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Summer 2013



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PROMOTION

Monopoly Reading Club

EDUCATION

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LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND
WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND
AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.
THE SECOND IS THIS
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.
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LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS
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LOVING GOD
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Love
AS A
WAY OF LIFE
SEVEN KEYS TO
TRANSFORMING EVERY
ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE

↑ ↓
Carey York

MAX LUCADO
A LOVE WORTH GIVING

THE LOVE LANGUAGES OF GOD
GARY CHAPMAN

—Beth Smith, librarian
Hope Community Church, Manitowoc, Wisc.

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Managing Editor

Lin Johnson

Contributing Editors

Jeanetta Chrystie

Cindy Grabill

Arlene Walker

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Editorial office, review products, advertising: Lin Johnson, Managing Editor, Church Libraries, 9118 W. Elmwood Drive, Ste. 1G, Niles, IL 60714-5820; 847-296-3964; fax: 847-296-0754; linjohnson@eclalibraries.org.

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ECLA

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Book Updates

Repackaged

The Berenstain Bears: Good Deed Scouts Help Their Neighbors by Jan & Mike Berenstain (Zonderkidz, combination of *Honey Hunt Helpers*, *Mama's Helpers*, and *Help the Homeless*)

Read with Me Bible edited by Doris Rikkers and Jean E. Syswerda (Zonderkidz, now with audio CDs)

VeggieTales I Can Read!: Bubblegum, Maps, and Missing Patience by Karen Poth (Zonderkidz, combination of *LarryBoy Meets the Bubblegum Bandit*, *Bob and Larry's Creation Vacation*, and *Bob and Larry and the Case of the Missing Patience*)

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Zondervan; now as individual books: *Genesis* by John H. Walton, *Psalms* by John W. Hilber, *Isaiah* by David W. Baker)

Reprinted

The Tolerance of Intolerance by D. A. Carson (Eerdmans)

The Devil Has No Mother by Nicky Cruz (Worthy)

Retitled

Turning Your Down into Up: A Realistic Plan for Healing from Depression by Gregory L. Jantz (WaterBrook, originally *Moving Beyond Depression*)

Revised

10 Lifesaving Principles for Women in Difficult Marriages by Karla Downing (Beacon Hill)

The Marriage Builder: Creating True Oneness to Transform Your Marriage by Larry Crabb (Zondervan)

Men and Women: Enjoying the Difference by Larry Crabb (Zondervan)

Save the Date!

Annual ECLA Conference
October 18-19, Chicago area

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

Promotional Hooks

JULY

National Antiboredom Month
National Purposeful Parenting Month
28: National Parents Day

AUGUST

Romance Awareness Month
9: Book Lover's Day
15: National Relaxation Day

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
7-13: Religious Reference Books Week
8: International Literacy Day
22-28: National Religious Music Week

New Phone Number

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Entice Readers With Booktalking

by Ceil Carey

The Mending String by Cliff Coon. Reverend Clayton Loverage loves his youngest daughter, Ellie; but they seem to butt heads at every turn. His grown children had never tested him in this way. No, she doesn't get into trouble. In fact, she is too quiet and will not share her feelings with him. He likes to say she was born that way. She sure seems to have always been like that, even as a baby. And now that her mother has died, neither of them have his wife's sweet guidance to soften their relationship.

Clayton lives a regimented life, and he feels he should be able to demand certain behaviors from Ellie. But if she refuses to do something he asks, well, there is no way her stubborn nature is going to be coerced.

Perhaps they might have stayed that way until Ellie left home; she promised to do just that the moment she graduated. But God had other plans. Ellie's secret place of refuge becomes the scene of a crime but not before she discovers what she feels are incriminating parts of her father's past.

Her new and close friend, Ozzie, is a good kid; but his older brothers have criminal records. Should Clayton allow their relationship to continue? And then there are the overbearing church members who seem out to get their pastor. What will they think of this latest situation involving his daughter? The pastor can't even control his own children!

This is a wonderful story of the bond between father and daughter and the healing that takes place between them in a time

of great stress and anxiety. It's fiction that relates to relationships in real life, forgiveness, and discerning when to speak and when to simply listen.

If you want to know what happened, read *The Mending String* by Cliff Coon.

This example of booktalking is one way to entice people to check out books in your library. Here's how to get started with this promotion tool.

Definition

"The booktalk is a sample of a book—a little piece of pie so good that it tempts you to consume the whole concoction," said Margaret Edwards.

This is an apt description of a technique that is a short summary of a book, told as a character or an observer, to interest other people in reading it. It's a sales pitch that leaves your lis-

*It's a sales pitch
that leaves your
listeners wanting
more and, hopefully,
interested enough
to read the book.*

teners wanting more and, hopefully, interested enough to read the book. It is not a review, in which you may or may not like the book.

A booktalk begins with the premise that you like the book and want to share your enthusiasm for it. It is not a summary of the entire book. The ending must remain untold, or you lose the impact of the talk and become a storyteller instead.

Booktalking is halfway between storytelling and book reviewing. Through booktalking, one hopes to expand the interests of readers in the audience and open up the world of reading to those who consider themselves nonreaders. And it demonstrates that reading can be fun!

Preparation

To begin booktalking, choose a book you have read that you like, a book you are genuinely enthusiastic about. Or take notes as you read a new book if you plan to booktalk it.

Next decide which type of booktalk you are going to do: one in which you are an observer and tell about the action or one in which you become a character and tell about the action as if you are part of it or it is part of your life. Obviously, the second type isn't appropriate for nonfiction. Whatever the format, the purpose of the booktalk is to encourage listeners to read.

Write a come-on sentence, a hook to

Through booktalking, one hopes to expand the interests of readers in the audience and open up the world of reading to those who consider themselves nonreaders.

grab listeners' interests. This hook also establishes immediate rapport with your audience. For instance, a rhetorical question works well.

The first sentence is the hardest to write. Read jacket blurbs or an annotation for ideas. (Amazon.com is great for this step.) Think about what will convince people to read this particular book. Don't forget that nonfiction can be as exciting and interesting to booktalk as fiction.

Be honest in what you say, and let the book sell itself. Outline or write out what you want to say—either a particular scene or the beginning of the book up to a certain point. Never give the ending or outcome. Doing that takes away the reason for listeners to read the book. You want to leave them hanging at a crucial point, so they *have* to know what happens next.

You can add "inside" information like unusual or interesting facts about the author or how the book came to be written. The Internet is great for discovering these kinds of details. But remember, the center of a booktalk is action—what is happening and to

whom. Begin with action, and the details or explanation can come later.

Always have a copy of the book with you. Show it at the beginning and end of your talk, giving title and author at that time. Use a phrase at the end, such as, "If you want to know what happened, you'll have to read"

Be sure you use correct pronunciation. Look words up if you are not positive of how to say them. If you read a passage, make it a short one that will keep your listeners' interest; or you will bore your audience.

Booktalking masters do not recommend memorizing your speech, but first-person booktalks lend themselves more to memorizing than if you are an observer to the action. Know the talk well enough that it's not memorized but becomes a story you can tell easily.

However, do memorize the sequence of events. If you lose your place, the sequence will help you get back on track more easily. It helps to have note cards to refer to but not to read from in their entirety.

Watch mannerisms that will be distracting. If you are going to use an accent or dialect, only do so if you are comfortable with it and can do it well. But do use props if you feel comfortable doing so, e.g., costumes, hats, or background music. Experiment with different formats for props: video clips, poetry, and music.

Practice your booktalk aloud, and time it. Two to three minutes is an average time. Use a video camera (great for critiquing); use a mirror to see facial expressions, stance, etc.; or give your talk to a family member or friend. Remember, eye contact is essential. Practicing will help particularly with timing and emphasis.

Booktalking in pairs can be fun too. If you have a willing partner, alternating between the two of you adds interest with different personalities. Plus you can get feedback on your own performance from your partner.

Performance

When it's time to give your booktalk, heed these suggestions:

- Give the title and author at the beginning and end while holding the book up for the audience to see.
- Catch the attention of your audience, and use inflection in your voice.
- Speak with enthusiasm.
- Use volume or softness to add variety to your speech.
- Don't speak too quickly.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Pan the audience slowly with illustrations if you use them from the book.
- Smile and enjoy yourself.

Pitfalls and Problems

Not every booktalk will be perfect.

If you lose your place, go back and elaborate until you do remember. Also use note cards, so you can quickly resume your talk.

If you forget a name or number, don't make one up. Someone who's read the book will catch your mistake and let you know about it. Instead, cover up the best you can, and don't let one mistake ruin your entire performance.

If you blank out completely, don't panic. Stay calm, and try to make the best of the situation. A few moments of silence is not the end of the world. You can admit you've gone blank, and tell your audience they'll have to read the book. Make a joke of it, be casual, laugh about it.

Don't let potential problems detour you from booktalking. Instead, prepare adequately and practice until you're comfortable with the talk.

Then have fun, and let booktalks bring new readers into your library.

Ceil Carey is outreach department head at Plainfield Public Library District, Plainfield, Ill., a former church librarian, and copresident of the Evangelical Church Library Association.

Community Central

by Jerusha Agen

What good is a church library? If asked to name positive benefits of having one, even a librarian would likely think only of the usual functions of providing educational resources for the congregation and staff, encouraging spiritual growth, and offering Christian alternatives to secular entertainment.

These benefits are, indeed, important. But equally valuable is a role more rarely recognized: the building of church community.

Perhaps building community is an unsung benefit of church libraries because many librarians are too focused on connecting people with what's inside the library's doors to see the greater value in using that media to connect people with one another. In reality, fulfilling the latter goal is not as difficult as one might think.

Hangout

One obvious church community role is that of a hangout, particularly for kids and young families. For many churches, the best place for members to relax and chat with one another after the worship service or classes is the library, where they talk while checking out media materials for the week.

This fellowship function requires only a layout that is conducive to lingering and chatting, media items that are of enough interest to draw in visitors, and friendly library staff.

Book Club

Other community roles for a library sometimes require more effort, but the returns are worth it.

With a little planning, one such rewarding endeavor is to launch a church book club. At our library in New Hope Presbyterian Church, Green Bay, Wisc., we started a group for book lovers or for those who simply want an excuse to connect with other people at the church over an interesting topic.

What started out as a book club for married couples found its best demographic as a women's ministry, and New Hope's Books & Chocolate group was formed. At monthly meetings, this special club invites members to sample chocolate desserts as they discuss a book they have all read. The library remains an integral part of this club by choosing (with the group's consent) the books to read and obtaining copies for all interested readers.

Featured Titles

Another community-building activity that New Hope Library practices is a simpler one, but still effective in con-

necting people with one another. When a patron or staff member has read and is enthusiastic about a particular book in the library, we put that book on display with a small sign.

With the permission of the reader, the sign suggests that library patrons ask that person about the book. In this way, we encourage book lovers and church members to seek one another, while their names and interests become more known.

Outreach Programs

Special outreach programs are an additional means of building and creating relationships within the church as members join together to minister to the community at large.

One such project at New Hope is the Tutorial Education Program (TEP), which endeavors to meet reading and educational needs for people inside and outside the church. Through a short training program, church volunteers are equipped to help students who attend this free program to receive assistance with reading, English as a second language, and other educational challenges.

With a passion for tackling the problem of illiteracy, the librarians at New Hope are the driving force behind TEP and its community-building results.

Reading Contests

Even ever-popular reading contests can be made into community-building activities by displaying fun visual counters of contestants' progress in areas where all church members can

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*The entire church
community wins
when the library
aims to encourage
connections within
the congregation.*

Monopoly Reading Club

by Jeanetta Chrystie

Board games continue to hold an important role in family play and laughing together. Monopoly claims it is the world's number-one board game, available in hundreds of versions. Themes include popular television shows, movies, fictional characters, sports teams, and cities around the world.

A Monopoly-themed reading club is particularly useful during months when the weather may be less desirable for family outdoor activities. Here's how to conduct it.

Setting Up

Just as board games have rules for successful completion, so must reading clubs. If you have yet to try a reading club in your church library, this is a great theme for your first attempt at running a three- to five-month club.

Monopoly involves three steps to set up the game for play: deciding who will serve as the banker, players choosing tokens to represent their locations on the game board, and initial monies distributed among the players.

To set up your reading club, hold three planning meetings. You may want to advertise the upcoming club theme and asking for additional volunteers to join the library staff for the duration of the club to handle extra traffic and record-keeping tasks. Consider advertising to borrow Monopoly boards from church members to display in the library during the reading club.

Try to hold your first planning meeting in someone's home, perhaps as an afternoon tea or potluck dinner. Doing

so creates the family feel you want your club to recreate. Display a few Monopoly boards in the living or family room to generate ideas and excitement.

You may want to help participants get to know one another better by creating a Find This Property game to locate properties on different Monopoly boards. For example, Monument Square on Coruscant is on the original Star Wars Monopoly, One Fish Two Fish Sushi is on The Cat in the Hatopoly, Death Valley is on the America's National Parks Monopoly, Seattle Seahawks is on the NFL edition, and Neverland is on the Disney edition.

Provide a written agenda for your first staff planning session to help keep the meeting on track. Cover the following four topics:

(1) Decide when your reading club will start and end. Books checked out after the official ending date will not count toward reading club credits.

(2) Discuss whether to have children fill out reading credit slips with the name and author of each book read. Decide whether the slips must be submitted by the ending date.

(3) Discuss necessary changes from any prior year's reading-club rules. What ages of children are eligible to participate? How many books are required to reach a successful reading goal? Discuss whether to divide the club into age- or grade-based groupings that may have different reading-goal requirements. Also, decide whether a certain number of books should be read from selected categories of topics, such as missions, biography, fiction, or Bible characters. The

rules should be clear and concise to display near the checkout desk.

(4) Review any available budget for the club. Can you purchase materials to create promotion, tracking, and award materials? Will you make flyers to advertise the reading club? Will you create activity sheets to distribute as interest builders for the upcoming club? If yes, determine how many sheets to create and when you will distribute them. (See activity-sheet examples on page 12.)

Ask for volunteers to do these tasks. Remind everyone to minimize expenses and save receipts.

In your second planning meeting, distribute draft copies of activity sheets, and have the tracking poster design ready for group discussion. Draw little "properties" around the

continued on page 10

A Monopoly-themed reading club is particularly useful during months when the weather may be less desirable for family outdoor activities.

Juvenile Fiction Series

by Cindy Grabill

Children who are Christians live confusing lives. They want to please Jesus, and friends are important too. However, often the two conflict. If their families move, they have to find new friends. They want to impress people, yet be themselves. They want to explore new areas but are hesitant to take risks. Their bodies are changing, and they begin to think about what they might want to do when they grow up.

The authors of these fiction series for ages 8-12 deal with many of these dilemmas. They place their protagonists in similar situations and provide Christian answers to help readers make godly decisions, thus making them good choices for your library.

ALEC LONDON

by Stephanie Perry Moore & Derrick C. Moore

Moody, PB, 120 pages, \$6.99 each

Ten-year-old Alec's life is in turmoil. His father is the new assistant principal, and Alec gets into trouble often. His mother leaves to pursue an acting career in California, and Grandma is hospitalized with cancer.

Yet Alec's constant, simple prayers and eagerness to do God's will help him cope with these challenges and cause him to change from a whiny fourth grader to a self-confident, risk-taking, fifth-grade president. Alec includes a letter to his mother, in which he shares his deepest feelings, at the end of each chapter. The Moores also includes reproducible word-search puzzles on various topics.

Boys will identify with Alec and

root for him. His simple prayers will motivate them to pray more. Readers will also learn math and English as they read through the stories and fill out the reproducible worksheets at the end of each book.

CARMEN BROWNE

by Stephanie Perry Moore

Moody, PB, 160 pages, \$6.99 each

Carmen and her family are moving too far away to maintain regular contact with her best friend. Yet this 10-year-old African-American develops solid friendships with other Christian girls. Through their experiences, they learn about prejudice and the consequences of lying. They see the harmful effects of anger. They grow closer to God and learn to pray constantly and depend on Him for everything.

Moore has created realistic, likable characters and provides Christian answers to real problems many girls deal with daily, such as domestic violence and friendship dilemmas. Carmen's example will inspire them to please God and trust Him for every detail. Plus her adopted brother searches for his birth parents, a situation that could lead to a discussion of how we are adopted in Christ.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

by C. S. Lewis

HarperCollins, PB, 200 pages, \$7.99 each

Enter the land of Narnia where animals talk and four children reign as kings and queens. Here the nasty boy Eustace is forever changed when he sheds his dragon skin. These tales tell

how Aslan frees the land from the spell of the White Witch and eventually leads his people to Paradise.

These magical tales are filled with rich Christian symbolism and are stories for children to read independently or for families to read together.

CODEBEARERS

by The Miller Brothers

Warner, PB, 366 pages, \$13.99 each

A mysterious book lures Hunter Brown and his friends to the land of Solandria, where its author commissions them to be Codebearers to help the Resistance fight the evil shadow forces. Each title focuses on a separate mission there. First, they concentrate on reuniting the two halves of the bloodstone to lift its curse. Next, the book tells them to follow the flame to

*The authors . . .
place their
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BOOK ROUNDUP

find seven people important to the Resistance. Hunter then searches for his missing father—also a Codebearer—whom he believes to be in trouble. But Dad is now working against the author, and Hunter must make a decision.

This series is mesmerizing reading with unique plots. The authors emphasize various forces of evil and stress the omnipresence of the “Author” and His unique purpose for each of us.

CONCORD CUNNINGHAM MYSTERIES

by **Mat Halverson**

Focus Publishing, PB, 95 pages, \$8.95 each

Each book includes 12 everyday mysteries, including missing artwork and money stolen from the classroom piggy bank. Ten-year-old detective Concord Cunningham identifies a verse containing a clue, then readers use that verse to solve the mystery. Solutions and explanations are located in the backs of the books.

Short chapters help readers peruse carefully as they look for clues and will familiarize them with the Bible. Each title ends with an explanation of how to use a concordance and emphasizes the idea that Scripture contains answers to life’s problems. Recommend this series to reluctant readers and kids who enjoy the Encyclopedia Brown series by Donald J. Sobol.

ELIJAH CREEK AND THE ARMOR OF GOD

by **Lena Wood**

Standard, PB, 144 pages, \$7.99 each

Elijah and his friends find a grave in the basement of an old church and see an elderly man burying a severed head and arm that, in reality, are part of a suit of armor. Elijah believes God is telling him to find the whole armor. So they embark on a full-fledged treasure hunt, complete with map and metal detector as they search for, find, and put on the armor of God.

Anderson’s unique characters and their unusual adventures will attract even the most reluctant reader.

All the elements of “eerie and spooky” are here, including abandoned wells, skulls, and body skeletons, to delight readers of both genders. Yet the spiritual message is clear: Christians who put on the full armor of God can withstand any temptation.

RACHEL YODER

by **Wanda E. Brunstetter**

Barbour, PB, 160 pages, \$4.99

Rachel, a nine-year-old Amish girl, can’t stay out of mischief. Her shoofly pie contains too much salt and not enough sugar. The frogs she takes to church don’t know church etiquette. She falls into the duck pond, and becomes jealous when her baby sister gets all the attention. Each incident contains a subtle, yet simple message like put belongings away and obey Mom. Plus it contains a glossary of Amish terms.

These hilarious tales give a clear picture of the Amish way of life and remind readers that God looks at the heart. Recommend this series to girls who like the Anne of Green Gables series.

SAM COOPER ADVENTURE SERIES

by **Max Elliot Anderson**

Port Yonder, PB, 175 pages, \$9.95 each

Sam and his new friends can find adventure in the most unusual places—with or without parental per-

mission. From being marooned on a desert island with drug smugglers to being separated from other people during a trip down the river, the boys must use their wits to survive. Anderson includes underlying Christian truths, among them the difference between material wealth and treasure that lasts.

Anderson, a cinematographer and former reluctant reader, writes that boys are made of “danger, adventures, excitement, and conquering things.” These books are filled with all four elements. His use of the show-don’t-tell technique gives readers the feeling they are experiencing the same situation as the characters. For instance, I could almost feel the sharp raindrops beating against my face as the boys sailed down the river in a storm.

Anderson’s unique characters and their unusual adventures will attract even the most reluctant reader.

S.A.V.E. SQUAD SERIES

by **Lauraine Snelling & Kathlene Damp Wright**

Barbour, PB, 160 pages, \$5.99 each

Four girls “with nothing in common but their differences” meet and become friends when they win a poster contest and must present a fundraiser idea for Founders’ Day. When they heroically save a basset hound from drowning, they become the S.A.V.E. Squad with an acrostic from the first letters of their names: Sunny, Aneta, Vee, and Esther.

They decide to raise money by helping homeless dogs. Next they aid feral cats living near a Dumpster and save petting-zoo animals from a bully. Many of their great ideas fall flat, such as buying the animals in that zoo. But their perseverance allows them to help many animals.

These books are light, action-packed, and funny. Girls will learn the value of teamwork, perseverance, and responsibilities accompanying pet ownership.

BOOK ROUNDUP

VIKING QUEST

by Lois Walfrid Johnson

Moody, PB, 175 pages, \$7.99 each

The Vikings raid a section of Ireland under the leadership of 14-year-old Mikkel. Their captives include 13-year-old Briana and her older brother, Devon. These same criminals took their younger sister, Keeley, in an earlier raid. Mikkel's army leaves Devon on an island where he must face a dangerous journey home.

Meantime, Briana becomes a slave to Mikkel's family in Norway. Believing God is telling her to be a light to the nations, she witnesses to Mikkel's family and introduces him to Christ.

When Devon arrives with ransom money, she asks him to free Keeley instead. Bree agrees to be a cook on an exploration voyage with Mikkel and Leif Ericson in exchange for her freedom. When Mikkel returns her to Ireland four years later, he asks for and receives forgiveness for past crimes and for her hand in marriage.

These books are informational and depict a lesser-known period in history. Johnson presents the gospel through the characters in kid-friendly language, emphasizing such spiritual truths as constant forgiveness, honesty, and slavery to what or whom we serve. These books also show how God can change and use anyone, no matter what he or she has done.

WINNIE THE HORSE GENTLER

by Dandi Daley Mackall

Tyndale, PB, 144 pages, \$5.99

Twelve-year-old Winnie can't cook, pray deeply, or keep her side of the bedroom neat. But she can tame unruly horses. Each book focuses on a different horse, including Wild Thing, whom Winnie later adopts, and Gracie, who sacrifices her life for her foal. Throughout the series, Winnie makes new friends and learns many of the same lessons she is teaching the horses. She teaches them, for example, to love unconditionally and learns about the un-

conditional love of God.

Bestselling author Mackall has created fun, quirky characters and situations to which girls can relate. She weaves her knowledge of animal behavior skillfully into the text and concludes each title with glossaries of horse terms and breeds. Recommend these books to girls who love horses.

Cindy Grabill is a freelance writer who has worked in a church library.

Community Central

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track their book numbers and root for one another.

Reaping the Benefits

Does it seem as if the ways in which a library can encourage church community are endless? Perhaps they are.

For churches and their libraries, the benefits of learning to create and utilize a library's community-centered functions are mutual. In a church where the library is central to inner community, it gains support and greater usage—vital needs for a healthy, sustainable church library.

More importantly, the entire church community wins when the library aims to encourage connections within the congregation. The result is a church that comes together and grows as one body, loving and supporting one another as God intended—sometimes even over books and chocolate.

Jerusha Agen is a freelance writer who has served in church libraries for 19 years. She's on the library staff of New Hope Presbyterian Church, Green Bay, Wisc.

Monopoly

continued from page 7

edge of a sheet of poster board in a facsimile of a Monopoly board. You could use locations around your town, especially places the children will know, or places in your church building.

After approving these items, choose a date by which the final copies will be completed and ready for use. Ask for a volunteer to design award certificates and another to find ideas for small prizes to give to all participants.

In the third planning session, collect receipts and determine the remaining reading-club funds. Review and finalize the award certificate design. Select small prizes from purchased or photographed samples to give to children who complete the desired number of books. Ask for a volunteer to hand-letter the name of each participating child on a certificate.

Promotion

Three methods of promotion are announcements, reading club props, and activity sheets. Short announcements in worship services and your church newsletter or bulletin let parents and children know about the upcoming reading club and its theme. Announcements before children's Sunday school classes, choir rehearsals, and other activities are more opportunities to spread the word.

You can likely borrow most of the reading-club props. Ask church members to loan you interesting Monopoly boards. Display various boards around the library—within sight but beyond the reach of little fingers. Caring for borrowed game boards is important because some of them are now collector's items.

The remaining prop is your tracking poster on which you will show each child's progress with the number of books read, or read to them if they are

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What Automation Can Do for Your Library

by Shara Blackmore

Note: I've worked in the library automation industry for more than 10 years and am frequently asked why a church library should use a software program to automate it. Consequently, I wrote this article to provide information and insight from years of communicating with churches about their needs and visions.

Your church library is more than a collection of books and other resources. It's a vital source of information for teachers, pastoral staff, families, children, teens, adults, and people in need, among others. Your library can expand your church beyond the building walls into people's homes and lives.

Setting up and establishing the library is more than a task or job. It is a ministry to your church and community.

Your library is also a monetary asset for your church. However, the value of the resources in it far exceeds their monetary worth. For instance, they provide help with spiritual growth, information for leadership development, and guidance for improving family relationships.

Keeping track of these resources can be difficult—or easy if you use library automation.

Automation is an integrated library management system, or a resource-planning system. An automation software program provides a centralized

system for common library tasks, such as cataloging, circulation, searching, and printing reports.

Combining these tasks creates an efficient and timesaving system compared to using multiple programs and methods.

Benefits for Librarians

A church library is usually staffed with volunteers who are committed to donating their time and talents. A library software program can greatly assist them in their efforts with easy data-cataloging methods, quick circulation, and efficient report features.

Most programs have the ability to import data files from other programs and use Internet sources to quickly im-

port catalog information. This feature alleviates the burden of typing in every data field.

Circulation can be done quickly by scanning a barcode label on the book to lend and return items. The program keeps track of who has what item, keeps track of when it is due back, and provides an option of printing or emailing a reminder notice to the patron.

Unfortunately, it's common to lose items as they are lent out without a tracing method or simply forgotten about. Using a library program ensures that the item can be tracked to the last person who checked it out, alleviating the cost of having to repurchase the item, which is good stewardship.

Most software programs offer a variety of circulation reports to print to show overdue items, as well as items that are not being circulated to help with weeding.

Plus programs create reports to show inventory listings to help evaluate budget spending and accumulated replacement values for insurance purposes.

Benefits for the Congregation

Automating the library makes it easier for patrons to use it since most people are familiar with computers and online search tools. Software programs offer the convenient ability to search the catalog online from the church's website.

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*The benefits
of automating far
outweigh the cost
of buying a computer
and software
program
for your library.*

Having resources cataloged by subject and content helps people easily put their hands on the items that are most relevant to them. Parents will be able to find books that help them with parenting and nurturing relationships. Teenagers will be able to find DVDs based on biblical teachings, and teachers will be able to find materials to aid them in their classrooms.

Benefits for the Pastor and Ministry Departments

Having a centralized system also helps your pastor and staff to organize and classify their resources, such as sermon transcripts and reference books. Entering these items into the software program allows them to be searched by subject, author, category, or any data field that contains information. This feature enables your pastor to provide supplemental reading and resources related to his sermons and teaching to the congregation.

Every ministry department in your church can use the library program to catalog their resources too. Many programs have the flexibility to allow for any type of resource to be cataloged and the data fields to be named accordingly. Curriculum, equipment, nursery toys, and other types of items can be tracked and quickly located for use.

Benefits for the Community

Every church wants to expand past the physical walls of the building and reach out to the community. Having an organized library enables your church to promote the resources that are available and offer age-appropriate materials for neighborhood families, creating a ministry to families who may be struggling and would not otherwise have resources available to them.

This type of low-key outreach helps create a stress-free and inviting environment for members of the community to visit and become familiar with your church.

The benefits of automating far outweigh the cost of buying a computer and software program for your library. The time and money it takes to manually type catalog cards, replacement-value reports, inventory, and book labels can be more than the cost of automating.

Automating your library will improve its functionality and, in turn, have a powerful impact on both your church and community.

Shara Blackmore is the customer support and administration manager at Jaywil Software, the developer of ResourceMate library software program.

Editor's note: For a comparison of library software programs, see the pamphlet Library Software Solutions. Ordering information is on the back cover of this journal.

Monopoly

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too young to read.

Hand out activity sheets to children passing the library door or at the end of Sunday school as they leave their classrooms.

Activity Sheets

Rotate posting a few completed activity sheets in the library each week.

Title the first sheet "The funniest thing that ever happened when we played Monopoly is" Then make photocopies to hand out. Everyone wins as the children enjoy writing a few sentences about their experiences.

Create a find-a-word puzzle by hiding the names of words from a Monopoly game among a jumbled square of random letters. Place the hidden words horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. Include a list of the hidden words at the bottom of the sheet to make it easier for children to know when they have found them all.

Print the words *Monopoly Property Trading Game* in large, bold letters at the top of a lined sheet of paper. Let children see how many words they can create using the letters of those words.

Everyone Wins

Have a game night when the reading club ends. During the awards presentation, declare everyone a winner for participating in the club; and hand out participation certificates. Then hand out the small prizes for those who completed the required number of books.

Later, hold a follow-up meeting. Encourage all the staff members and volunteers to share their experiences. Take notes of any changes you want to consider when planning the next reading club. Also prepare the club's circulation statistics to advertise in the church newsletter or bulletin, and store reusable materials and leftover prizes for your next reading club.

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

BOOK REVIEWS

Bible & Theology

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK OF DIFFICULT VERSES

by Josh McDowell & Sean McDowell
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4944-6, PB,
304 pages, \$14.99

Have you ever been stumped by a Bible verse or passage? If so, this book goes verse by verse through Scripture, providing answers to puzzling theological questions. Where did Cain get a wife? Were the earthly siblings of Jesus at the crucifixion with Mary? Why must the poor be always with us?

Authored by well-known theologians, this book is written in language laypeople can understand. They present and discuss multiple views of each verse, and put ancient culture into context. Though a bit wordy at times, verse explanations are always thought provoking. I recommend this book to both new and mature Christians who seek clarity regarding puzzling biblical passages. BF

THE BIG BOOK OF BIBLE ANSWERS

by Ron Rhodes
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5140-1, PB,
352 pages, \$14.99

Scripture has inspired many believers to ask the hard questions. To answer them, Rhodes puts 20 years of experience as the radio host of *Bible Answer Man* to good use. He compiled a list of the most-asked questions, along with answers supported by as much scriptural backing as is available.

Rhodes does his best work when the questions are about elements of Scripture he can answer by turning to biblical history; theological heritage; or specific teachings by prophets, priests, and apostles. A majority of the questions are answered thoroughly, with Rhodes

rendering complex theological concepts in an easy-to-understand format. At points, he departs from Scripture to answer questions concerning the relation of science to the Bible. Here he provides black-and-white perspectives on what many Christians consider shades-of-gray issues, such as the Earth-age debate. As a supplemental study text, this book would be a wonderful addition to any church or school library. EPN

GOSPEL DEEPS: Reveling in the Excellencies of Jesus

by Jared C. Wilson
Crossway, 978-1-4335-2640-4, PB, 207
pages, \$15.99

A diamond is meant to be viewed from multiple angles to fully appreciate it. Wilson helps readers more fully appreciate the gospel with chapters rich with quotes, ranging from Church Fathers to yesterday's songs. His chapters consider aspects of the gospel and, like a jeweler, explore them from multiple perspectives.

Each chapter may be read independently of the others. Wilson provides readers with points and counterpoints for each topic and subtopics. This comprehensive work uses a Baptist soteriology. It's liberally sprinkled with bullet points, extensive quotations, and cited and uncited Scripture references in addition to a Scripture index and endnotes. Recommended for intermediate Bible students. BLE

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ

by Bruce A. Ware
Crossway, 978-1-4335-1305-3, PB, 156
pages, \$ 15.99

Jesus is fully God and fully human, according to the creeds. Ware considers the full humanness of Jesus and how it influences our understanding of God, the Trinity, and Jesus Himself. In so doing, he leads readers to deep and sometimes difficult views regarding

the humanity of Christ but never lessens the reality of Jesus' divinity.

This book is similar to attending a seminary class as Ware presents points and counterpoints, as well as explanations for why the church has maintained its view of the God/Man, Jesus. A seminary professor and past president of the Evangelical Theological Society, Ware has the background to write this book. Chapters conclude with discussion questions, and the book ends with general and Scriptural indices. Recommended for church libraries and small groups. BLE

MEN & WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

by Pamela L. McQuade
Barbour, 978-1-61626-915-0, PB, 303
pages, \$4.99

This volume is packed with all 2,026 proper names found in the Bible. Each name that is mentioned four or more times in Scripture has an individual listing that includes meaning, outline of the history of that person, and Scripture references. Names having one to three mentions are listed at the end of each alphabetical section, along with their first Scripture reference. The author used the King James Version and *Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* as the starting point for this work.

McQuade has created a handy reference book for individuals and church and school libraries. If the volume is revised in the future, adding definitions of the names mentioned one to three times would be helpful. Highly recommended. JA

Books help us understand who we are and how we are to behave. They show us what community and friendship mean; they show us how to live and die.

—Anne Lamott

BOOK REVIEWS

Biography & Memoir

DAYS LIKE THESE

by **Kristian & Rachel Anderson**
Zondervan, 978-0-310-32583-3, HB,
198 pages, \$19.99

Cancer, the word that strikes fear in any heart, was the enemy of the Andersons. This is the story of Kristian's fight to survive cancer for his wife and two sons. Most of the pages are from his blog, starting with the discovery of his cancer. Rachel's pages add to the story from her perspective as wife, mother, and caregiver.

Kristian writes well, sharing much of the emotional and spiritual journey he takes. His faith shines through as he shares thoughts, feelings, and Scripture. We begin to understand some of the struggles of cancer patients and their families, both through the physical changes from chemotherapy or radiation and the strength needed by the caregivers. *Days Like These* is a remarkable story of Kristian's courage and faith that never fails. Unfortunately, due to some mildly offensive language, I cannot recommend this book for church libraries. JA

A FORCE OF WILL: The Reshaping of Faith in a Year of Grief

by **Mike Stavlund**
Baker, 978-0-8010-1511-3, PB, 224
pages, \$14.99

Joy is more joyful after one knows grief. While most people would not choose to grieve or suffer through loss, nevertheless it is an unavoidable part of life. Pastor, theologian, and writer Stavlund shares the experience of the death of his four-month-old son, Will, and the lessons he and his wife learned as they dealt with the devastating loss.

Stavlund's memoir is brutally honest and therefore should be helpful to others who must face grief and still

maintain their faith. He does not use a scriptural foundation but, rather, shares his yearlong journey as a child of God. Recommended mainly for churches with larger budgets to augment their library section on grief. Churches with limited budgets may want to pass. JAW

HOPE UNSEEN

by **Scotty Smiley with Doug Crandall Howard**, 978-1-4516-7291-6, PB, 243,
\$14.99

While serving in the army, Captain Smiley lost his eyesight after suffering injuries caused by a car bomb. At first his whole life was turned upside down, and his faith in God was radically shaken. With the support of his wife and friends, he overcame the limitations of his blindness and learned a valuable lesson: God's plan isn't always our plan. God works in unimaginable ways, but His plan is always for the best. Today Smiley's blindness no longer holds him back. He has the spiritual strength to take on anything—from surfing to mountain climbing—in order to teach leadership classes.

Hope Unseen is an impactful testimony of faith, even when there is a lack of understanding of God's power and awesomeness. God's greatness amidst seemingly impossible odds gives us glimpses of His might, power, and love. Smiley's story is a snapshot of God's big picture and, thus, is inspiring reading. NC

THE INSANITY OF GOD: A True Story of Faith Resurrected

by **Nik Ripken with Gregg Lewis**
B&H, 978-1-4336-7308-5, PB, 322
pages, \$14.99

Is God's love still strong in the presence of unspeakable evil? This is the driving question behind Ripken's international journey after 15 seemingly fruitless years of service in war-torn Somalia. As he interviews persecuted Christians around the world, Ripken questions and challenges the most in-

stinctive tenets of American Christian faith, finding healing and revolutionary new perspectives.

As Ripken's personal testimony, this book is powerful. The narrative style pulls readers into the agony and joy of Christians from Africa to China and confronts the naïve belief that success is measured in numbers or following Christ can be easy. As a pastor, missionary, and relief worker, Ripken is ideally experienced to write this book. Though his style tends toward overemphasis or oversimplification in places, the book is a thought-provoking work I recommend for any teen or adult who desires to truly follow Jesus. EJS

JONI & KEN: An Untold Love Story

by **Ken & Joni Eareckson Tada with Larry Libby**
Zondervan, 978-0-310-31469-1, HB,
192 pages, \$18.99

The theme for this story is love: God-given love between a man and woman that was tested and eventually grew stronger through the trials of quadriplegia, chronic pain, depression, cancer surgery, chemo, and even pneumonia. The Tadas drew closer to God, and He answered in phenomenal ways.

Here's a truly inspirational story about God's grace and the deep love between Ken and Joni. Ken committed himself to the practical ways of becoming a warrior and taking care of Joni. In turn, Joni appreciated and respected the physical, spiritual, and emotional strength of her husband.

This easy-to-follow biography is a book I had to read in one sitting. Flashback reflections fill in earlier years, conducive to understanding the two personalities. Ken is a retired teacher and director of ministry development for Joni and Friends. Joni, founder and CEO of Joni and Friends, is the author of numerous bestselling books. Recommended for church and school libraries and marriage retreats. LGM

BOOK REVIEWS

NORTH OF HOPE: A Daughter's Arctic Journey
by Shannon Huffman Polson
Zondervan, 978-0-310-32876-6, PB, 248 pages, \$16.99

When sorrow is expressed through a grieving writer, the well-placed words can voice what readers were only able to communicate through tears. This memoir is written from the author's perspective during a trip she took in honor of her parents who were brutally murdered by a bear while in the Arctic.

Polson is poetic with her work, spending much effort on well-crafted metaphors and anecdotes. She mentions several religions, as well as Christian denominations, but does not point to God as the answer to suffering. The book ends with the importance of wildlife conservation. Although the moral foundation of the story is not God, I still recommend this book for adults who have suffered a loss in the family because of how eloquently Polson addresses the subject of grief. ARB

Children

Bibles & Bible Storybooks

CANDLE BIBLE FOR KIDS: Toddler Edition
by Juliet David
Candle, 978-1-85985-939-1, HB, 160 pages, \$9.99

Although designated for toddlers, this book is perfect for young readers. The words are almost all one or two syllables; the drawings are colorful; and the stories are told in condensed, simple ways. Central characters, such as Adam and Eve, Moses, Jonah, and Samuel, are drawn childlike. But their life stories are accurate, even if shortened greatly. The parables of Jesus are

told in drawings and words and succeed as tales youngsters will relate to and enjoy, especially the forgiven prodigal son, the rescued lost lamb, and the saved traveler the good Samaritan took care of.

At the end of each lesson, Bible references are inserted for parents who wish to provide even more details for youngsters. The book's cover is thick and cushioned, making it durable and kid-friendly. DEH

THE BERENSTAIN BEARS STORY-BOOK BIBLE
by Jan & Mike Berenstain
Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72721-7, HB, 256 pages, \$16.99

If you can get past the idea that everyone in this book is a bear, whether it be Moses, Joseph, or even Jesus, then you can enjoy what are accurate Bible stories. Each vignette begins with a title and Bible reference, showing where the original version of the narrative can be found in Scripture.

Although the book is targeted at youngsters, many words are advanced

(Pharaoh, Israelites, mountain-top, Persia, salvation, hosanna, Jerusalem, disciples). Thus, this is not a dumbed-down paraphrasing of biblical tales as much as it is a colorful, eye-appealing, actual summary of key events from the Bible. It includes history, miracles, prophecy, and visual presentations of Christ's parables. The format is two-page spreads of drawings with text overlaid in short paragraphs. Children will appreciate the graphics, and they will be exposed to solid teaching. DEH

BIBLE STORIES THAT END WITH A HUG
by Stephen Elkins
Tyndale, 978-1-4143-7543-4, HB, 155 pages, \$14.99

Be advised that this book is a sanitized version of the Bible. It presents only the upside of each biblical story included, thus guaranteeing that the end of the story will create a huggable situation for a child and his or her parent or grandparent. For example, we get the story of Adam and Eve without the Fall. We get the story of Cain and Abel without the murder. We get the story of Jonah without the vomiting on land. We get the story of Christ rising from the dead without ever being told anything about the crucifixion.

So, the good news is that this is a book with cute, colorful drawings of children and animals and happy bedtime stories. The bad news is, it surely is not an accurate depiction of the depth, range, and scope of the true Bible. DEH

MY STORY TIME BIBLE
retold by Sophie Piper
Lion, 975-0-7459-6214-6, HB, 320 pages, \$14.99

This book offers six stories each from the Old and New Testaments. Unlike many children's early readers, the stories are detailed and elaborate, running from 20-30 pages per story. Naturally, being for children, the stories selected are ones that are extraor-

SERIES UPDATES

The Berenstain Bears I Can Read!
by Stan & Jan Berenstain with Mike Berenstain
Zonderkidz, \$3.99
Piggy Bank Blessings
978-0-310-72505-3
Do Not Fear, God Is Near
978-0-310-72511-4

VeggieTales I Can Read!
by Karen Poth
Zonderkidz, \$3.99
Junior Comes Clean
978-0-310-73208-2
The Case of the Couch Potato Caper
978-0-310-73213-6

BOOK REVIEWS

dinary or adventurous, such as Noah and the flood, David and Goliath, Daniel and the lions, Jesus calming the storm at sea, the first Christmas, and the first Easter.

The vocabulary is primarily limited to one- and two-syllable words, with sentences of only four to seven words. The artwork is not overly sophisticated, but the colors are bright. And the images are stories within themselves, such as a full manger scene with Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, a barn, and many animals. There are elements of humor, too, such as showing Jonah being whirled around with seaweed, small fish, and bubbles as he tumbles in the fish's belly. This book is simple in format but rich in content. DEH

Picture Books

BECAUSE GOD IS AWESOME!

by Brad & Kathy Bright

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5406-8, PB, 96 pages, \$9.99

Designed to instigate spiritual conversations between parents and children, every two pages is a set of God's attributes, a verse, and questions to start conversations with youngsters. The major emphasis is on how God is all-powerful, loving, dependable, and forgiving.

The pictures are aimed at the younger audience, using bright colors and childish stick-like figures. A strong aspect of the book is that it asks questions children can relate to, allowing them to see God in a way they understand. The book is interactive, requiring parents to share their faith with their kids. Children ages 4 to 8 who have a heightened curiosity about nature, history, and religion will enjoy the biblical insights and educational perspectives this book provides. It could also be incorporated into a Sunday-school class in which discussion would be part of the learning process. CT

NORA'S ARK

by Eileen Spinelli

Zondervan, 978-0-310-72006-5, HB, 24 pages, \$14.99

In this tale of imagination, little Nora goes outside before a rain storm arrives. She uses broken chairs, discarded fence slats, and old boxes to build herself an ark. She welcomes on board her little brother, one girlfriend, two toy monkeys, two spiders, two cats, and two goldfish. But the wait is long for the rain, so the cats wander away, the brother and friend leave, and even Nora has to eat pretzels to keep from falling asleep. But at last the rain falls, but only for 40 minutes, not 40 days and nights. Her older sister fetches her for dinner.

Although Nora has not actually been like Noah, she does share one thing with him: the joy of loving the fresh air after a rainfall and the beauty of a rainbow. Children who know the story of Noah will enjoy these colorful pages and the imaginative comparisons between Nora and Noah. This isn't heavy theology, only a lot of fun. DEH

Juvenile

AWESOME BIBLE VERSES EVERY KID SHOULD KNOW

by Rebecca Lutzer

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-3938-6, PB, 112 pages, \$9.99

Has a child ever confronted you with a hard question but you did not know how to answer it in words he or she would understand? In this easy-to-use text, Lutzer addresses such questions and answers with kid-appropriate, real-life applications. Topics covered include sin, friendship, temptations, death, Christ's second coming, tithing, church attendance, witnessing, and respect for parents.

The artwork is colorful and flamboyant; the vocabulary is on an elementary-school level; and the examples relate to homework, sports,

games, television, families, toys, vacations, and music. Lutzer has written previous books for children and knows how to get her point across to the younger generation. Obviously, the book is solid on Bible training. But it is also a helpful training tool for developing readers. HRS

CHRISTIAN'S QUEST

by Jacqueline Busch & Melvin Patterson

Moody, 978-0-8024-0600-2, PB, 282 pages, \$8.99

After Gramps dies, Christian leaves everything behind in Destruction City and heads for Celestial City. He wants to meet the King and live under His

SERIES UPDATES

Code of Silence

by Tim Shoemaker

Zondervan, 978-310-73499-4, \$14.99

#2 *Back before Dark*

The Gates of Heaven Series

by C. S. Larkin

Living Ink, 978-0-89957-893-4, \$14.99

#5 *The Crystal Scepter*

Goldtown Adventures

by Susan K. Marlow

Kregel, 978-0-8254-4295-7, \$7.99

#2 *Tunnel of Gold*

Legends of Karac Tor

by D. Barkley Briggs

Living Ink, 978-0-89957-866-8, \$12.99

#4 *The Ravaged Realm*

Threshold

by Christa Kinde

Zonderkidz, 978-0-310-72489-6, \$14.99

#2 *The Hidden Deep*

BOOK REVIEWS

rule. Christian soon finds out that the journey on King's Way is not easy. He faces many trials and tribulations, including a showdown with the Wicked Prince, who will do anything to keep Christian from reaching the King. Christian learns about the King's ultimate love, answers to prayer, and promise never to leave as he makes the leap of faith to the Celestial City.

Christian's Quest is a juvenile, urban rendition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The authors narrow down and update the classic into a story that's easy to understand, yet still impactful. Pictures in each chapter help kids visualize what's happening. At the end of the book are discussion questions and an allegory word list. If the reader doesn't have any urban-life knowledge, some phrases might be confusing (e.g., "quick to snap off"). Ultimately, the book is an insightful and relatable book for kids that would be a great addition to any collection. BKB

Christian Education

ROCK-SOLID CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

by Larry Fowler

Regal, 978-0-8307-6543-0, HB, 203 pages, \$17.99

God's Word furnishes the content and design of children's ministry. Here's the necessary tool to get your kids' ministry on track. Seven sections elaborate on seven standards: Target hearts, use the nature and work of God in discipline, value both men and women in discipleship, focus on the needs and spiritual outcomes, value every individual child, rely on spiritual power, and use biblical excellence in the ministry.

Each section is divided into chapters on thinking right about the appropri-

ate standard, doing right, and a page on feeling right about the topic. A helpful discussion guide is included for ministry staff. Eye-catching charts, graphs, and tables illustrate the basic principles. This book is scripturally sound and illuminated with personal stories. Fowler is director of global networking for Awana and Kidzmatter. Recommended for church libraries and children's leaders. LGM

Christian Living

THE 10 BEST DECISIONS A LEADER CAN MAKE

by Bill Farrel

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4540-0, PB, 207 pages, \$12.99

Every person is created with leadership skills and a sense of destiny, according to Farrel. However, Bible verses like "The poor you will always have with you" are given no ink. He provides biblical references for all his stances; provides probing questions and challenges for men who are floundering in finding direction for their lives; and has a motivating, upbeat tone that is like an ongoing pep talk.

But many anecdotes and attempts at humor are worn-out stories; the book lacks vibrant, contemporary examples of successful people who have done amazing deeds of leadership; and it fails to show specific, 21st-century applications.

I like Farrel's premise that potential leadership may lie within most men, but a world with all bosses and no employees would be chaotic. The skills assessment charts, self-evaluation forms, and checklists for personal growth provide valuable frameworks for men wanting to do better in life. Just understand that not everyone will be Caesar, Lincoln, or Churchill. DEH

FALLING IN LOVE WITH GOD

by Bob Hostetler

Leafwood, 978-0-8911-2374-3, PB, 222 pages, \$14.99

Whereas many folks talk about submission, others talk about love. This book explains how to search for the love of your life: God. In an engaging style, Hostetler inspires, convicts, and sympathizes with readers who have not yet fallen in love with their heavenly Father. "Every human heart longs to love and be loved," Hostetler wrote, "And every heart is unfulfilled until it falls in love with God."

In each chapter, Hostetler, a speaker and popular writer, packs in personal anecdotes, biblical stories, and an ending prayer, making this guide into love perfect for a daily or weekly study tool. His style makes the passages easy to understand and inspiring for readers. This book is detailed and heavy with convicting moments, perfect for readers who wish to grow into a deeper, loving relationship with God. KSI

FRESH AIR

by Chris Hodges

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

Have you ever been stuck in the doldrums, wanting to know what you were missing in your relationship with Christ? Often we lose fire for God, sink into the mundane, and can't find a way

SERIES UPDATES

Boundaries

by Henry Cloud

Harper, 978-0-06-220633-6,
\$28.99

Boundaries for Leaders

Praying God's Word for Your ...

by Kathi Lipp

Revell, 978-0-8007-2077-3, \$13.99

Praying God's Word for Your Life

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out. As pastor Hodges wrote, “The purpose of this book is to put wind in your sails again. To get you unstuck. To move you through the storm. To help you reclaim your compass and redirect your course.”

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

GOD IN THE MIRROR: Discovering Who You Were Created to Be
by Miles McPherson
Baker, 978-0-8010-1333-1, PB, 235 pages, \$14.99

We’ve all heard the saying that “image is everything.” McPherson encourages readers to go on an I.M.A.G.E. journey, to recognize that we are Individually unique, are God’s Moral mirrors, have Authority to rule, are God’s friends, and are Eternal beings. Understanding who we are in Christ transforms the way we live. And as Christians, we should be living as Christ did.

This is a wonderful, encouraging book. McPherson has done a good job of encompassing all aspects of a person—physical, mental, spiritual, relational—as he prompts readers to be God’s mirror. He emphasizes that image is more than an inscription or imprint but the core of who we are, alive and active, representing God’s attributes living in our human design. I especially recommend this book for young adults who are still forming their personal identities. RMM

JESUS IS: Find a New Way to Be Human
by Judah Smith
Nelson, 978-1-4002-0475-5, PB, 200 pages, \$16.99

How would you describe Jesus

without using religion and church? Smith’s book, developed from the campaign “Jesus Is ___ Projects,” is designed to help people think about Jesus both as a person and Messiah.

Smith emphasizes a relationship with Jesus, instead of rules and Christian standards. He carefully explains the pressures inside the church, explores the results of today’s Christian thinking, and strives to place focus back on the real Jesus and His grace. He uses Jesus’ parables, current cultural examples like social media, and personal illustrations from his years as a pastor, husband, and father to show how deeply God loves his children. This book offer insights for people seeking to know more about the lordship of Christ and less about church dogma. SCC

MUD AND MASTERPIECE
by John Burke
Baker, 978-0-8010-1535-0, HB, 301 pages, \$19.99

Why are “sinners” so attracted to Jesus, yet repelled by religious folk? Burke believes it has everything to do with the heart of Jesus, the fact that He was for them, not against them. The word *Christian* has begun to leave a bitter taste in many mouths because of Pharisee-like attitudes. Here readers are reminded that every person, including the person in the mirror, is a masterpiece.

This book has two sections: “Seeing Through the Eyes of Jesus” and “On Mission With Jesus.” The first gives biblical examples of Jesus going out of His way to love the unlovable and then reflects on how we can do the same. The second part gives more of a practical approach on how to impact the world with empathy and love. Each chapter ends with a “Question and Actions” section. The chapters are written in common language, offering a challenge for readers to reexamine themselves and the people they encounter each day. RMM

RENEGADE: Your Faith Isn’t Meant to Be Safe

by Vince Antonucci
Baker, 978-0-8010-1501-4, PB, 222 pages, \$14.99

It’s easy just to go to church and read your Bible for 15 minutes a day. It’s hard to live faithfully and joyously for God. But Antonucci calls for Christians to be renegades—people who live for God in dramatic, radical ways, including bold witnessing, sacrificial giving, personal physical discipline, and righteous mental development. He encourages readers to surrender all of their lives to God and serve Him, especially when it is risky, dangerous, or outside their comfort zones.

This book will convict readers. It contains true stories of people who have lived radically for God and fascinating profiles of the lives of others who were changed because those people became renegades. The book includes discussion questions for each chapter, making it functional for both small groups and individual readers. SHP

THE UTTER RELIEF OF HOLINESS
by John Eldredge
FaithWords, 978-1-4555-2571-3, HB, 187 pages, \$19.99

If someone asked you the first word you think of in relation to holiness, what would it be? Boring, maybe. Or unattainable. Or maybe just hard. But *New York Times* bestselling author Eldredge suggests a different option: relief. Not only is holiness possible, it is necessary, he argues. It is what we were made for.

Eldredge begins by redefining the popular idea of holiness. He points readers to Jesus’ life, showing how His holiness was not boring or hard but completely freeing. Then he proceeds through a series of practical processes to show readers how to implement holiness into their lives. Plenty of biblical references, thought-provoking questions, practical applications, and

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a compelling writing style make this book a good choice for patrons. RAB

WONDERSTRUCK: Awaken to the Nearness of God
by Margaret Feinberg
Worthy, 978-1-61795-088-9, PB, 205 pages, \$14.99

Most of us are in need of spiritual “pixie dust”—the delight and wonder that comes from knowing God’s presence and love. By showing how different prayers and practices awakened her to this wonder at different stages in her life, Feinberg is able to lead readers in finding God in the ordinary and to be wonderstruck in His presence. She shows how to engage nature, cross-reference Bible materials, pray with friends, and use journaling, among many other options, as ways of reinvigorating a relationship with the Lord.

Feinberg’s writing is filled with the ardor and joy with which she seeks to imbue readers. Her examples are touching, and her points are relevant to modern readers. Though she occasionally jumps around in her narratives, her anecdotes and explanations are thematically tied together. Recommended for readers looking for spiritual growth. KH

Evangelism

THE CROSS IN THE SHADOW OF THE CRESCENT
by Erwin W. Lutzer with Steve Miller
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5132-6, PB, 240 pages, \$14.99

Can Islam and Christianity coexist? This is the question pastor Lutzer poses. Using quotations and statistical research, he gives a terrifying explanation of the Muslim agenda based on its history and stated goals. He offers practical steps for how Christians should react. Each chapter ends with a positive, real-life story of a Muslim who converted to Christianity.

This book is insightful and educational, in that it gives readers an understanding of Muslim behavior and specific ways in which Christians should respond to it. Although the explanation of Islamic beliefs can be frightening, Lutzer consistently reminds readers of God’s sovereignty. Exhaustively researched, this book’s common language bridges the gap between the scholar and lay readers. Mature Christians, especially those wishing to reach out to Muslims, will find this book interesting and functional. JD

Family

Marriage

WAITING FOR HIS HEART: Lessons from a Wife Who Chose to Stay
by Joy McClain
Moody, 978-0-8024-0590-6, PB, 173 pages, \$12.99

Here’s a beautiful, heart-wrenching testimony about love and faith. Married to an alcoholic, McClain persevered through years of verbal abuse, fighting, fear, turmoil, and legal separation. She got a job, parented their three children, and many times experienced God’s provisions. Through all her trials, she never lost hope for her husband to heal and her marriage be restored. She also gained forgiveness and strength through God’s mercy, grew in her faith, and chose to forgive. McClain’s husband and children also wrote about their journeys and the phenomenal victory they experienced through prayer and God’s grace.

McClain included appropriate Scripture throughout the story and a Bible study on the topics of hope, God’s tenderness, His power, idols, fear, keeping a correct focus, and choosing to forgive. This candid portrayal of living with an alcoholic is inspirational

and helpful for others who are in similar situations. Highly recommended for church libraries and recovery programs. LGM

Parenting

52 THINGS DAUGHTERS NEED FROM THEIR DADS
by Jay Payleitner
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4810-4, PB, 192 pages, \$12.99

Dads who have daughters know the relationship between them can be complex. Most fathers want to communicate their love to their daughters but often are unsure how to do so. Payleitner provides commonsense advice to fathers who want to ensure their daughters become strong, secure Christian women.

In 52 chapters, he shares stories—many of them personal—about what daughters need from their fathers. These brief stories are written in a lively, conversational style. And Payleitner’s suggestions are practical, easy to accomplish, and often fun. In addition, he gives a takeaway message at the end of each chapter and notes that list additional resources at the end of the book.

Fathers who want to learn how to nurture their relationships with their daughters will gain insight from this book. Payleitner’s advice will not create perfect fathers, but it will help dads understand they are God’s gifts to their daughters. JCH

MOMS RAISING SONS TO BE MEN
by Rhonda Stoppe
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4977-4, PB, 224 pages, \$12.99

From babyhood to adulthood, Christian mothers are called to faithfully raise their sons to manhood. Stoppe’s encouraging guide to raising sons focuses on biblical examples of both mothers and sons.

She presents seven principles for

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raising godly sons that include the ideas of respecting authority, thinking biblically, and recognizing God as the source of wisdom and strength. Stoppe, a popular speaker and mother of two adult sons, offers many personal illustrations, along with biblical, historical, and contemporary examples. She provides practical recommendations for parenting, communication, discipline, and a mother's need for a close relationship with God. Highly recommended. JA

NO MORE PERFECT MOMS: Learn to Love Your Real Life
by Jill Savage
Moody, 978-0-8024-0637-8, PB, 217 pages, \$13.99

Have you ever forgotten to pick up your kids? Savage has and wants to help moms be honest about the struggle with "perfection infection."

No More Perfect Moms is a wonderful manual for moms that helps identify the way we expect perfection in our search for excellence as mothers. Savage honestly shares her parenting imperfections as she encourages readers to be authentic and "normal." Full of practical advice, humor, and Scripture, this book is for all moms at every stage of childrearing. In addition to being a mom, Savage is a speaker and CEO of Hearts at Home. Highly recommended. JA

WHAT GOD WANTS EVERY DAD TO KNOW
by James Merritt
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5008-4, PB, 224 pages, \$12.99

Fathers play an important role in the lives of their children. Merritt says that one of the most crucial roles they play in rearing their children is to guide them toward a life that pleases God. He argues that the book of Proverbs is an essential tool for fathers to use in teaching their children since it focuses on five key areas of life: financial, emotional, physical, relational, and spiri-

tual. He explores each of these areas, using Proverbs as a guide for learning how to master them.

Merritt, a pastor and father of three adult sons, provides readers with a large dose of pragmatism. Although he does not offer much new information, he does give material that will live long in readers' minds. The one flaw in the text is the number of dated sources he uses. Still, there is much to commend to fathers who read this book. It is an engaging and relevant volume. JCH

Fiction

AZULI EYES

978-1-60209-311-1, \$15.95

SCOUT'S PRIDE

978-1-60209-319-7, \$16.95

The Chorillian Cycle #1-2
by Michelle L. Levigne
OakTara, PB, 179-228 pages

Scout Captain Ian Fieran and school teacher Miranda Riallon search for genetic terrorists who have been kidnapping children from the colony on Chorillian. *Scout's Pride* focuses again on Captain Ian and Miranda and now their daughter, Kay'li, as the three deal with internal politics and mysterious disappearances.

These books show narrative potential, but they lack professional polish. The main characters are blatantly heroic, with few fears or flaws, making them hard to identify with. Conversely, the antagonists are cartoonishly evil. Somehow, Miranda has the same level of military ability as the highly trained scouts, despite the fact she has only gone camping a few times with her father. There is no real motivation for the villains outside of some desire to be contrary.

One of the biggest issues relates to God. Fi'in is the God stand-in and is used to differentiate between the noble heroes and dastardly bad guys. However, the author lacks subtlety with her

Christian imagery, so it comes across rather heavy-handed and obvious. Both in the religious portrayals and character relationships, there are no surprises. Regrettably, the writing quality doesn't justify the time needed to read the series. TN

THE DANCE

The Restoration Series #1
by Dan Walsh & Gary Smalley
Revell, 978-0-8007-2148-0, PB, 352 pages, \$14.99

After being married for 27 years, Jim and Marilyn Anderson are suddenly separated. Actually, Jim views the development as unexpected. But Marilyn has been trying to bring her sadness and disenchantment with the union to her husband's attention for years. Jim's anger and frustration is keenly portrayed, as is Marilyn's blossoming independence.

Walsh and Smalley, in their roles as pastor and family relationship authority, have encountered situations such as the Andersons face many times. Now they put their counseling guidance into an interesting fictional format. Recommended for the fiction section of any church library. JAW

FLIGHT OF THE EARLS

Heirs of Ireland Series #1
by Michael K. Reynolds
B&H, 978-1-4336-7819-6, PB, 423 pages, \$14.99

Clare Hanley emigrates to New York to find work, so she can help support her family back in Ireland. Her brother, Seamus, and a family friend, Pierce, come with her. They soon become entangled with a shady, powerful man who helps them when they initially arrive. Clare struggles to discover the story behind the man and to free them from his influences while not losing the financial income he provides her.

With a believable plot; engaging, well-developed characters; and a logical conclusion, Reynolds provides a

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valuable lesson in how God's goodness can shine through even the dingiest of situations. His writing skills place the reader at the characters' sides, particularly on the famine ship where the survival mood becomes particularly grim. Readers who enjoy historical fiction with a touch of adventure won't be disappointed by this book. JAS

FULL DISCLOSURE

by Dee Henderson

Bethany, 978-0-7642-1089-1, PB, 480 pages, \$15.99

Categorized as romantic suspense, *Full Disclosure* follows the investigation of a female serial shooter and the slowly progressing relationship between two law enforcement officers.

Main characters Ann Silver and Paul Falcon are fully developed, but the novel could have benefited from judicious editing. It did not have to be this long. Setting and atmosphere of this tale could have been improved too. It's an interesting enough story with one or two slight plot twists, and it will help readers understand introverts like Ann better. But with a plethora of Christian fiction available, you may want to choose another title if your budget is limited. JAW

THE GATE

by Dann A. Stouten

Revell, 978-0-8007-2109-1, PB, 245 pages, \$13.99

During a personal retreat while his wife and daughters are away, Schuyler Hunt stumbles into a cottage after his car gets stuck in the mud. He is invited in as if he were expected, and readers suddenly realize this is an after-death experience for the main character.

This book makes readers think about what heaven will be like and how to experience God in a fuller way as Comforter, Teacher, and Redeemer. Although sometimes a bit theologically heavy-handed, the writing is descriptive and peaceful. Some parts of the plot do not seem realistic, especially

when Schuyler realizes he is walking with Jesus and is not surprised. However, the majority of this book is beautifully written. Readers who enjoy a slower-paced story will like that *The Gate* is based on the character's memories and recollections instead of an action-oriented plot. KSI

GONE SOUTH

by Meg Moseley

WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73080-0, PB, 352 pages, \$14.99

Ever wish you could go back in history and connect with your roots? So does Tish McComb. Tish moves to Alabama and reclaims her historic family estate. But her family name has more history than she knows. With a reputation sullied by her ancestors' sins, Tish struggles to charm her Southern neighbors. She learns that her true roots lie not in her family name but in her identity as God's child.

Gone South possesses witty writing with stylish descriptions. However, despite its intriguing start, the plot ebbs to a weak climax. Dialogue often reads unnaturally, and complex characters lack consistency and believability. Christian themes feel a bit preachy and added in as an afterthought. With one mild euphemism and a mature scene involving a canoodling stranger, this book won't blemish a church library; but it's not a gem. EEC

GREENWOOD AND ARCHER

by Marlene Banks

Moody, 978-0-8024-0621-7, PB, 337 pages, \$14.99

How do we deal with discrimination? What do we do when faced with hardships at every turning point? Banks deals with these issues as she tells the story of the recovery of colored residents of Tulsa, Okla., after the Tulsa race riot of 1921. Set 15 months after the riot, this book recounts the lives of people who embark on a journey to find their place in society and a life with one another.

Banks's ability to paint pictures with words is exquisite. There are a few consistency errors though, and readers are not immediately oriented to the characters and their struggles. It was also confusing not knowing the character's specific challenges but having the struggles only alluded to. The book includes an epilogue for updates and applications. It is good for church libraries because it helps people see we all are created equal by a loving God. CC

HOME RUN

by Travis Thrasher

Cook, 978-0-7814-0838-7, PB, 402 pages, \$14.99

Professional baseball star Cory Brand is known for hitting home runs. This talent is what made him a celebrity during his childhood and later paved his way to fame and fortune. However, after a violent public outburst, it all starts to slip away. To keep his career alive, he returns to his hometown to coach a baseball team and complete a recovery program while learning that nobody is beyond God's love and forgiveness.

Cory's story of redemption is a touching tale that exemplifies the notion that anybody can change for the better. His transformation throughout the book is believable and truly shows how God can help make someone's life more worthwhile. However, the book's greatest strength is in Cory's character. From his thoughts to actions, every part of his inner being is thoroughly convincing, thanks to realistic writing. Cory's unique personhood, coupled with a touching plot and inspiring message, make Thrasher's novelization of the movie with the same title a grand slam. MALT

THE HUNTED HARE

Aidan Mysteries #1

by Fay Sampson

Monarch, 978-0-85721-204-7, PB, 286 pages, \$14.99

Returning to the place where they

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found true love, Jenny and Aidan Davison journey to the shrine of Pen-nant Melangell with their young daughter, but this time with a different agenda. Diagnosed with advanced cancer, Jenny has mere months to live. She seeks the healing powers of the shrine and wants to show her daughter where she received her name. But their peace is shattered by an unexpected murder, and the relaxing atmosphere becomes tense with turmoil.

Sampson proves her knowledge of the history of Ireland and places the reader in the action with vivid descriptions. There is constant talk about prayer and faith, but relying on the healing powers of a saint is unsettling and doesn't parallel standard Christian views. Older teens and adults who like mysteries will enjoy this plot, even if the book's theology isn't firm. EE

JOSIAH'S TREASURE

by Nancy Herriman

Worthy, 978-1-936034-79-6, PB, 320 pages, \$14.99

Sarah Whittier, a headstrong young artist with a compassionate heart, struggles to open her own art studio in the gold-rush era of San Francisco. After Sarah's mentor dies, she takes over his property and uses the inheritance to set up her own art studio. But her chances of success are threatened when a young man claiming to be Josiah's son comes to town.

Josiah's Treasure is a wonderful story of redemption and forgiveness. Herriman has a talent for keeping readers' attentions by sustaining plot conflict and developing characters that are unique and three-dimensional. Although a romance, this book also has action, elements of humor, and solid parallels to such biblical stories as the lives of Ruth, Esther, Joseph, and David. The story offers morals and values without being corny or predictable. Fans of Christian historical romance will love it. EEL

SEQUELS

to *Leaving Lancaster*

by Kate Lloyd

Cook, 978-0-7814-0873-8, \$14.99

Pennsylvania Patchwork

to *The Noticer*

by Andy Andrews

W, 978-0-7852-3832-4, \$19.99

The Noticer Returns

SERIES UPDATES

Bloomfield

by Kathi Macias

B&H, 978-1-4336-7717-5, \$14.99

#2 *Last Chance for Justice*

Cedar Key

by Eva Marie Everson

Revell, 978-0-8007-3438-1, \$14.99

#3 *Slow Moon Rising*

The Danforths of Lancashire

by Murray Pura

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-5288-0,
\$13.99

#2 *Beneath the Dover Sky*

Deadly Reunions

by Lynette Eason

Revell, 978-0-8007-2009-4, \$14.99

#3 *When a Secret Kills*

Grace Medical

by Candace Calvert

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6112-3, \$12.99

#2 *Rescue Team*

Heroines Behind the Lines

by Jocelyn Green

Moody, 978-0-8024-0577-7, \$14.99

#2 *Widow of Gettysburg*

Lost Loves of the Bible

by Ginger Garrett

Cook, 978-1-347-6596-3, \$14.99

#3 *Reign: The Chronicles of Queen Jezebel*

The Monastery Murders

by Donna Fletcher Crow

Lion, 978-1-78264-004-2, \$14.99

#3 *An Unholy Communion*

O'Malley series

by Dee Henderson

Bethany, 978-0-7642-1112-6, \$12.99

#8 *Jennifer*

Quilts of Love

Abingdon, \$12.99

A Heartbeat Away

by S. Dionne Moore

978-1-4267-5270-4

Pieces of the Heart

by Bonnie Calhoun

978-1-4267-5272-8

Ultimate Gift

by Jim Stovall

Cook, 978-1-4347-0577-8, \$14.99

#4 *The Gift of a Legacy*

The Women of Lancaster County

by Mindy Starns Clark & Leslie Gould

Harvest House, 978-0-7369-2626-3,
\$13.99

#4 *The Amish Seamstress*

MOONLIGHT MASQUERADE

by Ruth Axtell

Revell, 978-0-8007-2089-6, PB, 345 pages, \$14.99

At the height of Napoleon's revolution, Rees Phillips, an employee of the British Foreign Office, is sent to pose

as a butler in the house of the intriguing and prosperous Lady Céline Wexham. He believes his assignment to be a relatively simple one: to find out whether Lady Wexham's loyalties lie with her home country of France or with England. But Rees finds his

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loyalties are tested as he falls under Lady Wexham's spell.

Despite initially lying about his identity, Rees's character is committed to God. Throughout the novel, he finds his strength and direction from the Lord. Céline notices his unwavering faith and is, in turn, influenced to give God another chance. Axtell's novel weaves a story full of history, secrets, romance, and faith in an easy-to-read narrative. Recommended for women and teen girls. CR

NO SAFE HARBOR

Edge of Freedom #1

by Elizabeth Ludwig

Bethany, 978-0-7642-1039-6, PB, 330, \$14.99

Cara Hamilton travels to America to reunite with her brother, Eoghan, after thinking he was dead for two years and to solve the mystery of his disappearance. On the ship she encounters Rourke Tanner, whose father's murder has been blamed on Eoghan in a frame-up. As Rourke uncovers more of Cara's story to find Eoghan and exact revenge for his father's death, the two end up falling in love. Rourke has to decide between being loyal to his family or showing devotion to Cara, whereas Cara must choose to support Rourke or Eoghan.

This novel deals with the Catholic and Protestant conflict in Ireland during the 1890s and contains a few instances of mild violence. Although I found some parts sluggish and the plotline confusing in places, overall this was an enchanting story for anyone who likes romance and historical fiction. KC

SEASIDE HARMONY

978-0-8249-3246-6

SUNFLOWER SUMMER

978-0-8249-3247-3

Postcards from Misty Harbor Inn #1-2
by Evangeline Kelley

Guideposts, 272-336 pages, \$13.99

Middle-aged sisters Caroline,

Gracie, and Sam return to their childhood vacation place. As they explore Nantucket and reminisce about happy times they had with their late mother, they discover a For Sale sign outside their mother's favorite building.

Remembering how much their mother loved the Misty Harbor Inn and wanted to own a bed and breakfast, Caroline convinces her sisters to buy and renovate the rundown hotel. But fixing up the old place is more challenging than they think, and running it proves even more difficult. With God and the sisters working together, the women seek to touch the lives of their guests, solve a mystery involving the history of the inn, and make their mother's dream come true.

This series demonstrates quality setting description. Readers will greatly enjoy the calm world in which they are immersed. However, the dialogue is a bit stilted because it contains unrealistic amounts of backstory and exposition; and the characters lack believability at times. They mention God only when they want something miraculous to happen. The pace is slow in spots. Nevertheless, the two books are laid-back novels that women seeking light entertainment will enjoy. LVO

TAKE THE TROPHY AND RUN

A Bloomfield novel

by Gail Sattler

B&H, 978-1-4336-7729-8, PB, 298 pages, \$14.99

You may not know it, but garden gnomes are great catalysts for romance. Stan and Amber discover this truth when Amber's gnome goes missing and the two friends are led on a scavenger hunt lasting months. As they spend more time together, love ensues; and they realize they are meant to be together forever.

The concept of a gnome hunt is original, but the overall story is not particularly engaging. Plot elements are restated multiple times but are not always fully developed. Though Am-

ber and Stan are in their late 20s, their approach to romantic relationships is childish and frustrating. The reader does not develop an emotional connection with them. Plus at times the dialogue and descriptions feel forced. This book is best suited for young women who enjoy romance and a bit of mystery in their novels. ES

WINGS OF GLASS

by Gina Holmes

Tyndale, 978-1-4143-6641-8, PB, 384 pages, \$13.99

When 17-year-old Penny elopes with the handsome Trent Taylor, she thinks she's found her prince. Ten years later Trent's promises become lies, and his love becomes extremely abusive. Belittled and degraded, Penny suffers through a life of pain and self-taught lies until her prayers for change are unexpectedly answered. A severe work accident leaves Trent at home for months, causing Penny to get a cleaning job where she makes two friends who try to coax her out of her unhealthy relationship. Confused and torn, Penny must decide what to do, especially with her first child on the way.

A bittersweet story with a hopeful ending, this novel approaches the issues of abusive relationships in a tactful way, addressing all sides of the problem. Although it is a work of fiction and provides entertainment value, it also is the kind of book that can be used as a conversation starter for women who wish to mentor or comfort friends who are in harmful or threatening environments. KS

WISHING ON WILLOWS

by Katie Ganshert

WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73040-4, PB, 320 pages, \$9.99

A development firm threatens to displace a struggling café. As the battle between sides rages, owner Robin Price and developer Ian McKay fall in love. Despite conflict and hardships,

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the two discover there is a way both sides can win.

This novel focuses on second chances with love, in this case between a widow and a divorcée. Ganshert explores questions relating to grief and personal identity. Her writing is detailed, and the effort invested in her characters is visible. Especially gripping and honest are the flashback chapters that explore Robin's life before the book begins. The plot and dialogue have some weak elements, but the manuscript is clean of any questionable content.

Middle-aged women looking for an escape and a lighthearted story will enjoy this book, but it is not for those seeking literary sophistication or something theologically deep. SER

Men

BATTLES MEN FACE: Strategies to Win the War Within

by Gregory L. Jantz with Ann McMurray

Revell, 978-0-8007-1969-2, PB, 233 pages, \$13.99

Dr. Jantz takes a broad look at many of the issues men face, such as career advancement, sex drive, anger management, competition in work and sports, and love relationships. He approaches the material with a counselor's mindset that explains why men are wired the way they are, then offers Christian insights as to how to channel masculine drives in positive directions.

Because of the vast range of topics, this book works best as an introduction to understanding the male psyche. There isn't enough space to dig deep into all the issues, so Jantz gives a solid overview of the most relevant matters, writing in layperson's language. This book works well as a jumping off point to deeper discussions or additional research into male issues. TN

NEW MAN JOURNEY: Finding Meaning in Retirement

by Steve Silver

Cook, 978-0-7814-0867-7, PB, 254 pages, \$14.99

The challenge is to make the golden years of a man's life better by using time, money, experience, and service in a self-fullfilling mission of personal destiny. Silver believes every man has a reason for being on Earth, and it is never too late to become aligned with what is most enjoyable and rewarding in a career or a life's calling. By using made-up profiles of men who are distraught due to lost jobs, low finances, marital disharmony, or spiritual shallowness, Silver inserts biblical lessons and personal experiences to offer advice on how to escape failure.

His turns of phrases are often witty ("the juice is worth the squeeze"), and his self-confessions of personal errors and mistakes are humble and insightful. After awhile, however, the book becomes slow reading as it revisits previous scenarios and goes into detail to explain biblical stories that most Christian men will already be familiar with. The advice found here is valuable even if the writing style is a bit tedious in the second half. DEH

Teens

FIRSTHAND: Ditching Secondhand Religion for a Faith of Your Own

by Ryan & Josh Shook

WaterBrook, 978-0-307-88629-3, PB, 240 pages, \$17.99

Firsthand tries to cope with the reality that many youth fall away from Christianity after confronting a crisis of faith during the teenage years. The authors draw from rich, personal experiences to explain the importance of developing a firsthand faith capable of withstanding adulthood's trials. Each chapter concludes with short testimonies from everyday people who have

had similar struggles and reflection questions about the chapter's practical applications. The *Firsthand* website also features corresponding, chapter-by-chapter videos.

Firsthand provides a fresh perspective on basic biblical truth without being condescending to its young-adult audience. It emphasizes a relationship based on knowing God instead of completing a religious checklist. The chapters explain how to deal with sin and doubt, and they encourage readers to live life fully and embrace real, heart-to-heart Christian community. AS

GET LOST: Your Guide to Finding True Love

by Dannah Gresh

WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73063-3, PB, 146 pages, \$13.99

This is not a typical book about love and boys, nor does Gresh condemn relationships or boyfriends. Instead, she focuses on the reality of being a woman who wants to be loved. She vulnerably shares her experiences of the messy truth of balancing dating, attending school, and maintaining a relationship with God. She also uses research and Bible passages to offer a modern perspective of relationships in secular and Christian colleges. *Get Lost* is a guide for young women looking for advice on how to feel content and confident in God before fulfilling these needs from a man.

Gresh is a bestselling author and vocal advocate for encouraging young women to maintain purity. Recommend for youth groups and as solo reading for high-school girls. SCC

PAST DARKNESS

by Laurel Woiwode

Crossway, 978-1-4335-3518-5, PB, 174 pages, \$12.99

Music is everything to Gabrielle. Her parents are worship leaders, and when she is old enough she joins them on stage. However, when her parents die in a car accident, her world is

BOOK REVIEWS

shattered; and she shuns everything having to do with music. Gabrielle leaves Chicago and moves in with her aunt and uncle at their ranch in North Dakota. After several years of bitterness, loneliness, and anger, a single piece of music cracks her stone heart and shows her the way back to God and joy.

Although the dialogue is not as strong as it could be, Woiwood's gorgeous descriptions of the countryside are rich enough to create a vibrant story setting. Teen and college readers will enjoy following Gabrielle's struggle to overcome grief and hatred and accept God's love and the people He has placed in her life. MJ

TRUE PURITY

by Hayley & Michael DiMarco
Revell, 978-0-8007-2068-1, PB, 182 pages, \$13.99

Purity is a hot topic among youth groups, but what does it mean for students striving to be pure in mind, body, and spirit? This is what the DiMarcos seek to answer. They dive into all areas that essentially cover purity of the whole person, including mental, physical, religious, and emotional purity. By drawing on biblical examples, as well as personal stories, they offer godly advice that challenges young people to examine their conduct and goals.

Hayley is the founder of Hungry Planet and the author of multiple best-selling books, including *God Girl*. Her husband, Michael, is the publisher at Hungry Planet and the author of *God Guy*. This duo provides advice for teens, young marrieds, and career adults. *True Purity* is a wonderful book for junior high and early high-school students. It offers challenging advice while reassuring readers that purity is not about works. True purity is about growing in God. KB

Women

THE BLESSED WOMAN

by Debbie Morris
WaterBrook, 978-0-307-73192-0, PB, 224 pages, \$14.99

Who better to teach us about grace than women of the Bible? Morris, a women's ministry pastor, puts forth insights full of wisdom she has gleaned from studying these women, first for her own benefit and then sharing with others. Working on the premise of becoming a Titus 2 woman, we can learn grace-filled living from Eve, Mary, Hannah, Jael, Hagar, Zipporah, Esther, Miriam, widow from Zarephath, Rebekah, Samaritan woman, and Naomi.

Also illustrated with personal stories, this illuminating text is an easy read and scripturally sound. It's well written in a conversational style. A study guide for each chapter is included. Recommended for libraries and women's study groups. LGM

GIRLS WITH SWORDS

by Lisa Bevere
WaterBrook, 978-0-307-4578-3, HB, 240 pages, \$19.99

Imagine being entrusted with a sharp, shiny saber. Bevere uses the illustration of a sword to explain that God has empowered women with the ability to fight a threatening evil. Throughout the book, she scatters appropriate sword-fighting facts that relate the physical to the spiritual. These comparisons give readers a mental picture of a spiritual battle that is being waged against sex trafficking, racial injustice, and religious suppression.

The content is enlivened with powerful quotes from prominent Christians, as well as scriptural references that lend a solid biblical foundation. Whereas the book provides strong arguments and case histories to underscore its teaching points, it is too lean on anecdotes and real-life examples. Bevere's zeal is sincere and genuine,

and her call for women to unite behind a symbolic sword of justice is powerful. But her righteous indignation sometimes overpowers her Christian love and compassion, making her militancy something many readers will not identify with nor appreciate. JC

THE POWER OF A WOMAN WHO LEADS

by Gail M. Hayes
Harvest House, 978-0-7369-4936-1, PB, 224 pages, \$12.99

Perhaps you have never thought of yourself as a leader, but Hayes is here with news for you: You are a leader. Or at least you can be. Using a comprehensive Leadership Style Inventory, she helps women discover their specific leadership styles. After completing the inventory, readers may explore chapters providing a personality profile, tips, and warnings, as well as examples of great female leaders from the Bible and history for each leadership style.

Hayes uses imaginative stories and metaphors to inspire and encourage readers who must remember that her creative retellings are not necessarily historically or theologically accurate. In addition, Hayes's strong egalitarian position in the gender-roles debate is evident as she encourages women to be passionate, powerful forces of leadership in their worlds. Despite a few potential objections, Christian women may find this book helpful as they seek to develop as leaders. SDK

YOUR BEAUTIFUL PURPOSE

by Susie Larson
Bethany, 978-0-7642-1066-2, PB, 237 pages, \$13.99

God has a plan for each of his followers, but sometimes it's hard to see it in our own lives. Larson offers advice about living one's God-given purpose. Major themes include growing in faith and finding joy in life. Each chapter includes a prayer, a reflection, and

continued on page 27

Biography

FOR THE GLORY

Vision Video, 7-27985-01498-2, 106 minutes, \$19.99

Faced with adversity, many people crumble. Not Kurt Kuykendall. His brother dies, his father rejects him, his mother becomes an alcoholic, and he gets cut from his college basketball team. Instead of giving up, he gives everything to God and tries out for the soccer team at the urging of his friends. This film depicts the true story of Kuykendall and how he overcame numerous hardships to represent the United States in the Olympics as a goal-keeper.

Though the film has a strong Christian message about overcoming adversity by trusting God and friends, it suffers a variety of ills. The acting is mechanical and emotionally underplayed, the script is rather clichéd and not nearly as dramatic as it could have been, and the camera work lacks variety and energy. The film is family friendly; but even with a solid message, it is not a high quality movie. MDP

Narrative

CATCHING HEARTS

Vision Video, 7-27985-01499-9, 74 minutes, \$22.99

This dramatic, thought-provoking movie follows the lives of three people and their quest for answers in an imperfect and complicated world. Professor Mark Gavin is famous for his best-selling atheistic novel, but he is beginning to question his ideals. One of his followers, a reckless teenage boy, struggles to connect to his Christian father and his beliefs. Another follower, a young, guilt-ridden woman, cannot seem to move past a big mistake she made earlier in her life. These

three people intersect through a series of coincidences that leave the audience wondering if they are truly coincidences or God-ordained interventions.

The movie contains natural dialogue, artistic cinematography, and a plot with emotional depth. It does not attempt to answer every question or sugarcoat reality. Instead, it stimulates intellectual conversation about denial, life, and faith. In an honest portrayal of contemporary challenges and tragedies, the story confronts some of the most basic questions all people have: Does God exist? Why do horrible things happen? Is there meaning to life? This is a relatable and family-friendly movie. CP

Teaching

INTO MY ARMS

Vision Video, 7-27985-0154-0, 58 minutes, \$19.99

Women who have an abortion are six times more likely to commit suicide. Clearly, a frightening statistic. But this DVD takes abortion from cold facts to a personal level. Viewers are allowed to sit in on a counseling session of women who are recovering from post-abortion trauma. Wounded by eating disorders, sexual abuse, and loveless relationships, several women tell their stories in heart-wrenching fashion.

This program is a stand-alone part of a 10-session video series with accompanying curriculum that leads individuals to forgiveness following an abortion. A worthy addition to church libraries and a must-see-and-share for youth workers. JAW

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MUSIC REVIEWS

Contemporary

STRAIGHT LINE

by Tyrus Morgan

Sycamore, 8-84501-78697-3, \$13.99

Morgan has an ability to blend styles and methods of music, as evidenced in this CD that is “a reminder that the mission field is often found in the middle of everyday life.”

The praise songs are an impressive mix of pop, folk, jazz, and rock. However, several cuts are also traditional in verses, choruses, and nonamplified instruments. Whereas the lyrics are God-honoring, they are not overly imaginative in metaphors or visual images, nor are they professionally poetic. However, for listeners looking for a combination of music that is traditional and modern and presents a challenge for personal witnessing and outreach, this CD delivers the message. TN

Praise & Worship

ANTHEMS

by Todd Ballard

Todd Ballard, 6-26570-62263-5, \$9.99

Ballard’s passion for music and the Lord come together in this album, creating an uplifting atmosphere. Stirring lyrics accompanied by drums, piano, and violin bring the heart rest, joy, and reverence for the Lord. Lyrics focus on praising God, seeing how He is always there, and remembering how He wants to be closer to us.

“Why We’re Singing” starts the album, lifting listeners’ hearts and preparing them to praise God, who is good, holy, and great. “Closer to Me” focuses on how God will never desert us no matter our trials or even if we forget He’s there. “Find Me in the

River” has undertones of finding God after being away from Him for a long time. For people who seem too busy with life or who feel far from the Lord, these lyrics will remind them of God’s eternal love. ALG

FOR ALL OF US

by Hearts of Saints

Hearts of Saints, 6-10395-74651-5, \$16.95

In this two-disc set, one disc features driving rock anthems, and the second offers up-tempo, contemporary worship. The title track is a moving tribute to God’s grace and love. In a musical twist, the group incorporates “Nothing but the Blood” into the final chorus, inviting listeners to return their thoughts to Jesus’ death and resurrection.

This CD will appeal to fans of such artists as Sanctus Real and the Afters. In fact, it fits in slightly too well. Rousing choruses of anthemic ohs and soulful falsettos make dutiful appearances, but some songs lack the lyrical or musical innovation needed to set them apart. Overall, the CD is an enjoyable (if slightly safe) contribution to the Christian rock genre. PEMW

HERE + NOW

by North Point

North Point, 5-099995-681221, \$9.99

Worship leaders display their talents in this CD with a modern flair many contemporary churches will find appealing. Energetic songs with a strong underlying beat, such as the title work, are interspersed with softer, piano-dominated pieces like “Revelation Song.” About a quarter of the CD consists of more recent worship favorites, including “One Thing Remains” and “Beautiful Things.”

The other songs are less familiar to the average listener but still convey the love and struggles of a person’s relationship with his Creator. The lyrics focus on how individuals can draw closer to God, and each song highlights

a different aspect of this journey. Listeners will appreciate the honest evaluation of humankind’s struggles, as well as the redemption and joy that are clear in each set of lyrics. LH

NO ONE HIGHER

North Point InsideOut

North Point, 5-099995-680729, \$9.99

Empowering and uplifting, this CD has a diverse collection of songs with catchy beats and meaningful lyrics. The contemporary music has a theme of praising continuously with other messages that focus on relying on God and surrendering as His servant. The instruments, both acoustic and electric, and vocals mesh to create a pleasing sound that resonates with the listener. The title track uses a musical buildup to emphasize God’s seat above all things and the power He has in our lives. “Can’t Stop Singing” pumps you up and excites your undying desire to worship God’s greatness.

This CD has toe-tapping rhythm and worshipful lyrics. I recommend it to Christians who can use a pick-me-up throughout the day and who want to worship purposefully. SF

Women

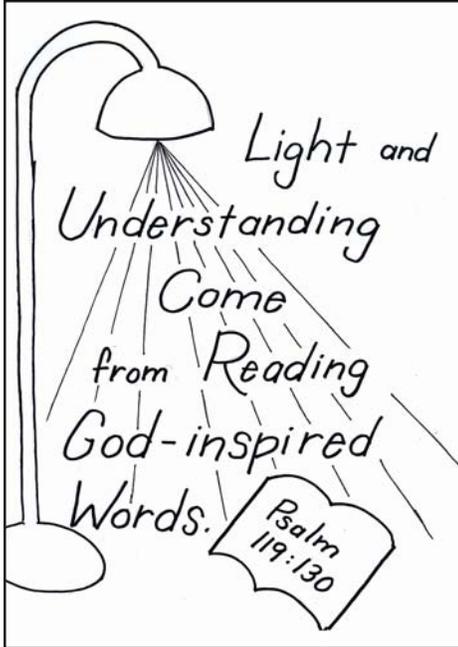
continued from page 25

discussion questions. It is usable for individuals and Bible study groups.

Larson, a speaker and radio host has a winsome voice. She shares personal anecdotes and quotes many Christian leaders. Her advice is not new, though it is attractively packaged. Because the focus is on living out one’s purpose, people who are still seeking their calling will not find much guidance here. But for those beginning their spiritual journeys or trying to recapture their God-given dreams, this is a well written and accessible resource. HW

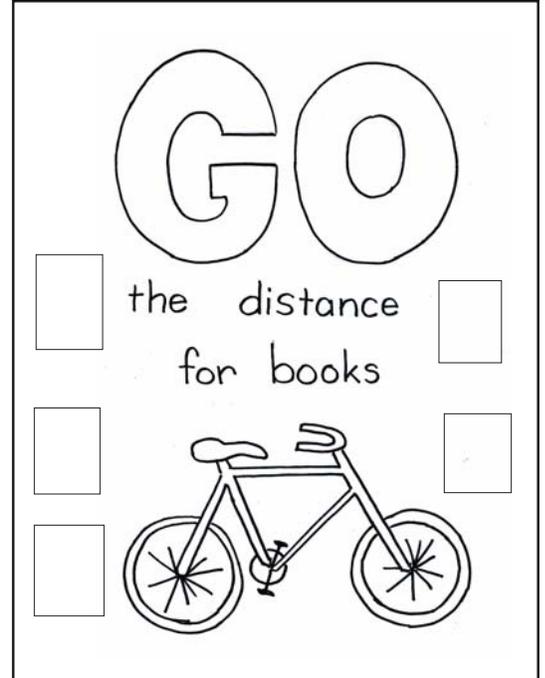
POSTER/BULLETIN BOARDS

by Arlene Walker



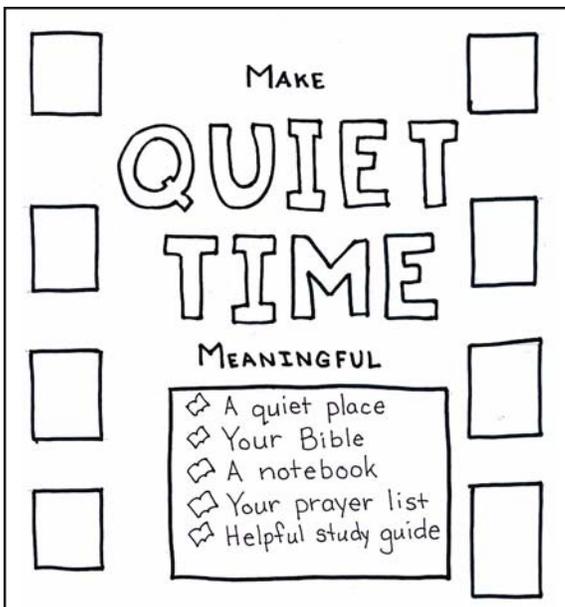
Poster

Use a piece of florescent yellow poster board. Cut a lamp from dark brown paper, so it is almost the same height as the poster. Cut a book shape from white paper, and print the Bible reference on it with a marker. Glue both items to the poster. Use a ruler and pencil to print the letters on the background, trying to space them evenly. Trace the letters with a black marker, and accent the rays of light with gold glitter.



Bulletin Board

Use light blue paper for the background. Cut letters for the caption from dark green paper, making GO much larger than the others; and staple them on the board. Enlarge the illustration of the bicycle on brown paper, and staple it in place. Copy jackets of books you want to promote for summer reading, and staple them in the spaces along the edges of the board.



Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with lavender paper or cloth. Cut letters for the caption from purple paper. Print the five helps on a piece of pale pink paper (cut to a size that will leave space for the remaining components) with a pencil and trace them with a marker. Staple the letters for the caption and the five helps near the bottom as shown. Copy jackets of books that are helpful for personal devotional time, and staple them in place.

Arlene Walker is a freelance writer and retired teacher.

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Wanted

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

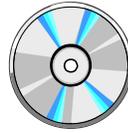
You can give other librarians promotional ideas by submitting your photos for publication in *Church Libraries*. Email them as attachments to linjohnson@eclalibraries.org. Include the following information in the message:

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Helps for Your Library

Library Software Solutions by Debra Stombres—\$6

Library software reviews from
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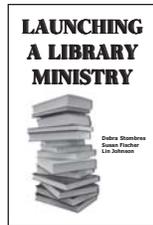


CDs

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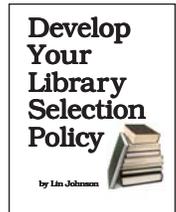
Launching a Library Ministry by Debra Stombres, Susan Fischer, & Lin Johnson—\$7

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