

A successful stepfamily begins with a solid marriage. These authors surveyed 50,000 couples to determine qualities found in satisfying relationships and to pinpoint weaknesses. Each chapter outlines a particular aspect of a healthy marriage. They discuss such topics as strong communication skills, closeness and flexibility, and realistic expectations. Deal, a leading remarriage authority, and Olson, a marriage and family expert, invite readers to take a more extensive online survey.

Each chapter includes quizzes and

exercises that rate such topics as couple closeness and strengths of happy and unhappy couples. Pulling out paper and taking these practical exercises will enlighten couples as to where they stand and the work that needs to be done to make their marriage stronger.

THE SMART STEPFAMILY: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family
by Ron L. Deal

978-0-7642-0159-2

THE SMART STEPDAD: Steps to Help You Succeed
by Ron L. Deal

978-0-7642-0696-2

THE SMART STEPMOM: Practical Steps to Help You Thrive
by Ron L. Deal & Laura Petherbridge
978-0-7642-0702-0

Bethany, PB, 238-262 pages, \$13.99

Deal and Petherbridge advise readers to count the cost before remarrying and demonstrate the positive impacts of humility and words of affirmation. They provide tips to strengthen cooperation between homes and give advice on discipline. Deal helps parents understand kids’ needs and develop strong communication skills, as well as providing guidelines to help stepdads be heroes to their children. Smart stepparents, he emphasizes, have the mind of Christ and forgive 70 times seven.

These books are filled with helpful Scripture, promises from God, and the challenge and encouragement to imitate and trust Him. Deal, a licensed marriage and family therapist, and Petherbridge, a speaker and author, include positive ways stepparents can relate to every family member the way Jesus would.

WHOSE KIDS ARE THESE?: Rediscovering Love and Laughter as a Step-Mom

by Karen Phillips Goodman
Barbour, 978-1-60260-449-0, PB, 224 pages, \$7.99

This inspirational speaker shares

advice from one stepmom to others about challenges they face, including sarcastic children, parenting styles, and house rules. She helps them get rid of anger and bitterness, stressing surrender and trust in God, and points to biblical role models who gave their limitations to God. He far exceeded their wildest dreams.

This small book can be used as a daily devotional as Goodman imparts spiritual truths in each short chapter. She points readers to a forgiving God who will help carry their burdens.

Cindy Grabill is a freelance writer who manages her church book table and thus has gained the nickname Book Woman.

Library Provisions

continued from page 10

What a ministry—and what a responsibility—to choose the proper books, magazines, and other materials that will best serve the needs of all the different members in a church’s congregation.

In fact, it’s such an important ministry that I volunteered to help with it—and I’m glad I did!

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

BOOK REVIEWS

Bible & Theology

THE BAKER ILLUSTRATED BIBLE HANDBOOK

edited by J. Daniel Hays & J. Scott Duvall

Baker, 978-0-8010-1296-9, HB, 1144 pages, \$39.99

This lavishly illustrated handbook was edited by two members of the Ouachita Baptist University. They wrote every summary of the Bible books, accompanied by 63 articles by leading evangelical scholars in American schools on such topics as other flood accounts in the ancient Near East and an overview of Christ's life.

This "encyclopedia" is divided into three parts. The first is "God's Story (and Your Story)" with commentaries on every book of the Bible; a section on "The History between the Old and New Testaments"; and articles on "The Setting for the New Testament," "What Is a Gospel? And Why Are There Four

Gospels?" and "The Synoptic Problem." Part II on "How the Bible Came to Be" includes articles on inspiration, canon, writing, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and translations.

Part III, "Digging Deeper into the Bible" includes 10 chapters on such topics as how to interpret the Bible, how the New Testament writers used the Old Testament, literary features of the Bible, archaeology and the Bible, whether there are hidden codes in the Bible, and responding to contemporary challenges to the Gospels.

This volume would make an excellent, inexpensive addition to the reference section of your library. LRK

DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

edited by Glen Scorgie

Zondervan, 978-0-310-29066-7, HB, 852 pages, \$39.99

Spirituality as a subject of study at evangelical colleges and seminaries is a recent phenomenon. This oversized dictionary is the compilation of 200 scholars. The first part consists of 34 chapters and 240 pages on aspects of spirituality, such as prayer, liturgy, and mysticism. It includes several chapters on the history of spirituality in Christian churches.

The rest of this enormous volume consists of dictionary articles from A to Z on such topics as African-American Christian spirituality and African spirituality to worship, yoga, and Zen. In between are entries on atonement theories, Baptist spirituality, Bible memorization, depression, fasting, holiness, icons, meditation, praise music, retreats, spiritual reading, and hundreds of biographical entries on everyone from spiritual giants in the early church to people born in the last century.

Consider adding this dictionary to your library if you have church members who want to know more about spirituality. LRK

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE IN CHANGING TIMES: Understanding and Applying God's Word Today

by Mark L. Strauss

Baker, 978-0-8010-7283-3, PB, 273 pages, \$14.99

If everyone in your church read this book, they would interpret the Bible more intelligently. The heart of it is on accurate interpretation of the various genres in the Old Testament (e.g., historical narrative, law, poetry, prophecy, psalms, and wisdom) and the New Testament (Gospels, Acts, letters, and Revelation). For each of these genres, Strauss, a New Testament professor, asks four questions: How does it fit into the larger story of Scripture? What is the author's purpose? How does it inform our understanding of God? What does it teach us about who we ought to be and what we should do?

Throughout the book, he gives practical illustrations on issues that are debated, such as when the culture of biblical times collides with ours, Sabbath observance, homosexuality, and women in church leadership. Not only should you buy a copy of this book for your library, but if your church is large or a lot of people use the library, consider buying several copies. Encourage every church member to read this book. LRK

LIFE-CHANGING BIBLE VERSES YOU SHOULD KNOW

by Erwin & Rebecca Lutzer

Harvest, 978-0-7369-3952-2, PB, 200 pages, \$12.99

Sometimes the storybook Bibles of childhood, filled with more pictures than words, are sorely missed. This is why this book is such a useful tool. It is divided into sections, each one dealing with a different topic, ranging from anxiety to heaven and from redemption to the second coming of Christ. Each section begins with one or two Bible verses that reference the issue, followed by an analysis of how it is seen in the Bible and currently repre-

SEQUEL

to *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*

by Mark Noll

Eerdmans, 978-0-8028-6637-0, \$25

Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind

SERIES UPDATE

Swindoll's *New Testament Insights*

by Charles R. Swindoll

Zondervan, 978-0-310-28434-5, \$25.99

Insights on Revelation

BOOK REVIEWS

sented in the world. Each unit concludes with questions readers can ask themselves or can be used for discussion in a small group.

Both Erwin, senior pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, and Rebecca, his wife, saw a need for a book that connects Scripture to different concerns of both Christians and non-Christians. This is a valuable tool for school and church libraries for personal and group study. LJS

TEMPTED AND TRIED: The Temptation and Triumph of Christ
by Russell D. Moore
Crossway, 978-1-4335-1580-4, PB, 207 pages, \$14.99

Giving in to temptation is easy; struggling against it is difficult. This book's thorough exposition of how Christ struggled and won against temptation equips readers to persevere in their own struggles. Using systematic theology, Moore explains Christ's temptation in the context of Israel's wilderness wanderings.

A dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Moore uses the Bible as his primary source and documents both Scripture references and topics in indices. His simple language, conversational tone, and vivid illustrations bring new insight into a familiar passage, making his complex ideas relevant and easy for a layperson to read.

Moore bluntly discusses temptations both men and women face, including pornography, materialism, gluttony, and the church's compromise for political power, which may make some readers uncomfortable. However, he always points to the deeper spiritual roots behind all these problems. This is an excellent book. SB

UNVEILING THE KINGS OF ISRAEL
by David Down
Master, 978-0-89051-609-6, HB, 170 pages, \$29.99

When you need one volume cover-

ing time from Adam to the 1940s, this book will be helpful. Although the title speaks to kings of Israel, it is actually a retelling of Bible stories with challenges to traditional dating and archeological findings.

The in-text quotations from biblical archeologists provide support to Down's beliefs. He provides his views of history and amazing photographs of the topics. Notes and an index complete the book. Downs is a field archeologist and spends much of his free time at sites or taking groups to sites, so they may experience the field of Biblical archeology. Recommended for reference sections. BLE

Biography & Memoir

CLOUDS OF WITNESSES: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia
by Mark A. Noll & Carolyn Nystrom
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3834-9, HB, 286 pages, \$25

Most people have never heard of the 17 influential leaders profiled in *Clouds of Witnesses*. That's because each is from a country in Asia or Africa, where Christianity is growing at historic rates. The authors present the background, conversion, ministry, and struggles of these heroes of the faith, hoping to educate Western believers, so they can better understand their non-Western brothers and sisters.

If this book has a weakness, it is introducing several difficult issues without any commentary, such as different ways Chinese believers approach the Communist government or how some Indians see aspects of the Hindu culture as compatible with the Christian faith. However, the authors sought to present the issues faced by the leaders, not to assess them. They succeed in creating detailed, well-researched por-

traits of Christian leaders who, though they respond to unique issues and circumstances, love and serve the same God. ALG

KISSES FROM KATIE: A Story of Relentless Love and Redemption
by Katie Davis with Beth Clark
Howard, 978-1-4516-1206-6, PB, 204 pages, \$24

"You see, Jesus wrecked my life." That's a bizarre lead, but Davis doesn't pull any punches in her description of how God hauled her from her normal life and led her to be a missionary in Uganda and a 22-year-old mother of 13 adoptees. Coming from the viewpoint of a girl who grew up in a well-to-do American family, this story is interesting in that it shows how material wealth doesn't necessarily mean spiritual riches.

Being a teenager when she decided to move to Uganda, Katie's stories of life there are especially poignant because what she describes is what she now calls home. In Katie's own words, "Jesus wrecked my life, shattered it to pieces, and put it back together more beautifully." This young woman's inspirational story would be a valuable addition to both church and school libraries. She is a role model for Christ-like selfless service. LJS

PARADE OF FAITH: A Biographical History of the Christian Church
by Ruth A. Tucker
Zondervan, 978-0-310-20638-5, HB, 509 pages, \$39.99

Best known for *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, a history of missions, Tucker has now turned her attention to the outstanding and some not-so-outstanding leaders of more than 20 centuries of church history, from Mary, the mother of Jesus, to Billy Graham. In 24 chapters, she picks out five or six fascinating characters from each age and tells their stories. As might be expected, she picks out more women than church histories written by men. At the end of

BOOK REVIEWS

each chapter are a selected bibliography and a "What if ..." section in which she asks readers to speculate on how the history of the Christian church would be different if these characters hadn't answered God's call or done what they did.

This is the most well-written and interesting book I've read in some time. Tucker is a former seminary professor and an evangelical feminist who feels strongly that women have played more of a role in church history than is usually accorded to them. This is an excellent church history book for members of your congregation who don't like history. LRK

Children

Picture Books

DO YOU LOVE ME MORE?

Faith Basics for Kids

by **Crystal Bowman & Ava Pennington**

Standard, 978-0-7847-2916-8, HB, 28 pages, \$8.99

This book presents a series of questions from a little boy who wants to know if he is nice to his sister, helpful in washing dishes, friendly to a hurt friend, and good about keeping his bedroom clean if Jesus will love him more than before. Ultimately, his parents show him in the Bible the grace Christ offers to all and how Jesus loves him fully. As a result, the boy will want to serve the Lord by continuing to do all of the good things he has been doing.

This book features pen-and-ink drawings overlaid with watercolors. At the end, Bible verses explaining God's grace are printed for parents' use. This entertaining book accurately explains God's boundless grace on a child's level. DEH

GOD MADE THE DINOSAURS!

by **Todd Aaron Smith**

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-3843-3, HB, 10 pages, \$5.99

This is not a theological or scientific treatise, but a cartoonish, fun book for preschoolers. The featured dinosaurs are drawn with funny faces, and they eat plants with Jurassic Salad Dressing and gulp down hot dogs. The one-liners on each page are simple observations about dinosaurs, such as, "Some were as tall as trees ... some were as small as flowers." The punch line at the end is, "Every dinosaur was wonderful and special because God made them all."

The bright colors and simple sentences will appeal to youngsters, and the thick cardboard pages are durable even in the hands of four-year-olds. DEH

HEAVEN: God's Promise to Me

by **Anne Graham Lotz**

Zondervan, 978-0-310-71601-3, HB, 35 pages, \$16.99

A brother and sister are sad because they have lost their grandmother. They turn to the Bible to discover what it is like in heaven where Grandma has gone. They get some biblical perspectives (e.g., streets of gold, no sadness or sickness or crying), but they throw in some homemade speculation of their own (e.g., bees will be there but will not sting, lions will be there but only for petting). The children dream about flying and playing. They finally realize they are only imagining earthlike enjoyments, whereas an eternity spent with Jesus will be joyful beyond their imaginations.

The story is told in rhyming quatrains and supported by vivid, colorful watercolors of scenes of Earth and heaven. This book will be a comfort to children concerned about death. DEH

JOURNEY INTO THE BIBLE

by **Lois Rock**

Lion, 978-0-7459-6088-3, HB, 47 pages, \$14.99

This book presents key stories of the Bible in truncated form, from Adam and Eve through Jesus' crucifixion. Many times the summaries are only one paragraph.

The book features definitions of key foreign words, such as *abba*, *shalom*, and Christ. It has maps of the Middle East and Central Asia. It talks about clothes Bible people wore, crops they grew, Temples they built, food they ate, battles they fought, homes they lived in, and nets they used for fishing. It summarizes some of the parables Jesus taught and also provides short biographies of some of the disciples, including Paul and Peter.

The artwork is not overly impressive, but the drawings are functional and supportive of the text. This is not a book to sit and read as a story but, instead, is something a child and parent can use to explore aspects of the Bible for conversational learning. It crams a lot of data into fewer than 50 pages. DEH

MY MARCH TO THE MANGER: A Celebration of Jesus' Birth

by **Mary Manz Simon**

Standard, 978-0-7847-3201-4, HB, 14 pages, \$12.99

This sturdy, thick-paged book is designed for ages 3 to 6. Each two-page spread on the left shows modern children getting ready for Christmas by decorating a tree and organizing a manger scene. On the right is a scene of the original manger area, with a new animal appearing each time a page is turned. The story is told in rhymed couplets, except for the end, which is a direct quote from Luke 2:7 telling of the Christ child's humble birth.

This book is unique in that it has large open gaps in the pages, allowing a new animal to be shown as it is added each day. The colorful animals are doused in glitter, making the book

BOOK REVIEWS

sparkle and shine. It's a visually appealing book, telling a simple, accurate account of Jesus' birth. DEH

OCEAN ADVENTURES

978-0-310-72141-3

WILDERNESS DISCOVERIES

978-0-310-72142-0

The Nature of God

by Peter Schriemer

Zonderkidz, HB, 30-31 pages, \$16.99

These books will appeal to youngsters because they are filled with bold, colorful photographs of animals, fish, birds, and bugs. They relate fascinating details about animals and bugs God created, such as the fact that the Nene goose can only be found in the Hawaiian Islands because it has feet that can walk across cooled lava; Anole lizards have eyes that move independent of each other, so they can search for food in all directions simultaneously; and red-shouldered hawks and barred owls share the same trees peacefully because hawks hunt by day and owls hunt by night.

Parents will be as fascinated by these scientific revelations as their children. Based on the TV show *Critter Quest*, these books are God-honoring, entertaining, and intellectually enlightening. DEH

Early Readers

XANDER NASH: THE BEGINNING OF IT ALL

978-0-9828-0774-3

XANDER NASH: SIBLING RIVALRY

978-0-9828-0775-0

XANDER NASH: LET MY PEOPLE GO

978-0-9828-0776-7

XANDER NASH: A WET & WILD RIDE

978-0-9828-0777-4

XANDER NASH: DON'T HAVE A COW, MAN!

978-0-9828-0778-1

XANDER NASH: HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

978-0-9828-0779-8

Xander Nash #1-6

by Hunter Talen

Creation by Design, PB, 95-188 pages, \$6.99

Xander and his trusty dog, Mitts, time travel to Bible times, experiencing creation, sibling rivalry with Joseph and his brothers, the plagues of Egypt alongside Moses, Noah's flood experience, the golden calf, and keeping Samson's secret. The adventures are exciting and fun, as well as teaching important truths. Kids experience the stories by getting to know the Bible characters and living out their stories alongside them. In each book, Xander learns an important lesson he can relate to a problem or situation at home. But the question always is: How will he get home?

These short chapter books, stemming from a clever premise, are well written for younger readers, but in *Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow*, a scriptural discrepancy occurs. The marriage story of Samson is slightly skewed; and no mention is made of his blindness, perhaps seen as too much violence. At the end of each book, the last page refers readers to the Bible sections with the same story. All is told in a contemporary way that will appeal to today's readers, especially boys. CC

Juvenile

HORSE DREAMS

Backyard Horses #1

by Dandi Daley Mackall

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-3916-0, PB, 102 pages, \$5.99

Ellie James dreams of owning a stallion show horse and decides she's going to pray for several weeks about it to see if God will answer her prayers. By doing so, she opens the door for fears, frustrations, and a lesson in patience. She is supported by loving par-

ents and a good pal named Colt, but she is frustrated by "that-annoying-teacher," who doesn't understand her daydreams, and her major female adversary, Larissa. Everything climaxes at the moment Ellie goes to check on a pinto horse at the local animal shelter, and she realizes this is the horse she's been praying for all along.

Mackall has once again aimed at the classic young-girl story and hit the target. The book is nicely paced, attention grabbing, and often entertaining and funny. This novel is great for girls between third and fifth grades because the main character is a fourth-grader, the book is short, and the words are easy to read. It would make a good addition to any church or children's school library. DR

SEQUEL

to *Dragons in Our Midst* series
by Bryan Davis

Living Ink, 978-0-89957-880-2,
\$14.99

Children of the Bard series
#1 *Song of the Ovulum*

SERIES UPDATES

Kids' Bible ...

Barbour, \$9.99

Kids' Bible Handbook

by Tracy M. Sumner

978-1-61626-342-3

Kids' Bible Questions & Answers

by Ed Strauss

978-1-61626-109-2

BOOK REVIEWS

Christian Education

THE ART OF MENTORING: Embracing the Great Generational Transition

by Darlene Zschech

Bethany, 978-0-7642-0934-5, HB, 187 pages, \$19.99

Learn how to mentor from a life poured out for others, a life lived in Christ, that is, Zschech's life. Here is an inspiring manual on helping the next generation reach their full potential found in the knowledge of faith in Christ. Zschech discusses 14 values: time for growth, encouragement, dreams, energy, perseverance under pressure, open doors, excellence, humility, overcoming adversity, failure isn't final, leadership, personal value, genius, and hearts of flesh.

Strong scriptural values are relayed in a well-written, conversational format. Musician and pastor Zschech uses a lot of personal illustrations, as well as biblical stories and quotes and quotes from well-known Christian leaders, authors, musicians, and other famous people. Highly recommended for church and school libraries, leaders, and mentors. LGM

INSTANT SMALL GROUP: 52 Sessions for Anytime, Anywhere Use

by Mike Nappa

Baker, 978-0-8010-7281-9, PB, 201 pages, \$14.99

Voilà! This guide plus people equals

SERIES UPDATE

Program Builder

Lillenas, 978-0-8341-7877-9,
\$5.99

Easter Program Builder No. 35
compiled by Heidi Petak

a small group. Here's a teaching resource that provides one year of interactive discussion guides for adult Bible study with no preparation required. The chapters are divided into four sections about Christian essentials, personal growth, family and community, and holidays. Each session lasts between 30 and 50 minutes and contains opening questions, Scripture study, and personal application.

Concisely written, the educationally sound teaching techniques combined with biblical depth will encourage and inspire adults toward spiritual growth. Nappa, an author and editor of many Christian ed resources, occasionally added user friendly adaptations, extra biblical insights, and expansion ideas. Scripture and theme indices and an appendix with 20 tips for dynamic discussions are included. Add this book to your library for small-group leaders, teachers, retreat leaders, and family and personal devotions. LGM

'TIS THE SEASON: Church Celebrations for Advent and Christmas

by Rachel Gilmore

Judson, 978-0-8170-1697-5, PB, 110 pages, \$14.99

Good news for the Advent season. This helpful resource directs multigenerational congregations to the big picture of God's salvation plan, using traditional Christmas stories. Material for 18 programs and services share the exciting themes of hope, love, light, peace, joy, eternal life, service to others, freedom from sin, and sharing the good news. Diverse formats for worship and learning include reflective and interactive worship, fellowship programs, dramas, hands-on learning, and faith-education stations. God's Word is spoken directly from Scripture with no retelling.

The directions for each program and service are detailed and can also be adapted to fit the uniqueness of any congregation. Options are given for traditional hymns and contemporary

music. Includes an appendix of reproducible resources and handouts. Gilmore, a 20-year veteran of Christian education ministry, conducted much research. Good for church and school libraries. LGM

Christian Living

ABUNDANT SIMPLICITY: Discovering the Unhurried Rhythms of Grace

by Jan Johnson

InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3547-8, PB, 172 pages, \$15

This book's oxymoronic title is reconciled as Johnson shows how "bloated" Christians can find peace and fulfillment through simpler habits of conversation, possessions, use of time, leisure, and technology. She addresses these changes from the perspective of focusing inward, rather than cutting back.

A spiritual director and author of several books on spiritual formation, Johnson weaves the thoughts of church fathers and contemporary sources into her discussion of simpler practical and spiritual lifestyles. Including her personal adjustments in standards of living and loving gives the book a lived-through flavor, especially the chapter on simpler words. Each chapter ends with "experiments" or lifestyle changes to try, plus personal or group discussion questions. She brings a positive, humble tone to literature on simple living. Recommended. JZ

THE BLESSING OF ADVERSITY: Finding Your God-Given Purpose in Life's Troubles

by Barry C. Black

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-2680-1, PB, 242 pages, \$14.99

What could possibly be good about

BOOK REVIEWS

adversity? Rev. Black, the current chaplain of the U.S. Senate, has seen many positive outcomes in his own life and in the lives of others as a result of facing difficult situations. He offers practical ways to take advantage of challenges by mastering spiritual disciplines, developing a deeper trust in God, and focusing solely on the Lord.

Black's advice is sound, but his short anecdotes and examples often lack the power to be remembered and applied. Though the content relates to people facing trials, it often only focuses on basic Christian living. Black focuses on practical solutions for weathering trials, not comforting hurts. Though he is a Seventh-day Adventist, his doctrine is solid. For those wanting a new way to face adversity, this book should be helpful. ARM

FAITH WITHOUT ILLUSIONS: Following Jesus as a Cynic-Saint
by Andrew Byers
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3618-5, PB, 221 pages, \$17

Although reality is objective, interpretations of reality are subjective. Byers discusses the gift of disillusionment and the threat of cynicism in the modern church. After explaining his former romantic and spiritual cynicism, he analyzes trends in pop Christianity that fuel Christian cynicism, presents biblical ways to reform cynical thinking, and explains the value of what he calls "hopeful realism" or positively embracing reality.

In an engaging, conversational tone, pastor Byers uses personal anecdotes and well-documented examples from

the Bible. Each chapter is ideal for group study with quotes at the beginning and discussion questions at the end. I recommend this book for any church library that services college and adult small groups interested in contemporary church issues. KMH

GOD CAN'T SLEEP: Waiting for Daylight on Life's Darkest Nights
by Palmer Chinchin
Cook, 978-1-4347-0057-5, PB, 237 pages, \$14.99

Bad things happen to good people. When disasters strike, innocent children die, and families fall apart, we often ask, "Where is God?" Dr. Chinchin explores the reasons for God's silence and makes a defense for why, when we are beset with hardships, we should stand firm in our faith.

Supported by an array of stunning personal testimonies, this fast-paced and enthralling book is also filled with imaginative poems, captivating pictures, and pertinent Scripture references. Readers begin to see how God works through the horrors of life. Recommended for believers who are ready to transform their pain into a beautiful picture of God's grace, love, and comfort. KS

THE INVITATION: The Not-So-Simple Truth about Following Jesus
by Greg Sidders
Revell, 978-0-8007-3403-9, PB, 157 pages, \$12.99

Sidders offers an expert combination of historical facts, biblical teaching, and heartfelt personal stories. He effectively leads readers through Jesus' calling and explains how to live fully committed to the Lord. His book is an in-depth study of the life and teachings of Christ, making it a valuable text for a committed Christian or new convert.

All of the lessons about discipline, vision, faith, trust, and obedience are taught by using pertinent anecdotes. This method engages readers and forms a personal connection. Each

chapter includes several Bible passages, making the book useful for a group Bible study or individual devotional readings. Because of the author's journalistic training and current occupation as a pastor, he is able to make biblical messages applicable to modern readers. Recommended for church groups and individuals who seek a new view on their life in Christ. EADG

INVITATIONS FROM GOD
by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun
InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3553-9, PB, 208 pages, \$15

Attesting to the power of an invitation, especially one from God, Calhoun endeavors to explore several specific categories concerning this topic. From an invitation to cry to an invitation to live the best life possible, this book is packed with sound wisdom and advice. Calhoun incorporates Scripture seamlessly and frequently. Her in-depth study of the Bible allows readers to see for themselves what God says and challenges them to accept invitations for love, fellowship, joy, and communion the Lord is holding out to them.

The book's format is inviting and easy to read with its personal, one-on-one delivery. It also extends a gentle challenge for personal and spiritual growth. For new Christians to those who are mature in their faith, this book provides readers with reassurance to step out and accept what the Lord has for their lives. This book is worthy of any church library. RV

JESUS + NOTHING = EVERYTHING
by Tullian Tchividjian
Crossway, 978-1-4335-0778-6, HB, 224 pages, \$18.99

Pastor Tchividjian takes a look at what it means to live a truly gospel-centered life. According to him, we should realize the gravity of our sin and the completeness and constant relevance of our salvation. Once we acknowledge these facts, we will be born

SERIES UPDATE

Boundaries
Zondervan, 978-0-310-33049-3,
\$24.99
Beyond Boundaries
by John Townsend

BOOK REVIEWS

into the justification, freedom, grace, peace, hope, joy, and love of Christ, who alone is enough to save us in the past, present, and future.

Tchividjian has an evident aptitude for simplifying the complex. There is a clarity to his message, which is already relevant to every Christian, that now makes it comprehensible to the vast majority of audiences. The book does become somewhat redundant halfway through, but this fact merely emphasizes the importance of the message Tchividjian is conveying. Fitting for all Christian audiences. MM

A KINGDOM CALLED DESIRE: Confronted by the Love of a Risen King

by Rick McKinley

Zondervan, 978-0-310-28543-4, PB, 166 pages, \$14.99

Not another checklist of how to become a better Christian, this book probes the deeper issues that keep us from loving God as we should. We thrive on instant gratification, but being a follower of Christ often doesn't provide quick solutions. Pastor McKinley urges us to answer the simple, yet vital question, "What do I really want?" Although we know what the answer should be, we allow surface cravings to distract us from the only desire that matters. McKinley challenges us to reevaluate our hearts to discover why God isn't at the center.

His conversational style is easy to follow, and the topics are engaging and challenging. He successfully integrates Scripture references and personal illustrations to emphasize various concepts. At the end of each chapter, he gives formational questions that could easily serve as discussion content for a small group or personal reflection in devotional time. The uncomfortable truths he presents spur readers to keep Jesus as their greatest desire. EF

THE FAITH OF LEAP: Embracing a Theology of Risk, Adventure, and Courage

by Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch

Baker, 978-0-8010-1415-4, PB, 207 pages, \$16.99

Faith involves risk. Frost and Hirsch challenge readers to turn their backs on the safety that has embodied the contemporary church and, instead, to leap into the adventure that is aggressive faith in God. They rely on research of the Scriptures, history, and Christian leaders to build their argument for living out a faith of risk for Christ. They challenge followers of Jesus to step out of comfort zones and experience faith that comes by risking reputation, employment, social status, prestige, and even security. Live with risk or live with nothing is their belief.

The Faith of Leap differs from other books on this subject because it brazenly challenges contemporary Christians to have the kind of "in-your-face" faith that was evident in the lives of the apostle Paul, John Bunyan, and Martin Luther King, Jr. It's not a doctrine for the faint of heart, but it is motivational, fresh, and gut wrenchingly honest. For those Christians wanting to make a bolder stand for Christ, this book has a game plan. DR

THE PEACE GOD PROMISES

by Ann Spangler

Zondervan, 978-0-310-26715-7, HB, 232 pages, \$19.99

We all know what peace is, but what is the peace that God promises? Spangler looks at how His peace impacts our lives today, as well as how it impacted people in the past. She illustrates her points with numerous real-life stories and Bible verses. Her goal is to show how readers find God's peace by patterning their lives after others who have found it. She focuses on gaining self-confidence, assurance, contentment, and grace by being one with the Lord. At the end of each chapter are group-discussion questions.

Spangler, an award-winning author who has written several books on Christian living, is a noncritical, gentle writer who is easy to read. This book is for anyone experiencing anxiety related to job stress, family problems, health issues, or global tensions. JAS

PRACTICING THE WAY OF JESUS: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love

by Mark Scandrette

InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3634-5, PB, 218 pages, \$15

Would you give half of your possessions away? Scandrette and his peers consider what Jesus taught and then attempt to follow His *dojo* (Japanese for "the way"), including giving away possessions.

Using conversations and examples, he challenges readers to reconsider if what they believe is true, authentic Christian living. The book has a study guide, appendices of forms to use, and questions at the ends of chapters. Scandrette cofounded ReIMAGINE in San Francisco, which models the points made in this book. Recommended for group studies. BLE

SANCTUARY OF THE SOUL: Journey into Meditative Prayer

by Richard Foster

InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3555-3, HB, 164 pages, \$16

Learning to hear, like Elijah, God's whisper in the tumult of life comprises the heart of this book on meditative prayer. Three of Foster's own meditative experiences—at a meadow, cave, and beach—sandwich the three main sections describing quieting one's heart, entering into meditation, and common distractions. As typical of his writing, he quotes frequently from Catholic, Orthodox, and Quaker mystics. The book ends with answers to a potpourri of questions, including how to know whether the "voice" is that of God or Satan. ("Satan pushes and condemns, God draws and encourages.")

Conservative groups that are un-

BOOK REVIEWS

comfortable about meditative prayer and references to Christian mystics might want to refrain from buying this book. But those who've appreciated Foster's work on spirituality in the past will welcome this expansion of his teaching on prayer. JZ

SIMPLY SALSA: Dancing without Fear at God's Fiesta
by Janet Perez Eckles
Judson, 978-0-8170-1701-9, PB, 143 pages, \$13.99

Eckles tells the touching story of a long string of violent and tragic personal experiences. Even though she lost her eyesight, struggled with financial ruin, had rough marital issues, suffered the murder of her eldest son, and faced the release of her son's killer, her story is full of joy and praise for the Lord. The book shows she is able to dance in her heart for all God has given her.

The narrative contains a rich Hispanic flavor, and Eckles communicates directly with readers, bringing them into the story. Readers will find themselves hurting for her losses, yet rejoicing in her victories. Through Eckles' stories, readers can gain a better understanding of God's deep provision and love. This is a fun and touching book, especially for women. MA

UNDEFENDING CHRISTIANITY: Embracing Truth without Having All the Answers
by Dillon Burroughs
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-3702-3, PB, 149 pages, \$11.99

Burroughs discovered the key to Christian living in today's world: Imitate Jesus. Although this concept is not new or original, his approach to living as a Christian is. His blunt and humorous chapters are purposefully short to make each challenging subject digestible and thought-provoking.

Burroughs tackles such issues as porn, divorce, homelessness, and sex and gives practical and relevant advice about credit cards, Jesus' blog, and

food. However, the brevity of the chapters interferes with pacing and, at times, gets a little confusing, with seemingly random details unrelated to the central message of loving others as Jesus did. This book is best for young adults but particularly for anyone who needs a spiritual wake-up call. MCA

Church & Ministry

CHURCH DIVERSITY: Sunday—The Most Segregated Day of the Week
by Scott Williams
New Leaf, 978-0-89221-703-8, PB, 190 pages, \$13.99

Forty years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "the most segregated hour of the week" arrived on Sunday morning. Williams fights to change this reality by offering passionate suggestions for confronting race in the church. Each chapter ends with "Church Diversity Challenges," and complementary videos are on New Leaf's Web site.

Williams is a campus pastor at a church known for its innovative strategies. He draws heavily on his own experiences and speeches from King. In addition, Williams presents advice from other pastors of diverse churches and uses successful, diversity-based businesses as examples. Despite these unique approaches, the information is somewhat repetitive and may not be applicable to most laypeople. However, this book will be a useful tool for leaders who want to bring more diversity to their churches. RAB

WORSHIP ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN: Exploring Worship as a Spiritual Discipline
by Rory Noland
Zondervan, 978-0-310-33128-5, PB, 226 pages, \$16.99

Worshipping God involves more

than appearing at church on Sunday morning. Noland provides a practical, biblical study for those who want instruction to improve their individual and corporate worship. Through David, the Psalms, and a multitude of other Scripture passages, he uses God's Word to define and describe what God wants in our worship.

Noland seeks to encourage average church attendees with a bigger picture of the scope of worship and easy ideas that can be applied in their worship. Chapters have discussion questions, application points, and short sections directed to pastors and worship leaders. Two appendices provide lists of the names and attributes of God for worshippers. Noland was music director at Willow Creek Community Church for 20 years. Currently he serves as director of Heart of the Artist Ministries and a pastor of worship. Highly recommended. JA

Evangelism & Missions

Apologetics

HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS TRUE? vol. 1
edited by Ken Ham & Bodie Hodge
Master, 978-0-89051-633-1, PB, 300 pages, \$14.99

Where does one go when a co-worker states the DaVinci code is true? This book provides an answer. It also addresses 27 other questions, ranging from the validity of the Bible to evolution to atheism.

The illustrations are somewhat cartoonish and align with the stories in the chapters. Charts and end notes enhance the material. It is much like other books on this topic, however. Ham founded Answers in Genesis and the Creation Museum and Hodge has

BOOK REVIEWS

a mechanical engineering degree that he uses in biblical apologetics with Ham. Recommended for patrons beginning to learn apologetics. BLE

Family

Parenting

5 CONVERSATIONS YOU MUST HAVE WITH YOUR SON

by Vicki Courtney
B&H, 978-08054-4986-0, PB, 247 pages, \$14.99

Courtney advocates for parents not letting their sons buy into the culture's lies. She wants them to tell the truth about living a godly life and to start early with that truth. Her book is based on five main discussions they need to have with their sons as they are growing up, such as, "Don't define manhood by the culture's wimpy standards. It's OK to be a man!" and "Godly men are in short supply. Dare to become one!" She stresses keeping open lines of communication with sons, beginning in their early years. Topics include communication, consequences, self-control, marriage, sex, and pornography.

Courtney, a speaker and bestselling author on parenting, gives many examples from her own parenting adventures and writes conversationally with humor. Highly recommended. JA

AN EXPOSÉ ON TEEN SEX AND DATING: What's Really Going On and How to Talk about It

by Andy Braner
NavPress, 978-1-61521-923-0, PB, 193 pages, \$14.99

"I remember when I was a kid." We've all heard, or even said, this statement. But today teens live in a promiscuous culture, one drastically different from the world of their parents' own

teen years. It's so different, Braner argues, that parents can't draw from their own experiences for guidance. Teenagers now live in a world where premarital sex is a social norm and dating is purely physical. Braner aims to reveal teens' struggles, not to stab a finger of criticism but to show a need for help.

He possesses a voice of experience, having been involved in youth ministry for 15 years. With stories that depict a lost age group, he aims to shock his reading audience into noticing that teenagers need help. His book is a useful tool for parents, a dating guide for teens, and even a devotional option for church members. LJS

GIVE THEM GRACE: Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus

by Elyse M. Fitzpatrick & Jessica Thompson
Crossway, 978-1-4335-2009-9, PB, 213 pages, \$14.99

Do kids need law or grace to respond in obedience to God? Mother-daughter team Fitzpatrick and Thompson present a wonderful, thought-provoking perspective on parenting. When parents try to make their kids "good," they often use rules that don't change children or save them. The authors want to help parents introduce their children to the grace-giving God who alone can transform and save.

Filled with many personal illustrations, *Give Them Grace* is both a parenting book and a book on Christian living. Each chapter concludes with helpful questions to aid understanding. One of the appendices includes nine common problems in childrearing and samples of responses with management, training, correcting, and remembering the promises of the gospel. Fitzpatrick is a well-known author of books on counseling, family, and Christian living; and Thompson is a homeschooling mother. Every church library should have this book. Highly recommended. JA

PROJECT DAD: The Complete Do-It-Yourself Guide for Becoming a Great Father

by Todd Cartmell
Revell, 978-0-8007-1999-9, PB, 221 pages, 12.99

Think back to junior high school. Remember the class clown—the kid who insisted on making a joke out of everything? No matter how serious the subject, he interjected some inane comment or action or body noise. *Project Dad* took me back to those days. While Cartmell has many good ideas about effective fathering, for me he destroyed his message with constant wisecracking. I also felt that he buys into the image of the sitcom dad—the bumbling buffoon who lives only for football.

The book explores five distinct areas: how to look at your children, talk to them, connect with them, act toward them, and lead them. Cartmell uses examples from his own parenting experience, friends' experiences, and situations he has dealt with as a clinical psychologist. He concludes each chapter with a synopsis, along with a list of discussion questions that can be used for self-examination or as a basis for group interaction.

Perhaps a generation of Bart Simpson fans would not be bothered by the irreverent "humor." But I personally would not have kept reading had I not agreed to complete the entire book before writing this review. I do not recommend this book. BR

RITE OF PASSAGE: A Father's Blessing

by Jim McBride
Moody, 978-0-8024-5880-7, PB, 148 pages, \$13.99

Citing history and the many rites of passage demonstrated by diverse civilizations, McBride iterates that children transition into adulthood more easily if they join that tradition. He details the rites he used for his children to guide others in establishing their own, similar to a call to such rites in the Promise

BOOK REVIEWS

Keepers movement of the 1990s. McBride draws on several writers from that era to validate his ideas.

Focusing on three basic elements for his rite of passage, separation, transition, and incorporation, he established a symbolic journey for each of his children. The details of those journeys are the bulk of the content in the book. He gives air to the other adults he enlisted to guide his children through their rite. He emphasizes that each child is different, and thus each rite should be customized for that child. However, he provides several prototype outlines to assist fathers who wish to give their children such an experience.

McBride is a fascinating, likable guy who has shared his passion. This book, however, would make better companion material for a seminar. The points became a bit belabored; and he could have quite effectively communicated them with a booklet, rather than a full-length book. Still, I can see this title being useful in a church library. BR

THE SMART STEPDAD: Steps to Help You Succeed!

by **Ron L. Deal**

Bethany, 978-0-7642-0696-2, PB, 247 pages, \$13.99

Deal has written an excellent treatise on stepfathering. He includes sidebars for moms and even requests that wives join their husbands in reading two chapters. He covers topics ranging from dealing with holidays to ex-spouses to how stepparent relations affect current marriages. Although the focus is on steprelationships, there are plenty of good parenting tips as well. Each chapter ends with discussion questions that allows readers to interact with other stepdads, their wives, their kids, and their stepkids. Concluding notes provide an excellent bibliography on the topic.

Deal's experiences in counseling stepfamilies give him authority that sticks, and he backs up his points with comments from stepdads from all

walks of life. He is concise and articulate, making the book an easy read. He uses his own experience of the death of his son to drive points home and makes the connection clear. That he shared such an intimate part of his life makes him seem like a mentor, rather than only a teacher or counselor and gives him instant credibility.

When I married a woman with a 2-year-old son, I would have given anything to have had a copy of this book; and I'm sure my son would have appreciated it as well. It should be a part of all church libraries. BR

STICKY FAITH: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids
by **Kara E. Powell & Chap Clark**
Zondervan, 1-978-0-310-32932-9, PB, 222 pages, \$14.99

Why do teens and college kids leave the church? Drs. Powell and Clark present research findings that point to reasons youth abandon their faith once they are ready to leave home. Based on research by the Fuller Youth Institute, *Sticky Faith* is a helpful guide for parents who want to do all they can to encourage faith in their children. The authors present research findings and offer strategies that may help parents in this endeavor.

The book is easy to read and has lots of practical ideas for being proactive one-on-one and with family projects. Powell and Clark both work at Fuller Theological Seminary and have authored or coauthored many books. Recommended if you have room in your collection for general parenting books. JA

THE STRANGER IN YOUR HOUSE
by **Gregory L. Jantz with Ann McMurray**
Cook, 978-1-4347-6622-9, PB, 240 pages, \$14.99

In 10 chapters with notes and additional resources listed in the back of the book, Jantz discusses possible teen scenarios in a family setting. Each chap-

ter ends with a "Bringing It Home" section that summarizes the information and includes appropriate Scripture.

Don't expect nice platitudes (he asks you to revisit your own teen years and make that a part of the conversation) because veteran health-care counselor Jantz has covered all the bases. He gives parents tools to work through any possible angst or tragedy and ways to react for good outcomes. This is a valuable book to have for parents facing the terrible teen years, even if the teen is docile. Have it in your library for parenting groups, as well as individuals. CWM

Singles

12 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU MARRY

by **Clayton & Charie King**

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-3777-1, PB, 195 pages, \$11.99

Couples seeking a solid guide to help them prepare for marriage need look no further. This book provides a step-by-step examination of marital stumbling blocks, such as past relationships and work habits. Though unlikely to revolutionize lives, it may spare a few nights of sleeping on the sofa.

Readers will find similar information in nearly any marriage book, but few competitors strike the balance between theology and practicality as well as these authors. The alternating perspectives of the married authors provide entertaining and informative examples without seeming preachy or judgmental. Research is complemented by Scripture and personal applications. Although the target audience is obviously dating and engaged couples, married couples will benefit from reading this book as well. Highly recommended for those considering marriage and counselors. RD

BOOK REVIEWS

ARE YOU WAITING FOR “THE ONE”?: *Cultivating Realistic, Positive Expectations for Christian Marriage*

by **Margaret Kim Peterson & Dwight N. Peterson**

InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3310-8, PB, 231 pages, \$16

Ditch the fairy godmother, and throw away the glass slipper. Prince Charming isn't coming, and there is no perfect “happily ever after.” This book points out that society has given us unrealistic ideas about relationships and marriages. By analyzing some of the misconceptions, the Petersons define love beyond the “fantasy” of romance.

Overall, this book does a good job of presenting a new view of Christian marriage. The coauthors of this book have a healthy marriage, so their advice comes from an experienced approach. This book confronts some controversial topics, such as divorce and sex; but most of its theories, suggestions, and examples are reasonable and insightful. Some arguments could have had more specific scriptural references; but other than that, the text has realistic and established biblical views of relationships and marriages. RM

YOUNG AND IN LOVE: Challenging the Unnecessary Delay of Marriage

by **Ted Cunningham**

Cook, 978-1-7814-0447-1, PB, 244 pages, \$14.99

For couples who are young and in love but feeling pressured to delay marriage, this book offers biblical advice and support. Pastor Cunningham acts as a cultural critic, condemning secular influences and suggesting a new Christian outlook that advocates marriage. Each chapter ends with personal journaling prompts and identifies potential threats to young marriage. Cunningham emphasizes the broader subject of individual Christian maturity, widening his readership.

Cunningham builds his case on Scripture and expert sources, both Christian and secular. His voice contains rebuke, which may offend some readers; but humorous anecdotes balance the harshness. Because of its open discussion of hot topics, such as marriage and sexuality, I recommend it for Christians who want to be challenged with a fresh—and convicting—interpretation of God's view of marriage. KK

Fiction

ATTRACTED TO FIRE

by **DiAnn Mills**

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-4864-3, PB, 394 pages, \$12.99

When the vice president's daughter, Lindsay Hall, attempts to commit suicide, she is placed under the protection of Secret Service Agents Ash and Meghan. She is taken to a Texas ranch to recover from her addictions and to be shielded from threats made against her. The agents unravel Lindsay's past to discover who is threatening her and why. When the ranch is compromised, they realize none of them are safe under an invisible demon's glare.

Through believable plot and dialogue, the characters become a team willing to do anything to protect Lindsay. Ash relies on Meghan, despite his disapproval of women agents. Meghan realizes God uses the past for good. Haunted by her past, Lindsay learns to rely on others and God for strength. Mills illustrates the battle of addiction and withdrawal while proclaiming the power of prayer.

Teens and adults will enjoy solving the mystery alongside the Secret Service. I recommend this book for school and church libraries because it illustrates God's presence in everyone's life, no matter how broken one's past is. SCC

BELONGING

by **Robin Lee Hatcher**

Zondervan, 978-0-310-25808-7, PB, 286 pages, \$14.99

Felicia Kristofferson comes to Frenchman's Bluff, Idaho, escaping the relatives of the family whom she thought adopted her from the orphan train. She is the new teacher walking into a job where two board members voted against her. But immediately she loves her new home, the children at her school, new friends, and being completely on her own. Colin Murphy and his precocious daughter, Charity, own Felicia's house. Colin, still reeling from the death of his wife five years earlier, is worried that Felicia will quit to get married, like previous female teachers.

With many twists and turns, Felicia's painful past seems to be chasing her while she is having no luck at finding her brother and sister who were also on the orphan train. It seems that she will never have the family she desires, nor will she find love.

This story engaged me from the beginning through the end. Recommended. CWM

COMPOSING AMELIA

by **Alison Strobel**

Cook, 978-1-4347-6773-8, PB, 338 pages, \$14.99

Amelia and Marcus Sheffield quickly learn that adjusting to married life is not the only difficulty they will face during the coming year. Their dedication to each other is jeopardized by job changes that force their relationship to become a long-distance one, even while an unexpected pregnancy threatens Amelia's mental health. Paralyzed by haunting memories of their parents, they struggle to discover what it means to surrender to God's inexplicable dream for their lives.

Despite the turbulence surrounding their situations, the young Sheffields are easy to relate to. Their interactions are realistic and draw strong emotional connections from the reader. Strobel

BOOK REVIEWS

SERIES UPDATES

Bailey Flanigan Series
by Karen Kingsbury
Zondervan, 978-0-31027-634-0
#3 *Longing*

Colorado Runaway Series
by Janelle Mowery
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2803-3, \$14.99
#2 *When Love Gets in the Way*

Pleasant Valley
by Marta Perry
Berkley, 978-0-425-24322-0, \$14
#5 *Katie's Way*

Texas Trails
Moody, 978-0-8024-0583-8, \$14.99
Lone Star Trail
by Darlene Franklin

addresses difficult topics, such as struggling marriages, bipolar disorder, and parental neglect, in sensitive ways that seek to uphold scriptural principles and show a God who is in control. It's deep material but written in a way as not to be too heavy or depressing. AS

DRY AS RAIN

by Gina Holmes
Tyndale, 978-1-4143-3306-9, PB, 390 pages, \$13.99

Eric and Kyra Yoshida's marriage is falling apart, and betrayal is the final blow. No reconciliation is possible until a car accident disrupts their lives. A concussion causes Kyra to forget all the pain and circumstances in her tattered life, including her marriage separation; and Eric chooses this time to win her back. The question is whether or not he can do so before her memory returns.

Using an engaging style and a first-person point of view, Holmes brings

up consequences for actions and the fact that forgiveness doesn't always mean reconciliation. This faith-based story of adultery, emotional struggles, and wanting to go back is one that will strike a chord with many readers. Discussion questions and an author's note complete the book. It contains adult themes and scenes, but they are handled well. CWM

THE FIRST GARDENER

by Denise Hildreth Jones
Tyndale, 978-1-4143-3558-2, PB, 422 pages, \$13.99

This story seems to be about Governor Gray London; his wife, Mackenzie; and their sweet daughter, Maddie. But as Gray and Mackenzie's life unravels, you realize it is about the gardener, Jeremiah Williams, who has tended the gardens of the Tennessee governor's mansion for more than 25 years. The Londons become special to Jeremiah and, if not for his wisdom and perseverance, they wouldn't survive their tragedy.

This novel is rich with characterization and lush with the setting and culture. Jones takes the reader on a journey she may not want to take, but resistance is futile as she turns page after page—and she'll want a tissue box handy. Jeremiah becomes a character you think about long after closing the book. Includes discussion questions at the end. For patrons who love Southern fiction and edgy reality, this is a book to put on your library shelf. CWM

FROM ASHES TO HONOR

First Responders Series #1
by Loree Lough
Abingdon, 978-1-4267-0769-8, PB, 328 pages, \$14.99

Austin Finley has many regrets, but the one that haunts him most is his decision to ignore a phone call. It was his brother's last call before the World Trade Center collapsed. Austin's bitterness and self-loathing land him in counselor Mercy Samara's office. Soon

after, Austin resigns his job and moves to Baltimore, where he finds work as an EMT and renews his faith in God. When the beautiful counselor returns to his life, strong feelings ignite; but this time she is the one haunted by memories. They must decide either to put their pasts behind them or let their pain drive them apart for good.

Lough does an excellent job of portraying an entire nation's hurt and loss. The dialogue takes readers from onlooker to participant. Although Mercy does not share Austin's Christian beliefs, his analysis of loss, grief, and renewal provide readers with biblical insights about God's faithfulness. AMW

HEIRESS

Daughters of Fortune #1
by Susan May Warren
Summerside, 978-1-6093-6218-8, PB, 367 pages, \$14.99

Two sisters, Jinx and Esme, are heiresses of a newspaper magnate with a different approach to life but wanting love above everything else. In New York City, beginning in the late 1800s during the Gilded Age, it is their duty to marry well and boost their family's place in society. Jinx must wait to marry until her older sister does, but Esme has no desire to marry a man she does not love and who has been chosen for her. Both young women make choices at this crossroads that will affect them forever.

From the mansions of New York to the frontier of Montana and over a decade of time, readers will follow the drama and emotions of Jinx and Esme. Though taking place 100 years ago, this piece of historical fiction touches on many of the same issues we deal with today: rebellion, adultery, domestic abuse, lies, and betrayal. *Heiress* is written well with suspense and drama at every step, keeping readers turning pages as tension builds. Not recommended for teen readers but, rather, for a more mature audience. CC

BOOK REVIEWS

LOST MELODY

by Lori Copeland & Virginia Smith
Zondervan, 978-0-310-28986-9, 320 pages, \$12.99

Jill King has a piano that sits in her Nova Scotia apartment without a note played since a tragic accident. She has a scarred hand and a dead dream. Jill's nightmare envelopes the hundreds depending on her, as well as the man she loves who has political ambition.

This story was inspired by a real catastrophe in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1917. An explosion on a ship flattened city blocks, and the blast triggered an epic natural disaster. The authors, using Scripture, a real setting, and human reactions to tragedy, are able to pull the reader through the emotions and fears that sometimes lead to insanity. Weaving the dreamlike state through threads of reality, they provide a tale readers will ponder for a long time. CWM

PIRATE OF MY HEART

by Jamie Carie
B&H, 978-0-8054-4815-3, PB, 304 pages, \$14.99

When Lady Kendra Townsend's father dies, she is forced to make a decision between living with the terrifying man her money-stealing uncle chooses or leave the only home she knows to find a new life in America. With the knowledge that God will go with her, Kendra boards a ship captained by Dorian Colburn, a man who believes all women are bad luck. It isn't until Dorian has to save her from the gold-digging men around her that he decides Kendra may be worth losing his freedom for.

This drama-filled romance will captivate readers' hearts and leave them smiling. Vivid descriptions of historical settings and crisp and witty dialogue pull readers into the story. The theme of taking a leap of faith and leaning on God is appropriate for modern readers. Women, particularly, will identify with Kendra. AMW

THE QUEST

GodQuest Series
by Sean McDowell & Bob Hostetler
Outreach, 978-1-9355-4129-5, PB, 288 pages, \$14.99

The McDowell name, as in bestselling author Josh, is synonymous with contemporary apologetics. Now his son Sean has created fiction that highlights the same truths. Enlisted to craft setting and characters was Hostetler, who worked to "realistically and compellingly deal with questions every thinking person has about central tenets of the Christian faith."

The Quest is part adventure, part thriller, part faith-defense. Twenty-three-year-old college dropout Emma Seeger begins her quest when her widowed father, who is newly born again and newly remarried, goes missing in Israel. Emma despises her stepmother, Katya; but the two can trust only each other as they pursue the truth about David's fate.

Amid moments of heart-pounding danger lie slower sections where Katya answers Emma's spiritual questions with long explanations of doctrine that are simply stated without jargon. Truth is couched in intrigue. Recommended. J-AI

THE SCROLL

by Grant R. Jeffrey & Alton L. Gansky
WaterBrook, 978-0-307-72926-2, PB, 352 pages, \$14.99

David Chambers, a burned-out Christian, is about to forsake biblical archaeology when he receives an offer he cannot refuse: a chance to find the lost treasures of the Jewish Temple. His joy turns to frustration, however, when he finds his fellow team members are his archrival and ex-fiancée. To make things worse, a militant political faction will stop at nothing to ensure the artifacts stay buried, even if it means burying the archaeologists with them.

Despite an intriguing premise, lengthy explanations of Temple history slow the plot to a crawl. The tempo

eventually picks up, only for the story to end rather abruptly. The dialogue is hard to follow, and what are supposed to be arguments sound like playful banter. Also, the Christian elements feel inserted, not natural. For those who like Indiana Jones movies, this novel provides some amusement. MG

TEN PLAGUES

by Mary Nealy
Barbour, 978-1-60260-684-5, PB, 348 pages, \$12.99

White dresses serve as his canvases and blood as his paint while the demon-possessed murderer haunts the neighborhood around The Lighthouse Mission. One person anchors him to the area, pastor Paul Morris, the focus of his hate. Keren Collins, a detective with a gift of discerning demons, joins Morris as they race to stop the murderer before he can slaughter more people.

Nealy's strengths are suspenseful writing, artfully developed characters, and her ability to portray biblical truths even in dire circumstances. Her weakness is cheesy dialogue of the romantic moments between Morris and Collins. The plot is thick, and twists arise with every new bit of backstory. The plot is believable if you believe in demon possession. I recommend this book for older teens and adults. JAS

WATER'S EDGE

by Robert Whitlow
Nelson, 978-1-59554-451-3, PB, 405 pages, \$15.99

After his bosses dismiss him instead of giving him the promotion he was expecting, Tom Crane, an ambitious young lawyer, returns to his hometown to set his father's estate in order. Soon, though, he begins to suspect that his father's death may not have been an accident. To find the truth, Tom must confront the lies of powerful men; the desires and beliefs of his own heart; and, eventually, the love of the God his father always trusted.

BOOK REVIEWS

Whitlow's terse, fast-paced prose fits the plot well and makes this legal thriller an entertaining tale. Occasionally, Tom's spiritual journey seems to be moving too quickly, but the quirky personalities of characters who influence him spiritually and the compelling lessons about faith and prayer keep that aspect from becoming too stereotypical. Readers who have read Whitlow's past works will especially enjoy this book. RAB

Men

MEN OF THE WORD: Insights for Life from Men Who Walked with God
edited by Nathan Busenitz
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2981-3, PB,
246 pages, \$13.99

What is biblical manhood? Christian men struggle to find answers in today's world. Busenitz answers this question by turning to men of the Bible, including Abraham and David, and looking at their examples. Compiling lessons from other contemporary authors, he shows that men who are truly godly live by faith, treasure God's Word, repent from their sins, and lead with courage.

Busenitz, a pastor and theology professor, addresses these questions in a new way that makes readers think about the real men of the Bible. However, the book is not engaging and is rather lackluster in its repetitive format, making it a bit tedious in delivery. Taken a section at a time, it was thought provoking and interesting; but read cover to cover, it became predictable. NS

STEPPING UP: A Call to Courageous Manhood
by Dennis Rainey
FamilyLife, 978-1-60200-231-9, HB,
192 pages, \$17.99

There's a problem facing the male

population these days: a lack of authentic manhood among men. Rainey, a speaker and CEO of Family-Life, tries to offer a new solution by calling men to step up and be truly courageous, even in everyday life. He explores five stages in the journey to be a courageous man: boyhood, adolescence, manhood, mentor, and patriarch.

Rainey's conversational and easy-to-read style lends itself well to the topic. He also includes real-life stories to illustrate his points. The book is geared toward married and/or middle-aged men, and it works well for that audience. However, college-age men might find themselves struggling to relate fully to the call Rainey gives since the book deals with and pulls examples from marriage and fatherhood. Highly recommended for older men looking for a way to improve their lives and testimonies. NS

Science

THE DARK SIDE OF CHARLES DARWIN
by Jerry Bergman
New Leaf, 978-0-89051605-8, PB, 256
pages, \$13.99

This book delves into Darwin's little-known vices, providing evidence of his sexism, unhealthy psychiatric condition, sadistic tendency, plagiarism, and forged-image publication. Bergman, who holds seven graduate degrees, investigates Darwin's hypocritical claims against God and scrutinizes his flawed pangenesis theory. He also astutely questions how family and Christian culture influenced Darwin's theory.

However, Bergman makes overzealous claims and contextual oversights. He labels Hitler's tactics as "Darwinian methods," a bold association, despite Darwin's support of eugenics. Darwin's racism and sadism,

though excessive, were common and viewed as less extreme in his own culture and profession; but Bergman doesn't fully acknowledge this fact.

He states that Darwinism and Christianity are "diametrically opposed," a claim with which theistic evolutionists may disagree. He also argues Darwin's model cannot account for macroevolution; but he doesn't reconcile it with his own view, creationism. This book is not a foolproof defense against evolution, which has been adopted by the scientific community, regardless of its founder's vices. Approach it as a discrediting exposé of Darwin, well-cited, though somewhat biased. DN

Teens

THE BOOK OF NAMES
Legends of Karac Tor #1
by D. Barkley Briggs
Living Ink, 978-0-89957-863-7, PB,
\$12.99

Would you protect a country not your own? Teenage brothers Hayden and Ewan must answer this question when they accidentally walk through an ancient runic archway into the world of Karac Tor. The kingdom is spiraling down for a lack of true leadership and spirituality, and the current leaders believe the boys to be the answer against the evil sorceress, Nemesia, who is bent on destroying and controlling Karac Tor.

This book is immediately attention grabbing, with swift but easily paced action starting on page one. The characters' reactions, speech, and development are believable and well written. There are many suspenseful moments, as well as lots of adventure and no dull moments. The plot is original and well-developed. I recommend this book for teenagers; and it would be an excellent addition to any church and school library. DR

BOOK REVIEWS

PRECISELY TERMINATED

The Cantral Chronicles #1

Amanda L. Davis

Living Ink, 978-0-89957-896-5, PB, 347 pages, \$12.99

Monica is a slave in a dystopian future charged with ending the tyrannical reign of the Nobles. In a world where everyone is controlled with computer chips implanted at birth, Monica's chipless state lands her at the mercy of the rebellious slave council for basic needs. In the climax, Monica is forced to shut down the all-powerful computers before all the slaves and citizens of the domed city die from poisonous gas.

Davis's characterizations are realistic and sympathetic. However, readers might get tired of the plot. If anything goes wrong, either people die or Monica has to struggle for survival. At times, I would put down the book and have no desire to continue reading. It is far too hopeless for far too long. Not recommended as a Christian alternative to better books of this genre. NS

SKETCHY BEHAVIOR

by Erynn Mangum

Zondervan, 978-0-310-72144-4, PB, 220 pages, \$9.99

When 16-year-old Kate Carter participates in a forensic sketching exercise in her art class, she has no idea that it will turn her world upside down. In a matter of days, her profile has helped put a serial killer in jail, and now police are worried that the killer's friends will take revenge on Kate. Under the stifling protection of the police, Kate is

forced to think about God and what He means in her life, a life that is suddenly anything but ordinary.

Although the plot hinges on a string of events that are fairly unlikely, or at least coincidental, the author's strong narrative voice and sense of humor make the story feel believable anyway. Kate is witty and likable, both as a narrator and typical high-school girl. The story's quirky details and dialogue will keep readers turning pages, even during chapters about Kate's house arrest that would otherwise feel claustrophobic and dull. The romance element will especially appeal to teen girls, as will the rest of this fun, easy-to-read novel. ALG

THERE YOU'LL FIND ME

by Jenny B. Jones

Nelson, 978-1-59554-540-4, PB, 320 pages, \$12.99

Finley Sinclair's older brother Will found God in Ireland. And, if any place could possibly help her hear God again, Finley hopes it's Ireland. As she wrestles with grief over Will's death, prepares her audition piece for the New York Conservatory of Music, and visits crabby Mrs. Sweeny in the nursing home, Finley determines not to fall for Beckett Rush, the teenage vampire actor and heartthrob staying at her host family's B&B. But Beckett's genuine kindness slowly strips away her prejudices and melts her hardened heart.

This teen romance is much more than a romance. Finley must let go of her past and be willing to accept God, even while helping Mrs. Sweeny make peace with her sister and Beckett escape the grasp of his controlling father. Jones covers death, depression, eating disorders, fame, and romance in simple, yet tactful ways. Any teen girl or young woman should love this book. ARM

WHAT IS HE THINKING?: What Guys Want Us to Know about Dating, Love, and Marriage

by Rebecca St. James

FaithWords, 978-0-446-57267-5, PB, 155 pages, \$14.99

Guys always want to know what women are thinking, but girls have the same curiosity about men. What men are thinking about marriage, dating, relationships, love, and modesty are subjects St. James unpacks in this book. Using poignant interviews with single guys, as well as married couples, she seeks to understand the opposite sex in a godly way. In their own words, guys shed light on what they find attractive, how important God is, and what they are looking for in marriage.

This book is well organized and easy to read. Along with her interviews, St. James uses several personal stories to illustrate her points. She has published many books that speak to girls, so she is experienced in this subject. This book is helpful for women who seek to understand guys' thoughts on relationship issues. EADG

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE: Stepping Up and Standing Out in an Anti-God Culture

by Mike & Daniel Blackaby

B&H, 978-08054-6481-8, PB, 224 pages, \$14.99

The Blackaby brothers explain three reactions young Christians have to the world. Some are "cave-ins," surrendering to the pull of earthly pleasures, letting their faith collapse. Others are "cave-dwellers," secluding themselves from the world out of fear. Still others are "colliders," firm in their faith but willing to come face-to-face with the world, directing people to God.

Mike, a college and young-adult pastor, and Dan, a seminary student, explain simply and in insightful detail how young Christians can become colliders, facing fear, pain, pop culture, and life head-on without jeopardizing their faith. With questions and sugges-

SERIES UPDATE

Chronicles of Chiril

by Donita K. Paul

WaterBrook, 978-1-4000-7341-2,
\$15.99

#3 *The Dragons of the Watch*

BOOK REVIEWS

tions at the end of each chapter, “Culture Clips” and “Collider Bios” embedded throughout, and hilarious anecdotes to illustrate the brothers’ points, this book is fitting not only for teen believers, but for any Christian who struggles with facing the world. MM

Women

GRACE FOR THE GOOD GIRL: Letting Go of the Try-Hard Life

by Emily P. Freeman

Revell, 978-0-8007-1984-5, PB, 257 pages, \$13.99

Too often believers wear masks, hiding from genuine faith. Freeman, a youth pastor’s wife, discusses these masks, which include performance, reputation, phony moods, service, spiritual disciplines, leadership, comfort zones, and indifference. The eight-week group study guide includes song or video suggestions. This book serves a younger women’s audience for those who emphasize grace in salvation to encourage women who think salvation means “doing” for Christ and feel they aren’t doing enough.

Though Freeman says wise things about grace and works, this book rambles at times and seems to have too much first-person voice. Buy it if you are trying to reach women stressed by performance-based faith, but it’s not a must-add if your library dollars are limited. JZ

WHEN A WOMAN INSPIRES HER HUSBAND: Understanding and Affirming the Man in Your Life

by Cindy McMenemy

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2948-6, PB, 188 pages, \$11.99

Author of the bestselling *When Women Walk Alone*, McMenemy now counsels women in making good marriages better. She offers the typical advice of marriage books, including affirmation, home support, communi-

cation, and acceptance. She covers practical ways to meet a husband’s top-10 needs, including his wanting to be appreciated and becoming all that God intended for him to be. Chapter 4, “Make His Home a Sanctuary,” endorses helping him set up a “man cave.” Each chapter ends with a section by a man, titled “From His Perspective,” plus application suggestions and a prayer.

McMenemy, a pastor’s wife, writes with a style that is warm, personal, and encouraging. Buy this book if updated marriage books are a felt need for your church library. JZ

A WOMAN’S SECRET FOR CONFIDENT LIVING: Becoming Who God Made You to Be

by Karol Ladd

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2965-3, PB, 207 pages, \$12.99

Insecurity has plagued the hearts and minds of many women in this century. But what is bigger: the truth of God or the lie of Satan? This devotional emphasizes taking steps forward in the truth that God sees each of His children as someone chosen, holy, and dearly loved. For many women, self-image is a personal and painful topic. Ladd does a good job of gently, yet diligently analyzing it and offering women biblical ways of finding acceptance, personal joy, and individual respect.

This book provides additional suggested reading materials and exercises at the end of every chapter, as well as discussion questions at the end of the book. These added supplements are designed to help readers develop a defense for the “confidence defeaters.” Ladd’s conversational style of writing is more akin to a visit than a lecture, making her book helpful, encouraging, and insightful. RM

Reviewers

Julie Agen, church librarian
Molly Anderson, writer
Michelle Carolyn Archer, writer
Stephanie Binion, writer
Ruth Anne Burrell, writer
Ceil Carey, church & public librarian
Sarah Cristina Cespedes, writer
Elizabeth A. De Graaf, writer
Ryan Dennison, writer
Bianca L. Elliott, teacher
Elizabeth Ford, writer
Mark Glenchur, writer
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Kara Marie Hackett, writer
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Nathan Sturgis, writer
Lucinda J. Sweazey, writer
Rachel Vachon, writer
Anna M. Williams, writer
Jeanne Zornes, writer

DVD REVIEWS

Children

WILDERNESS DISCOVERIES: Sand, Snakes, and Screeching Birds Nature of God vol. 1
Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-32939-8, 30 minutes, \$9.99

This DVD is divided into a series of miniprograms in which the host takes viewers to the sandy beaches of various lakes. He locates and sometimes captures insects, frogs, small snakes, owls, turkeys, and seagulls, so he can explain the uniqueness of each creature. For example, seagulls can drink both saltwater and freshwater because they have a gland in their head that can

extract salt from water. Tiger beetles can run from 25 to 85 of their body lengths in one second, which is the equivalent of a car going between 150 and 725 miles per hour.

The programs talk about conservation and explain, for example, how turkeys had dwindled to only 30,000 birds in America. But thanks to protection and relocation, they are now located in all states except Alaska and number more than seven million.

The host teaches children how to hold bugs and animals, care for them in captivity, and release them without harm. The bottom-line lesson in each episode is that it is impossible for such complex animals to have been formed

randomly and that they prove God's creative power. These are great learning experiences and enforcements of biblical teachings. DEH

SERIES UPDATES

BASIC

Francis Chan

Cook, \$14.99

#5 Teaching

978-1-4347-0097-1

#6 Prayer

978-1-4347-0080-3

POSTER



BULLETIN BOARD



Some Teen Reading

Photos are clip art from Microsoft Word 2007.

—Joyce K. Ellis, former library volunteer
Edinbrook Church, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

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

MUSIC REVIEWS

Contemporary

HOPE OF THE BROKEN WORLD

by Selah

Curb, 7-1518-79250-2-1, \$15.99

Selah fans will welcome this CD's fresh lyrics and tunes, featuring the signature sound we've come to expect. Clearly maturing in faith and message, the group released this collection as a response to "so many natural disasters, uprisings in the Middle East, economic uncertainty, and a host of other ills and evils occurring in our world. It seems as if the Earth itself is groaning and crying out for our Lord's return."

Standout tracks include "I Turn to You" about the shelter God offers and "Threshold of Glory," which encourages us to turn our attention away from today's uncertainties and toward the One who offers hope of heaven and strength to endure down here: "We push back the gates, we open the door/ Together we come to be with You, Lord." Another biblically rich album, it made me more anxious to approach the "Threshold of Glory." J-AI

JOY: An Irish Christmas

by Keith & Kristyn Getty

Getty Music, 8-04879-25292-4, \$13.99

The Gettys, beloved for their mega-hit "In Christ Alone," bring their Irish heritage and traditions to this mix of classic carols and tunes they categorize as "new hymns." The couple welcomed daughter Eliza Joy into the world; and Kristyn wrote, "Our own love for our child has brought a fresh understanding to all the relationships involved in the gospel narrative: Mary's love for her Son, God's love for His Son, and God's love for the world."

The best descriptor of this collection is "melding"—long-loved tunes and lyrics melded with new, sure-to-be classics. For example, weaving through the "Joy Has Dawned" medley of new Celtic melodies is the Christmas clas-

sic "Gloria (in *Excelsis Deo*)." The CD concludes with "Irish Christmas Blessing" with this charming prayer: "Now may the fragrance of His peace/soar through your heart like a dove released." Beautiful! J-AI

THE ONE YOU NEED

by Shane & Shane

Fair Trade, 7-36211-59959-9, \$13.99

The two Shanes have been refocusing on planting roots and nurturing their families instead of touring with the likes of David Crowder Band. They're leading worship, serving on staff at a Dallas church, and teaching songwriting/recording. This self-produced CD has unmistakable influences of family and rooted-in-community faith. Barnard began writing the title track—a letter from daddy to daughter—before his daughter was born. Everett, father of two daughters, helped complete it. They said, "It's the first desperate feeling of, 'I want my girl to know Jesus.'"

One marker of the content is its deep connection to Scripture. As Barnard wrote, "We found ourselves asking, 'What if I could tell my neighbor or family member one thing, what would that be? The gospel! It just boils down to sharing the gospel.'" Musically, the CD is a diverse combo of jazz, pop, folk, and worship. But the consistent message unifies and makes it a worthwhile listen. J-AI

THE OTHER SIDE

by No Other Name

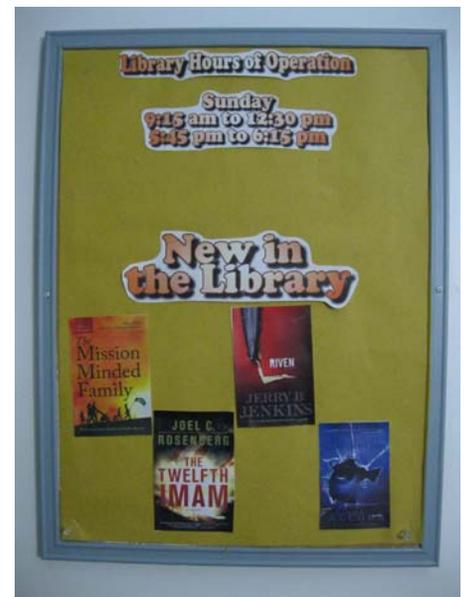
Curb, 7-15187-92532-8, \$12.98

Meet an up-and-coming trio with one heart for spreading the gospel. Brother/sister duo Sam and Laura Allen along with Chad Smith present a joyful blend of harmonies and creative lyrics to "Lead You to the Cross." Laura wrote "Before I Go" as a list of questions believers ought to ask. The three collaborated on "Even Angels" after a late-night tour-bus chat about "how those who have been purchased

with the blood of Christ have a song even angels cannot sing."

This CD features a dynamite *a capella* arrangement of "Christ Arose" and two reminders of heaven: the classic "Midnight Cry" and the title track. The latter has poignant word pictures like this line: "On the other side the mother who lost her child at birth/She holds her precious baby and lets go of the hurt." For rich content and musical excellence, highly recommended. J-AI (Order from www.no-other-name.com.)

BULLETIN BOARD



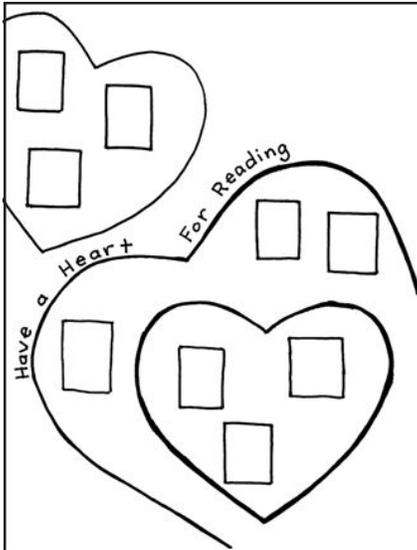
New in the Library

Library hours are listed at the top.

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

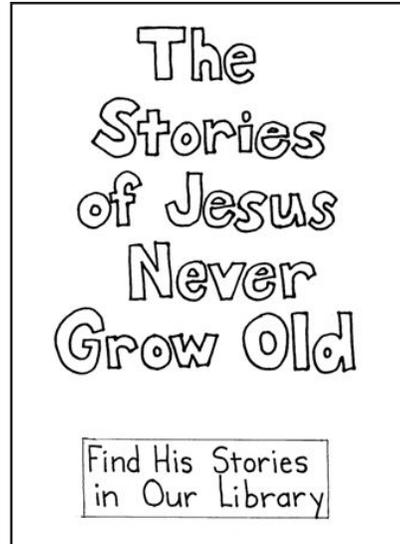
POSTER/BULLETIN BOARDS

by Arlene Walker



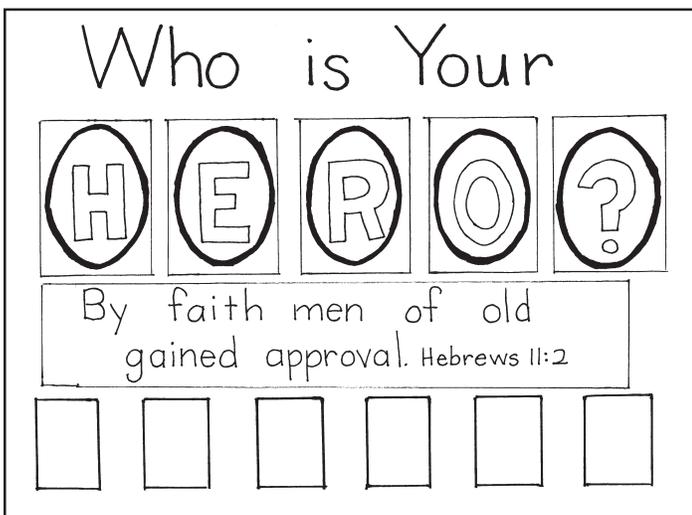
Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with pink paper or cloth. Use gift wrap with designs in colors that are predominantly red, pink, or white for the hearts. Cut a large heart the upper two-thirds of which will cover the bottom area of the bulletin board. After mounting the heart in place, trim the excess so it is even with the edges of the board. Cut two hearts not quite as large as the first and mount them on the board, trimming part of the upper heart to the edge of the board. Arrange copies of book jackets from novels for adults, teens, and children on the board as shown. Cut the caption from black paper, and arrange it along the top of the largest heart.



Poster

Use a piece of dark-blue poster board. Cut large letters for the caption from white paper, and outline them with a black marker. On a rectangular piece of paper cut to fit along the bottom of the poster board, write the letters for the invitation to the library, using a pencil and ruler for good spacing. Trace the letters with a black marker. Glue the letters and invitation into place. In the remaining space, glue small pictures of Jesus in scenes depicting His earthly ministry.



Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with tan paper or cloth. Use black paper to cut the first three words of the caption, and staple them in place on the board. Purchase oval black mats that are used for framing photos, or design and cut your own from heavy matting paper. Cut five pieces of gold paper the same size as the outside of the mats. Cut the four letters and a question mark from black paper in a size that almost fills the oval shapes. Glue the letters in place in the ovals, and mount them as shown. Write the verse on a long strip of tan paper, using a pencil and ruler to write before tracing the words with a black marker. Mount in place. Arrange copies of book jackets about heroes in the space along the bottom of the board.

As an added activity, hand out cards to readers and ask them to write the name of their Bible or historical Christian hero and tell how the hero inspires them. Staple these cards in the space around the outside edges of the board.

Arlene Walker is a freelance writer and retired teacher.

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- Pictures of bulletin boards, window displays, and/or posters you've created to promote books and your library. (No pay for this one either but lots of gratitude from other librarians who need ideas.)

You don't have to be a professional writer. I can edit your ideas, but I need the ideas to edit. I only work via e-mail, so contact me at linjohnson@eclalibraries.org. For complete guidelines, go to eclalibraries.org/journal.html; click on Writers' Guidelines.

—Lin Johnson, Managing Editor

Helps for Your Library

Library Software Solutions by Debra Stombres—\$6

Library software reviews from
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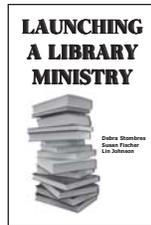


CDs

See order form on inside back cover.

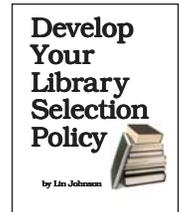
Launching a Library Ministry by Debra Stombres, Susan Fischer, & Lin Johnson—\$7

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

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