This issue features:

- CLJ on the Oregon Coast, and more . . .
- Stephanie Lavenia Swinnea: Writer of a Tale Worth Telling
- Beauty out of Ashes
- Technology in Schools; Children’s Book Award Winners
- You Can’t Judge a Book by Its Cover
- A Still, Small Voice: Spirituality in Young Adult Literature
- Devotionals
- Harps of Heaven to Hands of Men: Composer Kathryn Ellis
- Reluctant Reader Remedies
- The Way the World Is: The Science and Theology of the Reverend Dr Sir John Polkinghorne
- Recent Books on Prayer
You’ll notice the absence of ratings in the reviews in this issue. Our ratings for quality were becoming so much the same as to be meaningless, and the ratings for acceptability were based on text that described the problems better than a number could. So...no more ratings.

Over the past two years our publication has been irregular, ever since I returned to work in the library field. Approaching retirement age, I no longer have had the energy to maintain a full time position and publish CLJ regularly.

Now I have officially retired from my public library position, have moved to Florence, Oregon, (see our new address on the next page), and will be working full time on the journal.

We did not publish several issues recently (vol. 4, nos. 3, 4; vol. 5, nos.2, 3), for each issue not published, we extended subscribers’ expiration dates three months. You will find your new expiration date on your mailing label.

I thank each of you for your patience.

Nancy

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The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide readers with reviews of both Christian and secular library materials from a Christian point of view. About 300 books, cassette tapes, and videos from both Christian and secular publishers are reviewed each issue. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Christian Library Journal.

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Cover illustration from All Together in One Place, by Jane Kirkpatrick, © 2000. Reprinted by permission of Waterbrook Press. Printed in the U.S.A.
“There is a mysterious quality to music that we have not yet defined,” says Texas composer Kathryn Ellis. “From the earliest songs that were sung or chanted, to the earliest instruments that were invented, music has fulfilled needs of the human heart.” If this alone was the sole meaning of music, it would be judged worthwhile. But music extends deeper into the fabric of creation: “Musicians have tried to represent creation and God, and I believe they have done as good a job communicating the phenomenon of creation to the general public as have scientists.”

As a Christian, Ellis believes that her ability and desire to compose music is God-given. She embarked early on the path that would see her emerge later as a composer. Piano lessons began at age seven and she first attempted to write music at age sixteen, although at that time she lacked the technical tools for proper musical notation. But then marriage, motherhood, and a career as a nurse intervened.

Although she didn’t pursue music seriously, her love of music endured and she continued to play for her own enjoyment. In 1991 she enrolled at Houston Baptist University with the dual intents of learning the theory behind piano music notation and to become conversant with other instruments. She credits excellent piano and theory/composition instruction and encouragement from the music faculty as guiding her towards graduation in 1996 with a Bachelor of Music in theory and composition (magna cum laude).

After graduation she enjoyed having the freedom to compose as she wished and began to write in earnest. Acknowledgment did not come easily. Two years elapsed before her first publication (the Beethoven-style Piano Sonata in C minor), but she currently has sixteen works either published or scheduled for publication. Classically trained and fond of traditional forms such as the fugue, prelude, sonata, and theme and variations, she views herself as a traditional composer. Major influences on her work include Haydn, Schumann, Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Saint Saens, Vivaldi, Debussy, Ravel, and from this century, Ives, Stravinsky and John Williams. She admires Part and Gorecki because of the seriousness and depth of their subjects. Her music incorporates stylistic elements from the baroque, classical, romantic, and impressionistic eras as well as contemporary twentieth century techniques.

The spiritual journey that has influenced her career as a composer began with childhood acceptance of Christianity. “In expressing myself musically,” she says, “I intend it to be an offering back to God, honoring the beauty of everything He has created and acknowledging His gifts. My Christian faith is the skeleton of my music.” She continues, “I believe that whenever appreciation of beauty in the world is expressed, God is honored as Creator.” This isn’t accomplished only by those who are professes Christians. “A talented artist can paint a beautiful scene with religious implications that deeply touches Christians, although he himself may not understand what he is portraying.” She agrees with Madeleine L’Engle’s comment: “Christ has always worked in ways which have seemed peculiar to many men, even his closest followers. Frequently the disciples failed to understand him. So we need not feel that we have to understand how he works through artists who do not consciously recognize him. Neither should our lack of understanding cause us to assume that he cannot be present in their work.” Still, as Christians we ought to have a deeper insight into the nature and personality of our Creator.

Ellis finds music in the words of scripture, too. “Much of the Bible is very musical to me,” she says. “I particularly like the psalms.” Her praise song “From Everlasting to Everlasting” (the only biblical text she’s set to music) is based on Psalm 90. She’s also attracted by Old Testament tales. “The story of Esther seems to demand trumpets, processional, and exotic dance music.” She has written music about Jonah—“a story filled with so much magic, especially when Jonah was sinking into the depths of the sea”—that uses xylophone and harp. The majestic depictions of kings and priests call to mind the ancient instruments—drums and lyres—they used in rituals.

How does Christian classical music fit into our society? “Our culture is spiritually impoverished,” Ellis says. “In the baroque and classical times, many famous composers were church musicians and used scripture for the basis of their music. Many mirrored famous artists’ works, and became well known because of their sacred music. That is not common now, in fact the reverse is true—it seems that the “art” community leans well toward secular art and music versus anything that is overtly Christian.”

Some of Ellis’s music is specifically Christian, such as “Sanctus” for organ or piano and SATB; “Sacred Songs No. 1 and No. 2” for baritone and piano; “Rainbow Man” for soprano and piano; “From Everlasting to Everlasting”, and the piano prelude “Justification and Sanctification”. Of these, she says, “I find when I am writing a specifically Christian piece that I pray more before and during the process ... I
approach these pieces with a more reverent attitude than my other pieces ... lots of times at the piano I feel really creative and music just comes out of me easily. I have found it is best just to go with the flow and write it down or record it right then and there, then I thank God afterwards for the inspiration of the music.”

She freely admits to being a program music writer—even pieces which on the surface appear to be absolute music are not. “I am always expressing something—most of my pieces are inspired by stories and characters I like, places I’ve been to, or feelings I want to express musically without using words. Prayer is a source of inspiration for the actual music after I have a subject.” But unless she’s writing overt program music (such as in “The Little Prince Suite”, or her work-in-progress “Texas Symphony”) she doesn’t note the underlying meaning on the score. “Every piece is very personal to me,” Ellis says. “This leaves me feeling very vulnerable where my music is concerned.” Music can be both very personal, but also interpersonal. Ellis notes that “The Greeks believed that every person had a certain modal scale that best suited them—they used certain scales and tones for battle, for prayer, for celebration, for every occasion. But music also crosses language barriers—people of different languages can listen together to music of the old masters, and can feel the same emotions being evoked and communicate that shared feeling with each other without having to speak the same dialect.”

Music also involves the composer, the performer and the listener in communication. “That can be a wonderfully creative process because many times the listener hears and interprets a piece quite differently from the composer or performer. Unless a composer wants only to write and perform for himself, he lets go of the music once it is written. It is so much fun when a person hears a piece of music I have written and tells me a totally different interpretation of it than what I had intended. I think this is to be expected when no explanation or program is given with the music. I like hearing different performers interpret music—that is why we all enjoy live performances so much; we can get wonderful consistent quality of music in a CD, but isn’t it fun to hear an orchestra or a soloist play familiar pieces with different interpretations?”

Some contemporary classical music can, however, be quite difficult for the listener to assimilate. Ellis is aware of this. To her, much contemporary music is “the emperor’s new clothes.”

“Music that no one but the composer can relate to is only good for the composer ... if the general music listening public cannot find anything to relate to in a work of music, then that sort of music will never be used as building blocks or foundations for new music in the future. The reason that the music of the great masters has endured was because they each introduced new concepts and elements to music while retaining part of the familiar, so the public could listen, learn, accept and then enjoy.”

She herself needs to have something to relate to in music—either melodies, rhythms, or harmonic progressions that make sense. “I have never liked atonal music, or serial music as a whole,” she says, “unless there is at least a tonal center to grab hold of every now and then. I find some contemporary music unpleasing and uninspirational because it just doesn’t make me want to hear more.” Innovations—like music being played underwater on chimes while the listeners listen while snorkeling—she finds clever and interesting, if not practical. Still, there needs to be a reason or goal for breaking established rules or traditions in music. “New and fresh music can result. But a composer has to hang onto some common ground and then build upon it, rather than throwing everything out.”

Although she is a classical composer, Ellis enjoys contemporary Christian music too. There is “a lot of really good music being written and performed by Christian artists, and much good orchestration being used.” In conjunction, she sees an emergence of Christian artists in literature and in the visual arts, as well as a wider public acceptance of this art and writing. “Christian music is also gaining larger audiences. Contemporary Christian music is one of the primary venues of reaching the youth of today—especially the non-churched. I find this encouraging.”

Her goals for the future include several large scale projects: a five movement symphony based on historical events and places in Texas, chamber music, a string quartet, pieces for flute and piano, clarinet and piano, and a Christmas suite of five pieces for flute and piano. She is writing hymns to accompany a book of Celtic Christian devotions being written by author Andrew M. Seddon and Bishop Neil Jones of St. David’s Celtic Catholic Church of Canada. She desires to write music for piano and solo instrument for young and intermediate musicians, and aims to write music that is realistically playable, not awkward for the performer. She composes music for weddings (“to honor the sanctity of the church and the union of two believers, but that is new and different”); has been very active in church music; and will soon be teaching a “Kindermusik” class called “Village” for babies and parents. “Modern music,” she says, “helps children learn the stories and teachings of both testaments.”

As any composer would, she’d like to hear more of her compositions played, and so another dream is to work with a group of musicians. “I do all my work alone, which is the way composing is, of course, but it would be very rewarding to have a working relationship with musicians who would perform my music. Currently, on the symphony I am writing, I have only heard computer-generated instruments, reduced parts on the piano, and my imagination.”

Many composers have attempted to express the Christian faith in music and song. Bringing the harps of heaven to the hands of man is a task that composers of every generation seek to accomplish—because each generation needs to hear that expression for itself. It is a task that Kathryn Ellis embraces gladly—and tunefully.
For Piano solo:

“Piano Sonata No.1 in C minor”

Three Impressionist Pieces (“A Little Afternoon Rain”, “Prelude for a Snowfall”, “Ice Dances”)

“Ezekiel’s Rag”

“Fugue in Ab”

“The Little Prince Suite” (9 short character pieces based on St. Exupery’s “The Little Prince”)

Other:

“Butterfly Fantasy” for flute and piano

“Capriccio” for clarinet and piano

“Fanfare for Brass Quartet.”

Unpublished works:

“March of the Russian Children”

“Variations on an Original Theme”

“Sacred Songs No.1 and No.2 for Baritone and Piano”

“Rainbow Man” for soprano vocal solo and piano

“Goblins” three movement work for woodwind quintet


by Lisa A. Wroble

The children’s magazine market is booming. New magazines are debuting every year. For several successful magazines, the Internet provides additional fun for children’s leisure time. Click through to some of these on-line versions of popular magazines to provide your child-patrons with educational entertainment.

DiscoveryKids (brought to you by the Discovery Channel) includes activities, a word puzzle, and links to the month’s current topic-such as dinosaurs. Children can play games, chose from sixty-three “adventures,” find when the month’s topic airs on the Discovery Channel, and explore the world.

www.discoverykids.com

Pack-O-Fun is a craft site designed for adults working with youth groups. Updated weekly, it includes instructions for an easy-to-make craft (often made from items found around the home) such as a recycled robot, plus an activity or skit suitable for medium to large groups of children. www.pack-o-fun.com

National Geographic includes highlights for kids, updated monthly, such as a “creature feature” on polar bears, in addition to a link to the children’s magazine National Geographic World. The Kids page includes catchy articles, quizzes, experiments (such as making a vortex in a bottle), short stories, and cool links to other kid-friendly sites. www.nationalgeographic.com/kids

Smithsonian magazine is another popular and educational magazine for adults that includes an on-line children’s version. “Kids Castle” provides a place for kids to post their own messages to each other, play games, read about history, the arts, sports, animals, science and more, in addition to linking to a featured “site of the day.” www.kidscastle.si.edu

For the preschoolers that visit your library, two sites provide fun but educational activities with familiar friends. They can play alone, or with an adult’s help.

Sesame Street Central includes games and links for “preschool,” “parents,” “kids,” and “baby & you.” www.ctw.org/home

Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood includes links to his house, the neighborhood of make-believe, for neighbors of all ages, a tour guide, and a song list. www.pbs.org/rogers

Kids don’t need to know they’re learning when they have fun with these magazine-related sites.
**School Librarian’s Corner**

Welcome back to the School Library Corner of Christian Library Journal.

by Debra Stombres

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**Technology in Schools:**

While I fancy myself a creative person, I am not very coordinated with free-handed drawing, painting, or anything requiring perception of proportions. I have been delighted to find help for my bulletin boards, newsletters, and bookmarks through the aid of clip art and card/poster making software! While I will not claim an exhaustive experience in this area, let me share my knowledge of several programs and how they have improved my creative expression in the library.

Mindscape Printmaster Gold version 8.0 is now available. Version 4.0 is offered free for those of you using HP printers. (http://www.hp.com/printing_ideas/index.html for more information.) Why buy banners when you can make them? I advertise National Library Week, Family Reading night, and others with attractive fonts and graphics. Use your color printer and laminate for a professional look. Need especially large letters? Blow each letter up to fill a page and then cut them out. Version 8.0 is also an easy way to create a clever web page with no html knowledge required.

Serif PagePlus 5.0 (6.0 will be out by the time you read this) is an inexpensive desk-top publishing tool. Create attractive newsletters with any of many templates by replacing text with your own. Or create your own Library News letterhead for a professional newsletter and keep your teachers informed of new materials, schedules, reading programs, etc. Also a good wwsiwyg for web sites.

American Greetings Print! Premium is another card/poster program with its own large clip art set. I have enjoyed the attractive clip art alphabets that accompany this easy to use program. Use colored card stock and make your own promotional book marks!

Parsons/Broderbund Calendar Creator Christian Edition is a great way to post your library calendar. Beautiful graphics and religious holidays make it easy to look like you spent hours on your work.

For even more clip art options I bought a Corel Gallery. Cut and paste from this program for clip art in almost any category you can dream up!

* All of the above programs require Windows compatible PCs.

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**Writer in the Spotlight:** Andrew Clements, author of 1999 Crown award-winning title Frindle.

Before choosing a career as a writer, Andrew Clements was a teacher in the public schools north of Chicago. For seven years he wrote poetry and songs as he taught 4th grade, then 8th grade, and finally high school English. He had been encouraged to write by his own high school English teacher and once discovered could never quite put away the talent.

He moved to New York singing and writing songs with his wife. Their career in music never took off, so he accepted a job with a childrens book publisher. For ten years he was Editorial Director at Picture Book Studio in New York. Now, he is a full time writer, and lives in Central...
Massachusetts with his wife and four children. While Mr. Clements feels it doesn’t come easily, he considers writing to be a great privilege.

**Software Highlight:**

_The Master Christian Library_. Version 6.0

**Ages Digital Library, 1998.** (Version 7.0 is out as of November 1999.) Requirements: Win 3.1 or higher, Macintosh System 7.0.1 or higher. $79.95. Available at 1-800-297-4307. (www.ageslibrary.com)

Increase your collection by over 400 rare and out-of-print titles with this unusually affordable CDRom. _The Master Christian Library_ uses the easy Acrobat Reader, 3.0. (included in the disk) to open any of the 400 titles. Several Bibles are included along with sermon collections, commentaries, _Foxes Book of Martyrs_, Bible reference books, and thirteen works by Jonathan Edwards. Also read works by Charles G. Finney, Martin Luther, Dwight L. Moody, C.H. Spurgeon and John Wesley. Many biographies and even some fiction round out this collection. All text is searchable with Boolean Logic.

**Logos Research Systems**

In January, 1992 a Microsoft programmer who had been using his spare time to write a program with which to read and search the Scriptures left Microsoft. Bob Pritchett followed his mother Jenni’s passion for Christian reference material when he joined his father Dale and good friend and programmer Kiernon Reiniger to found Logos Research Systems, Inc., and to market the first Logos Bible software package. Jenni is still known in library circles as the designer of one of the very first catalog card printing programs, _Librarian’s Helper._

Today Logos markets a large and sophisticated product line including entire libraries of Bible reference software designed around their _Logos Library System_. Other companies market a variety of books to be read on this platform. Logos sells over 1000 books compatible with this system, but the best value is to purchase the book collections.

Before taking a look at some of the programs currently available, I’d like to give you an overview of the _Logos Library System_ platform. This is free software that is installed the first time you purchase any book collection. LLS is a powerful platform for collecting, organizing and searching your personal electronic library. Included is a powerful search engine that will search any and all books that you designate. Books are cross-referenced and any time you add or unlock new books, they are placed in the same library collection even when purchased by other companies which use the Logos Library System as their platform. Both Nelson and Baker produce book collections for this system.

Because of the sophistication and complexity of this system, training videocassettes are available and Logos puts on training seminars at various locations around the country. Once this system is mastered, the Bible researcher can bookmark pages in individual books, set up study screens using favorite titles for quicker retrieval, and paste passages into any word processor.

System requirements for the Logos Research System are Windows 3.1 or higher, a 486 33 MHz or better, 12 Mg RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive.

_The Logos Bible Reference Series_. This library collection for the Logos Library System is available in three levels. The Standard Collection, listing for $129.95 includes five bibles such as NIV and NAS, _Eastons Bible Dictionary_, seven study tools and commentaries, as well as geography aids and devotional literature including _My Utmost for His Highest_, totaling nineteen books. The Intermediate Collection retails for $199.95 and includes a total of 30 titles, adding titles to the Standard Collection such as the _New Living Translation of the Bible_. The Deluxe Collection is $299.95 and features 42 titles adding books such as _Wiersbe's Expository Outlines_, and the _Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations_. If you purchase the Standard or Intermediate Collections, you can pay to have individual titles unlocked and added to your personal collection.

_The Scholars Library_. For the true bible scholar, Logos publishes the Deluxe Collection above, along with the _New Testament Greek Core Collection_ and the _Old Testament Hebrew Core Collection_ for a total of over $2000 worth of print material all in electronic format and listing for $599.95. From the Deluxe Collection you have a large selection of bibles including NIV, NAS, and the _New Living Bible_. Use the Greek and Hebrew dictionaries and lexicons to trace the true meanings behind the different translations. Language tools, teaching tools, commentaries, and maps

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**Web Sites of Interest**

_BookAdventure.com_ — For libraries not already offering a computerized reading program such as Accelerated Reader, check out this free site put up by Sylvan along with a host of reputable organizations. 3000 + tests on a very comprehensive reading list are available. Teachers or parents can sign up kids and then track their progress. Prizes are downloadable.

_FunBrain_ [www.funbrain.com] — Play games such as Math Baseball and Stay Afloat, a word game. These interactive games rival edutainment software. Proton Don teaches elements of the Periodic Table. There is something for everyone at this site.

_Christianity Online_ [www.christianityonline.com] — From the Christianity Today family of magazines comes an extensive site for Christian news, bulletin boards and links to other Christian sites. All 12 magazines are available online for free as well as a 7000 + link Christian site search engine.
make this invaluable to the bible scholar. A bonus in the Scholars Library are Alfred Rahlfs Septuagint with Morphology and Nesle/Aland 26th Edition Greek NT with Gramcord Morphology. This is an incredible Bible reference library providing easy searching, cross-referencing and printing at your fingertips!

Steve Greens Midi Hymnal: a complete tool kit for personal devotions and corporate worship. For the music department in your church or school, here is a collection of more than 3,000 traditional hymns with four-part midi files to be printed from your favorite music notation program. The Logos Library System is also included in order to view and search all the text of the hymns as well as the included Bible, and books such as 101 Hymn Stories, and The Spiritual Lives of Great Composers. List Price, $129.95.

Noah and the Ark and David and Goliath. For kids in your library, church or school, here are two fun Bible game/programs. Young children can have the story read to them and older children can click through the story themselves. List Prices, $29.95 each.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Revealed. An officially authorized CD-ROM exploring the original texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls -- with interviews, translations, and video clips -- web site. The Dead Sea Scrolls are one of the most important discoveries of the 20th century. This is a pleasant way to become familiar with the ancient manuscripts through the use of color photos of artifacts and people, historical videos and 3D animations, and interviews with leading scroll scholars. List Price, $59.95

Bible Clips: The complete church graphics resource kit. Besides beautiful vector graphics of bible characters, scenes and more, this kit includes Arts & Letters Draw, a powerful tool for manipulating clip art and for drawing your own. Vector graphics are better designed for manipulation than are bitmap graphics. These can be enlarged without ever losing their integrity. You can also ungroup them and take characters out of scenes, leaving the scenes intact. Anyone creating Christian bulletin boards, T-shirts, flannel graphs, or producing desktop publishing will enjoy this collection. List Price, $59.95.

For more information about the above products, and to see the entire product line visit www.logos.com.

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More Gold Medallion Winners, 2000

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Recent Books on Prayer

by Lydia E. Harris

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." (James 5:16 NIV)

Prayer is a powerful tool and of interest to many. Consequently, new books continue to be written on the subject. This bibliography covers some recent titles plus classics that encourage, teach, and motivate readers to pray. For additional books on prayer, check your church library, Christian bookstores, or the Internet.

Consider prayer books by E. M. Bounds, Andrew Murray, J. Oswald Sanders, Oswald Chambers, C. Peter Wagner, Dick Eastman, Richard Foster, and others.

Although reading a book on prayer may stimulate your prayer life, it is not a substitute for praying. May these books inspire both children and adults to grow in their relationship with God and to "pray without ceasing." (I Thessalonians 5:17 KJV)

Prayer Books for Children

1. Brooks, Sandra. I CAN PRAY TO GOD, illustrated by Gwen Connelly. Standard, 1989, 1997. ISBN 0-7847-0258-6. PAP, $1.99, 24 pages. This dear book with colorful illustrations teaches children they can do something just as important as grown-ups--pray. Children learn to pray using a five-finger prayer pattern. Each finger reminds them of one category of people to pray for. For example, the thumb, closest to the heart, prompts them to pray for family and friends they love. This prayer tool is easy for children to understand and remember.


Prayer Books for Parents and Families

1. Arkins, Anne and Gary Harrell. WATCHMEN ON THE WALLS: Praying Character Into Your Child. FamilyLife, 1995. ISBN 1-57229-031-5. HBB, $12.95, 106 pages. This excellent tool helps parents systematically pray for specific character traits to be built into their children's lives. Twelve traits with specific scriptures to pray include kindness, courage, servanthood, contentment, plus eight more.
Action steps to teach these traits to children are included. To order: 1-800-FL-Today.


4. Couser, Thomas. REAL MEN PRAY: Prayer Thoughts for Husbands and Fathers. Concordia, 1996. ISBN 0-570-04849-4. PAP, $13.99, 331 pages. Couser shares prayers and thoughts from his personal journal on topics relevant to men. Fifty-two weeks of prayers are included along with scripture, quotes, and reflective questions. He encourages men to take a few minutes a day to focus on God and begin their own journals.


6. Fuller, Cheri. WHEN MOTHERS PRAY: Forty Devotions to Build, Strengthen, and Bond. Multnomah, 1999. ISBN 1-57673-412-9. PAP, $12.99, 201 pages. These devotions are designed to draw families closer to each other and God. They include scripture, stories, prayers, quotes, discussion questions suitable for different-age children, and specific ways to apply the teaching. This valuable book will bless and strengthen families.


10. Osborne, Rick. TEACHING YOUR CHILD HOW TO PRAY. Moody, 1997. ISBN 080248489-1. PAP, $9.99, 221 pages. Osborne explains the importance of laying a foundation of prayer and guides parents step-by-step in teaching their children to pray. Written in three sections, part one shows parents how to prepare to teach their children to pray. Part two covers the principles and approaches to teaching prayer, and part three provides practical hands-on suggestions to complete the task. A valuable book for parents.

11. THE POWER OF FAMILY PRAYER. National Day of Prayer Task Force. ISBN 1-56179-659-X. PAP, $4.00, 52 pages. This concise booklet helps families pray together all year, not just on the National Day of Prayer. With testimonies of answered prayers, scriptures, family-night activities, and more, this guide emphasizes the privilege and power of family prayer.

12. Wooden, Keith. TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY. Zondervan, 1992. ISBN 0-310-54481-5. PAP, $10.99, 109 pages. Written from the viewpoint of a pastor and father, this resource offers practical guidance rather than specific formulas for teaching children to pray. It is not a how-to book but rather stresses the importance of parents modeling their faith. Topics include prayer patterns, prayer etiquette, letting children touch their world through prayer, and more.

Prayer Books for Adults


4. Christenson, Evelyn. A TIME TO PRAY GOD’S WAY. Harvest House, 1996. ISBN 1-56507-300-2. PAP, $10.99, 254 pages. Changing the world through evangelistic prayers is the topic of this inspiring book. The method taught is prayer triplets: three Christians praying together weekly, each praying for the salvation of three others. The book presents an effective, simple plan and can be used with A STUDY GUIDE FOR EVANGELISM PRAYING.


7. Dean, Jennifer Kennedy. **POWER PRAYING: Prayer That Produces Results.** WinePress, 1997. ISBN 1-883893-61-5. PAP, $9.00, 110 pages. Based on 1 John 5:14-15, Dean believes understanding God’s will is the cornerstone of power praying. She provides guidance to find God’s will and pray with power. Sample prayers are included.


10. Fryar, June L. **ARMED AND DANGEROUS: Praying with Boldness.** Concordia, 1997. ISBN 0-570-04997-0. PAP, $10.99, 176 pages. This quick read is not deeply theological but covers powerful, scripturally-based concepts of prayer. Fryar emphasizes the reality of spiritual warfare and that Christians, armed with God’s Word and prayer, are dangerous to forces of the devil. Over forty pages of appendices strengthen the book and include suggestions for teaching children to pray, planning a prayer retreat, and more.


14. Haan, Cornell. compiler. **THE LIGHTHOUSE MOVEMENT.** Multnomah, 1999. ISBN 1557673-633-4. PAP, $4.99, 125 pages. This exciting movement aims to mobilize Christians to pray for every person in America by year-end 2000. The vision is to have lighthouses (homes) in every neighborhood where members pray for, care for, and share the gospel with their neighbors. The inspiring handbook compiles the writings of thirty-five Christians and offers help and encouragement to join the movement. A must read for those who long for spiritual awakening in our nation.

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18. Kopp, David, Heather Harpham Kopp, and Larry Wilson, editors. **PRAYING FOR THE WORLD’S 365 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE.** Harvest House, 1999. ISBN 0-7369-0047-0. PAP, $12.99, 379 pages. A unique guide with specific ideas to pray effectively for 365 influential people around the world. Included are authors, musicians, leaders, politicians, and other professionals such as Hillary Clinton, Bill Gates, Kay Arthur, Fred Rogers, Jack Evankind, and hundreds more. This resource recommends five minutes of prayer a day to change the world.

shares how his life and ministry exploded with power after God brought him a prayer partner. For example, his church prayer team grew from one to 120. The book covers fundamentals of prayer, how to become a prayer partner, discussion questions for each chapter, and more. Practical appendices are included.


22. Mueller, George. ANSWERS TO PRAYER. Moody, 1984. ISBN 0-8024-0565-7. PAP, $4.99, 126 pages. Mueller, who founded and operated orphanages in 19th-century England, believed in the power of prayer and relied on God to provide the orphanages’ daily needs. He details the continual provision and answered prayer as he and his staff asked according to God’s will. This classic inspires reliance on God and demonstrates his faithfulness.


26. Rinker, Rosalind. PRAYER: CONVERSING WITH GOD. Zondervan, 1987. ISBN 0-310-32171-9. PAP, $9.99, 120 pages. When Rinker discovered the focus of prayer should be on God and not the impression made on others, she no longer was afraid to pray aloud. A classic study on conversational prayer, it teaches praying back and forth on one subject at a time in group intercession. Helpful appendices for daily quiet time and personal worship are included. This simple, powerful method revolutionizes prayer lives.


Bible Studies on Prayer


2. Gilliland, Glaphre. TALKING WITH GOD. Zondervan, 1985. ISBN 0-310-45301-1. PAP, $6.99, 153 pages. Designed to help readers establish consistent and meaningful prayer lives, this practical study is suitable for individuals or groups. Twelve lessons include insights, scriptures, and questions on different aspects of prayer. The book also contains notes for group leaders. Additional materials on prayer are available through Gilliland’s ministry called Prayerlife. To order: (405) 789-5304.

3. Heald, Cynthia. BECOMING A WOMAN OF PRAYER. NavPress, 1996. ISBN 0-89109-954-9. PAP, $7.00, 101 pages. This 11-week Bible-based study helps women respond to God and learn to pray biblically. Lessons include Bible-study questions, quotes from devotional writers, author reflections, prayer, and memory verses. Valuable for both personal and group use for those desiring deeper prayer lives.


Lydia E. Harris, M.A., is a freelance writer involved in prayer ministry in her church, community, and Moms In Touch International. She writes for numerous publications including THE STANDARD, CELEBRATE LIFE, AND REJOICE! and lives in Seattle, Washington.
Recently I reread several of the novels in Madeleine L’Engle’s anthology *Trailing Clouds of Glory: Spiritual Values in Children’s Books* to discern connections between my two collections of prayer-poems for teenage girls and books that meet the spiritual needs of young adolescents. I was also interested to see how spiritual works for young people fit within the context of Christian school libraries. The reason I chose *Trailing Clouds of Glory* is because the stories included in the anthology reflect a common theme voiced by L’Engle when she says, “Only as we keep in touch with the child within our very grown-up body can we keep open enough to recognize God who is Love itself, as that Love is revealed in story.”

For example, one of the novels in L’Engle’s anthology is *Emily of New Moon* by Lucy M. Montgomery. After the young girl’s dying father says to her, “You mustn’t be afraid of anything, Emily. Death isn’t terrible. The universe is full of love—and spring comes everywhere,” the author explains that, “Emily didn’t know exactly what Father meant. But all at once she found that she wasn’t afraid any longer—and the bitterness had gone out of her sorrow, and the unbearable pain out of her heart. She felt as if love was all about her and around her, breathed out from some great, invisible, hovering Tenderness.”

Today, most school librarians must also be media specialists who grapple on a daily basis with issues such as: the explosion of information technology; the tension between building a library’s book collection and creating a multi-media center that will position the library as the core resource of the school; the challenge of trying to build lifelong readers out of students who may not have found time to read a book for pleasure since the fourth grade; and finally, the search for religious books that are both spiritual and modern.

We succeed in our search when we find, in either poetry or prose, books that communicate to young people essential Christian values such as honesty, self-respect, responsibility for others, courage, compassion, and faith in God. These are values that teenagers must learn and feel to their very core to retain a sense of their own self and their relationship to God—a relationship, like Emily’s in *Emily Of New Moon*, that enables them to navigate successfully life’s journey.

My first book, *Prayers On My Pillow: Inspiration for Girls on the Threshold of Change*, started as an effort to communicate with my daughters Julia (then twelve) and Emily (eight). Beginning in October of 1995 and continuing on a daily basis for the next two years, I wrote at least one prayer-poem every night. I first began writing them because Julia was beginning to distance herself from me. The prayers, written in the first person, from her point of view, were designed to bridge the gulf that was developing between us as she confronted the confusion, changes, and pressures of growing up, and I confronted this accelerated pace of life that leaves parents with little time for heart-felt conversations with our children. The prayers were an indirect way for me to let her know I understood how she was feeling and what she was going through.

I did not write these intimate and extremely specific expressions of feelings and faith in God so that they would be shared with a wider audience, which is, perhaps, why they came to be published. I suppose this should not have surprised me. What is most real and personal in our lives is also what is most universal in the lives of others. Librarians—who have chosen a career which has a goal of building book collections for children based on this premise—know this well.

Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, Colby Rodowsky’s *What About Me?*, Jean Craighead George’s *Julie of the Wolves*, Little Women, *Winnie The Pooh*, and *The Little Prince*, to mention just a few in the anthology, all meet our urgent and compelling need for understanding of the Divine. L’Engle points out that the message these books share is that: “in order to live life to one’s fullest potential, one must grow up and remain a child.” That message also happens to be the theme of the very first prayer I ever wrote for Julia dated October 25, 1995 which states:

*I think I’m afraid to grow up, God.*

*For I see how much pain there can be*

*I want to stay young and protected*
I’m scared that I’ll lose what is me.
I know in my life there’s no choice, God.
That each day that goes by is a change.
So I pray that my soul grows with You

Then my world as I grow won’t be strange.

Contemporary young adult stories such as Paul Fleischman’s *Whirligig*, Rob Thomas’ *Monster*, John Marsden’s *Slave Day*, John Marsden’s *Tomorrow, When the War Began* and Phyllis Reynolds Naylor’s *Sang Spell* also express in concrete and credible terms the yearning of the adolescent to know God. In *Whirligig*, a teenage girl, Alexandra, has discovered the whirligig left in Maine and describes its magic to her skeptical friend, Steph. “You can’t see the wind, but look what it can do. It’s invisible but powerful. Like thoughts. One brings a bunch of junk to life. The other brings desires to life. And it’s better if you broadcast your thoughts outside….It symbolizes all unseen forces. It’s like electricity—an invisible power that people didn’t know existed for centuries. If you learn to use thoughts, you can do all kinds of things.” When I read this passage, I can not help but think of John 3:5 when Jesus, explaining to Nicodemus the concept of being born again, uses wind as an analogy, saying, “Only God’s Spirit gives new life. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going.”

Like Paul Fleischman, it is crucial to me that my prayer-poems recognize and respect the interior lives of adolescent girls or anyone who has ever been an adolescent girl. Here is a single verse of a prayer that expresses the difficulty of maintaining one’s faith in God, particularly during young adolescence when identity can be ephemeral at best:

Today I woke no little girl
But someone not yet here
As if I’d lost the faith to grow
In God instead of fear.

Many of us lose the faith to “grow in God instead of fear” as we mature. We no longer hear the inner voice of faith that was so clear and joyous when we were children. Often our loss of trust in the Lord starts to happen when we are around ten. During the past two and a half years of reading thousands of emails sent to my web site, www.girlprayers.com, I have found that young people may stand before us as cynical and uncaring but, in reality, they are attempting to make meaning out of life. They are searching to know God. In what has become an online youth ministry, I respond with personalized prayers to provide support and solace for girls and their families as they weather the stormy times that inevitably occur in all relationships.

Like prayer, stories about adolescent spirituality also provide support and solace. Reading these stories can be a salvation for teenagers from troubled homes or with troubled lives, for they communicate messages of compassion and courage that invite personalization and ownership on the part of the reader. Taking ownership of these stories moves God from some abstract concept on the outskirts of a young person’s life into their very core. The process of reading spiritual literature also opens up for teens new ways of thinking about themselves and their relationships with others. The process often breaks down their self-imposed isolation and relaxes the frequently rigid standards by which teenagers judge themselves and their peers. However, with the disintegration of family structures and the frantic pace of modern life, getting young people to take the time to read and then reflect on what they read is extremely difficult. Few parents bother to read aloud to their children once their children learn to read. As children get older and their free time is taken up with sports, extra curricular activities, homework, the Internet, and, of course, television, reading for pleasure simply disappears off the radar screen for all but the most avid readers.

As a result, reading is hard for them. Internet communication may have enabled them to learn basic typing skills at an early age, but how many long descriptive passages have today’s adolescents been motivated to master while browsing through virtual shopping malls and teen webzines? Holding their attention long enough to enable them to first read and then integrate the spiritual content of a book or poem is daunting. And yet, it is through solitude that we are able to learn to know God and take measure of our soul. Both reading and prayer invite solitude, a state of mind experienced all too seldom by our young people today.

If we decide to take on the challenge of encouraging adolescents to seek out books that meet their spiritual needs, we must use whatever tools we have at our disposal. I believe that indirect methods are frequently the most effective. The “grapevine,” for example, often works like a charm. Get a couple of seventh grade avid readers hooked on a book like *Monster* with its unconventional scripted format and morally intriguing open-ended finale, and good “word of mouth” among peers makes it a popular choice even among the most reticent of readers. “Word of mouth” was certainly the reason *Prayers On My Pillow* became successful. Girls who received the book for Christmas 1998, and the mothers who
bought it for them told their friends about it so that by the spring of 1999 a grass roots movement had given it life.

I am convinced that, if we can choose stories that teach adolescents essential Christian values in ways they can relate to and embrace we can better communicate our values to adolescents; we can bridge spirituality and technology; we can capture and hold the attention of our students, our readers; and we can continue to guide young people on their search to know -- and love -- God.

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D.C. and Lorraine Bentley, Library Media Specialist at St. Andrews School for their generosity, wisdom and insight into adolescent spirituality.


I would like to acknowledge and thank Ann Whittington and Nancy McKinley, librarians of the Blessed Sacrament School in Washington,
With our ever-increasing understanding of our universe comes a desire to relate the picture presented by science to that provided by our faith. We listen intently as scientists - particularly those involved in physics, astronomy, and cosmology - pronounce upon matters of science and theology.

There can be a tendency to regard all scientific pundits as either atheists (Stephen Hawking, Carl Sagan, Frank Tipler) or agnostics (Paul Davies). But the New York Times reported a few years ago that 40% of American scientists believe in a personal God to whom they pray. Physicist Freeman Dyson says "Many first-rate scientists are Christians, Moslems, Buddhists or Jews, many are Marxists, many are militant atheists, many are like me, loosely attached to Christian beliefs by birth and habit but not committed to any particular dogma." In short, scientists reflect the composition of society at large.

As we seek to penetrate the secrets of our wonderful, complex, and mysterious universe, it behooves us to listen to the voices of scientists, particularly those who share our Christian faith. One such is John Polkinghorne, who has combined the twin vocations of mathematical physicist and theologian.

Polkinghorne's active career was spent as a particle physicist at Cambridge University, delving into the structure of the atom. There, he says, "I did not make any important discovery myself but I had a ringside seat during a period in which many very remarkable and exciting discoveries were being made." In 1979 he resigned his professorship in Mathematical Physics to pursue holy orders. He was ordained as a priest in the Anglican Church in 1982, and served in parish ministry for five years before returning to Cambridge as President of Queen's College. He is currently canon theologian at Liverpool Cathedral, a founding member of the Society of Ordained Scientists, and the only ordained Fellow of the Royal Society. He was knighted (KBE) in 1997.

Polkinghorne's first book of reflections on science and Christianity, The Way the World Is, was published in 1983, shortly after his ordination. He wrote, he says, to give a coherent account of his Christian belief to his physics colleagues - "for a number, the basic question was not why I was seeking ordination but why I was a Christian at all."

For Polkinghorne (as for many Christians working at the juncture of science and theology), science and faith are not adversaries but complementary methods of exploration on a common quest. "Religion is our encounter with divine reality, just as science is our encounter with physical reality." Polkinghorne has "...a desire to understand the rich and complex world in which we live and to seek the truth about it. In my view, the insights of science and the insights of religion are both essential to that task." But not merely any religion - "...no attempt at such an endeavor could begin to be adequate which did not address the questions posed by the mysterious and commanding figure of Jesus Christ..."

True, some scientists do see faith as incompatible with science. Others seek to equate scientific discoveries with eastern religions. Still others are content with a deistic, mechanical, hands-off god who doesn't interfere. But Polkinghorne sees no reason why thinking Christians cannot hold their faith with integrity: "Christians do not have to close their minds, nor are they faced with the dilemma of having to choose between ancient faith and modern knowledge. They can hold both together."
For Polkinghorne, it is God who makes the universe intelligible. He asks, "Is the true key to the way the world is to be found in the possession of a wandering carpenter in a peripheral province of the Roman Empire, far away and long ago?" and answers his own question, "The Christian God is not a detached if compassionate beholder of the sufferings of the world, he is a participant in them. It is the crucified God whom we worship."

Polkinghorne is concerned that the core of Christian faith not be watered down in concession to science, or a 'false harmony' created between them: "...I do not find that a trinitarian and incarnational theology needs to be abandoned in favour of a toned-down theology of a Cosmic Mind and an inspired teacher, alleged to be more accessible to the modern mind." There are limits to Christian orthodoxy, and Polkinghorne stands squarely in the historical Christian faith as expressed in the Nicene Creed.

Our society accuses Christians of having abandoned intellectual integrity to embrace blind faith. Polkinghorne disagrees. His faith is not based on science, but on his "encounter with God in Christ, mediated through the Church, the sacraments, and... the reading of scripture. The discussion of science-and-religion is a valuable but second order task..."

How, exactly, does God interact with his creation? How does he operate in the world of the atom and quantum mechanics? In the exercise of the will? How does he allow humanity to be human? How does he allow the universe to operate without constant tinkering? How can he be both immanent and transcendent, eternal and involved in time? Why is there evil?

It is questions such as these that Polkinghorne discusses in the heart of his writings, in the trilogy composed of One World, Science and Creation, and Science and Providence.

His answers may not always be expected, and are never simplistic, because, "the world is complex, full of surprises, and understanding it involves notions a good deal more subtle than we could possibly have foreseen." They are not final answers, and Polkinghorne is comfortable with gaps in our understanding, "it is important to recognize that things can be true, and manifest themselves as true, without our necessarily being in possession of a theoretical understanding of them." Such mysteries as the incarnation and the crucifixion may not be possible with our limited human understanding.

"In the rational beauty and rational transparency of the physical world we see the threads of a deeper meaning woven into the empirical tapestry of science. Those physicists, like Stephen Hawking, who, in speaking of the mathematical order of the physical world like to refer to reading the Mind of God, are in my opinion speaking better than perhaps they know, though there remains much more to the divine mind than physics will ever disclose."

Such a statement stands in contrast to those of Paul Davies, who believes that "science offers a surer path to God than religion," or Stephen Hawking, whose quest to understand why the universe is the way it is leads him to ask, "What place then, for a Creator?" Or even, Polkinghorne would add, those who use the Bible as a science textbook.

But God, Polkinghorne asserts, is not an object to be subjected to scientific experiment. "Every encounter with divine reality has the character of gracious gift and it partakes of the uniqueness inherent in any personal meeting."

Polkinghorne has, he says, "always stood within the community of the Christian faith and Christianity has always been central to my life," and acknowledges the "unique saving action of God in Christ." While he doesn't believe that faith can be proved - in a "knockdown final demonstration" - it can provide a coherent and rational view of the way the world is. He notes that the vital question for faith is not whether it is comforting or altruistic, but whether it is true. For Polkinghorne, the answer is clearly "yes".

Polkinghorne is not content to look merely at the world, at the planet inhabited by humanity. His vision extends further. "If there is a purpose in the universe (as I believe there is), it is perhaps not exhausted by what happens in the solar system." There is a grand and great universe out there, and all of it matters to God.

Where does the purpose and future of the universe lie? - in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection is a focal point for Polkinghorne - it is the defining action of God.

In a review of Polkinghorne's recent book Beyond Science in the prestigious journal Nature, physicist David Merman complained, "...an eloquent discussion of how it may all
end... comes down from these lofty heights with a resounding thud for the non-Christian reader with a... declaration of faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Provincial Christian mythology is a blemish on so grand a theological vision."

But Merman misses the point. For Polkinghorne - and all Christians - it is the Resurrection that gives hope and meaning to the universe, that tears it away from the universe of atheist Steven Weinberg who wrote, "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless."

The Resurrection is not 'provincial mythology', but the crowning expression of God's faithfulness and promise to his creatures. The Resurrection provides the ultimate hope for the universe.

Despite their deceptively short lengths, John Polkinghorne's books are not 'light reads'; for those unacquainted with contemporary physics and cosmology, they can be daunting. They require thought and contemplation. The most accessible for the non-scientist are *Quarks, Chaos and Christianity*, which provides an overview of his thoughts, *The Way The World Is, Science and Providence*, and *Serious Talk. The Faith of a Physicist* is an exposition centered around the Nicene Creed. *Reason and Reality* explores other areas in science and theology, such as the role of the Bible and the nature of the Fall. *Searching for Truth* is a series of Lenten meditations. *Belief in God in an Age of Science* also provides a reasonably accessible overview. *Scientists as Theologians* compares and contrasts his views with two other prominent scientist theologians, Ian Barbour and Arthur Peacocke.

Not everyone will agree with all of the positions Polkinghorne takes. Adherents of a young age for the universe, for example, will find little sympathy with Polkinghorne, who accepts standard models of cosmology and believes in a "fully gifted universe" - that is, a creation gifted by God with the potential to grow and develop. He finds little interest in the question of origins as temporal beginnings (how did things begin?) but much in the deeper ontological question "why is there anything at all?". "God," he says, "is the God of all times and all places." He wonders about God's foreknowledge of the future. He rejects both a strictly literal interpretation of the Bible as well as a completely allegorical viewpoint. He writes from a fully Anglican perspective. But whether or not one is in agreement with everything he says, he presents a vision of the interaction of God and the cosmos beyond the ordinary. The Christian Gospel has a unique duality - the heart of the Gospel message is simple enough to be understood by a child, yet it is complex enough to engage the best theological and scientific minds in a search for deep understanding of the cosmic order.

Throughout his writings, Polkinghorne's wonder at the intricacies and beauties of creation shines through. Not for him a creation in ruins, but a creation that yet shows the wonder and glory of God, that matters to God, and will be redeemed by Him.

I mentioned once to an agnostic colleague - skeptical of most tenets of Christianity - that I had heard John Polkinghorne speak at Liverpool Cathedral, and when I had explained who Polkinghorne was, my colleague said, "I could listen to somebody like that."

I think such a comment would please John Polkinghorne.

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Stephanie Lavenia Swinnea - Writer of a Tale Worth Telling
by Mary Jarvis

A n afternoon outing with her children was the catalyst for change that led Stephanie Swinnea into a five-year odyssey of study and research which resulted in the writing of a screenplay and the book, I Patrick a Sinner: A Tale Worth Telling.

A few years ago, Swinnea wanted her four children to learn about their Irish heritage. She took them to the North Texas Irish Festival in Dallas, Texas, where they were captivated by the Irish music, stories, art, and dancing. She engaged festival participants in questions and conversation. To her surprise, the following year she and her children were invited to be performers in the children’s area. They all sing and play instruments, so Irish tunes and tales were added to their repertoire.

In looking for stories to tell about St. Patrick, she discovered the real Patrick. She says, "I thought he was more myth than man; then I discovered the historic figure. I read several translations and commentaries on his writings." Swinnea's dark brown eyes glow as she relates, "Reading his Confession set a fire in my soul. I was in awe of this man who so desperately wanted to live his life in imitation of Christ. I had always been unaware of his true greatness. His own words gave me a picture of who he really was. He wrote his Confession so that others would know it was God working in his life that created his ministry to the Irish."

Patrick, writing near the end of his life, begins his Confession, "I Patrick, a sinner..." from which Swinnea derives the title of the book. Patrick writes, "I must teach from the rule of faith of the Trinity, without fear of danger to make known the gift of God and eternal comfort, to promulgate the name of God everywhere fearlessly and faithfully, so as to leave after my death a legacy to my brothers and my children whom I have baptized, so many thousands of people... May it never happen... that I should ever lose his people which he has gathered in the ends of the earth. If I have achieved any small success, it was the gift of God."

What began as an exercise to learn Irish folklore became a compelling journey into the history and culture of the Emerald Isle and its people. Fifth century Ireland was a dark and barbaric time of black Druid religious practices and brutal warring kingdoms.

Patricus Magonus Sucatus was born to a British noble family during the waning years of the Roman Empire when Britain was still nominally under Roman rule. As a young boy of fifteen he was captured by Irish raiders while staying at the family villa on the Irish Sea and taken to Ireland as a slave. On the voyage to Ireland and after arriving, he endured cruel mistreatment.

Gathering material from Patrick’s Confession and other historical documents, Swinnea has woven together a novel that puts the reader in the middle of Patrick’s trials and the dark ages. Patrick, alone without family or friends, turned to the one true Friend and found solace in the midst of deprivation and loneliness. According to Swinnea’s novel, the "Holy Boy" won the respect and hearing of his masters by his life and his ability to spin tales. After six years of slavery, Patrick escaped and journeyed home to Britain. But God was not finished with the young man and called him to go back to Ireland to preach the Gospel. He became a priest and ultimately won permission to return to Ireland.

The slave turned servant of God lived to become bishop of numerous churches in Ireland. Pagans were transformed to faithful believers and martyrs of Christ. Known as "Patrick, shepherd of God’s people in Ireland," he has stood through the centuries as one who brought light to the Irish during the darkest of times.

This novel, though earthy and sometimes violent, grips the reader with its message of God's powerful transformation and working in the lives of men and women. Swinnea states that "Patrick was an uncultured country evangelist, a rugged individualist. His was the universal message, ‘God loves you.’" She says, "I hope I have succeeded in bringing to my readers, not a true biography, impossible with the limited facts available, but rather the true character of Patrick, with all his faults and failings, strengths and successes, and his heart big enough for all Ireland. He was a flesh and blood man, humbled by friends and foes alike, a man who faced death at least a dozen times, but who loved his God and the Irish people more than his own life. His is a story of a common man facing uncommon and insurmountable odds and overcoming them with unconquerable faith."

Before writing the novel Swinnea wrote a screen play about Patrick, A Tale Worth Telling, which has been picked up by a California motion picture company. She says, "I wrote a screenplay because a movie is the only book a lot of people read."

How does a mother home-schooling four children sit down and write both a screen play and a historical novel? A gifted storyteller and musician by profession, after beginning her research on Patrick, she joined a screen writing group and each week as part of the discipline of the group, she wrote twenty pages in odd moments and late at night to be critiqued by the group. As she continued her research, the book grew from that effort. Even the design for the cover of the book was created by Swinnea. Researching the symbols and Irish art of Patrick’s day, she created a design for the cover. Presenting the design to an artist as an idea for the cover, she was told that she had already created it.

At first glance, this tall soft-spoken woman gives little hint of the talent and creativity she possesses. But as story and song begin to flow from her, one realizes this is someone touched in a special way by God’s spirit and gifts. She, like Patrick, has been faithful in using the gifts God has given. We hope we will read more from her pen.

Mary Jarvis is a retired teacher, writer, and editor. She and her husband Mike live in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, on a ranch. She is currently working on a novel, several articles, and poetry.
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Imagine digging a simple ditch and finding the past. To every child who hopes to find an arrowhead or even dinosaur bones, this story is a Civil War soldier, the reader is drawn into the natural and warm portraits and carried back in time.

Although the book is fictional, the Wisconsin setting was inspired, the author said, by an archaeologist who claimed Wisconsin was once covered by a glacier during the Ice Age. There is no mention of dates. Any hint of evolutionary content would be extremely subtle. Who once lived where I now stand? The author uses graceful prose to address this thought-provoking message.

Joanne M. Haffly
Writer/Homeschool Parent
Gig Harbor, Washington

REMEDIES

Reluctant readers (RR) abound. They come in all different shapes and sizes, ages and genders, abilities and desires. Enticing RRs to discover new worlds in books may be challenging, even frustrating, but it is always rewarding.

The other day I met a boy named Seth. A bright, inquisitive youngster more interested in throwing the football than reading about someone else doing so, he had all the symptoms of a RR. Head down, pawing through books quickly, immediately discarding those that looked “too long” or “too boring.” Seth’s personality cried out for a challenge. After thinking of several options for series books, I gathered my bounty and set it out for him to review. His gaze lingered over one book, so I set out to hook him. Picking up the book, I invited him to sit down with me to read the first few pages together. After completing those pages, I posed several questions to him about how he thought the book would end.

As a typical RR, Seth never answered, but I knew I had him. The starry-eyed stare told me so. Smiling, I closed the book and started to put it away. Before the book was out of his reach, Seth, Mr. RR himself, grabbed the book, shyly asking if he could keep it and “maybe see what happens.”

The business of books doesn’t stop at the publishing end. Rather it begins the biggest challenge of all, encouraging RRs and all readers to open the pages and immerse themselves in the story held within. With a little prodding on our part, we can introduce our RRs to a new experience, that of actually enjoying the reading adventure. As book professionals, it is our job to be knowledgeable of the markets, paying close attention to the style and tone of each writer. This information can be helpful in directing the search of RRs.

While Goosebumps and Harry Potter are popular in the secular markets, it is our responsibility to know why they are popular. After reading a few of the books, I can see the attraction. The books, filled with humor and engaging language, entice the reader with round characters and realistic dialogue. However, the Christian market has as much to offer. Bill Myers and Sigmund Brouwer are just as skilled at developing interesting stories, sprinkled with humor and well-developed characters as their counterparts in the secular market. Myers’ Wally McDoogle books never fail to elicit gaggles of giggles from even the most diehard RRs. The series, closing in on twenty-plus books, gives all readers the excitement of looking forward to Wally’s newest adventure.

Reluctant readers are everywhere. Unfortunately, video games and movies are cutting into the time once reserved for reading in our society. However, with a bit of work on our part, we can take the most RR and turn him into an enthusiastic reader. So open the page with your RR and let the adventure begin!


E. Wisconsin--Antiquities--Fiction; Archaeology--Fiction. unp. Gr. 1—3.

PS—Gr. 1.


E. Bears--Fiction; Valentine’s Day--Fiction. 28 p.

Little Bear is just too young to make a proper Valentine’s surprise for his family when they awake for their Valentine’s party after their long winter’s nap. His paws can’t control the scissors. He’s not strong enough to squeeze the glue. So how can he compete with his siblings’ pink Valentines with lace? Over the long winter’s sleep Little Bear dreams up an answer. As each Bear child presents their Valentine with a riddle to their parents, Little Bear comes up with a surprise riddle of his own.

A Word from the Editor: Eileen Zygarlicke
"What is warm and soft
And you don’t wrap it up;
You wrap it around,
And it’s good for any time of the year.
Not just on Valentine’s Day."

Then Little Bear answers his own riddle with a Little Bear hug for each member of his family. Lively illustrations by Elaine Garvin bring the characters in the story to life. *Little Bear’s Surprise* is the second in a series of Easy to Read Little Bear books written by Kathleen Allan-Meyer.


E. Fairy tales. unp. K—Gr. 3.

Using an American girl of the early 1920s, Jerry Pinkney masterfully illustrates and retells the classic fairy tale of Hans Christian Anderson, *The Little Match Girl*.

It is New Year’s Eve on the city streets. A poor little girl, with her tray of matches and basket of artificial flowers to sell, wanders unnoticed by the elegantly dressed ladies and the handsome gentlemen with warm scarves, muffs, and wide-brim hats. She feels the cold severely as she loses her too-large slippers. The feeling of cold increases as snowflakes fall over the little girl’s bare hands and feet, so she seeks a corner protected from the wind. Her bleak life is a glaring contrast to the warmth and comfort of the visions seen in the warm glow of each match she lights. First she sees a warm stove, followed by a marvelous feast, shining Christmas tree, and last of all her loving grandmother. As she strikes all her remaining artificial flowers to sell, wanders unnoticed by the elegantly dressed ladies and the handsome gentlemen with warm scarves, muffs, and wide-brim hats. She feels the cold severely as she loses her too-large slippers.

The text is short but amply to communicate the story as it blends with the vibrant illustrations that poignantly show the invisibility of the poor among the prosperous. Hopefully this glimpse will give each reader eyes to see this contrast as well.

An excellent resource for discussion, this book teaches compassion and sharing.


E. Folklore. unp. K—Gr. 3.

Nelly and her Aunt Pitty Patty go to the local market, where they purchase a "fine fat piggy" and bring it back home. Unfortunately, when they arrive at the front gate the pig will not go through it. Nelly goes to get help, asking a dog, a stick, fire, water, an ox, a butcher, a rope, a cat, and a cow all to no avail. Finally she seeks out Farmer Brown who gives her hay to bribe the cow, who gives milk to bribe the cat, who begins to chase the rat, and so on. The cumulative tale is set in motion until the dog bites the pig and the pig goes through the front gate. Then Aunt Pitty Patty, Farmer Brown, and Nelly all sit down to dinner.

Jim Aylesworth’s fresh retelling of *Aunt Pitty Patty’s Piggy* is both funny and delightful. Using rhythm, rhyme, and colloquial language, the story reads like poetry, while its repetitive nature makes it a great read-aloud for audience participation.

Award-winning illustrator Barbara McClintock uses pencil and watercolor to illustrate nineteenth-century life. The comic illustrations are a great counterpart to the inherent humor found in this favorite folktale.

*Kerri Cunningham
Librarian
Camano Island, Washington*


E. Family life—Fiction; Bears—Fiction. 48 p. Gr. 1—3.

In Barbara Baker’s *One Saturday Afternoon*, the author shows a bear family, each member trying to enjoy a Saturday. Mama, who needs a moment alone, wants to take a walk. Lily, the oldest, cleverly reads her book while supervising her brother and sisters at the same time. No one listens to Rose, Daisy draws pictures, and Jack scribbles on the walls and resists taking his nap. Papa can’t seem to keep his bread and jam from disappearing.

Kate Duke’s watercolor illustrations depicts each bear’s own unique identity, while Barbara Baker does a wonderful job depicting real life through this family of bears. Children will be able to relate to at least one of the characters in the story. Each member of the bear family faces some kind of simple crisis that is realistic for a large family. This story would lend itself to opening discussions with children about their own family.

*Patricia Youmans
Retired Librarian
Monmouth, Oregon*


E. Creation; Color—Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 29 p. PS–K.

Use of lively adjectives by Leroy Blankenship, clearly defined and colorful illustrations by Peggy Tagel, and a board-book format by the publisher combine to make *Somebody Bigger Than I* a popular choice for the pre-school and kindergarten child. Don’t underestimate the power of the simple verses which asks the question, “Who put the colors in creation?” Each page presents another color, related to objects to keep little eyes and ears busy finding objects, naming colors, and listening for those ear-catching “big” words which fascinate little people like “infinite,” “glistening,” “juggles,” and “pondering.” Leroy Blankenship has not stinted on colorful vocabulary to drive home his point. “Now you might be wondering, seriously pondering on who this somebody is. It’s really no bother. It’s my heavenly Father. These miracles are His.”

*Judy Driscoll
Retired Teacher
Poulsbo, Washington*


E. Cats—Fiction; Animals—Fiction. unp. Gr. 1—3.

God’s love and care is seen in *The Throwaway Cat* by Steven and Judy Brantley. Pearl, a
about the players who are different, Danny, member of the Wolves team, has a bad attitude. The Bombers, the best team, in the finals. Travis, a skater, plays on the hockey team as a goalie, wearing moccasins instead of shoes as a crippled leg and foot, plays on the hockey team as a goalie, wearing moccasins instead of shoes. The author, William Roy Brownridge, himself was the moccasin goalie playing hockey despite his spina bifida and clubfeet. This book contains positive messages regarding handicaps, teamwork, and sharing victory. The illustrations by Brownridge are impressionistic oil paintings, which lack sharp lines and definition. This is an unusual choice for a picture book, due to the need to distance oneself from impressionistic art in order to appreciate it. However, the illustrations are colorful, action-packed, and appropriate.

Karla J. Kessell
Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College
Portland, Oregon

**Gingerbread Baby**

E. Gingerbread—Fiction; Baking—Fiction. PS—Gr. 3.

Mattie and her mom are baking a gingerbread boy. Even though the baking directions clearly state “do not peek,” Mattie cannot resist taking a peek into the oven. When Matti opens the oven door, a Gingerbread baby hops out. The story is similar to the Gingerbread man wherein a Gingerbread baby is chased by a cat, a dog, goats, a pig, a fox, and dares them to catch him. Matti hatches a clever plan to catch his Gingerbread baby.

Gingerbread Baby is a delightful tale with beautiful illustrations by Brett that will enthral the reader. As always, Jan Brett has created a story that will captivate not only children but also adults.

Connie Weaver
Reference Librarian
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

**The Final Game : The Further Adventures of the Moccasin Goalie**

E. Hockey—Fiction. PS—Gr. 3.

The Final Game is a sequel to the Moccasin Goalie, but easily stands alone. Danny, who has a crippled leg and foot, plays on the hockey team as a goalie, wearing moccasins instead of skates. His team, the Wolves, is up against the Bombers, the best team, in the finals. Travis, a member of the Wolves team, has a bad attitude about the players who are different, Danny, Petou, who is small, and Anita, a girl. Travis does not pass to the other players on his team and play as a true member of a team. Advice from a professional hockey player helps Travis learn that all the players on the team are important. The Wolves learn about working as a team and defeat the Bombers in overtime.

The author, William Roy Brownridge, himself was the moccasin goalie playing hockey despite his spina bifida and clubfeet. This book contains positive messages regarding handicaps, teamwork, and sharing victory. The illustrations by Brownridge are impressionistic oil paintings, which lack sharp lines and definition. This is an unusual choice for a picture book, due to the need to distance oneself from impressionistic art in order to appreciate it. However, the illustrations are colorful, action-packed, and appropriate.

Karla J. Kessell
Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College
Portland, Oregon

**While You Were Sleeping**

This gentle story, with beautiful illustrations by acclaimed nature artist John Butler, is a nature-lover’s counting book. When Daisy awakens, her mother tells her of the activities of a variety of animals while she slept. The number of animals increases from “one tiger went hunting in the jungle” to “ten penguins jumped out of the icy sea...to join one hundred friends.”

Butler, a noted illustrator of the environment and animals in titles such as Polar Star and Chimuru the Seal, depicts beautiful scenes of geese flying past the moon and rabbits playing in a meadow. The spreads containing Daisy and her mother feel less detailed in comparison to the animal spreads, but overall the illustrations are warm and lovely.

Unlike typical counting books, which show spreads increasing by one throughout, this is a story that begins with Daisy and her mother, in the middle has scenes of the animals in their natural habitats as her mother describes them, and concludes with Daisy and her mother in Daisy’s bedroom. This is a wonderful book for one-on-one sharing.

Lisa A. Wroble
Freelance Writer and Librarian
Plymouth, Michigan

**The Very Clumsy Click Beetle**

This book shows a young click beetle goes for a walk, look at the art of “turning over” for a click beetle. A young click beetle goes for a walk, but does not pass to the other players on his team and play as a true member of a team. Advice from a professional hockey player helps Travis learn that all the players on the team are important. The Wolves learn about working as a team and defeat the Bombers in overtime.

How can someone you tease and mock be the one who eventually gives you hope and courage? In an unnamed, war-torn city, an unnamed girl tells her of her anger, describing her life since the war began. Everyone is cold and hungry, bored and lonely. Children amuse themselves by taunting reclusive Mr. O. Wednesdays are good days because the supply truck comes with tuna, flour, and soap. But when the truck is bombed and no longer brings food and hope, it is Mr. O who feeds the people with his cello music. And when his cello is bombed, the town still takes heart from Mr. O’s harmonica music.

Jane Cutler shows, in a delicate way, a child caught in a war. The Cello of Mr. O gives an honest glimpse into the child’s perspective and thought process. Cutler writes of a child’s weakness to taunt the different, then provides a story to challenge the reader to rethink those actions. The one hated is the one who gives to everyone. Even when Mr. O’s cello is destroyed, the child is at a turning point to give. Her crayon drawing inspires Mr. O to continue to make music in the midst of the war.

Greg Couch’s illustrations express both a war zone and the beauty of music. His stylized, elongated characters inhabit glowing yellow warm scenes, cool blue settings, and red angry spreads. Couch has brought further life to Cutler’s text through selective paintings.

Emily Zagarlick
Freelance Writer/Editor
Grand Forks, North Dakota

**The Cello of Mr. O**

How can someone you tease and mock be the one who eventually gives you hope and courage? In an unnamed, war-torn city, an unnamed girl tells her of her anger, describing her life since the war began. Everyone is cold and hungry, bored and lonely. Children amuse themselves by taunting reclusive Mr. O. Wednesdays are good days because the supply truck comes with tuna, flour, and soap. But when the truck is bombed and no longer brings food and hope, it is Mr. O who feeds the people with his cello music. And when his cello is bombed, the town still takes heart from Mr. O’s harmonica music.

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The Cello of Mr. O offers much to a study of any war, a study of music, or a study of friendship. The strength of human resilience is the theme of this remarkable picture book.

Lorie Ann Grover
Author/Illustrator
Sumner, Washington


E. Rabbit--Fiction; Jesus Christ--Fiction; Easter--Fiction. 30 p. K--Gr. 3.

The Rabbit and the Promise Sign, by Pat Day-Bivins and Philip Dale Smith, is a beautifully written and illustrated story of God's love for each of us. In this Christian fable, the only creature who remains with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane is a tiny rabbit. Because the rabbit demonstrates his love by waiting and watching with Jesus when all others fail him, Jesus gives it a special blessing. He places a star on its forehead which will be passed down through future generations. This star is a pledge of God's love for all its creatures. It is also a reminder of the Star of Bethlehem, which led shepherds and Wise Men to the baby Jesus.

The lovely rich colors of the illustrations by Donna Brooks add a great deal to the magical quality of this book. Each picture is an original oil painting on canvas, which is reproduced in full color.

Authors' notes offer additional materials on request to help children understand the message of The Rabbit and the Promise Sign. An audiotape of the book is obtainable from the publisher.

The Rabbit and the Promise Sign goes beyond the Easter Bunny to reveal God's great love for every child who believes.

Virginia Brown
Library Technician
Sheridan, Wyoming


E. Toys--Fiction. 32 p. Gr. K.

In this sweet childhood story, Matt and Watt the dog go everywhere and do everything together, including going to school. However, as Matt grows up, he begins to lose interest in Watt, forgetting what a special place the dog had in his early life. The reader will experience sadness when Watt is left at the riverbank and is not even missed by Matt. While at the river, Watt gets swept away by rainfall and becomes so soggy only his head is above the water. A young girl named Hattie rescues Watt from the water and takes him home with her and treats him very well. As Hattie snuggles into bed that night, she makes sure that Waterdog is right there beside her warm, safe and snuggled with love.

You're Safe Now, Waterdog, told by Richard Edwards, is the sweet portrayal of the childhood experience of outgrowing belongings that eventually are discarded or cared for by others. Sophy Williams' soft and colorful paintings add to the tenderness of this story.

Susan K. Brown
Teacher
Indianapolis, Indiana


E. ... Gr. 2.

Melinda had a bad night: crumpled sheets, lumpy pillow, crumbs in her bed ... it was awful! And as tired Melinda makes her way through her day, it is even worse. She's late for school, naughtily in gym class, and mouthy to her mother. When she is sent to her room, she tries to make the whole day go away by hiding under the bed where she dreams herself away to the other side of the world. When her sympathetic mother comes with cookies to find her in her room, she searches everywhere, finally joining Melinda under the bed with a reassuring "I love you more than anything in the whole world" and a shared snack to end the story.

Eugenie Fernandes gives her readers a little treasure between the covers of A Difficult Day. Everyone has a bad day, and children are no exception. The book contains the hopeful message that cranky kids and their frustrated parents still love each other in spite of it all.

Fernandes' illustrations are bright with faces echoing the text's strong emotions. Melinda's feelings are wonderfully captured in thoughtful similes: a warm bath which makes Melinda feel like a noodle in a bowl of chicken soup, a dark under the bed experience which leaves the little girl lost in space with no one who cares. The cozy image of mother and daughter eating cookies under the bed is humorous and full of love. This is one difficult day that definitely has a happy ending. Melinda's bare backside appears in some of the illustrations.


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correct. A great strength of the book is layout. Each encounter between Tanya and her instructor includes a depiction from the story of "The Ugly Duckling." Parallels are easily drawn. A full-page wordless spread follows where the reader sees Tanya working to flesh out her dancing character. The silent moments are reminiscent of watching a ballet.

Presenting Tanya, the Ugly Duckling is one of a series featuring the young dancer. This addition is a charming story that captures a performer's fears, with a classic tale, and a final triumph.

Lorie Ann Grover
Author/Illustrator
Sumner, Washington


E. Cats--Fiction; Grandfathers--Fiction. unp. Gr. 2—4.

Hannah and her grandfather are beachcombing when they see "a pale, thin wisp of a creature with eyes as green as the sea itself." And thus the reader is introduced to the title character, the "Fog Cat." "If I can tame her, can I keep her?" Little by little, Hannah enlices Fog Cat to become part of her life. As the seasons change, child and cat become closer, accepting each other as part of their individual lives. The two grow closer, becoming in a sense family, as Hannah gives her own baby blanket to line Fog Cat's litter for the expected kittens. When two kittens are stillborn, Hannah deals with disappointment. Fog Cat moves on, but she leaves a keepsake to remind Hannah of their time together.

Paul Mombourquette works magic in the space dedicated to the illustrations done in pen, ink, and watercolor. With an eye for authenticity, he carefully portrays the essence of family. Hannah, grandfather, and Fog Cat. The layouts are generous, the words used almost as an enhancement to the drawings. Fog Cat is a read-to-me book for the younger set, a pleasure for anyone who has been owned by a cat.

Su Hagerty
Teacher
Issaquah, Washington


E. Cats--Fiction. 30 p. PS—Gr. 2.

Mr. McGratt did not like cats, and especially not the one that showed up and decided to stay at his house. Each time someone comes by and admires the cat, Mr. McGratt says the cat is ornery, and gives them the cat. Each time, the person soon returns the cat, saying this cat is impossible. Finally, Mr. McGratt realizes this cat, who he calls Ornery, has come to stay, and the man and the cat become friends. Although Mr. McGratt never quite admits it, Ornery keeps the birds out of his pear tree, the Buswangers' dog from shredding his newspaper, and the Gantry boy from running through his pumpkin patch—not to mention being a faithful friend with whom to share a tuna sandwich.

Mr. McGratt and the Ornery Cat is a warm, gentle story of friendship between a man and a cat, with just enough of "ornerness" to give it zip. Author Marilyn Helmer writes in an easy manner with a touch of subtle humor to make this a great read-aloud book. Martine Courbault's charming, colorful illustrations add character to this ornery cat and to the very nice, but perhaps ever so slightly ornery himself, Mr. McGratt. Her drawings of Mr. McGratt's red wooden chair with the colorful pillow, his plaid slippers and suspenders, and his hand-carved wooden chair with the colorful pillow, his plaid slippers and suspenders, and his hand-carved

E. 30 p. PS—Gr. 2.

Not many children's stories have been written about friendship and trust in God, but he also finds life is no longer boring.

Cathleen Sovold Johnson
Student, Fuller Theological Seminary
Des Moines, Washington


E. Afro-Americans--Fiction; Actors and actresses--Fiction; Depressions, 1929--Fiction; Harlem (New York, N.Y.)--Fiction. unp. Gr. 1—5.

Some picture books are not just for young children. Tree of Hope is one such story based on historical fact that can enchant younger readers while serving as a springboard for discussion on multiple themes for older readers. Not many children's stories have been written on the Great Depression. In Tree of Hope, Amy Littlesugar balances the despair of a family struggling to make ends meet during the Depression with the hope for the future. The object of their hope is a traditional wishing tree growing outside the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem. For years the actors have rubbed its trunk for luck.

Florrie, the daughter of an actor at the Lafayette, not only demonstrates for the reader the effects of the Depression on her world, but also acquaints her audience with real people like director Orson Welles and plays like Macbeth. Littlesugar acquaints her audience with the history of Black Theater in America, without detracting from the storyline in which Florrie wishes for her daddy's return to the stage where his heart feels at home. When her wish comes true, she discovers what a wide effect her wish has on her whole family.

Oilwash illustrations by Floyd Cooper bathe each page with a sense of the times and just the right touch of hope. An historical note by the author tells of the real tree of hope in Harlem and also provides a brief summary of the rise of the Black Theater. Tree of Hope is a great addition to a multi-cultural library.

Judy Driscoll
Retired Teacher
Poulsbo, Washington


E. Helpfulness--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 32 p. PS—Gr. 2.

Dylan Taylor, new to the small town of Odyssey, is having a difficult time adjusting to life in his new home. Used to a big city, he is not only bored but lonely as well. Very little resembles his life as he once knew it. The huge skating parks are gone. The only skate park in Odyssey doubles as the sidewalk. He misses the amusement park and major league baseball of the big city.

A chase after a hyperactive dog that has stolen his baseball leads him to discover Whit’s End, a combination ice cream parlor and discovery emporium. Here he meets new friends, John Avery Whitaker (Whit), Connie, and Eugene, who try to help him make the transition to his new home.

While helping his new friends, Dylan uncovers the surprise welcome party being planned for him by his parents and Wit. Through a series of adventures, Dylan not only learns lessons about friendship and trust in God, but he also finds life is no longer boring. Welcome to Odyssey: the Start of Something Big, by Phil Lollar, is the beginning of a new series written to introduce young readers to the Adventures in Odyssey stories.

Marie Knaupp
Retired Librarian
Monmouth, Oregon


E. Sperm whale--Fiction; Whales--Fiction; Animals--Infancy--Fiction. unp. Gr. 1—4.

Baby Whale’s Journey chronicles the first two years of a baby whale’s life. Jonathan London begins the journey by tastefully documenting Baby Whale’s conception in the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Mexico. Her birth, many moons later, is presented with tenderness. London describes how her mother, with the help of the sperm whale midwives in
the pod, move Baby Whale to the surface for her first breath. However, Baby Whale’s life is not always calm and peaceful. Killer Whales try to attack the pod and a giant squid attacks Mother Whale when she makes a deep dive looking for food.

London includes an Afterword with additional information on the life and habits of the sperm whale. The reader’s guide contains many ideas for individual discovery as well as ways to share the book with a group. Baby Whale’s Journey is part of a nature series. Schools and libraries can request the Endangered Species Teacher’s Guide.

Jon Van Zyle’s illustrations successfully capture the tremendous size of the dark-bodied whales as they swim across the pages of the picture book in beautiful blue water shaded in greens and purples.

Barbara Bryden
Freelance Writer
Olympia, Washington.


E.  Kings, queens, rulers, etc.–Fiction; Orphans–Fiction; Adoption–Fiction. 32 p.  K-Gr. 5.

Just the Way You Are originally appeared in Tell Me the Story and later as a separate book titled The Children of the King. In Just the Way You Are, Max Lucado has written a story that portrays what God the Father wants from us, his children. He isn’t as interested in what we know or how well we use our talents as he is in spending time with us.

In the story, five orphans learn they’ve been adopted by the King. The townspeople tell them that they must impress him when he visits. Only after the horse show is over and she has won second place does Elaine enjoy her mother’s story but continues to plan to win first place. Only after the horse show is over and she has won second place does she say, “Thank you, God, for sending Noah to save the horses during the big flood.”

Young readers will enjoy Charlotte Lundy’s attractive book about horses. Heather Claremont’s illustrations will enchant the reader. The love of horses is a universal theme, but the link between winning at a horse show and the story of Noah falls short. Both are good stories but don’t connect. A bridge or explanation needs to be made, either in the front of the book or by the reader.

Marie Knaupp
Retired Librarian
Minnomuth, Oregon.


E.  Mexican Americans–Fiction; May Day–Fiction; Schools–Fiction. 30 p.  K-Gr. 3.

Stella is a young girl whose family has immigrated to the United States from Mexico. Her parents speak only Spanish, and her mother wears plain clothes and no makeup. Stella wishes her family was more like the others in her neighborhood and school.

When it is time for the school’s May parade, the girls in Stella’s class need to have tulip costumes. Stella dares to be different and asks her aunt to make a dress with all of the spring colors in it. When she arrives at school, her teacher calls her their “rainbow tulip.” The parade begins and Stella feels self-conscious. Soon, however, she is caught up in the excitement of the day and learns that being different is something of which she can be proud.

In The Rainbow Tulip, Pat Mora uses gentle, meaningful prose that all readers will relate to and enjoy. Spanish words and phrases are scattered throughout, adding to the cross-cultural feel of the book. Elizabeth Sayles’ soft pastel illustrations enhance the text, warmly bringing the reader into the story. The Rainbow Tulip is an excellent choice for collections on ethnic diversity and feelings.

Karen Brehmer
Teacher
Silverdale, Washington.


E.  Perfumes–Fiction.  K-Gr. 3.

Author Michelle Nikly delights readers with the fragrant tale The Perfume of Memory. Set in Asia, the story tells of a country that has forgotten its heritage and all that was important to it. In trying to remedy the people’s
Remember the days when you were young and you spent time gathering memories of your time on this earth. There is little action and a lot of conversation; slowing down, appreciating the small things around you, and really paying attention are the focus of the story. As Joel discovers, memories are being made whether we’re storing them or not. This is a valuable concept to learn at any age; memories are truly a gift from God.

Elizabeth Coleman
Freelance Writer
Tumwater, Washington

Dear Juno, by Soyung Pak; illustrated by Susan Kathleen Hartung. LCCN 98043408.

When Juno receives a letter from his grandmother in Korea, he uses clues in the enclosed pictures to tell him what she has written. Realizing that he does not need to know how to read or write to send a letter, Juno draws pictures of his life in America to send to his grandmother.

Dear Juno reflects the love between a young boy and his grandmother. Susan Kathleen Hartung’s beautiful oil paintings enhance this tender story. Her attention to detail such as actual Korean words in the letters help make Dear Juno a treasure to read. Children separated from grandparents by distance will find Dear Juno heartwarming. Teachers can use the story to teach letter writing even to young children.

Soyung Pak’s Dear Juno will be a welcome addition to any children’s collection.

Susan Robinson
Public Librarian
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania


There is much energy in the square on alternating pages. This breaks up the combination of a larger square and smaller activities, there are ten that are arranged in a most illustrations are double-page spreads friendly, reminding one of the Bruce Degen colored pencils with a grainy effect, very child friendly, reminding one of the Bruce Degen illustrations for Joanna Cole’s work. While most illustrations are double-page spreads showing the main character involved in many activities, there are ten that are arranged in a combination of a larger square and smaller square on alternating pages. This breaks up the sameness. There is much energy in the

Alan and Linda Parry’s charming series of four Prayers with Bears board books for preschoolers will delight the youngest readers. Each book’s format is the same. On two page spreads, the authors place a verse from the Scripture passage indicated in the book’s title, a simple four line rhyming prayer for the child to recite aloud, and an illustration of a teddy bear engaged in an interesting activity. Number of pages in each book ranges from six to sixteen.

In First Corinthians 13, for example, verse one of that passage from the International Children’s Bible, New Century Version, appears at the top. The child is encouraged to pray with Prayer Bear, “Help me when I speak, Lord./And let the words I say./Be filled with loving-kindness./On each and every day. Amen.” Prayer Bear stands tall, holding cymbals near a stuffed elephant who rings a bell with his curled-up trunk.

Children will hold these bear shaped books easily and eagery in their little hands. A big teddy on the cover and illustrations in brilliant primary colors will attract their eyes quickly and elicit many conversations. Brief Scriptures and simple language facilitate “hiding the Word” in their hearts and motivate enjoyment in prayer activities. These books make a cuddly, playful, and important selection for every toddler’s bookshelf.

Rhonda Marie Lackey
Freelance Writer, Former Teacher/Librarian
Tukwila, Washington


In No Dragons for Tea: Fire Safety for Kids (and Dragons), Pendziwol and Gourbault use a fire-breathing dragon to present fire safety tips to young readers in this story about a dragon who comes to tea. The hostess, a young girl about five, invites the dragon she meets on the beach to come home for a sumptuous tea. All goes well, no mess, no problems until the fire breaks out, but the hostess has learned what to do. After the story there are two pages telling children, and the adults reading this to them, fire safety rules and procedures.

The illustrations by Martine Gourbault are in colored pencils with a grainy effect, very child friendly, reminding one of the Bruce Degen illustrations for Joanna Cole’s work. While most illustrations are double-page spreads showing the main character involved in many activities, there are ten that are arranged in a combination of a larger square and smaller square on alternating pages. This breaks up the sameness. There is much energy in the
illustrations which is brought out in the diagonal movement of the characters.

Author Jean Pendziwol puts together good information, but the text seems to be more for the adults reading the story rather than for the child. This would be an optional purchase.

Leslie Greaves Radloff
Teacher/Librarian
W. St. Paul, Minnesota


E. School buses--Fiction; Snow--Fiction. 32 p. K—Gr. 3.

Winter is wild in Burskyville. When it storms, one would expect to find every vehicle stranded, every person stuck at home. But, Axle Annie, bus driver extraordinaire, can master the toughest hill in town on any winter day. Superintendent Solomon always calls her to see if she can make it up Tiger Hill, or if they should cancel school due to weather. Annie always answers, “Mr. Solomon! Do snowplows plow? Do tow trucks tow? Are school buses yellow? Of course I can make it up Tiger Hill!” She always does and the schools in Burskyville never have a snow day.

Trouble comes when a disgruntled bus driver and the discouraged owner of the local ski resort scheme to stop Annie in her tracks. The storm of the century comes and with extra assistance from the troublemakers, Tiger Hill is worse than ever. Axle Annie appears to be stuck.

Axle Annie will have young ones smiling and giggling throughout. Robin Pulver uses silly situations and repeated phrases to keep the reader anticipating what will happen next. Cartoon-like illustrations by Tedd Arnold done in colored pencil and watercolor wash are a perfect match to Pulver’s fun-filled text. A humorous addition to any picture book collection, Axle Annie would be a great book for older readers to read aloud to the non-reading child.

Karen Brehmer
Teacher
Silverdale, Washington


E. Cats--Fiction; Old age--Fiction. 30 p. PS—Gr. 3.

Everyone who has lived with a cat will enjoy the story of Simon, who is a very old cat. Even though his family takes very good care of him, Simon can hardly keep going and feels useless. One Tuesday night at ten o’clock he sticks his bony old legs into the air to breathe his last. But, no, his family places something soft on top of him and Simon sniffs. It is a new kitten.

Now, even though he moves slowly, Simon is too busy taking care of his little kitten to think of himself. When his family sees how tenderly he cares for the new kitten, they give him a new name. They call him the Grannyman.

Judith Byron Schachner not only writes words filled with devotion and love, she also paints pictures with depth and feeling that will be appreciated by all who read the book.

Marie Knapp
Retired Librarian
Monmouth, Oregon


E. Farm life--Fiction; Domestic animals--Fiction; Tornadoes--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 30 p. PS—Gr. 3.

“My chores are done,” says Farmer Brown as he stretches out contentedly on his porch after a long day of taking care of the animals. Suddenly he hears a rumbling sound—a twister is coming! The black cloud scoops up Farmer Brown, his clothesline, and his entourage of animals, each one now wearing “a pair of Farmer Brown’s plaid underwear.” All seems well when they land safe and sound, but “his cows oinked, / the pigs moo’d, / his sheep clucked, / the cat coo’d.” And when Farmer Brown tries to ask what’s wrong, all he can do is “cock-a-doodle-doo!” The farm is in chaos. Farmer Brown definitely goes round and round in Teri Sloat’s wild and silly tale.

This is a great “lap” book to read to young children as the plot is simple, there are a lot of things to look at, and only a few lines of text on each page. The frisky verse is a delight to read aloud. Colorful and bright, Nadine Bernard Wescott’s humorous cartoon, watercolor animals are a perfect match to the light mood of this story.

Lillian Heytvelt
Public Librarian
Pomeroy, Washington


E. Morning--Fiction; Sleep--Fiction. 32 p. K—Gr. 2.

Over Is Not Up!, by Dale Smith, is a charmingly simple story that makes the eternal problem of getting up in the morning fun for children. When Daddy calls for Bitsie to get up, Bitsie turns over, snuggles under the covers, cuddles her dolly, and goes back to sleep. Everything else is up, however. The sun, the birds, and the flowers are up. The animals and even the goldfish are up. Finally Daddy calls again in a louder voice, and Bitsie finally yawns, stretches, gets up, and runs to Daddy for a big hug.

Donna Brooks’ beautiful illustrations greatly enhance the simple text of this book. Each picture is an oil painting on canvas, which is color-separated and reproduced in full color.

The short sentences and multiple repetitions of the concept of ‘up’ make Over Is Not Up! an excellent choice for even the youngest child. An additional benefit of this book is a word list in which all of the words are arranged as flashcards that can be duplicated on a copy machine. These can be used to repeat the text of the book or to make up new sentences. Over Is Not Up! is a book which will be read, reread, and loved for many years.

Virginia Brown
Library Assistant
Sheridan, Wyoming


E. Food--Fiction; Neighborhood--Fiction; Afro-Americans--Fiction. 32 p. PS—Gr. 3.

Little Cliff’s great-grandmother sends him on a mission to get the special butter she needs to make sweet potatoes in her magic skillet. She tells him not to stop along the way and to return lickety-split, but he finds this impossible to do as the Porch People, his grandparents friends and neighbors, interrupt his journey to offer their own contributions to the special dish. Uncle Abe offers to teach Cliff how to trim hedges and sends him on his way with nutmeg. Mr. Boot-Nanny invites Cliff to join him on the porch to listen to the Brooklyn Dodgers play and ends up giving him pure vanilla from New Orleans. Cliff tries to avoid Cousin Savannah because she always wants to kiss him and feed him big slices of pound cake, but having been taught to obey the older people, he goes on his way with one of her kisses and a few tablespoons of fresh grease. He watches as Miz Callie churns the butter he has been sent to purchase and then returns to Mama Pearl who is waiting anxiously for him on the front porch.

Clifton L. Taulbert’s Little Cliff and the Porch People is a gentle and heartwarming tale set in the Mississippi Delta. According to Taulbert, this intergenerational tale is a “tender reminder of all that was good when all of one’s neighbors could be counted on to make significant deposits in one’s life.” The dialogue is colloquial and genuine and the relationships realistic. E. B. Lewis’ watercolors beautifully illustrate this story of a young African-American living in the segregated South.

Lillian Heytvelt
Public Librarian
Pomeroy, Washington

E. Marine animals—Fiction; Animals—Infancy—Fiction: Counting; Picture puzzles; Stories in rhyme. 32 p. PS—Gr. 2.

Written to the tune of “Over in the Meadow,” Jennifer Ward and T.J. Marsh invite their readers on a romp under the ocean to explore sea animals and their habitats, where a personable “mother manicte and her little calf one” nibble sea lettuce, while a pod of Orca whales and “their little calves two splash in the waters clear and blue.” Traveling through the number line the reader can examine three clown fish, four hermit crabs, five sea otters, six tiger sharks, seven sea horses, eight sea turtles, nine jellyfish, and ten octopi. With each verse the reader learns the name of the baby for that animal (“Did you know baby jelly fish are called jellies?”) see where they live and sometimes what they eat, and for a challenge find the camouflaged number on each page.

Illustrated Fun Facts pages at the end of the story give additional scientific information for the animals and plants mentioned. For those unfamiliar with the tune to the song, the music is included at the back of the book.

Kenneth J. Spengler’s bright and animated illustrations a la Ruth Heller support scientific fact without detracting from the whimsy of the animals. Somewhere in the Ocean will be a welcome and well-used addition to any primary classroom.

Judy Driscoll Retired Teacher Poulsbo, Washington


F. Adoption—Fiction; Foster home care—Fiction; Grandmothers—Fiction; Family life—Fiction. 277 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Elizabeth’s dream of seeing the ocean comes true, but now her goal is to avoid becoming part of the foster family that she has just been placed with. For the month of July she will be with the other Sheridan cousins staying with their grandma who lives by the ocean. Elizabeth does not answer questions or play games, choosing to be silent and withdrawn as she tries to understand what makes this family so close. She experiences many firsts while at Grandma Sheridan’s (whom she nicknames Iron Woman): first time at the ocean, first fireworks, and first understanding of what family life and love is all about.

V. M. Caldwell does an excellent job of sharing the inner thoughts, struggles, and triumphs of a child who has been orphaned and moved from home to home. Her new family welcomes her to be a part, but she doesn’t know how or if she really wants to do that. The Ocean Within is a book that will give the reader an understanding of family togetherness and acceptance of those who are different.

Lynette Sorenson College Librarian Kirkland, Washington


F. Jews—United States—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Thanksgiving Day—Fiction; Emigration and immigration—Fiction; Russian Americans—Fiction. 28 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

“ITakes all kinds of Pilgrims to make a Thanksgiving.” Molly, the heroine of Molly’s Pilgrim, learns this lesson. Molly desperately wants “to belong” but finds herself unaccepted in the new school. Miss Stickey, the third grade teacher, asks the class to make a village peopled by Pilgrims. Molly’s mom wonders what a Pilgrim is. “A Pilgrim is someone who came here from the other side to find freedom.” This truth becomes the key to this Jewish immigrant’s acceptance.

Daniel Mark Duffy illustrates Molly’s Pilgrim with shades of gray drawings that are full of life and detail. The pictures tell the story as strongly as the text.

Author Barbara Cohen bases her book on true events. Although she grasps the hub of this poignant story, it is almost predictable in ways: the family is transplanted from turmoil in Russia, Molly is chased home from school by the mean Elizabeth. The author adds the occasional Yiddish phrase to the narrative, but it is always decoded by context. This change-of-pace Thanksgiving book ties Jewish tradition to that of the Pilgrim forefathers.

Sa Hagerty Teacher Issaquah, Washington


F. Afro-Americans—Fiction; Race relations—Fiction; Mississippi—Fiction. 29 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Grandma tells about the first time she went to town by herself when she was just a girl. Walking into town on a hot summer day with two eggs in her pocket, she wants to see if it’s possible to fry an egg on the sidewalk. Hot and thirsty, she misunderstands the ‘Whites Only’ sign on the water fountain. Taking off her black shoes, she steps up on the little step in her white socks to get a drink. She is frightened when a large white man appears and shouts at her for drinking at the fountain. When he threatens to whip her with his belt, an old woman from the little girl’s church takes off her shoes and gets a drink too. More black adults take off their shoes and form a line to get a drink. Angry and red faced, the white man beats the little girl and the adults with his belt as the white townspeople watch. But when the Chicken Man walks up to the fountain, the white man stops and backs away. The Chicken Man has mysterious powers he learned in Africa. The white man is never seen again, but a strange chicken is seen flapping around the fountain.

Evelyn Coleman spins a fascinating story of life in a segregated Mississippi town and the power of one little girl to do some good. White Socks Only vividly portrays a group of people standing together to defeat racial hatred. Younger children may be distressed by the violence and need help understanding the context of the story. The author uses language and expressions of the region and time, which adds to the story, but may be difficult for young readers. Tyrone Geter’s illustrations convey the heat, anger, and mystery of that fateful day.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

**CHILDREN’S FICTION**


F. Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Listening--Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 5.

Kung Shi is the beautiful daughter of a wealthy Chinese merchant. Because his wife is dead, the merchant treasures his daughter more than his many possessions and gives her everything she asks. The years pass and one day Kung Shi meets Chang the Good. It is love at first sight for both and soon Chang asks Kung Shi to marry him. However, when she asks her father he tells her no. Again and again she requests permission to marry but he continues to put her off with various excuses. Frustrated by her father’s refusal, one stormy evening Kung Shi sets off in her boat to find Chang. During the storm her boat capsizes and she is drowned. That same evening Chang, looking for Kung Shi, is mistaken for a leopard and is slain by the local village men. The wealthy merchant learns too late the value of listening to his daughter. He commissions a plate be made to tell the story of Kung Shi and Chang and gives them to everyone he meets so parents everywhere will listen to their children and heed what is in their hearts.

Pam Conrad’s retelling of the legend of the Blue Willow plate is both lovely and haunting. Written in a way that is accessible to even a young audience, Conrad captures the sadness, poignancy, and beauty of this familiar tale. Her imagery of the Chinese countryside and the characters in Paula Danziger’s *Amber Brown Is Feeling Blue* is so evocative it is as if you can almost smell the smoke and feel the heat of the midsummer day. Her portrayal of the Chinese merchant. Because his wife is dead, the merchant treasures his daughter more than his many possessions and gives her everything she asks. The years pass and one day Kung Shi meets Chang the Good. It is love at first sight for both and soon Chang asks Kung Shi to marry him. However, when she asks her father he tells her no. Again and again she requests permission to marry but he continues to put her off with various excuses. Frustrated by her father’s refusal, one stormy evening Kung Shi sets off in her boat to find Chang. During the storm her boat capsizes and she is drowned. That same evening Chang, looking for Kung Shi, is mistaken for a leopard and is slain by the local village men. The wealthy merchant learns too late the value of listening to his daughter. He commissions a plate be made to tell the story of Kung Shi and Chang and gives them to everyone he meets so parents everywhere will listen to their children and heed what is in their hearts.

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F. Self-esteem--Fiction; Divorce--Fiction; Parent and child--Fiction. 140 p. Gr. 3 - 4.

Amber Brown is a fourth grade girl whose parents divorced a few years ago. Her father, living in Paris the last two years, is now moving back to be near Amber. She is looking forward to seeing her father with eager anticipation. Amber’s mother is engaged to marry a man named Max. Amber enjoys her relationship with Max and the time she spends with him and her mother is warm and fun. Her father’s return is going to force Amber into a position of making difficult choices and decisions. “I want to make choices and not feel guilty. I want to have choices, not ones like this. The ones I want to make are things like … Should I have chocolate or vanilla ice cream? Should my allowance be raised? Should I have to do homework, or not have to do homework? Now, these are good choices for a kid to make … not the ones I have to make . . . choosing one parent instead of the other.”

The feelings and emotions a child of divorce goes through are dealt with very deftly by Paula Danziger in *Amber Brown Is Feeling Blue*. Though the topic is a weighty one, the author interjects humor in her characters and secondary situations which help balance the book and create a real empathy for Amber’s situation. Tony Ross’ pen and ink illustrations fit the fun-loving personality of Amber Brown perfectly, depicting Amber just as one would imagine her to look.

*Sally Kuhns*

*Teacher*

*Bremerton, Washington*

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F. Glass--Fiction. Gr. 2 - 5.

Nicole and her nana travel to the seaside house where Nana grew up. While roaming the rocky shore, Nana tells Nicole of a childhood memory about the rarest color of sea glass—red. In days gone by people threw bottles, broken china, and other crockery into the sea. As the waves tossed about the broken glass, the edges were worn smooth and the pieces eventually washed ashore. Anyone who has spent long days at the beach knows the best part is hunting for special seashells or sea glass, those bits of worn debris worn smooth over time.

Environmental concerns today and the wide use of plastic have made sea glass less common, so Nicole’s finding a piece of red glass is a great treasure. Through beautiful illustrations, and Nana’s gentle recollection about the day she broke a very special red vase as a little girl, the reader learns a bit about the origins of sea glass as well as a lesson about remorse. Could Nicole’s piece of red sea glass be from the very vase Nana broke? Though this question is never answered, this charming story may be used to prompt discussions of conscience, sorrow, and consideration of the property of others as well as the environment.

This book provides a lovely example of cross-generational sharing and may prove useful in additional sharing on the part of readers and teachers.

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*Sally Kuhns*

*Teacher*

*Bremerton, Washington*
their families. The book concludes with a short article about sea glass and an activity for “recycling” it into a sun catcher.

Lisa A. Wroble
Freelance Writer and Librarian
Plymouth, Michigan


F. Dogs--Fiction; Ranch life--West (U.S.)--Fiction; Humorous stories; West (U.S.)--Fiction. 125 p. Gr. 3 - 5.


F. Dogs--Fiction; Mystery fiction; Humorous stories; West (U.S.)--Fiction. 126 p. Gr. 3 - 5.


F. Dogs--Fiction; Ranch life--West (U.S.)--Fiction; Humorous stories; West (U.S.)--Fiction; Measles--Fiction. 126 p. Gr. 3 - 5.

“It’s me again, Hank the Cowdog.” Thus starts another hilarious adventure told in first person by Hank the Cowdog, head of Ranch Security. The series, written by John R. Erickson, stays well in character, each book focusing on another facet of ranch life. Written in a folksy, chatty style, these chapter books are perfect to be read aloud. A high-interest level urges the reluctant reader to read on. Each chapter ends with a cliff-hanger. The illustrations by Gerald L. Homes, cartoon-style with the perfect touch of whimsy, are totally compatible with the fast-paced text.

In The Case of the Vanishing Fishhook, a bit of liver could be bait or a snack. When Hank finds out the difference, he finds himself in deep trouble and on his way to the vet’s, Sally May, Lady of the House, gives forgiveness to the errant Tom Sawyer (five-year-old Alfred) and Huckleberry Finn (Hank, of course) through the words of a very silly song.


F. Peregrine falcon--Fiction; Falcons--Fiction; Wildlife conservation--Fiction; New York (State)--Fiction. 258 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Frightful is the peregrine falcon trained and cared for by Sam Gribley since she was two weeks old. Now, Sam must release her. Frightful encounters danger, excitement, motherhood, and freedom, but she never forgets Sam and the one tree on the one mountain where Sam lives. An endangered species, Frightful’s adventures draw the interest of poachers as well as environmentalists. When her three eggs are endangered by state mandated bridge repairs, a group of children write letters trying to save the baby birds. The story follows Frightful on her amazing migration from her home in upstate New York to the Galapagos Islands off the coast of South America and back again.

Written by Jean Craighead George, Frightful’s Mountain is the third book in a trilogy that includes On the Far Side of the Mountain and Newberry Honor book, My Side of the Mountain, written forty years ago. This book shows the deftness of an experienced writer as well as the passion of a naturalist who cares deeply about the environment. The book is illustrated by the author’s own pen and ink drawings, which captures the beauty and intelligence of the peregrine falcon. Although Frightful is the central character, the central human character is Sam Gribley. The author assumes her readers know Sam from the earlier books in the series, and gives little explanation of this teenager who lives alone in a tree in the forest. Although this book does stand alone, reading the other books in the trilogy first would enhance the reader’s enjoyment. The book includes a very interesting foreword by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who writes of his own enjoyment of the author’s book when he was young, and her influence on his lifelong interest in wildlife.

Cathleen Sowell Johnson
Student, Fuller Theological Seminary
Des Moines, Washington


Karen Brehmer
Teacher
Silverdale, Washington


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Cathleen Sowell Johnson
Student, Fuller Theological Seminary
Des Moines, Washington

Owen Foote's frontier is Mrs. Gold's wood lot behind his house. He and his friend Joseph spend many hours there following animal tracks, imagining Daniel Boone adventures, and building a fort. One day, two older boys discover the fort. They are Mrs. Gold’s mean and streetwise grandsons from New York City. Their idea of fun involves ransacking forts and threatening little boys who try to stop them. This means war. But can Owen declare war without telling his parents? Owen finds the truth to be the best convincing evidence for action. Even his older sister is sympathetic. Owen and Joseph use their knowledge of nature to booby trap the fort for the final assault. Joseph digs a pitfall trap while Owen smears pitch up the ladder and scattering animal scat on the floor of the fort. In the middle of their preparations, the enemy unexpectedly advances. Owen is trapped in the fort. As a last desperate measure he releases his pet snake. It drops down on the intruders and sends them scrambling for the safety of Grandma’s house. Woodland lore and nature trivia are woven unobtrusively into the adventure. There is also an underlying theme about telling the truth, its power to convince, and the confidence it builds.

Owen Foote, Frontiersman is Stephanie Greene’s third book about Owen. Martha Weston’s pencil and ink wash illustrations capture the highlight of each chapter. The vocabulary is geared for independent readers in the second and third grade. Description is sparse, action is high, and dialogue is realistic, making the story an excellent read-aloud choice for younger listeners.

Other books in this series are, Owen Foote, Second Grade Strongman and Owen Foote, Soccer Star.

Melinda Torgerson
Freelance Writer
Ponemah, Washington


F. Polar bear—Fiction. Gr. 2 - 5.

Carol Grigg’s story The Singing Snowbear begins with a baby polar bear and his mother, as she teaches him to care for himself. When Snowbear is two years old, he hears music while he is swimming. He is compelled to find the music and the music maker, so he leaves his home. He meets a raven, a walrus, a snowy owl, and an arctic fox. They aren’t much help, so he continues searching. Lonely and discouraged, he searches until one day he hears the saddest song he has ever heard. When he finds the music maker, it is a beluga whale that is trapped in the ice. Snowbear rescues the whale. In return, the whale teaches Snowbear to sing as they swim together in the arctic sea.

Carol Grigg has written a polar bear fantasy and added a little “natures in harmony” flavor. There is an underlying theme that we should all try to “fill ourselves with the song” and get along with each other in love. There is a lot of metaphorical grammar and symbolism that children won’t understand on their own. Even though the story itself is sweet, it is written in a disjointed way that may cause readers to lose interest or need help following the theme of perseverence.

The main redeeming point of this book is the illustrations. Ms. Grigg uses beautiful watercolors with lots of purples and blues. The pictures have a certain softness that flows with the story.

Patricia Youmans, MLS
Homeschool Parent
Siloam Springs, Arkansas


F. Juvenile delinquency—Fiction; Physically handicapped—Fiction; Angels—Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 1 - 4.

After a series of small thefts, fifteen-year-old Jason DeLee is caught stealing a car. Because he has been in trouble with the law before, Jason is sent to a juvenile camp where he volunteers for a special work program. At first, Jason isn’t too sure about working with Kelly who has cerebral palsy. After getting in trouble for racing Kelly around in her wheelchair and smoking, Jason begins to see how he can help Kelly. In a moment of doubt about his future, however, Jason considers stealing the car of his dreams. As he puts this plan in motion, Monica appears telling him that she is an angel. Monica tells Jason not to take the easy way out and that God has provided him with a second chance in working with Kelly. After thinking things through, Jason realizes he really does want to stay and help Kelly.

Unlikely Friends, novelized by Monica Hall, is based on the Touched By An Angel television series episode “At Risk.” Monica, Tess, and Andrew, angelic figures in the television show, are all characters in the book. Illustrations by Joe Brown accurately portray the familiar angels and add depth to the relationship between Jason and Kelly.

True to the television series, this book tells the reader of a loving God who is involved with each of our lives, and can provide a second chance for anyone.

Elizabeth Coleman
Freelance Writer
live with the Sutherlands. He quickly learns the ways of the missionaries and their language. Although they share the Gospel with this tribal boy, he is steeped in his tribal religion and does not understand God’s Word.

Meanwhile, Alastair reads in a Sunday School paper of Joy Ritterhof who makes Gospel recordings using a phonograph machine. They contact her and invite her to come to the Phillipines hoping to impact the natives using the technology. Miss Ritterhof arrives but is detained in Manila and, Lastani, who is to be the “reader,” must leave for school. When she does arrive, Miss Ritterhof’s recorder will not work. In all of this Joy Ritterhof shows that Christians can always rejoice, knowing that God is in control.

Miss Ritterhof returns to the mainland with Alastair accompanying her on his way to boarding school. When the recorder begins to work again, Alastair steals away during the night to bring Lastani back to make the recording. Six months later ten hand-crank phonographs and ten sets of recordings are delivered to the Sutherlands. As the message is played, Lastani shares his testimony with those listening to the “talking box.” When they hike back up the mountain to deliver a phonograph and record to Lastani’s tribe, he seals his testimony by taking his family “good luck charm” to his uncle.

Following the story are five pages of additional information about Joy Ritterhof.

Patricia J. Perry
Parent, Former Librarian
Westerville, Ohio


F. Dogs--Fiction; Science--Experiments--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 133 p. Gr. 3 - 5.

A sequel to The Invisible Day, The Invisible Harry by Marthe Jocelyn is a tale about the adventures and misadventures of sixth grader Billie Stoner. But this is also a story about relationships: friends, sisters, divorced parents. The babysitter’s (Jodi’s) dog “Pepper” had an adventure out in the world (p. 7) which resulted in a litter of puppies. Harry Houdini, a sort of a terrier, becomes the center of the universe whose story turns into a comedic fantasy when Jodi, a science whiz, makes the pup invisible. There are giggle aplenty as Billie tries to cope with everyday life and this unusual pet.

The use of contextual clues ranks high in this chapter book. The first-person narrative rolls along at an even pace, with an occasional word just beyond the norm. The story is told with great humor and the cartoon-like drawings by Abby Carter add to the frivolity.

Su Hagerty
Teacher
Issaquah, Washington


F. Schools--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction. 72 p. Gr. 2 - 3.

Molly is a spunky third grader with “black braided hair, Band-Aids on her knees or elbows, and brown eyes,” who seems destined for mischief. A new girl, Flo, comes to their classroom and is suspiciously guarding about her purple backpack. Not only that but she had the fortune of being the one to tackle on Molly after an unfortunate incident with a basketball. Now Molly is after her to discover the secret in her backpack and to pay Florence back. Molly has a good friend named Morty who comes to the aid of Molly and Flo, teaching Molly the lesson that when you’re in trouble you should tell the tough parts of the truth first, then apologize.

Suzy Kline writes a well-paced story full of humor and the great descriptive language in Molly’s in a Mess. Diane Cain Bluthenthal’s pen and ink illustrations are expressive and fun. Children will enjoy the character of Molly and hopefully glean the message on the value of honesty.

F. Science--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Reading--Experiments--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 100 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

It seems Heather has always ice-danced with her brother. They make such a perfect match, or do they? Her parents think so, as well as her friends. The Girls Only Club would definitely agree. Heather and her brother make great ice-dancing partners. However, Heather is beginning to tire of the closeness she shares with her brother. Everything from homeschooling to athletics involves them both. She decides she wants to skate alone. With her decision made, the only thing left to do is tell her family.

Beverly Lewis has written the inside story of ice-dancers and figure skaters in A Perfect Match. This book is the third addition to the Girls Only (GO!) series. Teen girls will enjoy Heather’s predicament and feel they are part of the club in this life-changing decision. Lewis provides a safe haven for her characters to act out their story. Parents and children are Christians. Family devotions and private Bible reading are noted. An honest portrayal of homeschooling is relayed. The Girls Only Club does comment regularly on how cute Heather’s brother is.

It takes Heather a long portion of the book to tell her family her decision. Finally when everyone offers support, her realization that she wants to skate with her brother again occurs quickly. The motivation is only a gut feeling. Her brother takes her back instantly despite having found a new partner. Lewis’s characters are a bit too squeaky clean. The information gained by the reader into the skating field, and the good examples the children offer outweigh these problems.

Lorie Ann Grever
Author/Illustrator
Sammamish, Washington


F. Moving, Household--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 74 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

Morgy MacDougal-MacDuff finds making new friends in third grade a formidable task after moving from California to Massachussets with his parents. Fifth-grade bully Ferguson doesn’t make it any easier. But Morgy never gives up trying to make new friends or outwitting Ferguson. When a monstrous blizzard descends on Pucket Corner, Morgy learns to appreciate his new surroundings and friends.

It's extremely spirited and puts readers right into the story. Maggie Lewis brings alive real emotion and thought while teaching valuable lessons of courage and fitting in. Illustrations by Michael Chesworth are a bit bland, but kids will love them anyway. This book is a great addition to any school library.

Beth Loughman
Freelance Writer, Registered Nurse
Columbus, Ohio


F. Fathers and sons--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 72 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Truxton has a way with birds, especially wounded ones. He comes from a family of poor silversmiths in Colonial Williamsburg, so he must spend more time in the foundry helping with the work than he does in the woods with the birds. An accident happens in the foundry in which a wealthy silversmith is burned. Father is put in jail for maiming this silversmith, taking away his ability to work as a silversmith. When the judge comes, he is sure to sentence Father to the gallows. Father’s only hope is a pardon
from the governor. The governor shares Truxton’s passions for birds. Truxton gains an audience with the governor through the gift of a Mock-bird. Unfortunately, the governor dies before deciding to pardon Father. When the judge arrives, Father, because he can read, claims the benefit of clergy, thus receiving his pardon.

Johanna Berg’s black line drawings will help the mid-elementary reader visualize the scenes in the book. This short chapter book is especially good for those just beginning to read chapter books. Nancy Lohr concludes with some historical notes as to actual historical figures included in the story and information on colonial law and colonial books. The family’s faith in God is very evident throughout the story. Family devotion occurs daily. The family’s dependence on God to get Father out of jail is unfailing. The book seems to give an accurate portrayal of life in Colonial Williamsburg. If you’re looking for historical fiction written from a Christian perspective, Songbird would be a good book to consider for your library.

Jane Mouttet Missiary School Librarian Window Rock, Arizona


F. Occupations—Fiction; Zoo keepers—Fiction; Nursery schools—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Literacy—Fiction. 155 p. PS - Gr. 4.

Poor Sam Krupnik. Tomorrow is “Future Day” at nursery school and he has nothing at all to wear. He feels like a failure, “like the biggest, dumbest poophead in the world.” And when the sobbing preschooler comes to the dinner table stark naked, he certainly makes his point. He needs a special outfit to show everyone what he wants to be when he grows up.

The Krupnik family pulls together during troubling times, not like the Tucker who yells at his kids when they wear. He feels like a failure, “like the biggest, dumbest poophead in the world.” And when the sobbing preschooler comes to the dinner table stark naked, he certainly makes his point. He needs a special outfit to show everyone what he wants to be when he grows up.

Gently woven into Lois Lowry’s sweet story is Sam’s budding exploration of the world of reading. To his delight, by the end of the book he’s sounding out real words. Countering Anastasia’s interest in mediating to Buddha—an excellent point of discussion for parents—comes a section about how it’s OK for girls to grow up to be full-time moms. Affirmation of this career choice is rarely seen.

With sensitivity and humor, Lowry has created a tale of a little boy who wants to feel good about himself. Thanks to his family, Sam gets to enjoy the delight of being “the Chief of Wonderfulness,” even if only for a few days. Illustrator Diane de Groat peoples the book with warm, fun-loving characters, the kind you wished lived next door. Lowry’s *Zooman Sam* gives every reader a sense of the wonder of books and the joy of learning.

John T. Perrodin Attorney, Editor, Homeschool Father Colorado Springs, Colorado


F. Immigrants—Fiction; Russian Americans—Fiction; Jews—United States—Fiction; New York (N.Y.)—Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Golda Schmukler is about to embark on the biggest and longest journey of her life. Her Papa anxiously awaits the family’s arrival on Ellis Island where the promise of refuge and freedom will greet them. But first they must survive the boat ride. Sea sickness takes over most in the cramped hull, but not Golda and her brothers who cheerfully play tag on deck, nearly killing themselves in the process. There is adventure at every turn and she makes good out of each situation—even when the immigration inspector insists on giving her the dreadful American name, Gussie.

My Name Is Not Gussie is an engaging account of one immigrant girl’s escapades as she faces the new world. Mikki Machlin brings to life stories her own mother lived and told. Serious issues are brought out, but with an upbeat approach. Colorful illustrations by the author herself are plenteous, vibrant and detailed, adding to the overall charm and imaginative whimsy of this book.

Beth Loughner Freelance Writer, Registered Nurse Columbus, Ohio


F. Space and time—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. p. Gr. 5—8.


F. Space and time—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. p. Gr. 5—8.

It’s 1958, and twelve-year-old Kyle and his ten-year-old sister, Anna, are bored in small-town Odyssey, where they are visiting their grandparents. The tale of a mysterious house in the woods is welcome news to Kyle and he convinces his less adventurous sister to help him find it. When they do, a mishap sends both of them to another world and into the path of two colliding personalities: King Lawrence of Marus and his young general, Darín. Attracted to the sincere and capable Darín, the two join his entourage as he flees into exile amidst accusations that he is plotting to usurp the throne. Kyle and Anna also find that the mysterious “Unseen One” has given them supernatural gifts, which they put into Darín’s service. After numerous close calls, Darín and his loyal followers rejoin the Marutian forces to defeat the kingdom’s foes, only to discover that the despairing king has taken his own life. Darín is proclaimed king, and the two children suddenly find themselves back in Odyssey.

Paul McCusker’s recasting of the biblical account of David and Saul as an adventure story for middle-schoolers does not stand up well to the demands of such a task. The world of *Darín’s Rise* never succeeds in establishing a setting or tone, nor in developing its characters. The plot shadows incidents found in the Bible but in a context that does not always lend itself to the requirements of the biblical account or the point it was originally intended to convey. The use of two other-world children to explain and advance the plot is thin at best and their precognitive “gifts” questionable. Finally, our Lord, the “Unseen One,” is presented as a remote god rather than the imminent Savior of David’s psalms.

In *Arín’s Judgment*, Wade Mullins has three strikes against him, as far as he can figure. First, he’s what adults call “precocious,” and that means he’s only popular as a punching bag with most of the guys at school. Secondly, his father is still missing in the South Pacific, even though the war with Japan ended weeks ago. The third “strike” consists of the papers in his pants pocket: copied plans for the atomic bomb the U.S. has just dropped. Whatever the count, Wade is “out” with a black eye from a fight, and now a bent of the flu. Stumbling down to the coal bin for more fuel for their old furnace, Wade turns around to find himself in another world, one whose wars have not ended.

Immediately, Wade finds that he is a source of contention between two very different men. On one side is Arín who, with his family, has built an underground bunker in response to a prophecy from the “Unseen One” that promises total, world-wide annihilation. He sees Wade as the last sign before the end. On the other is Tyran, a powerful man poised on the brink of dictatorship with plans to unite the tribes of Marus into one country. To him, Wade is the means to the weaponry that will bring Marus under his control. Caught in the middle, Wade must choose between Arín’s incomprehensible warnings and Tyran’s flattering interest.

The second in the Passages series, *Arín’s Judgment* by Paul McCusker continues a project
sponsored by Focus on the Family to strip Bible stories of their “stained-glass...associations” and present them in their “real potency” as a tool for “communicating gospel truths.” This is a tall order by any measure, and particularly so in this attempt to re-tell the account of Noah, for which we have little background. Annison’s Judgment fails its own standard by offering an ill-defined, confusing setting, cartoon characters, and little in the way of “truth,” gospel or otherwise. Don’t send your kids to Marus; send them to Narnia instead.

Pamela A. Todd
Librarian, Chelston Christian School
Cumming, Georgia

F. Space and time--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Odyssey series.

F. Space and time--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction.

F. Space and time--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Obedience--Fiction.

F. Space and time--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Freedom--Fiction.

Annison’s Risk

In the tradition of C.S. Lewis, author Paul McCusker, uses the fantasy world of Marus to retell familiar Bible stories, giving them new life and power for young readers. In Annison’s Risk, book three of the Passages series, Madina (Maddy) Nicholaivitch, living in 1927 America, dreams of a fairy tale princess who asks for her help. Later, while playing hide and seek with her friends, Maddy disappears into the shadows under her house and re-emerges into the world of Marus in which a new king is being proclaimed to his newly conquered subjects. At his side is his soon-to-be-queen, the beautiful Annison. Annison is not only a member of the conquered people but a secret follower of the “Unseen One.”

Watching the parade, Maddy suddenly realizes that the princess in her dream and the soon-to-be-queen are one in the same. Determined to help her, Maddy finds her way into the palace and learns of plans to assassinate the king and exterminate the secret followers of the Unseen One. Annison needs her, but what can Maddy do?

Glennall’s Betrayal.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, James Curtis runs away from home and his Aunt Edna and into a mysterious mist, which transports him into the world of Marus. While there, he meets up with a band of gypsies, hears stories of the Unseen One, and rescues a strange boy who has been thrown down a mine shaft by his jealous brothers. But the stranger’s problems, along with James Curtis’s, don’t end there. Soon both have been captured and are on their way to a slave market in a distant land.

Draven’s Defiance.

Scott Graham, a newcomer to the town of Odyssey, walks into a railroad tunnel near the town but when he comes out, Odyssey is no longer there. Instead, he finds himself in a place in which soldiers raid a woman’s vegetable garden and the truth is suppressed. But followers of the Unseen One put their trust in him for protection and provision. They also witness miracles when Draven, a Voice of the Unseen One, raises a child from the dead and confronts a corrupt king and his evil wife.

Fendar’s Legacy.

Here the author changes the format from one main character to three, two boys and a girl, so that the story may be told on two different fronts. Michelle, Danny, and Wayne are cousins looking for excitement in 1968 Odyssey. They find it in a hippie festival at a nearby lake. Things get too exciting, however, when the police show up and the revelers scatter. The trio is knocked into the lake but when they emerge they find themselves no longer in a lake but in a public fountain on Marus. “Still being pursued by policemen, although for a different reason, the trio splits up and runs.

Michelle is quickly caught, taken to the palace for questioning, and suddenly finds herself being offered a position as advisor to the king based on her strange story. Danny and his brother Wayne, in another part of the city, are pressed into servitude but then rescued by an exiled prince who trusts in the Unseen One. Raised in the palace but born to the enslaved people, the prince has a mission from the Unseen One to deliver his people from their oppressors.

Passages is an excellent series for the eight to twelve-year-old audience. Paul McCusker takes familiar Bible stories, puts them into unfamiliar settings, changes the details, and comes up with a fresh new view to help readers experience them in a new way. Each of the books feature different main characters, coming from different decades in 20th the century, but all are tied together by the town of Odyssey and the character of John Avery Whitaker, known as Whit to the readers of the Adventures in Odyssey series.

F. Brothers and sisters--Fiction. Gr. 1 - 3.

Bridge 6 is about three siblings, Owen, Prunes, and Kelly, and is told from Kelly’s point of view. Owen runs the family restaurant, loves living by rules and expects others to live by rules, too. Prunes hates rules so much that he has moved out and lives under the Number 6 Railroad Bridge. All the characters love hockey. Owen, being the oldest, believes that he should always be the goalie. However, Kelly wants to get a chance at playing goalie. Prunes knows this and advocates for Kelly. An argument breaks out and Owen resorts to pouting. It is finally decided that the goalie’s name will be picked out of a hat. Owen’s name is chosen because Kelly and Prunes have conspired to make every name in the hat Owen’s. The next week Owen, who loves rules, takes on a new position, that of referee.

This family is definitely nontraditional. No mention is made of parents, only the three siblings. Also, Prunes’ choice to ignore all rules and live under a bridge is unusual. This story shows that family can agree to disagree and can overcome differences of opinion, but the attitude toward boundaries and rules is of concern. This story can open the door for discussion of the benefits of rules, consistency and the circumstances under which being flexible can be a good thing.

The illustrations by Judith Christine Mills are colorful and portray action. The men are large, scruffy truckers and lumberjacks. Facial expressions support the storyline.

Karla J. Kessell
Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College Portland, Oregon

F. Friendship--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Paris (France)--Fiction.

Susie Morgenstern tells the unusual story of Ernst Morlaisse who lives a very routine life with his grandmother. The routine is shattered by the arrival of Victoria de Montardent, an unpredictable and vivacious girl. Ernst soon discovers that there is much more to life than his familiar routine, and that he has a long lost father. Ernst and his grandmother are impacted and transformed by the new people they encounter and come to terms with old hurts and regrets.
Victoria is one of fourteen children in a family of free spirits. Ernest’s mother died in childbirth and his father deserted Ernest, leaving him in the care of his grandmother. Ernest is reunited with his father who has come to regret his separation from his son. The families portrayed in this book are certainly nontraditional, but familial love and acceptance are central concepts.

Secret Letters From 0 to 10 was originally written in French and this translation has a formality of language, which only adds to the charm of the story. The story may seem odd at first, but the reader is soon hooked by the mystery and unpredictability of the plot. Susie Morgenstern is an award winning French author of children’s literature.

Karla J. Kessell
Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College
Portland, Oregon


F. Gawain (Legendary character)--Fiction; Knights and knighthood--Fiction; Magic--Fiction; England--Knighthood--Fiction. 212 p. Gr. 4 - 7.

In the writing of The Squire’s Tale, Morris owes a debt to the legends of King Arthur and his knights, including his nephew-subject, Sir Gawain. And Morris’ readers owe a great debt to him for reinvigorating the old stories with his fresh re-telling. The main character of his story, the Squire Terence, is a fabrication of the writer’s imagination. Many of the other characters are familiar to the fans of England’s Camelot. Terence is an orphan, raised by a clairvoyant-hermit and rescued to a life of excitement and danger by Sir Gawain, to whom he becomes a squire.

In this story, Gawain has yet to become the greatest of the Knights of the Round Table. He and Terence set off on a series of adventures that take them though the Other World and its magical inhabitants. Young readers who enjoy stories of wizards and magicians, damsels-in-distress and witches will not be disappointed as these and many other characters emerge to help or hurt the knight and his servant-boy on their journey to maturity. The author’s clever wit and subtle humor may be lost by a clairvoyant-hermit and rescued to a life of excitement and danger by Sir Gawain, to whom he becomes a squire.

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Ten-year-old Timothy Dawson, with an interest in both artwork and butterflies, has decided to do a painting of the butterfly garden at his church for a neighborhood art show. As his cousins Sarah Jane and Titus watch him work, Timothy becomes aware of something odd or unusual in the butterfly garden. Ever alert for a mystery, the three cousins join together to discover just what Timothy finds so unsettling about the garden and his painting. Soon the cousins are involved in an even bigger mystery of switched paintings, stolen candlesticks, and misplaced marigolds.

The Mystery of the Coon Cat

Sarah Jane is excited about finding a series of her favorite books for sale at the library book fair. But as soon as she snatches up the treasures, an old collection of Winnie-the-Pooh, two grown-ups try to talk her out of the books, offering her double what she paid for them. How valuable are these books and will Sarah Jane be able to return them to their rightful owner?

The Mystery of the Coon Cat

Titus McKay is taking care of a most unusual cat. Even his cousins, Timothy and Sarah Jane, think that the huge cat looks more like a wild lynx than a house pet. But when Titus takes the Coon cat, named for its resemblance to a raccoon, to a special animal show, the attention that the big cat receives becomes alarming and even dangerous. The three cousins are soon at work trying to locate a second Coon cat at the show, and its owner, to warn her about a mysterious and threatening note they’ve received.

The Mystery of the Runaway Scarecrow

Sarah Jane’s favorite seasonal display, a scarecrow named Buster, seems to have run away from home during his busiest season, Thanksgiving. Furthermore he has left a note for the town, challenging them to come and find him. He’s even sending in “vacation pictures” to provide them with clues. When no one in town can solve the mystery the three cousins go to work on Buster’s strange disappearance. They manage to solve not only the mystery of Buster’s disappearance but uncover the theft of a rare coin in the process and identify a thief.

The Three Cousins Detective Club series has several features that attract the attention of young readers. Each story is a mystery, a popular genre among children, with the mystery being proclaimed in the title. The trio of cousins, two boys and a girl, work together to solve mysteries. Each story features a different member of the group as its main character. The covers are colorful and attractive. The format of short chapters, large print and black and white illustrations by Joe Nordstrom make these books particularly attractive to early readers. Each story illustrates a biblical value found in a Psalms or Proverbs.

Donna E. Brown
Church Librarian
Portland, Oregon


F. Computers--Fiction; Cheating--Fiction; Humorous stories. 115 p. Gr. 3 - 8.

Wally McDoogle, 7th grader, is the self-proclaimed “Walking-Disaster McDoogle.” Everything he undertakes seems to turn into a wild and unpredictable event. His latest adventure begins when a computer glitch puts him in charge of the world’s computers. Whatever he and his friends, Wall Street and Opera, type into his computer becomes a reality as it’s instantly transferred to every other computer in the world. What begins as Wall Street’s desire to change her school grade from a “C” to a “B” and Wally’s wish to remove an overbearing coach from their school, turns into a Y2K disaster in which all computers are wiped clean of memory and the president of the United States is declaring war on Wally’s house.

Bill Myers, author of the Wally McDoogle series, fills his books with a wild sense of humor and outrageous events that capture the reader’s imagination. The books also convey biblical values, in this case, one against cheating. Wally
is a sympathetic character whose troubles mirror those of the average twelve-year-old, but in a greatly exaggerated manner. Readers will love My Life as a Mixed-Up Millennium Bug.

Donna Brown
Church Librarian
Portland, Oregon


F. Afro-Americans--Fiction; Race relations--Fiction; Civil rights workers--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Fallout shelters--Fiction; Recluses--Fiction. 138 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

It doesn’t take long at her new school for fourth grader Meg to learn people are not always treated as they are in her small hometown community of Mayfield. Her parents tell her people are afraid of what they don’t understand; this affects how they treat others. Meg and her friends stick together and stand by each other when Dillon’s brother comes home from the Navy and later when Sam dies. Meg doesn’t understand at first why Sam spends so much time talking with her parents. Later she realizes Sam had his own choices to make about his part in the Civil Rights movement. Meg sees people she knows come and go, and hears her friends and parents talk about current events. It becomes clear there is much “beyond Mayfield” that affects the community, and that there are people, such as Sam and Mr. Slater, who are willing to try to make a difference in the world.

Vaunda Nelson’s work of historical fiction is just right for the elementary reader. Dialogue and action move the narrative at just the right pace to hold the reader’s attention. The historical setting is not overpowered by facts and news accounts, and Meg is a typical fourth grader. The story effectively gives the reader a sense of how a specific time in history affects one small community. The narrative is somewhat vague as to exactly what Sam might have been doing in the Civil Rights movement, and there is some confusion initially on who is related to whom. It is not immediately clear who is “white” and who is “colored;” to the author’s credit this distinction isn’t important to the story, which is probably as it should be.


F. Discrimination--Fiction; Prejudices--Fiction; Race relations--Fiction; Afro-Americans--Fiction; Labor movement--Fiction; Chicago (Ill.)--Fiction. 192 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

The Christian Heritage Series: The Chicago Years, by Nancy Rue, takes place in 1928-29 and deals with issues such as women’s rights, crime and the mob, the Ku Klux Klan, and prejudice against Jews and blacks. The series also confronts issues of character and shows the consequences of wrong decisions.

The Trick introduces the main characters, ten-year-old twins Rudy and Hildy Hutchinson, who have just moved to Chicago with their lawyer father. They live with their wealthy and eccentric great aunt Gussie and have to face a different life in the city. Rudy is constantly getting into trouble and looking for ways to get out of doing anything that doesn’t look like fun. While going to Hull House with Aunt Gussie to help the immigrants who come to learn English and a trade, Rudy runs into Little Al whose dream in life is to make it big in the mob. He tries to get Rudy to help him steal purses and soon Rudy finds himself in over his head. When Little Al is arrested for some mob activities, Mr. Hutchinson defends him and Aunt Gussie steps up and agrees to take him into her home.

The Chase begins with Rudy, Hildy, and Little Al starting school, barely escaping a fight on the playground, and Rudy challenging Miss Tubb’s control in the classroom. While Hildy is worried about being fashionable and is obsessed with getting her hair bobbed, Rudy is trying to stay out of trouble, while simultaneously pushing every restriction. Trying to help a young lady from a nearby boarding house, the Hutchinsons become entangled in a conflict involving the mob and the Klu Klux Klan. In the middle of the excitement, Little Al is missing. Rudy finally realizes that his negative, critical attitude has not only hurt himself, but the ones he loves. He is willing to stand up for what is right and realizes the value of family roots and learning from the past.

Nancy Rue has filled these stories with allusions to historical events, people, styles, and inventions of the 1920’s. These action-packed episodes—while exciting—are rather far-fetched. While Rudy’s disobedience and disrespect is dealt with, Little Al’s disrespectful way of addressing adults is completely overlooked and never corrected by those in authority. The characters are rather shallow and not well-developed.

Esther Knapp
Librarian
Corvallis, Oregon


F. Marriage customs and rites--Fiction; China--Social life and customs--Fiction; Marriage customs and rites--Fiction. 153 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Ying is eleven years old and lives with her Grandmother (Ah Pau) in a small Chinese village. Ah Pau is sick, so Ying is trying to do all she can to make things easier around the house. One day, Ah Pau sends Ying to visit Ah Mah (Ying’s other Grandmother). The year is 1948 and according to Chinese tradition Ah Mah arranges Ying’s marriage. The prospective bridegroom is a wealthy college student whose family lives in the same village as Ah Mah. Ying runs away but is captured and brought back to face her very angry Ah Mah. A happy ending will make readers glad that Ying has such luck.

Ching Yeung Russell bases the story, Child Bride, upon her ancestors, so the Chinese tradition of arranged marriages makes for fascinating reading. Although Ying has appeared in earlier books, this story can be read without reading the others. Endearing illustrations by Jonathon Russell add a dimension to the book.

Connie Weaver


F. Chicago (Ill.)--Fiction; Great-aunts--Fiction; Gangsters--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 180 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

Rudy finds help from an unexpected source and realizes the importance of really listening. The kidnappers are discovered, the murder case resolved, and Rudy learns to appreciate and accept people from a different background.

The Stunt finds the Hutchinson family traveling to a family reunion in Virginia. Two major issues in the story include prejudice and discrimination against blacks, and the working conditions of women. Rudy finds himself alienated from everyone in his family when he disobeys his father and is nearly killed attempting to wing walk on an airplane. After facing one crisis after another in his family, Rudy finally realizes that his negative, critical attitude has not only hurt himself, but the ones he loves. He is willing to stand up for what is right and realizes the value of family roots and learning from the past.

Ching Yeung Russell bases the story, Child Bride, upon her ancestors, so the Chinese tradition of arranged marriages makes for fascinating reading. Although Ying has appeared in earlier books, this story can be read without reading the others. Endearing illustrations by Jonathon Russell add a dimension to the book.
Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride, written by Pam Muñoz Ryan, compares the lives of two famous American women, Amelia Earhart and Eleanor Roosevelt. Although with different occupations, the two find a similarity in their desire for daring adventures. While dining at the White House, Amelia shares with her fellow guest and with Eleanor Roosevelt, the feeling of flying at night, describing in detail what the stars, the clouds, and the landscape below look like. Asked by Eleanor what Washington, D.C., looks like at night, Amelia invites the First Lady to experience it herself, that night. The two make arrangements and head to the plane where they lift off to the stars. Eleanor is overcome by the wonder of all she sees. After landing and heading back to the White House, Eleanor spies her new car sitting outside and invites Amelia to take a drive with her around the capital city. The two go racing off into the night, letting the wind stream through their hair.

The book shows the similarities between the two. Amelia loves the freedom the skies afford her and Eleanor enjoys that same freedom in her car. They were oddities in their day, doing things and standing for things that women normally had no part in. Yet Ryan does a good job in showing that being different is acceptable and taking risks is okay. The story, based on a true event, gives readers a glimmer of insight into the personalities of these two famous women.

Eileen Zygarlickie
Freelance Writer/Editor
Grand Forks, North Dakota


Author Maxine Trottier introduces the reader slowly to the perils of the Japanese Americans in America during W.W.II. A young girl visiting her grandmother befriends the next-door neighbor, Mr. Hiroshi. She is enchanted with his garden, brimming with shrubs, moss, irises (flags), sand, and a pond filled with koi. The blissful days of summer are interrupted when Mr. Hiroshi receives a letter from the government. The young girl doesn’t understand why he is leaving, but is just saddened by it. Time goes by and she tends his garden. One day his house, now for sale, sells. The night before the new owners arrive, Grandmother and the little girl go to the garden and dig up two iris bulbs and capture all the koi, which they release in the nearby river. The little girl goes home with her two iris bulbs, which she plants as a tribute to her friend.

The story is a fascinating account from a child’s point-of-view of the concentration camps Canada and the U.S. had for Japanese Americans during W.W.II. The puzzlement of the child over what is happening to her friend is echoed in the adults. Mr. Hiroshi, born and raised an Canadian, can’t understand why he must leave his home and his garden. The same confusion, an unsung, childlike confusion, is seen in the young girl.

Paul Morin breathes life into the story with carefully crafted illustrations, filled with soft, vibrant colors that beckon the reader to come read the book again. Although a simple story, it is filled with a profound message of how happen when you reach out to others is excellent. The only negative is a short incident that night. The two

Eileen Zygarlickie
Freelance Writer/Editor
Bend, Oregon


First published in Sweden, Can You Whistle, Johanna? is humorous, heartwarming, and well-written. Berra, spurred on by Ullse, his friend, picks out a grandfather in an old folk’s home. Berra and the old man provide each other with company, stability, and love. They venture on walks, make a kite, and celebrate the “Grandfather’s” birthday. When Berra is challenged to learn to whistle by the grandfather, he doesn’t visit until he learns how. But when he finally does learn, the grandfather has gone to heaven. It is the final gift the grandfather gives Berra.

This short chapter book by Ulf Stark is colorfully and cheerfully illustrated by Anna Hoglund. The moral that special friendships happen when you reach out to others is excellent. The only negative is a short incident that night. The two

Paula Stewart Marks
Principal, Morning Star Christian School
Bend, Oregon


Reminiscent of Felicity, of American Girl fame, Hannah of Fairfield lives happily on the family farm in Connecticut, learning to spin and sew even though she’s not much interested in such womanly arts. What Hannah really loves is the animals and working outside—men’s work she is told—until her mother rejects one of the newly born lambs. After staying up all night to care for the newborn animal, Hannah gains respect from her father for her healing abilities.

But the real conflict in Hannah’s life is the battle for American independence. Ben, Hannah’s oldest brother, at the age of fifteen is eager to be off to war and defend his family and country. His father strictly forbids it and everyone in the household seems to hold their breath waiting to see if Ben will obey his father’s command or run off to war. Hannah discovers the war has come to her own home and her growing up is approaching faster than she had ever anticipated would happen.

Hannah of Fairfield, by Jean Van Leeuwen, is easy historical fiction, written for elementary school readers, and will appeal particularly to girls. It is the first story in a trilogy chronicling Hannah and her family. Also included at the back of the book is an author’s note on the history of the time period and a recipe for bird’s nest pudding, a dessert mentioned in the text. This book is well written and readers will find Hannah an engaging character.

Ceil Carey
Young Adult Librarian
Plano, Illinois


Spiders on the brain, spiders on the underwear: Spider Storch loves spiders. Girls are another story. Spider is trapped in the middle-school web of hatred for the opposite sex. His nemesis, Mary Grace, is a gangly gal with a long ponytail. To her disgust, Spider calls her “Smelly Face” for her own home and her growing up is approaching faster than she had ever anticipated would happen.

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She is chosen to be a flower girl in a wedding, she is thrilled. Spider is volunteered to be ring bearer for the same wedding.
BOOK REVIEWS  CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

000's—Generalities


It's a fact—you can look it up—kids love books about trivia, superlatives, and believe-it or-not kinds of information. The Scholastic Kid's Almanac for the 21st Century by Elaine Pascoe and Deborah Kops is aimed squarely at this audience.

As a fact book, browsed for enjoyment, it succeeds quite well. As a reference book it is less successful since the index, which consists of approximately 750 entries, is woefully inadequate. For example, Mount Rainier is the fourth tallest peak in the contiguous United States and that information is presented, but there is no listing for mountains, much less Mount Rainier itself, in the index—thus there is no easy way to find discrete facts. This title would certainly not replace one of the general almanacs on the reference shelf.

On the plus side the illustrations and graphics by Bob Italiano are great—clear, large, with bright appealing colors and made easy to read and interpret; the colored bar graph made visual comparisons quite accessible. Some parts of some charts have a fairly small typeface, but overall the legibility is much better than an adult reference.

Each entry includes a phonetic pronunciation, an “itinerary” (the passage of Scripture where this place is primarily mentioned), list of “travelers” (main characters), and “destination.” The typography of the area is explained in simple language today’s children can understand. Also included is “transportation” (mode of travel used in the Bible passage), “what to take” (special Bible items of interest from this passage), “arrival” (historical time frame), and the “reason for the visit” (background). “Things to do” gives more historical insight into the Bible story. A “then and now” section helps children make the connection between the ancient historical setting and the area today. Color cartoon illustrations are included on nearly each page.

Designed as a children’s reference book, The Baker Book of Bible Travels for Kids could provide interesting reading material for the child interested in geography or be an aid in children’s devotions.

Patricia J. Perry
Parent, Former Librarian
Westerville, Ohio

200's—Religion


This 6-1/4 x 7-3/4” hardcover book by Anne Adams is a unique children’s reference guide to Bible geography. Sixty-four places mentioned in the Bible are featured alphabetically. Several pages acquaint children with each of these places where people of the Bible walked.

Each entry includes a phonetic pronunciation, an “itinerary” (the passage of Scripture where this place is primarily mentioned), list of “travelers” (main characters), and “destination.” The typography of the area is explained in simple language today’s children can understand. Also included is “transportation” (mode of travel used in the Bible passage), “what to take” (special Bible items of interest from this passage), “arrival” (historical time frame), and the “reason for the visit” (background). “Things to do” gives more historical insight into the Bible story. A “then and now” section helps children make the connection between the ancient historical setting and the area today. Color cartoon illustrations are included on nearly each page.

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Patricia J. Perry
Parent, Former Librarian
Westerville, Ohio


The Exodus : Moses’ Story from the Bible, by Bruce Bickel and Stan Jantz, is a visually inviting book with an excellent blend of illustrations from the Dream Works animation The Prince of Egypt and the first fourteen chapters of the Book of Exodus from the Bible. Told in language appealing to young readers, the text is supplemented by sidebars and commentary by Charles R. Swindoll.

Sidebars explain terms and concepts to put the Bible text into historical context. “Courageous Nurses,” “Hot and Bothered,” and “Dreaded Disease” are examples of sidebars that help young readers better understand the events portrayed in the text. Appealing sidebar titles such as “Moses Needs a Pep Talk” and “Stinking Toads” draw the reader to these helpful tidbits of information.

Each of the fourteen chapters from the Book of Exodus are accompanied by an “Insights from Chuck Swindoll”—a single page that relates the text to the popular Dream Works The Prince of Egypt production. These insights appear at the end of each chapter in this book and reinforce the message from the Book of Exodus. “God is in Charge,” “God’s Extraordinary Plan for an Ordinary Man,” and “When Moses is Down, God Picks Him Up,” are some examples of Swindoll’s intriguing insights.

Both parents and children will delight in this attractive book. It provides a wonderful opportunity to share this exciting drama, and the Bible, as a family.

Lisa A. Wroble
Freelance Writer and Librarian
Plymouth, Michigan


Comfort for a Child’s Heart: The 23rd Psalm and Bible Promises is a beautifully illustrated devotional book. The author, Helen Haidle, has divided the 23rd Psalm into thirteen phrases or sections. For each section, she includes a brief explanation of the meaning, some questions for the reader to consider, a related New Testament passage, suggestions for family sharing, several Bible promises, and a memory verse. The author uses the 23rd Psalm to point the child to trust Jesus as his or her shepherd. The last two pages of the book feature an invitation to salvation, giving six Bible verses and a suggested prayer. The primary biblical translation used is the New King James Version, with exceptions noted.

The writing is clear and easy to follow, and the author explains biblical terms. She does a good job of bridging references in the 23rd Psalm to
references in the New Testament. The book has an attractive format, with many beautiful full-page watercolor illustrations by David Haidle. The artist uses soft, earthy colors, which suit the subject well. Haidle’s sheep are particularly engaging, with expressive faces that reflect the fears, concerns, love, and gratitude of the sheep.

This book is designed as personal devotional reading, but it could also be read aloud to younger children or used as a family devotional guide. It could be easily adapted as a group study for children. This would be a nice book for a child to own, as it is one a child might read many times.

Cathleen Sovold Johnson
Student, Fuller Theological Seminary
Des Moines, Washington


In The Other Brother, by Melody Carlson, Malachi and Benjamin are brothers. Their father hopes the boys will one day take over running the family farm. Malachi is loyal, obedient, and hardworking. Benjamin, however, wants his inheritance now so he can buy a yacht and fish all day. When Ben gets his boat, “his friends” come to celebrate with him. Unfortunately, the boat sinks and the friends leave. Ben, broke and hungry, ends up taking care of pigs. Soon, he realizes his father has workers that are taken care of and fed, so he heads home to ask to become his father’s servant. When his father sees him, he throws a big party to celebrate. Malachi is jealous that his loyalty will be rewarded, but that they should rejoice because Ben is not dead, but alive, and he’s come home.

This modern adaptation of the story of the prodigal son, with its cowboy flavor, will delight its young readers. The story is told in rhyme and is somewhat simplified, which makes it quite readable. The author has included the passages from Luke 15:11-32 to aid in further discussion. Steve Bjorkman’s watercolor illustrations are bright, colorful, and very expressive. From seeing the pitiful Benjamin in the pigpen, to the big shindig his father has upon his return, the illustrations truly compliment the style of the author’s story.

Patricia Youmans, MLIS
Homeschool Parent
Silouan Springs, Arkansas


Covering both Old and New Testament, The Rhyme Bible Storybook for Toddlers begins with the creation of the world and ends with Jesus returning to heaven. Many favorite stories such as Noah, Jonah, and Jesus’ birth are covered. Three consecutive stories cover Jesus entering Jerusalem, dying on the cross, and his resurrection. His death is handled briefly, but seriously in one story. Biblically accurate, the Bible reference is given at the beginning of every story.

Selecting child-friendly stories, author L.J. Sattgast has written each story in a rhyming format. Stories are short, about five stanzas long, with one stanza per page. Accompanying each stanza are delightful illustrations by Toni Goffe. The colorful drawings are expressive and joyful, the perfect companion to the author’s charming text. Logically organized, this book will be meaningful as a whole to children old enough to remember details from the previous story. Each story also stands on its own, making it useful for several different age groups. Toddlers, preschoolers, and their parents will enjoy this fun and funny book.

Elizabeth Coleman
Freelance Writer
Tumwater, Washington


Part of Zondervan’s popular I Want to Know™ series, this volume presents the story of the life and times of Jesus Christ in an engaging format. The book includes direct quotations from the New International Reader’s Version of the scripture, but it is much more than a Bible storybook. The authors have included pages about the history of the ancient New Testament world. Of special note are the sections on how the city of Rome came to rule the world and how its rule influenced the Gospel. Another short section outlines the Jewish religious themes that were contemporary with the life of Christ. This historic background information supports the retelling of major events in the life of Christ.

Of special note are the illustrations that accompany the summaries of Jesus’ miracles and his parables. These, along with the photographs and other drawings in the book, assist the young reader’s recall of the major themes is in the life of Christ. The use of vivid colors adds to the reader’s understanding of the text.

The book includes an excellent summary of the Gospel message and what it means to “have Jesus in your heart.” While the authors take an Arminian view of human nature and responsibility, the book is decidedly non-denominational in its discussion of baptism, the Lord’s supper, and other subjects. Despite its brevity, the book Jesus provides an outstanding, age-appropriate survey of the content and times of the New Testament.

Susan K. Brown
Teacher
Indianapolis, Indiana


A small boy and his Dad are going for a walk in the woods and by the sea. As they walk, Dad answers his little boy’s questions about the things they see. Patiently, Dad explains about wildflowers, heaven, oak trees, pears, birds, and how God has a hand in all of these items. Appropriate Bible verses accompany each scenery change.

Watercolor illustrations by Mary Anne Lard make a nice addition to this truly inspiring father/son story, Seeds of Heaven by Kim M. Henry.

Connie Weaver
Reference Librarian, Bosler Free Library
Carlisle, Pennsylvania


In his hymn “God of the Sparrow,” Jaroslav Vajda asks people to observe the world around them. He calls upon us to notice the sparrow, the whale, and the stars, as well as the hungry, the sick, and the foe. He then asks how we should respond to God and his creation. Rather than answer this, Vajda instead prompts us to consider how we praise and thank God as well as how we define life, peace, and home. The hymn “God of the Sparrow” is whimsically illustrated by Preston McDaniels and placed in a picture book format. The first in a series of hymns to be illustrated by McDaniels, God of the Sparrow could be used by parents or teachers as a tool to initiate conversations with children about God, his creation, and how we are to praise him. However, this would be a confusing book for children to read alone. References to “prodigals” and “pruning hooks” could be difficult for many children to
understand and the open-endedness of the hymn’s questions make it perhaps too ambiguous for younger readers.

Although the idea of a series of illustrated hymns is a worthy one, perhaps a better-known and more straightforward hymn would better serve the purpose. McDaniels’ illustrations will no doubt be attractive to children as they are both humorous and fanciful. The childlike characters and fantastical world depicted are reminiscent of fantasies and fairy tales. Music and words to the hymn are included.

Kerri Cunningham
Librarian
Camano Island, Washington


_A Young Child’s Garden of Christian Virtues_ is a devotional book to be used with toddlers. Each devotional consists of four parts: the Seed (scripture verse), Planting Time (repetition of the concepts of the scripture), Harvest Time (directions to parents regarding further enrichments of the concepts), and My Prayer (a short prayer which can be repeated by the child). The scripture verse is usually very short, such as (Matthew 19:26) ‘with God all things are possible.’ Planting Time often involves a poem with corresponding hand motions. Harvest Time may involve role-playing, craft projects, or other ways of applying the principles to daily life. The Prayers are one to three sentences long. Each prayer is related specifically to each topic and addressed to God or Jesus as seems most appropriate. None of the prayers are addressed to the Holy Spirit, but this omission may be appropriate considering the age range.

Susan Lawrence has done a good job of designing meaningful devotions that will fit within the toddler’s attention span. Hand motions and activities will help the child to understand and retain the concepts. This book is not illustrated. The book has a table of contents listing each devotional by its title, but lacks any scripture or topic index.

Karla J. Kessell
Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College
Portland, Oregon


_Hero Tales_, Volume III contains forty-five fascinating stories of fifteen Christian heroes. Each of the fifteen sections contains a short biography of the hero and three short true stories. Each one of the true stories chosen emphasizes a different Christian character quality. Trust, endurance, and compassion are just three of the qualities Dave and Neta Jackson write about in this volume. They follow up each true story with a sentence that combines aspects of the story with a Christian character trait. An appropriate Bible verse and three questions for discussion are included with each story.

This volume includes stories about Charles Albert Tindley, Lottie Moon, Billy Graham, and others. The stories are quite short, which would make them suitable for family devotions or Sunday school class use as well as individual reading. Even though the stories are short, they are well written and contain enough information to make the characters seem real. Toni Auble’s drawings help to flesh out the men and women in the book. The authors include a list of the Christian character qualities in the back of the book with the name of the story where you will find it.

Barbara Bryden
Freelance Writer
Olympia, Washington

500’s—Natural Sciences & Mathematics


567.912. Tyrannosaurus rex; Dinosaurs. 32 p. Gr. 3 - 5.


567.912. Velociraptor; Dinosaurs. 32 p. Gr. 3 - 5.


567.915. Stegosaurus; Dinosaurs. 32 p. Gr. 3 - 5.


567.915. Triceratops; Dinosaurs. 32 p. Gr. 3 - 5.

This four volume series by Janet Riehecky includes the following titles: _Tyrannosaurus: The Tyrant Lizard_, _Velociraptor: The Swift Hunter_, _Stegosaurus: The Plated Dinosaur_, and _Triceratops: the Horned Dinosaur_. In each of the books the readers are introduced to the dinosaur and follow it through a day. Readers learn about its diet, predators, and habitat, at least as much as can be conjectured. There is a short section for further reading and an index provided in each book, along with a short glossary. A description of the dinosaur and its lifestyle follows the story. These are simply written and should appeal to middle grade students the most and of course, those interested in dinosaurs.
It should be stressed that these give information about the dinosaurs themselves and not periods of time in which they lived, so teachers and librarians will not have to explain the differences in time so often found in books dealing with prehistoric creatures. There seems to be nothing, which would contradict the biblical timeframe of creation and age of the world. On the negative side, the illustrations, which seem to be done in chalk, are not all that attractive, a bit fuzzy.

Leslie Greaves Radloff
Teacher/Librarian
W. St. Paul, Minnesota


599.53. Dolphins; Human-animals relationships. 42 p. Gr. 3 - 5.

Informative, readable text gives basic information about dolphin’s mating habits, habitat, and sounding systems. Short sections set off with color photographs by Jeffrey L. Rotman allow the reader to read and study only sections of the book, or read from cover to cover. This would provide information for classes reading Scot O’Dell’s Island of the Blue Dolphins and those studying marine life, or mammals. Short chapter length, glossary, bibliography, and index provide ideas for additional reading. Author Mary M. Cerullo impartially addresses concerns about dolphins, such as living in captivity, the number caught in fishing nets, pollution, contact with humans, and tour boats carrying people who want to view dolphins in their habitat.

Leslie Greaves Radloff
Teacher/Librarian
W. St. Paul, Minnesota


599.786. Sea otter; Wildlife rescue; Seattle Aquarium. 48 p. Gr. 1 - 5.

One morning in the cold waters of Uganik Bay, Alaska, a mother sea otter and her pup were accidently hit by a motor boat. Lootas: Little Wave Eater tells the heartwarming story about an injured orphaned sea otter pup who was hand raised by Seattle Aquarium personnel.

Marine biologist C. J. Casson directed the sea otter program and led the staff in developing a program for raising Lootas. He also documented the pup’s progress through photographs which appear throughout the book. Aside from telling Lootas’ story, the author provides factual information on the life cycles and behavior patterns for sea otters. She also tackles the issue of conservation without scolding the reader.

Joanne M. Hally
Writer/Home School Parent
Gig Harbor, Washington

600’s—Technology (Applied Sciences)


612.7. Muscles; Muscular system. 28 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Seymour Simon has written many informational picture books for children that are of excellent quality. Muscles: Our Muscular System is no exception. Different types of muscle and the interaction of muscles with the skeletal structure are explained clearly. The concepts of voluntary, involuntary, contraction, and leverage are introduced. The structure of muscles down to the cell level is described. The connection with the nervous system is briefly mentioned. Three types of muscle, skeletal, smooth and cardiac are described. The effects of nutrition and exercise on muscles are included. These concepts are all treated in an introductory manner.

The illustrations include drawings, photographs, x-rays, MRI, and CAT scans. The anatomical drawings do not include reproductive organs and, are appropriately, unisex. Young children are often curious about the inner workings of their bodies and this book will answer their questions about muscles clearly and accurately.

Kara J. Kessell
Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College
Portland, Oregon


613.907. Sex education for children; Teenagers—Sexual behavior; Sex—Religious aspects—Christianity; Sexual ethics; Christian life.  p. Gr. 3 - 8.

You Are Wonderfully Made! by Lois Walfrid Johnson is a devotional for pre-teens answering questions about physical development from a Christian perspective. Johnson explains that not only is their body changing but also their interests, emotions, and responsibilities are maturing as well. The author uses short, fictional stories to explain puberty and sexuality of both boys and girls. She offers solutions to the problems of peer pressure, self-esteem, and mood swings, and touches on tough subjects such as sexual abuse, abortion, and AIDS. At the end of each story is a To Talk About section for group or family discussions, a supporting verse, and a prayer. The role of parents is held in high regard, but examples of other trustworthy adults, friends, and extended family are also offered, especially when the parental role is not supportive of Christian values.

Lois Walfrid Johnson has written over twenty-five books, and has won the Gold Medallion, the C.S. Lewis Silver Medal, and five Silver Angel awards from Excellence in Media. You Are Wonderfully Made! is the third book in the Let’s Talk About It Stories for Kids series. The other two titles are You Are Worth More Than You Think, and Secrets Of The Best Choice. Her style is informative, friendly, and factual without being graphic. A good example is always the best instructor for making solid life-long choices, but this book is an excellent supporting tool.

Melinda Torgerson
Freelance Writer
Pomeroy, Washington


In a wonderful mixture of the old and new, Cris Peterson presents a photographic history in Century Farm: One Hundred Years on a Family Farm. “So much has changed in one hundred years, but many things have stayed the same.” Although there is no storyline, Peterson writes the text as if she were the voice of her husband, Gary, descendent of the original owners, B. John and Lovisa Anderson. A mélange of sepia and full-color pictures stress the connection between the generations and introduce how machination has eased the work of the farmer. The slow pace of farming is reflected in the large print, the generous amounts of white space, and the varied sizes of the pictures. Century Farm is simply preserving one family’s legacy for even the youngest child.

Sa Hagerty
Teacher
Issaquah, Washington

700’s—The Arts and Recreation


784.215. Lullabies; Sea poetry; Poetry—Collections. 29 p. PS.

Drifting off to sleep will never be same after reading Fishing For A Dream. Kate Kiesler’s beautifully warm illustrations nearly float off each page as traditional lullabies from Ireland, Scotland, Greece, and even Robert Louis Stevenson complement the pleasant, restful tone. Artfully matched together, each heartwarming poem and picture creates a sleepy

Many voices have championed the cause of wild animals. But who speaks for the animals that have served us, saved us, and shared our food? Since the dawn of civilization, the large portrait paintings by Don Brown feature the Shire horse, which remembers its history as a noble battle charger, and the Onagadori Chicken, which has sacrificed its extravagant tail feathers to create dishes coveted by the Shogun. The Shire horse once again make their unique qualities a valuable asset to the human kind.

A Barnyard Bestiary, by David Bouchard, is slightly less scientific than an encyclopedia, but quite a bit more informative than a picture book. Although the subject is domestic animals of the past, it has a lot to say about modern civilization. The large portrait paintings by illustrator Kimball Allen will hold the interest of pre-school readers while the language and passion of the poems would appeal to any reader who is concerned about preserving endangered animals.

Melinda Torgerson
Freelance Writer
Pomery, Washington

900's—Geography, History, Biography


In 1799, in a small English port, lived Mary Anning. Before scientists had coined the word dinosaur, Mary was excavating fossils from the seashore with her brother. With little money, no schooling, and a lot of hard work, she found ichthyosaurus, plesiosaur, and a pterodactyl. During her adult life she gained the respect of the scientific community. It was said, “She knows more about the science than anyone else.” Mary Anning’s life-long passion was digging along the dangerous coast for bones from the past.

Don Brown has chronicled a true story of a remarkable woman from English history in Rare Treasure. It is wonderful to have a picture book added to the shelf that portrays a woman achieving in the area of science. The example of a resourceful person educating herself is
excellent. She perseveres in finding fossils, studying them, and selling them in her local shop. Here is a person focused on her life goals and achieving.

Brown’s soft watercolor illustrations recreate an atmosphere of the past. Thin, loose, fine outlines seem to subtly capture the figures as they are remembered through his text. Mary Anning’s circumstances and story will inspire children and adults to pursue their own passions despite obstacles.

Lorie Ann Grover
Author/Illustrator
Sunner, Washington


921 (759.13). West, Benjamin, 1758-1820; Artists.

Benjamin is supposed to be keeping his niece from crying, but he draws her picture instead. He later learns about making paints from the Indians. He learns about hair pencils from a traveler. The family cat develops bald patches—Benjamin has cut hair from the cat to make his own hair pencils. The story mentions that Benjamin is a Quaker boy, but no religious beliefs are mentioned in the story.

The Boy Who Loved to Draw by Barbara Brenner is an excellent biography of artist Benjamin West for those in the younger grades. Olivier Dunrea’s colored paintings with the sharp distinct edges accurately portray colonial life. The book concludes with reproductions of some of Mr. West’s work. If you have readers who are young artists, this book would be an especially good addition to your library.

Jane Mouttet
Missionary School Librarian
Window Rock, Arizona


921 (760). Obata, Chiura; Artists; Japanese Americans. 48 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Nature Art with Chiura Obata chronicles the life and career of nature artist and Japanese American, Chiura Obata. Beginning with his birth in 1885 on the Japanese island of Honshu, the biography tells of his childhood, artistic training, and immigration to America at age eighteen. It then chronicles his university teaching career, family life, and his many artistic achievements. Special chapters are devoted to Obata’s love for Yosemite National Park (from which came much of the inspiration for his nature art) and his years spent in an internment camp during World War II. Related activities interspersed throughout the book help the readers to make nature art of their own.

Michael Elsohn Ross has done a superb job of presenting to readers the life and work of a lesser-known naturalist. Although the story of Obata’s life is told concisely, Ross is able to make it fascinating. Obata’s immigration story and his love for the beauty of California and Yosemite Park are balanced with the discrimination he met with because of his Asian heritage and his resiliency in the face of many obstacles.

The reader is left with the desire to know more about this incredibly gifted artist. Also fascinating are the many tips included throughout the book for making your own nature art, such as how to produce your own flower and rock art, bird portraits, and nature portraits along with many other suggestions. An Important Dates page, Glossary, Bibliography, and Index are included.

Wendy Smith’s illustrations are well done and assist the reader by highlighting the related activities and suggestions. More importantly, reproductions of Obata’s own work and the photographs of the artist pique the reader’s interest and give a sense of the enormous scope and talent of Chiura Obata.

Kerri Cunningham
Librarian
Camano Island, Washington


921 (792). Tallchief, Maria; Ballet dancers; Osage Indians--Biography; Indians of North America--Biography; Women--Biography. 28 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Dedication, hard work, and supportive parents allowed Maria to get her start in ballet. This autobiography is of Maria Tallchief’s young life and her early training. The book ends with her trip to New York to join a ballet troupe.

Maria mentions in the story, “I was born with music that flowed through my body as naturally as blood in my veins. This was a gift from God.” Mr. Kelley’s colored paintings have a softness to them that go well with the life of a young ballerina. The paintings are beautiful. The three double page paintings are a nice addition to the text. Young ballerinas will be encouraged by this book to work hard. Young Native Americans can read about a fellow Native American who left Indian country to receive better training that was locally available. Tallchief: America’s Prima Ballerina would be a nice addition to the biography section of your children’s library.

Jane Mouttet
Missionary School Librarian
Window Rock, Arizona


Jane Sutcliffe’s story Babe Didrikson Zaharias begins on Doucette Street in Beaumont, Texas, in 1919. We meet an eight-year-old girl who runs, jumps hedges, and hits a baseball like “a regular Babe Ruth.” Being poor and one of seven children, Babe and her brothers had to be creative when it came to having fun. She was just as strong and fast as any of her brothers. She loved running, jumping, and throwing. She wanted to become the greatest athlete that ever lived. This story follows Babe through her school years until she eventually competes in the 1932 Olympics where she won several medals and set many world records. Babe was a star athlete.

This is an inspiring story about a girl with a lot of drive and ambition. Jane Sutcliffe has made this a very readable story, packed with facts about Babe Didrikson’s life. Jeni Reeves’ illustrations are well done, yet unassuming so as not to detract from the story. An afterword is included to give more detailed information about Babe Didrikson’s life after she won her Olympic medals, including information about her being one of the founders of the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), as well as being named Outstanding Woman Athlete of the Half Century in 1950. There is a timeline on the last page that shows the events of Babe’s life.

Patricia Youmans, MLIS
Homeshool Parent
Siloam Springs, Arkansas


921 (813.54). DePaola, Tomie--Childhood and youth; Authors, American; Illustrators. 56 p. Gr. 2 - 3.

An East Coast hurricane, a new house, a first viewing of the classic Disney film Snow White, the disappointment of kindergarten, a fire, a flood, Christmas, New Year’s, a move, and the end (‘for the time being’). Welcome to Tomie DePaola’s first chapter book, the tale of the time when he was not quite five, told in Tomie’s voice, illustrated in Tomie’s easily recognizable style, for Tomie’s readers.

DePaola’s simple text tells the story in the language of a young boy. Readers of his picture books will enjoy hearing about his upstairs and

This is the abridged version of the American Revolutionary hero, Marquis Jean Lafayette. Fritz begins this historical talk when Lafayette is very young, but only briefly mentions his boyhood. The gist of the book covers Lafayette’s passion for the American colonies’ pursuit of freedom where General George Washington becomes an important friend to the Marquis. This friendship lasts till Washington’s death and Lafayette deeply mourns his dear General. Americans loved Lafayette so much that many cities were named after him. The book ends, at the death of this beloved war hero.

Fritz has included a useful index, bibliography, and two pages of notes. A glossary would have been nice for some of the undefined terms, but on the whole this historical account is enlightening and informative.

Connie Weaver
Reference Librarian
Carlisle, Pennsylvania


Squanto has come home, but his tribe is gone. Illness has killed everyone. If Squanto had been there, he would have died, too. Instead, God uses a negative to provide a positive. Squanto, an Indian captured as a slave and sent to Spain, ends up in England and finally comes home to North America to find that everyone he knew is gone. Sometimes people wonder why bad things happen to good people. When the Pilgrims come, they settle in the very spot where Squanto’s tribe had been. The first winter for the Pilgrims is difficult and half of them die. The second winter, Squanto comes to the settlement and teaches them how to live.

Squanto and the Miracle of Thanksgiving is a compelling tale written by Eric Metaxas. Colorful illustrations by Shannon Stirnweis bring the story to life. Although Squanto’s early life is probably somewhat speculative, most sources agree that Squanto was definitely an instrument of God in helping the Pilgrims survive. His slavery, his knowledge of England, knowledge of the English language, and understanding of the area were assets in helping the Pilgrims make it through their second winter.

This is a must read book for anyone who wants to understand the early settlement of our land.

Patricia J. Perry
Parent, Former Librarian
Westerville, Ohio


They promised to be forever friends, but it might not happen. Slowly, year by year, they are graduating and leaving each other. Binky just can’t cope with her brother Egg going off to college; what will she ever do without him? A close friend worries Lexi’s parents, who want her to step back from her serious relationship with Todd. They even want Lexi to date others. How will they all deal with these problems? It seems Todd’s way is to find a beautiful girl to date. Lexi has her own difficulties, as an important date gets the wrong idea about the relationship she had with Todd. Of course there’s always Miranda’s group to keep things stirred up with a bit of nasty gossip and a dollop of wrong attitude. Everything eventually comes out right as Binky discovers she can cope without Egg, and Lexi and Todd convince Lexi’s parents of their mature Christian attitudes.

Author of the Live! From Brentwood High series and several advice books, Judy Baer capably uses her story to exhibit Christian solutions to teenagers’ problems. Her protagonists recognize the value of positive friendships, chaste dating situations, and saving sex for marriage. With mature thought and action, they obey their parents—even when it goes against their own desires. Prayer and Bible study form a fundamental part of their lives.

The author deals with a number of issues, including suicide, teen pregnancy, anger, honoring parents, coping with friends’ strange ideas, and dating. The slang used adds verisimilitude to the scenes. With easy-to-read sentences and simple language, F. Grandparents—Fiction; Ranch life—Wyoming—Fiction; Wyoming—Fiction. 208 p. Gr. 4—8.

Con spends summers on his grandparents’ ranch in the Wind River area of Wyoming, along with his female cousins. This summer, he flies in from Austria and into the middle of a heap of problems. Strange things have been happening around the ranch and his grandfather is not well. He encourages Con to observe carefully things that are different and to put together all the pieces. Grandpa and Gran have a deep trust in God to take care of them according to his will and to provide for them. But a big movie star with a lot of money secretly attempts to destroy their ranch and their way of life, ostensibly in the name of saving the environment. Native Americans, jealous neighbors, and a radical group are thwarted by determined sleuthing and help from all of the cousins and Con’s good friend, Hannah, in Washington D.C.

While certainly a good story, written with obvious joy for the barren lands and beauty of Wyoming, the premise of The Sagebrush Rebellion—that kids could solve such a mystery and conquer the evil motivations presented—is really presumptuous. Too many coincidences drive the plot forward. What was Hannah doing in Washington D.C. anyway, just in time to take an incriminating picture? All of the cousins run together in the reader’s mind, although their different gifts and abilities are demonstrated. However, the values presented by author Mary Reeves Bell, including respect for the land and the native American, love and honor for grandparents and heritage, the importance of reading and writing of poetry, and deep faith in God, are real and worthy.

Judy Belcher
Teacher
Bremerton, Washington


Dora, a sixteen-year-old Amish girl, sneaks out on dates with Gideon until the guilt of disobeying God and her parents becomes overwhelming. When Dora is offered the schoolmarm job at Birch Hollow School in Minnesota, she accepts. She comes to like Matthew, and they begin dating. The courtship continues until Matthew becomes distant, and Dora wonders if he has found out about her secret dates with Gideon. Then Matthew moves to California, and Dora returns home to Pennsylvania. She writes Matthew a number of letters, but there is no response. After Dora returns to her schoolmarm job, she writes to Matthew one last time. At last she receives a letter, and it appears that he plans to return home for a visit; she hopes he still cares for her.

Carrie Bender has written a story about a teenager’s rebellion against waiting until age seventeen to date, and the problems this attitude causes in her life. Dora never gets to enjoy a courtship with Gideon when she is old enough to date, and Dora’s courtship with Matthew is jeopardized because of her past relationship with Gideon.

Birch Hollow Schoolmarm is a terrific book about the importance of not allowing self-centeredness to keep God from being the focal point. Scattered throughout the book are German names for activities, objects, and people, with the meanings in English provided in parentheses. At the back of the book are “Rules for Teachers and Schoolchildren,” that describe old customs; there is also a listing of credits for each section with applicable scripture.

Dianne Woodman
Free lance Writer and Homeschool Parent
San Jose, California


F. Choices—Fiction. unp. Gr. 4—8.

Twelve-year-old Camille faces many decisions and she wants to make the right choices. But did she make the right choice by joining the Christian Debating Team at school? Close friends don’t think so. They predict this outward show of faith will certainly alienate her from the in-crowd. As she stews over the dilemma, an angel suddenly appears. Camille soon finds herself on a unique journey where concepts of faith take on form. She learns how to use Time, Wisdom, Faith, Courage, Praise, and Thanksgiving in her Christian walk, and how to avoid Fear, Doubt, and Worry.

Judi Brantly makes biblical principles come alive through symbolism. Although fiction, this imaginative approach implants practical ideas for decision-making in a very real way. Martha-
Life is busy.

For some of you, that brief sentence might just represent the height of impertinent understatement. Each month the calendar fills up as the tyranny of the urgent runs roughshod over our best intentions. It wouldn’t be so bad if we could only keep our priorities in order, but it often seems that the very things that are most precious to us and most vital to our health and spiritual wholeness are the first to be jettisoned as we rush from one responsibility to the next.

One fine but hectic day, I became fed up. And so, in spite of tongue-in-cheek warnings to “be careful about what you pray for,” I prayed that God would help me to find more time to spend in his presence. God saw fit to answer my prayers. It seemed I was in need of back surgery, and not only that, but while waiting for surgery, I would be forced to take time off work. I wondered, somewhat ruefully, if I should have paid more attention to those warnings that every kind of thing will be well. For those who are weighed down by fear and anxiety, Teresa of Avila wrote the following poem:

“Let nothing disturb you, nothing cause you fear;
All things pass
God is unchanging.
Patience obtains all:
Whoever has God
Needs nothing else,
God alone suffices.”

David put it more concisely when he wrote, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1)

So, feeling that I had better keep up my end of the bargain, I decided to set aside a portion of each day to read, study, pray, and meditate on his word. It will not surprise you to learn that through this experience—surgery and all—I have been most richly blessed. Not only have I grown closer to my God, but I’ve also met some interesting friends along the way, and my path has been most wonderfully illuminated by their wise words and insightful observations. I thought I’d share some of my favorite passages, in the hopes that you might share in my blessing, without having to resort to surgery!

For those who wonder why we pray at all, since God already knows our innermost thoughts and needs, Julian of Norwich tells us that “Prayer unites the soul to God.” Julian experienced visions, which she referred to as ‘showings.’ In one of these showings, Christ gave her these words for those who suffer from doubts and uncertainty: “I may make all things well, and I can make all things well, and I shall make all things well, and I will make all things well; and you will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well.” For those who are weighed down by fear and anxiety, Teresa of Avila wrote the following poem:

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For those who struggle—even in the midst of their Christian walk—with questions about the meaning of their lives, Teresa declares that “The goal of the spiritual journey is to be united with God ...” For those who labor endlessly to find a balance between the demands of this world and the desire for the next, Hildegard of Bingen wrote, “On the one hand, your desires and feelings sigh for the narrow path that leads to God. But, on the other hand, you have a whole realm of worries about the people entrusted to you. The former is in light; the latter in shadow ... You don’t allow yourself to see that they belong together and this is why you so frequently experience depression in your spirit. For you fail to see your striving for God and your concern for people as a unity ...”

For those who wonder how it is that God can truly care for them, when so many others clamor for his attention, Therese of Lisieux reminds us that “The sun’s light, that plays on the cedar-trees, plays on each tiny flower as if it were the only one in existence; and in the same way our Lord takes a special interest in each soul, as if there were no other like it.”

For those who suffer under the self-imposed burden of perfectionism, Therese states that “Perfection consists simply in doing his will, and being just what he wants us to be ...” For those who punish themselves for failing to meet the needs of others, Canon Tallis counsels, “Who are you to think you are better than our Lord? After all, he was singularly unsuccessful with a great many people.”

Of those who cannot find the strength to keep to the narrow way, Augustine asks “Why do you try to stand in your own strength and fail? Cast yourself upon God and have no fear. He will not shrink away and let you fall. Cast yourself upon him without fear, for he will welcome you and cure your ills.”

It is my hope that the words I have passed along may serve to refresh, inspire, and enlighten, and I would strongly encourage you to visit local bookstores and, of course, libraries in order to pursue further readings.

I have listed some of my own sources below, and while they are all excellent, I would recommend Devotional Classics most highly. Editors Foster and Smith have selected fifty-two classic works of devotional literature, and each 2-4 page
Sources

Praying with Julian of Norwich, by Gloria Durka

Praying with Teresa of Avila, by Rosemary Broughton

Praying with Hildegard of Bingen, by Gloria Durka

Winona: Minn. St. Mary’s Press, various years


Devotional classics: selected readings for individuals and groups, by Richard J. Foster and James B. Smith. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993

Scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Elizabeth Ferguson’s dreamy illustrations complement this line of thought. Camille’s Crossroad is a great discussion-building tool for parents and teachers.

Beth Loughner
Freelance Writer, Registered Nurse
Columbus, Ohio


F. Orphans--Fiction; Kentucky--Fiction; Stuttering--Fiction; Pollution--Fiction; Football--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 118 p. Gr. 5—8.


F. Gangs--Fiction; Miami (Fla.)--Fiction; Cuban Americans--Fiction; Track and field--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 118 p. Gr. 5—8.


F. Kidnapping--Fiction; Soccer--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 115 p. Gr. 5—8.


F. Stock-car racing--Fiction; Television--Production and direction--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 122 p. Gr. 5—8.


F. Paintball (Game)--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 121 p. Gr. 5—8.


F. Basketball--Fiction; Mystery fiction; Criminals--Fiction; Fathers and sons--Fiction. 121 p. Gr. 5—8.

In each of the books in this series, the author, Sigmund Brouwer, takes a high-school-age boy, a sport, a personal problem, and throws in some cultural problems or earthy aspects to construct a story of intrigue. Yes, these are definitely formula books. However, they have well-developed characters facing personal struggles and trying to make wise decisions while being successful in their sports. The author is obviously well-acquainted with each of the various sports, as he uses appropriate terminology to describe strategies and talents required for successful participation in each one. He also deals with safety issues and competition. He hooks the reader with some pretty earthy images. For example, a boy escaping through a second-story window lands in some dog waste, only to be laughed at by the police because of his smell. These incidents are not central to the stories, however, and are handled humorously.

Each book in the Sports Mystery series introduces a character who has faith that God will work all things out for the good for those who trust in him. In a couple of the books, these prayers seem to be a bit tacked-on at the end; perhaps the protagonist really would have been struggling with God in the deepest part of the conflict, not just recognizing him at the end. There is nothing sugar-coated about the faith described, though. “Believing ain’t really believing if you don’t practice it.” (Cobra Threat)

Personal and cultural issues addressed include stuttering, popularity, making friends, illegal aliens, computer hacking, impersonation, gangs, illegal dumping of dangerous chemicals, an unemployable father, fraud, and materialism. Storylines, which make reference to such elements as the Internet or making it in a sport as a woman, are current and timely.

Readers will be thinking about real life in new and helpful ways as they get drawn into these stories.

Judy Belcher
Teacher
Bremerton, Washington


In a tale of the classic battle between good and evil, The Hermit Thrush Sings by Susan Butler tells of the reunion of Leora and her sister Reba. The twisted circumstances of the times—caused by radiation from a meteor—creates a narrative filter through which we see Mayner, the remains of Maine. Leora’s wicked relatives, Tanette and Wilfert, the misunderstood birnbas, and the kind-hearted servants Norie and Howie, all in their own way, compel Leora—with her webbed left hand—to make the dangerous trip from Village 3 to Village 13. There occurs the ultimate battle, as the commoners take back their lives from the oppressive government.

The Hermit Thrush Sings is a complex story. The brevity of the chapters, some four-to-seven pages in length, works to the advantage of the author, allowing her to develop the characters...
with bold strokes. There is some violence in the book, which is integral to the storyline.

Su Hagerty
Teacher
Issaquah, Washington


In 1867, fifteen-year-old Sean Sullivan joins his father to work on the Union Pacific railroad. Thus father and son become a part of the race to meet the eastward-bound Central Pacific railway, linking America by rail for the first time. Sean begins as a lowly waterboy but by the end of the story has worked his way up to the enviable position of spike—on one who drives the spikes into the rails. Not only is his labor physically gruelling, but he faces the possibility of a quick death at the hands of angry Indians or drunken whites, as well as the dangers of nature’s wrath and unforgiving terrain.

As he matures toward adulthood, Sean observes more than the obvious discomforts of building a piece of history. He marvels at the prejudice he sees directed toward the Chinese, Indians, Blacks, and even evident among the Irish themselves as they pit county against county. He mourns the greed of the financiers of the railroad who greatly overcharge the government for their own gain while forcing the underpaid workers to move so quickly that much of the railway will have to be replaced due to shoddy labour.

One of several books in a remarkable series, this fictional journal brings to life an era of history vital to the development of the American way of life. Wagon trains crossing the country took several months and were fraught with danger and hardship. Travelling to California by ship could take as long as nine months. The transcontinental railroad reduced the journey to a week.

In his afterword, author William Durbin astutely compares the railroad’s importance in uniting America with the Apollo moon landing a hundred years later. Sean’s journal is an exciting, literate read that painlessly provides historical information. It is a simply splendid book, beautifully written.

Marcy Stewart Fronkne
Assistant Professor of Education, Bryan College
Dayton, Tennessee


F. Pacific railroads--Fiction; Railroads--Fiction; Diaries--Fiction. 188 p. Gr. 5—9.

The youngest McWaïd, starts off by getting a much more enviable position of spiker—one who drives the spikes into the rails. Not only is his labor physically gruelling, but he faces the possibility of a quick death at the hands of angry Indians or drunken whites, as well as the dangers of nature’s wrath and unforgiving terrain.

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Marcy Stewart Fronkne
Assistant Professor of Education, Bryan College
Dayton, Tennessee


F. Paddle steamers--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Australia--Fiction. 160 p. Gr. 5—9.

Tension mounts when strange Miss Perlmutter, a new passenger and Bible-quoting spinster, arrives on board. Patrick finds a mysterious and threatening character. Heὀ takes a much-needed vacation, and his friend, an encounter with Officer York, a bully, and a break-in into the locked wards of Collingwood Asylum, where he finds a secret room.

And when he comes home, he finds himself tangled up in the guide ropes. If flying away on a runaway balloon isn’t exciting enough, then add to it a crash-landing in the outback, the fearsome “bunyip,” and then an encounter with a mysterious giant of a man. All this, on top of the main event—surviving a sweeping fire-storm—will keep readers intrigued and anticipating the next installment.

For readers unfamiliar with the series, there is more than enough action to keep the interest; in fact, the storyline will convince new readers to go back and learn more about the McWaïds. The author provides plenty of authenticity for his story of the land down under, and while his characters are quick to pray and give testimony to their belief, they don’t come across as too contrived or overbearing.

Robert Elmer, author of Panic at Emu Flat, writes a nail-biting conclusion to the eight book series of the McWaïd family, titled Adventures Down Under. The story is set in Australia in 1869, and Patrick McWaïd, fourteen years of age, travels the Murray River with his parents and brother and sister aboard Lady Elisabeth, their family’s triple deck paddle steamer. River life is busy, but soon becomes busier, more mysterious and threatening than Patrick would want. Mayhem ensues when ostriches are loaded aboard. Patrick, curious and excited, unlashes a cage. One large, agitated bird trundles out and runs down the gangplank with Patrick hanging onto a wing. Thus begins an odyssey for Patrick that includes a missing friend, an encounter with Officer York, a bully and tyrant who almost kills him, and a break-in into the locked wards of Collingwood Asylum, where he finds a secret room.

Tension mounts when strange Miss Perlmutter, a new passenger and Bible-quoting spinster, won’t discuss the hidden rifles Patrick saw. Her heavy German accent only adds to Patrick’s suspicions, until she comes to his aid when he is accused of murder. Building tension like a watchdog winding a clock spring, Elmer

F Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, d. 30 B.C.--Fiction; Egypt--History--To 640 A.D.--Fiction; Diaries--Fiction. 222 p. Gr. 4--8.

Set in Egypt before the time of Christ in 57 B.C., this is Cleopatra’s journal, written during her twelfth and thirteenth years. The author has so effectively brought Cleopatra to life that the reader almost quivers in fear as she does when she realises she is in danger from the many enemies to the crown. Imagine her anxiety when a deadly cobra is let loose in the palace—yet all is not fear and danger for our young heroine. She happily records her friendships, and therefore ends with room for another departure of friends. With loving, respectful, firm guidance, the parents give the students the benefit of the doubt and room for mature thinking. In return students treat parents with love and respect, have fun with them, and try hard (and often successfully) to be mature and godly. Gunn believably presents members of the opposite sex as friends as well as dating material. Problems receive sufficient description to make them recognizable but are not delved into deeply. This leaves room for the reader to put herself in the situation and to consider how she should act. Sufficient in itself, the story is one of a series and therefore ends with room for another beginning.


F Christian life--Fiction; Short stories. 271 p. Gr. 7--10.

Departures is actually a collection of three summer vacation stories featuring characters from popular series. Now Boarding at Gate 10, by Gunn, features Christy Miller. The Miller family travels from California to the town in Wisconsin where they lived previously. The occasion is Christy’s grandparents’ fiftieth wedding anniversary. Christy spends time with Matt, a boy she’d once had a crush on. By the end of the vacation, both agree that they’re not ready to be boyfriend and girlfriend.

Unfortunately, Gunn constantly tells us what Christy is thinking, rather than showing us through Christy’s actions and words. While observing her grandparents, Christy decides commitment and intimacy are requirements for a successful marriage. Later, she concludes they are also elements of a close relationship with God. However, those deep thoughts seem pasted into the story, which has a does-he-like-me-or-doesn’t-he shallowness.

Please Pick Up the White Courtesy Phone, by Nentwig, features Cooper Ellis. Cooper and her friend, Claire, accompany their mothers to Seattle on a business trip. The girls stay with Cooper’s Aunt Penny while the moms check into a hotel.

Much of this story reads like an itinerary: they did this, they did that, they went here, they went there. The conflict revolves around sibling rivalry between Mrs. Ellis and Aunt Penny. Mrs. Ellis thinks Penny is irresponsible. When she finds out the girls got lost in a rough part of the city because Cooper was trying to meet a boy she’d met, Mrs. Ellis vents her dismay on Penny rather than Cooper. As a result, the climactic scene lacks authenticity.

In the Event of a Water Landing, by Gunn, features Sierra Jensen. This is the best story of the three. Sierra travels with her friend Jana, Jana’s brother Gregg, and Gregg’s friend Tim to join Jana’s and Gregg’s parents at their vacation cabin. Sierra and Jana flirt with a couple of boys.

When the kids go river rafting, Gunn uses the opportunity to make corny analogies to life. And speaking of corny, the dialogue is unnatural, particularly for teens. When Sierra accuses Jana of being fickle, Jana responds, “Come on, Sierra. Don’t be so critical. This is all part of it. . . Part of figuring out life. You know, leaving childhood and venturing into the wild wonderful world of womanhood.” Pull-lease.

Gunn makes two half-hearted attempts at suspense in this story, but quickly resolves them, as though trying to shield her readers from intensity. The result is a light-weight story.

Light-weight is an accurate characterization of the collection. This is truly light summer reading. Nevertheless, the stories had one special delightful twist. The three stories converge at one point, as the characters all cross paths. Although they don’t know each other, they do notice one another in a way that will have readers flipping pages to verify.

Andrea R. Huelsenbeck
Freelance Writer
Tempe, Arizona

That ever-elusive boyfriend, Paul, living in the English Isles, once again pulls at Sierra’s heartstrings. This time she really believes she will get to see him. She even has a date in mind for their meeting: her high school graduation. But Sierra must place her emotions and mind under God’s control as other problems arise in Closer Than Ever. Friends and future plans take up a big portion of Sierra’s time and thoughts. Maybe they’ll all get to go to the same university, or maybe not. Prayer and Bible study become real to Sierra as she copes with crazy situations and real problems. She needs all her Christian maturity when the news comes that the plane Paul was supposed to be on has crashed. Will Sierra ever see Paul again? Her friends and family offer their own inimitable forms of support as they await the final denouement.

Robin Jones Gunn, author of the Glenbrook and Christy Miller series, presents a nicely wacky bunch of Christian teens here. While having fun and enjoying one another’s friendships, they learn—often through trial and error—to apply the Lord’s solutions to problems such as coping with emotions, arranging social events, spending money, leading a friend back to the Lord, and dealing with siblings, graduation, and the eventual departure of friends.

Karen Hesse’s use of the diary format allows her to describe daily life during the Civil War from a teenager’s viewpoint. The war is particularly brought home to Amelia because of the political conflict that exists between her parents. When a ship of slaves is wrecked on the island, Amelia’s mother wants to turn them over to the authorities, while her father wants to help them escape. This same conflict exists among the people on the mainland.

A Light in the Storm: The Civil War Diary of Amelia Martin offers a superb opportunity for children to learn about the civil war and the unique position Delaware occupied because of its location. The state was on the border between North and South, freedom and slavery, and those who lived there disagreed about the right and wrongs of slavery. The book includes a brief history and illustrations depicting American life in 1861.

Dianne Woodman
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Parent
San Jose, California

Discussion-starter on Christian heroes, evangelism, and the Bible’s lessons of love and forgiveness.
Lisa A. Wroble
Freelance Writer and Librarian
Plymouth, Michigan


Another thought-provoking and inspiring title in the historical fiction series about early Christian heroes, Mask of the Wolf Boy recounts the story of Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth in China during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900.

Chou Fu-Lin is a houseboy for the Goforths, Canadian missionaries in Changte. After falling into a wolf’s den, where he is attacked and badly scarred, Fu-Lin is brought to the Goforths, where both his physical and spiritual wounds are tended. Wearing a bandana to mask his disfigured face, he earns the nickname “Wolf Boy.” Though plagued with recurring dreams about the accident, he knows that he would never have come to the Goforths, nor learned of Christ’s salvation, were it not for the incident. The Goforths give him a good home and schooling, in return for his service as a houseboy.

When the American Consul urges the Goforths to flee the country, Fu-Lin accompanies them on their journey. As they travel to Shanghai, they are confronted with growing animosity towards whites and foreigners. The anger of the Chinese people grows more and more violent with each city they enter. Soon Fu-Lin is hiding not only behind his “Wolf Boy” mask, but behind the fear that veils his faith. Torn between his new faith and his national loyalty, he wonders if the Boxers will turn on him. As the Goforths and their travelling companions face impossible odds, overcoming them all through prayer, Fu-Lin’s faith is dealt the ultimate test. In the end, both Fu-Lin and the reader learn a valuable lesson about friendship and trust in God in this novel by the Jacksons.

Lisa A. Wroble
Freelance Writer and Librarian
Plymouth, Michigan


F. German Americans--Missouri--Saint Louis--History--19th century--Fiction; Emigrants and immigrants--Fiction. 270 p. Gr. 7—12.
In Kathleen L. Jacob’s novel, *Never Forsaken*, seventeen-year-old Louisa Shumaker emigrates from Germany to St. Louis, Missouri in 1894. Two years earlier her father had sailed to America, promising to prepare a new home for his family. Now the long-awaited letter has come with money for ocean liner tickets and detailed travel instructions. Louisa faces a difficult and dangerous journey with her mother, Sophia, fifteen-year-old brother, Henry, and six-year-old sister, Dorothy.

After tearfully giving away treasured possessions and parting with relatives and friends, Louisa’s family embarks on their trip. Bound together by their love for each other and their faith in God’s presence and protection, the family survives the theft of their trunk, a stay in an unsanitary inn, and deplorable conditions during a nine-day voyage across the Atlantic. Their mother’s prayers give them courage. Fear and suspense grip them during exams at Ellis Island, but they receive immigrant status.

Louisa is disappointed with St. Louis—her family is confronted with a small apartment and dirty neighborhood—but God has not forsaken them; the author skillfully weaves this theme throughout her story. Louisa helps support her growing family by sewing and house-cleaning. Rheumatic fever strikes and death visits more than once, but the family members comfort one another with the hope of heaven. Louisa blossoms into a lovely young lady with a strong faith and a promising romance.

Jacobs’ story displays good literary style, capturing the flavor of the era with horse and buggy, cobblestone streets, gas lamps, and street cars. References to prayer, and to God’s faith and a promising romance.

∗


Written in diary format, *Elizabeth I* covers the life of Elizabeth and her observations of her father’s life and court from July 1, 1544 to March 3, 1547. Elizabeth includes recollections of events from the past and manages to effectively convey the constant political upheaval that is so much a part of her ten years as the “forgotten princess,” brought to court only when expedient. From the beginning of the journal the reader is aware of her astute survival skills and insights regarding the political seething around who is “in” or “out.” Some of her interpretations are definitely the thoughts of a teenaged, immature young woman, like her comment about Mary’s interest in marrying Charles V: “Why she’d want him, I wouldn’t know. I heard he is a man with a huge, ugly jaw, bad teeth . . .”. On another occasion, Elizabeth comments about the appointment of a royal fool for Edward, lamenting her being “the only royal child in our family without a fool.”

The data included appear to be accurate and, if fictionalized, in keeping with the events and descriptions of the time. Elizabeth reflects on all aspects of her life and feelings from day to day, well aware that her life will be in peril if Mary ever ascends the throne. The journal format is very popular reading and an easy way to absorb history and portray personality.

A four-page epilogue summarizes events in Elizabeth’s life from her father’s death to her own. In addition, a historical essay on the Tudors, a family tree, a brief outline of Henry VIII’s wives, and a photo gallery are included at the end of Lasky’s book, providing more factual depth.

Patricia Braun
Retired Jr. High Librarian
National Louis University, Elem. Educ, Student Teaching Supervisor
Arlington Heights, Illinois


F. High schools—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 192 p. Gr. 6—12.


Glen, seventeen, likes his ordinary life; he never gets too excited about anything. As the narrative is written from Glen’s point of view, the reader learns that clothes and girls aren’t important to him yet. His parents think he’s not living up to his potential, but that doesn’t bother him much either—until his father challenges him to study for an A on a test.

Phil, Glen’s friend since kindergarten, has no time for him anymore because of his new girl, Lisa. Glen feels deserted and lonely. Then Charlie Thornton moves in across the street. A star football player, tall, blonde and good-looking, Charlie teaches Glen about drinking and breaking the rules. Drawn to Nicole, the pastor’s daughter, Glen believes she only has eyes for someone else.

Life seems easy for newcomer Charlie, until he tries to date Nicole and she turns him down. He believes she’s playing hard to get, while Glen draws mistaken conclusions, which set the stage for misunderstanding and confusion.

Readers are drawn into the story *Best Of Friends* through the many teen-age problems and fears, which leads to gripping questions about real issues. As Glen experiences a life-threatening mine cave in, he questions whether there really is a God, and learns that growing up has a price.

*Friends Like These* continues the story of 17-year-old Glen Sauten as he begins his first dating relationship with Nicole, the pastor’s daughter, with sometimes humorous, often anxious moments. Charlie, now Glen’s ex-friend because of Nicole, knows he’s better looking and smarter and can’t understand why Nicole prefers average, ordinary Glen over him.
But Glen isn’t ordinary; he’s searching for answers to real life questions, and frustrated with the youth group at church because they never talk about real problems. Overhearing his new mentor and friend, John, say, “People won’t grow unless they talk about real life issues with other believers,” strikes a chord in Glen’s spirit. 

Glen begins meeting weekly with John’s small Bible study group and schedules time to read the Bible and pray. Becoming vulnerable as God works in him, Glen develops a growing relationship with God along with an overwhelming realization of who God is.

Lindquist combines the angst of growing up with the need for an increasing relationship with God. Written from Glen’s viewpoint, the text allows teens to identify with the characters. Lindquist draws the characters with skill and warm insight. Parents will welcome the strong moral values and common-sense answers suggested to address everyday problems youths face today. Whether reading this as a stand alone book or part of the series, the reader will want more from this author who portrays kids with realism and heart.

Gail Welborn
Freelance Writer/Reporter
Everett, Washington

★


The Journal of Scott Pendleton deals with Scott’s life from May through August, 1944. The first entry establishes Scott’s feelings regarding his past home life, and moves quickly into events surrounding D-Day. In the beginning he is stationed in England as a member of the 116th Infantry Regiment, and he becomes part of the Allied push, landing in the chaos of Omaha Beach. The bulk of the journal entries detail the subsequent battles and skirmishes of which the 116th is part. After several weeks pushing forward in Europe, Scott is wounded and returns to Omaha Beach, which is now more organized; from there, he is shipped to a hospital and eventually home.

While Scott and his Virginia recruits appear to be the main characters of the narrative, the author, Walter Myers, acknowledges the war as the primary figure of the book in the epilogue. A section at the end entitled “Life in America in 1944” includes a historical essay about Hitler’s role in Europe, a list of events leading up to the war, and a selection of D-Day photos.

The language and sentence structure are reflective of Scott’s central Virginia background and education. Scott is presented realistically and humanly, a young man plopped into war and reflecting periodically back on events that should be occurring at home, like picnics or parties.

Patricia Braun
Retired Jr. High Librarian
National Louis University, Elem. Educ. Student Teaching Supervisor
Arlington Heights, Illinois

★


F. Hagerstown, (Md.)--History--Civil War, 1862-1865--Fiction; Ransom--Fiction; Maryland--Fiction; United States--History--Civil War, 1862-1865--Fiction. 265 p. Gr. 3.—10.

Friendship in the face of adversity, no matter the cost, no matter the cause, is given an excellent stage in Ann Rinaldi’s newest work of historical fiction, Amelia’s War. Set in Hagerstown, Maryland, it presents the Civil War as seen through thirteen-year-old Amelia Grafton’s eyes. Her family is pro-Union, but not necessarily pro-North, and throughout the story, and the war, Amelia struggles to take a stand. When she finally does take a stand her actions will make a life-changing difference in the lives of all around her.

Rinaldi, an award-winning author, is at her best in this latest addition to Civil War stories. She has the ability to weave a credible storyline around uncovered historical facts, thereby giving the subject matter, in this case the Civil War, a more pronounced, immediate, perspective. The horror and destruction of war is evident, as is the tragedy of broken families and friendships; but more importantly Rinaldi draws attention to the need to show compassion and decency towards others, never mind whose side they may be on. The characters are all strong, and even though the main character is a pre-adolescent girl this should not deter boys from reading the book, since the plot has plenty of action.

This book is excellent for its authenticity, and its ability to show how life continues on, despite the pressures of war. A book to consider when studying the Civil War.

Pam Webb
Library Technician
Sandpoint, Idaho


F. Slavery--Fiction.  Gr. 5.—8.

In Burden of Honor, three teenagers’ lives are disrupted by the American Civil War. Gideon Tugwell worries that the family’s lack of money will result in the loss of their farm, or force his widowed mother to marry a vicious slave catcher. But the ex-Confederate soldier, John Fletcher, rescued by the Tugwell family, helps Gideon sell the family’s crops at the market in Richmond for a satisfactory profit.

Emily Lodge is frustrated with the military’s refusal to issue her a pass to Illinois. After innocently agreeing to pass on information from wounded soldiers to Oliver Fitzugh, in exchange for free mail delivery, Emily is arrested. At Fitzugh’s execution, she is cleared of any wrongdoing and is subsequently issued a pass.

Nat Travis, a freed slave, returns to Virginia to help his mother and sister escape. After Nat is captured and has located them, he is taken to Richmond. He gets away and makes arrangements with the Underground for their freedom. Then Nat sees his brother, Rufus, in a coffin chain and decides to stay.

In Road to Freedom, these same teenager’s lives are disrupted by the American Civil War. Gideon Tugwell worries his widowed mother will be forced to marry a vicious slave catcher. He wants her to marry John Fletcher, a friend and helper on the farm. When Cobb tries to get Gideon and John Fletcher hung as spies for hiding a Union soldier, the plan backfires. Emily Lodge is ready to leave for Illinois using a hard-earned military pass, but family responsibility takes her to Briarstone Plantation. She acts as liaison between her injured cousin, William, and the troublesome overseer and takes on teaching responsibilities. A week before Emily’s pass expires she leaves for Illinois but is forced to turn back. Nat Travis, a fugitive slave, is tracking his brother, Rufus, in a coffle chain. He is captured and sent to the Trouble Plantation. After escaping, Nat goes to a barn where runaway slaves hide and finds Rufus there. Nat gives up his freedom so Rufus can escape on a streamer.

Lee Roddy has written historical novels about the responsibilities of three teenagers growing up during the Civil War. Gideon works on the family farm from sunup to sundown but still finds the energy to study with Emily as one day he hopes to write books. Emily figures out the best way to handle a troublesome overseer, and Nat wants all his family members free.

These are excellent books for children to learn about the conflicts between individuals with differing views on slavery.


In *Abandoned*, Jennie McGrady once again finds herself in the middle of a mystery, when her friend Annie finds out that she was adopted after being abandoned as a baby in a trash bin. At the same time, Annie confides in Jennie that she thinks she is being followed. When Annie disappears, the police and the news media become involved. Meanwhile, Jennie's dad is trying to track down a serial killer who is targeting pro-life victims.

After tracking a license plate, Jennie confronts Debra Noble, the news anchor for a Portland television station, and Debra reveals that she had an abortion as a young girl. As Jennie tries to discover who Annie’s birth-mother is, murders continue, and a murder attempt is made on Debra Noble.

Jennie’s discoveries lead her to some shocking revelations involving a failed abortion, blackmail, and a guilty doctor seeking to cover up facts that could destroy his reputation. Patricia Rushford’s exciting plot, descriptive writing, and integration of teen issues make this a worthwhile, enjoyable read.


Darla Jean (DJ) Randall is back in the High Hurdles series. She continues toward her goal of heading to the Olympics as a member of the U.S. Equestrian Team. She’s in ninth grade now, struggling with algebra, and desperately juggling all her obligations—from teaching new riders at Briones Academy to training with her horses.

Whether or not they’ve read the earlier books in this series, young readers’ hearts will be captured by this busy and determined high school freshman. Snelling does an excellent job filling readers in on the details of DJ’s life—in case they haven’t read the previous books in the series. And she does this without repeating too much information, which would be frustrating to those following the series book-by-book. In the first few pages we have her mother and stepfather, Robert, DJ’s five-year-old twin stepbrothers the Double Bs, her biological father, Brad, and his wife Jackie, all cheering DJ on at a show.

In this title, DJ learns to focus, for in school, during lessons, or while working with her horses, her daydreaming often places her in embarrassing situations. She is also learning to let go of her worries and also of her horse, Major, who is holding her back from doing her best in competitions. When Brad and Jackie offer DJ one of their many horses, a thoroughbred gelding named Herndon, DJ can’t bear the thought of leaving Major behind. She and Herndon end up in the ring together, though, and DJ learns that life events are ultimately in God’s hands, if we simply “let go and let God” do his work.
200’s—Religion


231.7. Creationism. Gr. 8 - 12.

Johnson and White’s first chapter, “They say your uncle was fuzzy or was he?” leads into a refreshing explanation of evolution versus creationism in What’s with the Mutant in the Microscope? Using simple language and comparisons, the authors expose gaping holes in Darwin’s theory of evolution and give solid answers for creationism, based on scientific fact and the Bible. At the same time, they state that “Darwin is to evolutionists, what Christ is to Christians: truth itself.”

The authors’ express the need to speak evolutionists’ language. Which means the creationist needs to know the arguments for evolution, as well as the arguments for creationism. In eight easy to read chapters the authors reveal both sides of the debate. Using the premise that the human body demonstrates intelligent design and points to a creator, the reader learns arguments based on science facts:

Natural selection can be observed

Exact cell reproduction leads to survival, while random cell reproduction leads to destruction.

The single cell is hard evidence of a creator.

DNA, a living blueprint within humans, points to a creator, because of its intricacy.

The theory of irreducible complexity means life could not happen randomly.

White, biologist-apologist, and Johnson, bestselling youth author, make the evolution-creation debate enjoyable and easy to understand. Their comparisons of animals and people, theory and fact illustrate with clarity their message that God is the grand designer. Both youth and adults will appreciate this excellent resource.

Gail Welborn
Freelance Writer/Reporter
Everett, Washington

300’s—Social Sciences


370. Schools--History. 48 p. Gr. 7 - Adult.

Years ago the school house was the community center. Small schools were located within walking or riding range. Parents wanted their children to have a good education and all grades were in one room. Boys were usually on one side, girls on the other. Wood desks, benches, a potbelly stove, an outhouse outside, and perhaps a blackboard was all that was needed to give an education. Few books were available. Teachers relied on rigorous drilling and memorization. Discipline was strong and teachers were respected. Virtue and high standards were emphasized.

One-Room School by Raymond Bial provides a fascinating historical look at one-room schools from the 1700’s to the 1950’s. Clear, detailed, colorful photographs carefully add to the text. Find out what a “blab school” was, or how multi-age groups helped teach each other. This is an informative look at early education which shows that many modern education methods were actually pioneered in these early schools.

Paula Stewart Marks
Principal, Morning Star Christian School
Bend, Oregon


374. Occupational training; Vocational education; Alternative education; Vocational guidance. 216 p. Gr. 9 - 12.

Not everyone wants or needs to attend college. The book But What If I Don’t Want to Go to College?: reveals alternative education programs and resources. Step by step information on alternative education is presented. Also, the author shows the reader how to find career opportunities, and how to get started in a new career. He points out that most of the new jobs that will be created between 1997 and 2005 will need graduates of vocational and other types of educational programs.

From animal care and farm work, through nursery workers, truck drivers and wholesale workers, this book presents hundreds of job descriptions. The author even includes salary information and training requirements. The book contains numerous graphs, charts and illustrations on every aspect of job and career seeking. For example, following information on filling in an application on page 132, the author has presented several pages showing a sample application. Appendix C on page 147-154 lists the median weekly pay in 1996 for 600 different jobs.

Harlow G. Unger has done a credible job of presenting his topic. In this book he gives the reader a carefully laid out plan to prepare for and find a career. On top of that he gives seventy-two pages of statistics, charts, and resources on alternative education and career finding opportunities. Those alone are worth the price of the book.

Dell Smith Klein
Writer/Teacher
Catalina, Arizona


Just as the title suggests, 100 projects have been included, geared to entice any student into becoming a successful science fair presenter. The experiments and projects cover all areas of science from chemistry to ecology. The introduction is an essay designed to provide reminders of excellent presentation techniques. Each experiment is presented simply, beginning with a list of materials, and careful procedures to be followed. When explanations or suggestions or interpretations seem appropriate, they are included as follow-up. Illustrations accompany each experiment. Metric equivalents and a full detailed index are included. Budding scientists should have no problem accomplishing these projects, only deciding which one to try.

Patricia Braun
Retired Jr. High Librarian
National Louis University, Elem. Educ. Student Teaching Supervisor
Arlington Heights, Illinois
500’s—Natural Sciences & Mathematics


Intended as the first one-volume comprehensive source on North American mammal, The Smithsonian Book of North American Mammals, largely fulfills its goal. Written by more than 200 experts, this work covers the approximately 400 mammalian species found north of Mexico. Each entry includes a distribution map, photograph (many in color), identification guidelines, and information on behavior, diet, habitat preferences, and other related matters. A summary of the current population status of each species is also included. This authoritative work is useful for both the general reader and the specialist alike. The only shortcoming of the book is its preface, where the editors document the history of the study of mammalogy in the United States. Given the “north of Mexico” focus of the work, the absence of a Canadian historical counterpart is incomprehensible. This oversight aside, The Smithsonian Book of North American Mammals sets a standard for scientific writing and readability, which will be hard to follow.

Ted Goshulak
University Librarian
Langley, British Columbia

The Smithsonion Book of North American Mammals

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION


812.2. Children’s poetry, American—Afro-American authors; Afro-Americans—Poetry. 128 p. Gr. 5 - Adult.

I, Too, Sing America is an anthology of poetry written by African Americans that borrows its title from the poem of the same name by Langston Hughes. Catherine Clinton has compiled this collection, and for each of the twenty-five poets she has written a brief biography and introduction to the poet’s work. Each of the poems is illustrated with a full page of artwork by Stephen Alcorn. Some of the well-known poets include Phillis Wheatley, W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Gwendolyn Brooks, Maya Angelou, and Alice Walker.

As an anthology, the collected voices speak of hope that cannot be destroyed by racial injustice. Here is exemplified the black poet’s quest for truth in a world that encourages the smile that hides pain and sorrow. Written over a period of almost three hundred years, the earlier poets lived at a time when most black Americans were slaves. Read as a collection, the message reflects both slavery and later racial injustice, and emerges as a voice that must speak truth and cannot be silenced. These voices also are America, as Langston Hughes asserts.

The selection of poets is excellent. The twenty-five biographies of African Americans who chose to express themselves through poetry tell their own story. Catherine Clinton tells their stories simply, letting the facts speak for themselves, rather than pushing an agenda. The contemporary artwork, like the poetry it depicts, is sometimes celebratory and sometimes disturbing, but always hauntingly beautiful. The book itself is cloth bound and printed on high quality paper.

Cathleen Sovold Johnson
Student, Fuller Theological Seminary
Des Moines, Washington


921 (070). Bly, Nellie, 1864-1922; Journalists; Women—Biography. 112 p. Gr. 6 - 8.

At the end of the nineteenth century, when it was difficult for women to find work outside the home, Nellie Bly became a stunt reporter. Few women worked for newspapers and the ones who did reported on flower shows, fashions, and dinner parties. Nellie Bly was not content to report on such uninteresting things and worked to have more exciting stories. Her search for a story led her to Mexico where she wrote about...
the life of the peasants and for the first time gave Americans a true picture of life in Mexico. A few years later she circled the globe in less time than Phileas Fogg in Jules Verne’s Around The World in Eighty Days. Charles Fredeen spins an interesting story as he tells how Bly changed the way news was reported.

Nellie Bly: Daredevil Reporter explores not only the life of a turn of the century female reporter, but the legal and economic condition of women at that point in history. Laws favored the men. It was not uncommon for a woman to suffer unjustly when a man took advantage of a situation. Several times in her life Nellie Bly experienced economic hardship as a result of unfair laws or treatment by various men. As a result she used her journalistic talents to improve the life of poor women and orphan children. There is one mention of a man that Nellie Bly may have had a relationship with, but did not marry.

Charles Fredeen used many photographs of Nellie Bly throughout the book. He also included very interesting photos of newspaper articles she wrote and places where she lived and worked.

Barbara Bryden
Freelance Writer
Olympia, Washington

900’s—Geography, History, & Biography


Editor Gerald H. Anderson, director of Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, CT, and editor of International Bulletin of Missionary Research, has brought together 350 highly qualified contributors to create a marvelous reference work for any serious study of Christian missions. This edition follows the 1998 Simon and Schuster hardbound edition.

From Abdul Masih to Zwingli, from Origin (183-253) and Eusebius of Caesarea (260-339) to Mother Teresa and Billy Graham, the reader will find 2,400 entries representing every Christian era and perspective. In addition to the alphabetical listing, the volume is enhanced by a 30-page index, which indicates not only the biographical entries but also places, missions, and contributors. Its fifty-page index categorizes entries by time period, region of service, agencies and orders, type of work, religious tradition, as well as biographies of women, of martyrs, of non-western persons and religious tradition, as well as biographies of

Jeanette Hardage
Reviewer
Sonora, California

No library or researcher can go wrong with Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions.


921 (305.5). Truth, Sojourner, d. 1883; Abolitionists; Reформer; Afro-Americans—Biography; Women—Biography. 201 p. Gr. 6 - 12.


921 (269). Graham, Billy, 1918; Evangelists. 208 p. Gr. 6 - 12.


921 (266). Teresa, Mother, 1910-1999; Missionaries of Charity—Biography; Nuns—India—Calcutta; Missionaries; Women—Biography. 207 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

This series is written in a fictional narrative format. Told from the first person or omniscient view, the actual lives of the heroes are interspersed very creatively with realistic dialogue that should help the young adult reader not become bored while reading history. Almost every chapter ends with an exciting situation that will help the reader continue to the next chapter. Each story begins with the heroes at a young age. This should captivate the reader, as s/he may be approximately the same age as the hero in the book. The vocabulary used is middle/junior high school level. These stories are told from a Christian perspective. There is frequent quotation of Scripture in each book. All of the language used is non-detrerogatory nor racist. In the books discussing Sojourner Truth, Mother Teresa, and George Washington Carver there are brief descriptions of the violence in those times and locations. The violence is never graphic or candid. An example would be the reference to the whippings in Sojourner Truth’s period of history, a brief reference to a hanging in the book discussing George Washington Carver’s life, and the quick description of leprosy patients and rioting in India during the life of Mother Teresa.

The books are hardbound and have a durable cover with a drawn likeness of the person discussed on the cover. The paper is heavy and the type, by and large, is easy to read and take notes. The indices are brief but helpful. There are further reading suggestions in the book about Mother Teresa. The book on George Washington Carver has endnotes and a bibliography.

Bianca Elliott
Educator
Linwood, Kansas


921 (809). Guyon, Jeanne Marie; Women authors--Biography; Authors, French. 144 p. Gr. 6 - 12.


921 (809). Marshall, Catherine; Women authors--Biography; Authors, American. 157 p. Gr. 6 - 12.


921 (780.92). Crosby, Fanny; Composers; Physically handicapped—Biography; Blind—Biography. 157 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

Madame Guyon

Jan Johnson writes a condensed edition of Frenchwoman Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Mothe Guyon’s autobiography. Living in the 17th and 18th centuries, Madame Guyon suffered persecutions, prison, and exile because she believed Christians could have constant communication with God. Madame Guyon emphasizes that she could never have carried her crosses of life without the abandonment of self and praying to God from her heart.

Catherine Marshall

Through extensive inclusion of entries from Marshall’s journals and passages from her books, Kathy McReynolds shows us Marshall’s journeys through grief. At the center of all Marshall’s endeavors, God was there. Realizing that understanding was not hers to have, the sovereignty of God became a major cornerstone of her faith.
Fanny Crosby

Bonnie Harvey explores the motivations of hymn writer and evangelist, Fanny Crosby. Blind from infancy, Crosby is remembered for her many hymns, including “Blessed Assurance.” She memorized the Bible, so she could “read” Scripture whenever she desired. Crosby considered a hymn to be “a song of the heart addressed to God.” Her hymns spoke to the hearts of those who sang them.

These books in Bethany’s Women of Faith series introduce or reacquaint the reader with women of intense faith and bold belief in prayer. Johnson, McReynolds, and Harvey write with clarity and evidence of research, bringing the legacies of these women of faith alive for the reader. This series offers adult and young adult readers an opportunity to identify with these women’s consequences and difficulties of life and gain encouragement and direction from how they found victory with God’s guidance.

Jo Huddleston
Freelance Writer, Author, Former Teacher
Auburn, Alabama


921 (973.92). Glenn, John, 1921-; Legislators; Astronauts. 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12.


921 (796.342). Ashe, Arthur; Tennis players; Afro-Americans--Biography; Discrimination in sports. 128 p. Gr. 6 - 12.


921 (796.42). Owens, Jesse, 1913-; Track and field athletes; Afro-Americans--Biography. 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

The A&E Biography Series by Lerner Publications would be a definite addition to any school library. These informative volumes are filled with actual photographs of the individual being highlighted. Each volume ends with a list of sources that were quoted, a bibliography for further reading, and an index. The wide margins make this attractive to reluctant readers as well as fun reading for anyone interested in the person being spotlighted. Reading these books is an easy way to learn about history.

Caroline Lazo tells about the challenges faced by Arthur Ashe as he tries to break into the white man’s game of tennis. Ashe came from ancestors who were slaves, and lived at a time when discrimination against blacks was a daily part of life. His determination to succeed and the positive attitude he was able to maintain despite the prejudice he faced made him an inspiration. He made a mark as the first African American male tennis player to be ranking number one in the world.

Tom Streissguth’s story of John Glenn chronicles his personal experiences in the space program through his latest trip to space in 1998. It tells of his time with the Marines during World War II and his continued experiences during the Cold War. The chapters about his time in the space program give many personal details as well as giving an overview of the space race with the Soviets. The final chapters cover Glenn’s career in politics and end with his return to space in 1998.

The Jesse Owens story by Tom Streissguth parallels the rise of his stardom with the growing Nazi regime. Growing up in Alabama as the son of a sharecropper, Owens became known as the “world’s fastest human” as he participated in the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany. Streissguth tells of his personal and family struggles as well as the civil rights movement of the 60’s. While his personal life is not a great role model, the feats he accomplished and his determination to never quit make this an informative worthwhile book.

Esther Knaupp
Librarian
Corvallis, Oregon


Twelve year old Mary Antin, along with her family, traveled from Russia hoping to begin a better life in the United States. The year was 1894, and the Antins were Russian Jews who had escaped the hardships of religious persecution.

As a young child, Mary wrote a long letter to relatives left behind in Russia, and shared details of their new life—the successes, the struggles, the joys and the tears. Years later, Mary enlarged on that first long letter to write a book of her experience as a young Russian girl, living under the hardships imposed upon Jews in Russia, to a young immigrant building a life in Boston. Her book, The Promised Land, serves as the basis for author Rosemary Wells’ book, Streets of Gold. Ms. Wells has taken Mary’s story and adapted it into a shorter version for today’s young readers. Streets of Gold is presented in an episode format, so each page represents snippets from Mary’s young life. At the same time, words from Mary’s original book are included on each page so readers have the opportunity to read Ms. Well’s adaptation while also reading Mary’s prose.

The illustrations, by Dan Andreasen, are warm and engaging and provide a pictorial journal of Mary’s life. Streets of Gold is a must read for anyone who wants to understand religious persecution and immigration through a child’s eyes.

Debby Willet
Elementary Teacher
Canyon, Texas


Like most Americans, I thought I knew the story of the Pilgrims. They came to America on the Mayflower in search of religious freedom, landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620, struggled through the winter, made friends with the Indians, and celebrated the first Thanksgiving. Reading William Bradford: Plymouth’s Faithful Pilgrim reminded me that the simplified summaries we learn may be essentially factual, but leave out most of the real truth of history. Gary D. Schmidt has written an insightful biography of William Bradford that looks for the reasons behind the historical events. In telling Bradford’s story, Schmidt quotes often from Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, Bradford’s own record of the Plymouth settlement. The result is a historical account of the Pilgrims, primarily as seen through the eyes of William Bradford. Schmidt emphasizes the religious faith that drove Bradford and his fellow pilgrims, giving them strength to continue with unusual integrity through many difficult circumstances.

This book is valuable as a balanced picture of a person who strove to live out his faith through difficult times. One senses the author is really trying to bring out the meaning of what happened. While Bradford emerges as an exemplary figure, he is neither idolized nor demonized. Bradford was a person who suffered many tragedies in his life. He was drawn to the radical faith of the Separatists early in life, and remained true. He became a highly respected man of good judgment, but Schmidt makes no attempt to make him into a superhero who always knew best. Bradford was a person who learned—who reevaluated and made changes, always seeking to follow God. The book is attractively illustrated with black and white photos, drawings, and maps. It includes a helpful annotated reading list and a complete index.

Cathleen Sovold Johnson
Student, Fuller Theological Seminary
Des Moines, Washington


Princess Ka‘iulani: Hope of a Nation, Heart of a People takes a fascinating look at one of the most beloved figures in Hawaii’s history. Ka‘iulani, the last crown princess of Hawaii, was a beautiful young woman who fought to save her homeland. Born in 1875 to Princess Likelike and her Scottish husband, Archibald Cleghorn, Ka‘iulani’s early life was one of privilege and freedom. She counted Robert Louis Stevenson as one of her special friends. After her mother’s death in 1888, Ka‘iulani was educated in England. Around this time United States advocates for expansionism began to express interest in the independent island nation. Ka‘iulani’s life changed dramatically in 1892 when the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown and an acting president appointed. She journeyed to the United States in hopes of persuading the government to allow her country to remain independent. While well-received, the actions of her aunt, Queen Lili‘uokalani undermined much of the work she did. In 1898 Hawaii was annexed by the United States, and less than a year later, at age twenty-three, Ka‘iulani died of inflammatory rheumatism which attacked her heart.

Sharon Linnea’s book gives an insight into 19th century politics and society, as well as the United States’ struggle to annex Hawaii. While written for younger readers, adults will find the book enjoyable, too. Newly translated journal entries and letters, as well as many black and white photos poignantly relate the life of this overlooked Christian heroine.

Lillian Heytvelt
Public Librarian
Pomeroy, Washington


The “Double V” or double victory campaign was the label given by the Pittsburgh Courier to a fight for racial equality abroad and at home from 1940-1945. It refers to the African Americans who joined the armed forces to demonstrate they, too, were responsible as well as brave citizens. The volunteers fought for the ideals of freedom in Europe to which the country was committed, but they were also fighting for equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities at home and on the battlefield.

This volume centers on firsts related to equality issues achieved by blacks both places during World War II. It includes the issuing of Executive Order 8802 which established the Fair Employment Practices Commission, and highlights firsts throughout the war in the Pacific and in Europe including fights for officer equality on the battlefield, participation of black units in specific battles, and recently achieved recognition of seven black Medal of Honor recipients by President Clinton. A photo gallery of black participation during the war years, a significant events list, bibliography and index are included at he end of the text.

Patricia Braun
Retired Jr. High Librarian
National Louis University, Elem. Educ. Student Teaching Supervisor
Arlington Heights, Illinois


970. Africans—America—History; America—Civilization—African influences; African diaspora; Africa—Emigration and immigration. 136 p. Gr. 8 - Adult.

As part of the Library of African-American History series, Catherine Reef gives a detailed look at both the culture and the history of the African people, as they adapted to their New World surroundings. For a slim volume (a little over 130 pages), the subject is well-covered. The addition of illustrations, sidebars, photographs, and quotes give depth and fullness to the subject at hand. The book moves from the beginnings of the slave movement, touching briefly on other countries where slave-holding was practiced, and interjects cultural aspects along its progression to the present day.

There is a diversity of subjects covered, such as How the Slave Trade Changed Africa; Slave Culture in the United States; and the African Burial Ground. There is some coverage of African influence in the arts from its continental roots to its place in modern society, and religious practices. There is mention of voodoo practices; however, the influence of Christianity is given greater coverage.

This book makes for a good starting point for in-depth study into any one of the given subject areas. There are numerous notes and an impressive section of suggested further readings. With a growing interest in multicultural backgrounds this is a welcome addition for middle school and high school students, although use in the upper elementary would also be beneficial for students.

Pam Webb
Library Technician
Sandpoint, Idaho

F. Emergency medicine--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 345 p. Adult.

Sacred Trust is a story about a young Christian doctor, Dr. Lukas Bower, who often finds himself at odds with hospital administration because of his moral and ethical standards. After only his first week as the new full-time doctor in a small-town ER unit, he has already made several enemies. The ER chief, Dr. George, doesn’t want a full time ER doctor on staff. He will do anything to get rid of him. Ivy Richmond, a wealthy supporter of the hospital, is his father’s most influential member of the hospital’s Board of Directors. Hospital staff members, afraid to lose their own jobs, have a difficult time supporting Dr. Bower’s medical decisions. His only ally seems to be Dr. Mercy Richmond—Ivy Richmond’s daughter. But she has her own problems. Struggling to rebuild her practice and her reputation after a bitter divorce five years ago, she now must find the courage to put herself and her daughter, Tedi, through another court battle to regain custody. Tedi’s father is an alcoholic whose problem is getting steadily worse. Mercy fears Tedi may be in danger.

Sacred Trust is an exciting, suspenseful book that is difficult to put down. The fast-paced action of an ER, though difficult to describe in written form, is handled believably by the author. Hannah King creatively weaves together Dr. Bower’s story and the stories of his patients, many of whom are carried through to the end of the book.

Robyn Wyatt
Freelance Writer
Port Orchard, Washington

A Note from the Editor: by Mary McKinney

“You can’t judge a book by its cover.”

This cliché has challenged me of late through the inspiration of my husband, Jim. He works with junior high students, and encourages them not to go after a flashy cover or title, but to find the worth of a book in an interesting way. Each student has to find a quotable quote, or at least, a valuable and succinct lesson learned from the story line.

“It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.” This familiar quote from A Tale of Two Cities has become its trademark. As we look back into history, we have to admit that timeless quotes have often come from the written word. “The rosy finger of dawn ... ” has been with us in print since Homer’s classic, The Odyssey, was penned.

I challenge you, as a reader, to view your next book as a possible source for imparting worthwhile information to others. Is there a phrase or idea that is worth quoting? Find something credible to discuss with a friend.

An example of a timeless theme occurs in Frank Peretti’s books, This Present Darkness and Piercing the Darkness. A recurring phrase, maybe not earth shattering, but maybe so, is “Let’s pray ... ” I recommend these books because the main point I reaped was that there is power in prayer. This is certainly a worthy point to be made, and one, I’m sure, that has encouraged many readers to pass the novels on to others. The more recent Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins alerts the reader to the critical subject of being spiritually ready to meet the Lord—another meritorious theme!

Here’s an experiment—shut the book you’re reading, and see if you can find a concise way to express the value of its pages. The market is glutted with books, so let’s be encouraged to find those that can lift the imagination and the heart. This search for quotations has enhanced both the way I read a book, and my whole approach to writing.

To end this with a bit of humor, here is a fairly unknown quote that lost something in the wording, although the meaning is clear enough. Completing the above quoted statement from Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities, it ends: “... we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.” Not much punch, but the point is made!
heart of any reader who happens to be an “incurable romantic,” such as myself.

Lynn Austin does an excellent job in telling how our lives get busy and we lose focus on God and on what is really important. She also talks about compromise in marriage and open communication—even when it seems like it’s too late. Her characters are interesting and have depth. The novel contains material involving pre-marital sex and physical abuse. The only negative I found was that the book cover does not entice the reader, and in fact, I shied away from reading it because of it.

Tammy D. Williams
Freelance Writer
Port Orchard, Washington


Forced to land a small Cessna 185 in the middle of a snow-covered pasture during a blizzard is heart-stopping to David Michaels, flight trainee and pastor of a local church. To add to the suspense, the “pasture” turns out to be a well-hidden airstrip that leads to a mysterious “hospital” performing illegal genetic engineering. Michaels discovers a devious plan to produce a genetically superior race which had once been thwarted when Hitler lost in World War II, but now has been resurrected in several discreet places within the United States. The project is known as “MOMS,” (Mid-south Obstetrical Management Systems).

A young girl name Gaby, kidnapped and now used in experiments to produce top-caliber offspring, escapes the high-security complex. David and his flight trainee, Dean Barber, discover the half-frozen girl, and find themselves caught in the middle of a snow-covered pasture during a blizzard. For example, Elsa actually gets around to telling her story through the perspective of her best friend, Peder Ramstad.

Sophia Vergott is a newspaper columnist known as the Heroine of the Hour who thrives readers across America with tales of her adventures on the high seas. After her husband’s death and four weeks after the birth of their second child, she takes over as captain of a ship with barely a raised eyebrow from the crew—and this is 1887. It’s hard to suspend disbelief and be engaged in the story when it doesn’t ring true.

Most of the book is taken up with characters thinking about their pasts or their feelings, or talking about their pasts or their feelings. Those parts plod along. However, when Miss Bergren actually gets around to telling her story through action, such as the pirate Mason Dutton’s kidnapping of Elsa, words and pages disappear and the reader is drawn into the scene.

Andrea R. Huesgenbeck
Freelance Writer
Tempe, Arizona

F. 398 p. Adult.

Lydia Clark, a single teacher in the 19th century English village of Gresham, has resigned herself to a life without a mate, when to her surprise she suddenly has two men attempting to court her. Unfortunately, neither possess the qualities that she feels are important in a husband. She must turn aside, believing her opportunities for love and marriage are negligible. Surprises and happiness do await her. Refurbished in romance and life, Noelle Somerville finds refuge at Larkspru Inn. She discovers new values and purpose for living and a romance she never dreamed possible, God acts to change her life in wonderful ways. The lives of the villagers of this small town are woven together to draw one into this romantic tale. God and his servants act to bring meaning and richness to the drama played out here.

The third book in this series by Lawanna Blackwell, this volume seemed to lack the clarity and focus of plot that the two previous books had. Blackwell does continue to present a clear Christian message in this chronicle of Gresham, but there is not the dynamic action and strong characters to keep the story moving forward as was evident in her earlier novels.

Mary E. Jarvis
Retired Teacher and Writer
Pawhuska, Oklahoma


After his Texas ranch is illegally taken over by squatters during the Civil War, Brazos Fortune is unable to get justice served, so he leaves his daughter Dacee June with his sister-in-law and
Heads north to start a new life. After dreaming about a cross that he believes to be a sign from God, Brazos is confident that the Lord will guide him to a place to call home. Brazos joins three men headed to the Sioux Indian reservation in the Black Hills of Dakota, in search of gold. Coincidentally, one of the men has a map to a hidden gold strike marked by a cross. Brazos wonders if he will find both his fortune and his home under this cross.

Burdened with the loss of his wife and two daughters to illness, and the loss of one of his sons to a renegade lifestyle, Brazos struggles to eke out an existence panning for gold along Lightning Creek. He and his friends are unsuccessful in their attempt to find the gold strike marked on the map. When the army clears the Black Hills of anyone mining in Sioux Indian territory, Brazos stays behind to care for Hook, fatally wounded by his old enemy Doc Kabos, who attempted to steal the gold map. Hook’s death takes longer than expected, and when Brazos doesn’t show up at a pre-arranged meeting point, his buddies come back for him. Together they wander the Black Hills, trying to avoid the angry Sioux, and find their way out of the mountains. They stumble onto another mining operation deep in the hills that the army doesn’t know about. They stake their claim in Deadwood Gulch and become quite successful in their operation.

When Brazos makes a run to Bismarck for winter supplies, he discovers that Dacee June has run away from her aunt, apparently in an attempt to find him in the Black Hills. Brazos is reunited with his military son, Robert; the two of them track down Dacee in the Black Hills, saving her and her companions from an Indian attack and a severe snowstorm. Brazos is reunited with another son, Todd, at Christmas, when they have a second run-in with Doc Kabos, who attempts to get the gold map once again. Finally, when Doc Kabos finds the gold strike without the map and holds Dacee June hostage until Brazos retrieves the gold for him, a friend gives his life to save Brazos and Dacee.

Grateful for the strong friendships he’s forged, Brazos settles down more permanently in Deadwood, becoming a store owner, and watching the little mining town grow. Happily surrounded by all of his family except his renegade son Sam, Brazos begins to wonder where exactly the Lord planned for him to live. He has yet to find the “cross” that would mark his new ranch, and this mining town is not what he had in mind as a permanent home. Brazos finally comes to the realization that he can live anywhere. The cross of Jesus is the only cross that matters, and he already lives under it.

_Beneath a Dakota Cross_, by Stephen Bly, is the second novel in Stephen Bly’s Old California series. This is the story of Martina Swan, the daughter of Wilson and Alena Merced. Martina married William Swan with the dream of wedded bliss and independence from her parents. Instead she is left with a baby to raise and a struggling store to run when her husband seeks prosperity in a Nevada silver mine.

Martina must decide which is more important: her own pride or finding her husband and doing whatever she can to save her marriage. Martina shows determination and strength through one adventure after another. She is able to save her store from foreclosure, fight bank robbers, travel to Nevada by stagecoach, and rescue her husband from a dangerous Indian woman. In the end, she learns the value of obedience to God and faithfulness to her marriage.


_Computerized surrogate parenting is the topic of C.A. Curtis’s new fiction novel Synthesis. Although comparable to Huxley’s classic, _Brave New World_, Curtis introduces God into the equation, calling him Maker._

_Synthesis' locale, the Pacific Northwest, is described with picturesque descriptive phrases. The plot involves selected pre-screened children who are removed from their parents at age five and taken to the San Juan Academy. There, children soon forget their parents as they are taught oneness, unity over individuality, and meditation whenever they are troubled._

_David Winston, raised in the Academy, now prepares to graduate. Facilitator Hegelthor, mentor and father figure to all children in the Academy, has a particular interest in Winston._

_Hegelthor groomed Winston to become the Youth Facilitator who “will ensure the implementation of our programs in all learning centers.”_

_Hegelthor developed the Profile Tracking System that embraces genetic determinism, spiritual essence, intellectuality capacity, and emotional integrity. It predetermines and designs, “Individualized Educational Tracks for students.” Each track reflects _Synthesis’_ goal for students and guides “the student to the most appropriate track.”_
The book as a whole is entertaining and opens a window upon the dynamic character of Amish life and the ever present danger of sin in all our lives. I enjoy D.J. Delff’s books and hope to read many more about Father Griff in Avenell.

Mike B. Jarvis
Episcopal Priest
Pawhuska, Oklahoma


This fifth in the series of Angelwalk books takes the reader to one of the gambling capitol:s of America, Atlantic City. Where Angels Dare focuses on two “unfallen” angels, Darien and Stedfast. The bulk of the novel is told from the angels’ perspective, and much is told in flashback. The main thrust is to trace the history of gambling and the many ills it brings, as well as to follow the few people willing to resist and fight against the establishment of gambling in their area.

This is a tell-not-show type of narrative, reflective and historical in its content. This style lends itself to a rather static story line; the reader is not given fleshed-out characters, but rather small glimpses of a few “victims” of the evil brought to Atlantic City. The main characters, the two angels, basically reminisce about the evils of gambling, abortion, and other human ills. The human characters, especially Brett and Molly Erlsand, also reflect on past decisions and life choices, pondering if they had made better decisions.

This is a novel about how God can change a man’s life and give him a new opportunity. D.J. Stanton, a retired navy captain, is called upon to solve the mystery and rectify the event, if possible. What he discovers is a research project tampering with opening doors to other dimensions that has gone awry—and worse yet, might eventually lead to opening the door to hell itself.

This project is fiercely protected by the United States president, unbeknownst to his constituents. He initiates a “black operations” cover-up, which pits Stanton, a young boy, a crazy woman, and a handful of military men against these ruthless and highly trained killers. Stanton succeeds in destroying the project that would perhaps do untold damage to the world if it were pursued, while saving his small team through prayer and an incredible leap of faith that ultimately restores the 1500 scientists and their families who had disappeared.

Just like the first book in the J.D. Stanton series, Alton Gansky’s Vanished is a great science fiction adventure that is suspenseful, intriguing, and believable, even though it deals with other worlds and dimensions. The book is based on current scientific thought, which is explained in simple terms for the average reader. Gansky’s fascinating blend of science fiction and scripture makes for a mind-stretching book; one can no longer think of heaven and hell, or the beings that inhabit such places, in the same old way. Readers so familiar with the scriptures that the accounts of miracles, appearances of angels, and descriptions of heaven seem somewhat routine and old hat will find that Gansky’s books will cause them to read of these events with new eyes and fresh consideration.

Sherri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford Oregon
Everyday living to lessons of faith without being and fundamental values, and they relate quick reads of lively essays, most of them under wished he were Baptist so he could punch a boss pacifist confesses that there was a time when he writes,” but it only made me lightheaded and whiskey might prove effective.  “So I tried it,” kitchen blew up.  And when he and his wife his admired teacher, Sister Rosalie, “the first fellowship, too.  He remembers 1968 as the year buy one bolt and experience trust and Paul and Silas were lucky to be in jail so they forgive Jessica for her secret? captably faced the AIDS death of his fiance, God?  A mission trip to Mexico and a near which is: did those Dove Bars really come from elsewhere? empirically learn that God doesn’t stumblings we enjoyably learn that God doesn’t expect us to be any different than how He designed us.  Teri and the reader find out that he keeps showing up, as the pizza man, as the waiter who gives her the flower she vainly recognized the value of friendship, helping each other without interfering, chaste dating situations, saving sex for marriage, and not rushing into marriage.  Up to date language, situations and manners add to the stories without confusing the reader who might not identify with these.  Fellowship around food is important and each story ends with a relevant recipe.  After this comes an address and invitation to the reader to connect in friendship with Gunn.  Written in a genre described by P. G. Wodehouse as “rich goo for the female trade,” this series stands out because of its invitation to the reader to connect in friendship with Gunn.  Written in a genre described by P. G. Wodehouse as “rich goo for the female trade,” this series stands out because of its excellent presentation of the great riches found in Jesus Christ.

In Secrets, newcomer to Glenbrook, Oregon, Jessica Morgan, has a secret and a scar and means to cope with both all by herself—even when it means going hungry for two weeks.  However she has not reckoned with the happily extroverted Teri Moreno, nor the kind, empathetic, handsome, gently macho Kyle who comes to the rescue when she crashes her car.  Teaching English to some wonderfully weird Christian teens, listening to Teri’s strong, friendly witnessing, coping with her increasing admiration for a very human, Christ-like Kyle, Jessica faces many challenges to her chosen world and her detonations.  Not the least of which is: did those Dove Bars really come from God?  A mission trip to Mexico and a near kidnapping settles many questions as Jessica surrenders to Christ.  But the further question remains: can Kyle, who several years earlier capably faced the AIDS death of his fiancé, forgive Jessica for her secret?

Gunn’s humorous, sympathetic portrayal of her protagonists draws the reader into Secrets.  A strong story line includes real problems, sometimes faced amusingly, yet ultimately solved capably through Christian precepts.  Several of the characters face personal conflict as they cope with colliding lifestyles.  Gunn handles this believably.  Adults and teenagers, rich and poor, various ethnic groups find common ground for friendship without sacrificing their individuality.  Secrets storyline flows smoothly from scene to scene, providing enough tension to encourage reading.

In Whispers, love is once again coming to one of Glenbrook’s denizens.  Who wouldn’t want to be in school-teacher Teri’s shoes: two guys of possible husband material, both causing fireworks with her emotions.  What’s more, it’s all happening in Hawaii, where Teri has gone to visit her sister and brother-in-law.  All Teri has to do is sort the real from the bogus Christian.  And so the problems begin.  Actually, they began a long time ago when Teri realized her thighs were too big and that the Lord wasn’t going to change them; but she sets that problem aside to cope with the man problem.  Mark is easy to sort out, he’s not interested anymore.  Scott’s still really, really, interested.  He can hardly keep his hands off her.  However, he assures Teri he is thinking about beginning to maybe come back to the Lord.  Then there is the dark horse Gordon, in her mind not even considering as a third possibility.  Admittedly he’s a Christian, a student-pastor, but he has such a loud laugh, and he is forever falling over something: besides he’s too old for her.  So Teri puts him out of her thoughts.  But he keeps showing up, as the pizza man, as the waiter who gives her the flower she vainly hinted to Scott to give her, as a fellow hiker and nature lover.  Worse yet her mama and aunt think he is God’s gift for Teri.

This next book in Gunn’s series is a humorous blast from beginning to end.  Where else can you read about communion being served with crackers and orange juice gleaned from the congregations’ pockets because the pastor flung the bread and wine far and wide as he tripped through congregations’ pockets because the pastor flung the bread and wine far and wide as he tripped through.  Where else can you read about communion being served with crackers and orange juice gleaned from the congregations’ pockets because the pastor flung the bread and wine far and wide as he tripped through.  This next book in Gunn’s series is a humorous blast from beginning to end.  Where else can you read about communion being served with crackers and orange juice gleaned from the congregations’ pockets because the pastor flung the bread and wine far and wide as he tripped over his own feet?  It is also a sympathetic, engaging study into the wooing of a woman who thinks she might be getting past the marriageable stage.  Filled with human foibles and God’s answers to them, Whispers is a “don’t disturb me while I’m reading” book.  The protagonist’s personalities convincingly play off each other.  FromTeri’s tribs to Gordon’s stumbling we enjoyably learn that God doesn’t expect us to be any different than how He designed us.  Teri and the reader find out that kindness, Christian love, and the fireworks God has planned makes the most wondrous romance.

In Echoes, ultra-slim, long-haired, blonde Lauren has just experienced the perm disaster to end all perm disasters.  The only solution is to cut off all that frizzy dry hair.  Then her absolutely perfect, God given fiancé finds New...
York more attractive than Lauren and the engagement is broken. The combined efforts of her best friend, Mindy, a kitten to cuddle while she eats comfort food, her computer-hacker brother, and a return to school to get her teacher’s degree start Lauren on the road to recovery and a closer walk with her Lord. An e-mail correspondence with a man known only as KC encourages Lauren further. This grows into a romantic correspondence similar to that enjoyed by the poets Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. When Lauren and KC decide to meet at KC’s chosen spot (which just happens to be near Glenbrooke, Oregon) much happens. Mindy warns Lauren of the horrific things that could happen through such a meeting. Lauren gets cold feet. KC just gets left out in the cold. In a denouement that draws in all our old Glenbrooke friends, Lauren and KC embark on a face-to-face friendship and romance.

Diet Cokes, e-mail, nation-wide commuter travel, and computer caused headaches help make Echoes a contemporary romance. With biblically based behavior, broken hearts, friends’ quarrels and doubt driven rifts are healed. Deliberately choosing or not choosing to grow in Christian maturity plays a big part in this story. Because Lauren’s original fiancé liked ultra-slim women, while with him she kept herself very thin. During this story Lauren gains weight. Gunn presents this as acceptable and improving. The love story of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning is an integral part of Echoes. Several of their love poems are included. Robin Jones Gunn includes a warning at the end of this book: “...the newspapers are full of tragic ... accounts of ... people who have been taken advantage of through ... Internet ... Don’t try this at home!” The warning comes after other non-story items and could be easily missed. It would serve its purpose better at the beginning of the book.

Donna J. Eggett
Freelance Writer
Raford, Virginia


After her failed attempt at suicide and no where else to turn, Karen reluctantly shows up at her grandmother’s ranch. It looks as wind-swept and forsaken as she feels. Grandmother Sophia along with her hired man, Dusty, run the threadbare ranch as a last resort for delinquent boys. Dusty is a buff under her skin with all of his godly ways and words, and she is unable to accept the fact that God cares for her and has a plan for her life. Sophia gives her an intimidating stack of journals to read from a long dead relative and is assured that many questions will be answered for Karen if she will persevere to their conclusion. Though high society born and raised with all the comforts life offers, Karen learns to treasure life in its simplest form as she unthaws in the warmth of her grandmother’s loving care and as Dusty’s encouraging words replay their tempo through her thoughts.

Whispers from Yesterday by award winning author Robin Lee Hatcher is a modern romance novel that mines the depths of the lengths God will extend himself to show his love to the most hopeless searching soul. One cannot run away without encountering God in some form each step of the way. The grandmother patiently lives with the consequences of harboring petty jealousy and pride from bygone years and holds to the promise that God will restore the years the locusts have eaten.

Excerpts from the journals that the main character reads are expertly interspersed throughout, which becomes two love stories packaged in one and wrapped with the greatest love story that comes from heaven.

Debbie Lindsay
Homeschool Parent
Eatonville, Washington

In Mixed Blessings, Rick Hamlin depicts Lurleen as an unbeliever who cynically views the faith of church members. The way some members so easily say, “I’ll pray for you,” seems shallow to her. But when things wished for come about, Lurleen must ask if it was a God-thing instead of a coincidence.

Hamlin provides just enough plot twists to keep the story unpredictable. His detailed descriptions and vivid characterizations are well done. The satisfying ending has potential as a springboard to a sequel.


Abbie Farrel, twenty-six and widowed, struggles with running the Lucky Star ranch. She allows Cole Jasper to return to her ranch as a foreman, after having run him off the place four years ago. Cole promised Abbie’s late husband he would look after Abbie and he’s secretly sent money back to her headman to help with the financial burdens. Abbie tries to stifle her warm feelings for Cole in deference to the memory of her late husband. Cole has always loved Abbie but honors her efforts to hide her feelings toward him.

Cole’s brother, Sam, comes to the ranch accusing Cole of murdering a woman in El Paso. Cole refutes and he and Abbie flee to hidden themselves in their ensuing fight. Soon after Sam leaves, two bounty hunters arrive and take Cole hostage for his alleged crime. Abbie, together with a young ranch hand and a Comanche Indian follow and rescue Cole from the bounty hunters. Believing his brother is the murderer, Cole eludes Abbie, slips from their campsite, and starts toward El Paso alone to surrender to the sheriff. A preacher joins Cole on his journey and leads him to the Lord. Because of Abbie’s stubborn determination, Cole is eventually cleared, making way for the two of them to admit their love for one another. Abbie is able to feel peace about loving again.

Kristen Heitzman weaves sufficient background into Honor’s Disguise so that readers can gather the plot of this series. Her characters in this historical novel are vivid and easily identified with. She writes strong descriptions of the lands surrounding Abbie and her companions as they travel for days on horseback. The story’s satisfying ending leaves the reader wanting to know more about life ahead for Abbie and Cole.

Jo Huddleston
Freelance Writer; Author, Former Teacher
Auburn, Alabama


F. Adult.

Growing up in a dysfunctional family in small town Mockingbird Valley, Arkansas, Katrina struggles desperately to discover her own self-identity, and break free of the constraints the valley and her family seem to place on her. She longs to be an artist, and to experience the world beyond Mockingbird Valley. When Katrina comes to know the Lord, the closeness she and her sister Eden shared as children evaporates. When Eden finds herself unwed and pregnant, however, it is Katrina to whom she turns for strength. In order to help Eden care for her baby, Dreamy, Katrina sets aside her dreams of college and, to please her father, she takes community college courses to be a teacher. When her mother is diagnosed with terminal breast cancer, and Eden finds herself in jail for supposedly shooting her husband, Katrina is once again the glue that holds the family together.

The Lord unravels all these complications, however. Katrina’s adulterous father becomes attentive to his wife during her illness and sets his feet on the right path before her death. Eden’s law-breaking husband wakes from his coma, clears Eden of guilt from his shooting, and the two begin to live a more settled life. Prompted by her mother’s dying wish, Katrina pursues her dream of art school in New York and her passion to make a mark on the world for the Lord in some way, breaking the destructive behavioral cycle her family was trapped in. “I wanted what faith I had found to lift me above myself, to reach down into the darkest parts of me and root out the pieces that had grown bitter. . . God had set a fire inside of me, one that blazed enough to make me dissatisfied with sitting still while the rest of the world tramped by in the dark” she says.

Eloquently and sensitively written in first person, the prose in Katrina’s Wings is reminiscent of books such as Cold Sassy Tree or Dandelion Wine, and it has a deep sense of “memory,” much like Tennessee Williams’ The Glass Menagerie. Author Patricia Hickman does deal with subject matter for mature readers, handling it realistically, but tactfully.

Sheri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon


When the radio station Belle O’Brian has worked at for ten years changes to an all sports format and requires her to play an air-headed “Betty Boop” radio personality, she decides it’s time to look for another job in radio. The call from her old friend and mentor, Patrick Reese, seems an answer to prayer. She eagerly accepts the opportunity to work with the man who launched her career on the path to success—and who years later that she’s “grown up” she can see if there is any possibility of a relationship with this older man, whom she’s always had a crush on.

However, just when Patrick seems to be showing interest in her romantically, Belle realizes that he’ll never be more to her than just a good friend. But Belle hopes to get Patrick interested in her wise, fifty-something landlady, Norah. Although Norah has been friends with Patrick for quite some time, and admires romantically, she is reluctant to get involved in what would be her third serious relationship with a man—especially since Patrick is not a Christian.

Meanwhile, David, the broadcast engineer, finds himself strongly attracted to Belle; he reveals none of his feelings, however, believing himself unworthy. He is a Cahiil after all, who grew up on the wrong side of the tracks with an alcoholic father, and got himself in trouble with the banker’s daughter in high school. Pregnant and unwed, she fled to California with the son that David has never seen, but whom he has faithfully supported financially for years.

As the Lord does his work in the lives of these people, Patrick realizes his need of a savior through Norah’s quiet witness; Belle realizes her growing love for David; and David learns the importance of forgiveness, as long-broken relationships are mended, and he learns that he is valuable in the eyes of God, regardless of the opinions of men. Mixed Signals, by Liz Curtis Higgs, is a satisfying story to read. It moves along quickly and is full of surprises and humor, with real characters and every-day struggles that readers can relate to.

Sheri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon

F. Real estate developers—Fiction; Women historians—Fiction. 335 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

While Emilie might possibly consider getting married one day, she has her work as a Ph.D. and a historian to keep her life busy—and she certainly would not consider getting involved with the likes of Jonas Fielding, who is far too loud, rugged, and earthy for her taste. But Emilie’s need and orderly ways are turned upside down as Jonas, at the Lord’s behest, worms his way into her life to show her the meaning of true joy.

Through Jonas’ bumbling attempts to break through Emilie’s tight reserve, she comes to know the Lord in a personal way, which transforms all her other relationships. Her newfound faith is put to the test, however, when she makes the academic discovery of her life-time in identifying the location of the first Moravian Gemeinhaus in Lütitz. Unfortunately, her research reveals that the Gemeinhaus is located on the eighteenth hole of the city’s golf course Jonas is developing and managing. This conflict of interests brings Jonas and Emilie’s budding romance to a precarious position. But the Lord deals similarly with him in a unexpected turn of events. In the end all is well; the Lord gives both Emilie and Jonas the desires of their hearts—and each other.

Bookends, by Liz Curtis Higgs, is her second adult fiction book, and is just as enjoyable as the first, Mixed Signals. The story is full of laugh-aloud humor, but the characters are realistic and face difficulties everyone can relate to. As in her first book, Higgs’ story-line is fully developed. Although Emilie and Jonas become romantically interested in each other, that’s not the end of the story; Higgs goes on to show the development of their relationship and their continuing spiritual growth in the face of some surprising challenges.

Sheri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon


F. Genetic engineering—Fiction. Adult.

In The Truth Teller, Lara Godfrey’s husband died of cancer six months ago. Lara wants to fulfill the dream she and her husband had to have a child, and decides to conceive through the use of in-vitro fertilization (IVF). Lara, a Physicians Assistant, goes through this process with Doctor Braun. Little does Lara know that Dr. Braun has contracted with a multi-millionaire, Devlin Sloan, to fertilize her egg with the DNA of the “Ice Man”—a man frozen over five million years ago. With the help of her neighbor, Connor, Lara finds herself and her infant on the run. Will Devlin, with his limitless resources track her down? Will Lara’s dream of motherhood end before it gets started?

Angela Hunt has written an intriguing novel that addresses scenarios that seem impossible, but yet, perhaps frighteningly possible. It addresses man’s misguided attempt throughout history to “create the perfect human being,” and the destruction that results. The novel contains more than one murder as well as scientific jargon that is suited to the more mature reader.

Tammie D. Williams
Freelance Writer
Port Orchard, Washington


Set during World War II, Triumph of the Soul tells the story of two men, both ace pilots, both devoted to their homelands, whose lives parallel each other in their journey towards God. American Billy Hochreiter and German Rolf Schiller engage briefly in air combat before Rolf sends Billy’s fighter crashing to the ground. Billy lands in a French forest and is rescued by members of the French Resistance. Here he meets Collette, a beautiful and intriguing woman whose influence upon him shocks his superficial faith to its core. Rolf, a handsome hero of the Reich, believes his heart died the day Katharina was killed. But the worst is yet to come for the German soldier as everything he thought was strong and righteous begins to crumble and he must face a bitter betrayal. During the darkest hours it is his relationships with two women, his devout younger sister and the beautiful, mysterious Olga, which spark a flicker of hope in the deadness of his spirit. The two men meet once again in aerial combat as the story draws to a close, but this time each now has a quiet voice of faith that speaks inside.

Michael Joens produced the animation for the McGe and Me and Adventure In Odyssey series for Focus on the Family. The influence of his involvement with movies is clear in his writing. This is a novel that reads much like a film: the action is vivid, the dialogue as rapid as machine gun fire. While the character of Billy seems a bit superficial in contrast to Rolf’s, this is an intriguing read for lovers of Christian historical fiction.

Lillian Heytvelt
Public Librarian
Pomeroy, Washington


F. Diners (Restaurants)—Fiction; Texas Panhandle (Tex.)—Fiction; Love stories; Christian fiction. 249 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Annie Jones has written two books (and a third is on the way) revolving around the old “Mother Road” Route 66, which meanders from Chicago to LA through small towns and truck stops now bypassed by the high-speed interstate freeways.

Double Heart Diner describes the wild journey Georgia Darling takes down Route 66 with her nemesis, Jess Murphy, in order to convince him to preserve the Double Heart Diner, rather than purchase the land and sell it to developers. Georgia, a flamboyant red-head with inventive schemes patterned after her “hero,” Lucy Ricardo, grates harshly against Jett’s self-controlled and aloof personality. Through their various escapades, Georgia awakens more emotions in Jett than he knew he had—fear, anger, compassion, hope—and teaches him to really live again. Georgia in turn comes to realize that she can trust Jett as a man who keeps the promises he makes regarding the Double Heart Diner, and their relationship.

Cupid’s Corner tells the tale of twenty-something Jenny Fox, the town’s youngest mayor. She desperately tries to revitalize the economy of Cupid’s Corner, drawing tourists to the area by attempting to break the town’s old record and holding sixty-six weddings in one summer. Complications arise when her ex-fiancé, a big city doctor, returns to town, determined to win back her heart. Equally determined, however, is newspaper editor Joe Avery, who pursues Jenny even though she continues to hold him at arm’s length. He is new to the area, and Jenny figures anyone as smart as he is will eventually leave Cupid’s Corner to make his way in the “big city.” Committed to small-town life, Jenny is determined not to get her heart broken again by someone who will love her and leave her. When she is betrayed once again by her ex-fiancé, she realizes that Joe is a man she can truly trust, and that it is God alone who holds her future.

While both books carry the guarantee to make you giggle (or you can exchange the book for another in the Waterbrook romantic comedy line), Double Heart Diner provides the laughs—albeit with somewhat contrived scenarios and constant verbal sparring between the two characters that is almost too witty to be true. Cupid’s Corner provokes few giggles, but is by far the stronger book in terms of its more substantive plot and realistic character development. The humor is bittersweet, born out of Jenny’s confusion and exasperation over

F. Women journalists—Fiction; Miami (Fla.)—Fiction; Michigan—Fiction; Christian fiction. 401 p. Adult.

Where Yesterday Lives is the touching story of Ellen Barret and her family as they live through the week following her father’s death. She travels from Miami back to the small town where she was raised. Here she must face her sister, who has hated her for years, though she has never been able to figure out why. Her younger brother is filled with anger over the way his father treated him when he was alive. He lashes out at everyone around him. To make matters worse, Ellen feels herself drifting away from her husband. They have been struggling for months and he refuses to come to the funeral. Feeling hurt by his reaction, she fights the urge to call an old boyfriend. Yet she knows he will provide her the comfort she needs during this difficult time.

The author, Karen Kingsbury, seems to have struggled with the dialogue during confrontations between family members. The rest of the book is written more professionally, though it is not always enjoyable to read. The reader is taken through a very difficult week in this family’s life. The characters tell their own stories, moving from dialogue to narrative in such a way that you hardly realize it is happening. Well told, the subject matter is heavy. The problems these people deal with are very true to life. This is definitely a book that will help you think and possibly help you to improve relationships in your own life.

Robyn Wyatt
Freelance Writer
Port Orchard, Washington

Waiting for Morning, by Karen Kingsbury.


Hannah waits one evening for her family to return from a camping trip. A car finally pulls up, but instead of her husband and two girls, a policeman shows up at her door. There has been an accident, caused by a drunk driver. Her husband, Tom, and her oldest daughter Alicia have died before reaching the hospital. Jenny, her other daughter, suffers a broken arm and a severe concussion. Hannah and Jenny return home grief stricken and numb, unable to grasp what happened. Hannah cannot receive comfort from God as she realizes she no longer believes he exists. One man’s foolishness has shattered their lives forever.

Hannah’s life becomes consumed with one purpose—to see the drunk driver convicted of first-degree murder. Her obsession with revenge causes her to forget the only important thing left in her life—Jenny. Left alone to deal with her grief, Jenny becomes more and more withdrawn. She wishes she had died in the accident with her sister and father. Convinced her mother doesn’t love her, she spends most of her time on the Internet, trying to find the quickest and surest way to commit suicide so she can be with them again.

Karen Kingsbury writes about real people with real problems, who do not always respond to crises in the most positive manner. Through their trials and struggles we come to know and understand ourselves better. We feel their emotions. We identify with their struggles. And with them we learn that God is always there, even in our darkest moments. Waiting for Morning shows us how to forgive. This book is well worth the time for anyone wishing to challenge oneself to grow in God.

Robyn Wyatt
Freelance writer
Port Orchard, Washington

All Together in One Place : A Novel of Kinship, Courage, and Faith, by Jane Kirkpatrick.

F. Frontier and pioneer life—West (U.S.)—Fiction; Women pioneers—West (U.S.)—Fiction; Western stories. 406 p. Adult.

“I’ve sold it. It’s done and I’m going.” Jeremy Bacon tells his wife, Mazy. Shocked and angry, she declares she’ll not leave Wisconsin. Seeing no other choice, Mazy reluctantly consents, and her mother, Elizabeth Mueller, goes along.

The Bacons connect with others going west, making a wagon train full of hopes, plans, and cherished possessions. Sister Esther chaperones a group of young women with marriage contracts in the West. Tipton Wilson, a pampered teenager in love with Tyrell Jenkins, the wagon train’s farrier, travels with Jeremy and Mazy. Suzanne Culliver finds her sightless life on the trail difficult, in spite of husband Bryce’s tenderness. Ruth Martin, accompanying other family members, brings along a fearful past.

Surprises catch up with this assortment of ideas and personalities before a tragedy leaves all the men dead. Shall they go on or return home? More disasters cause hopes, plans, and cherished possessions to dwindle. Hardships, thirst, dust, and fears accompany these grieving, tattered women and children until at last they face another big decision: Oregon or California. “We look so wretched,” Tipson says. By then their looks no longer matter. What does matter has already taken place deep inside.

After reading one intriguing sentence in pioneer Ezra Meeker’s journal and working with this meager information, Kirkpatrick did extensive research. She then created the story, carefully and deliberately choosing words that place the reader in the minds and lives of these fictitious women. Throughout she successfully raises questions about them and their pasts, then allows the answers to flow out gradually. Some questions, however, remain unanswered, leaving the reader with hopes those revelations will come in the next books of the Kinship and Courage series. No Eyes Can See, Book 2, will appear in February 2001 and Book 3 later that year.

Betty M. Hockett
Writer, Speaker, Teacher
Newberg, Oregon


F. Married women—Fiction; Alaska—Fiction; Historical fiction; Christian fiction; Love stories. 310 p. Adult.

Inspired by the life story of her own grandmother, Bonnie Leon tells of Mary, an Aleutian girl in love with a native man, Paul; her parents disapprove of him because he is not a Christian. Mary is not a Christian either, so this does not bother her, but although she has already agreed to marry Paul, her parents arrange for her to marry Sean, a godly Irishman. Mary fiercely resists, but when her parents reveal that Paul is an adulterer, she agrees to the arranged marriage, feeling she has no other choice.

Mary is certain that she will never love Sean, despite his deep love for her. When the two of them take a job as caretakers of a fox preserve on a tiny, uninhabited Aleutian Island, they find themselves trapped there with Trent—an unexpectedly violent poacher—and not enough provisions to make it through the severe winter. As they struggle to survive, fend off hunger, and guard against Trent’s extreme outbursts, Mary is forced into a number of situations that cause her to look to the God of her husband and her parents—the God she has long resisted as having no part of the native ways. When she finally capitulates to the Lord’s call, Mary finds that she is able to let go of all remnants of her relationship with Paul, and truly love her husband, Sean.

A Sacred Place, based on the lives of the author’s grandparents, shows the faithfulness of the Lord in circumstance after circumstance, and the salvation message is clearly presented. However, at times moral or spiritual allegories are presented too overtly to the reader, and seem rather contrived. Although the basic premise of the story is interesting, the characters and
dialogue lack the depth and naturalness necessary to fully engage the reader.

Sherri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon


F. Romance fiction. Adult.

Jan and Mark are seeking to find the truth. For the first time in years, they have a common goal—to discover what really happened to their son Tim. Although the pain of their divorce is still fresh, Jan puts her hurt aside to join forces with her ex-husband, Mark. The police report states that Tim’s death was the result of suicide. But even though neither Jan nor Mark have had a close relationship with their son in recent years, they find it had to believe. What they do discover is Tim’s diary in which he writes that his girlfriend “Stardust” is expecting his child. When a pregnant young girl shows up on Mark’s doorstep claiming she is “Stardust.” Jan looks to the unborn child as the healing for her grief. Can Mark reach Jan through his newfound faith in Jesus? Will Jan realize Mark has changed and forgive him?

Lorena McCourtney writes a compelling novel about love, forgiveness, and Christ’s ability to change the heart. Abortion, drug use, and premarital sex are mentioned throughout the novel, with biblically based responses. Stardust builds your faith and directs the reader to rely fully on Jesus.

Tammy Williams
Social Worker/Freelance Writer
Port Orchard, Washington


F. United States. Navy—Officers—Fiction; Biological weapons—Fiction; Adventure stories; Christian fiction.

In Code Name: Antidote, by Paul T. McHenry III, the Russian mafia obtains an Ebola-like virus, intent on selling it to a Middle Eastern terrorist group to use as a biological weapon against the Jews. Supposedly the virus is controllable enough to infect and kill its intended object before swiftly dying out, thus avoiding a full-scale epidemic. The U.S. knows that this is untrue, and if the virus is released, with international air travel, it could be spread rapidly throughout the world, resulting in millions of deaths. Naval Commander David Egan and Dr. Catherine Evans team up with a special forces operation to track down the man transporting the virus, and destroy it.

Code Name: Antidote is similar in style and approach to Tom Clancy’s books, however the plot is somewhat difficult to follow, and the motives of certain characters’ actions are unclear. Readers need to stay sharp to wade through all the military jargon (although a five page glossary of terms is provided) and keep track of special operations tactics, and the subterfuge of various characters. Along with a couple of embarrassing spelling errors, there are weaknesses in the plot. The love story between Dr. Evans and Commander Egan is not entirely convincing. An important minor character is introduced midway through the story, but there is no mention whatsoever of what happens to her in the end. People are killed or roughed up right and left in various hotels, or on the streets, but no bystanders ever seem to notice anything happening. The violence is a bit graphic in spots. The book includes disturbing images of people being tortured or killed, an attempted rape scene, a second implied rape scene, and the repeated presence of prostitutes and one character’s supposed pleasure in sexual perversion. The Lord’s name is casually used in a non-spiritual context a few times, though it is not used as a swear word.

In spite of these concerns the story is interesting and action-packed with a little "philosophizing" thrown in. Two of the characters debate some significant spiritual issues relating to creation versus evolution, and various doctrinal views surrounding salvation. Ultimately, Dr. Evans returns to her childhood commitment to the Lord in a moment of desperation when she recognizes that she can do nothing in and of herself, but God can do everything through her. Likewise, Commander Egan is prompted to renew his spiritual search. However spiritual issues are not a significant part of the book overall.

Sherri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon


F. End of the world—Fiction. Adult.

The Patmos Conspiracy gives a rather detailed rendition of the last days. Throughout the rather convoluted storyline the reader finds an important message—Jesus is Lord! The author, Bruce Merritt, gives a credible, detailed account of how the final days will play out. His mid-tribulation rapture passes a thought-provoking question on to the reader—“Are you ready and willing to suffer for the sake of the Gospel?” Whether the reader agrees with the timing of this event or not, the heart question remains valid, for who can know what may be required of each of us?

There is an interesting reference to a large and effective religious organization with widespread publication coverage known as “Cornerstone.” This inference seems to be based quite closely on a real-life ministry bearing the same name. This organization’s willingness to print the truth about a conspiratorial take-over by the possible Anti-Christ’s new age center known as Interpax, gives the reader reason to check his own commitment level to Christ. Consequences are harsh, yet the reader is made to know that sacrifice on earth offers great reward eternally. This is an interesting and somewhat challenging read that end-time buffs will enjoy.

Mary McKinney
Editor, Author, Teacher
Port Orchard, Washington


F. Adventure fiction. 311 p. Adult.

The beautiful setting of Denver, Colorado, and the ensuing area becomes an appropriate backdrop for this engaging romantic adventure, Ransomed Heart. The likable character of Rosalind Hayes, society misfit, pulls the reader into a most entertaining read. Rosalind, a beautiful young society lady, all but rebels against her upbringing as she inwardly despises the false front and snobbery of the social class. Handsome, yet controversial Adam Moreaux, enters the picture as the renowned Pinkerton operative, (detective), nicknamed the Panther, and sparks an idea in Rosalind to hire him to help her find her missing brother.

When Rosalind has a run-in with the infamous jewel thief, the Catbird, she finds herself inadvertently caught up in the danger and intrigue of his perilous world. To add to the danger, it is soon discovered that there is a mysterious link between this devious thief and Rosalind’s brother, Isaac. Rosalind is the only person who can recognize the Catbird. For her own safety, and going against all protocol (which she inwardly welcomes), she accompanies Mr. Moreaux into the mining towns and mountainous terrain of the rough hill country. Amid great danger, tense drama, and some very tender moments, Rosalind and this most intriguing detective, Adam, discover an attraction for each other that they know would be frowned upon by her family and socialite friends. Do they dare become vulnerable to love, and if so, will they be able to find a lifestyle that somehow unites their two very different backgrounds?

The author, Sara Mitchell, skillfully intertwines romance, mystery and a touch of humor into her colorful and enjoyable characters. She weaves a varied and interesting tapestry of old west, high society, and true faith in God that produces a
most appealing scenario. The story line in 
*Ransomed Heart* has fascinating twists and plenty of action that should appeal to a broad spectrum of readers.

Mary McKinney  
Editor, Author, Teacher  
Port Orchard, Washington

*Daughter of Joy*, by Kathleen Morgan.  
(Brides of Culdee Creek; 1.)  LCCN 99025264.  

F. Women pioneers--Fiction; Married women--Fiction; Colorado--Fiction; Historical fiction; Christian fiction.  
335 p.  Adult.

This tender and touching story, *Daughter of Joy*, speaks to the heart-rendering grief of personal loss as well as restoration and healing. Abigail Stanton, the main character of the novel, has a solid and living faith in God that she is determined will enable her to survive the devastating loss of husband and young son. Abby takes on the job of cook, housekeeper, and teacher for a feisty nine-year-old girl and her embittered father, Conor MacKay, at a ranch outside of Colorado Springs. It is here that she hopes to be able to start fresh and remove any commitment to emotional demands on her life. However, by determining to follow the Lord and give love to those who are hurting, Abby finds herself becoming attracted to Conor, discovering a tenderness and sensitivity beneath his hard, demanding exterior.

Just as Abby discovers that there might be hope and promise of life beyond despair, she senses that the Lord is telling her that she is to leave the ranch and her new position. Never did she realize how incomprehensible the Lord’s will can be—how unpredictable and difficult to understand. Loss and confusion once again threatens to overtake her until she discovers an inner peace and gentle whisper that promises, “Trust me, I’m still in control.”

Kathleen Morgan, the author, brings out a beautiful theme, “For every joy that passes, something beautiful remains.” Her reflective novel is sensitively written. The author’s personal experience of losing her own son allows her to know the heartache and difficult road back to emotional stability.

Mary McKinney  
Editor, Author, Teacher  
Port Orchard, Washington

*Fallen Stars, Bitter Waters*, by Gilbert, Lynn, and Alan Morris.  

F. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Desperate to save America from the chaos of a long term, German-caused, nation-wide blackout, President Luca Therion swears his eternal devotion to German Count Tor von Eisenhalt. The evil and unearthly von Eisenhalt, the man who will never die, swiftly moves toward taking over the entire world by uniting the Eight Spheres of Influence (including America) economically and militarily, with himself as the head. When Arab nations rattle their sabers against Israel, von Eisenhalt sends troops into battle, crushing them utterly, and is hailed by the Israelis as the Messiah.

Just as Nero blamed Christians for the burning of Rome, Tor von Eisenhalt likewise blames America’s blackout and ensuing chaos on the Christians. Determined to get rid of them, he begins rounding up Christians and putting them in isolation camps “for their own protection” from the angry American people. Small pockets of believers escape and remain hidden beyond his reach however, and as they minister faithfully to others who join their motley bands, the number of believers increases, as does their physical and spiritual battle against the supernatural evil perpetrated by von Eisenhalt.

When she finally reaches Africa, she is reacquainted with her cousins, Jeb and John. She has had her eyes set on John since she was a young girl. Will all of her dreams finally come true on Africa’s soil?

Gilbert Morris continues the Winslow saga in this story set in interesting locations such as England, aboard the Titanic, and Africa. In his writings, Mr. Morris shows how the power of God is directing our lives and is bringing about events to shape our character to make us more like Jesus.

Tammy D. Williams  
Social Worker/Freelance Writer  
Port Orchard, Washington

*The Flying Cavalier*, by Gilbert Morris.  
(The House of Winslow; 23.)  LCCN 99006518.  

F. World War, 1914-1919--Fiction.  
318 p.  Adult.

The city of Paris makes a charming backdrop for this World War I romance. The story centers on Lance Winslow, a fighter pilot whose wife was recently killed during a German air raid. Devastated by his wife’s death, he hardens himself to a all others around him, including his five-year-old daughter. His sister-in-law, Danielle, was fourteen when he married her sister, and at the time she was infatuated with him. Now she struggles with her feelings of love for him and wishes she could break through his hard shell.

Jo Herringer is a journalist who has come to France to cover the war. After meeting Lance and his family, she finds herself falling in love with this pilot whose only motivation in life seems to be to kill as many Germans as possible. Can she help him find God and learn to love again?

Logan Smith came from America to join the Foreign Legion and fight with France against the Germans. After being wounded in battle he meets Danielle, who is a nurse at the hospital he is sent to. Soon he finds himself falling in love with her. But it is obvious to everyone that her heart belongs to Lance.

Gilbert Morris does a wonderful job of painting the pictures of war, from the horrendous conditions in the trenches to the intense battles in the sky. His account is historically accurate, and his characters bring this trying time to life. While realistic, the scenes of war are not overwhelming. The romance between the characters is the main focus, so it makes for an enjoyable, light read.

Robyn Wyatt  
Freelance Writer  
Port Orchard, Washington

The White Hunter, by Gilbert Morris.  
(The House of Winslow; 22.)  LCCN 00502455.  

F. Titanic (Steamship)--Fiction; Winslow family (Fictitious characters)--Fiction; Americans--Africa--Fiction; Hunting guides--Fiction; Historical fiction; Christian fiction.  
317 p.  Gr. 10 - Adult.

Annie has a dream and a call of God. She wants to serve as a missionary to Africa. The problem? It’s 1911, she’s single, and suffers from a lung condition. But, believing God, Annie leaves her home and goes to New York, confident that God will open the door. Annie does not realize that getting to Africa will entail being employed as a personal assistant to a New York socialite and a trip aboard the Titanic.
Glitter can be deceptive. Lacking Morris' usual versus the eternal, godliness versus ungodliness. Around her.


In the Salvation Army, Afton sees a marked estranged father calls to renew his relationship Burns has just lost her godly mother. When her Morris' offering of a modern-day novel. Afton.

Gilbert Morris is well known for his prolific this mystery, teasing with clues, using a surprise conclusion. Morris has penned over forty books.


Gilbert Morris is well known for his prolific writing of historic fiction. All That Glitters is Morris' offering of a modern-day novel. Afton Burns has just lost her godly mother. When her estranged father calls to renew his relationship with her, Afton jumps at the chance for a visit to America. Having been raised in Scotland, working alongside her mother and grandfather in the Salvation Army, Afton sees a marked difference working alongside her father, a movie director in the shallow world of Hollywood. Spending time with her father, Kyle Patton, Afton notes his life of excess has not brought him happiness. Plagued with personal as well as business problems, Patton is still determined to run his own life. When things begin to fall apart with the filming, and strange delays come one right after the other, Afton and her father find help from a stand-offish recluse calling himself Peregrine. Feeling a true foreigner herself, Afton realizes she must continue to nurture her faith as she tries to shine amidst the darkness around her.

Morris' story is the contrast of the temporal versus the eternal, godliness versus ungodliness. Glitter can be deceptive. Lacking Morris' usual historic drama, the superficial characterization does not draw the reader into this story.


Virginia waits anxiously for Jonathon to return from his trip west, hoping he will court and marry her. Married life doesn't begin quite as Virginia expected. They live with Jonathon's grandmother while he builds their farmhouse. Once they move to the farm, they are not on their own very long before Virginia's childhood friend, Jenny, comes to visit. Jonathon and Virginia offer to take Jenny's child in rather than see two-year-old Mindy go to a foster home. While Mindy is still adjusting to Virginia and Jonathon and their new baby, Jonathon's mother falls and comes to stay with them while her leg heals. Virginia feels Overburdened at first, but gradually learns to find strength in God and to see her family as a blessing.


The Meeting Place is an historical novel set in Acadia in the year 1753. Acadia, a colony of England, is unique in that it is inhabited by both English and French settlers. Living side-by-side, these settlers remain isolated from each other. It is a dangerous time, a time of war between the English and French on the Continent, and the tensions run high in Acadia. Under these conditions, two women meet in a meadow, gathering flowers for their wedding bouquets. A secret friendship is formed between Catherine, an Englishwoman, and Louise, a Frenchwoman—as they share God's word together, the struggles of winter, family, and motherhood. Through this relationship, Catherine's husband, Andrew, who is in charge of the military in that area, values his position and his feelings about the impending military conflict that is soon to break out. When England orders all French residents to be evacuated, Catherine and Andrew lose more than a friend and the results are devastating. This is an interesting novel with surprising twists and turns. The characters are easy to identify with, and easy to love. Themes include the value of friendship, family relationships, as well as prejudices—their stories that are as relevant today as they were in 1753. This story probes deeper and has stronger adult characters than other Janette Oke novels that I have read, making it a satisfying read. I am looking forward to the sequel.


The Ephesus Fragment is a compelling mystery/adventure, much of which centers around the Vatican. The Pope is struggling with the decision of whether or not to declare Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Co-Redemptrix with Christ. Then, all on the same day, several events occur that have a major effect on this issue. The Pope has a stroke. A peasant woman in Mexico city is miraculously healed of a tumor after receiving a vision of Mary. An archaeologist finds an ancient scroll that appears to have been written by Jesus’ disciple, John. It is the story of Jesus’ life told from Mary’s perspective. This scroll could answer many questions about Mary—including whether or not she is worthy to be considered equal to Christ himself. A struggle begins to determine who will possess the scroll. Some are even willing to kill for it.

Although the issue of Mary is never resolved, the author does seem to attribute more to Mary than just the honor due her as Christ’s mother. The reader is left mainly to his own conclusions, as the contents of the scroll are never fully revealed. Characters with several different faiths are equally and fairly represented, including those with no belief in God.

The story takes off slowly, but after the first fifteen chapters it becomes difficult to put down. The large number of characters sometimes makes it difficult to follow. There are a few violent scenes. Much of the ending is predictable, but the author, Gary Parker, still manages to take the reader by surprise with some of the developments. He does an excellent job of wrapping up his story. He answers enough questions to bring the mystery about who is after the scroll to a close, but leaves the reader wondering about the scroll itself and also about how God moves in our lives. Entertaining and thought-provoking, The Ephesus Fragment challenges the reader to clarify his own beliefs and relationships that affect the life of the Christian.

Robyn Wyatt
Freelance Writer
Port Orchard, Washington


F. Railroads—History—Fiction. 11 - Adult.

Eighteen-year-old Jordana Baldwin lives with her brother, Brenton, and sister-in-law, Caitlan O’Connor in Omaha. Caitlan keeps her feelings for Brenton unknown to him because of her bitterness toward God. Damon Chittenden, a cowworker with Jordana, is obsessed with her and relentlessly pursues her. Kiernan O’Connor and his wife Victoria, the Baldwin’s sister, live in California. When Kiernan is seriously injured in a railroad accident, Victoria’s faith in God helps the two of them through a difficult time in their life. Jordana, Brenton, and Caitlan travel to California after Kiernan’s accident. Damon follows Jordana to California and kidnaps her. But she escapes unscathed, and Damon is arrested. Victoria’s praying for Jordana’s safety is the catalyst for Caitlan committing her life to God, and this leads to Brenton and Caitlan’s engagement.

Judith Pella and Tracie Peterson have written a story about two families’ whose faith in God enables them to handle personal difficulties. Jordana escapes sexual harm from Damon Chittenden, and Kiernan is emotionally recovered from his life threatening accident and nearly returned to physical health.

Separate Roads is an eventful historical novel about the hardships faced by families trying to survive in the 1800’s during times of a civil war and expansion of the Central Pacific Railroad. Brenton’s signing of a paper to not fight the South puts him in an uncomfortable position when the Governor decides the Omaha citizens should train for the militia. Kiernan’s accident incapacitates him physically and only the railroad’s intervention keeps his family from starving.

Dianne Woodman
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Parent
San Jose, California


On the morning of her marriage Elise receives the shocking news from her father that she is octoroon, her deceased mother having had one quarter Negro blood. Keeping this a secret, she wedds Kendall and lives happily with him on his parent’s plantation. But one short year later after the birth of their baby daughter the harbored secret erupts. Elise and her baby are returned to the slave master who owned her mother, where she is forced to ply the trade of prostitution at his brothel or lose her baby forever.

During this time Reverend Benjamin Sinclair, certain of God’s calling to evangelize the Texas territory, drags his unwilling wife and children away from civilization. His righteous fanaticism alienates his son and drives his wife to despair to the point of considering suicide to escape the drab existence of a circuit preacher’s wife.

Jillian’s refinement and breeding and knows she is aware of what is happening without all the lurid details.

Texas Angel may evoke strong emotions creating introspection regarding the actions and relationships that affect the life of the Christian.

Dianne Woodman
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Parent
San Jose, California


F. Fred Harvey (Film)—History—Fiction. 20-10 - Adult.

In A Veiled Reflection, Peterson’s story of identical twins that exchange places for three months could have been cliché. Instead she instills irresistible charm and warmth into Jillian’s character, and the reader swiftly comes to care about and root for her.

While twin Judith runs away to marry, Jillian travels to Arizona and fills Judith’s contract as a Harvey Girl, serving food and refreshments to travelers in a Harvey Hotel. Called by Judith’s name, most Harvey girls accept the deception, except for the town doctor who treated a serious burn on Judith’s arm just before she returned home. The burn, unknown to Jillian, is only the first of many unknowns Jillian has to deal with. Unable to continue the charade, Jillian confesses to the doctor why she’s in Arizona posing as her sister. While agreeing to conceal the deception, the doctor is intrigued. He is attracted to Jillian’s innocence, but guards a hurt and wary heart from the past. Furthermore he sees Jillian’s refinement and breeding and knows she will soon return home. A pregnant fifteen-year-old Navajo, racial prejudice and a growing attraction to Mac, the town doctor, lead to a dramatic scene that places Jillian’s position and possibly her life in jeopardy.

Although fiction, Peterson characterizes Jillian’s personal growth with clarity and insight and draws the reader into the story with each new quandary Jillian faces. The salvation message is woven throughout the story as an outgrowth of character. An engaging story showcasing morals and integrity while displaying human
characteristics and the need for a personal relationship with Jesus.

Gail Welborn
Freelance Writer/Reporter
Everett, Washington


F. England--Fiction. Gr. 9 - Adult.
The mythical Stone of Scone, symbolizing Scotland’s ties with ancient times and an intrinsic part of all coronations since the first king of Scotland was crowned, is stolen just before the coronation of Prince Charles of Wales. Shortly after the theft, Eagan Hamilton, leader of the Liberal Democratic party, is killed, and Andrew Trentham is elected the new leader. Pressure is expected to be put on Andrew from Dugal MacKinnon, the Scottish Nationalist MP and party leader, as the party continues to take steps leading up to Scotland’s bid for independence from the United Kingdom. As the new LD party leader, Andrew feels inadequate running the organization until ascertaining his own roots which he finds are of Scottish origin.

Michael Phillips has written a story about a man searching for his roots who reads fascinating novellas about five women God used in creating the lineage of Christ. Tamar married of her husband—and Tamar was determined to bring honor upon Judah’s house by begetting an heir.


F. Biblical fiction. Adult.
Unveiled, by Francine Rivers, is first in a series of novellas about five women God used in creating the lineage of Christ. Tamar married with child.” Judah, acknowledging that he says “by the man to whom these belong, I am also” (Genesis 38:10).

Judah, fearing for the life of his third-born son, orders Tamar to return to her family, supposedly until Shelah is old enough to marry her. Years pass, but Judah does not keep his promise. According to Canaanite law, the only other way Tamar can beget an heir is by her father-in-law. Disguising herself as a harlot, Tamar persuades Judah to lie with her. Later, when Judah receives word that Tamar has become pregnant by harlotry, he orders her to be burned, but she sends Judah’s staff, cord, and seal to him and says “by the man to whom these belong, I am with child.” Judah, acknowledging that he failed to keep his promise to Tamar, declares her more righteous than himself; and the Lord poured out a double blessing on Tamar as she gave birth to twin boys.

As Rivers indicates in her introduction, it is important to understand Tamar and her actions in the context of her own time period. Tamar’s extreme actions make sense in light of the fact that the only way a woman obtained honor was by bearing many sons to build up the household
Following classic traditions of unforgettable characters, like Scarlett and Rhett Butler, Dr. Penelope Stokes has created equally memorable characters in her fiction novel, *Amethyst Heart*. But most of Stokes’ characters are memorable for their virtues not vices, and for their selflessness instead of selfishness. Although the story begins in the pre-civil war South, it opens in 1993 with ninety-three-year-old Amethyst Noble preparing for a family meeting. Little Ann, a rebellious teen and great granddaughter remains after the meeting, and is given a life changing choice.

When Amethyst learns her son wants her declared incompetent for selfish reasons, Stokes sets the scene to travel back in time to 1853 to introduce readers to Amethyst’s father, Dr. Silas Noble and a rich cast of characters, family, and friends, both black and white. Noble’s grandmother gifted an amethyst brooch to him on her deathbed for his future wife, speaking words: “as priceless to the one who wears it as it is to the one who gives it.” The heart-shaped brooch, surrounded by small pearls, with “Sincerity, Purity, Nobility” engraved on its back, characterizes the Noble family and four generations, except for Amethyst’s son and grandson.

The civil war era and succeeding years of racism in the south are vividly portrayed with believable scenes, dialogue, and characterization. Stokes handles the flashbacks from mid 1800’s to 1993 and the competency hearing with incredible style. The reader never gets lost, but is eager to learn more of this family.

The characters created by Stokes bring Christianity alive as each generation lives out their faith in everyday life. The book ends with Noble’s grandson. “The characters created by Stokes bring Christianity alive as each generation lives out their faith in everyday life. The book ends with Noble’s grandson.”

According to an ancient messianic prophecy, Lady Firebird and Brennan Caldwell are part of the telepathic Sentinel line that will bring forth a child who will save the world from its darkness. The evil Shuhr will do whatever it takes to prevent this. Their tactics include attempting to wipe out the entire Caldwell family—or worse, kidnapping one of Firebird’s soon-to-be-born twins to use as part of their twisted genetic breeding program. Phoena, Firebird’s power-hungry sister, offers the Shuhr Firebird’s life in exchange for Phoena’s queenship on an independent Netaia, which is now under Federation control. The Shuhr, also telepaths, mentally manipulate Phoena for their own benefit. When her husband begs Brennan to rescue her, he agrees. Unfortunately, Brennan is captured and drugged so the Shuhr can access his mind to obtain important information about Federation. As a protective measure, Brennan is forced to induce a self-imposed amnesia.

Grieving for the intensely painful separation from her husband, Firebird finally decides she must rescue Brennan herself. She is successful. However, because of his partial amnesia, Brennan at first does not even know Firebird as his bond mate. As he works with the healer, it becomes clear that much of his mind and skills may be restored, but it will take time and a great deal of effort on his part—and the telepathic skills that he so highly valued in himself will not come as easily as they used to. Brennan learns an important lesson in humility through his experiences, and Firebird comes to grips with the fact that even though she considers herself a “good person”—especially when compared to the evil Shuhr—sin is an innate part of her being that can only be covered by blood sacrifice and submission to the Eternal Speaker (God).

*Fusion Fire*, by Kathy Tyers, is the exciting sequel to *Firebird*. The book moves along rapidly with a well-developed plot, and the relationship between Brennan and Firebird is more fully developed, showing their unique interconnectedness after undergoing pair bonding. The book deals with significant spiritual issues regarding man’s sin nature, pride, and the importance of submitting to Christ and his word. Tyers gives a two page synopsis of *Firebird in Fusion Fire*, which clarifies things for those who haven’t read book one.

Sherrill Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford Oregon

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“Holy Firebird!” observes Sarah Morgan near the peace treaty. The story begins, however, in 1888, when Bender Springs, a small fictitious town, had another name. Vinita Hampton Wright turns back to that early day several times throughout the story. At last the connection between the old town and the present becomes clear.

From Saturday, June 7 until Saturday, August 16, readers live the days with an assortment of Bender Springs folks: Sarah, miserable, and her pastoral husband, Jacob; Tony Gardino, a fearful and unhappy teenager; Dave Seaton, a young widower who dreams of roads that lead somewhere else; Randy Kluver, female teen who moves into Dave’s heart; Mamie Rupert, elderly widow with strange, haunting dreams; Iris Miracle, Pentecostal minister, and her brother Maxwell, called Ax for short. More people help round out that difficult summer, making change possible for some and not for others.

Wright skillfully involves reader’s emotions as she alternates chapters between primary characters, also including secondary characters as important elements. Her descriptions of the oppressive heat feel authentic, and the way
tempers flare, even to a rape sorely regretted afterward, ring true for a community suffering with high temperatures and dry ground. Life-changes the characters experience happen in realistic ways. Wright does not offer pat answers for problems.

The message of God’s love, salvation, and help for daily living springs through surprising sources, not from whom or where the reader might expect. It brings hope and faith into lives that had none.

Betty M. Hockett
Writer, Speaker, Teacher
Newberg, Oregon


F. Mothers and daughters—Fiction; Romance fiction.

Commissioned to paint portraits of some of Chicago’s upper crust while under the expert tutelage of a world renowned art instructor, Christina is soon propelled into a busy life away from the baggage of her years growing up in a small town where she and her mother are continual fodder for the gossip mill. While enjoying her anonymity, she soon smacks into skeletons from her past which bring up haunting questions that need answers. Christina sets out to unlock the mysteries which lead her back to her home town.

Passing up a megacity pastorate, Andrew accepts a call to a small town church where his spinster aunt and disabled uncle live, determined to make a difference in the life of the congregation. Andrew is not long in realizing the disappointment that in spite of his godly preaching using the tool of God’s Word, the messages seem to fall on deaf ears. He resolves to pray without ceasing for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, bringing a miracle that changes a town.

In the Shadow of a Secret by Lance Wubbles, author of The Gentle Hills series, is a serene romance set in the late thirties. An unwed mother living in a small community is continually reminded of her shame. The fact that most of the heartache comes via the so-called Christians obscures her path to salvation. All the events lead to a boiling cauldron of evil. Then through the Holy Spirit’s patient intervention sins are confessed and the way is opened for forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation. In the midst of turmoil a family separated by years of festering pain is brought together for healing. The conclusion is idealistic for a community of varied persons on a sinful planet, but with God all things are possible.

Debbie Lindsay
Homeschool Parent
Eatonville, Washington
100’s—Philosophy & Psychology

A current issue of Sally Stuart’s Christian Writers’ Market Guide is essential for anyone serious about writing for Christian publishers. This year’s volume includes more than 1,100 writing markets with seventy-three new periodicals and fifty-six new book publishers added. The 583 pages are packed with valuable information to help beginning or seasoned writers find markets to publish their work and track editorial changes.

The bulk of this comprehensive resource lists book and magazine publishers along with specific contact information, genres they accept, and publication requirements. Stuart’s Guide is an invaluable tool for anyone considering a writing career in the Christian publishing field.

A Note from the Editor: by Ray Legg

Beauty Out of Ashes

I have been thinking of you, the readers of Christian Library Journal, quite frequently for the past several days. Part of it may have to do with getting the column in on time, but the events of the recent past are the primary cause.

I was taking my son to work at the dining hall. As we pulled into the parking lot of the Student Life Center, we noticed smoke rising from the roof of the main administration building. I told him to go inside and make sure someone had called 911, while I drove to the back side of the building and entered the ground floor to see if there was anything I could do to help. The fumes were overpowering and I had to leave.

The fire and rescue teams arrived and methodically and professionally began to ply their trades. Other fire and rescue teams from all over the region converged, but despite their efforts, they were powerless to stop the fire from consuming the entire third floor of the building - the classrooms, offices, natural history collection, technology center, and the library. As the fire spread along the length of the building, everyone prayed that it would stop before it reached the library. If it didn’t, it would destroy more than books; it would destroy a part of history—the rare book collection.

And it did. While the fire was prevented from spreading to the lower floors of the library, the smoke and water caused incredible devastation. Everything in the library was affected. All that was left were row after row, shelf after shelf of charred remains. Thirty years of hard work and two to four million dollars of the school’s resources went up in smoke.

But the process of rebuilding has already begun. Classes resumed two days after the fire. Even though all the essential college functions are being run from temporary modular buildings, we are pressing on. Colleges and universities from all over the nation and the world have pledged their support as we rebuild. Our plan is to be back in business in a newly renovated building by the beginning of the fall term.

As all this activity has transpired, I have wondered about you, our readers. If something like this fire was to strike your library, what plans do you have in place to preserve your collection? Do you have any? How about using our disaster as your motivation to review your disaster plan in case the same thing happened to you?
payment, and more. A detailed table of contents and general index help readers quickly find specific markets and information.

Besides markets for periodicals and books, this necessary tool includes new online markets, greeting card and specialty markets, contests, plus markets for scriptwriting, song writing, and poetry. It also contains helpful information on Christian writers’ conferences, workshops, and organizations plus editorial services and agents. Useful indexes include a glossary of terms and denominational listings of book publishers and periodicals.

To use this reference, study the periodical and book entries relating to your topics of interest and highlight possible markets. For example, if family life interests you, find this listing in the table of contents and read entries for this topic. Then follow instructions within each publication to request sample copies, writers’ guidelines, and theme lists. When materials arrive, examine each publication thoroughly before writing a query or piece for them.

Stuart, widely known in Christian publishing as a marketing expert and conference speaker, has compiled this guide for fifteen years. With thirty-three years of writing experience, she has authored over twenty-five books and hundreds of articles. Her well-researched, up-to-date book is the best Christian marketing tool available. Stuart found her writing niche; now she helps others find theirs with this outstanding annual resource.

Lydia E. Harris
Freelance Writer & Former Teacher
Seattle, Washington

100’s—Philosophy & Psychology


The author lost her first son, Patrick, to full term stillbirth, then had two healthy sons within three years. That experience makes this book credible, her profession as a journalist makes it thorough. Research for Pregnancy After a Loss became her healing quest. It is the single most comprehensive volume on this topic and covers emotional, physical, and spiritual elements of subsequent pregnancies. Organized by trimester, the book anticipates everything from telling people you are pregnant to taking home a healthy baby. Each chapter includes How You May Be Feeling, Prenatal Visits and Tests, Common Concerns, Tips for Easing Anxiety, and Home Monitoring of Your Pregnancy.

Because of its broad range, there is some material that may not be applicable your situation, such as detailed descriptions of diseases/conditions that lead to pregnancy loss. For example, if your loss was the result of a late term cord accident, you can skip the selective abortion or early miscarriage sections. The index is specific, allowing you to read only what you need/want. Read selectively, this book will be a tremendous asset to anyone journeying through the unfamiliar and sometimes anxiety-ridden territory of subsequent pregnancy after loss.

Anita Goldman Horning
Freelance Writer
Lawrenceville, Georgia


As a complementary companion to The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, ex-pastor John Maxwell writes to support the leadership student. He helps readers recognize, develop, and refine personal characteristics needed to be an effective leader others will want to follow. Among his twenty-one leadership qualities, he identifies character, charisma, commitment, communication, generosity, listening, passion, responsibility, self-discipline, servanthood, and vision as a few chapter heads. Each section begins with succinct quotes to direct readers’ thinking, and step-by-step teaching and examples to illustrate his points. Chapters end with “Daily Take-Aways,” meaningful summaries or a challenge to apply the skill taught in the section. Many personal, believable anecdotes salt and pepper this self-help tool, easily read in one or two settings.

Although Maxwell writes in an easy-to-read quick-style, his message runs deep, and the encouraging, empowering advice prompts readers to look down deep to discover qualities needed to live their dream. He advises students of influence to make leadership changes from the inside out and to absorb the book strategically and methodically, (not in one or two settings) perhaps its most acute benefit. Anyone desiring to be more effective with others will benefit by the skills Maxwell identifies. He does not use Scripture in his work, but his principles stem from biblical ideals throughout. His tools for teaching groups, the video and audio series, are also highlighted. Church and lay leaders praise this volume.

Carolyn Hearing
Freelance Writer
Winterville, North Carolina

200’s—Religion


“Intelligent design,” writes William Dembski, “is three things: a scientific research program that investigates the effects of intelligent causes; an intellectual movement that challenges Darwinism and its naturalistic legacy; and a way of understanding divine action.” Dembski, a Ph.D. holder in the fields of mathematics and philosophy, proposes what he calls “specified complexity” as a criterion for detecting design in natural phenomena. This approach is thus different from “creation science” which has religious commitments, and “naturalism,” which denies the possibility of divine action in the universe. It is a scientific approach that acknowledges the possibility of divine action, but does not seek to define the Designer.

Despite what might seem to be a deliberately agnostic approach to the nature of God, Dembski asserts that “any view of the sciences that leaves Christ out of the picture must be seen as fundamentally deficient.” In other words, first the evidence of design must be found, and only then can it be seen how this relates to a Christian worldview. Dembski is, in fact, concerned that any approach to science must be compatible with the Christian faith.

The topics covered in the book range over approaches to divine action, natural theology, naturalism, information theory, design in nature, science and theology, and creation as divine gift and logos. Some of the chapters are fairly technical for the lay reader, involving exercises in the theory of logic. The book as a whole is probably more suitable for the serious student of science and theology. Dembski provides a helpful appendix countering objections to design theory. As books on intelligent design theory continue to proliferate, Dembski’s book should provide a worthwhile overview.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


Years ago people would read their Bibles and never mark in them. Later came Bibles that encouraged people to write notes to themselves in the margins. Later still came study Bibles that provided space and notes to the text so people could really learn and apply the Word of God into their lives. Many Bible studies series taught people how to study the Bible for all its worth. Kay Arthur, who has an excellent speaking
ministry, has now defined a way to study the Bible that is easy to learn and takes a lifetime to perfect.

Her inductive method is not unique, but her book carefully teaches one what it is and the advantages to using this method. With many examples, explanations, and helps, Arthur takes the Bible student through her process. Each chapter builds upon the preceding chapter with no assumptions made from the beginning. She begins with the rationale for using the inductive method and shows the flexibility of this method such as a topical study, book study, or a person study as well as many other studies. She teaches the use of questioning to arrive at the true, clear meaning of scripture without ever placing her theology in the balance. She has the student using the pencil constantly and she is aware that colors are a powerful way to learn and remember information. She is also cognizant of how people will connect with symbols or patterns, so she teaches how these are to be used in inductive Bible study. In many respects this is a mini course on biblical studies.

The book is written well with many charts, maps, examples, and directions. The appendices are many and detailed. The topics covered in the appendices are a summary of the inductive process, worksheet examples, extensive “how to’s” regarding the use of dictionaries and concordances, as well as recommendation pages for further studies and helps for verb tenses, moods, and voice. This would be a useful book for the person desiring to develop a life long habit of studying the Bible.

Bianca L. Elliott
Teacher
Linwood, Kansas


Mr. Garlow begins The Covenant by stating that the study of covenants will change one’s life. He supports this statement with a book that explains the history, main concepts (i.e. blood, purity, curses/blessings, etc.), symbolism (i.e. meal, name exchange, etc.), and use of covenants in the church today. Mr. Garlow sets an understandable background for the study of biblical covenants that makes the rest of the book easy to comprehend. The outline is simple and straightforward with a progression from the history of covenants in the two testaments through an interpretation of how one should use this information in their personal and corporate lives. He discusses briefly different covenants (Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the new covenant), but emphasizes the Abrahamic and New Covenants.

In chapter eight and following Mr. Garlow begins dealing with issues such as the suffering of Christians versus sickness, spiritual authority of believers according to covenant theology, and binding and loosening. Mr. Garlow believes in the present authority of covenants. He believes that by speaking the promises indicated in the covenants, we exercise the authority and power of the covenants. We may rebuke orally the spirit of bitterness for example.

At the end of each chapter are study/discussion questions. There is a note section in the back of the book and within the text are numerous references to Scripture.

Bianca Elliott
Teacher
Linwood, Kansas


Stephen Olford asks what is the message in the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians in The Christian Message For Contemporary Life. Initial chapters cover what he calls “the contradiction of division” and how division weakens the witness of the church. For example, churches preach the message of reconciliation, yet experience divisiveness in their own church body. He covers the character of the Christian message and its relevancy for today, and discusses how religion has moved from God centered to self-centered. Olford writes, “Objective doctrines are replaced by subjective experience; worshipping a holy God gives way to entertaining the congregation.” He places great emphasis on the great commission and the importance of communicating Christ’s message to unbelievers today. The concluding chapters deal with understanding the Christian message through the Holy Spirit with His initiation, illumination, and spiritual interpretation.

Olford elaborates on the challenge of the Christian message and compares lack of spiritual maturity to the degree of carnality in hearts. He defines spiritual maturity as willingness to accept spiritual truth, apply it, and then affirm it. Each chapter ends with an itemized passage description of where in 1 Corinthians his conclusions are drawn from. These, coupled with biblical end notes, encourage the reader to read God’s word. Olford describes issues that confront churches today with insight and honesty, while emphasizing our hope is in the Lord who will provide the answers if we only submit to Him and ask. A must read for serious-minded Christians.

Gail Welborn
Freelance Writer/Reporter
Everett, Washington


Sometimes non-scholarly people do not know how to answer questions from non-Christians regarding their faith, the desire/need to
indicates, Stott’s personal plea for unity, integrity, and faithfulness. This little book should be a valuable resource for those interested in the commonalities which evangelical Christians share.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


While many aspects of our Christian faith are simple enough to be understood by everyone, even children, there are deeper layers of meaning to engage even the best minds in theological inquiry. This is what is meant by “mystery”—not puzzles or problems to be solved, but “the deep dimension of life where meaning dwells” (p. 2). For Mark McIntosh, professor of systematic theology and spirituality at Loyola University, theology involves seeking out these meanings ... God’s meanings.

The mysteries of the Christian faith include the doctrines of creation, revelation, incarnation, salvation, eschatology and the Trinity. These are distinctive doctrines that bind us together in one faith, and separate us from the multitude of the world’s other faiths. McIntosh asserts that we can’t escape from theology; rather, that "theology is taking place whenever your life is interpreted in the context of God’s life, when the mystery of God’s love begins to shine and radiate into your world ... " (p.8). Theology is not academia, but part of life. McIntosh uses the language of friendship and family to explain the mysteries of faith and show how they relate to daily life.

Although part of a series for Anglicans, Mysteries of Faith provides an engaging, lucid, and accessible examination of these central doctrines that should benefit members of other denominations as well. It would be hard to conceive of a better treatment written for laypersons, or one that makes the mysteries of faith more real and relevant.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


“It we want real love, ideal love, limitless love,” writes Ruth Myers, “God’s heart is where to find it. It’s the only love big enough to meet the God-sized needs of your life.” With this as a premise, Myers, a missionary for many years in Singapore and now on staff with the Navigators, explores the deceptively simple concept that God loves us. “All of us in some degree have false or incomplete notions about God and his love, and these wrong ideas about Him lie at the root of many of our problems.” Myers believes that there are three reasons that Christians often have trouble actively believing in God’s love: (1) they intuitively know they do not deserve his love, (2) they don’t see God meeting their expectations and desires, and (3), this being perhaps the most prevalent reason of all, they do not take the time to cultivate the depth of relationship with God that love requires. Having dealt with each of these issues in her own life, Myers challenges and encourages the reader join her in the ongoing process of becoming so grounded in the reality of God’s deep and passionate love that it becomes a constant influence in life rather than an abstract concept.

This isn’t a book to be skimmed in an evening. It is one to savor prayerfully and thoughtfully. It is a delight to come upon the many excerpts of poetry, lines from hymns, and favorite quotes that Myers uses to illustrate her points. She concludes each chapter with a prayer and a challenge: “What Scripture or truth in this chapter do you feel the Lord is especially speaking to you about? What will you do to profit the most from this?” The Perfect Love is a call to action and an invitation to experience “the only love that truly satisfies—the only love you truly need.”

Lilian Heynelt
Public Librarian
Pomeroy, Washington


N. T. Wright, now Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, is well known for his contributions to the ongoing quest for the historical Jesus. Writing from a predominantly conservative position, Wright’s books have opposed those of the Jesus Seminar, but have provoked controversy in their own right. His major volumes, The New Testament and the People of God, and Jesus and the Victory of God, are written primarily for scholars; this new book, The Challenge of Jesus, provides an accessible overview of Wright’s studies focusing on the life of Jesus.

Wright believes that there are still new things to be said and learned about the life of Jesus of Nazareth. It is an important part of discipleship to think clearly, accurately, and truthfully about Jesus Christ, because he has revealed God to us. Wright challenges common assumptions about Jesus; he attempts to present a picture of Jesus
that is grounded in the world of first century Palestine, but that also speaks to us today. He examines such topics as Jesus’s understanding of the Kingdom of God, his mission, and the crucifixion. He discusses the relationship of Jesus and God; the incarnation; and the resurrection. Lastly, he examines how a proper understanding of Jesus can affect our lives as Christians in today’s world.

The Challenge of Jesus is written in a clear manner, and should provide a valuable resource for those interested in the historical Jesus.

Andrew M. Seddon  
Physician/Author  
Billings, Montana


241. Medical genetics--Religious aspects--Christianity; Medical genetics--Moral and ethical aspects; Genetic engineering--Religious aspects--Christianity; Genetic engineering--Moral and ethical aspects. 120 p. Adult.

A single glance at the newspapers tells us that genetic engineering is here to stay. The Human Genome Project has successfully mapped out the human gene sequence, there is hope for treatment of various genetic diseases, animals have been cloned, and humans may be next. Genetic engineering can (and is) viewed both as a bright hope for the future and as a Pandora’s box of unmitigated evil. Where does the truth lie? How should a Christian respond?

As with many technologies, genetic engineering lies in the gray zone between good and evil. It promises many benefits, yet troubling aspects should prevent uncritical acceptance. The issues involved are complicated and not easily resolved. Genetic Engineering: A Christian Response collects twenty essays from highly qualified sources to address some of the concerns. These are gathered into three groups relating to society, the family, and the individual. The diverse topics involve matters of justice, worldviews, the nature of humanity, and spirituality. Genetic engineering includes treatment of disease, but also the potential for eugenics (thereby bringing in the possibility of abortion for unwanted pregnancies), and human cloning. What costs will genetic engineering carry? Who benefits? Who suffers?

Christians cannot and must not avoid these issues. They are not easy—just as many of the essays in this book are not easy—but Christians need to be informed and outspoken. Genetic Engineering: A Christian Response is not a textbook, and lays no claim to presenting a comprehensive picture of the current state of genetics. It presents an overview from a broadly Christian perspective and its authors are committed to evaluating and critiquing genetic engineering from a Christian standpoint. The book should be well worth the investment for those involved or interested in this area.

Andrew M. Seddon  
Physician/Author  
Billings, Montana


What is biblical hospitality? Michele Hershberger, a Mennonite church worker and former youth pastor, presents a unique perspective that may push readers out of their comfort zones. Not a typical tea-and-cookies hospitality book, A Christian View of Hospitality addresses theological issues of hospitality in our post-modern culture.

Hershberger stresses the need to see strangers through the eyes of Jesus and says they often bring the gift of hospitality. Their gifts may not be tangible or wrapped but rather something the host learns from the stranger or from giving. The author prayed daily for opportunities to be hospitable and was surprised by God’s answers and the many opportunities. She blends personal accounts from her life and others who participated in a forty day experiment with biblical teaching on hospitality. Fresh insights challenge readers with meaty concepts to chew on and digest.

Appendices include ideas for encouraging hospitality and a discussion guide for individual or group study. Readers who want to move beyond the status quo in offering hospitality will find this thought-provoking resource valuable.

Linda E. Harris  
Freelance Writer, Former Teacher  
Seattle, Washington


David Adam, vicar of Holy Island, Lindisfarne, was a coal miner before he attended Kelham Theological College, which may partly explain his keen interest in prayers for the working person. The title of this small book refers to the adoration in Ephesians 6:10 to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.”

We must, Adams declares, “make our own personal discovery” that all power comes from God and that his power is always available. He explains in his introduction that Celtic prayer did not divide life into sacred and secular niches but spoke simply(575,587),(912,873)

I especially enjoyed Adam’s introduction, his emphasis on the importance of God’s power in everyday life, and his anecdotes of living with and without (electrical and spiritual) power. Power Lines can be a beneficial tool for congregational use and for personal meditation.

R. Jeanette Hardlage  
Freelance Writer  
Sonora, California


Author Chris Wave collaborates with singer Kim Bolton to write often humorous, sometimes impertinent, short stories that reveal God in ordinary life. Using the analogy of the American Diner of the fifties, with God as the Master Chef, their new book, Conversations at the Girlville Diner addresses facets of life common to women and mothers. Wave writes, “This is where the whole of community crosses paths. If diners are the meeting places for humanity, then that is where you will find God.”

Broken into five sections, each segment focuses on different aspects of life, such as contentment, spiritual growth, love, children, and holidays. Stories are short, humorous, and to the point. God is the Master Chef who serves nutritious provisions through true-life examples by feeding the spirit of man, rather than the body, when they come to his diner.

Wave’s prayer as a young, agitated mother, “Dear God, I want to be usable, but truthfully,
Lord, I’ve got no use left to put able on,” reveals her natural affinity and ability to write humor. However, Bolton carries the humor over the edge when she paraphrases the story of Sarah and Abraham.

An attractive book in gray and red, with black highlights, it is a good read for those brief moments to refocus and reflect on the true meaning of life.

Gail Welborn
Freelance Writer/Reporter
Everett, Washington


Gordon Jackson acknowledges that nothing can take the place of the Bible, but recognizes that Christians also find other sources helpful in their spiritual journey—“the local church, good pastoring, caring friends and family, personal devotion, and good books, among others.” (p. 5) He designed Quotes for the Journey to assist in this process.

Jackson, who is associate dean for academic affairs at Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, set four standards for choosing his entries: 1) They “flow from and are faithful to a Christian worldview. 2) They are “highly applicable to day-to-day discipleship and to practical Christian living.” 3) They are unique in “message, creativity, capacity to stretch our thinking.” 4) They are “highly readable, provocative and thoughtful, without being offensive…."

The 1300 quotes are arranged at once topically and alphabetically; they range from a half dozen entries for “God’s Provision” to more than fifty for “Prayer.” Many quotes are one sentence; most are under twenty-five words. Sources range from ancient to modern, with a large number from that famous author Unknown. The work includes an author index.

While Jackson is faithful to his last three standards, perhaps not all quotes are faithful to a Christian worldview. E.g., John Lennon’s: “Two more popular than Jesus now; I don’t know which will go first—rock ‘n roll or Christianity.” (p. 97) or “They stopped me from swinging in church, so I had to swing outside.” by Fats Waller. (p. 38) On the other hand, perhaps the compiler simply needs to provide a clearer definition of his conception of a Christian worldview.

Jackson admits the subjectiveness of his choices and realizes that the preponderance of quotes are from British and American sources and from males; he cites his indebtedness to many other anthologies, books, magazines, and individuals.

This small volume does live up to its compiler’s hope that it may be useful for finding interesting quotes on a particular topic or simply for browsing.

R. Jeannette Harlage
Freelance Writer
Sonora, California


I suspect that many readers, like myself, will never have associated noted author and theologian John Stott with bird-watching. Yet this has been a life-long passion with him, and he estimates that he has seen 2,500 of the world’s 9,000 bird species. In The Birds Our Teachers Stott engages in what he wryly calls “orni-theology”—that is, extracting lessons in Christian life and belief from the lifestyles and habits of birds.

In his typically literate and engaging style, Stott draws such comparisons as “The migration of storks—repentance,” “The drinking of pigeons—gratitude,” “The song of larks—joy,” and eight other parallels. He ranges across the spectrum of the bird world and the sweep of scripture, from psalm to parable. Stott has obviously done his homework, and his love of birds—and God’s creation in general—shines through. This is a lighthearted yet profound and deeply relevant book, with appeal and accessibility to a wide age-range.

The Birds Our Teachers is illustrated with more than 150 color photographs taken by the author, and presented in a very attractive format. With fact, poetry, humor, theology, and a solid insight into the ways of both birds and humans, Stott has created a devotional that should have wide appeal to bird lovers and Christians in general.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


248.3. Prayer groups—Christianity; Prayer—Christianity. 187 p. Adult.

“Prayer is much greater than bringing a list of requests to God,” writes Price, General Director of Bible Prayer Fellowship and long-time pastor. He challenges families and churches to discover the power and blessing of uniting in Christ-centered prayer. To do so, he teaches five keys: claim the power of Christ and expect his presence through his Spirit; pray in the power and real meaning of Jesus’ name; trust Christ to take charge; allow Christ to change you according to his will; and pray in harmony with God. Numerous encouraging illustrations and answered prayers are shared from church history to the present day.

Written in an earnest, exhorting tone, Price’s biblical teaching will impact individuals, homes, fellowship groups, and churches if applied. Chapters end with discussion questions and application exercises. Endnotes and information about Bible Prayer Fellowship are also included. Pastors, ministry leaders, and all who want to grow in prayer will appreciate this new release.

Lydia E. Harris
Freelance Writer, Former Teacher
Seattle, Washington


In The Other Side of Love, Gary Chapman presents scripture to support his belief that anger is not a sin. Chapman believes anger is a God-given response to the dishonesty and unfairness we believe we see or are experiencing. However, Chapman continues, anger becomes a sin when we do not see anger as a red light alerting us to take positive loving action to correct the problem, and lash out instead in hurtful words or actions. He discusses definitive (valid) and distorted anger and warns that anger can come out of our own compulsions and unresolved problems, not another person’s wrongdoing. Various methods of handling anger in a constructive rather than a destructive way are presented to encourage the reader to process anger in a godly fashion. Chapman includes chapters on long-term anger, anger and forgiveness, anger in marriage, and teaching children to handle anger. Three important chapters cover anger at God, anger at yourself, and what to do when you encounter an angry person.

Chapman includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter that could be used by an individual or group. At the end of eleven of the chapters there is a page titled “From One Side to Another.” This page summarizes the previous chapter into easy to find lists. An easy to read book with helpful examples The Other Side of Love lovingly encourages those with hidden anger or obvious anger to find solutions that will improve the quality of their life and those around them.

Barbara Bryden
Freelance Writer
Olympia, Washington.

For the Family’s Sake: The Value of Home in Everyone’s Life, by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay. LCCN 99033107. Wheaton, Ill.:

We all hunger for God. We long for quality time with him, for meaning in our role in God's world, for connection with others. Macaulay, daughter of L'Abri Fellowship founders Francis and Edith Schaeffer, reflects her idyllic childhood environment and passion for home and family in these pages. She emphasizes the foundational place homes have in everyone's lives. She shares principles from her experience of raising six children plus the educational philosophy of Charlotte Mason, an educator who lived a century ago. Macaulay stresses the importance of balance between leisure and work, allowing plenty of outdoor playtime, reading as a family, establishing routines such as mealtimes, and maintaining a cheerful, peaceful atmosphere. Her writing elevates the value and dignity of home life and shows the importance of homes to communities and society.

Readers who prefer simpler lifestyles will appreciate her ideas; others may find some suggestions impractical for modern-day living. An appendix and extensive notes are included, but there are no subheads to divide lengthy chapters. Although the content is vital, the writing is wordy with frequent digressions from the topics. Those who persevere in reading it will find valuable information and inspiration.


Auburn, Alabama

Jo Huddleston
Freelance Writer, Author, Former Teacher
Auburn, Alabama

The Home Coming: Unconditional Love: Finding Your Place in the Father's Heart, by Jack Winter; with Pamela Ferris. Seattle: Daystar Ministries in 1964, a network of healing centers and resources. Winter writes a systematic, clear, in-depth study of this parable. His insights will help readers to relate their circumstances to this parable, causing them to question whether they are like the younger or older son.

The Home Coming is a look into understanding the prodigal son, the brother in the parable of the prodigal son. Winter writes a systematic, clear, in-depth study of this parable. His insights will help readers to relate their circumstances to this parable, causing them to question whether they are like younger or older son.

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Collections of sermons, unless unified by a common text or theme, can sometimes present a fragmented feel, written as they are at different times for different reasons. This collection by Martin Smith encompasses sermons written for professions of vows, seasons of the church year, and funeral occasions. Still, despite these disparate beginnings, there is an underlying connectedness, best exemplified by the terms of the book’s title—nativities and passions. Nativities suggests coming and birth, and passions suggests emotions and trials. The Christian life encompasses both.

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Seth Farber is a past practicing psychotherapist whose views on psychiatry can be summarized as: ' ... the mental health system [is] a rival religion, a crude form of idolatry inimical to the dissemination of the Christian faith ... ' and: 'mental illnesses do not exist.' He believes that psychiatry is a flawed, harmful system which excludes solely to perpetuate itself and provide a living for its practitioners. Yet both society and the church have yielded control of mental health to it, and so mental patients have become relegated to the fringes of society, abandoned by a confused church.

Farber raises serious issues, but creates controversial conclusions. He fails to demonstrate why the mind cannot have mental illness and doesn’t recognize the close (and mysterious) connection of the mind and the body. His distinction between ‘madness’ (schizophrenia) and other conditions associated with a physical basis (depression, Alzheimer’s dementia etc.) is unclear. Recent genetic studies of genes that may affect schizophrenia may undercut his argument.

Farber asserts an important critique of psychiatry and an urgent call to Christians to reach out to the mentally ill. Yet much work needs to be done on the basis of mental illness, and the view presented in this book cannot be accepted as a norm.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


It is no secret that there’s a strong connection between the body and the spirit. Our spiritual and emotional health strongly impacts our physical health. While only recently have clinical studies begun to show a positive relationship between spiritual health and physical health, clergy, patients, and some physicians have known this for a long time. Still, particularly where physicians are concerned, much more emphasis is placed on the physical than the spiritual. This, Dr. Fountain asserts, is a grave oversight.

Over decades on the mission field in Congo he has seen many instances of spiritual healing leading to physical improvement. Conversely, the effects of sin and a lifestyle that ignores God lead to a decline in physical well-being and failure of medical cures. God, Medicine & Miracles seeks to demonstrate this profound interaction, and to encourage people to seek complete healing—bodies, minds, emotions, and spirit.

God, Medicine & Miracles is written at a basic lay level in an anecdotal style suitable for the average reader; the medically trained reader might want to supplement it with more rigorous or technical references. The Gospel presentation also is at a fairly straightforward level. Still, Fountain makes many valuable points, and it behooves all of us—since illness and injuries will strike every one of us at some point—to recognize our holistic nature and to realize that full healing (body and spirit) comes only through Jesus Christ.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


There can be little doubt that we live in a society that is largely science-based. Almost daily we hear the latest “scientific” pronouncement on one issue or another. Each day treats us to another new advance. Yet if we were asked to define “science,” many of us would have difficulty in creating a definition that really fits the bill. And in its relationship to science our society vacillates between the extremes of uncritical acceptance and outright rejection. Our Christian faith intersects another element into this uneasy relationship.

Del Ratzsch’s book was originally published in 1986 under the title Philosophy of Science. In its somewhat technical pages Ratzsch discusses the nature of science, different approaches to the philosophy of science, what science can and cannot tell us, how science relates to the Christian faith, and (for this new edition) how the concept and movement of “Intelligent Design” fits into the picture. He does not discuss the usual creation-evolution arguments, but goes past them to the nature of science itself.

Science and Its Limits could be a challenging read for those not conversant with the premises of science. But science is with us to stay; it influences many aspects of our daily lives; it impinges upon our beliefs and worldviews; it helps shape our society. As such, it is important that we be conversant with science’s limits, and see it neither as savior of humanity, nor as humanity’s nemesis.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


For those interested in science and religion, there’s no end of books available, written from every conceivable perspective. Many of these go into scientific or theological detail at levels which leave the lay reader gasping for air. Not so this new volume by Episcopal priest Barbara Brown Taylor. In these four short, readable essays, Taylor seeks to relate some of the insights she has gained as a Christian from the discoveries of modern science. She rejects the view that science and religion are unconnected; instead, both scientists and believers are engaged with the mystery and the wonder of the universe we inhabit. Sometimes we can express ourselves only in the words of science; sometimes in the words of poetry; sometimes in the words of faith; sometimes we need the words of all three.

The “luminous web” represents the
interconnectedness of the entire created order. We live in a universe created by God, infused with his life and spirit; a universe where matter, life, and spirit are joined in ways we can’t fully explain or understand. The complexity and immensity of the universe reflects the awesomeness of its Creator. As spiritual beings, we have been given the privilege of relating to our Creator in ways that other parts of creation can’t.

Written in an elegant, lyrical fashion, The Luminous Web provides an accessible and intriguing perspective on a sometimes abstruse subject. There are references to evolutionary theory and big bang cosmology.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


How can we possibly learn and grow in our faith journey by reading literature? In Reading with Deeper Eyes, William Willimon skillfully explores the idea that God sometimes crops up in literature in ways we do not expect, sometimes in ways even the author did not expect. Each of ten chapters begins with a scripture verse that illuminates the chapter at hand, then proceeds to discuss a literary work, weaving stories from other works into the framework of the subject.

In the chapter “The Way Back Home,” the author compares The Odyssey to the story of the prodigal son. He acknowledges that his “moral horizon tends to be myopic,” and that Job (subject of one chapter) “teases me toward a horizon tends to be myopic,” and that Job (subject of one chapter) “teases me toward a horizon tends to be myopic,” and that Job (subject of one chapter) “teases me toward a horizon tends to be myopic,” and that Job (subject of one chapter) “teases me toward a horizon tends to be myopic,” and that Job (subject of one chapter) “teases me toward a horizon tends to be myopic,” and that Job (subject of one chapter) “teases me toward a horizon tends to be myopic,” and that Job (subject of one chapter) “teases me toward a horizon.”

Willimon, Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University, gives us ten great works to consider. Topics range from Crime and Punishment by Dostoevsky, to The Song of Songs, to The Passion of the Christ. Each chapter begins with a scripture verse that illuminates the chapter at hand, then proceeds to discuss a literary work, weaving stories from other works into the framework of the subject.

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270.1 Church history—Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600. p. Adult.

Eusebius: The Church History is a new and very valuable translation of the complete ten-volume church history work of Eusebius who lived from about 260 AD to 339 AD. These books by Eusebius are one of the most important sources of early church history in existence. He traces Christianity from the life of Christ until the reign of the Roman emperor Constantine, who converted to Christianity and declared it the official religion of the empire, thereby ending the horrible persecutions and martyrdoms which had been occurring previously to his time. Maier has done an excellent job making Eusebius’ often difficult style very readable and accessible to the modern reader.

One of the most helpful things in this text are the many colored photographs and maps which show the actual places Eusebius is talking about in his history. In addition, at the end of each book, Maier includes a helpful commentary on the text to make it more relevant and understandable, as well as a summary of Roman empire history relevant to each book of Eusebius. This material on the Roman empire of the time is very valuable and hard to find elsewhere. At the end of the text are appendices giving charts of Roman history and church history, particularly lists of church bishops in the main centers of Christianity during the early centuries—Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. The book ends with very good indices of persons and subjects referred to in the text.

This is a very high quality translation of a very important work, and it will be useful for anyone studying history and particularly, the history of the early Christian church. Without Eusebius, we would have very little first-hand knowledge of the early centuries and the early struggles and triumphs of Christianity.

Dr. Paul Boling
Assoc. Prof. of Philosophy and Bible
Bryan College
Dayton, Tennessee

The theme of this book is “the crisis of character in national leadership.” In the book’s introduction, Os Guinness poses these questions: What is character? Why is the character issue so confusing and uncertain today? Why does character matter?

To answer these and other questions, Guinness combines a series of readings by and about four great leaders from history: George Washington, first President of the United States, a fervent champion of religious freedom for all; William Wilberforce, the 18th century reformer and abolisher of Britain’s slave trade who helped transform the civil and moral climate of his times; Abraham Lincoln, America’s President during the Civil War, who is remembered for his character, moral integrity, and faith in God; and Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, a 20th century Russian who converted from Marxism to Christianity and whose writings about universal moral values garnered him the Nobel Prize for literature.

Guinness suggests that reflections on these men’s lives reveal a leadership model to which we can each aspire and a gauge by which to hold present leaders accountable. These reflective biographical essays show how character played a role as these four survived obstacles to their greatness. Their lives impacted civil and religious liberty. Guinness cautions that character can include evil qualities as well as good ones and that whether good or evil, character always has consequences.

Character Counts will appeal to America’s concerned citizens who yearn for the return of character in America’s leaders and want to combat the “growing vacuum in moral values among our people.” Through these essays the reader will gain encouragement and hope that individuals can collectively effect real change.

Jo Huddleston
Freelance Writer, Author, Former Teacher
Auburn, Alabama


This beautifully bound and printed book is a compilation of stories about people who stood for Jesus, either through imprisonment or death—the ultimate “Jesus freaks.” Each story begins with a notation of the person’s name, country, and date of their martyrdom or imprisonment. The stories themselves are beautifully written and attention-keeping—not dry or biographical. Each story is a snippet of a dedicated life, often with dialogue, etc. to make it come alive. They are ideal for brief devotional thoughts. Most stories end with a Scripture passage. Between stories are beautiful quotes from some of those same martyrs.

This book is coffee-table quality, but definitely not to be left unread! It includes stories about, or quotes from, the apostles Peter, John, Paul, Andrew, and James, as well as more currently—William Tyndale, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jim Elliot, Ignatius, Martin Luther, Polycarp, Richard Wurmbrand, and John Wesley.

In the back of the book you’ll find: information about each story’s source, a listing of each country mentioned—with information about the Church in that country, alphabetical and chronological indexes, things the reader can do in response, and information about the Voice of the Martyrs and DC Talk.

“Remember the Lord’s people who are in jail and be concerned for them. Don’t forget those who are suffering, but imagine that you are there in their place.” Hebrews 10:13 (CEV)

Barb Beyer
ACSI Missions Project Coordinator
Colorado Springs, Colorado


In light of the 2000 firestorm of controversy that dragged Bob Jones University into the national media spotlight and into the middle of Republican Party politics, this book, written by a historian and dean at Washington and Lee University, certainly deserves renewed interest and attention.

Mark Dalhouse has done a superb job of weaving never-before-available archival materials together with the memories and anecdotes of first-hand players into an incredibly appealing narrative. In researching this work, he enjoyed unlimited access to the late BJU chancellor, Bob Jones, Jr., and the university archives. By presenting his research, Dalhouse provides what is probably the most fair and balanced, independent account to be written about the self-proclaimed ‘World’s Most Unusual University.’
Dalhouse positively addresses the competing visions of the university. With great tact, the author juxtaposes the notion that the school is a regional, isolated, Bible-thumping institution against evidence that demonstrate its faculty and alumni enjoy wide, even international, acceptance and influence in the arts, sciences, and professions.

Of particular interest is the author’s account of the university’s public sparring with Billy Graham and his evangelistic team as they planned to bring a crusade to Greenville, South Carolina. Graham, a former BJU student himself, found that the university had no interest in supporting his brand of cooperation with ‘unseparated Christians.’ Others who have felt the sting of the university include Christian leaders such as the late Theodore Mercer, the late John R. Rice, and Jerry Falwell, founder of the competing Liberty University.

Even without a personal interest in the American fundamentalist movement, a reader might become spell-bound by the personalities and controversies that have turned a relatively small Christian university in South Carolina into a leading (perhaps even mythic) player in Christian education at the K-12 and post-secondary levels. Students of American history, religion, or education will be well served by reading this history.

Dann Brown
Assoc. Professor/Communications
Indiana Wesleyan University
Indianapolis, Indiana

300’s—Social Sciences


This is an unusual book about a difficult subject. Noreen Riols quickly involves the reader in her story using vivid descriptions of family life, fears, and feelings. Suffering from a deep postpartum depression, advised by her trusted vicar as well as medical specialists to terminate the life of her sixth child, she pushed away vicar as well as medical specialists to terminate the life of her sixth child, she pushed away

All the unexpected, unconditional love from compassionate friends couldn’t buffer the truth of what she had done. She knew that her rote prayers and committee work weren’t going to help her now. Seeds of scripture dropped into her life at God-incident moments and prayer on her behalf did bring Noreen to a new life with Jesus Christ. But she held on to a self-loathing that shadowed her life and robbed her of joy. Noreen shares how she found “the freedom that only absolute trust in a loving Savior can bring.”

Her heart shares the depth of emotional and spiritual pain and the freshening of renewal. Readers are offered one woman’s road to peace and healing. For women who still suffer from guilt there is hope. That Noreen lives in Paris and traveled to England for the abortion reminds us that this life and death issue crosses boundaries of country and culture. Those who still believe that this is a “minor operation” will be challenged to discover God’s perspective. Judicious use of scripture and clear language carries the story quickly. No one is immune from its lessons.

Carol B. Taylor
Freelance writer
Poulsbo, Washington


In our culture, girls begin dreaming of storybook weddings during childhood. After the romantic proposal, the “Wedding Machine” whirs into action, and many couples begin elaborate plans for an expensive production. Is this necessary? From personal experience, Kindig says no. She believes weddings can be beautiful without overspending and helps readers rethink aspects of planning them.

Instead of decorating and cost-saving ideas, this resource offers spiritual and relational guidance to make weddings more enjoyable and less stressful. Kindig encourages couples to reflect God’s love in decisions, avoid perfectionism, guard against greed, be hospitable towards wedding guests, and refocus from the wedding to the marriage afterwards. She includes an example of one couple who applied these principles and celebrated a “simply beautiful wedding.” Since Kindig’s views challenge society’s ingrained expectations, they may discomfort some but liberate others. Engaged couples, their families, and those who counsel them will find this book a thought-provoking, beneficial read.

Lydia E. Harris
Freelance Writer, Former Teacher
Seattle, Washington

600’s—Technology (Applied Sciences)


649.7. Child rearing--United States; Moral education--United States; Children--United States; Conduct of life. 124 p. Adult.

Here is a nice book to give as a gift to a friend, or to yourself, Do You Know What I Like About You? by Cynthia Ulrich Tobias. The volume contains sixteen brief chapters, each one embracing a biblical principle. The usual principles such as prayer, service, and kindness, as well as the unexpected principles like pursuing excellence, developing a sense of humor, and patriotism—all worthwhile efforts. Further, each principle is preceded with a scripture followed by an anecdote, a few ideas to “give it a try,” and a poignant poem. Judging by the vignettes the book is geared to parents of young children; however, these principles apply to people of all ages. They are God’s guidelines to a cheerful, healthy, and meaningful life.

Tobias does a nice job presenting her ideas. Her Give it a Try ideas will motivate parents and her poems will inspire them. Keeping a joke file for a crabbly day and playing the What I Know that You Probably Don’t game are especially creative ways to help parents and their kids stimulate humor as well as knowledge.

Do You Know What I Like About You? is practical yet poetic—a delightful duo.

Ginger McGrath
Freelance Writer
McMinnville, Oregon

700’s—The Arts and Recreation


At first glance, I found this a disappointing book, an impression based on the fact that several of the photographs of stained glass windows are definitely out of focus. However, the text is very informative with its history of stained glass in general and Chicago stained glass in particular.

The book is not intended to be an exhaustive study, but rather to present “as many styles and colors, as many types and colors of glass windows. The bulk of the work is a study, but rather to present "as many styles and colors, as many types and colors, as many styles and colors, as many styles and colors, as many styles and colors, as many different aspects and colors of stained glass in general and Chicago stained glass in particular."

The book is not intended to be an exhaustive study, but rather to present “as many styles and techniques as possible” found in Chicago’s stained glass windows. The bulk of the work is found in churches, although there are many instances of stained glass in secular buildings. The authors point out that since 1930 there have been at least 2,000 churches built in Chicago, and “virtually all of these churches have stained glass windows, many of them equal to the finest in Europe.”

The authors discuss types and colors of glass used and developed down through history, architectural settings for stained glass, and an introduction to the many artists and studios whose works are found in Chicago.

803. Criticism--Terminology; Literature--Terminology; Themes, motives--Terminology; English language--Terms and phrases. 360 p. Gr. 10—Adult.

As a teacher, I am always aware that many, if not most, of the students in any class lack even basic fluency in the terminology of literary study. That means one of the first tasks in every course is to create an environment in which the students can become familiar with the language of literary study. But that is no easy task because students, like readers in general, occupy various places along the continuum of comprehension when it comes to literary terms and concepts. The question is, then, how to help them develop a clear grasp of the terminology which will enable them to learn the subject. Understanding the vocabulary is crucial to understanding the concept regardless of the field.

To that end, Edward Quinn’s Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms will be a great help to teachers and readers everywhere as they trudge through “the thicket of literary terms” (vii). In clear, unambiguous language, Quinn has successfully defined even the most complex concepts in the field of literary study.

One aspect of the dictionary that is especially useful is that it includes themes that similar volumes do not. Often books of this type avoid attempting to define the abstract, like “love,” but Quinn’s treatment of the matter in terms of its use in literature is noteworthy. It is, after all, one of the most recurring themes in literature and poetry.

Another aspect that makes this commendable is Quinn’s ability to make difficult concepts accessible to every reader. His treatment of “Deconstruction,” for example, is very readable and will provide readers with an essential understanding of a very complex literary theory.

A final aspect of Quinn’s Dictionary which readers will find very useful is its inclusion of a short bibliography with certain entries—usually the more complex—that facilitates further reading on the subject. Along with samples from various readings, a helpful system of cross-referencing, and a readable style, Quinn’s Dictionary will be a welcome addition to any library and will be of useful tool for students of literature in general.

Raymond Legg
Assoc. Prof. of English, Bryan College
Dayton, Tennessee


808. Authorship—Marketing; Authors and publishers. 298 p. Adult.

Stuart, well-known marketing expert, conference speaker, and author of over twenty-five books, shares her expertise on business aspects of writing in Sally Stuart’s Guide to Getting Published. Beginning and seasoned writers will benefit from her experience and wisdom gathered during thirty-three years of writing and publishing.

A “one-stop writing resource,” the volume brims with practical tips on marketing and getting published. Chapters cover getting started, time management, and setting up a home office. Especially helpful is the detailed information on how to write professional query letters and how to prepare fiction and nonfiction book proposals. Realistic advice concerning agents, contracts, self-publishing, collaboration (often more agony than ecstasy according to Stuart), and ghostwriting are included as well. Writers interested in specialty markets will find more than twenty opportunities listed including curriculum, fillers, greeting cards, reviews, poetry, and online publications. Although this guide emphasizes business aspects of writing, one chapter deals with writing topics such as leads, transitions, point of view, and self-editing.

Stuart’s comprehensive, well-written reference can be read cover to cover or referred to as needed for specific topics. A thorough index, table of contents, and subheads make information easy to find. Useful appendices include a glossary of terms and an extensive resource list. Getting Published is a valuable addition to any writer’s library.

Lydia E. Harris
Freelance Writer, Former Teacher
Seattle, Washington


810.9. American literature—History and criticism; English literature—20th century—History and criticism; Belief and doubt in literature; Religion in literature; Atheism in literature; God in literature. 254 p. Adult.

Bruce Lockeberie, the well-known and respected author, teacher, and long-time administrator of the Stony Brook School in New York, has, in this volume, written a most readable and accessible Christian critique of the modern canon of English-language fiction and poetry. The book grew from an invited series of lectures at Denver Seminary delivered in the mid-1970s. Lockerbie’s objective is to analyze the worldviews of fiction writers who are decidedly not Christian believers. These non-believing writers are compelled not only to challenge belief in the existence of God with hostility, but also to mock the choice of others to place their faith in Christianity. Very wisely, Lockerbie does not provide answers to the spiritual conflicts represented by the selected writers. This approach would have resulted in simplistic caricatures of the writers and their works. Rather, he examines the nature of their arguments with God and religion. He further explores the way those arguments impacted their lives and their art.

One early chapter focuses on the writing of Matthew Arnold, and the survey of Arnold’s writing career highlights the clash of cultures that surfaced in the late-19th century. Lockerbie delineates the influence of Marx, Darwin, and Huxley on society and society’s popular writers. The lesson in worldviews provides the basis for analyses in the remainder of the book where the works of Stephen Crane, Thomas Hardy, William Butler Yeats, and Ernest Hemingway are among those discussed.

Yet another issue that Christian readers must wrestle with in representative writing is the incongruity found in the arguments of those who profess love of the Holy Scripture and respect it as great literature yet find themselves opposed to its fundamental message: the Good News that Jesus is Lord. Lockerbie skillfully describes and dissect the worldview that fosters this dichotomy throughout Dismissing God.

An extremely well written book, English literature departments should consider using it in their capstone course for majors. At the same time, the advanced high school student who has read the moderns that Lockerbie treats (Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and James Joyce included) will find great benefit in understanding the times, issues, and themes of these great, non-Christian thinkers.

Dann Brown
Assoc. Professor/Communications
Indiana Wesleyan University
Indianapolis, Indiana


Words glittering on the page. Images dancing
through my head. Bathed in a shower of new insights, I turn the pages of Luci Shaw’s small volume of poetry The Angles of Light. This gifted author-poet takes the everyday mundane activities of life and holds them up for a clear and magnified look. A small maple tree, a familiar passage of scripture, a snowy night; each comes under the scrutiny of the poet’s eye and we are refreshed and renewed.

Her work is a long thirst-quenching drink for the parched soul. Luci Shaw’s words are sparse and simple, shedding light in the dark corners of our life. She helps us to pause and reflect for a moment, to look and see with new eyes, to slow down and give thanks. Shaw speaks in clear, concise terms. Most of her poems are less than a page in length but they are definitely not insignificant. This is a book to be picked up again and again to bring faith and beauty into our lives.

Mary Jarvis
Retired Teacher and Writer
Pawhuska, Oklahoma


Spiritual growth, says Joy Sawyer, is not a rigid process of rules and formulas. Instead, it is a creative process more akin to poetry than a textbook. Using the metaphor of poetry she explores this idea of growth through creativity. We are God’s creation, and using our own creative abilities can bring us closer to him. Poetry is not simply another mental exercise, but involves the heart as well as the mind. It encompasses emotions, the appreciation of beauty, the acknowledgment of suffering; it is a living, holistic approach that sees our spiritual growth, says Joy Sawyer, is not a rigid textbook. Using the metaphor of poetry she explores this idea of growth through creativity. We are God’s creation, and using our own creative abilities can bring us closer to him. Poetry is not simply another mental exercise, but involves the heart as well as the mind. It encompasses emotions, the appreciation of beauty, the acknowledgment of suffering; it is a living, holistic approach that sees our spiritual lives not as something added on to us, but as an integral, interconnected part of us.

“We are Christ’s poem,” she writes, “an expression of his heart and mind, saved by grace from a destiny of disjointed ramblings.” (p.85) There are many such analogies between poetry and the Christian life. The poetical quotations Sawyer has chosen are primarily from contemporary poets. The language of poetry can at times be difficult, and require concentrated thought. It is not for everyone. But for those with an interest in, or affinity for poetry, Sawyer’s book provides a refreshing, joyful, and vital perspective on spirituality.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


Part 2, “Exploring the Narnian Chronicles,” is written not only for personal reading pleasure, but as a practical help for teachers, parents, and ministers as they use Narnia and its stories to teach the children in their charge. It covers all seven books and the section for each individual title includes the book’s main theme, background information, key symbols, and Biblical references, as well as vocabulary tests, quizzes, and even, in one, a recipe for Turkish Delight.

The book also includes two appendices. Appendix One is “The Aunt and Amabel,” a story by Edith Nesbit, who first inspired Lewis to read fairy tales and then, later, to write them herself, while Appendix Two is an essay, “Narnia: The Domain of Lewis’s Beliefs,” written by M. A. Manzalauo, a professor of English at the University of British Columbia and one-time student of Lewis himself at Oxford. If you can only buy one book about C.S. Lewis, this may be it!

Betty Winslow
Freelance Writer
Bowling Green Christian Academy Librarian
Bowling Green, Ohio

900’s—Geography, History, & Biography


With a graceful turn of phrase, the preface is an apt setting for a biographical gem, A Passion for the Impossible written by Miriam Huffman Rockness. Isabella Lilias “Lily” Trotter is born July 14, 1853, into a life of privilege in Victorian England. Although Lily is a talented artist, she chooses a life dedicated to the service of others as a missionary in North Africa. Through years of labor, there is little progress, yet Lily and her co-workers remain faithful. “Time is nothing to God—but to His children.” p. 239. August 27, 1928, Lilias Trotter went to her Eternal Reward. “God loves with a great love the man whose heart is bursting with a passion for the impossible.” (Wilhana Booth, p. 290)

In A Passion for the Impossible, Rockness includes an index, poem quotations, a foreword by Lyle Dorsett of Wheaton College, a preface, drawings by Trotter, maps, photographs, appendices, notes, a bibliography, and acknowledgments. Although the story tends to bog down, its pace is true to the life of the courageous, steadfast Trotter.

Sa Hagerty
Teacher
Issaquah, Washington


The Road to Donaguile is a memoir of Herbert O’Driscoll’s childhood in Ireland. In its gentle pages he introduces his readers to the farm of his early years and the people who inhabited it; to a way of life that has nearly vanished; to an age of simplicity that lies in marked contrast to our complex, high-speed world; and to attitudes and lifestyles very different from those of modern societies.

The just-concluded 20th century perhaps witnessed more change than any previous century—and it is refreshing and rewarding to look back at earlier ages (even if colored by the eyes of childhood) and see how other people developed and were nurtured. But more than a quest of sociology, such retrospection can also be a spiritual quest. We can reflect on the experiences and conditions that affect our spiritual growth. And so Herbert O’Driscoll has subtitle his book “A Celtic Spiritual Journey.” In his hands this journey is more implicit than explicit. O’Driscoll is not attempting to preach, but (as in many of his other books) to stimulate thought and reflection, to plant a seed, to encourage us to ponder the events and attitudes that have shaped us.

This is a memoir, not an in-depth autobiography, of a child growing up Church of Ireland in Roman Catholic Ireland. It can be read on this level, but also deeper, as in O’Driscoll’s hands moments of spiritual import are presented in a simple, understated manner. This small book is meant for reflection and contemplation.

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician/Author
Billings, Montana


The element of searching for home, of coming home, is a thread that runs through several of Frederick Buechner’s books. Author of over two dozen works of fiction and nonfiction, an aging Buechner senses that his journey toward home may be nearing its end.

The book’s title comes from St. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians, that “having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.” Buechner declares that he has experienced this special way of seeing. Buechner’s “seeing with the eyes of the heart” lies in his bringing to life people from his past. He welcomes the ghost of Naya, his beloved maternal grandmother, as his guest on the journey. She lights her Chesterfield with her Zippo lighter and sits nearby responding to his questions and comments. He confesses to Naya that he has been thinking about dying and even wonders if anyone will show up at his funeral. As his musing continues, we learn of the suicides of both his alcoholic father (when Buechner was just ten) and his uncle; of his mother’s caustic criticism of his father, and her in-laws’ belief that her carting him and his brother off to Bermuda to start a new life after her husband’s death was proof of how spoiled and irresponsible she was. We meet, too, his childhood friend, poet James Merrill, whose open homosexuality, when Buechner learns of it as an adult, he cannot understand, but whose friendship remained strong until Merrill’s death. A particularly hard blow is the death of his brother, which occurred during the writing of this memoir.

Buechner describes in fascinating detail his Magic Kingdom—study, office, and library. He speaks of his childhood love of the Uncle Wiggily and Oz books and discusses various biographies, histories, theology books, and family archives that fill his own library. By the end of the book, Buechner has laid bare many of his lingering doubts, while still clinging to hope. He believes that nothing and no one is ever completely lost. On the wall opposite his desk, Buechner has a copy of Rembrandt’s etching, “The Return of the Prodigal Son.” “It hardly matters which is the father and which the son,” he writes. “They have both come home.” (p. 90)

R. Jeanette Hardage
Freelance Writer
Sonora, California


921 (813). Lamott, Anne--Religion; Novelists, American--20th century--Biography; Christian biography--United States; Mothers and sons--United States; Faith. 275 p. Adult.

Anne Lamott doesn’t gussy up the truth for anybody. In Traveling Mercies, she tells all—the alcohol and drugs, lovers, abortion, a godless childhood—all the things a more inhibited writer might omit. Her writing is fresh: brash, poignant, witty, and often self-deprecating.

Her father was her first god, she admits, one she had trouble letting go of for years after his death. “No one in our family believed in God,” she says. “It was like we’d all signed some loyalty oath early on in deference to the pain of my father’s cold Christian childhood.” Still, she secretly believed that someone was listening when she prayed.

Lamott’s first glimpses of God came from families that seemed more intact than her own—Roman Catholic, Christian Scientist, and Jewish. Her first “lurch” of faith, as she calls it, came when she encountered Kierkegaard in college. Even after Lamott came to believe in God, she wanted nothing to do with Jesus. She describes with humor and candor his hounding until she finally said, “All right. You can come in.” (Her language includes more earthy comments.) On Sundays, she often went to the large flea market in Marin City, California. The gospel music from St. Andrew Presbyterian Church across the street drew her in long before she was willing to listen to a sermon. The welcoming people there kept her coming back.

Lamott continues to travel the road to faith. Her Christianity still may be considered unorthodox, but she persists in the journey and shares her everyday trials and insights with exuberance and clarity. Readers will recognize the simplicity of her faith by her two favorite prayers—“Help! Help! Help!” and “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”—prayers many readers will react to with empathy. Her language and some topics may be objectionable to some.

R. Jeanette Hardage
Freelance Writer
Sonora, California
The following is a list of publishers whose titles are reviewed or discussed in this issue of CLJ. Use these addresses and phone numbers to order books reviewed in this and all past issues. Any of them will be glad to send you catalogs and information about cataloging and discounts. “C” at the end of a listing indicates a publisher of primarily Christian materials.

Alabaster Books  See Multnomah, C
Albury Publishing, Publicity, P.O. Box 470406, Tulsa, OK 74147, 800-304-5327. C
Arthur A. Levine  See Scholastic, Inc.,
Baker Book House, Order Dept., P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49507, 800-877-2665.
Baker Books  See Baker Book House,
Bay Light Publishing, Order Dept., P.O. Box 3032, Moorsville, NC 28117, 704-664-7541.
Beacon Hill Press, Order Dept., 2923 Troost Ave., P.O. Box 419527, Kansas City, MO 64141-6527, 186-931-1900. C
Benchmark Books  See Marshall Cavendish,
Berkeley  See Penguin Putnam,
Bethany Backyard  See Bethany House, C
Bob Jones University Press, Order Dept., 1700 Wade Hampton Blvd, Greenville, SC 29614, 800-845-5731. C
Baker Books  See Baker Book House,
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