

# Church. Libraries

\$10

Fall 2013



## Celebrate Church Library Month

PROMOTION SKIT

## Dude! We Have a Library?

EDUCATION

## Turn Your Volunteers Into a Team

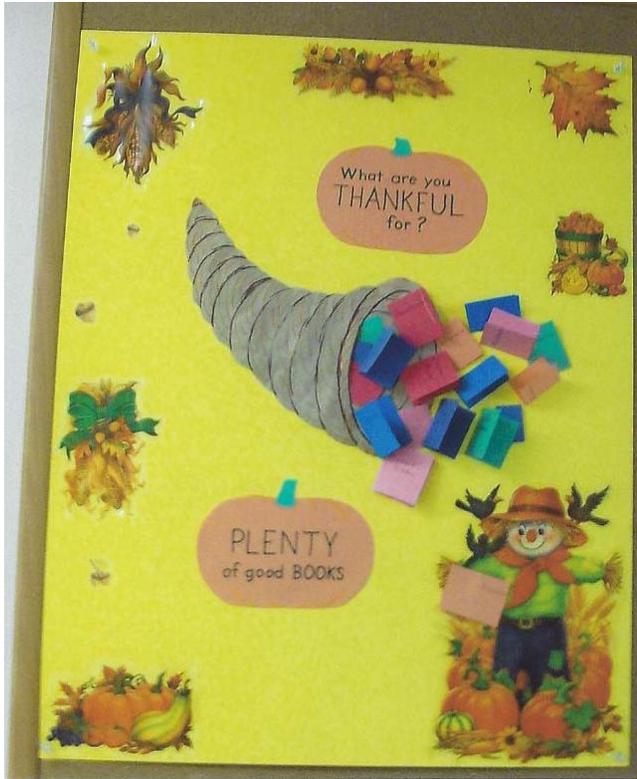
BOOK ROUNDUP

## Keeping Company With God

EDUCATION

## The Serendipity of Gifts

# BULLETIN BOARDS



What are you **THANKFUL** for?  
**PLENTY** of good books.

—Betty Fuller, librarian  
Warrner Avenue Baptist Church,  
Huntington Beach, Calif.



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

# CONTENTS

## Church Libraries

Volume 42, Number 1  
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Arlene Walker

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## DEPARTMENTS

News & Notes .....	3
Book Updates .....	3
ECLA News	
For the Love of the Word <i>by Ceil Carey</i> .....	5
Book Roundup	
Keeping Company With God <i>by Cindy Grabill</i> .....	7
Education	
The Serendipity of Gifts <i>by Diane Fisher</i> .....	10
Education	
Turn Your Volunteers Into a Team <i>by Jeanetta Chrystie</i> .....	11

## PROMOTION

Bulletin Boards <i>by Phyllis Jones and Lisa Kern</i> .....	inside front cover
Promotional Hooks .....	3
2013 Christy Awards .....	4
Celebrate Church Library Month <i>by Lin Johnson</i> .....	4
Dude! We Have a Library? <i>by Suzanne Reeves</i> .....	6
Marble Mania Reading Club <i>by Jeanetta Chrystie</i> .....	13
Poster/Bulletin Boards <i>by Arlene Walker</i> .....	28

## REVIEWS

Books .....	15
Bible & Theology .....	15
Biography & Memoir .....	16
Children .....	16
Christian Living .....	17
Church & Ministry .....	20
Family .....	20
Fiction .....	21
Teens .....	24
Women .....	25
Reviewers .....	26
Music .....	27
Contemporary .....	27
Praise & Worship .....	27
Southern Gospel .....	27

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Reviews are the opinions of individual reviewers, not necessarily of the editor or ECLA. Prices are subject to change.

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# ECLA

## Evangelical Church Library Association

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

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## Book Updates

### Repackaged

*The Berenstain Bears Faithful Cubs* by Stan & Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain (Zonderkidz, compilation of *The Berenstain Bears Discover God's Creation*, *The Berenstain Bears Do Their Best*, and *The Berenstain Bears Learn to Share*)

*Daniel and the Hungry Lions* (Zonderkidz, from *The Beginner's Bible*)

*The Dawn of Christmas* by Cindy Woodsmall (WaterBrook, from *Christmas in Apple Ridge*)

*Noah and the Big Boat* (Zonderkidz, from *The Beginner's Bible*)

### Reprinted

*Questions of Life* by Nicky Gumbel (Alpha)

### Retitled

*Live 10: Jump Start the Best Version of Your Life* by Terry A. Smith (Nelson, originally *Ten*)

### Revised

*Why Still Care about Israel?* by Sandra Teplinsky (Chosen, originally *Why Care about Israel?*)

## Help Wanted

ECLA is looking for a webmaster. If you have experience in this area or know someone who would like to maintain our site as a ministry, email Ceil Carey at [ceil@eclalibraries.org](mailto:ceil@eclalibraries.org).

## Use Our Reviews

If you or your library is a member of the Evangelical Church Library Association (membership includes a subscription to *Church Libraries*), you may quote from or reproduce the reviews in this journal in your library promotion materials.

Include this permission line at the bottom of each review: Reprinted from *Church Libraries*, Fall 2013. Used with permission.

## Promotional Hooks

### SEPTEMBER

Children's Books Month  
Library Card Sign-up Month  
Read a New Book Month  
National Literacy Month  
Be Kind to Editors and Writers Month

### OCTOBER

Church Library Month  
National Book Month  
National Reading Group Month  
National Book Fair Month  
Antiboredom Month  
6-12: Mystery Series Week  
13-19: Teen Read Week  
29: Biographies Are Beautiful Day

### NOVEMBER

Religious Books Month  
1: National Author's Day  
1: Family Literacy Day  
12: National Young Reader's Day  
24-30: National Bible Week  
25: National Day of the Bible  
27—December 5: Hanukkah  
29: C. S. Lewis's Birthday

### DECEMBER

Read a New Book Month  
10: Dewey Decimal System Day  
25: Christmas

## About Our Reviews

With few exceptions, we review only products that are published in the current year. Reviews in the spring issue and occasionally a few in the summer issue may include some books published late in the prior year due to the deadline lead time.



## 2013 Christy Awards

## Celebrate Church Library Month

by Lin Johnson

The 14th annual Christy Awards honoring and promoting excellence in Christian fiction were presented in June. This year's winners are:

- Contemporary romance: *The Breath of Dawn* by Kristen Heitzmann (Bethany)
- Contemporary series, sequels & novellas: *You Don't Know Me* by Susan May Warren (Tyndale)
- Contemporary standalone: *Not in the Heart* by Chris Fabry (Tyndale)
- First novel: *Into the Free* by Julie Cantrell (Cook)
- Historical: *Flame of Resistance* by Tracy Groot (Tyndale)
- Historical romance: *Against the Tide* by Elizabeth Camden (Bethany)
- Suspense: *Rare Earth* by Davis Bunn (Bethany)
- Visionary: *Soul's Gate* by James L. Rubart (Nelson)
- Young adult: *Child of the Mountains* by Marilyn Sue Shank (Delacorte).

The Christy advisory committee debuted the Christy Hall of Fame by inducting authors Lynn Austin, winner of eight Christy Awards, and Karen Hancock, winner of four Christy Awards.

The first Christy Book of the Year Award, showcasing the novel that had the greatest impact when placed against a set of criteria that includes literary quality, sales, and life impact, was awarded to *Into the Free* by Julie Cantrell (Cook).

For more information about the Christy Awards, go to [www.ChristyAwards.com](http://www.ChristyAwards.com).

**Be sure these Christy winners are in your library, and promote them as award-winning fiction worth reading.**

Does your circulation slow down over the summer? Do back-to-school and Sunday-school activities compete for your patrons' attentions? If so, October is the perfect time to draw those distracted readers back to the church library. Gain new readers this fall, and they'll reap the benefits for years to come.

Hosting an open house is an ideal activity to promote your library during Church Library Month. Start simple, but do begin planning today. Post notices in the church newsletter, and put up flyers and colorful displays throughout the building. On the day of the open house, offer treats to lure visitors in. If resources permit, continue the celebration throughout the month with contests, extended library hours, and/or giveaways.

Use the skit on page 6 in a worship service to let new people know about your library.

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

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

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

**Share how you celebrate Church Library Month with other librarians by posting your ideas on our Facebook page, [facebook.com/eclibraries](https://www.facebook.com/eclibraries).**

*Lin Johnson is managing editor of Church Libraries and has started two church libraries.*

# For the Love of the Word



## Evangelical Church Library Conference

October 18-19, 2013  
Elmhurst, Ill. (Chicago area)

brochure & details:  
[eclalibraries.org/ecla-conference](http://eclalibraries.org/ecla-conference)

# For the Love of the Word

by Ceil Carey

**F**or the love of the Word.” This theme will set the tone for the 2013 ECLA conference to be held October 18-19 at Grace Bible Church in Elmhurst, Ill. Librarians of every kind and book lovers in general will enjoy what we have in store.

Conference highlights include the following:

- author dinner Friday evening, a wonderful opportunity to meet and hear Christian writers, as well as purchase autographed copies of their books
- keynote speaker, Stan Guthrie
- a variety of publishers who will promote their newest products and be on hand during Saturday’s part of the conference
- workshops covering a variety of interesting and informative subjects on both Friday afternoon and Saturday, ranging from Christian fiction by perennial favorite Chris Jager to social media, book-discussion groups, book repair, and more
- on-site bookstore where you can peruse and purchase some of the latest and greatest books at a discount
- greeting old friends and making new ones, networking with other librarians who understand your challenges
- book swap where you might find that book you have been looking for—or didn’t know you were looking for
- a delicious lunch and opportunity for fellowship
- and, of course, the book giveaway at the end of the day, which enables you to take home free books for your library.

Check out the details on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/eclalibraries](http://www.facebook.com/eclalibraries) and our website, [www.eclalibraries.com](http://www.eclalibraries.com). Sign up now; you won’t regret it.

---

*Ceil Carey is a public librarian and copresident of the ECLA Board.*

# Dude! We Have a Library?

by Suzanne Reeves

**Editor's note:** Permission is granted to photocopy this skit to promote your library.

Approximate running time: two minutes.

*(JASON is sitting on a stool/chair reading a book as SHAWN walks by. SHAWN is a stereotypical surfer dude. Roles may be played by men or women with flexible ages; change names as needed.)*

SHAWN: Dude! What is that?

JASON: It's a book.

SHAWN: Wow—I've heard about those. I didn't think they still existed.

JASON: Yep. They're still around. It's actually really interesting.

SHAWN: *(Picks it up and holds it up to his ear.)* Nothing. I can't hear a thing.

JASON: You read it. You know, open it up. Read the words.

SHAWN: Dude. Reading. Cool. I've heard about that too.

JASON: It's pretty revolutionary. Anyone can do it.

SHAWN: Shhhaw! Anyone?

JASON: Yep, they have tons of books in our church library.

SHAWN: Our church has a library?

JASON: It's right next to *(give location)*. And they have all kinds of books for people looking for in-depth instruction, fiction lovers, right down to *(looks at SHAWN)* the beginner reader.

SHAWN: No way! Must be expensive.

JASON: Shawn, libraries are free. You just have to sign the card *(or insert church procedure)*.

SHAWN: *(Mimics his head exploding.)* Whoa! You mean, there is a library, right here in our church? Anyone can go there, and it's free?

JASON: Yes, Shawn.

SHAWN: What a day! Wait 'til I tell the pastor *(or insert pastor's name)*. He is gonna freak out! *(Runs off as JASON shakes his head.)*

---

*Suzanne Reeves is a freelance writer whose first book, Christian Chick's Guide to Surviving Divorce, releases in November.*

# Keeping Company With God

by Cindy Grabill

The God of the Universe longs to talk with His children through prayer, and most Christians talk to Him. However, many consider their prayers as duties or shallow exercises to an invisible Being. The authors of these books teach readers how to pray deeply, expectantly, boldly, and persistently. They suggest reasons prayer often goes unanswered and study the prayers of Jesus.

Since this topic is vital to Christian growth, these books belong in your church library.

**ANYTHING: The Prayer That Unlocked My God and My Soul**  
by Jennie Allen  
Nelson, 978-0-8499-4705-6, 2012, PB, 192 pages, \$15.99

Allen, an author and speaker, tells of the consequences of her decision to allow God to “do whatever you want with whatever I have.” This choice led her and her husband to Africa where they adopted a special-needs child from Rwanda. Allen shares how she allowed God to break down idols in her life and use His power to write several books.

Allen challenges readers to give God permission to have His way and shows through personal examples how that decision radically changes lives. Her stories emphasize that, through prayer, God is able to do far more than we thought possible.

**THE CIRCLE MAKER: Praying Circles Around Your Biggest Dreams and Greatest Fears**  
by Mark Batterson  
Zondervan, 978-0-310-33073-8, 2012, PB, 224 pages, \$14.99

**THE CIRCLE MAKER, STUDENT EDITION: Dream Big, Pray Hard, Think Long**  
by Mark Batterson with Parker Batterson  
Zondervan, 978-0-310-72513-8, 2012, PB, 224 pages \$12.99

During a drought-threatened Jerusalem in the first century B.C., a man named Honi drew a circle, knelt there, and prayed for rain. A torrential downpour followed, leading to flash flooding. Rev. Batterson shows readers how bold, persistent praying like this leads to showers of blessing. He tells of how his dream of owning a coffeehouse became reality after eight years of persistent prayer and relates specific answers to prayers as he planted churches. Batterson encourages readers to “pray circles” around their own biggest dreams and watch God work miracles.

These books are challenging, are inspiring, and will cause readers to relinquish weak prayer lives and watch their biggest dreams become reality. The student edition includes many of the same principles and challenges but in teen lingo.

**EXPERIENCING PRAYER WITH JESUS**

by Henry & Norman Blackaby  
Multnomah, 978-1-5905-2576-0, 2006, HB, 160 pages, \$14.99

Blackaby, a pastor and conference speaker, examines Jesus’ prayer life. He stresses Jesus’ determination to make prayer a priority, His submissive attitude, and His total obedience to His Father’s will. Blackaby shows Jesus’ praying for strength to combat temptation. We learn from His example as He intercedes for others.

What better place to learn how to pray than from the example of the Master Pray-er. Through Jesus’ example, Blackaby addresses all the principles of prayer, including what to pray about and who to pray for.

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*The authors of these books teach readers how to pray deeply, expectantly, boldly, and persistently.*

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# BOOK ROUNDUP

**I TALK TO GOD ABOUT HOW I FEEL: Learning to Pray, Knowing He Cares**

by Stormie Omartian

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2685-0, 2010, HB, 32 pages, \$14.99

God comforts children when they're sad and lonely and helps them not be afraid. He will make them feel good again when other children tease them. Omartian stresses happiness and asks children to think of 20 things that make them happy.

Children will feel close to God when they experience one of these emotions as Omartian shows them how they can talk to Him about anything and He understands.

**LIBERATING PRAYER: Finding Freedom by Connecting with God**  
by Neil T. Anderson

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4665-0, 2012, PB, 160 pages, \$11.99

Anderson stresses prayer as two-way communication and helps readers sharpen their listening skills. He shows how to walk in the Spirit and run from the flesh, as well as giving suggestions for how to pray for various groups, including the lost, the rebellious, and those in authority over us.

Sharing his own struggles, weaknesses, and helpful Scripture, Anderson, a writer and evangelist, presents realistic suggestions to help readers combat distractions and deepen their prayer lives. Thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter make this good devotional material.

**THE POWER OF A PRAYING ...**

by Stormie Omartian

Harvest House, 2002-2010, \$9.99-13.99

In this series, Omartian trains different groups of people to be prayer warriors. Her personal stories show how prayer can change anything. She helps teens avoid peer pressure, helps kids battle worry, and suggests to parents how they can pray for each child with "fervency and passion." She dem-

*The God  
of the Universe  
longs to talk  
with His children  
through prayer.*

onstrates how prayer groups will strengthen churches, and her advice to husbands and wives will develop powerful marriages.

These books are easy to read, informative, and filled with practical suggestions, such as "Seven Guidelines in Starting a Prayer Group." Each chapter includes helpful Scripture and ends with questions for further study. These books make ideal devotional material.

**PRAYER: Does It Make Any Difference?**

by Philip Yancey

Zondervan, 978-0-310-32888-9, 2010, PB, 352 pages, \$16.99

Yancey, editor-at-large for *Christianity Today* and bestselling author, examines the prayers of biblical prayer warriors, among them Abraham, Hannah, and Jehoshaphat. He delves deeply into communication between Jesus and His Father. He suggests reasons for God's silence and explains why some prayers are answered and some aren't. He stresses patience, discusses physical healing, and relates his own experiences with intercessory prayer.

This book is intellectual and well researched, depicting Yancey's knowledge of Scripture, particularly the New Testament. Yet this work is practical—Yancey shows ways to make prayer a priority—and comforting. Readers will know with certainty that the God of the universe longs to have a relationship with each of us.

**PRAYER ON FIRE: What Happens when the Holy Spirit Ignites Your Prayers**

by Fred Hartley

NavPress, 978-1-576-83960-7, 2006, PB, 163 pages, \$14.99

Christians who pray on fire allow the Holy Spirit to control every area of their lives and incinerate anything that will keep them from Him. This purging process allows intimacy and will cause prayer lives to sizzle. Lukewarm prayers to an invisible Being are replaced with prayers of faith believing that through Him anything is possible. Hartley tells true stories of people who prayed passionately and includes help for families and congregations eager to catch fire with their prayers.

Pastor Hartley presents key, yet often overlooked, concepts, including the presence of the Holy Spirit and the need to make Him president instead of resident. Total obedience to His will leads to awesome blessing.

**PRAYER: The Great Adventure**

by David Jeremiah

Multnomah, 978-1-590-52182-3, 2004, PB, 272 pages \$13.99

Pastor Jeremiah devotes a chapter to each portion of the Lord's Prayer and examines Jesus' prayer found in John 17. He makes suggestions for praise, shows how to examine priorities, demonstrates how to forgive others, and outlines the benefits of temptation. He teaches how to pray through trials and combat temptation and reminds readers of heaven in which each day is eternity. He concludes with a section on journaling that helps readers keep track of their spiritual growth.

Christians often recite the Lord's Prayer without considering its meaning. Jeremiah's book allows readers to contemplate each section and demonstrates how to pray. Jesus' prayer allows them to focus on their own purposes on Earth.

# BOOK ROUNDUP

## **TOO BUSY NOT TO PRAY: Slowing Down to Be with God**

by **Bill Hybels**

**InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3475-4, 2008, PB, 208 pages, \$16**

God's power flows through people who pray. This power can conquer fear, worry, and any conceivable obstacle. Hybels shows readers how to fit time with God regularly into the daily schedule and discusses each of prayer's four components: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. He explains four ways God answers prayer and discusses biblical characters who received one of these four answers.

Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, presents a convincing argument for the necessity and benefits of prayer and gives clear, step-

by-step instructions which, if followed, will lead to intimacy with God.

## **THE ULTIMATE CONVERSATION WITH GOD: Talking with God Through Prayer**

by **Charles Stanley**

**Howard, 978-1-451-66660-5, 2013, PB, 272 pages, \$14.99**

Stanley helps readers achieve intimacy with God through prayer. He provides tips to discern God's voice and deal with painful childhood memories and includes reasons for unanswered prayer. He demonstrates how we can win "battles on our knees" and emphasizes obedience. For those who do what God says, the possibilities are endless.

Stanley, pastor and director of InTouch Ministries, presents an awe-

some picture of God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. Yet this same I Am wants to commune with us through prayer. This book is easy to read, and Stanley's content is clear. Following his suggestions will lead to intimacy with God

*Cindy Grabill is a freelance writer who manages her church's book table ministry and has worked in the church library.*

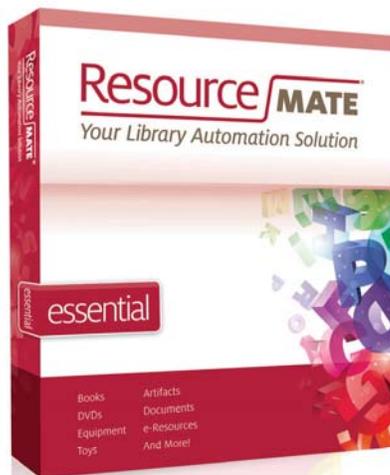
**"Be awesome! Be a book nut!"**

**—Dr. Seuss**

**Clearly one must read every good book at least once every ten years.**

**—C.S. Lewis**

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*– Calvary Baptist Church*

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# The Serendipity of Gifts

by Diane Fisher

Three Sundays ago Dorothy came into the library with a gift: a well-preserved hardback copy of *A Grief Observed* by C. S. Lewis. She made my day since our copy is showing its age, and now I won't have to purchase a new one. She felt good too.

Encouraging your users to share their unwanted books and media helps you build a team whose gifts can enhance the library's collection.

However, if you also want this team to care about the quality and suitability of their donations, be ready with a written donation policy. In creating the policy, be concise and as direct as you can be, choosing positive language to express your parameters. At the same time, provide a list of local charities and resale shops that welcome the materials you don't want.

In the box to the right is the donation policy I wrote for my library, which you may customize for yours.

The serendipity of gifts goes full circle as we delight our congregation with a freebie table. We pass on a select mixture of new duplicates, library discards, college textbooks, and other appropriate items that come our way but we can't use. Anything that stays too long on the table I give to charities and resale shops.

Last Sunday a newcomer held out a small Scripture plaque and asked, "Is this really free?"

I was glad to tell her it was.

*Diane Fisher is librarian at Bethel Presbyterian Church, Wheaton, Ill., and an ECLA Board member.*

## Bethel Presbyterian Church Library

### D O N A T I O N S

We enjoy receiving donations that are consistent with our church's theology and meet these guidelines:

- **commentaries and reference books:** items in good condition with no underlining or writing in the margins.
- **adult fiction, nonfiction, and biographies:** books published or reprinted in recent years, in good condition with no underlining or writing in the margins.
- **magazines, Bible-study guides, and other workbooks:** in general, we do not add these to our collection.
- **children's books:** items with specifically Christian content, in good condition, and with aesthetically pleasing artwork.
- **media:** CDs and DVDs are welcome; we are unable to accept cassettes or VHS tapes.

We may add your donations to the collection. But if we do not, we will put them on the freebie table to share with others if you wish.

If you have items that don't fit these guidelines, our staff will suggest other organizations that welcome them. If you are in doubt, please check with us before leaving items.

If you would like a tax receipt for your donation, we're happy to give you one.

We continue to welcome your contributions within these guidelines. The library committee wants to offer quality Christian literature for our church family, and your donations are an integral part in helping us reach this goal.

Diane Fisher, Librarian

9/2012

# Turn Your Volunteers Into a Team

by Jeanetta Chrystie

A church's library staff often has a strong leader plus other volunteers who either love to read books, have worked in public or school libraries, or are friends of the leader who encouraged them to help in the library.

Even a medium-sized church library may have volunteers who specialize in certain activities. These may include checking materials in and reshelving them, helping people locate and check out desired materials, cataloguing materials, repairing books, acquiring new materials, and creating displays and bulletin boards.

Volunteers in some church libraries specify when they staff the library for patrons to check out materials, such as Sunday mornings before Sunday school, Sundays after worship service, or Wednesday evenings before fellowship dinner or prayer meeting.

Each church library staff is unique to meet its church members' needs. Some churches call the volunteer workers a library committee and give the leader of the library staff an official title, such as director. The director then serves as the voice of the library committee by regularly reporting budget expenses, library needs, and circulation numbers to a paid church staff member or board of deacons or elders.

Other library staffs may be informal, where one or two people accession donations and check out books, oper-

ating without a budget or any reporting functions.

No matter what your staff looks like, Nehemiah modeled ways you can turn that staff into a team.

## Nehemiah's Model

In the first few chapters of the book of Nehemiah, we see several principles for creating a group of volunteers and turning them into a well-functioning team.

Before you approach your library volunteers, spend some time in personal reflection. In chapter one, Nehemiah learned that the walls of Jerusalem lay in ruins, the gates were broken and burned, and Jerusalem was

in disgrace. Nehemiah felt burdened about Jerusalem's problems, and he made those problems his passion.

First, Nehemiah bathed the situation in fervent prayers. As leader of the library staff, get a journal or piece of paper; and list your volunteer workers (or potential workers). Then list your library's needs. Write out specific prayers for each person and need. Avoid telling God how to meet a need or change a person. Just pray from your heart to your pen and God's ear.

Nehemiah also listened for God's leading. Listening for God involves setting aside times to be quiet, unrushed, and laying aside our personal desires. Write down whatever you think God is saying to your heart about the library work, workers, and problems or needs.

Second, Nehemiah formulated a plan to receive leadership instructions, people to help him, and materials for the work. Ask God to show you people in your church (or nearby churches) who can help meet the needs, perhaps for worker training and acquisition of materials.

On arrival in Jerusalem, Nehemiah surveyed the condition of the walls' destruction. Seek people who can tell you ways to become more useful to the congregation. Write down all the ideas that come to you, and sort through them later with additional input from your volunteer workers.

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*No matter what your staff looks like, Nehemiah modeled ways you can turn that staff into a team.*

---

*Define a common vision and purpose that can unify your library workers and help everyone work toward the same goals.*

Third, Nehemiah met with the people in Jerusalem and shared his vision with them. Define a common vision and purpose that can unify your library workers and help everyone work toward the same goals.

Again, write down some sample purpose statements for your library, such as:

*We provide wholesome Christian books to read. We provide materials for Sunday school and other teachers to use in preparing their lessons. We exist to serve varied needs within our congregation, such as [list examples].*

Define the library as a service ministry that supports other church ministries.

Fourth, Nehemiah behaved as a team player while thinking as a leader. He guided the work with a game plan, but he didn't try to do all the work himself. He also waited for the people to buy into the vision. We need to allow our volunteer workers to develop their own understanding of the vision and listen to their ideas. Volunteers flourish in a spirit of freedom and gratitude.

Fifth, Nehemiah became a good listener. We need to listen to the needs of our church members and be as responsive as we are able to with existing materials. Then formulate plans to

meet other needs that could fit into our library's vision and purpose, always keeping them as a guide and impetus.

Sixth, Nehemiah listened when reports of enemies' actions threatened the work. We also need to listen to changing needs within the congregation. Methods that have worked for decades usually need occasional updating to include new types of materials and equipment.

When people want additional services to help a particular ministry, such as having open hours during a women's daytime Bible study or vacation Bible school, ask for new volunteers from the congregation. A library is a ministry that enables church members to be more effective in their various ministries.

Seventh, and finally, Nehemiah acknowledged that the success of the work belonged to God. He also acknowledged the spiritual leadership of Ezra in reading the law to the people as they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. Ultimately, library volunteers function as partners with the pastor as they seek to help meet the needs of members, teachers, and church staff.

## Your Leadership

Building on these guidelines from Nehemiah are two specific skills that successful leaders develop: delegation and supervision.

Delegation is an act of giving people with specific abilities or interests the chance to utilize them in their volunteer work. Supervision is an artful combination of spot-checking the progress of delegated work without reclaiming the work. These skills are imperative for leaders of volunteer groups, such as church-library workers.

Many people do volunteer work for the sense of belonging and camaraderie it can offer. They seek acceptance, feelings of achievement, and social interaction, as well as an outlet for ministry. So share the important tasks.

Effective leaders of volunteer work-

ers must emphasize a we're-a-team feeling. Brainstorming as a group will generate more ideas than a single individual can create. One person's idea may give another person an additional idea. If your church does a teacher appreciation event where the library's contribution is mentioned, share the spotlight during activities (such as an awards night) with all team members.

Be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things. Effective listening skills begin with a compassionate heart and flourish with an open mind. Be willing to discuss different ways to accomplish tasks and goals, solve problems, and manage different opinions.

Help one another recognize church-library work as a ministry to the entire church membership and to people with whom they come in contact.

## Kingdom Results

Our library volunteers' efforts can have far-reaching effects for the cause of God's Kingdom as we allow Him to provide Christian information and teaching helps through all volunteers' ideas.

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

**The fire of literacy is created by the emotional sparks between a child, a book, and the person reading. It isn't achieved by the book alone, nor by the child alone, nor by the adult who's reading aloud—it's the relationship winding between all three, bringing them together in easy harmony.**

—Mem Fox

# Marble Mania Reading Club

by Jeanetta Chrystie

**K**ids are attracted to the colors, designs, and feel of marbles. They like rolling them, shooting them, playing games with them, collecting them, and trading them.

Marbles may be glass, clay, steel, ceramic, agate, or resin. Games using marbles date back to before the building of the Egyptian pyramids. Dozens of marbles games exist, with name and rules differences from country to country.

One common version, called ringer, is where a circle is drawn and people shoot marbles at target marbles to knock them out of the ring. Another game, called roly, adds punching little holes in the ground or sand and using the shooter marble to knock target marbles into the holes. Sometimes participants play a “keepsy” game where the winner is allowed to keep the marbles he or she captures by knocking them from the circle or into a roly hole.

Some people collect marbles based on their type, origin, designs, or value as a collectable.

Marbles can also be the basis for a library reading club. Here’s how to plan one around this popular toy.

## Marble Mania Setup

Before playing a game, people want to know the rules, expected activities, and ways to win. One great benefit of reading clubs is that there can be many win-

ners. Some options that help everyone feel they can be a winner include the following:

(1) Define age groups with different reading requirements for each group. If your church has a Sunday-school class for people with learning disabilities, or an English-as-a-second-language class, you may want to create special groups for them too.

(2) Set the reading level of books to match each group. For example, preschool children can count each age-appropriate book they have read to them as one book. Encourage young children who can read to read to a parent, grandparent, neighbor, or older sibling.

(3) Allow older siblings to read to younger siblings, perhaps setting five preschool books they help a younger sibling read as five books for the younger sibling and one book for the older sibling.

After you determine the age groups of children and youth in your church and the appropriate level and number of books for each group, then look at your library’s holdings. Do you have enough books in your biography section (that are not yellowed with age) to require teens to read at least one biography or autobiographical story as part of their reading list?

Do you have enough juvenile (ages 8-12) mysteries to support requiring children in that group to read one or

two mysteries? What reading level are your Bible character-based books? Do you have enough novels to require teens to read one where faith plays a part in the unfolding drama? Do you have enough early-reader books for children to check out several at a time?

The point of these questions is to determine whether you can use the reading club to generate interest in reading various genres, rather than participants always reading the same type of

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*Kids are attracted to the colors, designs, and feel of marbles. They like rolling them, shooting them, playing games with them, collecting them, and trading them.*

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# PROMOTION

books. Increasing your patrons' appreciation of more types of books not only increases circulation numbers during the reading club, but for many months afterward.

If you need to add to your collection, consider creating a wish list to publicize in the church bulletin. Ask people to stop by the library, and sign up to donate the book or funds to purchase it. You can often find good quality, inexpensive books at local used bookstores or on Amazon.com.

## Publicity

The next preparation activity is to create interest and enthusiasm for the upcoming club. Three to four weeks of announcements, activity sheets, and contests add to people's anticipation.

Announcements may be as simple as a few sentences in the bulletin or as interesting as brief skits during the announcements time of a worship service. In an announcement, include the reading club's theme, starting and ending dates, and teasers about upcoming activity sheets and contests. Display some marbles in a glass jar away from little fingers, along with a few books about marbles (perhaps from the public library).

Activity sheets can include word jumbles (hiding words among a grid of letters), acrostic-based treasure hunts (list a favorite toy for each letter in the word *marble*), and a coloring page related to marbles.

Consider displaying completed activity sheets. Encourage children and teens to pick up their weekly sheets and leave another to display. That way they develop a habit of coming into the library each week. Usually three or four activity sheets, one per week, helps generate interest in the upcoming reading club.

Contests may include anagrams (rearranging the letters of *marbles* to create other words) and hosting games for older kids and teens on the church grounds where everyone receives a

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*Increasing your patrons' appreciation of more types of books not only increases circulation numbers during the reading club, but for many months afterward.*

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few marbles to start their own collection.

Three web sites where you can glean more information to use in activity sheets and contests are: [www.landofmarbles.com/marbles-play.html](http://www.landofmarbles.com/marbles-play.html), [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble\\_\(toy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble_(toy)), and [www.marblecollecting.com/marble-reference/online-marble-id-guide](http://www.marblecollecting.com/marble-reference/online-marble-id-guide).

## Monitor the Action

On your enrollment forms, leave plenty of room below participants' names and contact information for them to write the name of each book they read toward the club goals. If different age groups have different reading goals, you may want to include that information on the form where kids can check off each requirement as it is completed.

Using enrollment forms in this way allows you to skip creating a large poster on which to track all participants' progress. However, children may be encouraged to read more by seeing their progress on a poster alongside everyone else's.

Post reading-club rules near the

checkout area. Example rules include: start and end dates, number of books each age group should read to earn a prize, and number of books different-aged siblings can count when read together.

Determine whether it would be wise for your church if all participants or families receive a minimal participation prize without reaching the goal number of books.

## End Game

Reading clubs help members be more aware of the church library and often generate return visits because they are more familiar with the library and its staff.

Host an end-of-the-club party, and give out prizes. Share humorous anecdotes and photos. And don't forget to thank your volunteers.

During a follow-up library staff meeting, discuss the parts of the reading club that worked well and any potential improvements. You may want to award everyone a few marbles to remind them of your marble mania.

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

*These are not books, lumps of lifeless paper, but minds alive on the shelves. From each of them goes out its own voice ... and just as the touch of a button on our set will fill the room with music, so by taking down one of these volumes and opening it, one can call into range the voice of a man far distant in time and space, and hear him speaking to us, mind to mind, heart to heart.*

—Gilbert Highet

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Bible & Theology

**BIBLE FIND IT: A Simple Illustrated Guide to Key Events/Verses/Stories/ And More**

**Illustrated Bible Handbook Series**  
by Kent Keller & Jonathan Ziman  
Barbour, 978-1-61626-599-1, PB, 257  
pages, \$12.99

Ever have that frustrating situation of knowing a Bible story, yet not remembering exactly where it is located? Well, this book solves that problem. It summarizes in one-page, succinct summaries the lives of all the great and minor personages of the Bible.

Additionally, it explains where some of our favorites catch-phrases are found, such as “Eat, drink, and be merry.” All the parables Jesus taught are categorized, identified, referenced, and explained. A special section called “Amazing Occurrences” locates and profiles such events as Balaam’s talking donkey, the sun standing still, Jesus feeding 5,000 people, and Paul shaking off the bite of a deadly viper.

The pages are supplemented with color paintings of biblical people, scenic photos of the holy lands, architectural artifacts, and views of nature. A detailed table of contents and an index make locating items quick and easy. Put this book within easy reach; it will be used often. DEH

**DEEPER PLACES: Experiencing God in the Psalms**

by Matthew Jacoby  
Baker, 978-0-8010-1520-5, PB, 183  
pages, \$14.99

The book of Psalms can be confusing, but it pictures the beauty of a relationship with God with all its messy emotions. Jacoby, the lead member of a band attempting to put the Psalms to music, wrote about his discoveries while studying this book. He said these

emotions are essential building blocks in any relationship, including one with God.

The more we read the Psalms and let them guide us, the better our relationship with God will become. This is a good book for anyone looking to know God better. JW

**THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD: Defending Your Life from Satan’s Schemes**

by Larry Richards  
Baker, 978-0-8007-9542-9, PB, 186  
pages, \$12.99

Demons are real, created beings with power to aid Satan and his rebellion. According to Richards, demons mostly make us feel bad about ourselves and keep us from being all we can be.

Loosely basing his thoughts on Ephesians, he tells us how to battle demons, which mostly sounds like psychoanalysis and mental imaging. His most bizarre example has you envision the moment of your own conception by standing with your arms out, holding the egg in one hand and the sperm in the other hand. By following his steps, and especially by attending one of his seminars, you can feel good about yourself and do great things. Not recommended. JW

**KILLING JESUS: The Unknown Conspiracy Behind the World’s Most Famous Execution**

by Stephen Mansfield  
Worthy, 978-1-61795-187-9, HB, 255  
pages, \$22.99

Christ’s passion has been considered from many points of view. Mansfield’s book is a literary version of Mel Gibson’s movie. Both are biblically based and placed in historical context, and both are graphic. Mansfield does not shy from controversy as much as he gets nose to nose with it until someone blinks—and it may be the reader. Short, staccato chapters keep readers turning pages with the story coming

alive. However, this is not a book for immature readers or for those who want a sanitized arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

Written by a *New York Times* best-selling author, it is similar in content to *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel with its research, but is more graphic. Mansfield uses strong language periodically and verbal images that may disturb some readers. In fact, he provides a disclaimer because of the content. He identifies sources and scholars and provides notes at the end of the book. Overall, this book is well written and has the potential of helping readers develop a more complete understanding of what Jesus went through in His final hours on Earth. Recommended for mature Christians. BLE

**THE POPULAR HANDBOOK OF ARCHAEOLOGY: Discoveries That Confirm the Reliability of Scripture**  
by Joseph M. Holden & Norman Geisler

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4485-4,  
HB, 448 pages, \$24.99

Archaeology continues to demonstrate that the Bible is true, and this book adds substance to that support. This tome has seven units with two or more chapters presenting the research in layman’s terms with application points and a variety of charts, tables, and images. A glossary of key terms, three appendices, a bibliography, an index, and footnotes within the chapters round out the content.

This book does not ignore alleged difficulties and confronts challenges, such as the JEPD controversy, with high-quality research and respected experts in the field. The authors, especially Geisler, are well-known for their apologetic ministries; and this book is in keeping with that focus. This book could easily be used as a textbook but is also a great resource for the teachers and serious Bible students in your church. Recommended. BLE

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT THAT?

by Aaron Sharp

Bethany, 978-0-7642-1056-3, PB, 255 pages, \$12.99

Many critics of the Bible contend that because it was written more than 2,000 years ago, it is out-of-date and not fit to provide advice to modern folks. This condensed book does an excellent job of debunking that belief by revealing that the Bible addresses literally hundreds of topics of key importance to today's people. The Bible focuses on such timely matters as abortion, alcoholism, birth control, civil rights, divorce, the death penalty, rape, sorcery, prostitution, unwanted pregnancies, and even weight control. By alphabetizing the topics and providing an extensive topics listing, users can quickly locate subjects.

Each entry has a one-paragraph overview, two to four quoted passages of Scripture regarding that topic, and then a list of more than 20 additional references to look up. Although the book is designed for research, it is also fun to read entry after entry and be amazed at God's timeliness. DEH

## Biography & Memoir

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### THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTER: A Memoir

by Alexandra Kuykendall

Revell, 978-0-8007-2205-0, PB, 249 pages, \$13.99

Reared by a single mom, Kuykendall struggled to find her identity without her father, a Spanish artist who seemed more concerned with a canvas than a little girl. In this touching memoir, she recounts how she wrestled to feel loved and make sense of her life while growing up, strengthening her marriage, rearing her daughters, and

finding belonging in her heavenly father.

Kuykendall retells her story with refreshing clarity. Her writing style and clear dialogue read like fiction. While at times her story jumps unexpectedly, she is careful to avoid focusing too long on specific times in her life. Her story as a young mother and involvement in MOPS is likely to attract mothers of different ages, but all women can relate to her story of love, personal identity in Christ, and passion for art. KMS

### CHASING THE DIVINE IN THE HOLY LAND

by Ruth Everhart

Eerdmans, 978-0-8028-6907-4, PB, 176 pages, \$18

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land can be an unsettling adventure. Many of the "holy sights" are disputed and based on tradition, rather than facts. Mix in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the clash of three main religions and everything is, as Everhart said, discombobulating.

Everhart, a Presbyterian minister, joined a group of pastors on a trip to the Holy Land. Her adventures and spiritual struggles are well written and carry her story along well. Her conclusion is that her faith is much like the Holy Land—based on uncertainty. Her main desire is not to restrict God with theology but to follow the Spirit. Women from mainline denominations will be this book's biggest fans, but it may not fit your library. JW

### TO STIR A MOVEMENT: Life, Justice, and Major League Baseball

by Jeremy Affeldt

Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-3051-7, HB, 191 pages, \$21.99

San Francisco Giants' pitcher Affeldt's heart for enslaved children began with the realization that he was almost one himself. He tells the story of how God has summoned him to help stop the worldwide problem of

sex trafficking. This book is a documentation of an interesting life. Flashing back to childhood memories—ranging from struggling on limited means to first learning how to play baseball—and then referencing future events, including his salvation experience and Big League high points, Affeldt uses the events of his life as anecdotes that teach readers the same lessons God taught him.

He is our tour guide through the journey he has walked, and with the benefit of hindsight he points out how God's faithfulness and wisdom manifest themselves in each event. Baseball fan or not, readers will be moved emotionally and, hopefully, called to action by Affeldt's life. EJM

## Children

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### Bibles & Bible Stories

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#### MY LEARN TO READ BIBLE: Stories in Words and Pictures

by Tracy Harrast

Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72740-8, HB, 239 pages, \$19.99

This book serves two purposes. First, it summarizes key Bible stories on a level 4- to 7-year-olds can understand and remember. Second, it helps to expand the vocabulary of young readers by presenting challenging words and inserting a drawing above them to help the child recall the word's pronunciation and meaning. For example, the word *tombs* has a picture of two burial tombs above it.

Each story, covering Old and New Testament people and events, is only two pages. And a biblical reference is supplied under each title in case parents want to refer to the Bible passage. The drawings are simplistic but diverse, featuring people of all colors,

# BOOK REVIEWS

nationalities, and races. As an overview of Scripture and a teaching text, this book is accurate and functional. DEH

## Picture Books

**HUMBLE HEART: A Book of Virtues Humble Bumbles**  
by Amy Meyer Allen  
Tyndale, 978-1-4143-8069-8, HB, 192 pages, \$14.99

This brightly colored, large-print book aimed at young readers contains words that are simple but biblically accurate. Eight animals and insects on a farm learn lessons in virtues, such as courage, faithfulness, mercy, and love. The animals interact with each other, but in each story one copes with an issue and learns a valuable lesson regarding serving others according to God's commands. For example, the book's title is taken from the lead story about a bumblebee that is so proud he won't take help or advice from anyone else in his hive. However, when he gets all messed up when trying to make honey by himself, he learns the value of accepting and giving help with a humble attitude.

Bible verses that support the virtue taught are provided for parents to read to youngsters. Each story is enjoyable and a good teaching tool. DEH

## Juvenile

**MAN ON A MISSION: The David Hilmers Story**  
by Rick Houston  
Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-73613-4, PB, 144 pages, \$6.99

David Hilmers had a dream of becoming a medical doctor; but negative events in his life continually popped up, stalling him from following that dream. Nevertheless, he persisted in seeking and meeting worthy goals. First, he served his country in the mili-

tary, then used his military experience and G.I. benefits to earn a Ph.D. He eventually fulfilled his original dream and even became an astronaut. Today he serves as a medical advisor and skills-assessment expert with international missions groups.

This book tells a true story that is both interesting and inspiring. It covers God's perfect plan for people's lives without being preachy or dogmatic. David's story proves that Christianity is not the equivalent of boredom or limited opportunities. He serves as a role model for young Christians who need righteous goals and worthy ambitions. Using simple words, this story presents an uplifting testimony of a genuine American hero. Parents will enjoy reading this book too. THJ

**SAINT FRANCIS AND BROTHER DUCK**  
by Jay Stoeckl  
Paraclete, 978-61261-159-4, PB, 137 pages, \$15.99

One of the most influential saints of the Christian faith comes to life in this graphic novel. Set at the height of the Roman Empire, the story of Francis of Assisi is retold with the only fictional character being Brother Duck, Francis's funny and sarcastic sidekick. Kids can join Francis and Brother Duck as they venture through the key events of

Francis's life while they discover how to follow Christ.

True to actual events, these colorful pages are close enough to cartoons to intrigue young readers, yet detailed enough to give the retelling of St. Francis's life a fresh perspective for those who know it well. Readers will be inspired as the story reveals how God works in the lives of those who trust Him and submit to His calling. I recommend this book to children and parents for both its educational and entertainment elements. KS

## Christian Living

**CONTENTMENT: The Secret to a Lasting Calm**  
by Richard A. Swenson  
NavPress, 978-1-61747-182-7, PB, 240 pages, \$15.99

In today's world, materialism is overvalued and contentment is undervalued. But throughout history, contentment was honored by great minds. It is possible to find this kind of peace in our day, but only through a relationship with Christ. Dr. Swenson helps readers discover the necessity of and accessibility to contented lives.

As a medical expert, he explains the value of not being overwhelmed by stress, anxiety, and worry. As a scientist, he offers statistics and research that show the future is not going to be pleasant if overpopulation, political strife, and technological overload continue unchecked. He also proves that our current approach to finding contentment—drugs, mindless video games, recreational sex—doesn't work. Instead, he shows that peace in the soul comes from knowing one's ultimate destiny and from having the ability to commune with a living God. Drawing on examples from both Scripture and

### SERIES UPDATES

**The Adventures of Lily Lapp**  
by Mary Ann Kinsinger &  
Suzanne Woods Fisher  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2134-3, \$12.99  
#3 *A Big Year for Lily*

**The Enchanted Attic**  
by L. L. Samson  
Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-74057-5,  
\$7.99  
*Wrestling with Tom Sawyer*

# BOOK REVIEWS

history, Swenson makes a strong case for the ability to find contentment and the necessity of making an effort to do so. KN

## THE EASY BURDEN OF PLEASING GOD

by **Patty Kirk**

**InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-4303-9, PB, 176 pages, \$15**

As Christians, we sometimes strain ourselves in an attempt to please God. We fail to see that pleasing Him involves tasks and feelings we already enjoy, such as love, rest, and surrender. Do we really have to go above and beyond what is comfortable to say we have lived a godly life? Should it be a burden to please God?

Teacher and former atheist Kirk explains in this thought-provoking book what pleasing God looks like. Based on the idea that God requires nothing but belief in Him, she explains how people complicate God's message of hope and bog down their lives trying to please Him. As well as using personal experiences, she skillfully retells familiar Bible stories to make the characters and situations easy to relate to. Reading this book is refreshing for the mature Christian who struggles with an overburdened life. EV

## EVERYDAY SABBATH: The Art of Real-Life Rest

by **Judi Braddy**

**Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-2881-1, PB, 190 pages, \$14.99**

God promises to give us rest, but

often our everyday mindsets rob us of that rest. Braddy, armed with the Word, tackles exhausting attitudes and practices to usher spiritual relaxation into the Sabbath and every other day of the week. She strongly advocates that practicing a weekly Sabbath, though not necessarily on a Sunday, is essential to function physically, as well as mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. She also encourages daily, monthly, and yearly rest intervals and presents plans for retreats, vacations, and sabbaticals.

Braddy illustrates content with personal examples from her pursuit of Sabbath rest, freely admitting that people with family and career obligations, as well as financial pressures, can feel compelled to become workaholics. She points out that Jesus regularly went away to pray, despite the demands on His time. Although the target readership for this book is middle-aged and older adults, the lessons are applicable to all overachievers. SER

## FALLING IN LOVE WITH GOD

by **Bob Hostetler**

**Leafwood, 978-0-9112774-3, PB, 222 pages, \$14.99**

While God is commonly defined as love, Hostetler takes this trait one step further and presents God as a jealous lover who demands a head-over-heels relationship with each of His human creations. Hostetler's format is a perfect balance of Scripture; analysis; anecdotal stories; thought-provoking questions; and personal prayers presented in an engaging, almost devotional structure. He uses the book of Hosea as a course companion since it depicts God as the ultimate lover.

Hostetler is a pastor, writer, and conference speaker. His blunt and quasi-sarcastic style of writing may not sit well with more traditional Christians, but it is effective. Although a good read for individuals, this book also lends itself to small-group studies for young and older adults who

seek a new perspective of their loving God. BL

## GOD DISTORTED: How Your Earthly Father Affects Your Perception of God and Why It Matters

by **John Bishop**

**WaterBrook, 978-1-60142-486-3, PB, 208 pages, \$14.99**

Everyone has "daddy issues" to some degree. Whether your dad abused you, treated you well, or was somewhere in between, the relationship you had with your earthly father directly affects your relationship with God. Pastor Bishop walks wounded readers through the healing process, using pertinent passages of Scripture, psychological methods of recovery, and insightful counseling lessons. It is a person's closeness to God that he is primarily concerned with, although he has much advice about how to mend bygone harms from a bad parental situation.

This book can serve teens and young adults who are, even now, trying to cope with distant or neglectful fathers. The text is sometimes blunt, but that makes it honest and pragmatic. Readers will gain insights on how to help damaged people who suffer from a misguided understanding of the heavenly Father. HJF

## HOPELIFTER: Creative Ways to Spread Hope when Life Hurts

by **Kathe Wunnenberg**

**Zondervan, 978-0-310-32015-9, PB, 256 pages, \$14.99**

This book can be an incredible encouragement to Christians everywhere. Its twofold goal is to encourage anyone who has ever struggled with maintaining a sense of hope in life and also to teach readers how to use Scripture as a way of instilling hope in others.

Wunnenberg, a speaker and president of Hopelifters Unlimited, is transparent in using stories from her life of dealing with depression, loneliness, and confusion. Her anecdotes are

### SERIES UPDATE

**Conversations**

by **Eugene H. Peterson**

**Eerdmans, 978-0-8028-6932-6, \$24.99**

***Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ***

# BOOK REVIEWS

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heartfelt and linked to biblical stories or lessons to show how others have faced trials that seemed hopeless, yet with faith in God they triumphed. At times the book becomes redundant when emphasizing certain themes, but it is easy to read and draw inspiration from. Women will primarily relate best to Wunnenberg's examples, although the biblical references are applicable to all readers. SJO

**THE MERCY PRAYER: The One Prayer Jesus Always Answers**  
by Robert Gelinas  
Nelson, 978-1-4002-0445-8, PB, 219 pages, \$15.99

Most people are in need of mercy, forgiveness, love, and restitution. Actually, mercy is something we all desperately need whether we realize it or not. Pastor Gelinas believes mercy is the most prayed prayer, so he offers insight on how it can be done effectively, sincerely, and genuinely.

Addressing the subject of mercy in a new way, he suggests it is a main key in our spiritual lives. He uses examples from the Bible and spiritual giants throughout history to show how it was sought in prayer. Readers learn why mercy is important and how to comprehend and apply it. Too often Christians forget their sinful natures and the need to ask for forgiveness. This book is not only good theology, it is also good psychology, for it helps the reader form a stronger, more comfortable bond with God. KS

**OPEN: What Happens When You Get Real, Get Honest, and Get Accountable**  
by Craig Gross with Adam Palmer  
Nelson, 978-1-4002-0530-1, PB, 202 pages, \$15.99

With astonishing stories that motivate, encourage, and open readers' eyes to new concepts and perceptions, Gross draws attention to the importance of accountability. His insight is revealed through the use of personal

experiences and secondhand accounts, such as friends who struggled with sin but overcame it through the gift of fellowship and establishment of accountability partners.

This book offers examples of all aspects of accountability: why it is needed, how it is developed, and how it can be shared. Scripture references are used more as support of contemporary issues and illustrations, rather than stand-alone lessons. The chapters are easy to follow, and many of the insights and revelations are so pragmatic and basic that readers will wonder why they haven't applied them already. SJO

**THE REASON FOR MY HOPE: Salvation**  
by Billy Graham  
Nelson, 978-0-8499-4761-2, PB, 206 pages, \$19.99

Dr. Graham presents one overall question for the reader: "The Lord came to save us, so will you accept his offer of a pardon?" Using excellent storytelling and good use of anecdotes and clear analogies, he writes about how the act of being saved brings hope into an individual's life. Hope is having an active faith in God's greatness. Spiritual hope is something that speaks to each person's long-term and short-term needs. It isn't only hope to escape eternal damnation but also hope and assurance that guilt and shame can be put aside and a brighter future can be expected.

Graham supports his points with scriptural references from both the Old and New Testaments. His writing style is journalistic in that it is tight, precise, and factually oriented. What is most enjoyable about the book is the depth of experiences Graham has to share, both on a personal level and an extended level based on the thousands of people he has ministered to during the past seven decades. People new to the Bible will find this book informative, and seasoned saints will find it insightful and uplifting. CE

**REVISION: 13 Strategies to Renew Your Work, Your Organization and Your Life**

by John C. Bowling  
Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-1943-6, HB, 215 pages, \$19.99

The essence of Bowling's book boils down to basic concepts: Retain your personal core values and those of the organization you lead, continually upgrade your professional skills, adapt to change, stay in touch with the people you are leading and serving, and follow a code of ethics. Using examples, anecdotes, and case studies, he reinforces his strategies for gaining a new focus if life or career has seemed to stop working well.

Admittedly, Bowling's decades of leadership experience is all in one arena, as president of Olivet Nazarene College. Nevertheless, he holds two doctorates, has traveled the entire world, and has made a personal study of management and leadership for many years. His examples are drawn from his work at Olivet, but also from Starbucks, missions organizations, people he has worked with, and books he has read. Humorous stories make even a business book fun to read. DEH

**THE STRESS FACTOR: Finding Rest in an Uneasy World**

by Brian Charette & Kerry Willis  
Beacon Hill, 978-0-8341-3002-9, PB, 156 pages, \$13.99

Stress is everywhere, and so are self-help books about it. So why another one? Many books bog readers down with research and self-help mechanisms. This book uses storytelling as a new way for readers to understand and deal with stress. Charette and Willis engage readers through fictional episodes of Chris Seal, an average adult dealing with job demands, family problems, and emotional crises. Readers will see themselves in the issues Chris faces. Using the acronym REST, the authors insert advice, plans, and biblical examples at the end of the book

# BOOK REVIEWS

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for how each of Chris's issues could be dealt with effectively.

The authors, both pastors, are transparent in sharing events from their own lives that taught them why, how, and when to deal with stressful matters. They supplement their experiences by presenting current research from other sources regarding the positive and potentially negative aspects of stress. This book is informative and easy to read. KS

## **UNFINISHED: Believing Is Only the Beginning**

by **Richard Stearns**

**Nelson, 978-0-8499-4851-0, HB, 262 pages, \$24.99**

"Why did Jesus leave us here?" is one of many questions Christians ask. Stearns attempts to answer this question by inviting readers to be part of bringing God's Kingdom here, as well as look for it in the future. He begins with an overview of the Christian worldview and develops the love story of the ages between God and humans. The book concludes with a study guide with sections of the "Big story"—go deeper, take action, and pray—as well as notes and a Scripture index.

Short, powerful chapters rich with personal vignettes from Stearns's life provide concrete examples for the concepts presented. He challenges readers on many levels with stories, applications of events in the Bible, and his life. He is president of World Vision, and all royalties from this book go to that organization. Recommended. BLE

## **AN UNHURRIED LIFE: Following Jesus' Rhythms of Work and Rest**

by **Alan Fadling**

**InterVarsity, 978-0-8308-3573-7, PB, 198 pages, \$15**

This book challenges and counsels readers to live at the pace of grace. The Christian life is often referred to as a walk with God, but are we walking with him or running ahead? This is the type of question posed at the end of

each chapter to help readers slow down and focus on walking in step with God. The questions are combined with illustrations and examples from Jesus' life, showing how He set an example to find adequate time for love, meditation, teaching, prayer, and resisting temptation.

This easy-to-read study on "worship through rest" is excellent for mature Christians, especially for those involved in ministry. Written through the experiences of a pastor, it gives advice for counseling oneself, as well as others, to find a place in the slow lane and find God in silence and comfort. HJF

## **Church & Ministry**

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### **THE CATALYST LEADER: 8 Essentials for Becoming a Change Maker**

by **Brad Lomenick**

**Nelson, 978-1-5955-5497-0, HB, 244 pages, \$22.99**

Any leader who wishes to ignite an organization will need to be a person of diverse perspectives, open-minded thinking, and godly discipline. Exemplifying these points, Lomenick draws quotations from numerous pastors, popular writers about culture, and Christian broadcasters. Excellent lessons include establishing goals, making good connections, staying faithful to the Bible, and not allowing setbacks to falter your momentum.

The book reads quickly because it is divided into numerous small sections that are highlighted by boxed quotations, subheads, and eye-catching fonts. The only weakness is the author's vanity: He loves to include stories about the time he was invited to the White House and likes to drop names about his affiliations with such celebrities as Joel Osteen and Andy

Stanley. If you can endure that, there are good lessons on leadership and management in this volume. DEH

### **THE POPULAR ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHURCH HISTORY: The People, Places, and Events That Shaped Christianity**

by **Ed Hindson & Dan Mitchell**

**Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4806-7, HB, 400 pages, \$29.99**

This selection of nearly 300 leading persons, places, and events in church history is helpful for a basic, beginning understanding of this history. It is arranged alphabetically, rather than chronologically. This format makes comparing the topics with contemporaries or historical background virtually impossible.

As it is a selection, not all the items listed may resonate with readers as essential to church history. For example, persons such as Johann Sebastian Bach, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Jerry Falwell (many of the contributors to this book work at the university he started) are included. Few women are mentioned. Written from an evangelical point of view, each article ends with a bibliography. Recommended for church libraries. BLE

## **Family**

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### **Parenting**

#### **HOW TO RAISE SELFLESS KIDS IN A SELF-CENTERED WORLD**

by **Dave Stone**

**Nelson, 978-1-4003-1873-5, HB, 160 pages, \$14.99**

Nice, respectful kids are in short supply. Stone wrote this book so readers' kids might be some of the few. Basing his insights on Romans 12, he focuses on Christian virtues readers should build up in their kids. The book

# BOOK REVIEWS

is filled with many of the author's personal illustrations and stories of these virtues in action, some hokier than others.

There is an obvious need for this book. My only reservation is that pastor Stone seems to settle for external and extroverted proofs while mostly ignoring the heart of one's child and the need for the Spirit's work. He emphasizes morals and being nice, while making little mention of teaching about Christ, although it is there. If you want your kids to be super nice and probably excel at sales, this might be your book; but there are better options for your library. JW

## WHAT A SON NEEDS FROM HIS MOM

by Cheri Fuller

Bethany, 978-0-7642-1030-3, PB, 224 pages, \$12.99

Some mother-son relationships seem to add credence to the adage that "men are from Mars, women are from Venus." Even mothers who have a close bond with their sons may think they harbor a complete stranger when their male offspring reach puberty.

Fuller is a speaker and author, as well as mother of three (two boys and a girl) and grandmother of six. She lists specific activities that all sons need from their mothers, such as encouragement, communication, prayer, and confidence-building. She adds questions at each chapter's end to "ponder, journal or discuss," lending the book to both individual and group study. Recommended for the parenting section of any church library. JAW

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

—Jacqueline Kennedy

## Fiction

### CATCH A FALLING STAR

by Beth K. Vogt

Howard, 978-1-4516-6027-2, PB, 320 pages, \$14.99

What do you do at age 36 when you're still waiting for dreams to come true? Kendall Haynes watches all her friends and even her younger sister get married, and she wonders about God's plan for her life. Is asking for a husband and a family too much? She's already busy running her allergy and asthma clinic, but she can't help hoping for the perfect man to burst into her life and sweep her off her feet.

This fast-paced, contemporary novel is an exciting, yet relatable picture of what it means to surrender plans and dreams to God. It features well-developed characters and unpredictable plot twists. Although the author conveys a message of hope and reconciliation, immoral behavior is occasionally referenced; and several characters live non-Christian lifestyles. I recommend this vividly descriptive novel for teens and adults who struggle with letting God take the wheel in their lives. EV

### DEAD LAWYERS TELL NO TALES

by Randy Singer

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-7558-8, PB, 431 pages, \$13.99

Landon Reed is trying to reinvent himself. An ex-quarterback emerging from prison with newfound faith, he seeks redemption by earning his law degree. When Harry McNaughten, a brilliant criminal-defense lawyer, takes Landon under his wing, Landon finds his convictions and marriage tested as he is assigned to a case much more sinister than he ever could have anticipated.

The story maintains an intriguing fast pace, never growing dull. At weaving a compelling and surprising nar-

rative that is chock-full of intrigue and peril, Singer succeeds. However, the characters, though believable enough, are emotionally underdeveloped. Even for a plot-driven novel, characters need to have opinions, worries, and dreams, which are in short supply. Essentially a mainstream novel with Christian protagonists, the story is not blatantly Christian and, thus, has overtly violent content and adult situations that some may find objectionable. Fans of court dramas or suspense thrillers will enjoy this well-crafted narrative, but those in search of a more emotional or spiritual journey should look elsewhere. CAM

### FEAR HAS A NAME

The Crittendon Files #1

by Creston Mapes

Cook, 978-0-7814-0816-5, PB, 432 pages, \$14.99

For Granger Meade, joyous memories came only from thoughts of times he'd had with Pamela Crittendon back in high school. Years later, those memories are still his only source of happiness. Hoping to feel that joy once again and his desire to feel loved drives him to torment Pam and her family. Within this chaos, Pastor Evan McDaniel strangely disappears, leaving Pam's journalist husband to investigate and write about that mysterious event during his own family's rocky time.

This story puts readers on the edges of their seats, not realizing how much time has gone by since they last took a breath. The novel uses fast-paced dialogue, vivid settings, and quick scene changes to provide strong narrative drive. It pits man's evil of man against God's justice in inventive ways. The plot involves rape, kidnapping, suicide, smoking, and adultery; but for discerning readers, it provides thought-provoking entertainment. RMM

# BOOK REVIEWS

## FOREVER FRIDAY

by Timothy Lewis

WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73221-7, PB, 288 pages, \$14.99

Adam Colby, a divorced estate-sale businessman, has given up hope of finding a lasting love. While organizing leftover possessions from a deceased couple's house, he discovers photo albums of love poems written on postcards, dated every Friday from 1926 until the year the husband, Mr. Alexander, died. Curious, Adam contacts Yvette, the mysterious daughter of the couple's former housekeeper, to piece together their story. In the process, Adam realizes his own failures in his previous marriage and looks forward to finding his "forever girl."

*Forever Friday*, while a fun and easy-to-read novel, is not a perfect Christian romance. The newly-married Alexanders discuss their bedroom activities, some crass language is used, alcohol is consumed by many characters despite the Prohibition, and the unrealistic plot and awkward sentence structures may annoy some readers. However, fans of *The Notebook* will enjoy this novel. RRG

## GRACE'S PICTURES: Ellis Island

by Cindy Thomson

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6843-6, PB, 396 pages, \$12.99

Grace McCaffery has finally escaped from Ireland to get a new start in New York City. She is enthralled by how her new camera can capture meaning in her dark world. However, when Grace finds herself the target of gangsters, that world becomes too real. Must Grace put aside her distrust of others in order to accept help from a willing police officer and God?

This novel has an enthralling plot; and, because of Thomson's ability to say so much with few words, the story moves quickly. She occasionally stretches historical accuracy for the sake of the story though. As her knowledge of the period is extensive, she oc-

## SEQUELS

to *Into the Free*  
by Julie Cantrell  
Cook, 978-0-7814-0425-9, \$14.99  
*When Mountains Move*

to *The Noticer*  
by Andy Andrews  
Nelson, 978-0-8499-4761-2, \$19.99  
*The Noticer Returns*

## SERIES UPDATES

*Amish Vines and Orchards*  
by Cindy Woodsmall  
WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73006-0,  
\$14.99  
#3 *For Every Season*

*The Ballantyne Legacy*  
by Laura Frantz  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2042-1, \$14.99  
#2 *Love's Awakening*

*The Cadence of Grace*  
by Joanne Bischof  
Multnomah, 978-1-60142-425-9,  
\$14.99  
#3 *My Hope Is Found*

*The Cate Kincaid Files*  
by Lorena McCourtney  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2159-6, \$14.99  
#2 *Dolled Up to Die*

*The Grand Tour Series*  
by Lisa T. Bergren  
Cook, 978-1-4347-6428-7, \$14.99  
#3 *Glittering Promises* (last one)

*Guardians of Justice*  
by Irene Hannon  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2124-4, \$14.99  
#2 *Trapped*

*The Men of the Texas Rangers*  
by Margaret Daley  
Abingdon, 978-1-4267-6186-7,  
\$14.99  
#4 *Severed Trust*

*Quilts by Design*  
Abingdon, \$12.99  
*The Christmas Quilt*  
by Vannetta Chapman  
978-1-4267-5277-3

*Raw Edges*  
by Sandra D. Bricker  
978-1-4267-5275-9

*Red Returning Trilogy*  
by Sue Duffy  
Kregel, 978-0-8254-4266-7, \$14.99  
#2 *Red Dawn Rising*

*Seasons*  
by Rusty Whitener  
Kregel, 978-0-8254-4322-0, \$14.99  
#2 *A Season of Mysteries*

*Shaker Book Series*  
by Ann H. Gabhart  
Revell, 978-0-8007-1982-1, \$15.99  
*Christmas at Harmony Hill*

*Weddings by Design*  
by Janice Thompson  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2153-4, \$13.99  
#2 *The Icing on the Cake*

*Windy City Neighbors*  
by Neta & Dave Jackson  
Worthy, 978-1-6179-5-001-8,  
\$14.99  
#2 *Derailed*

*Wings of the Nightingale*  
by Sarah Sundin  
Revell, 978-0-8007-2082-7, \$14.99  
#2 *On Distant Shores*

# BOOK REVIEWS

asionally uses vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to readers. The book's theme of forgiveness is expertly woven through the lives of the characters, making the Christian slant evident. Recommended for female fans of mysteries and historical fiction. KN

## **GROUNDLED**

### **Windy City Neighbors #1**

**by Neta Jackson & Dave Jackson**

**Worthy, 978-1-61795-000-1, PB, 320 pages, \$14.99**

Grace Meredith, a 20-something popular Christian recording star, is engaged to a handsome young man she is madly in love with and is traveling with a message of purity for young people. When her world comes crashing down in the form of a broken engagement, hope seems to flee from her life; and Grace begins to question everything. She has never taken the time to get to know her neighbors in Chicago, but now events cause her to seek them out. Several turn out to be "angels unaware."

This novel will particularly appeal to women and fans of Neta Jackson's Yada Yada series. Because the main character, although close to 30, is a rather naïve young woman, *Groundled* will also appeal to a younger group of readers in their teens. Despite being first in a series, it does not leave the reader hanging at the conclusion and has a satisfactory ending. Recommended for church libraries and, with the inclusion of book-discussion questions, book clubs. CC

## **THE ICECUTTER'S DAUGHTER**

### **Land of Shining Water #1**

**by Tracie Peterson**

**Bethany, 978-0-7642-0619-1, PB, 344 pages, \$14.99**

Merrill Krause has repressed romantic aspirations to assist her father and brothers on the family farm, as her dying mother requested. Although she relishes helping with the horses and ice harvest, Merrill fears her protective

brothers and tomboyish ways will discourage potential suitors. Her worries diminish when newcomer Rurik Jorgenson falls for Merrill's resilient beauty. Just as attraction intensifies between them, however, Rurik's former fiancée arrives and spreads pernicious rumors. With their relationship threatened, Rurik and Merrill struggle to submit to God's will.

Christian motifs throughout this novel depict a couple striving for a God-scripted courtship and suggest that flourishing marriages grow from passion, rather than obligation. Although the predictable plot escalates haltingly and lacks vibrancy at times, the rustic charm of this turn-of-the-century tale will appeal to romance fans. Redemptive and uplifting, this book emphasizes the beauty of a love story in which God stands at the center. MD

## **IF THE SHOE FITS**

**by Sandra D. Bricker**

**Moody, 978-0-8024-0628-6, PB, 288, \$14.99**

When two lawyers strike out on their own to form a law firm designed to help the needy folks of Cincinnati, they discover along the way that fairytale endings aren't only for ancient days. Julianne and her longtime best friend and neighbor, Will, both dream of happily-ever-after lives. But first they must establish themselves in the real world. Will cannot envision himself as a contemporary Prince Charming, despite the fact that in his career he seeks to rescue those who have no heroes. And Julianne is so intent on finding success as an attorney, she fails to realize that sometimes Cinderella has to change her appearance and lifestyle in order to become the belle of the ball.

Unfortunately, this new telling of the Cinderella story lacks any surprise twists. If only there were one dastardly villain or monumental legal case to decide the fate of the kingdom, it would not have been so predictable.

Although it stresses several moral themes, it is not particularly Christian in nature. The author succeeded in making much of the dialogue witty and realistic, and the plot gains momentum in the second half of the book, so it qualifies as light entertainment. MEL

## **THE OFFERING**

**by Angela Hunt**

**Howard, 978-1-4391-8205-5, PB, 320 pages, \$15.99**

Amanda Lisandra is the wife of a soldier. She and her family are struggling to make ends meet, so she decides to become a gestational surrogate for a family in need. During this time, she goes through many conflicts and battles that test her faith in God. Her femininity, ethnicity, religion, and citizenship all are impacted by weighty decisions she must make. And readers wrestle emotionally with her all along the way. Hunt gives readers a glimpse inside the life of a Cuban-American family dealing with financial struggles and grief, while facing heart-aching decisions about how to survive while also being faithful to God.

This novel is an eye-opener and a tearjerker. Readers will find themselves feeling the pain of the characters and getting caught up in their lives. This is superb drama that also challenges the thinking of Christians regarding attitudes toward foreigners, help for the poor, and medical care for the needy. DCB

## **AN OPEN HEART**

**by Harry Kraus**

**Cook, 978-0-7814-0535-5, PB, 464 pages \$14.99**

Haunted by his painful past, Jace Rawlings returns to Africa in an attempt to make up for his sins by serving as a missionary doctor. After a car accident rocked Jace's world, killing his passenger, the governor's wife, and erasing his memory of what happened that night, Jace is unsure of many things, including his own faith and

# BOOK REVIEWS

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whether or not he committed adultery. The only thing he is sure of is that he must return to Africa, based on a calling from his dead twin sister. His marriage is thrown into turmoil, and his emotions are erratic as he slowly makes a journey back to Christ.

This story exposes realistic cultural diversity while presenting medical crises. Readers need to process traumatic experiences, including rape, torture, and death; but the theme of redemption makes the book powerful. MM

## **UNHOLY HUNGER**

**Lure of the Serpent #1**

**by Heather James**

**Kregel, 978-0-8254-4291-9, PB, 272 pages, \$13.99**

Disaster reaches its black claws into Evelyn Barrett's life, leaving pangs of bloodthirsty revenge and excruciating misery in its wake. The gruesome fate of her beloved daughter drives Evelyn to let her anger take control. When her sin nearly claims her life, she is left with a strange ability and an aching heart. She must decide how to approach her "gift," grief, and bitterness in the face of scarring discoveries and crumbling relationships.

James has created an intriguing, if somewhat unrealistic, plot with spine-tingling action and vibrant descriptions. Unfortunately, the story line is overwhelmingly dark because it circles around sickening episodes of sexual abuse. Also, James does not adequately deal with the consequences of Evelyn's sin or her struggle with God. The characters are well developed and endowed with lifelike dialogue. However, I only recommend this book for mature readers because of the intensity of scenes and the unresolved emotional and spiritual conflicts. EJB

## **WHAT ONCE WAS LOST**

**by Kim Vogel Sawyer**

**WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73125-8, PB, 340 pages, \$9.99**

Christina Williams is a poor but lov-

ing woman who took over the Brambleville Asylum for the Poor after her father's passing. When their communal home goes up in flames, they have no choice but to separate and trust that God will provide a place for them to stay while each person must strike out on his or her own. This action then opens the door for myriad stories showing God's omnipotence, love, and ability to sustain His people even when things look hopeless. The characters come to a full understanding that God knows their trials and He is faithful to restore.

This character-driven story comes with a lot of backstory and detail, making it slow reading most of the time. Except for the opening drama of the fire, there is little intense action. And the characters are not three-dimensional enough to allow readers to bond with them. Overall, this is a simple story that is easy to read. Although it underscores the validity of God's loving care, but it is not highly dramatic. CA

## **WHEN MOCKINGBIRDS SING**

**by Billy Coffey**

**Nelson, 978-1-4016-8821-9, PB, 326 pages, \$15.99**

Nine-year-old Leah has grown up with parents who adamantly reject a "Higher Power." Leah struggles with a speech impediment and facing the people around her who see her as different. With few friends, she isolates herself but finds solace in the Rainbow Man. Leah describes him as a tangible person. On her ninth birthday, Leah discovers her talent for painting; and the Rainbow Man tells her what to paint and who to give her paintings to. What significance will her paintings play? Who will they affect?

Although slow-moving and lacking imagery, this book develops well-rounded characters. Coffey presents the Rainbow Man with Christlike characteristics. He also introduces questionable morals, such as endorsement

of magic, faith described as the "Maybe," and some iconoclastic beliefs of a pastor. Readers will explore how the supernatural ties into theology but need spiritual discernment. You may not want to add this one to your library. AK

## **WHEN THE MORNING GLORY BLOOMS**

**by Cynthia Ruchti**

**Abingdon 978-1-4267-3543-1, PB, 352 pages, \$14.99**

Three women from separate generations—1890s, 1950s, and 2013—have a connection to babies born to unwed mothers. Ruchti deftly knits these three threads into a cohesive story that draws readers in and causes them to care about the outcome.

Her segues from one era to another are clear, and the reader is never confused about which protagonist is searching for hope in her particular circumstance. Discussion questions follow at the end of the book. This is an enjoyable read, due in part to Ruchti's gift of descriptive writing. A good addition to a church library's fiction inventory. JAW

## **Teens**

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### **CAPTIVES**

**The Safe Lands #1**

**by Jill Williamson**

**Zondervan, 978-0-310-72422-3, PB, 381 pages, \$9.99**

When Levi of Elias returns home from an outing, he faces the disturbing reality that everyone in his community, including his father, grandfather, and fiancée, has either been shot dead or kidnapped by enforcers from the Safe Lands, a disturbed city infected with a harmful plague. They are to be used as donors and surrogates to keep the Safe Lands population from going extinct. Levi thinks he is the last

# BOOK REVIEWS

hope in saving the remaining members of Glenrock before his loved ones become corrupted by the Safe Lands' ways.

Similar to Old Testament stories of battles to conquer the Promised Land, *Captives* keeps readers' eyes glued to the page, riveted by unexpected plot twists. Because the book presents theological challenging questions about a master creator, as well as scenes involving drugs and sexual activity, it should be read by mature teenagers solid in their faith. The settings are so vivid, readers understand the emotional reactions of the characters. This is a page-turner. BMW

## MERLIN'S BLADE

### Merlin Spiral #1

by Robert Treskillard

Zondervan, 978-0-310-73507-6, PB, 432 pages, \$9.99

Treskillard delivers a fresh look at a beloved classic, delving into Merlin's origin. Using power from a strange meteorite, Druids are trying to take over Britain and destroy Christianity. One person can resist their power and save the homeland: Merlin, a simple blacksmith's son who is nearly blind and scarred after 14 years of protecting his loved ones. He stands against the cult, asking God to give him strength. Excalibur and baby king

Arthur appear in the book, giving anticipation for the future.

This book is fairly long and at times frustrating in the way the action slows down. So many characters are introduced that it is difficult to keep track. Plot movement is slightly confusing when not focused on the protagonist. Overall, however, it is a good adventure, upholding Christian values and demonstrating the power of faith. CE

## PAIGE TORN

### Paige Alder #1

by Erynn Mangum

NavPress, 978-1-6129-1298-1, PB, 281 pages, \$14.99

Paige Alder is a busy college grad who cannot say no to anyone. In addition to church activities, her regular job, and planning her friend's wedding, Paige constantly takes other's burdens on herself and begins to miss out on the true beauty of life by spending time with God and pursuing her dreams of marriage and motherhood. With the help of her best friend, co-workers, and a new love interest, Paige works toward setting boundaries and realigning her relationship with God.

This book is strong in Christian values but reflective of a youthful, feminine lifestyle. Some of the language is slightly edgy for Christians, and the sentence structure is often erratic or stilted in an effort to sound contemporary, yet coming off as awkward. A few of the chapters are repetitive. For teen girls and young women, this book is light entertainment since it does reflect genuine struggles of gals in their early 20s. BJR

## A SIMPLE SONG

by Melody Carlson

Revell, 978-0-8007-2225-8, PB, 280 pages, \$12.99

After the sudden death of her grandmother, a singing legend, Katrina Yoder is curious about what it would be like to live her dream as a professional singer. But Katrina is Amish,

and her family does not agree with singing for "vainglory." When Katrina's friend encourages her to audition for the TV show *American Star*, Katrina thinks it is out of the question. However, when her dad's crippling back injury worsens and his only relief is an expensive surgery, her bold move reveals a whole new side to her and helps her father along the way.

Although there is no questionable material in the book, it has serious weaknesses. We are never told the main character's age, nor are we given much description of her. Also, in trying to allude to some Amish dialect, the dialogue becomes awkward and unconvincing. The Amish setting is visual, and the TV show in the story almost perfectly mirrors *American Idol*. However, I recommend this novel for young teen girls who may enjoy Katrina's story and the Amish perspective. HJF

## Women

### THE BEAUTY OF BROKEN: My Story and Likely Yours Too

by Elisa Morgan

Nelson, 978-0-8499-6488-6, PB, 238 pages, \$15.99

Named one of the top 50 women influencing the church and culture by *Christianity Today*, Morgan is well known as the former CEO of MOPS, a speaker, and a prolific author. In this brutally candid book, she dispels the myth of a "perfect" family by turning a bright light on her family as she grew up and the family she established with Evan, her husband.

Morgan makes the case that while we strive for an illusive goal of perfection, it is in the brokenness that comes with adverse circumstances that God can transform our lives. Brokenness brings with it new values, such as commitment, humility, relinquishment,

## SERIES UPDATES

Merlin's Immortals

by Sigmund Brouwer

WaterBrook, 978-1-4000-7156-2,  
\$7.99

#3 *Martyr's Fire*

Paige Alder

by Erynn Mangum

NavPress, 978-1-61291-321-6,  
\$14.99

#2 *Paige Rewritten*

# BOOK REVIEWS

and respect. This is a hope-filled book that will be a great addition to church libraries. JAW

## **FEAR, FAITH, AND A FISTFUL OF CHOCOLATES: Wit and Wisdom for Sidestepping Life's Worries**

by **Debra M. Coty**

**Barbour, 978-1-62029-169-6, PB, 229 pages, \$9.99**

Through a series of witty stories that relate to dating, hygiene, career moves, family life, and even schooling, Coty shows how to use prayer, courage, and optimism to conquer those ever-nagging fears that reside in the back of the mind, especially for women. She explains the differences between legitimate concern, proactive planning, and logical preparation, as opposed to anxiety, depression, and nervousness. Drawing on the lessons Christ taught about not being tied to things that cause worry (e.g., worldly goods, prestige, long life), Coty teaches readers how to lighten up and take things a day at a time.

With somewhat sarcastic humor and amusing personal stories, this is the perfect book to appeal to both teens and mothers. It's fun reading with pragmatic advice and a book I recommend for anyone who struggles with worry and fear of the unknown. CG

## **VICTIM OF GRACE: When God's Goodness Prevails**

by **Robin Jones Gunn**

**Zondervan, 978-0-310-32479-9, PB, 208 pages, \$15.99**

How are Christian women called to respond when their lives don't go as planned? Gunn explores the idea of viewing oneself as a recipient of God's loving grace, instead of as a victim of circumstances. She engages the reader quickly through personal stories in each chapter and then clearly connects the stories' situations to the circumstances of biblical women. Each story and connection is applicable to modern readers, although a few of the Bible

examples are a bit too detailed.

With years of experience as a seminar speaker and successful author of books for girls and women, Gunn is able to pinpoint what women need. I recommend this book for a church library as an encouraging text for any woman working to increase her faith and trust in God. AG

## **A WOMAN'S HEART FOR GOD: Drawing Closer to the Lover of Your Soul**

by **Sheila Cragg**

**Worthy, 978-1-617951-59-6, PB, 235 pages, \$14.99**

Cragg knows about true pain and chaos in life. Taking care of her ailing husband while still doing duties as a mother and grandmother sometimes became overwhelming. She shares her experiences of finding hope, even when facing physical exhaustion, emotional low points, and spiritual dryness.

Her suggestions are solid and reinforced by Scripture for a target readership of middle-aged and older women. She speaks with gratitude of how God gave her lessons related to endurance, faithfulness, and peace. And her example of perseverance make her a role model for all women facing serious trials in their lives. The book is anecdotal, making it easy to follow; but the illustrations are somewhat distant for younger women readers. HB

**No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions nor regret the loss of expensive diversions or variety of company if she can be amused with an author in her closet.**

—Lady Montagu,  
providing advice on raising her  
granddaughter, 1752

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**It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations—something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own.**

—Katherine Patterson

# MUSIC REVIEWS

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## Contemporary

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### LIVE IN NASHVILLE

by Larnelle Harris

Inpop; CD: 8-04147-16772-1, \$9.99;

DVD: 8-04147-16782-0, \$14.99

If there's an artist in contemporary Christian music who deserves a best-of collection, it's Larnelle. From his earliest days as a drummer for the Spurrflows, to his time in the Gaither Vocal Band, through decades of solo and duet ministry, he has projected a consistent message of the gospel. His rich, tenor voice is unmistakable.

This concert recording features his best-known songs (many packaged in medleys), a new cut ("The Greatest of These," from 1 Corinthians 13), and show-stopping high points as he revisits collaborations in-person with Steve Green, Steve Amerson, and Sandi Patty. Who wouldn't want to hear a more mature Larnelle and Sandi reprise "I've Just Seen Jesus"? I also enjoyed the tenor trio of Larnelle, Steve, and Steve on "Kings of the Earth." Highly recommended. J-AI

### SOMEDAY

by Jennifer Shaw

This Side Up, 7-00261-36568-8, \$15

A classically trained pianist and voice major, Shaw has performed with the Columbus Symphony and has been a music professor. She also is the mom of three, including a son with sensory processing disorder. Out of her history of trusting and proving God faithful through her family's darkest days, she wrote or cowrote many meaningful songs.

Shaw's lyrics are prayerful and biblically sound. I especially resonated with the line in "You Are Glorious" that says, "The nails that held Your hands and feet/Are the ones that set me free." Also, "Lamb of God, we need Your love/Come rescue us, have mercy," is a key line from "Shine on

Us" that I found meaningful as a personal prayer. As a caregiver of aging parents, I loved "Your Child," the story of a compassionate caregiver. For its deeply biblical and emotive content, recommended. J-AI

### SWALLOW THE OCEAN

by Newsong

HHM Records, 5-099973-57382-1, \$11.99

From first to last song, this CD is a worthwhile collection. The first cut packages the old gospel message in a relevant, modern retelling, culminating in the chorus: "Anybody out there searchin'/Jesus, Jesus is all we need." Later, the thought-provoking title cut uses the image of trying to swallow the ocean to portray the depth and riches of coming to know God through Christ; the refrain echoes: "With my hands lifted high I come/I'm comin' alive with You."

Always Christ-centered, worshipful content fills out the collection. It's packed with scriptural truth that speaks clearly to this generation. For great imagery alone, this is a high recommend. Musically, it's vintage Newsong: pleasing, sometimes energetic, always engaging. J-AI

## Praise & Worship

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### THE WAY WE WORSHIP

by FFH

62 Records, 0-083061-09652-6, \$11.99

We might not think bluegrass when we think of FFH. But this worship CD's acoustic and lightly orchestrated numbers have a distinctly bluegrass twang. That said, the content from this husband-wife team is meaningful and transcends style, as always. Knowing Jeromy is fighting MS gives the lyrics richer meaning. When he and Jennifer sing "Always: My God will come

through always," we know it's from the deepest place in their experience.

"I'm Coming Home" has secular or crossover overtones. It features cliché pop phrases like "I'm layin' my cards out on the table" and "taking what I have left, my dignity and self-respect." I enjoyed the couple's unique interpretations of classic hymns and gospel songs, especially the 1974 oldie "Jesus, Name Above All Names." As I kept listening, I also came to appreciate the heart of worship that they say flows out of time spent with their kids. Recommended. J-AI

## Southern Gospel

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### MERCY

by Aaron & Amanda Crabb

Capitol Christian, 8-19113-01001-7, \$13.99

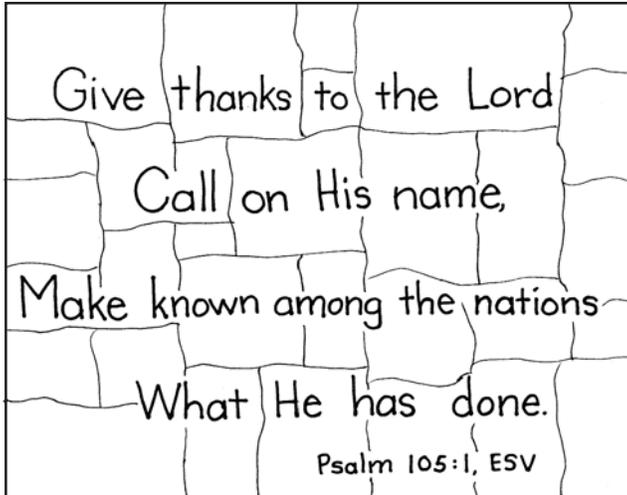
Family harmony always sounds extra rich and full, and this brother-sister duo is no exception. Formerly singing in the Crabb Family group with brother Jason, Aaron and Amanda have been recording together since 2008.

The high point of this CD is the worshipful "Holy" taken from the Lord's Prayer: "You are holy, holy/Let Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." That said, I wasn't as crazy about "I'm Learning." Its lyrics are a string of clichés. I realize it's done for effect, but I'm more likely to think deeply about one fresh image than a slew of tired ones.

Otherwise, though, the CD is packed with musically pleasing, solid tunes. I'm drawn to the comforting content of "God Loves the Broken" and the prayerful sentiment in "Guide Me": "For the swelling tide of this life could overtake me.... Holy Spirit please guide me." Recommended. J-AI

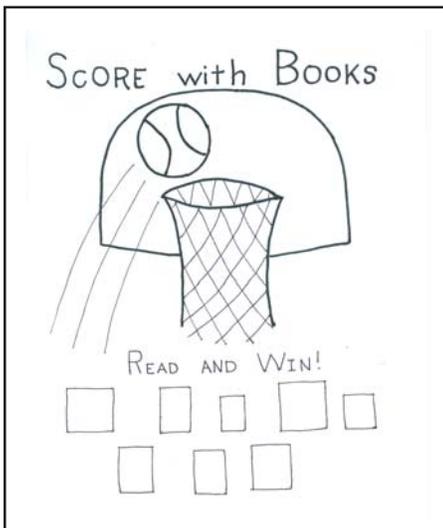
# POSTER/BULLETIN BOARDS

by Arlene Walker



## Poster

Cut pictures of people from as many different cultures as you can locate and find book jackets from books on evangelism and missions. Collect enough pictures and jackets to cover a piece of poster board. Make a collage with these, overlapping them and gluing them in place. Cut letters of the Bible verse from black paper, arrange them over the collage as shown, and glue them in place. You may want to embellish the edges of each letter using silver glitter, so the verse will be easier to read.



## Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with pale yellow paper or cloth. On a piece of large white poster board, draw a basketball hoop against a backboard. Outline the hoop and the backboard with a black marker, and cut around the outside. Embellish the hoop by gluing string over the strings that are part of the hoop. On brown paper, trace around a round object for a ball that is proportionate in size with the hoop. Use a black marking pen to draw lines to show it is a basketball. Cut it out and glue in place on the backboard.

Use three long pieces of black yarn to show the lines that indicate the ball is being thrown into the hoop. Cut letters for the two captions from red paper, and outline them in black before you cut them out. Mount everything in place as shown. Arrange copies of book jackets that depict topics like victory and overcoming in the remaining space as shown.



## Bulletin Board

Use dark green paper or cloth to cover a bulletin board. In proportion to the size of the board, make a sign from yellow paper. Use a pencil and ruler to print the letters of the verse on the sign. Or trace letters from letter patterns in a size that is in proportion to the size of the sign. Outline letters with a black marker.

Using pieces of fine sandpaper or brown paper, cut a path that fits diagonally across the board near the bottom. Cut letters for the caption on the path from black paper, arrange them along the path, and staple them in place. In the remaining spaces on the path, mount copies of book jackets from books with the theme of seeking the Lord. Arrange artificial flowers and foliage in fall colors in the remaining spaces.

*Arlene Walker is a freelance writer and retired teacher.*

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## Wanted

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

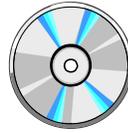
You can give other librarians promotional ideas by submitting your photos for publication in *Church Libraries*. Email them as attachments to [linjohnson@eclalibraries.org](mailto:linjohnson@eclalibraries.org). Include the following information in the message:

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# Helps for Your Library

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

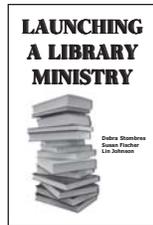


## **CDs**

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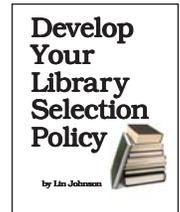
## **Launching a Library Ministry by Debra Stombres, Susan Fischer, & Lin Johnson—\$7**

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