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- Celebrate the Triumph of Easter with Books
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- Turning on Their “Wanter”
- A Fishing Contest of Another Kind
- Locating Quality Fiction
- Great Books for Grieving Parent
- Christian Bestsellers
- Resources for the School Librarian
Dear Readers,

Rain thunders down here on the coast interspersed by periods of lovely sunshine and mild temperatures. Paperwhites (narcissus) clumps bloomed in my garden winter. What a picture it was, to bask in the joy of the Christmas lights on my roofline, and see the paperwhites waving with the breeze just below! And now many of the remaining 500 bulbs and the wild rhododendrons are finished and the colorful summer wildflowers are in bloom.

I pray the choices you make for your library bring life-giving rain to the lives of your readers, sunshine to brighten their days, and joy to lighten their hearts.

In this issue you will find many titles which will broaden the scope of your collection. I especially recommend *Imperial Legions*, wonderful historical fiction by our own editor Andrew Seddon. Andrew, born in England, returns there as he is able, this last time to continue his studies and to research English history for the writing of this book. Thinking of moving back, he kept track of the weather, and finding rain on each of his days there, he determined, at least for now, to remain in sunny Montana. We salute his choice, as we would miss him.

Another title, *Come What May*, by our own reviewer Betty Hockett, inspired me greatly in reading of the lives and choices of a young American farm family determined to show young Hondurans a way to improve their lives and to bring them to Christ. Betty and her husband Gene returned to Honduras this winter to visit the work, now in its third generation.

In Christ’s love,

Nancy L. Hesch

Editor and Publisher

Phone (541) 997-4430
Fax (541) 997-4434
heschcj@harborside.com
www.christianlibraryj.org

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 titles 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.

Nancy Hesch Publisher & Editor
Andrew Seddon Editor: Articles
Raymond Legg Editor: Adult Nonfiction
Mary McKinney Editor: Adult Fiction, Young Adult Nonfiction
Sylvia Stopforth Editor: YA Fiction
Kitty Lindstrom Design and Graphics


Printed in the U.S.A.
I was seventeen and living in New Brunswick when a friend invited me to go fishing in Newfoundland. I was no fisherman, but I’d never been to Newfoundland, so I agreed. At St. Anthony, on the Newfoundland’s northern tip, we hiked, enjoyed the scenery, and caught only a few trout. But more importantly, I encountered the living legacy of a man whose writings still influence me.

Wilfred Grenfell was twenty-seven when, in 1892, he arrived on the bleak, forbidding Labrador coast. The scattered fishing hamlets were physically and spiritually miles apart from the English resort town of Parkgate where Grenfell was born. As the son of an Anglican clergyman, Grenfell could have enjoyed a life of relative ease. But he became a physician and chose to labor in a backwater of the British Empire, a place of poverty, malnutrition, and disease.

Even though he was raised in a Christian family, it wasn’t until he attended a meeting held in London by D.L. Moody, that he realized that Christianity was more than a social convention. Added to his innate sense of adventure, this realization resulted in his commitment to make “a real effort to do as I thought Christ would do in my place as a doctor.” Grenfell’s new-found faith propelled him to forsake English society for the company of illiterate ‘liveyers.’

For forty years he cruised the rugged, uncharted Labrador coastline in a series of small hospital steamers, taking health care and the Gospel places they had never been. He braved submerged rocks, fogs, icebergs, and treacherous shores. In the winter, he made rounds by dogsled, daring blizzards, trackless wastes, and dangerous ice floes. He operated in makeshift conditions on injuries and illnesses for which no medical training available in that era could have prepared him. And many occasions he did the only thing he could—offered comfort to the dying.

In time, others caught Grenfell’s vision. Additional doctors and nurses volunteered to join in the work, and small hospitals were constructed. Somehow, he found the time to write—some thirty-five books and many articles. Grenfell literally worked himself to death; the entire coast mourned his passing in 1940.

Over the past twenty years I have managed to collect the majority of Grenfell’s books, most of which are long out of print. But with the changes in medicine and society over the past one hundred years, how can somebody like Wilfred Grenfell speak to us today?

Grenfell believed that the Christian message and life incorporated not only preaching, but outward expression and practical involvement in the lives of the needy. “Not even the most humble ‘working man’ can live to himself. Only a clam can do that.”

Grenfell believed that the Christian life should be one of sacrificial love, for “only unselfish love can win in the end.” Grenfell lived a life of sacrifice freely—almost unconsciously—embraced, that he accepted as something natural for the Christian. Sacrifice was a privilege. “The conviction that [the fishermen] needed what I had to give and that it would not be given if I refused the challenge, was as plain as daylight,” he wrote. “I have always believed that the Good Samaritan went across the road just because he wanted to. I do not believe he felt any sacrifice or fear in the matter.”

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talking or writing books. He worked at the carpenter’s bench. He fought temptation in the wilderness and put prayer into action. He healed the sick. He cast out devils. He wept with His friends. He treated women on an equality. Girt with a towel, He washed the feet of fishermen. He personally went and mixed and ate with outcasts. He began His preaching at home. He transformed weak, ignorant, selfish, and cowardly men into heroes. He Himself brought Heaven to earth wherever He was.”

Grenfell envisioned life as an adventure, to be lived wholly for God. “Jesus Christ challenges us to be his knights, to go forth into the world to make it better. We must have faith and take risks. Life is not meant to be easy and humdrum. Life is a challenge.”

He adopted Paul’s metaphor of a race; a race which every Christian could win. “Think then of a race in which it is never too late to be a winner, of a battle in which we have always left a chance of being victor. Think of a prize which grows greater, and only grows greater as we possess it.”

Christians need to listen for the call of God, and be ready to answer the call. “It is my habit constantly to ask God to teach me each day how to rightly use my faith,” Grenfell wrote. Grenfell dreaded the thought that he could have missed his opportunity for service: “There is the terrible fact that if I had not heard the call of Christ in the tent that day, I might possibly have been a physician in Harley Street, being driven about in my Rolls Royce! I would not have lost the opportunity of going to Labrador for anything.”

Today, Grenfell’s approach to life—with its vocabulary of ‘prize,’ ‘battle,’ ‘fight,’ and ‘adventure’ might be labeled ‘macho.’ He had no patience with passivity in the face of illness, injustice, and sin. “We must love what [Christ] loved and fought for what He fought.”

Not everyone is called to service in a setting such as Labrador. The affluent suburbs need committed Christians just as much as the inner cities. The principles that Grenfell lived by are worthy for any Christian, not only physicians.

We cannot, as Grenfell pungently expressed, “drift to heaven like dead fish down a stream.” Christ calls us to much more than this.

Quotations are from The Prize of Life (1914), The Fisherman’s Saint (1930), A Man’s Faith (1908), A Labrador Logbook (1938), Forty Years for Labrador (1932)

As mentioned, most of Grenfell’s books are long out of print. But several titles frequently turn up in both second-hand book stores and in church libraries, and can often be obtained by book search services. These include:

Grenfell’s autobiography Forty Years for Labrador (and its earlier version, A Labrador Doctor).

A book of devotions, A Labrador Logbook.

An account of travels, Labrador Looks at the Orient.

Three of Grenfell’s books of Labrador tales (worth reading for their descriptions of life among the common people in Labrador), Down North on the Labrador, Labrador Days, and Off the Rocks are in print from Ayer. Northern Neighbors and Tales of the Labrador are not difficult to find.


Many biographies of Grenfell were written in the first half of this century (I count at least fifteen). Two biographies are currently available, James Kerr’s Wilfred Grenfell, His Life and Work (Greenwood) for many years the definitive biography, and more recently Ronald Rompkey’s Grenfell of Labrador (University of Toronto Press, 1991). Try also Tom Moore’s Wilfred Grenfell (Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1980), and J.T. Richards Snapshots of Grenfell, (Creative Press, 1989).

Editor’s note: Andrew Seddon is himself a medical doctor, as well as a published writer and a CLJ editor.
A Few Clicks Away to Fun!

CLICK THROUGH TO CONTINUED ADVENTURES

by Lisa A. Wroble

When I was a child I didn’t want my favorite books to come to an end, so I wrote continuing chapters. I was delighted when I was old enough to delve into Nancy Drew mysteries because I could pick up the next book and the adventures continued. I soon discovered other series books and read anything with sequels because I could continue visiting with my favorite characters. If your elementary-aged patrons are eager for the next installment in the storyline of their favorite characters, these websites offer between-book fun.

Fans of the American Girls Collection will enjoy www.americangirl.com for additional information on each of their favorite characters. Click on the Fun for Girls star on the homepage to head to activities, games, trivia, and stories starring Felicity, Kirsten, Addy, Samantha, Molly, Josephina, and Kit. Of course, the site also contains wise advice from that contemporary American girl, Amelia!

If your readers like mysteries, they’ll love super-sleuth Meg Mackintosh’s site at www.megmackintosh.com. They can learn more about Meg Mackintosh, read Meg’s Mysteries or click on Match Wits with Meg as well as learn the latest about this spunky character created by Lucinda Landon.

Younger readers will love The Arthur Page at www.pbs.org/wgbh/arthur. This site is maintained by PBS for fans of Arthur and the other characters created by Marc Brown. The site features games and children’s artwork.

Children who like the adventures Ms. Frizzle and her class go on will love the Magic School Bus page at scholastic.com/MagicSchoolBus. Find out what’s new with Ms. Frizzle’s class and look at children’s artwork. Also visit the Activity Lab for nine different games and activities related to the Magic School Bus adventures.

Readers of any age will enjoy Seussville at www.randomhouse.com/seussville, especially with the holiday hype and controversy surrounding the latest version of the Grinch. Fans of Dr. Seuss will enjoy playing games, asking the Cat in the Hat questions, learning about the many Dr. Seuss books and characters in this cyberspace playground. And, of course, the Grinch is a main feature.

But, if you’re looking for a good book to share with a child, or to connect with your own inner child, you must visit the Reading Rainbow site at gpn.unl.edu/rainbow. This searchable site has a section for kids, parents, teachers, and librarians. The kids’ section is updated daily with a game and activity. Parents and librarians can explore segments of past episodes or visit the weekly schedule.
Children's Crown Award Reading Programs

Children's Crown Gallery Award
2001-2002 Nominee List
Kindergarten - Grade Two

A. Lincoln and Me, by Louise Borden, 0-590-45714-4, Scholastic '99, $15.99.


Daughter's Day Blues, by Laura Pegram, 0-8037-1557-9, Dial '00, $16.00.

Ian's Walk, by Laurie Lears, 0-8075-3480-3, A. Whitman '98, $15.00.


On the Same Day in March, by Marilyn Singer, 0-06-028187-1, HarperCollins '00, $15.95.

Prairie Willow, by Maxine Trottier, 0-7737-3067-2, Stoddart Kids '98, $15.95.


Something Beautiful, by Dennis Wyeth, 0-385-32239-9, Doubleday '98, $16.95.

Boys Mills '98, $16.95.

Day's Search, by Joan L. Nixon, 0-385-32296-8, Delacorte '98, $9.95.


Lewis and Papa, by Barbara Joosse, 0-8118-1959-0, Chronicle '98, $15.95.


The Mouse of Amherst, by Elizabeth Spires, 0-374-35083-3, FSG '99, $15.00.


The Riches of Oseola McCarty, by Evelyn Coleman, 0-8075-6961-5, A. Whitman '99, $15.00.


Shelter Dogs, by Peg Kehret, 0-8075-7334-5, A. Whitman '99, $15.00.

Sky Memories, by Pat Brisson, 0-385-32606-8, Delacorte '99, $15.00.

Spirit Horse, by Ed Ackerman, 0-590-39650-1, Scholastic '98, $15.00.

Tornadoes, by Seymour Simon, 0-688-14646-5, Morrow '99, $16.00.


You're a Brave Man, Julius Zimmerman, by Claudia Mills, 0-374-38708-7, FSG '99, $16.00.

Lamplighter Award
2001-2002 Nominee List
Grades Six - Eight

Bright Freedom's Song, by Gloria Houston, 0-15-201812-3, Harcourt '98, $16.00.

Chinese Cinderella, by Adeline Yen Mah, 0-385-32707-2, Delacorte '99, $16.00.

Devil's Den, by Susan Pfeffer, 0-8027-8650-2, Walker '98, $15.95.


The Longest Ride, by Denise Patrick, 0-8050-4715-8, Holt '99, $15.95.

Moon Over Tennessee, by Craig Crist-Evans, 0-395-91208-3, Houghton '99, $15.00.

Paperboy, by Isabelle Holland, 0-8234-1422-1, Holiday House '99, $15.95.

The Song of the Molimo, by Jane Cutler, 0-374-37141-5, FSG '98, $16.00.

Standing in the Light, by Mary Osborne, 0-590-13462-0, Scholastic '98, $9.95.


Want to participate in the reading and voting? Nominate titles for the next year? Go to Children's Crown Book Award at www.childrenscrownaward.org and register.
School Librarian’s Corner

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

by Leslie Greaves Radloff

This column is a first for me. Although I have talked about children’s books and library issues for years, I have never before written about them on a regular basis. When Nancy asked me to take over the column, I thought, “Wow! Big shoes to fill.” This column was one of the first parts I read in CLJ after its arrival. So, with Nancy’s input I began thinking about topics and materials that I had recently read and used which might prove helpful to other school librarians or media specialists.

Two resource books crossed my desk as I was thinking about the column. One was Selecting Books for the Elementary School Library Media Center: A Complete Guide by Phyllis Van Orden, and the other was Coretta Scott King Award Books: Using Great Literature with Children and Young Adults by Claire Gatrell Stephens. Since I am always looking for resource books to help me with selection and for materials that my teachers can use with novels, I’d like to share them with you.

The first is a very useful, practical guide for both beginning and experienced librarians. The thirteen areas covered include a discussion of the selection process for collections which will support curriculum and information literacy for all students and library users. The general guidelines may be applied to a variety of circumstances. All book buyers know that the price of books has risen in the past few years and that budgets or gift moneys do not cover the needs of school libraries. The author has included tables and criteria to help understand pre-selection and selection as well as calling attention to the need for a selection policy, a subject which I discussed in an article for Christian Library Journal several years ago. Each library needs one, in print, clearly written, and available for people to see. If you don’t have one, borrow a few from other libraries and tailor one to fit your own, keeping in mind the purpose of your school, its special mission, and philosophy of education.

Van Orden’s book is logically arranged and moves from general selection information to the specifics of selection of materials to reflect diversity; picture books, the different genres of fiction, non-fiction, folk-tales, rhymes and poetry; and reference aids (an area where many of us have trouble choosing for our unique circumstances) and professional books. Since many of us use our money for items other than professional books, this title could be recommended to teachers building their own selection libraries, although if the budget would allow, I’d say buy it for the media center. All this information comes with a hefty price—$49.95. If the cost is prohibitive, check the public library or college/university libraries, especially if there is a library school attached.

The second volume, Coretta Scott King Award Books: Using Great Literature with Children and Young Adults, fills a need and a niche. With so many teachers wanting to teach with Newbery and Caldecott award books, many find like the author, that the media center cannot supply enough titles. The lists of winners for the Coretta Scott King Award should help that crunch. Most of us have the titles on our shelves already. Some of the titles listed include: In Daddy’s Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers by John Steptoe; Taylor’s Let the Circle be Unbroken and other titles; Walter Dean Myers The Young Landlords, and many other titles.

While I was not a teacher who used worksheet after worksheet when I was in the classroom, the ideas here could be adapted to use with students and include higher level thinking skills. Stephens has also included a bibliography and suggested Internet sites, which may or may not be useful, depending on grade level, maintenance of the site itself, and suitability for use with a particular grade.

These books came to me from a special collection lending library in Minnesota where teachers, school librarians, and those interested in the area can check out materials without having to buy them. See what your own states have to offer. Even if there is a small fee attached for borrowing privileges I have found it to be well worth it for the amount of materials that I can borrow. If they seem like titles that I will use again and again, I often purchase them; if not, I am not out any money.

Titles discussed:


Celebrate the Triumph of Easter...

with Books

by Lydia E. Harris

Hope! Triumph! Victory! Celebration!

These joyous words describe Easter. Although Christ’s resurrection is the pivotal event of history, Easter is often overshadowed by Christmas. Refocus on the true significance of Easter by adding some of these titles for children and adults to your library collection. Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Children’s Books


Benjamin, a young boy who lives during the days of Christ, wants to know who Jesus is. As he follows Jesus during his last week on earth, Benjamin gathers special reminders of events for his treasure box. For example, a bit of donkey fur reminds him of Jesus’ entry on a colt. After Jesus’ death and resurrection, Benjamin tells friends the Easter story using his special treasures. But he realizes Jesus is the real treasure. Use it in homes, churches, and neighborhoods to share the true meaning of Easter with children ages five to ten. Tips for leading children to Christ are included. FamilyLife’s collection of Resurrection Eggs are available to accompany the story.


Although the story of Jesus’ death is often difficult for young children to understand, this Arch Book emphasizes it was part of God’s plan. Written in poetry, it retells the events of Jesus’ last day on earth and includes the resurrection. Parents are encouraged to explain to their children that Jesus’ death shows his great love for us.


This cheerful book, with cut-out cover and bright illustrations, shares the wonderful events of Easter alphabetically. Children ages four to seven will enjoy rhyming verses that tell the Good News and reinforce the alphabet.


In this story, a father explains the difference between the commercial and biblical meanings of Easter to his family. His children learn the history behind the holiday and that it’s all right to celebrate spring festivities if they don’t overshadow the real meaning of Easter-Jesus’ resurrection. Written for children ages three to seven, this book helps parents and children discover the Easter that is central to our Christian faith.


A mother tells her children why Easter is special by hiding items that teach about Jesus’ last week on earth. For example, a shoe reminds them how Jesus washed his disciples’ feet and taught them to serve one another. Children three to eight will enjoy this family Easter hunt with objects hidden amidst detailed illustrations.


Adapted from THE EASTER PROMISE VIDEO, the story tells of three children who witness Jesus’ triumphal entry, betrayal, death, and resurrection. Although they expected a mighty earthly king, seeing the empty tomb and Jesus’ ascension into heaven convince them he is the King above all kings.


Bible stories, facts, activities, and puzzles provide creative tools to learn about Jesus’ life, love, and example. Part of the “I Want to Know” series for children eight to twelve, the first section tells of Jesus’ incarnation and life on earth including his teachings and miracles. The remainder covers the Last Supper, crucifixion, and resurrection. Preteens will enjoy the youth-friendly writing style plus full-color photos, graphics, and cartoons. Included are a few practical questions and answers plus how to become a Christian and follow Jesus.


A young boy named Thomas must temporarily live with another family when his sister contracts scarlet fever. While there he learns the legend behind the Easter egg and how it relates to Christ’s resurrection. Just as chicks break out of eggs, so Jesus broke free from the tomb of death. Helpful background information about traditions and symbols of Lent and Easter are included. Suitable for children four to eight, this beautiful book should stimulate further adult-child discussion about Easter.


Colorful illustrations and rhyming verse make this die-cut board book appealing for children four and under. It tells the resurrection story from Mary’s viewpoint, who found the tomb empty. It concludes with the reassuring words, “And Jesus loves YOU also and will always be with YOU!”


A farmer secretly mails his daughter Maggie a surprise present. Young Maggie is disappointed with her gift of a bulb and dirt. She waters the bulb for a while, then throws it out the window. Easter morning she finds a beautiful, fragrant lily blooming in her yard. “The gift is alive!” she exclaims. When Maggie learns the bulb was from her father, she realizes her ungrateful attitude hurt him. Her father’s response teaches her that Easter

This 6-1/4-inch-square gift book tells over twenty uplifting stories of individuals from around the world whose lives were changed because they encountered Jesus in a fresh way. Healings, miracles, answers to prayer, and transformed lives of young and old are shared. A beautiful book to enjoy at Easter and all year, it includes a CD of Sandi Patty and Larnelle Harris singing, “I’ve Just Seen Jesus.”


Written from disciple Peter’s perspective, this fictionalized story is biblically based and tells of Jesus’ death and resurrection, including Peter’s denial of him. Wangerin, a master storyteller, shows what Peter saw, heard, and felt as he witnessed events from the Last Supper to fishing with Jesus after his resurrection. Children ages four to eight will learn of God’s forgiveness through Jesus’ forgiveness of Peter.


This Arch Book with rhyming verse tells the story of Jesus’ resurrection for children ages five to nine. It includes the biblical account of Jesus’ appearance to Mary, the disciples, and later to Thomas. Family activities to celebrate Easter are included.


Written in poetry, this Arch Book reveals the story of Jesus’ resurrection through his conversation with the two men on the road to Emmaus. An ending note encourages parents to explain the promise of salvation to their children.


Three trees on a mountain top dream of what they’ll become when they grow up. Instead of becoming a treasure chest, a strong ship, and the tallest tree, they become a manger, a humble fishing boat, and a cross—all used by Jesus. Readers of all ages will appreciate this beloved story at Easter and year round.


Ten-year-old Christopher is not interested in fairy tales and wants to hear the biblical Easter story. He learns about the ministry, trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus as he and his parents read from Scripture. Christopher asks searching questions, and his parents provide clear answers. Children ages five to ten will enjoy this outstanding sequel to the award-winning, THE VERY FIRST CHRISTMAS.

Family and Adult Books


Lucado gives readers a fresh look at the final week of Jesus’ life by sharing numerous stories and personal experiences to illustrate scriptural truths. Combining gentleness and boldness, he challenges readers that they, like Pilate, must cast a verdict on Jesus. An extensive study guide and notes are included in this inspiring read.


Just as Advent is a time to prepare for Jesus’ birth, Lent is a season to prepare for his resurrection. O’Neal includes creative ideas and activities to celebrate forty days of Lent plus weekly activities for seven weeks between Easter and Pentecost. She shares enough ideas for several seasons along with the history and traditions of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Although intended for families, children’s workers will also find it useful.


Nine worship services from Ash Wednesday to Easter are included in this resource. Each service includes prayers and Scripture plus sermons for children and adults. Also featured are antiphonal prayers and hymns, Lenten reflections, and new songs for Lent. The innovative ideas are designed to make Lenten services fulfilling, whether used as presented or adapted.


Although a novelist, Brouwer presents historically accurate facts in these Easter vignettes and essays. Based on Scripture, they trace the last days of Jesus’ life through the eyes of Peter, John, Mary, Martha, and others. Full-color illustrations, Scripture passages, and song lyrics by his wife, Cindy Morgan, enhance the text. In the last vignette, he explains that a folded carpenter’s cloth means the work is finished. Similarly, the folded face cloth in the tomb signified Jesus had finished his work.


Eight devotionals help families prepare for Easter with worship and fun. Designed for the week before Easter, they cover Palm Sunday through Easter. Well-known authors guide readers through the Last Supper, Good Friday, and other events of Holy Week. Hymns, poems, prayers, Scripture, and varied activities are included. A valuable resource that adds joy and meaning to Easter.


This family guide for celebrating Easter includes brief devotions for six-and-one-half weeks preceding Easter plus ideas to inspire children to appreciate Jesus’ death and resurrection. Projects, activities, hymns, and the Passover celebration for Christians are included. An excellent volume that focuses on the true message of Easter.


Families can count down the days from the day before Lent to Easter Sunday with suggested daily (except Sundays) activities, recipes, and crafts. Stickers are included for the one-page calendar. A useful tool to celebrate the season and create family memories.

8. THE FINAL WEEK OF JESUS by Max

This attractive volume includes highlights from Lucado’s best-seller, AND THE ANGELS WERE SILENT, along with full-color artwork. Readers discover what matters to God by learning how Jesus spent his last week on earth. Jesus’ passion, power, and promise are evident in this moving book.


Howard beckons readers on a journey of spiritual growth during the Lenten season. Each of seven chapters is based on a Gospel text about biblical characters such as Nicodemus, the prodigal son, and the Samaritan woman. Suitable for personal or group study, chapters end with a prayer and questions for reflection.


Pastor Hayford offers a fresh perspective of resurrection power through these brief reflections. Meditations, songs, and poems help readers prepare their hearts to celebrate the empty tomb. A joy-filled book, it teaches readers step back in time and experience the triumph which changed history and promise are evident in this moving book.


Readers step back in time and experience events during Jesus’ days through the eyes of Marchiano, who played Jesus in the movie, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW. This captivating book depicts Jesus’ life and teachings not only through words but also through spectacular photography. It emphasizes God’s love—the same yesterday, today, forever, and encourages readers to accept the gift of salvation.


Excerpts from Martin Luther’s Easter sermons on the Gospels are collected in this unique volume. Sermon passages cover the journey to Jerusalem, Holy Week, the Lord’s Supper, Jesus’ arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. The messages reveal Luther’s thoughts on God’s love, salvation by grace, forgiveness of sin, and more.


Fenton, a Bible scholar from Oxford, England, offers daily readings from Ash Wednesday through Easter on Jesus’ life, passion, and resurrection. He illuminates passages from Matthew’s Gospel with thought-provoking reflections and includes prayer suggestions. Appendices about Matthew and notes for group discussion are included. Although intended for Lent, it’s useful any time of year for personal or group study.


This volume is comprised of over forty devotionals for the Lenten season. Each contains Gospel passages, thoughts on the Scripture, and a short prayer. Meditations focus on those whose lives were changed by encountering Jesus during his last weeks on earth. Included are familiar people like Zacchaeus and Lazarus plus lesser-known individuals like Malchus and Anna. As Easter approaches, the devotions center on those witnessing the crucifixion—the thieves, Jesus’ mother, Joseph of Arimathea, and others. It contains reflections to ponder year after year.


Lucado weaves stories and scriptural insights around three solid anchor points believers can count on: Our lives are not futile, our failures are not fatal, and our deaths are not final. Because of “six hours one Friday,” these anchors are sturdy enough to withstand any storms of life. Consequently, futility is replaced with purpose: failure holds forgiveness; and death is exchanged for deliverance. An uplifting read with an extensive study guide.


Readers experience the last week of Jesus’ life through the narrative of a Jewish shopkeeper in Jerusalem. As the shopkeeper is drawn into the happenings, he realizes Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. The man he knew as a carpenter becomes his Savior, and his life is transformed. Although a fictional account, this short, compelling read includes biblically accurate details.


The week before Jesus’ crucifixion, Simeon arrives in Bethany to visit a relative who is his business partner. Struggling with guilt and broken relationships back home, Simeon is ready to end his life. But things change when he meets Jesus and is asked to carry his cross to Golgotha. A real page-turner, this historical fiction novel weaves the last days of Jesus’ life together with the life of troubled Simeon and offers the miracle of life and hope.


Morison, an English journalist, sets out to write a book that disproves the resurrection. But after detailed examination of the historical account, he ends up defending Christ’s resurrection. First written in 1930, the book is a classic apologetic on the resurrection.

Lydia E. Harris, freelance writer in Seattle, WA, writes book reviews, devotionals, and articles for numerous publications. Her syndicated column on tea appears in twenty states and three provinces. She enjoys celebrating Easter with her husband, two married children, and one adorable grandson.


Sometimes it’s hard to be a kid, especially when you stand a foot taller than your class and your hands and feet are as big as a baboon’s, but what our hero in A. Lincoln and Me finds out is that sometimes being different isn’t as bad as it seems. In this sweet tale of growing up by Louise Borden, one little boy discovers that the things that make him stand out are the same things that made President Abraham Lincoln stand out. They even share the same February 12th birthday.

Ted Lewin’s illustrations combine sketches of Abraham Lincoln with realistic watercolor images of the boy and those important to his life, weaving a tapestry of black and white to represent the past, and bright colors to represent the present. The book is clean and crisp and doesn’t even hint at any real hurt in the boy’s heart for being laughed at and ridiculed; however it does give the teacher the important role of mediator and shows how one person’s encouragement can make up for another’s cruelty.

Virginia Schnabel, Freelance Writer, Shelton, Washington


E. Bears--Fiction.  30 p.  Small children.

Bear smells food and gets on the grain train, where he eats his fill and settles down to hibernate. Only young Jeffrey sees Bear as the train passes through. Crossing Canada the train passes through the many terrains of Canada and experiences the passages of the seasons. Finally spring arrives and Bear’s hibernation ends as he leaves the train and goes back to his home in the woods.

Julie Lawson uses repetition and refrain to emphasize the on-going trip. The words are lyrical. Brian Deines’ oil on canvas illustrations beautifully convey the vastness of Canada and the changing of the seasons. Both the author and illustrator are Canadian. Children will appreciate Bear and his search for food. Julie Lawson and Brian Deines have combined their talents to create a lovely pictorial story.

Mary McKinney, Former Teacher, Freelance Writer, Editor, Port Orchard, Washington


E. Cats--Fiction; Fear of the dark--Fiction; Bedtime--Fiction.  30 p.  Small children.

"Scratcha, scratcha, scratcha." Martha hears the unusual noise as she peeks timidly from her bed. Usually, Sophie, her cat, would check all the dark corners and creepy places before Martha went to sleep. But tonight, Sophie isn’t around, and her father hasn’t checked under her bed, a favorite hiding place for something scary.

As the story progresses, Brave Martha searches out all the potential places as her imagination builds great, scary monsters. But nothing turns out as it seems. At last Sophie her cat reappears, having been the noisemaker all along.

This is Margot Apple’s second book as author/illustrator. The pictures are big and expressive, the text short and to the point. The story line of Brave Martha is quite simple and would allow for good discussion with children about those imaginary fears many have. A comforting point to make is the final picture where Martha has settled down for the night, and her father is checking on her to be sure she is all right. This gives assurance that parents care and do their best to keep their children safe and secure.

Mary McKinney, Former Teacher, Freelance Writer, Editor, Port Orchard, Washington


Family dog Boomer has a very big surprise waiting for him. His owners have a new baby to add to the family. The baby is a new puppy named Baby Boomer. Baby is so cute and lovable that the family wants to play with him and not Boomer. Boomer is very sad that his family no longer wants to play fetch or pet him. Baby Boomer saves the story by wanting to play with and be loved by Boomer. So Boomer and Baby Boomer become wonderful friends and learn that they can both be loved by the family.

Mary Whyte has fantastic illustrations that really help the reader feel Boomer’s sadness. Also from the illustrations, the reader will want to pick up and cuddle Baby Boomer. Boomer appears in other stories, but the reader does not need to have read those previous books in order to love Boomer’s Big Surprise.

Connie Weaver, Church Librarian, Newville, Pennsylvania


E. Primary (Elementary).

Bright ‘n Beautiful is comprised of three ten-minute adventures from the "Jay Jay the Jet Plane" series from Focus on the Family.

In "Snuffy’s Rainbow" little Snuffy the Airplane sees his first rainbow and is determined to fly to the rainbow to meet it personally. But what he seeks always fades before him. Oscar the Airplane tells him that the rainbow has a secret. Resting in his hangar because of rain, Snuffy falls asleep and dreams that he has caught up to the rainbow and she tells him that her secret is that some things—like his skywriting—look better from far away. Snuffy awakens realizing that the truth of what she has told him and skywrites a rainbow for everybody.

In the second installment, "Snuffy Discovers the Ocean," upon seeing a fish in an aquarium Snuffy wonders asks Tracy and Jay Jay about the ocean which they are about to go fly over. As he is thinking over what they say, he falls asleep and soon hears the fish calling his name. The fish...


Coyote at Pinon Place, written by Deborah Dennard; illustrated by John Paul Genzo. (Smithsonian’s backyard.) LCCN 99019242. Norwalk, Ct.: Soundprints, 1999. ISBN 1568997671, HBB, $15.95.


PICTURE BOOKS

tells him to catch up with the others so that he can see the ocean. He does and is astounded at its beauty. While the others continue on, he stays to explore with the understanding that they will pick him up later. He actually dives into the ocean and is amazed with God’s creation. He wants to stay in the ocean but when he begins to show the fish his skywriting, he pollutes the ocean and loses his way in the smoky waters. He is about to panic when—he wakes up! It was all a dream. Now Tracy and Jay Jay really do take him to see the ocean, but he stays above the water.

The last story is "The Upside Down Waterfall." Snuffy tells his friends that he has seen an upside down waterfall in the park. They go with him but find nothing at all and don’t believe him even though they cannot argue him out of his idea. Brenda Blue suggests to Jay Jay that perhaps he would be a better friend if he believed in Snuffy and tried to find out how he might be right instead of spending time trying to prove him wrong. Jay Jay goes back to the park and he sees the upside down waterfall and goes to bring everyone else. When Brenda Blue sees what it is, she realizes that they are really viewing a geyser and explains it to the three friends.

This is an very sweet video for younger children. The computer animations are colorful and appealing. Each story has a simple song that suits the theme of the story and is easy to sing. A gentle way to present scriptural ideas about God’s love and creation to small children who will probably want to watch them over and over.

Teresa O’Donley, Library Media Specialist, Baymonte Christian School, Scotts Valley, California


E. Butterflies--Fiction; Metamorphosis--Fiction; Grandfathers--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. unp. Small children.

A little girl saves a caterpillar from a hungry blue jay and with her grandpa’s help makes a special butterfly house. Her grandpa knows the flowers that a butterfly likes the best. Enthusiastically, the little girl paints all the colorful flowers inside her box. She adds a stick and carefully puts the caterpillar inside. She watches expectantly as the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis and then a butterfly. All too soon, however, it is time to set the butterfly free. It is a sad moment but she knows that it is the right thing to do. The butterfly is now gone and the little girl is grown; but every year the Painted Ladies come and fill her flower garden. Sometimes she wonders if it is their way of thanking her for saving the life of that first caterpillar.

Butterfly House demonstrates a shared experience between a granddaughter and her grandpa. Eve Bunting has captured an experience that all of us have at one time enjoyed or are looking expectantly for the day when it will happen to us. The bond that builds between the two adds extra dimension to the story. The illustrations are bold and bright. Greg Shed has created brilliant, muted colors that cover the entire page, while the text is presented in an almost poetic form. This book is comparable to their combined efforts on the book Dandelion. The book ends with an informative page, which explains how to raise a butterfly.

The story is easy to relate to and the illustrations consume you. The story slows down and lacks a captivating ending, however. Children would enjoy this story. The thought that their kindness to an animal may be someday reciprocated is intriguing.

Marcia Snyder, Librarian, Missoula, Montana


Coyote at Pinon Place, written by Deborah Dennard; illustrated by John Paul Genzo. (Smithsonian’s backyard.) LCCN 99019242. Norwalk, Ct.: Soundprints, 1999. ISBN 1568997671, HBB, $15.95.

E. Coyote--Fiction; Animals--Fiction. 32 p. Small children.

This wildlife storybook, authenticated by the Smithsonian Institution, fosters an appreciation and understanding of natural habitats, the wildlife therein, and respect for the environment.

The young coyote on a daytime trek interacts with birds, a rattlesnake, and a woodrat before returning to the forest. The illustrations enable children to create a story of their own, and the words let parents and grandparents add spice to the story. Christian schools can add this title, assured both of a biblical worldview and an interesting, informative storyline. A one-page fact sheet at the end of the book highlights facts about the coyote. This title is part of the Soundprints Series, which has been awarded the Parents’ Choice Honors.

Dennard lives in Texas and is the author and photographer of several award-winning books for children. John Paul Genzo lives in New Jersey and has designed several postage stamps featuring wildlife and has illustrated several children’s books.

Larry Hennedinger, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

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Marcia Snyder, Librarian, Missoula, Montana
In The Day the Circus Came to Town, by Melody Carlson, Billy’s family has tickets to see the circus. This is a special event because he and his sister Emma have never been to the circus. Later in the day he and his friends are playing when they meet Zino the Clown from the circus. Zino offers the boys tickets, but Seth, Samuel, and Jack give Zino a hard time. They decide circuses are for babies, so Billy agrees with the other boys and refuses the ticket. That evening Billy refuses to go with his family to the circus. While his family is gone he decides to play with his friends but none of them is at home. Then Billy decides it would not hurt to go and check out the circus. He peers into the tent and sees his friends inside with their families. Billy decides he really wants to be with his family, but the man at the door will not let him in without a ticket. Billy is ready to go home when Zino the Clown appears with a ticket. Zino offers Billy another chance to see the circus and Billy is happy to accept the invitation.

The message to “follow your heart and not your friends” is clear in this story. While some children will find this story “old-fashioned,” it will be good for discussions about how decisions have consequences. The illustrations truly compliment the style of the author’s story.

Susan K. Brown, Teacher, Noblesville, Indiana


It’s Lionel’s birthday and Elliot wants to make him a cake. Elliot recruits Socks, Amy, and Paisley to help. They run to tell Beaverton their plan. After digging around in his cupboard Beaverton finds a good cake recipe. Finding everything they need, the friends work together to make the cake. Problems begin when they don’t understand what it means to separate eggs. Do you put them in separate bowls? And does cream the butter mean you pour cream on the butter? However, their biggest problem is deciding when the cake is done. The recipe says when they touch the cake it will spring up. But no matter how close they watch it, the cake doesn’t spring up. First it wobbles, then it doesn’t do anything, and while they waiting for it to spring up it burns. Disappointed, but resourceful, they cut off the burned part, decorate the cake, and surprise Lionel with “the best cake they had ever tasted.”

A story of co-operation and resourcefulness, Elliot Bakes A Cake will delight young readers. Often faced with complex situations or instructions they don’t understand, young children will empathize with the animals as they stumble through the directions. And they will be thrilled with the inventive solution to the problem. Andrea Beck encourages the reader to persevere in spite of problems. Beck’s delightful, brightly colored animals crowd the pages with happy expressive faces.

The recipe for the cake is on the last page of the book. It is worded just like the recipe the animals used. Children, or even adults who are not in the habit of baking, could find the recipe a bit confusing.

Barbara A. Bryden, Freelance Writer, Olympia, Washington


E. Friendship—Fiction; Fathers and sons—Fiction; Pies—Fiction. unp. Small children.

In Derek Munson’s Enemy Pie, the author shows how one boy learned to accept differences in people and make a new friend. This charming story chronicles the stages of friendship.

The problem begins when Jeremy Ross moves into the neighborhood and does things that really upset the main character in the story. The main character seeks advice from his dad, who understands stuff like enemies. Dad even knows a way to get rid of enemies. His secret weapon is enemy pie. It is guaranteed to get rid of enemies. The main character brings his dad all sorts of things to put in the pie like worms, rocks, already chewed gum, but Dad gives it all back. Then Dad says the hardest part of making enemy pie work is up to you. You have to spend a whole day with your enemy. The main character is not sure about this idea but he follows his dad’s advice. In just a short time the boys were having a great time together.

Now it is time to have some enemy pie. The boys sit down with Dad to eat their pie and ice cream. Then panic sets in. The main character does not want Jeremy Ross to eat the pie. He tries to stop Jeremy, but Jeremy asks, “Is it bad then why has your dad already eaten half of it?” The enemy pie is delicious and the boys became friends. This story will lend itself to discussions about friends and enemies. Most children will be able to relate to at least one of the characters in the story. Tara Calaham King uses color pencil and pastel illustrations to add to this great story.

Susan K. Brown, Teacher, Noblesville, Indiana


E. Children’s literature; Literature—Collections. 64 p. Small children.

From the sunshine yellow end papers to the bright colorful paper pulp paintings of children and common everyday objects, Denise Fleming’s The Everything Book is a joy. Fleming calls this book her ‘diaper bag book,’ while the book jacket says ‘something for everyone.’ They are both right! Whether in a diaper bag or on a library shelf, this comucopia of rhymes, poems, labeled pictures, and wonderful pictures of a small child’s daily life would entertain a small child for a long time. The title page has seventeen ladybugs trailing across it, which sets up a treasure hunt for the rest of the book: How many ladybugs are on each page? Page 62 includes a list of the number of bugs found on each page (although the ladybugs on the book jacket are not mentioned) and the ladybug parade continues right onto the last page, where the final ladybug flies across a starry sky filled with a huge crescent moon and the words, ‘Bye-Bye.’

On the way to ‘Bye-Bye,’ little lapitters can learn the names of common kitchen items, fruits, colors, animals, and even body parts (including an overalled rear labeled ‘bottom’), as well as listen to poems about subjects as diverse as chickens, fireflies, and traffic lights.

Fleming likes to put personal touches in her books from time to time: in this one, the faces on pages 50-51 include Fleming’s great-niece-in-law, Lexie, and a little girl that represents what Fleming thinks her Henry Holt editor, Laura Godwin, looked like as a child. The final personal touch is a poignant one. Children, no matter how old they grow, are always children in their mothers’ hearts, and although Fleming’s daughter Indigo is now grown up, The Everything Book is dedicated to her.

Betty Wintons, Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio


E. Children—Conduct of life; Children—Religious life; Christian life. 1 videocassette, col. 30 min. Small children.

How can children face their fears and talk about them? How do they deal with fear of the dark, or the jitters of the first day of school? Computer animation is used to create a story for each of these three areas, Fantastic Faith centers around Jay Jay, the Jet Plane, an inviting animated character with a human face. Jay Jay is ashamed to share his bad dream with friends but via song and talk about his fears comes to face them. On his first day of school he learns he’s not the only plane who has ever struggled with first-day jitters. On a camping trip, Snuffy overcomes his fear of the dark with help from Jay Jay.

Each of the short stories brings God into the picture, e.g., God helps us through our friends in the first story, and we are never really lost to God in the third story where stars are the focal point for dealing with the dark. Children will like the quick moving pace of the stories, the delightful animation, and the original songs. Parents can utilize the stories with confidence, even retelling portions, as kids will likely remember the stories. Recommended for all children’s libraries.

Larry Homme, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

Farmer Brown’s field trip, written by Melody Carlson; illustrations by Steve Bjorkman. LCCN 99053086. Wheaton,

Mr. Giovanni’s toys come alive when he leaves for the day. His newest creation is Jenny, a doll named after his own daughter. Jenny has clear eyes, taffy-colored hair, and a red gingham dress. As soon as Mr. Giovanni leaves, Jenny begins her search for a friend. There are shelves and shelves of toys and Jenny almost doesn’t know where to start. She approaches other dolls next to her, but learns they are not eager to be friends. Their idea of fun is sitting and talking. Jenny has other ideas. She approaches toy soldiers, a stuffed dog, and other toys before finally visiting with a stuffed rabbit named Rabbie. Rabbie is old and worn—not what Jenny has other ideas. She approaches toy next to her, but learns they are not eager to be know where to start. She approaches other dolls dress. As soon as Mr. Giovanni leaves, Jenny eyes, taffy-colored hair, and a red gingham for the day. His newest creation is Jenny, a doll "Forever Friends" detailed and charming, giving life to the words. Jenny’s neighborhood, written by Sharon Jennings; illustrated by Brenda Clark. Toronto, Ont.: Kids Can Press, 1999. ISBN 1550747290, HBB, $10.95.

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Forever Friends, by Joni Eareckson Tada with Melody Carson, is a shining story of what true friendship is all about. Sometimes we pick our friends for the wrong reasons. Rabbie reminds us that our hearts make the best choices. The colorful illustrations of Douglas Klauba are detailed and charming, giving life to the words. Forever Friends is a wonderful reminder that physical differences should not be our ruler of people’s value.

Debby Willett, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas


E. Banneker, Benjamin, 1731-1806--Family--Fiction; Farm life--Fiction. 29 p. Small children.

Molly Walsh while milking a cow in 1683 spills the milk. Since the cow that Molly was milking is owned by her Lordship, she is sent to court for stealing. The punishment for this crime is death. But Molly can read the Bible; therefore her sentence is to be sent to America as an indentured servant. Molly works very hard and eventually is set free. She purchases land, but needs help to raise her crops. She purchases a slave named Bannaky. Molly and Bannaky learn to love each other and are married. Molly has four daughters and the eldest daughter, Mary, has a son whom they name Benjamin Banneker. Benjamin later becomes a very educated and important man in history.

The story seems almost romantic in its retelling because none of the hardships are really mentioned. However, the account is accurate in that Molly Walsh did marry a slave and was the grandmother to the famous Benjamin Banneker. A simple story that depicts early American life in an entertaining way.

Mary and Joseph—in the traditional procession.

Roberto are chosen to portray Maria and José—Angie arranges the reenactment of Las Posadas story set in old Santa Fe, New Mexico. Sister Mary and Joseph seek lodging on Christmas Eve.


E. Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Fiction; Joseph, Saint--Fiction; Posadas (Social custom)--Fiction; Santa Fe (N.M.)--Fiction. unp. Small children.

The procession starts, and they knock on door and are welcomed by Roberto and Annette. A mysterious couple arrive to play Maria and José. The procession starts and they knock on door and are welcomed by Roberto and Annette. A mysterious couple arrive to play Maria and José.

The beautiful water colors by E.B. Lewis carry the heavy load of produce to the market for his mother. Saruni’s determined efforts to help, take an unusual twist, and his willingness to give is rewarded in a most interesting way.

The beautiful water colors by E.B. Lewis carry the heavy load of produce to the market for his mother. Saruni’s determined efforts to help, take an unusual twist, and his willingness to give is rewarded in a most interesting way.

The storyline is written simply, mixing some native words within the context of the story. The story is based on a custom that began in Spain and came to Mexico and southwestern America. Posada is the Spanish word for “inn,” and Las Posadas celebrates Mary and Joseph seeking lodging on Christmas Eve.
welcomed at a courtyard where a bonfire blazes and the empty manger awaits them. But the couple who portrayed Maria and José disappear. Just then Lalo and Roberto arrive to sit by the empty manger. They wonder who took their place in the procession.

Meanwhile, Sister Angie awakens and walks to church. She sees fresh footprints in the snow leading to the door. Inside, she kneels and prays by the wooden carvings of Maria and José. She notices their cloaks are covered with fresh snow. Unknown to her, a miracle had saved Las Posadas.

The artwork is done in acrylic on handmade watercolor paper. The paintings are simple but capture the spirit of the story. A short glossary of Spanish words is included. Children will enjoy this unique tale with surprise ending.

Lydia E. Harris, Freelance Writer; Former Teacher, Seattle, Washington


Mama begins waiting during winter when the winds swirl the snow and the bears begin their long sleep. She continues to wait as the ice on the pond thaws and the daffodils begin to bloom. Goslings and ducklings hatch, wild roses grow, and summer thunder booms, but Mama still must wait. It is only when the fall winds blow and the apples ripen on the trees that Mama’s wait comes to an end, for it is then that her daughter is finally born.

One More Time, Mama, by Sue Alexander is a mother’s loving account of the wait for her daughter’s birth. Prompted by her daughter’s request that she tell the story “one more time,” the mother beautifully describes the seasons that pass by during her pregnancy. Although beautiful, at times the abundant imagery used to describe the plant and animal life of each season seems too advanced and detailed for the young audience to whom this type of book generally appeals. However, David Soman’s watercolor illustrations are lovely and do a wonderful job of depicting both nature and the love that exists between the mother and daughter. Like Jamie Lee Curtis’ Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born, this is a book for parents and children to share together to remember the uniqueness of their child’s birth and, as a result, the uniqueness of the child herself.

Lydia E. Harris, Freelance Writer, Former Teacher, Seattle, Washington


E. Fear--Fiction; Grandmothers--Fiction. 24 p. Small children

Fear is an awful, controlling thing, and Addie was controlled by it. There were many real dangers for Addie, but she often trembled at things that couldn’t really harm her, like the lonely cry of the wolf at night, or a distant thunder storm. She would walk an extra mile to get to her beloved grandmother’s farm, just so she could skirt around the big bull in a neighbor’s field. Life was very hard for Addie and her fears.

One important day when she was feeding her grandmother’s chickens, an attacking chicken hawk gave her an extreme fright. But just as she was about to run and hide, something wonderful happened inside of her. Addie found a special courage tucked way down deep that allowed her to pick up a branch and scare the hawk away. This was a turning point for Addie. She still had some fears, fears of real dangers, but she also knew that she carried around inside of her a courage that would be there whenever she really needed it.

This true-life tale, When Addie was Scared, is written as quick, exciting prose. The tale unfolds the importance of love and encouragement as Linda Bailey relates this tale about her mother when she was growing up in the 1930’s on a northern prairie farm. The homespun tale portrays a common struggle with fear that many children may face. It will encourage children to discover that you have what it takes to face these fears right inside of you. The realistic illustrations by Wendy Bailey are appealing and intriguing with their detail and warmh. The situations presented allow for good discussion about different types of fears and how to deal with them.

Mary McKinney, Former Teacher, Freelance Writer, Editor, Port Orchard, Washington

PICTURE BOOKS

F. Thomson, Tom, 1877-1917--Fiction; Beavers--Fiction. 167 p. Elementary (Middle school).

Ahmek is a young badger who lives with his father and grandmother on a quiet pond. One day a human appears at the pond. Ahmek is a very curious young badger and soon discovers that this human, an artist named Tom Thomson, is not to be feared. Soon Tom is chased away by hunters who break up Ahmek’s home, separating him from the rest of the family. Heading south, Ahmek hopes to locate his father and grandmother. Instead he meets new groups of badgers, has many adventures, and eventually forms his own family unit with Kwezenhs. After their kids One and Two are born, Ahmek and Kwezenhs travel North in hope of finding some evidence of the rest of Ahmek’s family. When the new young family reaches the pond, it is to discover that not only are Ahmek’s father and grandmother there, but also his mother, long thought to have been killed by humans.

Author Patrick Watson tells a tale of beavers living in their natural environment with enough detail to put the reader into the story. Place names and the beaver’s names are from the Ojibway language. An excellent glossary is provided. Tracy Thomson, great grand niece of the real-life artist, Tom Thomson, illustrates each chapter with line drawings. Children and adults alike will appreciate the detail in both the text and the artwork. There are several excellent books of animal survival away from the native environment. Ahmek fits well into this genre.

F. Generosity--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction; Parables. unp. Elementary.


F. Generosity--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction; Parables. unp. Elementary.

Once again, Max Lucado expresses a biblical truth in a simple, yet beautiful way. All You Ever Need is a story about Tobias, the Watermaster, who distributes fresh water to the desert people. He and his Son, Julian, never limit the amount of water, or set standards of who may receive. The Watermaster and his Son leave their home. Then a drought, he skips school and is failing, and he won’t let others go to bat so the team is losing all its games. His mother explains why the in-between times is important, and Jimmy makes the decision to throw the watch out his bedroom window. The loud crash awakens Jimmy, who realizes he was just dreaming about skipping time. He looks outside his bedroom window at the rain falling and realizes he is glad to have a rainy day, even if he does miss baseball practice, because now he’ll have puddles to play in.

Bill Myers has a homerun in Baseball for Breakfast, The Story of a Boy Who Hated to Wait. Young children will learn how important the in-between times are and the consequences for living only in the good times. The colorful illustrations by Frank Riccio bring life and realism to the text. The two create a guaranteed favorite for young readers.

F. Bicycles and bicycling--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 76 p. Elementary.

Jason Birchall has two problems: his mother has the family on a new ‘healthy diet,’ and he dreams of saving enough money to buy his friend Eric’s royal blue/gold, flashy, mountain bike. With only ten dollars to go Jason can almost feel the bike beneath him as he races down the street. For some time he has been caching his money in his top dresser drawer quite near his stash of bubble gum, which is hidden from his vegetable wielding mother.

The Cul-de-sac Kids pitch in and help Jason earn the rest of his money by taking part in a recycling project. Money in hand, Jason heads for Eric’s to buy the bike, only to find out that Eric has sold it to someone else for more money. That is bad enough but Jason’s troubles multiply when he first offers to help his friend, Abby, by hiding her Mother’s Day gift money in his drawer separated from his by his baseball cards. All this time Jimmy has already been secreting his vegetable snacks in pockets, under his mattress, feeding them to his dog, anywhere he can to 


F. Bicycles and bicycling--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 32 p. Elementary.

F. Ships—Fiction; Rivers—Fiction; Jungles—Fiction; Brazil—Fiction. 104 p. Elementary.

Set in Brazil, The Captain’s Hat is filled with imagination-sparking details about life along “the big river.” As a former missionary to Brazil, author Anita Williams is well able to lend authenticity to this story of two boys and their adventures. Pedro and Spud befriended an older couple, the man a retired sailor, living aboard a ship scuttled on a beach. They meet a captain, pick fruit and nuts in the jungle, explore the countryside, and more. All the while, Pedro dreams of one day being a captain with a sparkling hat. A special deed earns him a hat of dreams of one day being a captain with a sparkling hat. A special deed earns him a hat of dreams.

Betsy Ruffin, Teacher/Librarian, Cleburne, Texas


F. Christian life—Fiction; Competition (Psychology)— Fiction; Fairs—Fiction. 100 p. Elementary (Middle school).

Cassie, You’re a Winner is the story of a pre-teen girl who wants to be “the best” at something. When she looks around her, it seems that everyone has a particular gift or talent, and she has none. Cassie compares herself to her two best friends, J. J. and Iggy—but both are skilled at something, better looking, etc. So, Cassie decides to enter two contests in the county fair—cake baking and horseback riding. Cassie is sure she should be able to get a “blue ribbon” for at least one of these events. Then, she is convinced, she will feel special and be a winner. The day of the fair arrives, and nothing turns out quite like she has planned.

Renée Kent writes about common feelings of inadequacy and insecurity in pre-teen girls and boys. Readers can relate to the characters and their struggles. The story teaches valuable lessons on friendship and what it really means to be a winner.

Tammy Williams, Freelance Writer, Social Worker, Port Orchard, Washington


F. Dolls—Fiction; Orphans—Fiction; Christmas—Fiction; London (England)—Fiction. 151 p. Elementary.

The Christmas Doll is a beautiful story that will touch the hearts of any reader, although intended for children. It is the story of two sisters, Lucy and Glory, orphans that live in a workhouse in London. Lucy, the elder sister, protects and cares for her sister and often communicates with her about stories about their life before the death of their parents. One of these stories is of a doll called “Morning Glory” that Lucy tells Glory she had as an infant. She also tells of how their mother sewed a blue morning glory flower on each of Glory’s dresses. When a deadly fever epidemic comes to the workhouse, Lucy decides it would be safer to live on the streets of London than risk exposing Glory to the fever. So Lucy and Glory make a daring escape and find themselves starving and cold on the streets. It is while searching the “mud flats” for treasure to sell, that Glory finds a doll that she is certain is “Morning Glory.” Lucy, sick at heart, realizes that selling the doll is their only hope. Neither girl could ever imagine the events that follow, all because of a doll named “Morning Glory.”

Elvira Woodruff paints a wonderful picture of life in nineteenth century London for two orphan girls. The story is imaginative and sweet. The story teaches of loyalty, friendship, and love. It is destined to be a classic in the lines of The Little Princess.

Tammy Williams, Freelance Writer, Social Worker, Port Orchard, Washington

Jenny argues over calls during their after-school baseball games, and Jenny never argued before. Some of her friends don’t want to see what’s wrong with her: they just want to keep playing baseball. But Ian and Krishnan try talking to Jenny and Ian even invites her and her two brothers over to his house for supper. Jenny tells Ian’s mom, Mrs. Piccolo, that her step-dad is in drug treatment and Jenny has to babysit her two-year-old brother. Her older step-brother, Billy, hangs out with his high school friends in the parking lot after school and throws rocks at Jenny and her friends who are playing baseball in the high school field. Jenny doesn’t like having to babysit all the time. She wants to play baseball with her friends.

Mrs. Piccolo explains that things might be tough now, but times change and things will get better. Jenny seems to feel better after her talk with Ian’s mom. Billy talks to Ian, who is surprised at how nice Billy is, telling him how much he likes baseball. They all have a good time at supper that night.

Despite seeing a different side of Billy, Ian is still afraid of him and his friends. He doesn’t understand why the older boys throw rocks at the baseball players. Then Ian’s mom gives him the idea to challenge the older boys to a baseball game. The high school guys go for it and so do the younger kids. After the game, the older kids leave the younger kids alone.

F. Camping—Fiction. 87 p. Elementary.

When nine-year-old Cody Michael’s folks send him off to Camp Bear, he wonders how he can enjoy his summer vacation. Camp Bear, he understands, has no TVs, no computers, no video games. In fact, Camp Bear has no electricity! Cody takes along a book on wilderness survival. Throughout the weeks at camp, Cody learns how to deal with bears, the camp bully, a “haunted hamster,” and girls. While the other boys pack M&Ms, Skittles, and Reesees Pieces for their hiking trip, Cody packs his wilderness survival guide. It’s a good thing he does, because the camp bully needs rescuing.

Cody Unplugged by Betsy Duffey is illustrated by Ellen Thompson. Her black and white drawings depict thoroughly modern kids in realistic settings. The drawings, and the humorous, brightly colored dust jacket will appeal to adults as well as children.

The book is divided into twelve short, easy reading chapters. Each chapter is followed by lists for every possibility called, “Cody’s Camp Survival Guide.” Children will enjoy a chuckle as they read Cody’s lists.


E. Czech Republic—Fiction; Cousins—Fiction. 30 p. Elementary.

Eva’s Summer Vacation, written and illustrated by Jan Machalek, introduces us to young Eva and her father as they begin their trip to attend a family wedding. As they take a taxi to the airport, Eva quietly says goodbye to many of the beautiful and historical areas and buildings in downtown Prague. When they arrive at Aunt Lida’s home in the small city of Hluk, the scene is much different. Aunt Lida lives on a farm in the Carpathian Mountains. She has farm animals in her backyard. The hilly countryside gives Eva the opportunity to play and run with cousins, pick wild strawberries, and swim every day. She has brought a traditional folk costume for the wedding and is delighted with the music and dancing of the ceremony. After the wedding, she tells her father goodbye as she looks forward to spending the summer with her cousin exploring the countryside.

Jan Machalek has succeeded in writing a balance of fiction and information about his native Czech Republic. Instead of lists, maps, and dates that usually go along with this type of subject, he has used a fiction story in picturebook form to paint a simple picture of some basic differences in this country. He shows a simple contrast between the capital city and the country. These contrasts, while obvious to adults, are explained very appropriately in his story. The description of the wedding is very simple, addressing the important issues a child would want to know, such as clothing and food.

To add to the description of the different topics are Mr. Machalek’s lovely double spread illustrations. Even though a written description of the city of Prague is not provided, the illustrations demonstrate the busyness and beauty of the architecture and landscape.

A small informational section at the end of the story includes a map, a very brief paragraph on Czech history, population, topography, and traditions. The Czech words used in the story are defined in this section as well.


Holiday Hero is book seven in the series of Secret Sisters by Sandra Byrd. The two friends, Erin and Tess, have a wonderful time together with their moms on their “girls’ holiday” to San Diego. However, Tess keeps having little twinges of guilt about her brother’s accident that keeps him from accompanying them. She knew that she wasn’t responsible, yet she could have responded faster to Tyler’s desire to go home immediately. Amidst the exciting world of sun and fun, Tess finds several challenges to stay honest and obedient. In fact, her insistence on...

Bill Myers continues his series Bloodhounds, Inc. with I Want My Mummy. Sean and his sister Melissa are hired to find a missing mummy from a museum exhibit. While looking for clues for the elusive Egyptian artifact, the two are confronted with bigotry. The townpeople, fueled by outrageous and incorrect media accounts, believe foreigners brought about the weird happenings taking place in their town by unleashing a mummy amongst them; so they set out to run the foreigners out of town. Eventually Sean and Melissa find the “mummy,” nothing more than a robot in rags, that was rampaging through town. They also discover that the two men who delivered the ancient relic allowed the real mummy to be destroyed through carelessness. They dressed up the robot to cover their mistake.

Myers tackles the relevant issue of bigotry and handles it with delicacy and forthrightness. Instead of being led by the crowd and talked into accusing others who are different from you, he teaches the reader to accept people for who they are—creations of God. Using humor and action, Myers effectively captures and keeps the reader’s attention while driving home a practical biblical truth.

Eden Zygardrice, Freelance Writer/Editor, Grand Forks, North Dakota


Louise feels like she is too predictable. Everyone seems to know what she will say, or do, or even eat. It’s too much for Louise, so she decides to make some changes. Unfortunately, everything she tries seems to backfire. Her change of hairstyles and clothes only bring snickers and lots of whispers from her classmates. When she steps forward to feed the penguins at the aquarium, she not only slips and falls into the penguin’s pool, she has to go home smelling like a fish. Something is not working right, and her mom and two best friends finally come up with the answer. Change comes from within, and doesn’t have to be drastic. The old Louise still has good to offer others, but it is also good to work on growing up and maturing.

Louise forges a clear lesson on appreciating who you are, yet finding ways to make changes where changes are needed. There are some humor and corny jokes that second and third graders should enjoy. Stephen Krensky gives a pretty realistic picture of how kids that age react to others, i.e. teasing and sometimes even some rather rude remarks. The illustrations by Susanna Natti are simple black and white sketches that portray some of the action in the story.

Mary McKinney, Former Teacher, Freelance Writer, Editor, Port Orchard, Washington

I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I think some six year olds would enjoy them. Is it wonderful to be a Christian? Just ask Mei Fuh/Edith Schaefeer. From her heart, the answer compellingly twirls—YES!

Donna Eggert, Freelance Writer, Radford, Virginia


At the center of The Mystery of the Attic Lion is a lion statue that has been tucked away in an attic corner. Titus, one of the three cousins, finds this statue and calls him Alexander. Someone breaks into Titus’ grandaunt’s home, and Alexander disappears. Titus, along with his cousins Timothy, and Sarah-Jane, have a new mystery to solve! They discover that the lion statue is part of another statue, and that they have both been missing for many years. The three cousins put their heads together and examine the few available clues. It’s not long before the TCDC (Three Cousins Detective Club) searches for and finds the lion statue and its long-missing partner.

Sarah-Jane and her two cousins, Titus and Timothy, answer a loud knock at her back door. The Mystery of the Backdoor Bundle begins. When the door is opened, no-one is there; however, they discover a small basket on the backstep. Inside, is an old doll with a note attached. The cryptic words, “Please help me.” lead the three cousins on a new mystery that results in diamonds being found inside the doll’s stuffing. The mystery is solved and the diamonds and the doll are returned to the rightful owners.

Elspeth Campbell writes engaging stories that move along quickly. The problems are identified, the three cousins get involved, and the mysteries are solved. Joe Nordstrom’s illustrations are simple pencil drawings that add charm to the books. The suggested age level is seven to ten, but the stories move along so fast, I think some six year olds would enjoy them. I recommend these as tradebooks for any library and classroom as read alouds.

Debby Willett, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas
Byrd's well-defined sixth grade characters are without having read the others in the series.

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A happy ending will please young everlasting love,' and a pink rose means 'to my flowers. Baby's breath means 'ours is an consequences. The girls learn the language of their teacher's wedding flowers. Tess has to discover there is nothing noble about a lie. They work in a flower shop to earn money for the wedding. Martinez' junior bridesmaid. And, because the niece won't be able to be Miss Martinez to hatch them, make ice-cream, escape from a very angry bull, pluck feathers from geese to make pillows, and go swimming. The story is reminiscent of Little House on the Prairie books due to the illustrations by Hutterite artist Hannah Marsden. Both the illustrator and the author (Rachel Maendel) live as Hutterites in Canada. The Hutterites' concept of life is quite interesting to read and through Rachel's eyes, the reader can glimpse what this may be like. There is an episode where geese are pronounced dead due to a weasel sucking the blood from them. Some Hutterite terms can be defined from the story; unfortunately there are a few terms that are somewhat unclear as to their meaning.

**CHILDREN'S FICTION**


Their teacher, Miss Martinez, is planning a beautiful wedding. Everyone from their sixth grade class is invited. When Tess Thomas and her Secret Sister, Erin Jansen, find their teacher crying, they comfort her. They learn that the niece of Miss Martinez' fiancé who has been waiting for a transplant for a long time, will get a new kidney just days before the wedding. Therefore, the niece won't be able to be Miss Martinez junior bridesmaid. And, because the family is chipping in to help pay for the surgery, there will be no flowers for the wedding and no honeymoon.

The Secret Sisters set out to change that. Tess thinks of a way they might raise money for the flowers, but problems crop up when Tess, in her eagerness to help, stretches the truth. The girls discover there is nothing noble about a lie. They work in a flower shop to earn money for their teacher's wedding flowers. Tess has to deal with her lies, her jealousy, and the consequences. The girls learn the language of flowers. Baby's breath means 'ours is an everlasting love,' and a pink rose means 'to my friend.' A happy ending will please young readers.

**Petals Power** by Sandra Byrd can be enjoyed without having read the others in the series. Byrd's well-defined sixth grade characters are believable. Young readers will easily identify with the girls' dilemma. Tess's parents react as loving and caring. The flower shop owner, however, seems too mean with no redeeming qualities.


F. Angels--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 48 p. Elementary.

As one of the many angels who write music for the King, Theodas loves his job. Unexpectedly, he is called before the King one day and sent to earth to listen for a new song. Upon arriving, Theodas meets William, a young boy. William has just witnessed another boy kill a singing bird and is crying. After comforting William, Theodas meets his parents and stays with them. William is drawn to the angel’s quiet spirit, and even combining his own eyes to the world of miracles and angels. Although the cover states, “Eternal Answers to Life’s Timeless Questions,” no concrete answers are given. Author Michael Card states at the beginning that there are often no easy answers for questions like why we pray or why we die. Instead, each of the seven chapters illustrates the faith and trust required even when we don’t know why. Each chapter contains the ongoing story of Theodas and William and is accompanied by lyrics from songs the author has written. A rich illustration by Ron DiCiani accompanies each chapter. DiCiani includes artist’s notes in the back, giving more information about the origin of each drawing. **Tell Me Why** will inspire discussion and raise questions about the role of angels in our lives.


F. Grandmothers--Fiction; Thanksgiving Day--Fiction; Neighbors--Fiction. unp. Elementary.

**The Secret Room** by Cynthia Mercati is an historically accurate chapter book that could provide a starting point for a larger discussion of the Holocaust. The focus of the story is Annie’s struggle with self-control and her eventual maturing. While the war with Germany and the plight of the Jews are important sub-plots, children reading this book will not gain a strong sense of the reality of war and the horror of the Holocaust. These themes have been painted with a very broad brush. Although Annie’s life surely would have been in danger for aiding Jews, these facts are downplayed. Black and white drawings by Deb Bovy add interest to the beginning of each of the seven chapters.

**Elizabeth Coleman, Freelance Writer; Tumwater, Washington**
Michael J. Rosen has written a captivating story of how grandmothers make holidays unforgettable in *Thanksgiving Wish*. Thanksgiving was “Bubbe’s” special holiday. Amanda looked forward to each part of the sumptuous feast. Bubbe worked for weeks, making one dish each day. There was her famous maple applesauce, the tom turkey, stuffing, chicken soup with matzo balls so light they floated, two kinds of potatoes, gelatin molds, honey cakes, and enough pumpkin pies for each family to take one home. Yet the best part of the day came right before bed, when her grandmother let her choose a wishbone for the Thanksgiving wish. Whoever held the biggest piece would have their wish granted as long as they never told anyone what it was. When Bubbe passes away, the pain seems the sharpest at Thanksgiving. The family struggles to hold up the family tradition, yet nothing is the same. Bubbe is not there to share the Thanksgiving wish.

John Thompson has dynamically illustrated this story with brilliant paintings. The details and expressions help to make the story jump right off the page and into your heart. It is almost as if you can smell dinner cooking. The story builds until you can feel the struggles and disappointments of each member of the family. Especially when the youngest, Amanda, realizes no one has saved the wishbones all year. They won’t have their Thanksgiving Wish. There is even a bit of a surprise ending when the secret of Bubbe’s wish is revealed.

Stories this captivating about the Thanksgiving holiday are few. It is a beautiful expression of family love and traditions, all of those things for which we are most thankful. The fact that this is a Jewish family adds a sense of multiculturalism to the story. This book is a must for any library.


F. Friendship—Fiction; Angels—Fiction; Wheelchairs—Fiction; Bicycling—Fiction. 32 p. Elementary.

Benjamin Brewer sits in his wheelchair watching the neighborhood kids play, and remembers the days when his legs worked like theirs. Rather than make an effort to join in the fun, Ben remains lonely. Tony, Ben’s neighbor, is also lonely. He rides his bike alone, remembering the days when he and Ben were best friends. Even since Ben got hit by the car, Tony doesn’t feel like a very good friend because he isn’t sure how to act around Ben in his wheelchair, so Tony remains lonely. Two angels are sent to help both boys realize friendship takes many forms, and to help both boys feel they have worth to each other still.

When Tony decides to enter the neighborhood bike race, a hole in his tire dashes his plans. But Ben has gotten good at fixing holes in tires—since keeping his wheelchair in good repair is now an important skill. Ben offers to fix Tony’s tire, and completes the job just in time for Tony to enter the race.

Lively pastel illustrations by Jeff Meyer portray Joni Eareckson Tada’s touching story *You’ve Got a Friend*. Young readers will learn that God gives us each special gifts in addition to the gift of friendship. Friendship is an unusual gift because it works two ways—we each have a need to feel wanted and to have friends, but most importantly, God wants us to share our ability to be a friend of others. By bringing sunshine to someone else’s day, our own paths are showered with sunshine, and this is the message that Tada’s story tells and Meyer’s illustrations show. Not only do Ben and Tony learn a lesson in *You’ve Got a Friend*, but the angels sent to help guide the boys together learn something too—all things, even small things like a porch ralling nail, are part of God’s blueprint for our lives. This is a great book to begin discussion on faith, friendship, handicaps, and reaching out to those in need.

Lisa Wrobble, Freelance Writer/Library Aide, Plymouth, Michigan


F. Space stations—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction; Science fiction. 103 p. Elementary.

The second in the AstroKids series by author Robert Elmer, *The Zero-G Headache* is written from the point of view of DeeBee. She is a tech wizard and is working on creating her own drone. However, complications occur and her drone experiences a major meltdown. DeeBee worries about how she will complete the drone, as it is a project for school, and she knows her teacher will never give her an extension to fix the problem. Not that she would have time for it anyway. DeeBee finds out her cousin Phil is coming for a visit. She considers him a music geek since he is gifted in music. The whole band decides to land on the station for repairs to their ship. Mir announces that Zero-G will perform, but that is not true. DeeBee comes to the rescue when she helps the band and they agree to do a concert. However, before they can fulfill their commitment, a power surge destroys their equipment. Phil saves the day when he accompanies the group, former classmates of his from the music colony, on an antiquated violin while they sing their latest hits.

Occasional illustrations by Paul Turnbaugh add visual effect to the story. A unique feature of the series is the historical background author Robert Elmer gives the reader at the end of the books about space travel. He also includes useful websites for those interested in finding out more about the solar system, planets, and space missions. Finally, he concludes the book with an

coded message the reader has to search for throughout the book. The added information at the back of the book will whet the appetite of most readers for finding out more about space travel.

Eileen Zygarlicke, Freelance Writer/Editor, Grand Forks, North Dakota
BOOK REVIEWS

CHILDREN’S NONFICTION

000’s—Generalities


Judy Heim and Gloria Hansen have co-authored a whole series of books that show you where to go to find free stuff on the Internet. This one, Free Stuff for Crafty Kids on the Internet, may be the best buy of the year for anyone who has to deal with craft-loving children and a slim budget. Its pages are filled with places to go on the Internet for all kinds of crafts: printable coloring pages and paper doll patterns, painting, rubber stamping and scrapbooking tips, craft instruction sheets, inspiration, and just plain fun.

It includes URLs (net addresses) for the on-line version of such family magazines as Parents and FamilyFun, as well as for big craft stores such as Michael’s, Jo-Ann Fabrics, and Ben Franklin. It even includes web sites that give instructions for balloon-twisting, juggling, puppet and kite making, and magic tricks!

Best of all, Chapter 1, Kids, Crafts, and Family Fun, includes information on tapping into web pages, dealing with common error messages, finding your way around the web without getting lost, using bookmarks, saving web pages and images to your hard drive, and Internet safety for children (including a list of child-safe search engines). This chapter alone may be worth the cost of the book!

I have only two reservations about this book (and indeed, the whole series). Some of the URLs include typos, making them useless for web navigation. Also, as is the case for web surfing in general, even the correctly typed addresses aren’t always current. However, after reading the first chapter, you should be able to get around both of those problems and find what you are looking for (or a satisfactory substitute.)

All in all, there is plenty in here to keep even the craftiest child busy for months!

Betsy Winslow, Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio


082. Quotations. 254 p. Elementary (Middle school).

Michel De Montaigne once wrote “I quote others to better express myself.” Who was Montaigne? When did he live? In the Scholastic Treasury of Quotations for Children, author Adrienne Betz compiles and references more than a thousand quotations. Not only does the author divide the quotes by subject matter but she supplies biographical information on her sources.

The introduction is an important part of this book. Betz discusses the history of the famous book of quotations, Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations, and the reason for her diverse selection. In addition, the author provides uses for quotations such as introducing an idea, adding authority to your opinions, or finding titles for literary work.

There are no illustrations in the book, but the larger print and white spaces make the book attractive to young readers. The book is divided alphabetically into categories such as anger, history, humor, and work, with a table of contents at the front and a biographical index at the end of the book. Throughout the book, in-depth paragraphs explain subjects such as Ways to Say: Don’t Just Talk About It, Take Action! or Artists Explain Their Own Work.

The sources for this book are extensive. From the Bible to Buddha, Shakespeare to Seuss, Mother Goose to Mother Teresa, these selections give the reader insights into the thought processes of people through the centuries.

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

200’s—Religion


Within the pages of Boys Life Adventure Bible Storybook, Adam looks like Tarzan. Illustrator Dennis Edwards uses his comic book style to draw the young readers into the text. The book is directed toward ages six to nine, but boys as old as twelve may enjoy this highly visual storybook, especially beginning readers.

Author David Horton divides the readings into four areas. There are fifty stories sections. Each story ends with a “Making a Man of God” element. The story is clarified and questions are asked such as, “Has anyone ever done something mean to you? Did you want to hurt that person back? What do you think might have happened if you had said, ‘I forgive you’ instead?”

The third section, Coaching Tips, gives the adult advice on how to apply the lesson to daily life. “The Verse to Remember” is a simple biblical verse with application to the lesson.

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


Bill Ross’ Hey, That’s Not What the Bible Says! is a collection of Bible stories from the Old and New Testament that humorously challenges your child’s knowledge. Ten stories, from Adam and Eve to Noah and the ark, to David and Goliath and Jonah and the whale, to Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection are included. First Mr. Ross tells an incorrect story, and then follows with the correct story from the International Children’s Bible, New Century Version. Did Adam and Eve go willingly? Just how many people were included on the ark? Was Goliath more interested in being David’s friend? Did Jonah successfully run away from God and His mission? Just where was Jesus born, in a stable or a techno-hospital? Was a stone really rolled across Jesus’ tomb, or was it a head stone? In one illustration Jesus is wearing a bracelet. I wonder what WWID could stand for. Mr. Ross, who also illustrated this book, has included comical sketches of the characters that most children will be amused by. The book is colorful and lively, and creatively presents Bible stories.

Debby Willett, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas


220.9 S505. Bible stories. 48 p. Elementary.

The title, Words of Gold, A Treasury of Bible’s Poetry and Wisdom, would lead one to believe that this was a book about the Psalms and Proverbs, or even the Old Testament. Instead, it is a selection of the author, Lois Rock’s, favorite Bible passages, covering the entire gamut of the scriptures. This is really a version of an interpreted Bible storybook, in biblical order. After each title is given is a brief synopsis of the general story or theme, followed by subtitles, further summaries, and then scripture. Some of the summaries are in the form of a question that

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the passage answers. The passages are presented from the Good News Bible, King James Version, or the New Revised Standard Version, with no pattern as to which text is used. An index completes the work, with references to biblical themes.

The illustrations and artwork are highly significant factors in this book. The style is stylized and ecletic. Highly intricate borders line the outside of every page: throughout the Old Testament section the pattern is a detailed, leafy, patterned border; the Gospel section has page borders that are in a vine and grape motif; from Acts onward the pattern suggest flames. The pictures of people are somewhat simplified and pre-Renaissance in appearance. Other pictures appear quilt-like. The same rich, vibrant colors are used consistently from beginning to end, with lots of gold.

Debby Willett, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas


Mary Manz Simon has adapted little known stories from the Old and New Testaments, creating Hidden Treasures: Amazing Stories from the Old Testament and Hidden Treasures: Amazing Stories from the New Testament. For an example, the story of Rahab and how she helps Joshua’s men escape from the soldiers of Jericho. Most children are taught the story of Moses as a baby and how he was adopted by the Pharaoh’s daughter, but how many have heard how Moses defended young women at a well? During Pharoah’s reign of terror against Hebrew baby boys were two midwives who defied the command to kill. These women were responsible for safely guiding the birth of newborn boys, despite the threats of the Egyptian soldiers. These nurses were blessed of God and soon had babies of their own. Elijah, exhausted from running from Queen Jezebel, awoke to the smell of fresh bread. Maybe not so unusual; however, Elijah had been in the wilderness and there was no oven close by. God had provided for Elijah because of his faithfulness and obedience.

These stories are excellent for children to read by themselves, or for reading aloud as a family, and questions are included at the conclusion of each story. What’s important is that Ms. Simon doesn’t simply tell stories of little-known people, but through the questions she encourages children to find the part of the story that relates to their lives. Her desire is to create “a heart connection” through the retelling of these stories about ordinary people that God used in extraordinary ways. Jeff Preston, the illustrator, has managed to capture the drama and emotion of these stories in vibrant colors. The illustrations add depth to the characters, and enjoyment of the stories. The series would make a wonderful addition to family libraries and would appeal to even small children. The questions allow children to consider what they learned and serves to reinforce bible truths. Parents would find these series to be a great way to spend quality time with their children.

Debby Willett, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas


The words “wonderful” and “awesome” have never been more aptly applied than when describing the story of God’s work in the salvation of His people from Egypt. Beginning with the birth of Moses and ending with the rise of Joshua to the leadership of God’s people, Wildsmith’s book offers an artistically rich, colorful, and respectful depiction of the events. The detail of the watercolor-tinted line drawings is as intriguing as the accuracy with which the time and locale are drawn. In addition, the perspective is always maintained in a way that emphasizes the greatness of the mighty acts of God rather than the actions of men. Particularly telling is Wildsmith’s depiction of the Ark of the Covenant and the Ten Commandments on both the front and back endpapers of his book. So often the Exodus story is reduced to a paean to the human desire for freedom, but Wildsmith’s book does not fall into that trap nor ignore the compelling, covenantal reason for the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt or the Law of Freedom they were soon to embrace. In summary, Brian Wildsmith’s Exodus brings the biblical account down to the verbal and visual level of a child without sacrificing the integrity or majesty of the event.

Pamela A. Todd, Librarian/English Teacher, Chalcedon Christian School, Cumming, Georgia


This visually appealing book offers both “food and exercise” for spiritual growth. Author John MacArthur creates a devotional to help kids understand their faith and grow as Christians. The book is broken down into twelve chapters, each focusing on a separate Christian doctrine (God, sin, worship, prayer, forgiveness). Chapters include from four to twelve questions such as: What does God want from us? Must we obey God all the time? and Why doesn’t God answer my prayers right away? A single spread is devoted to each question. MacArthur offers concise answers and activities to reinforce the concept and encourage children to grow closer to God.

Each chapter is color-coded, creating bright spreads that follow the same layout. Answers to common questions children—and new believers—have about God, faith, and the church, dominate the left side of the spread. These explanations are written in kid-friendly language. A word scramble and a prayer starter below the narrative completes the left side of the spread. An activity and a sidebar helping children relate the concept to everyday life dominates the right side of the spread. Relevant Bible passages (God’s Word) cover the right margin of each spread. A honeycomb background is sprinkled with tiny photos of children, along with two to three larger photos on each spread.

Not only is the layout visually appealing, it attracts young readers to this fine devotional because it makes it easier to use. Color-coding makes locating a specific category easier than using the table of contents. Children may also flip through and stop at spreads with headings matching their own questions: What if I tell someone about Jesus and nothing happens? (from the chapter on Evangelism); What is heaven like? (from the chapter on Heaven); Does God see everything we do? (from the chapter on Worship); and Who wrote the Bible? (from the chapter on the Bible).

The information and activities on each spread work together to help the reader not only better understand his faith, but apply what he’s learning so he will truly build up his spiritual muscle. For instance, in “How should we pray?” the spread provides a step-by-step for praying: Praise God, ask for his will, offer trust in him, and ask for what we need, for forgiveness, and for his help. The activity suggests finding a private place to “talk” quietly with God while the sidebar discusses easing fear by praying silently. “God Word” includes five scripture passages.

A Faith to Grow on: Important Things You Should Know Now That You Believe is a book parents will enjoy sharing with their children. Its visual appeal and non-doctrinal approach makes it suitable to general libraries as well. The kid-friendly narrative makes it a non-threatening addition for all libraries as well. MacArthur suggests, in the introduction, to read a section every day to “grow strong in the Lord!”

Lisa Wroble, Freelance Writer/Library Aide, Plymouth, Michigan
Scripture is quoted from the International Children's Bible, New Century Version, and Scripture references are printed beneath the text on each page. The last page of the book shows a picture of the night sky and the Star of the East with the words of John 3:16 printed below.

Illustrator Cathy Ann Johnson tells the Nativity story effectively through her illustrations. She uses bold, bright colors and her depictions of the characters and their surroundings are simple and clear enough to appeal to even very young children. Especially well done are the expressions of emotion on the character’s faces, such as Mary and Joseph’s fear at learning Mary is pregnant and the wise men’s awe and worship of baby Jesus. Small details in the portrayals of clothing and architecture help to lend an authentic flavor to the illustrations. A useful tool for sharing the Christmas story with young children.

Kerri Cunningham, Librarian, Camano Island, Washington
girls will enjoy searching for her throughout the book. Carolyn Larson has written a charming devotional that young girls and their mothers will love reading together. The bright and colorful pictures add to the stories and keep children interested. Young girls will identify with the emotions of the characters in the stories. They will see that although their actions are sometimes bad, they are not bad. Mothers will be reminded of how a child thinks, which will help them identify with their own little girls. The questions at the end of each story are thought provoking, but simple enough for young children to understand and answer. Many stories even provide ideas for activities that mothers and daughters can do together. The Little Girls Devotional Book is something every mother and daughter should have on their bookshelf.

Robyn Wyatt, Freelance Writer, Port Orchard, Washington


A Child’s Garden of Prayers entwines Thomas Kinkade’s paintings with a collection of prayers and blessings. Fans of Kinkade’s light-infused artwork will treasure this padded gift book which introduces children to praying. Prayers of gratitude and petition are included, plus prayers for morning, noon, and night. Topics cover parents, holidays, friends, animals, home, the world, and more.

Some prayers are familiar like St. Francis of Assisi’s: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace/ Where there is hatred, let me sow love/ Where there is injury, pardon/ Where there is despair, hope/ Where there is darkness, light/ Where there is sadness, joy.” Other classic prayers were penned by Martin Luther, John and Charles Wesley, and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Numerous prayers are sweet poetic verses. For example: “Heavenly Father, hear my prayer. Night and day I’m in Your care. Look upon me from above. Bless the home I dearly love. Bless the world I dearly love. I offer my promise of help from years ago. Lion cub offers his promise of help from years ago. Lion cub spares his life. The wren tells her, “Ask for what you need.” To whom it may concern, I offer my promise of help from years ago.”

Lydia E. Harris, Freelance Writer, Former Teacher, Seattle, Washington


Big Truths for Little Kids: Teaching Your Children to Live for God, by Susan Hunt and Richie Hunt, is a series of thirty-four stories designed “to teach children that they are created for God’s glory.” Each section contains catechisms, stories, let’s talk, and let’s pray suggestions. The catechisms range from “Who made you?” “God,” to “What is God?” “God is Spirit and has no body as we do;” to “What covenant did God make with Adam?” “The covenant of life.” It is suggested that the child(ren) being read to memorize the catechisms prior to reading each story section. The stories are short, usually two and one-half pages, and the let’s talk questions deal specifically with the story and how the story relates to the Bible and it’s relevance to life today. The Let’s Pray section includes a Bible verse from the NIV, and a simple prayer suggestion, designed to teach children to pray biblically.

Susan Hunt and her son Richie have compiled different stories that are simple and short. Young children will enjoy the stories while they are learning catechism. These stories are also appropriate for devotions. Doctrine is not discussed so this book would be useful across different belief systems. The catechisms are pointed and clearly based on biblical truths. This would be useful book for teaching children to life for God. The illustrations are simple pencil drawings reflecting children and adults who are smiling, interacting, and friendly.

Debby Willett. Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas

300’s—Social Sciences


398.2. Fables; Folklore. unp. Elementary.

It’s sunny and hot in the jungle, and most of the citizens are resting. All but one little lion cub who still wants to play. Finally, though, he nods off to sleep. His nap was short lived when a mouse scampers across his paw. The mouse pleads for his life, and lion cub spares his life. Grateful, the mouse promises to reward the cub’s kindness. Not sure how a small mouse could ever help him, the lion cub grows and grows, becoming the king of the jungle. On another sunny, hot day in the jungle, the lion manages to get caught in a net. Every way he turns, every struggle he makes, the mighty king of the jungle becomes even more entangled. The mouse hears the lion’s cries for help and offers his promise of help from years ago. Lion considers the mouse’s size and doubts his ability to help anyone, especially himself. Mouse sets to work, and eventually the lion is free. The lesson the lion learns is to “never again laugh at someone weaker or smaller than myself.”

Bernadette Watts’ retelling of this Aesop fable is simple, and her illustrations are colorful, and sweet. A wonderful picture book for small children.

Debby Willett, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas


398.2’.9047.2. Fairy tales; Folklore—Russia. unp. Elementary.

Luba and the Wren, Patricia Polacco’s retelling of the classic folk tale, “The Fisherman and His Wife,” is told with Russian flavor and the charming addition of a faithful and loving daughter, Luba. Polacco starts out with a Bible verse on the title page: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matt. 6:21.” She then goes on to demonstrate through her story one possible outcome of having your heart in things, not people.

Luba helps a wren trapped in a fowler’s net and, in gratitude, the wren tells her, “Ask for anything you wish.” Satisfied with her family’s simple lifestyle, Luba doesn’t want anything, but when she tells her parents, they trot out a long list of wants, from a rich estate to the power of ruling over the world. In fear and trembling, Luba obediently makes each wish until the wren finally returns everything to the way it was and her parents learn to be content.

Polacco’s artwork, done in colored pencils and marking pens, gives the story much of its Russian flavor as well as demonstrating Polacco’s familiarity with the Russian lifestyle through her Russian and Ukrainian heritage, her extensive travels in the former Soviet Union, and her studies in Russian art and iconography. Although Polacco’s more recent works have tended to be a bit serious and message-driven, Luba and the Wren is vintage Polacco, a story told for the joy of telling it, and even libraries with a large selection of folk tales might want to add this one to their collection.

Betty Winchell, Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio


Inspired by an East Indian folktale, Sanji’s Seed by B.J. Reinhard tells of a peasant boy who


Inspired by an East Indian folktale, Sanji’s Seed by B.J. Reinhard tells of a peasant boy who
longs to become king. He learns that elderly King Akbar is looking for a successor. The next ruler must prove himself worthy of caring for a seed for one month and returning with the plant. Sanji nurtures his seed, but it doesn’t sprout. His mother reassures him that he did his best, and she will always be proud of him. When Sanji returns to the king’s palace with his pot of dirt, other young men are there with large, beautiful plants. Sanji hangs his head in shame. But King Akbar laughs at the other young men, saying he boiled the seeds in oil so they couldn’t grow. The king’s test proves Sanji has the integrity needed to become the next ruler. Sanji and his mother move into the palace, and he becomes a kind and honest king.

Detailed illustrations by Shelly Hehnenberger complement the story and are painted in rich, deep tones. Facial expressions show anticipation, disappointment, and pleasure.

Parents and teachers will appreciate the emphasis on honesty and the lesson from Luke 16:10, “Whoever can be trusted with small things can also be trusted with large things.” Adult-child discussion questions are also included. This engaging story makes a worthwhile addition to homes and libraries.

Lydia E. Harris, Freelance Writer, Former Teacher, Seattle, Washington

500’s—Natural Sciences & Mathematics


551.21. Volcanoes; Geothermal resources. 64 p. Elementary.

Volcanoes, geysers, mudpots and fire fountains form the center around which Earth’s Fiery Fury revolves. Many photos accompany the text and offer a visual journey that makes it easy to stay interested. Boxed sidebars add variety and highlight important features about the various topics. A glossary, recommended resources (both print and www sites), and an index enable one to concentrate on individual aspects. It also attests to the careful research done in this work.

Different sized pictures, varying headlines, and attractive layout enable the student to probe and explore. The text and illustrations of Butternut Hollow Pond showcase a typical temperate pond in the eastern United States. Through five timeframes, from dawn to darkness, readers can experience the interdependence of food chains, food webs, and the ecological riches each organism brings. There is no fantasy storyline—nature is shown with its survival instincts.


Bob Marstall is a landscape painter and award-winning illustrator of nature oriented children’s books, such as An Extraordinary Life (Orchard Books, 2000). He lives in Massachusetts.

Teachers and parents can use the detailed story in words and watercolor to illustrate the ecological world in motion. Water striders, beetles, dragonflies, tree swallows, mallard ducklings, turtle, pumpkinseed, heron, woodchuck, cottontail, marsh hawk, deer, pickerel frog, and brass give life and interest to the story. Christian librarians can add this title with confidence.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida


591.763. Pond animals; Predation (Biology); Pond ecology; Ecology. unp. Elementary.

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Magnificent Monarch offers a colorful journey in the life of a monarch butterfly. It begins with a tiny caterpillar pushing from a leaf, and ends with the migration of monarchs. The illustrations are inviting, both in the light color hues created, and in the gentle feeling they offer. Four pages of Monarch facts at the end of the book help answer questions that might be raised, e.g. How many eggs does a monarch lay? Are caterpillars worms? Do all monarchs migrate? How do migrating monarchs find their way? Web sites of organizations supporting the monarch are given and enable parents and teachers to get much more information.

Glaser has written other outstanding science books such as Wonderful Worms (Millbrook, 1994), and Spectacular Spiders (Millbrook, 1998), and continues that quality here. Overall, her writing makes science easily understandable and inviting.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida


All About Turtles answers: How many kinds of turtles are there? Why do turtles have shells? What do turtles eat? How old can they live to be?

This is an important and informative title for all children. The story is told in such an easy moving vein, that each page offers a new aspect. Drawings are bold, adventurous, and colorful, e.g., two pages illustrate how big a turtle can be, and another two show the top and bottom view of a typical turtle shell. He describes salt water, freshwater, and land-dwelling turtles, showing the differences in anatomy, habitat, and diet.

Arnosky is the award-winning author and illustrator of some fifty books for children. As an avid naturalist, his first-hand observations add interest and depth to his depictions and descriptions.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

600’s—Technology (Applied Sciences)


How You Are Changing explains to eighth to eleven year olds the physical, emotional, and spiritual changes that are normal as they grow and mature. This is one in a series of seven books dedicated to giving honest answers to sensitive questions. Jane Graver has used age-appropriate language to discuss God’s plan in creating new life, the changes that take place during adolescence, and how this affects your sexuality. She helps to discover the purpose behind each change-taking place while always directing the reader back to God’s plan. She has also included a question and answer section that address common questions asked and promotes respect for your own body and for others.

This is a very versatile series. It is designed for the parent to read first and then to share with their child. The book can be given to the child to read on their own, as they are interested; or read along with their parent. The illustrations demonstrate the needed information without being graphic or explicit. Sensitive material is handled in a way that emphasizes God’s wonderful plan for creating new life. This series would build confidence in parents who aren’t sure how to approach the subject. It brings back the respect and beauty God intended but our society has perverted.

Marcia Snyder, Librarian, Missoula, Montana

Marcia Snyder, Librarian, Missoula, Montana

Masoff, a Scout leader for the past seven years, speaks of the Sky woman who created the world and sees the world as the basis for a garden design using fish heads. Other mystical references include a page for creating a fairy garden and the wives’ tale that basil keeps witches away. Overall, this book is an excellent resource for anyone interested in nurturing a love for nature and earth sciences through gardening.

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


Denise Fleming’s book, Where Once There Was a Wood, contains not only a wonderful parade of woodland, meadow, and creek wildlife done in paper pulp paintings, but also a subtle message: Wild creatures need space, shelter, water, and food to survive. The habitats represented in the book were once near Fleming’s home in Ohio and were part of the inspiration for her first book. In The Tall, Tall Grass; these habitats were destroyed during the making of a neighboring housing development. Before they disappeared, she collected and dried bits of the plants that were there. These bits were then incorporated into the pulp of the painting that wraps around the book’s front and back covers and in the white borders of each painting inside—except for one, the double spread painting at the story’s end that shows what stands there now “houses side by side twenty houses deep.”

Fleming dedicates her book to “Indigo, Sam, Emily, Molly, and Rachel—The Future”—the children of two of her friends and her own daughter, since her desire, in writing the story, was to motivate children (and the grownups who care about them) to notice and perhaps save the habitats around them before it becomes too late, as it was in Fleming’s own neighborhood.

To help readers inspired by her story, Fleming included in the back of the book several pages of information on building wildlife refuges in backyards or other areas and a page of addresses that readers can use to send off for more information on wildlife attraction and preservation. The combination of lovely nature paintings done in Fleming’s unique style (her most detailed efforts to date), the slow poetic story and gentle ending warning, and the information provided to help interested readers go further with the subject make Where Once There Was a Wood a valuable addition to any library used by children.

Betsy Winston, Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio


Juvenile gardening books often make the mistake of condescending to young readers. Author Karyn Morris treats her readers with respect. Within the pages of her book, The Kids Can Press Jumbo Book of Gardening, Morris explains basic plant requirements for optimum growth. She addresses how to plot out a garden, prepare the soil, and perform garden maintenance.

From Victory, Teepee, and Herb gardens to Miniature, Native, and Hanging gardens, Morris presents a large assortment of gardening styles and shapes to fit the interests of any child. She covers wildlife and native gardens, school and community gardens. There is even a section on attracting various wildlife and eliminating pests in the garden. Illustrations by Jane Kurisu abound on each page, complimenting the simple yet informative text with black and white drawings accented with green.

Minor concerns may include the use of an old Iroquois tale called the Three Sisters, which speaks of the Sky woman who created the world and the wonderful way babies are made, by Larry Christenson; illustrated by Cheri Bladhoom. LCCN 00008940. Minneapolis: Bethany Backyard, Bethany House, 2000. ISBN 0764223410, HBB, $10.99.

Using creation as a starting point and ending with Jesus’ virgin birth, The Wonderful Way Babies Are Made, covers human reproduction from a completely biblical perspective. Focusing on God’s plan for reproduction, basic biological information covers only a few pages. On each page, information is presented two different ways. There is a simplified rhyming verse with larger print for younger children. For older children smaller print inside a box provides more detailed information. For younger children, intercourse is only referred to as making love and not all details are divulged or body parts named. For older readers more information is imparted. Body parts are named and the terms intercourse and making love are used interchangeably. By basing the entire book on God’s plan, the author is able to naturally instill that reproduction is reserved for mothers and fathers who are married. A brief mention is made that making love is very pleasant and people want to do it outside of marriage, but that isn’t part of God’s plan.

Author Larry Christenson, recommends parents read this with their children, no matter what their age. Beautiful watercolor illustrations by Cheri Bladhoom complement the gentle text nicely. On the page where making love is discussed, there is a drawing of a woman on top of a man in bed. Mostly covered with blankets, bare shoulders are shown. Other pictures are of human and animal families with their young or biblical illustrations. This would be a great resource for parents wanting to give their children the whole picture, not just the clinical facts.

Elizabeth Coleman, Freelance Writer, Tumwater, Washington


Kathy Ross has assembled a collection of crafts that will inspire a child’s imagination in her book Crafts For All Seasons. She begins with fall and has twenty crafts for each season. Each craft has a pictorial list of supplies needed. She also provides numbered and illustrated instructions. The crafts apply not only to the holidays that occur during a particular season, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, St. Patrick’s Day, and Father’s Day, but she also includes events or characteristics of that particular season, such as the first day of school, snowmen, spring flowers, and weddings. Halloween is not included.

This craft book has a wonderful balance of crafts that need a little parental help, and those who

700’s—The Arts and Recreation

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Silent Night” is one of our most loved Christmas carols. It was written by Joseph Mohr in Austria almost two centuries ago as he was preparing for midnight mass. Mája Dusíková has captured the beauty and simplicity of this carol. The illustrations bring a soft warmth to the familiar text and leave the reader with a sense of calm. The complete text of the song is illustrated from the silence of the night, to the brightness of our Saviour.

The book, Silent night, Holy Night: A Christmas Carol, begins with the story behind the famous carol. Mája Dusíková has written a synopsis of the events that led to the writing of the text and music, the efforts of two men. Although the text is very familiar, the addition of pictures brings a new dimension to an old carol. It would be especially nice for younger children who may already be familiar with the words to the song. A delightful addition to a Christmas collection.

Marcia Snyder, Librarian, Missoula, Montana


100 Best Games by Eulalia Perez is an easy to use reference book. Nicely presented, games are divided by indoor or outdoor activities and logically arranged by sub-category. There are introduction games, games to separate and choose, expression games, games for two, running games, games played with a ball, travel games and games for infants and toddlers. Rules and play are very clearly presented. Colorful illustrations by Maria Rius help to interpret directions. Many standard games like Hopscotch, Follow the Leader and Freeze Tag are included. The Parson’s Cat or Planted may not be as familiar. There are also many variations of popular games, providing players with a new challenge. Each game is clearly labeled with appropriate age group and the number of players required.

This book would be a great resource for school teachers. Sunday school teachers and parents who need a quick game idea that requires no set-up or props. While games presented in this book are clearly intended for children, adults could also play adaptations of them. The introduction games would be fun for any age. Directions are provided at the back of the book for a few simple crafts. These can be used with some of the games, but are meant to be optional.

Elizabeth Coleman, Freelance Writer, Tumwater, Washington


800’s—Literature & Rhetoric


Editors Ivan and Mel Jones selected twelve artists to each illustrate a different month of the year. Throughout the book, the styles of art fit together smoothly, lending diversity while still giving the book continuity with their bright colors and simple designs.

The poems tug at the imagination of children, thus playful images of unicorns, fairies, and monsters contrast with kittens, snowmen, and bedtimes. Two days describe Jewish celebrations. December has reference to Father Christmas and Santa Claws (a poem about cats.) Several poems may be controversial. April 8th has a lighthearted poem called “The Laughing Buddha.” A poem “Before the Beginning” wonders about evolution, and Krishna’s Birthday has the poem, “Krishna’s Friends.” October 31st talks about the witch’s black cat who had kittens. But there is nothing sinister in the writings; most are whimsical or traditional pieces of poetry.

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


Laura Godwin has seen the publishing world from both sides of the fence, both as an editor at Henry Holt and as an author whose works on bookstore and library shelves can be found not only under her name, but also under the name “Nola Buck” (the combining of her mother’s and father’s names), and her work shows a sure grasp of what will work for kids. Barnyard Prayers, her first book of poems, is a collection of short and simple poem prayers said by various barnyard animals. In Godwin’s case, though, simple does not mean childish. Her poems have a lot going on in them and some remind me of French poet Carmen B. De Gaxstold’s work in her book, Prayers from the Ark, translated into English by Rumer Godden in 1962 and now sadly out of print. My favorite of Godwin’s, “The Sheep’s Prayer,” is only two lines long:

I am just a woolly sheep.

Please help me count myself to sleep.

Brian Selznick’s illustrations add another dimension to the book. He chose to make the farm animals part of an urban child’s toy farm set and, in the first few pages, the little boy is playing with the toys in his room, beneath a set and, in the first few pages, the little boy is farm animals part of an urban child’s toy farm dimension to the book. He chose to make the of Godwin’s, “The Sheep’s Prayer,” is only two


823'.9 912. Potter, Beatrix, 1866-1943—Correspondence; Moore, Noel—Correspondence; Authors, English—19th century—Correspondence; Artists—Great Britain—Correspondence; Letters. unp. Elementary.

Young Noel, the oldest of the four Moore children jumps excitedly out of bed. This is the day that his mother’s friend, Miss Potter is coming for one of her visits. She arrives with gifts for all, even Mother’s unborn baby, and Noel gives her a gift of a freshly picked flower. As she generally does, she entertains the children with stories, jokes, and pictures. She has also brought her pet bunny and mouse to play with the children. After lunch, she tells Noel that she is going away to Scotland for a long time but promises to write.

The morning after she is gone, the doctor is called to tend to Noel, who is often ill. Confinement to his bed makes Noel increasingly bored and depressed. But one day a letter with drawings arrives from his friend in which she tells a fanciful tale about a rabbit named Peter. Noel realizes that he is the model for Peter and that his sisters and mother are the models for Peter’s family. Noel’s spirits are lifted and he begins to recover. He is well enough to be out of bed by the time Miss Potter arrives in person to visit him.

This is the true story of Noel, the little boy for whom Beatrix Potter wrote her marvelous stories. The author, Jane Johnson has not only done a fine job of relating this appealing footnote to the Peter Rabbit books but her exquisite illustrations are skillfully done in the style of Beatrix Potter. The endpapers are copies of the actual illustrated letter that contained the original Peter Rabbit story, which Beatrix Potter later expanded upon and published. Truly a lovely book.

Teresa O’Donley, Library Media Teacher, Scott Valley, California

900’s—Geography, History, & Biography


The Scholastic Atlas of the United States by David Rubel provides a color map of each state. Major interstates, rivers, and cities are highlighted. Included on the page are facts about the state such as population, motto, size, highest and lowest points, state bird, animal, and flower. Each state has several paragraphs about the terrain, ethnic diversity, and major industries. Color photographs are accompanied by text, adding insight into each state. For example on Washington’s page, there are photographs of commuter ferries on Puget Sound, Mount St. Helens, and the Grand Coulee Dam.

Instead of being arranged alphabetically, the states are presented by region: New England, Mid-Atlantic, South, Midwest, Great Plains, Mountain, Southwest, and Pacific. Each region is color coded, both on the content page and the edge of the page within the atlas. A legend is included on each page, making this easy for children to use. Appendices are provided in the back of the atlas illustrating U.S. possessions, population density, major river systems, geographic regions, and territorial expansions. A glossary of important terms follows the appendix. Statistics in the book are based on information available from 1998 and 1999. While not exhaustive, this atlas would be an excellent resource for researching basic state information.

Elizabeth Coleman, Freelance Writer, Tumwater, Washington


Born into a family of seventeen children in 1706, Benjamin Franklin only attended school for two years before his father needed him to work in his candle and soap making shop. Benjamin did not like the work, and after two years his father allowed him work in his brother’s print shop. Even with little formal education, Benjamin enjoyed reading and was eager to learn new things. After his brother was told he could no longer publish a newspaper, he allowed Benjamin to be the editor. At eighteen, Benjamin decided to leave Boston. Although he arrived in Philadelphia with nothing, through hard work Benjamin prospered. This would be true many times in his life. The American colonies were still under British rule at the time and Benjamin was proud of this fact. He worked hard to improve living conditions in Philadelphia. A strong interest in science led to many inventions still in use today. Becoming unhappy with British rule, Benjamin began to work for the independence of the American colonies. He continued this work the rest of his life.

The Amazing Life of Benjamin Franklin by James Cross Giblin covers eighty-four interesting years of an American founding father. There is enough information to
understand the historical aspects, without overwhelming the reader with details. The oil and canvas illustrations by Michael Dooling are excellent. Included is a brief list of Benjamin Franklin’s inventions and sayings from Poor Richard’s Almanack. Historic sites of interest to those studying the life Benjamin are included, as well as a bibliography and index. His life is an example of hard work, a desire to learn, and integrity.

Elizabeth Coleman, Freelance Writer, Tumwater, Washington


973.7’115. Underground railroad; Fugitive slaves—United States; Fugitive slaves—Canada; Underground railroad—Fiction; Fugitive slaves—United States—Fiction; Fugitive slaves—Canada—Fiction. 119 p. Elementary (Middle school).

An incredible amount of information is given about the Underground Railroad in The Last Safe House by Barbara Greenwood. The story line is of a black girl who is delivered to a white family with a girl about her own age, Johanna Reid, in St. Catharines, Canada West (now Ontario). During her escape from slavery, Eliza, her mother, and her brother separate to avoid being captured. The relationship between the two girls helps to document the unjust treatment of slaves in the south and the realities of the life that they led. Between each chapter of the story are inserted articles with teaching about numerous aspects of slavery. Some concepts talked about are Harriet Tubman, a cotton plantation and how it worked, the abolitionists, and the swamp ghost. Information is given about so many related subjects that this book is incredibly valuable for integrating with other subjects. For example, a recipe for gingerbread cookies is given, instructions on how to make a corn husk doll, how to find the North Star and instruments that were used, storytelling examples and how-to’s, and the role of music and songs. Maps and diagrams are added throughout to further illustrate the concepts. The book ends with a simple glossary, a bibliography, and an index.

The drawings of Heather Collins very effectively complete the message of this book. Her depictions of the girls and their family life capture wonderfully the feelings of the story line and the historic times. Some pictures are full pages and many others are small oval illustrations. They are done in black and white, with varying amounts of detail. The diagrams and maps bring even more understanding to the text.


In March of 1888 a killer blizzard struck the Northeast. Author Jim Murphy chronicles the events leading up to the blizzard and describes vividly the raging natural monster in his book Blizzard! He isolates certain people within his book and tells their story, from the successful politician to the office worker, farmer, and factory worker. Murphy uses art from museums and his own collection that depict the viciousness of the snowstorm.

Although interesting, this book may become a bit dull for some young readers. The story becomes somewhat repetitive and dry, forcing the reader to put it down and come back to it at another time. The events are interesting and adding personal accounts and tragedies liven the text, it may still need to be read in segments to younger readers. Some of the wording and word choices may be difficult for younger readers to understand without guidance.

Eileen Zygarlicki, Freelance Writer/Editor, Grand Forks, North Dakota

F. Physically handicapped—Fiction; Forgiveness—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 127 p. Middle school (High school).


F. Physically handicapped—Fiction; Prayer—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 129 p. Middle school (High school).

Sixth grader, Darcy, has been in a wheelchair for four years, ever since a car hit her while she was riding her bicycle. Her story begins in the hospital where she is being treated for a pressure sore. Darcy is frustrated and very unhappy until a boy walks into her hospital room to cheer her up. Eric is a unique individual in that he is a burn victim. Joni Eareckson Tada (famed author who is also paralyzed) describes Eric’s physical deformities so accurately that some readers may be emotionally affected. However, Eric’s Christian attitude is what propels him to befriend all children in the hospital.

Eric encourages Darcy to forgive the driver who hit her just like he forgave his father for setting the fire that caused his burns. Unfortunately, Eric dies before the end of The Amazing Secret, so Darcy must rely on her friends to help her locate the driver of the red Corvette that hit her.

The second book, The Unforgettable Summer, describes the exciting adventures Darcy and her friends have during the summer. The church family goes on an annual camp-out and Darcy is anticipating the outing with some trepidation. This is the last vacation before she is to enter Junior High and the summer is an emotional roller coaster. Darcy does not want things to change and she is terrified that the junior high school will not be handicap accessible, or that she will not be able to overcome the other students’ hurtful comments concerning her physical disability. Prayers are answered in the form of butterflies and a bear.

Joni Eareckson Tada creates a series that is enlightening to those who are not disabled as well as to those who are. Readers do not need to read the series in numerical order, however, students will want to know the beginning of Darcy’s story. The author provides a very realistic portrayal that should be a positive influence to all who read these books. Glossaries in both books define terms that students may not recognize.


F. Anastasia Nicholaevna, Grand Duchess, daughter of Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, 1894-1917—Fiction; Russia—History—Nicholas II, 1894-1917—Fiction; Diaries—Fiction. 220 p. Middle school.

Author Carolyn Meyer gives the reader an insightful look at Anastasia, daughter of Nicholas II, the last czar of Russia. Using a diary format, Meyer brings life to the grand duchess, offering personal glimpses into the life of the royal family. The story spans only three years in Anastasia’s life and is penned primarily by her, as she journals her thoughts and her everyday doings. The reader sees a young girl experiencing the same joys and disappointments as other children. Anastasia shares her feelings about those around her, including the eunuch Rasputin, and the uncanny power and influence he has over Anastasia’s mother. The reader takes part in the arrest, exile, and house imprisonment of the czar and his family.

Near the end of the book, Anastasia decides to destroy her journal, the keeper of her thoughts; Meyer provides a glimpse into what may have occurred that fateful day in July of 1918. This book brings to life one of the most discussed and theorized-about girls of history, Anastasia. At the end of the book, Meyer notes the various rumors surrounding the supposed disappearance of the grand duchess and her reported resurfacing; she does not disclaim the rumors, but mentions that the remains of the royals were recovered. DNA testing has proven that the remains are those of Nicholas and his family; however, Meyer explains that not all of the family remains are accounted for—those of the youngest child, a boy, and one of his sisters is missing.

Actual photographs of the royal family help add substance and dimension to these historical people. This is an accurate account of the grand duchess and will spark the interest, curiosity, and imagination of most readers.

Eileen Zyganticki, Freelance Writer/Editor, Grand Forks, North Dakota


F. Bats—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Mothers and daughters—Fiction; Uncles—Fiction. 144 p. Middle school (Elementary).

Henrietta is so upset! Her mother is taking her to live with her Uncle Mike while her mom tours the country playing the clarinet. Henrietta feels abandoned and unwanted. She has to live in a small mining town away from her friends, and to top it all off, her uncle is a scientist who studies bats! Working through the teasing from new classmates—and her loneliness—is a challenge that leaves her hurt and angry. The boys at school even give her the name “Batty Hattie.” When Henrietta is at last allowed to accompany her uncle to the bat caves she commits the number one offence, touching a bat with her bare hands. Not only that, but she actually takes the baby bat home with her and hides it in her bedroom.

Suddenly Henrietta has a purpose in her life: keeping the baby bat, Smokey, alive. She has to feed it every two hours all through the night, becoming so tired she keeps falling asleep in school. Without ever telling her uncle, she even decides to take the bat to school as part of her nature project. Unfortunately, the bat escapes and creates chaos. Now what will her uncle do about her disobedience? Will her mother be disappointed in her and quit her life-long dream of keeping a pet? She also provides fascinating information about bats that should hold the interest of the reader. There are several typographical errors in the book and the main character uses a swear word once in anger. There are also allusions to evolutionary ideas concerning the origin of bats.

Mary McKinney, Former Teacher, Freelance Writer, Editor, Port Orchard, Washington


F. Online chat groups—Fiction; Computers—Fiction; Interpersonal relations—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 160 p. Middle school.

According to her family and friends, Morgan Cross spends too much time online. Her schoolwork, social life, and home life suffer, as she becomes addicted to email. Morgan tells herself that spring break is coming soon, so she will have time to play catch up then. Besides, Morgan’s online friends really need and appreciate her help, unlike everyone else around her. Anna, whose mother is paranoid about her eating habits, depends on their email communications. And “last wish,” who is dying of cancer, is worried about leaving his poor mom with an enormous hospital bill.

Connie Weaver, Church Librarian, Newville, Pennsylvania
For a few years now, headlines have trumpeted the news that Christian fiction is “finally coming into its own.” Numerous articles have described the great surge in the publication of this brand of fiction. Even public librarians are sitting up and taking notice as patrons demand fiction titles at all levels that clearly demonstrate a Christian worldview.

All these high-quality materials flooding the market should make collection development a snap, right? All across North America, YA librarians are rejoicing as they file their well-thumbed review journals in the nearest recycling bins.

But hold on. Did someone say “quality?” Unfortunately, right on the heels of pieces expounding the boom in Christian fiction, are articles calling into question the literary merit of some of these materials. Yes, Christian fiction offers solid values, moral standards, and a redemptive, faith-centered perspective—a welcome change from the dark and despondent “problem” novel often aimed at our youth—but “the consensus is that despite the moral message of most YA Christian Fiction, the books are often poorly written and overly preachy.” It appears that not everyone can be a C.S. Lewis or a Catherine Marshall.

The challenge is, as always, to separate the wheat from the chaff, to discover and acquire the best and the brightest, and then to make these titles accessible to our users. But where do we start?

In the recycling bin, I fear. For while it’s sometimes hard to find time in our busy schedules to peruse all those review journals, these publications are still among the best selection tools available to us. Here are a few that deserve a closer look:

- *Church Libraries*, a quarterly publication of the Evangelical Church Library Association, provides short, signed reviews, articles and a bestsellers list.

- *Make Way for Books*, an independent bimonthly, provides annotated reviews in the area of childrens’ literature.

- *The Library Journal* now publishes a column on Christian fiction on a regular basis. It deals primarily with adult fiction, but many of these would also interest our YA readers.

- And let’s not forget the *Christian Library Journal*! Nancy Hesch, with her troupe of dedicated volunteer reviewers, does her best to make your job easier! See their website at www.christianlibraryj.org.

For a comprehensive, annotated list of these and other relevant selection tools, as well as subscription and contact information, see the following website: www.redeemermclean.org/libres.html

This website also provides links to associations such as the Association of Christian Librarians and the Evangelical Church Library Association. Involvement in these organizations offers many benefits, including collection development information for librarians serving in a variety of settings. The formal—and informal—sharing of ideas that takes place at conferences, regional meetings, or on list-servs, is often an excellent resource, particularly for those who work in isolated circumstances.

The following two titles might also prove useful:


For an introduction to some of the best that contemporary Christian fiction has to offer, check out *The Storyteller’s Collection*, edited by Melody Carlson. This sampling of short stories by gifted Christian fiction writers is geared for adult readers, but will also be enjoyed by YA’s interested in something new. (Multnomah, 2000)

Finally—don’t underestimate the readers themselves. Start a book club, or ask young library users to recommend books for library reading lists, or to write brief reviews to be posted in the library. Some of the wonderful people we serve are also our best resource.

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Off-line life begins to crumble when Dad and Mom need Morgan to help run the family restaurant during spring break, instead of accompanying them to New York City. Morgan causes her mother and sister to miss important phone calls, upsets co-workers, and finds herself the cause of a friend’s injury. Online, Anna becomes seriously ill after following Morgan’s advice. And last, wish turns out to be a phony, a cancerless classmate, who has conned her into raising money for him.

When Morgan’s parents return from NYC, she begins to see the difference between real friends and family, and those online, who may or may not be what they seem.

*Chat Freak,* by Kristi Holl and Terry K. Brown, is part of the TodaysGirls.com series. A “Character Reference” section includes a short biography for each character. The book also includes lists of web abbreviations and definitions. The style is similar to Scholastic’s Ann M. Martin Baby-sitters Club series. Message and language are both accessible, and help to promote a light, familiar story of a young teen finding her place.


F. Moon, Lottie. 1840-1912--Fiction; Pen pals--Fiction; Best friends--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Missionaries--Fiction; China--History--1862-1912--Fiction. 158 p. Middle school.

Separated by an ocean, best friends Ida and Mollie attempt to stay in touch through letters—letters that often take months for each of them to receive. Never in their wildest dreams, as they saved money to purchase look-alike dresses in their native Virginia, did either of them imagine that Ida and her family would make the decision to go off to China, “that pagan nation,” and become missionaries. As the years go by, Ida’s letters are not only filled with exciting tales like sea worms for supper and wearing men’s trousers, but also of war, disease, and rebellion. Molly knows her friend’s health is fragile and she becomes more and more concerned for her. But how can she help her, and what will be the cost to Molly?

This well-written story for eight-to-twelve-year-olds follows the events of missionary Lottie Moon’s life through the fictional eyes of two young friends at the turn of the century. Although their lives are conceived in the minds of the authors, Dave and Neta Jackson, the sacrifices and work of missionaries are very real indeed and this book demonstrates that in a clear manner to its readers. *Drawn by a China Moon* is part of the Trailblazers Series, adventure stories that introduce young readers to Christian heroes of the past.


F. Frontier and pioneer life--West (U.S.)--Fiction; Diaries--Fiction. 144 p. Middle school.

The language is realistic for the time period, and as the voice of a candid and inquisitive girl of fourteen. The reader learns much about life in 1868 as author Kristiana Gregory eases facts into the entries spanning just over one year. For instance, Libby and her mother sew rocks into the hems of their dresses so the prairie winds won’t expose their bloomers; Libby and her friend, Ellie, practice manners at afternoon teas in which sand founs both the butter and the sugar.

Historic notes follow the story and add to the facts slipped into Libby’s “diary.” I especially like the “About the Author” section in this and other current Dear America books because it helps drive home the point that these books are fictionalized accounts of life in different time periods. Readers who enjoyed the American Girls collection and Little House on the Prairie series will appreciate *The Great Railroad Race* portrayal of this exciting time in history.


F. Islands--Fiction; Coral reef ecology--Fiction; Refugees--Fiction; Drug traffic--Fiction. 188 p. Middle school (High school).

A teenaged Harrison Ford, *Hogsty Reef’s* main character, Jim, lives the life every young man would dream of. Coming from British Columbia to the Caribbean Islands of Turks and Caicos is enough of an adventure, but this young man deals with shipwreck, Haitian refugees, drug runners, as he learns the ropes from a young female adventurer, Julia. All the best comes to those who conquer in the name of good and right.

John Dowd is an Arthur Ellis Award winning novelist for his book, Abalone Summer. It’s not clear in *Hogsty Reef* if the Caribbean book is a sequel, but if the Turks and Caicos literary world offers an award for juvenile adventure novels this one could win; it is exciting and well written. There is one occurrence of profanity when the young adventurer gets trapped. The book also refers to voodoo through the voice of the young female adventurer, Julia. But this in no way dominates or detracts from the story. Teens and almost-teens will zoom through every exciting page. All the loose ends are tied up well by Dowd, who awakened the young boy in the heart of this fifty-two-year-old reader/reviewer from the northwest!
Phoebe Olcott, the fifteen-year-old protagonist of *The Hollow Tree* by Janet Lunn, is an unusual one, depicting a heroine who has no convictions other than hatred of war in a time period that is fraught with the conflict of great ideas. No doubt, there were people who shared Phoebe’s feelings and who have a story to be told, but the author does not delineate her character’s convictions or personality in such a way as to give adequate impetus for Phoebe’s drastic action of setting out alone into the wilderness. Although Kathryn Lasky’s book only covers the trip to the Pacific Ocean, it offers an excellent introduction for young readers to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Librarians and teachers might even need to remind their readers that both the book and the character of Augustus Pelletier are historical fiction, not actual history. The story is followed by a brief history of the Corps of Discovery’s journey. It also includes illustrations depicting important events during the journey and items used by members of the expedition.

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F. Lewis and Clark Expedition--Fiction; Lewis and Clark Expedition--Exploration--Fiction; Lewis and Clark Expedition--Diaries--Fiction. 150 p. Middle school (Elementary).

It is 1871, the era of the cowboy in Texas. Walter Myers’ *The Journal of Joshua Loper* gives us a ringside saddle on the Chisholm Trail, as Joshua, the teenage son of former slaves, goes on his first dirty, toilsome, dangerous, and exciting cattle drive. With the help of his parents’ teaching and his belief in the Lord, Joshua learns to cope with the trail boss’ bigotry, bone-wracking work, stampedes, rustlers, foul weather, and having to shoot his beloved, suffering horse. When the herd arrives in Abilene, Kansas, Joshua receives his pay and faces the blandishments of this wild town. He also receives the respect of his trail boss and the companionship of a new horse.

Part of the My Name is America series, *The Journal of Joshua Loper* is firmly based on historical events. Using basic language, and often reproducing the speech patterns of his characters, Myers manages to make us forget this is fiction. He emboldens the story with many interesting facts about the Chisholm Trail and the cowboy era, describing aspects such as the handling of cattle and horses, cowboy lingo and food, bigotry, trail drive hierarchy, and more. Myers tells it like it is, and includes some rough talk and coarse jests, gory depictions of death, and the temptations faced by cowboys on the trail and in Abilene. Along the way, he illustrates how cheaply some held life.

The story ends with an epilogue about Joshua’s adult life and death, and notes about some of the other characters. An appendix providing actual photographs of black cowboys, cattle drives, and notable people adds interest and flavor. A map of the Chisholm Trail area concludes this book. Author Walter Dean Myers has received several awards, including the Coretta Scott King Award and ALA Notable Children’s Book Award.


F. Emigration and immigration--Fiction; Finnish-Americans--Fiction; Iron mines and mining--Fiction; Strikes and lockouts--Fiction; Minnesota--Fiction; Diaries--Fiction. 171 p. Middle school (Elementary).

*The Journal of Otto Peltonen* chronicles the emigration of a Finnish boy to northern Minnesota in the early 1900’s. His father came to America earlier, and worked in the mines to earn money for the passage of his family, and to buy his own farm. Otto, his two younger sisters, and his mother join him in the town of Hibbing. Journal entries are filled with descriptions of the area and the mine, and again and again the many gruesome accidents that take place in the mines. There is also a sense of disillusionment with the difficulty and ugliness of life. Otto relates his progress in school and reading, and the inter-relationships within the family.

Social issues of the day are dealt with from a common person’s viewpoint. Otto’s father wants the union to help provide safety, security, and equality for the workers; his mother is appalled that women have the right to vote in Finland before they do in America. When Otto is about sixteen, he works in the mine for a time, until the family finally saves enough money to buy a farm.

The author, William Durbin, is obviously very familiar with the life that he has detailed, as the reader sees and feels what it was like. Otto speaks Finnish and is learning English at the beginning of the story. The text is written in well-developed English, with a few Finnish words interspersed. The reader is somewhat struck by the incongruity between the text and the boy’s reported limited knowledge of English.

The cover shows a photo of a typical boy of the time, with a faded blue and white photograph of a mine. Following the body of the journal readers will find an epilogue, a historical note as to the reasons for emigration, a section of period photos, a map, brief information about the author, and a fold-out map showing a vertical cross-section of an iron mine.
Jerry Newman is a black boy being raised by his widowed Mom in East Texas in the early 1900's. He is not a bad kid, he just seems to get into situations that cause problems. He accidentally sets a church on fire, so his Mom sends him out to Los Angeles to stay with his uncle, a freelance news photographer. He feels like he is going far, far away; hence the title of the book, Journey to the End of the Earth. Jerry and his uncle travel to San Francisco immediately after the big earthquake of 1906 to take pictures. Jerry also visits the pentecostal revival on Azusa Street and listens to the prophecies and preaching of William Seymour.

Dave and Neta Jackson depict Jerry as a typical black adolescent of his time. The story is written in a straightforward and simple manner; as seen through Jerry's eyes. He struggles with his feelings, and his impressions regarding what he sees. The difficult role of blacks in society in those times, both in East Texas and in California, is presented clearly, but not morallyistically. The genuine historical message of the early pentecostal movement, including the equality of all people before God, is presented plainly. Following the story is a section providing additional information about William Seymour, and a brief bibliography for further reading.

Donna Eggett, Freelance Writer, Radford, Virginia

Aloha Cove series.

L L C C N 9 9 0 2 1 1 6 7 . S t . L o u i s , M o . : C o n c o r d i a , 1 9 9 9 . I S B N 0 5 7 0 0 5 4 8 4 0 , P A P , $ 5 . 9 9 .

F. Immigrants--Fiction; Chinese--Australia--Fiction; Prejudices--Fiction; Australia--Fiction. 176 p. Middle school (elementary).

Aloha Cove series.

L L C C N 9 9 0 3 1 9 8 6 . S t . L o u i s , M o . : C o n c o r d i a , 1 9 9 9 . I S B N 0 5 7 0 0 5 4 8 4 2 , P A P , $ 5 . 9 9 .

F. Immigrants--Fiction; High schools--Fiction; Islands--Fiction; Kwajalein Island (Marshall Islands)--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 271 p.

Aloha Cove series.

L L C C N 9 9 0 5 3 1 2 7 . S t . L o u i s , M o . : C o n c o r d i a , 2 0 0 0 . I S B N 0 5 7 0 0 7 0 3 3 3 , P A P , $ 5 . 9 9 .

F. Immigrants--Fiction; Mothers and daughters--Fiction; Islands--Fiction; Kwajalein Island (Marshall Islands)--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 271 p.

Aloha Cove series.

L L C C N 9 9 0 0 1 0 0 7 1 . S t . L o u i s , M o . : C o n c o r d i a , 2 0 0 0 . I S B N 0 5 7 0 0 7 0 7 2 4 , P A P , $ 5 . 9 9 .

F. Immigrants--Fiction; Mothers and daughters--Fiction; Islands--Fiction; Kwajalein Island (Marshall Islands)--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 271 p.
MIDDLE SCHOOL FICTION


My Secret War. The World War II Diary of Madeline Beck, by Mary Pope Osborne, captures some of the significant incidents that happened on American soil during WWII. The story begins slowly, then builds and...

F. Stepfamilies--Fiction; Anorexia nervosa--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Kwajalein Island (Marshall Islands)--Fiction. 254 p. Middle school (High school).

When sixteen-year-old Cass has to make the move from Tennessee to the small tropical island of Kwajalein, she does not embrace her new life very well. For one thing she has difficulty going from a family of two to a family of four practically overnight. Although she likes her new stepfather for the most part, Cass has a tough time with her new stepsister Tabitha, who is as opposite as can be of Cass, except in age. As the year progresses Cass and Tabitha realize they have more in common than they originally thought—great parents being the prime shared factor. Together the girls grow closer as they share the joys and frustrations of friendships, dating, and realizing God is greater than the situations they find themselves up against throughout all the joys and adjustments of a blended family.

The Aloha Cove series by Theresa Kelly will appeal to readers who are drawn into relationships, especially those concerning blended marriages. The setting is paradise, quite literally. Yet paradise is far from perfect. Struggling with who a person is, what his or her beliefs are, and feelings surrounding family and friends are key plot motivators. The books cover quite a variety of subjects including interracial dating, alcoholic parents, the pressures of dating, and sibling relationships. These are all dealt with appropriately, and with sensitivity. One of the main appeals of the book is how the principal characters, Cass and Tabitha, are able to realize through the guidance of their wise, yet pretty cool parents that God has it under control. The author effectively handles some very sensitive issues, particularly premarital sex and abortion from a boy’s perspective.

There is plenty of dialogue in the books—perhaps too much, in fact, which stifles the potential for character development through narrative passages. There is also a concern regarding the other characters’ parents. It seems surprising that parents wouldn’t be more involved if their child was thought to be anorexic, or in an abusive dating relationship. As it is, the only parents who are developed involved if their child was thought to be anorexic, or in an abusive dating relationship. Nevertheless, this series offers some solid Christian advice for adolescent girls who are seeking advice and answers for tough situations they are facing.

Pam Webb, Library Technician, Sandpoint, Idaho


F. Mystery and detective stories; North Carolina--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 173 p. Middle school.

Lois Gladys Leppard draws upon her mother’s childhood in North Carolina for many Mandie incidents. The stories, which at times move slowly, usually make up for the lack of literary writing and sound editing. With regard to the title references, the Dark Alley plays an important part in Book 33, but the significance of the Buried Stranger and the Seaside Rendezvous do not become evident until close to the ends of Books 31 and 32.

Leppard fills these stories with dialogue—sometimes stilted and more advanced than would be common to most young teens. She has created likeable characters with Mandie, Celia, and their friends, as well as Snowball.


F. World War, 1939-1945--United States--Fiction; New York (State)--Fiction; Diaries--Fiction. 186 p. Middle school.

Sabotage, secrets, and surprises await Madeline Beck on Long Island, New York as World War II begins to unfold across the globe. This young girl is pulled into the American war effort following the announcement that Japan has bombed Pearl Harbor. After learning that her own father was one of the American soldiers injured in the attack, Madeline sneaks to the beach after curfew each night to be alone. One night she comes face-to-face with an unknown enemy, a frightening encounter that puts her family in danger. Sworn to secrecy, Madeline tells each new day in fear that someone will come to take her away. Now Madeline must find a way to face and conquer her fears.

My Secret War. The World War II Diary of Madeline Beck, by Mary Pope Osborne, captures some of the significant incidents that happened on American soil during WWII. The story begins slowly, then builds and...
concentrates on the intriguing details of war-time life in America. Sentences are short and choppy, in true diary fashion, but Osborne’s text manages to capture the mood and emotion of a time when American citizens were more united than ever before.

This diary is part of the Dear America series, and true to the series mission, My Secret War teaches history while at the same time entertaining it’s young readers. Real events are fictionalized to include the main character, however, the genuineness of the historical context is maintained and reveals much about a time when family, faith in God, and loyalty to country were cherished American values.

The book includes a fictional epilogue that is a bit unrealistic, but which will satisfy the romantic inclinations of pre-teen age girls. Other interesting inclusions are a historical note with details about America’s entrance into WWII, historical photographs, newspaper clippings, and a recipe for war cake, all of which further the educational value of My Secret War.


As may be deduced from its title, One Eye Laughing, the other weeping: the diary of Julie Weiss, by Barry Denenberg. (Dear America) LCCN 00021920. New York: Scholastic, 2000. ISBN 0439095182, HBB, $12.95.


In the epilogue, McKissack adds information about the rest of Nzingha’s life, a family tree, and some fascinating photos, drawings and maps. There is also a glossary and a pronunciation guide, which could be helpful for read-aloud times. This is a story that will appeal to young girls of any race, and will be a valuable addition to any library’s middle school collection.

One eye laughing, the other weeping: the diary of Julie Weiss, by Barry Denenberg.

One eye laughing, the other weeping: the diary of Julie Weiss, by Barry Denenberg.

Our strange new land: Elizabeth’s diary, by Patricia Hermes.


Our Strange New Land ends on October 9, 1609 as Lizzie frantically writes her final entry in order to send her journal back to England with Captain Smith; he is to give it to her brother, who she hopes will be strong enough to join the family the following spring.

Author Patricia Hermes includes a short historical account of the settlement at Jamestown to further acquaint her young readers with this historical period.

Jamie Chandler is one of six girls who’ve started a private on-line chat group associated with a Christian website, TodaysGirls.com. Jamie is the artist of the group. When she finds a summer art camp through an on-line search, her best friend, Bren, encourages her to go. In order to get enough money together for tuition, she needs to submit a portrait to apply for the scholarship offered. But she doesn’t feel any of her work is good enough, and the deadline is only a few weeks away. A friend from cyberspace (“van_gogh”) encourages her to believe in her God-given artistic gift.

But long hours working at the Gnosh Pit (the local hangout), and perfectionism cause her creativity to fade. Despite these odds she does her best and makes the deadline just in time. When Jamie learns she’s won the scholarship, she’s thrilled—until she realizes it’s not for the piece she submitted; a friend has submitted a portrait drawn by Jamie’s father. Will Jamie tell the truth, despite the consequences? Whatever decision she makes will be based on faith, and on learning who “van_gogh” really is.

Dandi Daley Mackall captures a teen’s hopes and dreams through realistic dialogue and action. The story moves quickly with plenty of turmoil conveyed through Jamie’s inner thoughts and her struggle to believe in herself,
her talent, and God. The text is a mix of traditional fiction and bolded cyberspeak; the latter is used to represent on-line chats. A “Net Acronyms” list at the beginning of the book defines terms the girls use during their chats. Each book in the series is about a different girl and, though each book stands alone, it’s helpful to know the characters as they’re shown in Portrait of Lies. Readers will find the final spread, providing background details (age, screen name, interests) and photos of each girl, a plus. The book concludes with an afterword about Internet safety and wise use of chat rooms, complete with scripture references. A great addition to series book sections and a welcome alternative to popular “cyber-related” series such as Cyber.Kdz, Danger.com, and Internet detectives.

Lisa Weble, Freelance Writer/Library Aide, Plymouth, Michigan


Middle school (Elementary).

Following the lives of two very different thirteen-year-olds, Promise Breaker sets the stage for the series by giving the reader a glimpse of them in 1940, at age five. Dov Zalinski, a Polish Jew, is being left at an orphanage by his mother. Emily Parkinson, the pampered only child of a British officer, moves to Israel that same year. Seven years after the close of World War II, Dov begins looking for his family. Uri, a member of the Jewish Moshad, helps Dov board a boat bound for Israel. Dov and Emily cross paths when the boat is boarded by British officials. Emily has accompanied her father to help translate. When a riot breaks out, Emily and Dov fall overboard. Emily saves Dov’s life by helping him ashore.

Peace Rebel picks up the story immediately with Emily and Dov reaching the shore. Grabbed by the Jewish underground and transported to a Kibbutz, Emily and Dov find themselves in a place they don’t want to be. Emily wants to get home to her parents, who think she is dead. Dov wants to leave the Kibbutz to try and locate his family in Jerusalem. When members of the violent Jewish group, Irgun, discover who Emily is, they kidnap her. Dov unwittingly discovers the plot and rescues her before travelling to Jerusalem.

Author Robert Elmer has written a fast-paced series that even adults would enjoy reading. Many difficult vocabulary words are introduced. The author, however, does a great job of explaining them or sounding them out through the character of Dov, who doesn’t speak English or Hebrew well. At the end of each book, Elmer explains which parts of the story are true and which parts are fiction. He also includes a brief list of books and websites for further research. This is an exciting series that will get even reluctant readers reading.

Elizabeth Coleman, Freelance Writer, Tumwater, Washington

The crew of the old Spanish galleon, The Savage Damsel and the Dwarf, has two problems. The most pressing difficulty is a knight who has sworn to besiege their castle, kill all would-be rescuers, and take possession of Lady and lands. Lynet’s second problem is that her vainly beautiful older sister, Lyonesse, is the Lady in question; and she is rather intrigued with the whole scenario. Before they find themselves completely at their attacker’s mercy, Lynet takes their future into her hands and sneaks out of the castle, destined for the Court of King Arthur. But, instead of a knight in shining armor, Lynet is granted a kitchen knife nicknamed “Pretty Hands” and a mysterious dwarf called Robert, whose only weapon is his wry humor. This very unlikely trio soon finds that none of them are who they seem, surprising even themselves. As Lynet leads them home, her disenchantment with her “heroes” ebbs, flows, and finally takes its proper course as she learns to see past appearances and tradition and into the realm of the heart.


F. Prejudices--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Afro-Americans--Fiction; Race relations--Fiction; Grandmothers--Fiction. 213 p. Middle school.

John Armistead portrays racism in the 1950’s South in this novel of relationships. In The $66 Summer, George comes to Obadiah, Alabama, to work for his grandmother, hoping to earn enough to buy a used Harley-Davidson motorcycle. He and friends Esther and Bennett, children of Elizabeth, Grandmother Tilly’s black employee, fish, seek to earn extra money to meet their dreams, and discover evidence that...
If you're working at a Christian school or are a homeschool family, you'll find value in the stories and characters in these books. The following reviews are from various sources, and they highlight the variety of themes and settings found in middle school fiction.


F. Weddings--Fiction. p. Middle school (Elementary).

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" and "Sasquatch." When 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.

Mary Grace decides to blackmail Spider. She'll blab to the entire school that he's going to have a baby floating in a precarious wooden cradle. Or worry about what other people will say or think about him. Mary Grace loses her power sealed. But soon Mary Grace's demands go too far. Spider finally comes to his senses and stops worrying about what other people will say or think about him. Mary Grace loses her power over Spider, and the wedding goes ahead with well-rounded characters. The relationships changes in Jordan's life. The issues of facing one's fears and nature into one's own home. Written simply yet with power, Martha Tannery Jones' narrative uses the historical account to give strength to the storyline. The issues of facing one's fears and dealing with anger are resolved, as Charlie discovers what is really important in life. The book includes photographs showing the destruction the town suffered, as well as the rebuilding of the destroyed Galveston. These images help the reader to visualise the scale of the horror and devastation suffered.


F. Slavery--Fiction; Afro-Americans--Fiction; Time travel--Fiction. 185 p. Middle school.

Jordan Henning Scott does not want to move with his mother and sister to Springfield. After all, at twelve years of age, he should be able to make a decision as important as this on his own. Jordan wants to live with his father, though his mother has refused to reveal his father's location. Angry about the events in his life, Jordan joins the Cobras, a neighborhood gang. Jordan plans to stay with the Cobras until he can get enough money to fly out to be with his father.

Gang members must have a gun, so Jordan visits his grandfather and steals the gold watch that has been passed down in the family from slave ancestors. Suddenly Jordan is no longer in the city. Instead Jordan is in a wooded area with a strange young black boy named Uriah Henning, his great, great, great, great grandfather and a slave on the Henning's plantation.

Because Jordan cannot prove he is free, he ends up picking cotton and is eventually sold, with other members of Uriah's family. Jordan is purchased by a member of the underground railway and put into hiding with other runaway slaves including Uriah. Suddenly, Jordan is back in his own time. Finally realizing the true value of the watch, he returns it to his grandfather and decides to quit the gang; this action results in a shooting, cementing the changes in Jordan's life.

Arvella Whitmore has an engaging style that allows her writing to pull the reader into the story. Jordan seems very much a real person. However, Trapped Between the Lash and the Gun deals too neatly with the gang issue and with slavery. This would be a good addition to the time travel genre of fiction were it not so neatly wrapped up.


F. Christian life--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. 123 p. Middle school.

If you're working at a Christian school or are looking for that perfect book to get into the mind and soul of an unsaved teen or almost-teen boy, then this is the book. If you want a book that doesn't skirt the issues, but goes directly to the salvation message, this it. Sharon Hambrick does a good job of writing through the eyes of a twelve-year-old in a tight spot, although some of her expressions don't really fit his age level.

Stuart's Run to Faith is a no-holds-barred gauntlet event for the main character. He has to deal with having to attend a Christian academy because his widowed mother has had to move into a single wide trailer with Grandma, and that is Grandma's bargaining tool for her unsaved grandson. Friends, teachers, coaches, and neighbors are all intent on converting Stuart. Mom is neutral as she deals with trying to get enough money to get a place of their own.

Lively situations, real-life conversations, and Stuart's gift of speed as a runner make this an honest, believable read. Surely God works this way on a daily basis as He puts people to work carrying His message of the Gospel. This book should be in every Christian school library and should be sent as a gift to every public school library. This novel is a true outreach to the unsaved and a tune-up for the believer.


F. Hurricanes--Texas--Galveston--Fiction; Galveston (Tex.)--Fiction; Fear--Fiction. 128 p. Middle school.

In the year 1900, Charlie, twelve and rambunctious, has already been in trouble several times for fighting. His mother warns him about his temper, but what can he do when others keep egging him on? He lives seven blocks from the warm gulf waters in Galveston, and rapidly rising water threaten the lives of everyone in Galveston. When the water reaches the family on the second floor of their home, Charlie is forced to face his worst fears as he must choose between clinging to the floating roof parts, or letting go and attempting to rescue the family on the second floor of their home, they have to jump into the swirling, debris-filled waters before their home collapses around them. Charlie is forced to face his worst fears as he must choose between clinging to the floating roof parts, or letting go and attempting to rescue a baby floating in a precarious wooden cradle. A definite page-turner, Terror from the Gulf brings the fear and tension of fighting the fury of the horror and tension of fighting the fury of the hurricane to Galveston in a memorable way.
Hunting in a Virginia swamp for an escaped hog, Gideon Tugwell overhears men planning to burn down both Briarstone Plantation and Gideon’s home. Gideon runs to Briarstone to tell William, the owner’s son, about the impending uprising.

Emily, a relative of William’s from the North, is living at Briarstone. She wants to ask him not to sell Nat to the slave trader. Earlier, Emily and Gideon had tried to help Nat escape, and now he must wear a collar with a bell. Angry and bitter, Nat fears for his life when he learns he will be sold to a slave trader.

Before Emily can appeal to William, however, Gideon comes in with the news of the rebellion. Emily and Gideon fear they’ll be murdered in their beds at dawn on Sunday. Now they need Nat’s help to find the leader of the uprising. Nat had decided to run, but gives up his bid for freedom in order to help Emily and Gideon.

Uprising At Dawn is a fast-paced and exciting account of an attempted slave rebellion. The Civil War and the issues that prompted it become real as Lee Roddy describes life in Virginia in 1862. Roddy skilfully weaves together numerous sub-plots. The characters are well-developed and show the diversity of opinion that existed in the North and South on slavery. Many young people will be surprised at the amount of responsibility young teens assumed at that period in history. The cover illustration by Chris Ellison is well done and adds to the excitement of the story.

Barbara A. Bryden, Freelance Writer, Olympia, Washington

The wreck of the Ethie, by Hilary Hyland.

Proof that real life has everything that fiction has to offer, and more, The Wreck of the Ethie is based on a real shipwreck on the coast of Newfoundland. Colleen and Skipper, her huge canine protector and friend, enjoy life on this island province and are thrilled by all that their coastal cliffside cottage has to offer. Storms bring many things in to the shore, but the fateful day that the S.S. Effie crashed over the “whale’s back” brings meaning and purpose to all that the dog and girl have shared before. The shipside sequences are told through Patrick, the ship’s boy, who works hard to help deliver passengers and crew safely to a cove he has worked before as a fisherman.

Hilary Hyland’s first book is brisk and full as she covers the terrible challenges the people face, here on the North American homeland of the Vikings. Coastal storms that rival Hollywood’s “Perfect Storm” threaten to tear life apart on the rocks as each season passes. Skilled research and lively writing make this true tale an interesting read. Accompanying articles and poetry substantiate the strength of this story, a certain tragedy turned into a real canine hero’s opportunity. Everything about this story is enjoyable and satisfying.

Rev. Jim McKinney, Teacher, Port Orchard, Washington
200's—Religion


241'.672. Friendship; Christian life; Prayer books and devotions. 167 p. Middle school.

Thanks for Being My Friend, by Lois Walfred Johnson, is designed for family devotions, Sunday School, a child's own "quiet time," and much more. The stories are short and timely, averaging about 500 words each. Following each story is a "TO TALK ABOUT" section that encourages the reader to relate the story and Bible truths to their own lives. The questions are thought provoking and open-ended, and encourage the child to think beyond yes and no. For example, one of the sections has a question regarding finding free time and making time for being together. Children should know that making time to be together is more important than finding free time.

Family is stressed, and questions show how relationships are important. Readers are shown how to invite Jesus into their lives, and a sinner's prayer is given. Encouragement is given to use the book as a type of journal, and space is provided for just that. For a family who wants to have devotions but is unsure how or where to begin, this book is excellent. Also, for the reader who has already established the habit, this book would be a refreshing opportunity. Every chapter includes a Bible verse and a prayer to reinforce the lessons.

Ms. Johnson has written an excellent devotional book, and is worthy of the Gold Medallion Book Award it has been given. I highly recommend this book for every family library.

Debby Willett, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas


Recognizing the great decay of American morality, the author recognizes the need for "young warriors." Using the lives of Saul, David, and Jonathan, the reader is admonished to follow God's principles rather than yielding to the cultural pulls of our society. Giving scriptural references as well as modern day examples, a person is pointed toward the right choices to make when faced with dilemmas. The author works among gang members in the inner-city, so he is very aware of the societal breakdown. This book personally gave my husband extra courage to stand up for what he believed in during a very difficult situation. By faith, he followed the principles set out in God's Word that the author presented, and wasn't swayed by feelings, emotions, and what seemed right. The author concludes the book with a statement of faith as well as the Apostle's Creed explained.

Mary Jo Carter, Teacher, Norfolk, Nebraska

300's—Social Sciences


372.64. Literature—Study guide. 24 p. Middle school.


372.64. Literature—Study guide. 24 p. Middle school.


372.64. Literature—Study guide. 23 p. Middle school.


372.64. Literature—Study guide. 24 p. Middle school.

At first glance, the curriculum materials by Julia Pferdehirt with Dave and Neta Jackson, using their books about Amy Carmichael, David Livingstone, Martin Luther, and Hudson Taylor, appear to be geared for solely the homeschool audience. Further examination reveals a profusion of creative ideas that integrate subjects in a most refreshing way. The guides are relatively short at 24 pages, with no worksheets or other traditional activities to copy for classroom use. Background information and questions need to be read to or by the individual student.

Each guide begins with Notes to the Teacher; which include instruction on how to use the guide, the scope and sequence, planning helps, an overview of the guide, and an historical summary of the particular book. Each guide has seven lessons; the first and last lessons each cover one chapter, and the others cover two chapters of the text. The authors consider this a two-week unit, when combined with the other materials given. Each lesson is one page and includes a prayer and praise section, tying the chapter into scripture; a background section; vocabulary and concepts; a discussion segment; and an encoded list of corresponding activities which are presented in the last part of the guide. The scripture passages and the discussion questions bring relevant and healthy thinking about God's view on the issues of major world problems of the time; like world trade, opium, colonialism, slavery, and the caste system. On each lesson page is a pencil sketch and a one-sentence quote from the particular chapter.

After the lessons is an excellent map, that may be copied for geography work. Multitudinous activities are then listed in geography; history; social studies and folkways; literature and language arts; and the church today, which is missions involvement. Each correlates to a particular chapter in the book, and are driven by the particular person and area of the world studied, so each guide is different. Many activities deal with further research and realistic, interesting learning for the students; for example, instructions are given on how to put on a sari in the story of Amy Carmichael, and how to make fried rice in the story of Hudson Taylor. Each guide has a couple of "mega-projects" for further work, which are keyed for older or younger students.

The guide ends with a list of resources. Many of the activities refer to sites on the World Wide Web, including the Jackson's own site at trailblazers.com. At this site are additional helps and a list of links to other sites, which are actually internal to that site. A few of the other web addresses listed have changed, a not-uncommon happening in working with the web. All in all, the teacher is given a wealth of options for working with the stories of famous Christian leaders in a way that brings focus and support for the individual student or for the entire class.

The Science Factory by John Richards is a collection of science experiments that cover ten topics: air and flight, water and boats, electricity and batteries, magnetism and magnets, light and sight, sound and music, measurements, work and simple machines, shapes and structures, and finally, chemicals and reactions. Each chapter contains a brief introduction about the chapter topic and then nine to eleven experiments. Each experiment includes an informational paragraph, materials needed, numbered instructions, an extra tidbit of science information, and an explanation of “Why It Works,” referring to a successful experiment. The illustrations are mostly photographs. An equipment checklist is included at the beginning of the book that lists over 70 items needed to complete the experiments. A glossary of science words and an index is also included.

The subtitle of this book is Easy-To-Make Science Experiments. However, the experiments included are far from easy. There are several reasons this collection of experiments would cause frustration among children or those with little science background who may attempt these experiments without adult instruction. The list of materials needed for each experiment is woefully incomplete. There are many items lacking necessary details. Some examples of these materials are thin cardboard, sticks, wire, adhesive vinyl, and foil. While these are not unusual materials, there is no indication of amount, size, type, or kind. Another shortcoming is the numbered instructions. The author assumes on several occasions that the reader has some understanding about the topic. While this isn’t usually a problem for science teachers, most will need help understanding the directions. They are over simplified and lack necessary details. For example, for the experiment on electromagnets, the reader is told to “Make a crane out of two boxes. Make the arm of the crane from cardboard.” This is all the direction provided. The picture offers a little help, but no details. Another criticism is the illustrations. They are not clear enough to offer any detailed assistance as the reader attempts to follow the steps. They are somewhat small and difficult to see, especially when involving small pieces or wires.

If the reader has prior science experience, then these experiments may not be difficult for him/her. If however, there is no previous knowledge, these experiments would be frustrating for both children and adults. The interest level for this book would be middle school age, but they would certainly need adult help.


In DK Guide to Space, author Peter Bond uses astronomical photography to provide an excellent resource to those seeking a general information book about space and related topics. Each double page spread covers a different topic, including the nine planets, the sun, the moon, space exploration and travel, stars, space stations, the extraterrestrial, and several others. Most illustrations are photographs, including many from the Hubble telescope. Mr. Bond provides seven or eight easy to read paragraphs that correspond to the many pictures for each topic. Several space data charts are provided, as well as a list of space web sites, a list of landmarks in space exploration, and an index. Peter Bond has provided another opportunity for readers to enjoy learning about space. For those to young too read, the pictures will keep them occupied and increase curiosity. For the older reader, there are sure to be several pieces of information that will be new and interesting. Even though older readers may have a general understanding of the topics presented, looking at beautiful pictures and reading about the mysteries of space never seems to grow old.

DK Guide to Space would not be appropriate as the only resource for astronomical or space study; this book is recommended to complement a teacher’s space theme or a librarian’s collection of books about astronomy or outer space. It is easy reading and enjoyable viewing.


El Nino Current: Environmental aspects; La Nina Current: Environmental aspects; Global environmental change. 80 p. Middle school (High school).

April Sayre has loaded this book with many color illustrations and photographs that will help the readers to understand this weather phenomena a little better. Definitions of El Nino can be found at the very beginning of the first chapter. El Nino was named for the Christ Child by Peruvian fishermen because they noticed this weather pattern near Christmas. La Nina is basically the opposite weather conditions of El Nino. The chapters discuss the effects of this weather phenomena in South America, North America and other countries around the world. Animal and plant life are also portrayed as being greatly affected anytime El Nino or La Nina happens.

The author has included a table of contents, a bibliography, an index, and websites. Satellite images, photos of the destruction caused by floods, and diagrams of wind patterns are extremely well done. The effects of El Nino and La Nina are not always bad and Sayre has text discussing how plant life has grown in deserts due to rainfall that fell when it would not normally. The text is somewhat technical and sometimes difficult for a layperson to grasp, but the information is timely.
600’s—Technology (Applied Sciences)


Space Station Science is organized into five parts: Getting There, Space Basics, Living in Space, Working in Space, and Coming Home. Each part explains the appropriate aspects of space travel or station living. Throughout the book, there are informative and relatively inexpensive home experiments that illustrate the complex science and technology associated with the space station.

The text covers a lot of material: the effects of space travel on humans and animals, conducting experiments in zero gravity, the possible commercial uses of the developed technology, and reasons for expanded space exploration.

Space Station Science does not ignore the risks and difficulties of space travel. It does point out how scientists and engineers have addressed these issues in the past, present, or future. The book also emphasizes why astronauts undergo rigorous training and development to overcome those issues that science can not address.

Author Marianne J. Dyson was one of the first ten women to work in NASA’s Mission Control, and it shows. She writes with an insider’s knowledge, an enthusiast’s passion and a veteran’s realism. She clearly supports continued development and exploration of “the final frontier,” yet does not ignore the technological and economic hurdles that remain to be overcome.

Still, she eagerly and convincingly writes about subjects she loves and knows. If NASA has a youth recruitment program, this book should be heavily considered as the primary text. Ms. Dyson managed to find a wonderful balance of content and understandability. This book engages the reader with wonder and wow, yet never sugarcoats any of the risks and realities of space travel.

This highly readable book is an excellent choice for students who want an introduction to the current space program, but aren’t ready for college level physics textbooks. It balances content, interest, and accuracy in a delightful way. The author does not directly address God or Scripture, but her sense of wonder and fascination points to an appreciation of His Creation.

Kirk Hunt, Instructor, Pima County Community College, Business & Industry Division, Tucson, Arizona


Patricia C. and Frederick L. McKissack present a fascinating story of the role African Americans played in the whaling industry. Black Hands, White Sails is a history of whalers showing their contribution both to whaling and to the abolition movement. The McKissacks’ poignant picture of black whalers begins with the first African captives brought as “indentured servants” to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619 and ends with the Viola, the last wooden whaling ship built in America in 1917.

One movement among the abolitionists was the Underground Railroad, a secret group that helped runaway slaves make their way to freedom. Numerous whalers, both black and white, used ships to transport runaways to safety. Like their white counterparts, black whalers carved scrimshaw, sang whaling shanties (also spelled chanties), and lost their lives attempting to capture the great whales of the Atlantic Ocean. Only one story—that of the Essex of Nantucket—left this reader uncomfortable. That story, set in 1821 describes a shipwreck and cannibalism.

The McKissacks give us a list of common sea expressions and their original meanings. These expressions, like “hand over fist,” “hard and fast,” “over a barrel,” and “groggy,” continue to be used in America. An Appendix describes the various whales and compares their shapes and sizes. Four pages of Important Dates are followed by a four page Bibliography and a comprehensive Index.

Both students and teachers will find the reading of Black Hands, White Sails easy reading. People who enjoy discovering little known historical facts will delight in the McKissacks’ presentation.

Dell Smith Klein, Freelance Writer, Teacher, Yarnell, Arizona

700’s—The Arts and Recreation


How does an award-winning author commemorate a twenty five year best seller? Caldecott Medalist David Macaulay celebrates with yet another one of his popular how-it-was-made books, Building the Book Cathedral. What Macaulay really wanted to do twenty-five years ago was write a book about gargoyles. His publishers liked the picture of the cathedral better than the picture of the gargoyle; so, even though Macaulay was unsure about how to do it, he wrote Cathedral, explaining the construction of a medieval cathedral. How does an author who knows nothing about gothic construction and only a little about book making produce a masterpiece? Building the Book Cathedral explains it all, mistakes, corrections, misplaced perspectives, exhaustive study, deadlines, and the fun. David Macaulay learned with that first book. Now he teaches us what he learned, while also giving us an engaging glimpse of who he is. Building the Book Cathedral contains the full text and drawings of Cathedral enhanced by many of the original sketches and editing notes, with humorous, instructive asides and explanations from the now older, wiser author. What can the artist do when linear perspective does not provide our eyes with the true picture? How can the artist make a drawing evoke emotion? What does he do if his sketching makes the carver and the block of wood look the same? Macaulay explains all this and more with both text and the juxtaposition of subtly changed illustrations and original illustrations. The author’s black and white pen and ink drawings present the story; his words illustrate the pictures. Written at middle school level, Building the Book Cathedral, like it’s forerunner Cathedral, will delight all inquisitive readers.

Donna Eggert, Freelance Writer, Radford, Virginia


742. Perspective; Drawing—Technique. 64 p. Middle school (Elementary - Adult).

A how-to book, Draw 3-D by Doug DuBosque teaches interested artists how to add a sense of depth to their drawings. Following illustration-enhanced steps, the tyro begins with circles, boxes, or his name, adds a vanishing point, rules in some lines, and it all pops into perspective. Further lessons explain such concepts as horizon, two and three vanishing points, the relationship between perspective and eye level, drawing curved objects, the perspective of shadows, and the four vanishing point paradox. With panache and wit, DuBosque dynamically teaches three dimensional drawing. Armed with the tools listed in the introduction the artist can participate in the clearly understandable step by step instructions for producing linear perspective drawings.

800's—Literature and Rhetoric


810's—Literature

Journals. Each author shares his or her views on journal keeping. Styles of journal keeping vary from collecting memorabilia and newspaper clippings to keeping copies of letters and e-mails to writing and sketching in a notebook. Each author entry includes a listing of the author’s books, a description of the author’s journal keeping style and a record of the interview. Jack Gantos describes journal keeping in this way. It is “the single most important book that [kids] will write. Whether they become poets or novelists, or better business letter writers... It’s a good writing habit and it’s a way to discover important truths about yourself.”

Speaking of Journals by Paula Graham is an encouragement to aspiring writers in junior high and above. The book is a useful resource for language arts teachers of all ages. Several of the authors interviewed started their journal at the urging of a teacher. While not all authors keep on, Ms. Graham presents an excellent argument for the use of journals.

Jane Mootter, Librarian, Hilltop Christian School, Window Rock, Arizona

900's—Geography, History, & Biography


921 (828). Tolkien, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel), 1892-1973; Authors, English—20th century—Biography; Fantasy literature—Authorship; Middle Earth (Imaginary place). 128 p. Middle school.

This biography of the life of Tolkien takes the reader on a fascinating trip from South Africa to England, to the outermost parts of the imaginary world—the world of J.R.R. Tolkien. Without reading the introduction, the reader may believe he is indulging in a fascinating fiction, because Tolkien’s life was so interesting. It would be very helpful to have read The Hobbit and/or The Lord of the Rings before reading this, because there are many allusions that can be better understood having that background.

Tolkien led a very moral and respectable life. He waited many years to finally marry the woman he loved. Raised as an orphan by a priest, Tolkien highly valued the advice of his authorities and elders. His educational standards and commitment to do what was right made him successful, happy, and legendary. Teachers would benefit from this book, as it would expand their knowledge of and appreciation for the man if they teach any of his books. Junior high students will enjoy the easy-to-read style and be fascinated with the content. All readers could benefit from the true inspiration of this man, J.R.R. Tolkien.

Mary Jo Carmer, Teacher, Norfolk, Nebraska


921 (940.55'18 19492552). Penraat, Jaap; Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust—Netherlands—Biography; World War, 1939-1945—Jews—Rescue—Netherlands—Amsterdam; Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)—Netherlands—Amsterdam; Amsterdam (Netherlands)—Biography. 64 p. Middle school (Elementary).

Forging Freedom tells the true story of Jaap Penraat, a young boy growing up in Amsterdam in the 1930's. When German forces arrive in Holland at the onset of World War II, Jaap immediately begins to protects his Jewish friends and neighbors from the Nazis. By making fake ID cards he is able to save many Jews from arrest, but as Nazi persecution increases Jaap realizes he must do and risk even more. Although he has already been imprisoned for his resistance activities, Jaap begins counterfeiting documents from a German construction company to create a ‘letter’ requesting that Dutch workers be transferred to France to work on the Atlantic Wall. Risking his life, Jaap repeatedly poses as a foreman and travel leader and, over several trips, is able to lead 406 Jewish men to France where they are transported by the French Underground to Gibraltar and then to England and freedom.

Hudson Talbott has written and illustrated a wonderful story of compassion and courage. Talbott takes Jaap Penraat’s complicated resistance activities and, without losing important details, simplifies them in a way that will make sense to even younger readers. The horrors of the Nazi regime and the awful dangers resistant workers faced are clearly depicted, yet the book is able to remain gentle and the message is clearly one of hope. Talbott’s illustrations show everything from a Dutch market to war scenes and Hitler himself, and help bring to life the world of 1940’s Europe. Maps and authentic forged documents are also included.

The book ends with an interesting Author’s Note where Talbott explains that although he had been friends and neighbors with Jaap Penraat for over twelve years, it was only after hearing Jaap being interviewed on the radio that he learned of his bravery and compassion during World War II. In 1998, Jaap Penraat was awarded the medal of the Righteous Among the Nations.

Kerry Cunningham, Librarian, Camano Island, Washington


If it were not for his portrait on the ten-dollar bill, Alexander Hamilton might have become
another “Forgotten Founding Father” of the United States of America, remembered only by historians. As it is, few school children could say why Hamilton was placed there or what had been his various roles in the infancy of our country. Alexander Hamilton: America’s Bold Lion by John Rosenberg redresses this oversight in a respectful, yet honest account of his life. Born out of wedlock, Hamilton had only his quick intelligence and forceful personality to commend him in a world which was concerned primarily with family connections and wealth. He put these to immediate use and, by the age of twenty-one, found himself aide-de-camp to General George Washington and privy to the momentous events of the American Revolution. After independence was won, Hamilton was called upon to serve as Secretary of the Treasury under Washington, where he had great influence on the forming and defining of the new entity called the United States. His life cut short in a duel at forty-one, Hamilton never attained high elected office, but did profoundly influence the direction the country took with his tireless writing, best illustrated by his contributions to The Federalist Papers.

Rosenberg’s biography of Alexander Hamilton is a good, serviceable introduction to the man for the middle school reader or researcher. The text is somewhat dry, but it is perfectly adequate for transmitting the facts of Hamilton’s life if not the spirit. The author does this honestly, with a warmth for his subject that does not gloss over his frailties, such as his affair with Maria Reynolds, or gush with admiration. In addition, the work is well indexed, and a very helpful bibliography and list of important dates in the work is well indexed, and a very helpful bibliography and list of important dates in Hamilton’s life can be found at the end. The researcher also will appreciate the author’s own list of sources and acknowledgments in which he ranks the helpfulness of the titles in his bibliography.

Pamela A. Todd, Librarian/English Teacher, Chalcedon Christian School, Cumming, Georgia


Masada was a fortress built deep into the rock and high upon a cliff to protect Nebuchadnezzar. It was his finest fortress, and few dared to overcome it. However, when Nero tried to annihilate the Jews, he had some difficulty with the zealots. An historical narrative written about the famous fortress Masada, this book delves into the Jewish zealots’ valiant efforts to defeat Rome. Although this appears to be a children’s book (with pencil drawings, short content, and large pages), the style, vocabulary, and content is high-school to college level. Adults will be fascinated by some of the history including the psychotic King Nebuchadnezzar, who built it, the Jewish Zealots who defended it with their very lives, the determined Romans who attempted to destroy it, and the modern archaeologists who have dug up its treasures.

Mary Jo Casmir, Teacher, Norfolk, Nebraska


490.57.18. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945); World War, 1939-1945—Atrocities; Germany—History—1933-1945; Antisemitism—Europe. 120 p. Middle school (High school).

Ted Gottfried has done an outstanding job of relating the horrors of the Holocaust for the YA audience. His easy to follow narrative leads the reader from the early days of the Nazi party’s ascension to power through the atrocities of the “Final Solution.” Gottfried’s chronicle is first-rate. He unflinchingly relates the facts without dwelling unnecessarily on the gruesome details. There are separate chapters on each of the groups that Hitler persecuted. His brief afterword is a solemn warning that if we do not learn from the past and if we believe we are superior to others, we could find ourselves where the Germans, both aggressors and victims, found themselves in WWII.

The fine illustrations by Stephen Alcorn introduce each chapter and are supplemented by photographs, which are a nice addition but not for younger, more squeamish readers. The book also contains a chronology, glossy chapter notes, index, and a list of other books to read and Internet sites to visit if the reader would like more information.

The Christian reader should be advised that the topic is not appropriate for younger children and that even for some older children this book may be somewhat frightening and/or graphic both in terms of violence and some sexuality (example: castrations, rapes). Also, while Gottfried makes no judgments about the homosexual lifestyle, there is a chapter devoted to Hitler’s persecution of homosexuals. Parents will perhaps want to read this with their older children to discuss the many issues that are covered and exchange views on what a Christian’s response to such horrors should be.

Teresa O’Donley, Library Media Teacher, Scotts Valley, California


490.57.18. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945); National socialism; Hitler, Adolf, 1889-1945; Antisemitism—Europe. 128 p. Middle school (High school).

“How can such a monstrous crime as the Holocaust occur? It begins when people start thinking of themselves as ‘us’ and of others as ‘them.’ But there is no ‘us’ and ‘them.’ There is only ‘we.’”

Nazi Germany: The Face of Tyranny describes the beginning, middle, and end of a systemic attempt to rid Germany and other European states of the Jewish population. Author Ted Gottfried introduces a young Adolph Hitler who soon becomes the leader of the Nazi party and then the leader of Germany. Through Hitler’s command the “Final Solution” was undertaken. Two thirds of European Jews were massacred.

With well footnoted chapters, the author traces the evolution of the Nazi movement, summarizes key events leading up to and through World War II, and describes the final attempts to round up and murder millions of Jews and other estranged groups such as Gypsies, Polish citizens, mentally and physically ill people, and homosexual individuals.

Toward the end of the book, the author tells the fate of the more infamous Nazis discussed in the book. He lists the major events chronologically and supplies source notes. He provides a glossary of German terms and others and gives additional resources for reading, including Internet sites.

The illustrations by Stephen Alcorn are bold black and white ink drawings accented with beige. The pictures reflect the bleak nature of the information within the pages. Several black and white photographs of Jews, Nazi soldiers, and children in a concentration camp lend additional sobriety to the reading.

Homosexuality is mentioned several times. In recounting of the murder of a Nazi, Ernest Rohm, the author tells that two men who shared the same bed were dragged from their bed and shot.

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


It is a time of terror and fear as World War II rages around the globe, and for one man, Chiune Sugihara, a diplomat from Japan, it is a time to determine destiny.

Sugihara began life simply enough, willingly following his family’s traditions and values, but now he is a man and must choose for himself either to become a doctor as his father wishes, or to follow his own dream and become a teacher. Chiune’s decision will lead him down a far different path than he could ever have imagined and will give him the power to choose life or death for thousands of WWII refugee Jews.
Will he follow his conscience or the dictates of his government?

In *A Special Fate*, by Alison Leslie Gold, the little known story of Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara is played out. Gold writes about a man of compassion and intelligence, who in spite of the danger to himself and his family, willingly becomes God’s instrument. Just as God placed Esther in a position of power in time to rescue his people from death, *A Special Fate* reveals how God used Sugihara in the same way. Gold uses short, simple sentences to reach her young audience, which sometimes interrupts the flow of the book, but Gold also wraps her narrative around the stories of some of the Jewish families Sugihara helped to save, making her writing seem more credible and alive.

Included in the book are some photographs and images of actual documents signed by Sugihara on behalf of Jewish refugees. These images provide a glimpse into Sugihara’s personal life and reveal the faces of one young man and a little girl his actions helped to rescue.

Virginia Schnabel, Freelance Writer, Shelton, Washington

F. Genealogy—Fiction; Aunts—Fiction; Lawyers—Fiction; Birds—Fiction; Survival—Fiction; Hermits—Fiction. 185 p. High school (Middle school).

Sixteen-year-old Ivy is determined to be an historian, contrary to her dad’s prompting that she follow in his legal tracks. To relatives who take pride in producing consecutive generations of lawyers, Ivy’s quiet, methodical ways appear rebellious. Yet, she is encouraged by the memory of her mother, who died of cancer when she was very young, leaving Ivy with an appreciation of people and their roots.

At the annual holiday reunion, a competition ensues between Ivy and her aggressive Aunt Fiona over recording the Breedlove family history. Ivy is convinced that true character only appears through taking time to listen and record individual personalities. Aunt Fiona, widely known for her time management successes, prefers video clips of rehearsed speeches and views Ivy as unreasonable. Many of her relatives liken Ivy to her eccentric Aunt Josephine, who cut family ties and ran off several years before.

One day, Ivy encounters a crazy neighbor who informs her that her Aunt Jo lives deep in the nearby Adirondack Mountains. With the encouragement of a motherly aunt, the help of an eccentric tracker named Mountain Mama, and a handsome student ranger, Ivy locates her estranged aunt and her birds. Aunt Jo reveals a side of the Breedloves Ivy had never known. As the quiet beauty of the place begins to grow on her, disaster strikes, and Ivy must rescue her injured aunt from the icy jaws of death.

Backwater, by Joan Bauer, is a coming of age portrait of a young girl who, through adversity, finds value in herself and others. Ivy’s approachable characteristics draw the reader into her adventures. Though not specifically Christian fiction, this story exudes solid morals and values. Main characters are well sketched. Writing style and point of view are consistent and exquisitely crafted.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Newman Riga Library, Churchville, New York


In author Wendy Lee Nentwig’s fourth book in the Cooper Ellis series, Cabs, Cameras, and Catastrophes, Cooper still has feelings for her former boyfriend, Josh, and embarks on a campaign to re-establish a relationship with him. Encouraged by her friends, Claire and Alex, Cooper makes attempts to restore a connection with Josh. This plan becomes muddled when she agrees to go out with another fellow. When he sees Cooper dating other people, Josh eventually begins seeing another girl.

Cooper comes to realize she must trust God in the situation with Josh. This same trust in God is tested in her modelling jobs, when Cooper is confronted with skimpy clothing that she must model. During all this mayhem, Cooper also discovers that her best friend Claire is forced to deal with the painful issues of divorce. Once again, Cooper turns to God for comfort, support, and the wisdom to know how to support Claire during the difficult time of divorce.

Throughout the book, Nentwig weaves Christian ideals and morals into her plot. This book will catch the eye and hold the interest of the young girl with down-to-earth authenticity and the wisdom to know how to support Claire during the difficult time of divorce. Parents’ beliefs, especially when she discovers her father is possibly having an affair.

In another first-person account, Someone Like You, by Sarah Dessen—an ALA Best Book for Young Adults—covers much of the same territory as Carlson’s Diary does. However, even though Halley, the main character in Someone, comes to much the same conclusions as Caitlin, there is not the same heartfelt hope as is felt by Diary’s end. The difference? Jesus.

Without being pretentious, Carlson shows how Jesus fills the empty places in our lives. Difficult subjects like infidelity, dating, abortion, partying, and teen pregnancy are addressed from a point of view within the Christian circle of standards. Nonetheless, Carlson still addresses the roller-coaster life of a teen girl with down-to-earth authenticity and satisfaction. She makes it clear that even good Christian kids can take a tumble off the path at times. Her point is: are they willing to get back on it when God stretches out His hand in gentle correction and forgiveness?


F. Elephants—Fiction; Poaching—Fiction; Wildlife rescue—Fiction; Adventure and adventurers—Fiction; Kenya—Fiction. 241 p. High school.

The MacGregor family consists of Dr. Jack, Dr. Mavis, seventeen-year-old Chris, fourteen-year-old Heather, and twelve-year-old R.O. The teens are reminiscent of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, in that they are constantly happening upon exciting adventures that ultimately lead to their solving a crime. In this particular situation, the crime is that of poaching elephants, lions, and various other African animals.

Chris, Heather, and their Kukuyu friend, fourteen-year-old Rebecca, find themselves stranded in the wilds of Africa where baboons infiltrate their camp. They must also confront the beginning of the rainy season, which entails several severe thunderstorms, charging lions, and being imprisoned by poachers. And these are only a few of the mishaps that occur during this fascinating tale.

The details that are included in this story are so appalling that the reader becomes very aware of the plight of animals that are in danger of being killed by poachers just for their tusks, skins, and feet. Author Richard Trout is an environmental biologist and a college professor, and has done

Pam Webb, Library Technician, Sandpoint, Idaho

Forgotten almost starts off with a bang, but the bank robber doesn’t pull the trigger of the gun he is pointing at Jennie McGrady on page nine. The gun does not go off until page thirty-five, when the same criminal, Jon, forces his way into Jennie’s car the next day. Jon and his cohorts, Maude and Junior, kidnap her and hold her at an isolated summer home. Jennie’s escape attempts fail. When she hears Maude say, “We’ll have to kill her,” she knows that only a miracle can save her. Before they leave, Jon makes Jennie walk ahead of him into the woods. She bolts, and he shoots.

A miracle rescue preserves Jennie’s life, but she suffers a complete loss of memory. She doesn’t remember her family and friends, who promise protection when she wonders fearfully, “what if the man who shot me comes back to finish the job?” Later, intuition warns again, but Jennie pays no attention. Another shot aimed at her and a car accident send her back to the hospital. An alert orderly on a hijacked elevator, along with Jennie’s quick action, end the trauma. Jennie has her memory again and authorities take the culprits into custody.

With Forgotten, Patricia Rushford again maintains her high standards for good mysteries aimed at younger readers. She ably weaves Jennie’s Christian witness throughout the enthralling twists and turns of plot. Jennie models her faith as she recalls Bible verses and prays during her ordeal.

Jennie and her family have starred in twelve other books. Nonetheless readers who discover the series for the first time with Forgotten will enjoy it. Rushford includes enough details about Jennie’s background to help readers feel acquainted.

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

Forgotten


Forgotten

Horse Whispers in the Air shows how a ninth grader copes with problems. Good descriptions, well-crafted characterization, and moving plot line make Dandi Daley Mackall’s book a good read. It is a well-told tale about coping with disease and death. Horse Whispers is third in the Horsefeathers series, but readers will have no trouble following the plot even if they haven’t read one and two. A glossary of horse breeds at the end of the book is a helpful tool.

Myrelmey Pittman Crane, Freelance Writer, Editor, Alderwood Manor, Washington


High school.

The Orphan Train West series is a collection of stories that Jane Peart has based on the historical orphan train migration and placement of abandoned children during the late nineteenth century. The large print enconced between the covers of each book renders these stories easy to read. At the same time, the span of time the orphanage, as seen by their own authors. Adopted by a struggling family with five boys and a surly father, Kit helps the mother manage the busy household. Kit dreams of becoming a teacher, and of finding her brother and sister. Laurel, her father dead from an accident and her beloved mother from sickness, is adopted by a doctor and his wife who have a void in their hearts. Laurel fills their need but after graduation is torn between staying or pursuing her music and locating her maternal grandparents in Boston.

Toddy is the daughter of a dance hall floozy. An inconvenience, she is deposited at the orphanage. Energetic and mischievous nonetheless, Toddy is chosen to be a companion to Mrs. Hale’s invalid granddaughter, whose parents are deceased. This relationship steers Toddy to pursue a nursing career.

Ivy and Allison trade dresses at their train stop. Ivy is sent with the couple that Allison is intended for. The opulent lifestyle of the mayor allows Ivy everything she could ever hope to have. Allison, on the other hand, is now with a single handicapped lady. But a black cloud boils on the horizon of Ivy’s fairy tale life when her fiancée dumps her after the explosion of an embezzlement scandal involving her adoptive father. Ivory’s life, burdened with guilt from the
dress switch and now scandal, pales in comparison to Allison’s simple but fulfilled one.

April and May are sisters. Torn apart during the adoption process, they each adapt to their respective loving families. But by age ten harsh circumstances propel April to return to the orphanage. May is brought up without the knowledge of having been adopted. The secret unfolds after a trunk’s lid is lifted. There is a sister out there somewhere and she is determined to find her!

Following the conclusion of April & May readers will find an endorsement of the books by the founder and director of the Orphan Train Heritage Society, an organization made up mostly of the descendants of the actual Orphan Train Riders.

Debbie Landau, Homeschool Parent, Eatonville, Washington


F. Badgers–Fiction; Animals–Fiction; Fantasy. 370 p. High school (Middle school).

Lord Brocktree is a delightful tale of good and evil. The mountain of Salamandastron, home of the Badger Lord Stonewap, is invaded by a horde of vermin. When blue rats by the hundreds, led by wildcat Ungatt Trunn, take over the mountain, Stonewap sends Fleetscut hare for help. In visions Lord Stonewap has seen a mighty badger. Ungatt Trunn has visions of the great badger too, but his response has been fear.

Unknown to them, the mighty Badger Lord, Brocktree, has seen a vision of the mountain and is looking for it. As Brocktree journeys toward Salamandastron, Dorothea hare joins him. Soon their company includes an assortment of hares, moles, otters, squirrels, and other animals. Fleetscut finds Brocktree and his friends and leads them to Salamandastron where, after a great battle, Lord Brocktree takes command of the mountain.

Brian Jacques never leaves any doubt in the mind of the reader as to which side is good and which is evil. Ungatt Trunn deals with everyone, including his own troops, cruelly. Brocktree deals fairly and kindly and believes you should never kill another animal unnecessarily. All shades of the human personality are seen in the various animals. It is easy to laugh at the antics of Brocktree’s troops. They may not always be kind as they scold and scamp among themselves, but they learn from Brocktree to work together and care about each other. In Ungatt Trunn the dark side of man is displayed. The animals’ dialogue is written as they pronounce it. Each group has delightful differences in language.

Fangorn drew the map at the beginning of the book and also provided chapter illustrations. The small sketches at the beginning of each chapter faithfully depict the personalities of the characters. The cover picture of Brocktree is excellent.

Barbara A. Bryden, Freelance Writer, Olympia, Washington


F. Missionaries–Fiction; Christian life–Fiction; Deaths–Fiction; Mexico–Fiction. 174 p. High school.

When Ashton volunteered to help build a church in the Mexican jungle, she never dreamed the team would be up against a drug smuggling ring. As the team gathers in El Paso, Ashton is horrified to discover that Judah Ewen and his girlfriend, Rebekah, will be part of the group. Judah, the son of Ashton’s former pastor, was blamed for the drowning death of Ashton’s brother. Although Ashton has tried to forget what happened, she has not forgiven Judah.

As the group heads into the Mexican jungle, many unresolved personal problems threaten the success of the mission and the safety of the team. Arriving at the village, they discover that Dane Meyer, the pastor they came to help, is missing. Ashton finds Meyer hiding from the drug smugglers in the jungle. Hunger, rain, and illness plague the group. As Ashton helps to build the church and prays for Judah’s healing, she learns how to forgive.

There are many ways to hide. Meyer hides in the jungle to escape danger. Ashton tries to hide from the pain of her brother’s death by refusing to deal honestly with it. Others on the team are hiding from other problems. Catherine Farnes reveals what happens when we attempt to hide, and shows how we can come out of hiding. Fast-moving and exciting, Out of Hiding illustrates the need for forgiveness without lecturing. The author’s descriptions of hiking uphill in the heat, of the team’s ministry to people in the small Mexican villages, and of the problems of being ill in a foreign country are quite realistic. When they visit a tiny Catholic Church, Judah refuses to stay in it, and Shane says the statues are not “meant to just be art.” The cover picture of the jungle village by Mary Ann Lunn adds visual interest to this adventure story.

Barbara A. Bryden, Freelance Writer, Olympia, Washington


Passage to Little Bighorn tells the story of Dakota, a modern Native American boy, swept backwards through time to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Living for weeks among his Lakota ancestors, Dakota learns of his proud heritage directly from those ancestors, and from the great Hunkpapa leader, Sitting Bull. Passage tells the Native Americans’ side of the famous battle, and of life during the 1870’s. Intermixed with his reflections on life in the past, Dakota has thoughts and visions of the present and his troubled mother.

Dakota’s passage through time lands him near a Hunkpapa camp, a few weeks before Little Bighorn. Initially wounded and held captive, Dakota eventually grows to be accepted and valued by the Lakota. Along the way, he learns of the history and culture of his people through first-hand experience. After witnessing the Battle of Little Bighorn, Dakota returns to the present with a better understanding of himself and his modern-day situation.

Author Terry Kretzer-Malvehy’s attempt to blend history and fiction is not entirely successful. Like Dakota, this book doesn’t quite fit in. Passage includes several scenes of graphic violence and at least one profane use of God’s name. The text describes some of the animist beliefs and practices of the Native American people of the time, without any comparison, or reference, to Christianity.

Although more readable than a history textbook, Passage is less than an enjoyable novel. The story simply does not recover from the rushed and jarring way Dakota is hustled through one hundred and fifty years of history. The reader simply doesn’t have a chance to know or care about Dakota. The book would have been stronger had a more relevant and engaging mechanism, or reasoning, for moving Dakota been found or developed.

This book delivers the culture, history and sensibilities of the Lakota People in a unique way. The book’s substantial bibliography proves the author did her homework. That said, Passage fails to measure up to the readability of books like Centennial or The Court Martial of George Armstrong Custer. These books do a much better job of delivering history and a good story.

Kirk Hunt, Instructor, Pima County Community College, Business & Industry Division, Tucson, Arizona


F. Mary, Queen of Scots, 1542-1587–Fiction; Scotland–History–Mary Stuart, 1542-1567–Fiction; Fools and jesters–Fiction; Kings, queens, rulers, etc.–Fiction. 390 p. High school.

When young Nicola Ambruossi, a traveling troubadour, is saved from the cruelties of her uncle by Queen Mary, wife of French King Francis, her life takes a turn many young girls would only dream of in fairytales. She becomes Nicola, La Jardiniere, the Queen’s Own Fool, whose job it is to be not only the queen’s entertainer, but also her listening ear, and in a sense her conscience. This fast-paced story
moves from Huguenot persecution in France where the untimely death of King Francis leaves the young Queen stripped of her title, to Scotland, where the famous Mary, Queen of Scots, restores herself as Queen of her homeland. Nicola becomes an integral force in her Queen’s life as the Catholic royal battles her Protestant detractors (namely John Knox) and enemies who would usurp her power for their own greedy gains. This is a story of mystery, intrigue, war, and love.

In Queen’s Own Fool, authors Jane Yolen and Robert J. Harris have crafted a Reformation tale which keeps the reader intensively involved from first to last. Vivid descriptions, such as, “He is like a serpent when he smiles—al l lips, no teeth,” interspersed with short parables, afford humor and provoke thought. This novel, written from the point-of-view of the fool, is a great enticement to further explore the life and times of Mary, Queen of Scots.


At seventeen, Nikki doesn’t live with her parents anymore. Instead, she has moved several hours away from Millbrook, to live with her grandparents while she heals from a teen-pregnancy. Her own parents have separated as they deal with their own difficulties. Living with her grandparents gives Nikki the opportunity to get her life back in order. She is making new friends, is establishing herself academically, and best of all, she is getting a second chance at love. Things are going well.

One weekend Nikki decides to drive back to Millbrook to visit her mom. While there she bumps into TJ at the local 7-11. Emotions and memories flood over Nikki, and she blurts out something about her pregnancy to TJ. He is stunned, but determined to understand what Nikki means. It is at this point in her life that she begins to learn the life-healing lesson of forgiveness.

Through a variety of events, Nikki’s faith grows and her Christian walk matures. She learns to listen to the Father’s voice, and witnesses relational miracles in the process.

Shirley Brinkerhoff has written a compelling story of teenage perspective, problems, relationships, and resolutions. Her characters are well-developed and realistic. The Christian perspective is written with realism, relevance, and life-impacting power. Doctrine is left out, which leaves Ms. Brinkerhoff’s message a simple one of faith in God and the power of prayer. Second Choices would be a wonderful addition to any library.

Debby Wilten, Freelance Writer, Canyon, Texas


The mezuzah contains a hidden message that will identify Donner as a former SS officer in charge of the “Jewish problem” in Romania during WWII.

While Con’s mother works with Simon Wiesenthal to find those guilty of war crimes, Con and Hannah find themselves fighting for their lives. Con is faced with the reality of anti-Semitism when Hannah, who is Jewish, is nearly killed.


Gary Blackwood’s story of Elizabethan England is a delightful mix of history and fiction. Widge and Redshaw are fictitious, but most of the other characters in the Chamberlain’s Men are based on historical fact. The language of the characters and Blackwood’s descriptions of conditions of the times add a sense of authenticity. The story moves rapidly, yet deals with many of the problems faced by people in 1602. Shakespeare’s Scribe is the sequel to The Shakespeare Stealer.

Barbara Bryden, Freelance Writer, Olympia, Washington


As a junior venturing mid-term through the crowded halls of Canyon Street High, Stephanie braces herself for the gawks that have shadowed her since birth. Frosty, Snow White, Casper, and Albo Annie are among the hurled taunts she continuously dodges. She is a one-in-fifteen-thousand genetically anomalous albino with a visual impairment.

Turning out for track, Stephanie determines to prove this is an area where she sparkles. But at practice she finishes dead even with the school snob. As Stephanie leaves, the sun’s glare blinds her already weak eyesight and she collides with one of the guys. She is surprised as a hand helps her to her feet and defends her against another jeer. The name attached to the hand is Nathan. Despite Nathan’s attempts to be a genuine
friend, Stephanie is quite sure he is only interested in her scientifically since he is planning to train as a paramedic.

Catherine Farnes sprinkles Snow with a mixture of humor and poignancy. Written in the first person, this is a very believable piece of work that conveys the impression of having been experienced or well-researched. The reader is thrust into the depths of the character’s anguish, conflict resolutions, and the vexations that accompany all humanity, but is magnified for a person who is physically challenged.

The insights illustrated include the following: that self worth does not come from outperforming others but only through the Spirit’s tender caress upon the heart strings, which reveal God’s love and approval; that cynicism builds walls and prevents the foundation of true friendship; that the dating process can be a tool for finding a marriage partner at the appropriate time: that it is possible to become a Christian for friendship; that the dating process can be a tool to build walls and prevent the foundation of true relationship. In the end, Stephanie learns that God can use her handicap to actually help others, and that he can also help her to gain final acceptance that God can work through, past, and in spite of it.


F. Web sites—Fiction; Swimming—Fiction; High schools—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 140 p. High school (Middle school).


F. Web sites—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 138 p. High school (Middle school).


F. Boyfriends—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 157 p. High school.

At sixteen, Cooper Ellis is allowed to travel the subways of New York by herself, going to modelling auditions or special photography sessions. She is doing well in school and everything seems to be running smoothly. That is, until she starts dating Josh, one of the most likeable and cutest boys in school. Suddenly, everything gets complicated. As much as Cooper enjoys being with Josh, she feels like she doesn’t have a life of her own anymore. Everyone said that things would change, and Cooper is beginning to realize that she doesn’t like the kind of changes necessary to have a fulltime boyfriend.

Wendy Lee Nentwig writes a realistic story of the complications that can occur when young people enter the dating scene. Her third book in the Unmistakably Cooper Ellis series takes its readers on a journey through the ups and downs of relationships. Cooper discovers in her adventures that not only does she feel smothered by Josh and his constant attention, but more importantly, her all-important relationship with the Lord suffers. She is still young, and there is a lot of life to live. Subway Tokens in the Sand helps the reader to consider the importance of friendships and the fact that perhaps a serious personal commitment to another should wait.

Debbie Lindsay, Homeschool Parent, Eatonville, Washington


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Debbie Lindsay, Homeschool Parent, Eatonville, Washington
wants to confess, but what about the big tennis tournament, and what about his reputation. They haven’t actually looked at the test; is it really cheating if you don’t look at the exam? Betty Gaard has created a situation that many young people will find themselves in some day. Is it really dishonest to not tell the whole truth? Mike finds himself in a situation where he knows what he should do. He can hear his mom telling him that two wrongs don’t make a right. He can feel God’s prompting in his heart to tell the truth and confess. Yet he struggles with all the other circumstances that surround him. Instead of making a decision he just puts it off for another day. To make matters worse, his dad announces they are going to move. Mike is struggling with all his circumstances, but discovers that what he really needs is to get right with God. The Theft offers realistic characters and a challenge for today’s youth.

Marcia Snyder, Librarian, Missoula, Montana


It is June 1943, and for two years the Nazi armies have controlled the Polish town of Bedzin. Eva and Rachel, along with their father, have been forced to leave their home and live in an attic room in the Jewish ghetto. Rachel is often sick and weak. Eva spends most of her time caring for Rachel, knitting, and playing chess. One terrifying day, however, the girls are taken from their father to a Nazi work camp. They are forced to work in a factory, making uniforms and blankets for the armies. The girls struggle against sickness, fatigue, and starvation to hang on to love and family amidst the chaos.

In this novel, Anne Issacs depicts the experiences of her mother-in-law, Eva Buchbinder. The title Torn Thread symbolizes the threads of the spinning machine that continue to tear, just like the girls’ lives that are threatening to tear apart. Throughout the story each of the girls grows in strength and determination. Although Rachel is the weaker, there comes a time when she is the one who is instrumental in saving the life of her sister. Their sacrificial love and commitment is inspiring.

Issacs has done a superb job of bringing this story to life. There have been many books written about this subject, and this is one worth reading. You will feel as if Eva and Rachel are sitting beside you telling you the story themselves. You will feel their suffering and wish you could do something to stop it. You will see their commitment to God and their resolve to honor him despite extraordinary circumstances. A captivating story.

Marcia Snyder, Librarian, Missoula, Montana


- Americans--Switzerland--Fiction; College students--Fiction; Switzerland--Fiction; Romance fiction. 286 p. High school.


- College students--Fiction; Romance--Fiction. 313 p. High school.

As you wish continues the story of Christy Miller. Robin Jones Gunn has labelled this series “Christy & Todd: The College Years.” Until Tomorrow takes the reader on an unbelievable trip. Christy, Todd, and friend Katie all meet in Switzerland for a fantastic vacation in Europe. Christy has been going to college in Switzerland as well as working in an orphanage. After Christy convinces Todd and Katie of the need for an itinerary that is supplemented by a tour book, the group travels to Venice, Rome, Paris, Salzburg, Oslo, and Amsterdam. Most of the journey is by train. The trip is not without mishaps as Christy and Todd temporarily break up, Katie gets lost, Todd goes on a side trip alone to the Arctic Circle; also, Christy discovers that she is not interested in teaching. As You Wish picks up the story with the trio attending college in the United States. Katie wants a boyfriend but first must forge her past boyfriends for dumping her. Christy finally admits she loves Todd; unfortunately, Todd has a serious car accident which lands him in the emergency ward for surgery.

These books are longer than the original Christy Miller series. Unfortunately, the trip through Europe is a little unbelievable even with some of the mishaps. Katie and Nancy go through changes but Todd seems a bit too perfect. However, fans of the series will want to read these two books to finally see Todd propose to Christy.

Connie Weaver, Church Librarian, Newville, Pennsylvania


- Coffin, Levi, 1798-1877--Fiction; Haviland, Laura (Laura Smith), 1808-1898--Fiction; Slavery--Fiction; Underground railroad--Fiction; Afro-Americans--Fiction. 184 p. High school.

After two years of freedom, Cassie finds herself huddled in shackles while kidnappers plot her return to slavery. A fight erupts and one kidnapper ends up dead; Cassie must decide if she will voluntarily return to slavery to rescue her son, Jacob. One of the slave catchers, Fairchild, assures her that if she agrees, he has a plan. Cassie and Fairchild walk all the way to the Kentucky farm. When they arrive, Fairchild, not really a slave catcher, tells Cassie she must play the part of a willing slave until he returns for her and Jacob. Her presence at the farm brings her close to Jacob, but angers other slaves. She obeys the master, watches and waits for Fairfield’s return, and gets better acquainted with Jacob. Then another slave’s betrayal changes everything. But Zeke, also a slave, carries Jacob to safety. The master beats Cassie, who lives and later escapes.

Luke Thomas, a young white man from Ohio and a friend to Cassie, figures largely in Randall Wisehart’s A Winding Road to Freedom. Through him readers meet Levi and Catherine Coffin, Laura Haviland, John Fairfield, John Jolliffe, and Rev. William Casey, real people who assisted with the underground railroad.

Wisehart thoroughly researched that movement and those who participated in it. His research adds credibility and important information, though he developed Luke, Cassie, and the other characters from his imagination. The background material helps illuminate the situation at that time, but its recounting tends to interfere with the story.

A Winding Road to Freedom lacks a literary writing style as well as precision editing. Even so, Cassie captures a reader’s heart.

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


This sequel to the earlier Newbery Honor winning A Long Way From Chicago (Puffin, 2000) revolves around Mary Alice, a 15-year-old who grows up during the recession of 1937. Her parents are without work, and send her to live with her grandmother, a woman who is known for arousing tense emotions in her neighbors. Grandma Dowdel, whose rambunctious ways were seen through the eyes of her grandson, Joey, in A Long Way From Chicago, here has Mary Alice as an accomplice. While the activities and life in this small Illinois town are not easy, by the end of the year Mary Alice comes to see the love in the heart of her formidable grandma.

The hilarious story makes this a great read-aloud, and older teens will gain historical perspective on the challenging years of the depression in small-town America. In addition to receiving the Newbery Honor, A Year Down Yonder was a National Book Award finalist, and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

Richard Peck has written over twenty novels for young readers. Christian libraries and schools can add this title, sure to entice interest and provide a positive view of life and relationships.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

F. Science fiction; Christian fiction. 143 p. High school (Middle school).

Meena Biop has just received a critical assignment from the Grand D’Hoffna in front of the Universal Council. This council is made up of senators from all the known planets in the universe except for Earth. Initially her assignment is to evaluate Earth to see if it is ready to begin a relationship with other planets. Meena comes to the Earth posing as an exchange student from England and stays with a family that has other children close to her age. Soon, however, Meena becomes involved in a plot to unseat a despot who desires to destroy the Earth because of his estranged wife and their son. She feels, and then learns, that she is one of a set of triplets taken at birth by the D’Hoffna’s people to be ready for this assignment. She is reunited with her “family” and discovers that everything will be fine.

This mother-daughter duo, Anders and Throop, writes a science-fiction-based-in-today’s-time-story that is quick reading. The simple plot of The Year of the Child portrays a teenage heroine saving the world, with plenty of action and also details concerning life in high school. There is also a subplot that revolves around a romantic relationship between Meena and her host family’s oldest son. All of the characters, except Meena, are quickly sketched and not well-developed. The dialogue is adequate, with many references to the differences between English and American speech.

Woven throughout the book is a strong evangelical message. The references to “El Niño” are paralleled to both Meena’s life and that of Christ. There are many times that Meena prays and receives instruction. This book is fine for middle to high school students.

Bianca Elliott, Educator, Limwood, Kansas
BOOK REVIEWS

HIGH SCHOOL NONFICTION

100’s—Philosophy & Psychology


Katie was a lively, Canadian sixteen-year-old who died while with her family in France. While on the plane taking Katie’s body back to Canada her mother, Susan, read Katie’s journal and felt it would be worthwhile to share with others. Katie’s sister, Christelle, also contributes poignant comments in the book. In Love Ya Like a Sister: A Story of Friendship, Susan explains that the family went to Paris, France, for one year to show the children their father’s heritage and to improve their French. Each journal entry is Katie’s note to a friend (Heather, Ashley, and Maude) or personal reflection. Later the entries are the emails that she sent to her friends. The correspondence is very typical for teenagers. Examples of topics Katie discusses are boys, virginity, drugs, friends, books (she really liked Embraced by the Light), advice, and everything else teenagers talk about with their friends. She tells about the minuita of her days in Paris and other parts of France. She spends considerable time trying to explain the differences between French and Canadian culture. Since the reader knows from the first pages that Katie will die, it is difficult to not want to tell Katie to see a doctor when she starts writing to her friends.

The editor, Julie Johnston, has done a remarkable job in permitting Katie’s voice to be heard in the book. This book is very emotional. There are sections in French but the translations are quite appropriate with only a few slightly suggestive sentences. The only objectionable word is used when Katie and Christelle are in suggestive sentences. The only objectionable word is used when Katie and Christelle are in suggestive sentences. The only objectionable word is used when Katie and Christelle are in suggestive sentences.

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Susie Shellenberger offers a guide that libraries can make available to teens who may be facing a variety of difficult situations. Without being preachy, she offers solid biblical advice in contemporary teen situations. The timely advise, appropriate for both junior and senior high, describes what it means to be a friend, and then presents situations teens might face, e.g. eating disorders, unwanted pregnancy or pressure to have sex, wondering if one is gay, being depressed, having no date, and coping with illness.

Help! My Friend's in Trouble! comes from the co-host of Focus on the Family’s weekly national radio teen talk show, Life on the Edge: Live. She is editor of Brio monthly magazine for girls and author of twenty-five books, including the recent Dear Diary (Zondervan, 2000). She also loves burnt hotdogs and old Mary Tyler Moore reruns.

Church shelves, libraries, youth counselors, camps—anywhere where teens are, will be a perfect place for this warm, caring book.

Josh McDowell and Kevin Johnson have teamed up to write a short, easy to read book dealing with how a young person can know the will of God in his or her life. There is almost an attitude of camaraderie, as if Josh and Kevin were sitting across from a young person at a local fast food chain. The causal language and typical situations are the backdrop for biblical counsel addressing issues such as God’s plan, life to the extreme, love, meaningful career, and a life that matters. Each of the eight chapters compares and contrasts what the world offers young people with what God offers young people. There is an abundance of current examples and references for the young person to identify with in the chapters. The issues are germane to the young person/early adult.

The chapters are relatively short and the tempo is quick and upbeat. The discussion becomes frank in a few places but never goes over the edge of appropriateness.

Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas

200’s—Religion


This book, Old Enough to Know, is in its third edition since 1987. In this book Michael W. Smith takes the lyrics from his album The Big Picture and relates them to the questions and situations that occur in young people’s lives. He adds the letters and questions he receives from his listeners to further explain his points. He presents an evangelical attitude towards the young people and his singing. The chapters cover issues such as self-esteem, drug use, making decisions, etc. Woven in the book is Smith’s testimony of becoming a Christian and living a Christian life. He admits to drug use when he was younger but he never glamorizes it.

Smith’s honest, candid responses will strike a chord in the young people who read this book. There is a note section at the end if the reader needs more information. Especially helpful is the nine page annotated listing of clinics and hotlines that can help any teenager in trouble or need. Also in the listings are the internet addresses as well as the traditional telephone numbers to these sites. Smith’s book closes with a page that invites the reader to write to him.

Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas


Teens ready to graduate or having just will benefit from the wit and wisdom of Bruce and Stan. Real Life Begins After High School. There are twelve chapters with titles like: Custom Design Yourself: Who Do You Want To Be? More Than Friends: Dating and Beyond, Money Matters: Your Fiscal Fitness Program, Those Things You Do: What God Wants For You. These subject areas become useful as a guide for future college entrants looking for insightful information to help them make educated decisions. The book winds it all up with a helpful bibliography. Definitely written
with a Christian perspective, the book has solid advice for any high schooler with post-graduation life to consider. Those who appreciate the writing style found in popular Christian magazines *Campus Life*, *Brio*, or *Breakaway* will likewise enjoy this humorous approach to a serious subject.

**Pam Webb, Library Technician, Sandpoint, Idaho**

### 300's—Social Sciences


306.7'0835. Sexual ethics for teenagers; Teenagers—Sexual behavior; Sexual abstinence; Youth—Sexual behavior. 213 p. High school.

I didn’t count exactly 501 reasons for holding off on sex, but Susan Pogány’s *Sex Smart* provides many excellent points for abstaining from sex before marriage. The book is designed to answer the most basic questions that a teen may have regarding sex. Pogány wrote the book in hopes of reaching young people directly or to help the parent who must answer the inquiring minds of their children. The book starts right off with definitions of love versus sex and how sex can actually ruin a relationship. Pogány goes on to explain how the sexes are not “wired” the same regarding how sex is perceived. Throughout the book, in appropriate locations, Pogány discusses the truths and myths regarding sexual activity. The answers are graphic and direct but never out of line. Chapter six is written by Susan’s sister, Attorney Anne Browning Wilson, who wrote a brochure that is distributed in Kansas high schools titled “If We Make a Baby, Do I Have to Pay?”

Pogány presents information over many topics as diverse as masturbation, abortion, double standards, date rape, how to say no, and sexually transmitted diseases. The theme of abstinence is never ignored and is emphasized by direct quotes from males and females who have suffered from premature sexual activity. There are numerous tables and practical suggestions to help drive home the information. There are letters from young people sprinkled throughout the book to make sure the reader knows how the young person feels about the specific situation. There is a detailed note section as well as a bibliography. This would make a ready reference book for public school counselors and sex education personnel as well as any and all private school settings.

**Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas**


332.7'43. Credit; Credit cards. 128 p. High school.

*Easy Credit* is an excellent book in which Ann Weiss presents an easy to read and understandable overview of credit written with, to, and for the youth. The concise chapters deal with the history and current conditions of using credit in the United States. The book starts out with how certain young people in the 1990’s were given credit and the results of their experiences. The book then provides the history of credit starting in times of old, making this review neither dry nor boring. Whenever there may be a section that could be misunderstood, Weiss provides either a past or current example of the concept for clarification of the point. Weiss anticipates the questions of the reader and not only asks them, but answers them clearly and cogently. Weiss could have stopped there and had a wonderful book but she takes the reader to the next logical consequence of credit—consumer protection. She discusses topics such as privacy, who is granted or refused credit, plus detailing of the laws and regulations. She ends her book with a chapter on consumer education that she has presented in the preceding pages.

The book is well constructed and ready for considerable use. The print is easy to read and the sections within each chapter are precise and useful. This should be a required text for public and private libraries.

**Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas**

### Civil Liberties


*Opposing Viewpoints* is written to provide the reader with the wherewithal to determine his her position and consider other positions to major current issues. The editors seek out knowledgeable people as well as those with vested interests in the topic or issue covered. Views from those not usually heard in the mainstream media are also presented. As a result of these objectives, *Civil Liberties: Opposing Viewpoints* has a reputation of being a good resource. This book is like the others in the series in that it will make high school student think and consider the position they espouse. There are many excellent study features such as end notes, questions for consideration that begin every essay, visuals, cartoons, and a periodical bibliography at the end of each section. The end of the book has a further discussion section, an annotated organization to contact section, bibliography, and a detailed index.

Having said this there are a few areas of concern. There are references to racist speech made within certain essays. Additionally, the sections dealing with pornography are strongly worded. The words used in that section are clinical and descriptive. In the chapter dealing with religion, the editors created an atmosphere that is non-religious and therefore not offensive to any one sect.

**Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas**

### Pregnant and single


362.8'392'0835. Unmarried mothers—United States; Pregnancy, Unwanted—United States; Teenage mothers—United States; Teenage pregnancy—United States. 160 p. High school.

The word "pregnancy" can be frightening to an unmarried teenager. In the midst of trying to live up to all kinds of expectations, a pregnancy during this delicate time in a young girl’s life can be devastating, perhaps even more so to a Christian who may feel as if she not only failed herself and her parents, but God as well. To help guide them toward making decisions they can live with, Linda Roggow and Carolyn Owens have written a gentle yet serious book designed to inform, provoke honest soul-searching, and help young mothers look reality straight in the eye.

In simple language, *Pregnant and Single* includes short personal stories and comments from girls of all walks of life in various circumstances, helping the reader to identify with others who have faced an unplanned pregnancy. Among the topics discussed are the shock of discovering the pregnancy, dealing with the reactions of others, health and finances, the practical aspects of taking care of a baby, whether or not to marry, and the process of adoption. The roles of the father and grandparents are explored, and caution is given to take time to carefully consider each option thoroughly. *Pregnant and Single* also serves as both a personal and practical workbook, asking detailed questions concerning all possible areas of conflict, bringing focus not only to the pregnancy, but to the bigger picture of the young woman’s life as a whole. The final chapter entitled “Faith Helps,” gives scripture that speaks about the sanctity of all life, both that of mother and the child, and of the forgiveness and guidance that God gives through his Son Jesus.

Roggow, a social worker, and Owens, a library clerk and mother, emphasize that objective counseling is essential, including an index of pregnancy care centers with addresses and phone numbers throughout the United States and Canada. An easy-to-read book with a colorful cover, the authors have written a much needed tool for anyone who needs help or wants to offer it. With over half a million teen pregnancies in 1999 (49.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 according to the Centers For Disease Control and Statistics August 8,2000 issue of the National Vital Statistics Reports (Vol. 48 number 14)), chances are someone you know can benefit from this book.

**Denise Griffin, Freelance Writer, Pfafftown, North Carolina**

### Leaving Cuba : from Operation Pedro Pan to Elian


**CHRISTIAN LIBRARY JOURNAL 55 SPRING 2001**
In this short book is a concise history of the emigration from Cuba to the United States since the 1960s. Leaving Cuba: from Operation Pedro Pan to Elian, begins with, and uses throughout, the numerous quotes of people, young and old, who have left Cuba. Kathleen Gay weaves these quotes into a simple and yet compelling narrative of the situation in Cuba. She states the political climate in the United States and Cuba throughout those years evenhandedly. Early in the 1960’s the children were the ones who left Cuba. Gay explains at this point in the book how the children received the nickname "Pedro Pan," referring to the children’s story Peter Pan. Gay then goes on and details the other major "waves" of adults and children who left Cuba and continues her narrative to the modern times with a review of the Elian Gonzalez case.

The high school student doing research for this topic will find the text easy to read and understand, powerful quotes, notes that include internet sites, books for further research, and an appendix of United States-Cuban Relations from 1958 to 2000. The students will identify with the feelings of the young people that left Cuba. The ecumenical attitude of the participants is reflected in the author’s writing.

800’s—Literature & Rhetoric


John Greenleaf Whittier, one of the most outspoken abolitionists among the poets of his generation, was born into a Quaker farming family in Haverhill, Massachusetts, in 1807. Although his early life was full of relative hardship and isolation, his constant exposure to the wonders of nature gave him a poet’s appreciation for the beauties of the world around him. Probably best known for the poem "Snow-Bound," Whittier struggled most of his life to find a balance between his Quaker beliefs and his longing for literary fame and recognition.

William Jolliff, the editor of The Poetry of John Greenleaf Whittier, has selected fifty-six of Whittier’s finest poems, including: "Ichabod," "Snow-Bound," "Telling the Bees," and "The Barefoot Boy." He organizes his selections in four thematic groupings: the crusading abolitionist, the nostalgic recorder of a vanished rural past, the balladeer of New England history, and the contemplative Quaker. Jolliff has written an introduction to each section and a headnote to every poem. While Whittier is often passed over by modern critics, Jolliff’s headnotes persuasively comment on why Whittier’s poems remain of value to modern readers. A selected bibliography is included at the end of the work.


Nate Saint was raised in a Christian home and had two great passions in life—serving Jesus and flying. He served stateside in the military in WWII and found a wife, Marj, when he was stationed in California. They soon joined Christian Airmen’s Missionary Fellowship and were stationed in Equador where Nate assisted missionaries who served deep in the jungles, often becoming their only lifeline to the rest of the world.

In 1951 after many adventures and the birth of two children, Nate flies his visiting sister, Rachel, over the section of the jungle where the fierce and isolated Aucas reside. Nate predicts that Rachel will some day minister to them. Four years and one more child later Nate and four missionary friends, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming, and Jim Elliott hatch a plan to reach the Aucas. They decide to drop gifts from the plane and then attempt to find a meeting place. The gifts are dropped, a sandsbar on the river that will accommodate plane landings is found, and five men’s families are about to experience tragic loss as these Christian servants heroically sacrifice themselves so that the Aucas may hear about the saving love of Christ.

Janet and Geoff Benge have done an excellent job of relating the story of Nate Saint in this entry in their Christian Heroes series. This is a truly inspiring story of young men and women who are willing to joyfully go wherever the Master calls and to abandon themselves into His loving care regardless of the consequences to themselves. Especially uplifting is the last chapter and the epilog in which the reader discovers the surprising way that these deaths open the doorway to the Aucas.


Dorothea Lange is best known for her famous photograph of the migrant mother taken during the Great Depression. But her photography didn’t stop then—this remarkable woman continued to record the people, places, and history of America through photos taken until her death at age seventy. This engaging account of her life portrays Lange’s restless spirit and describes how her passion for photography allowed her to capture, in revealing images, a zest for life she both felt and observed in the ordinary, sometimes sorrowful, lives of everyday people. Equally illustrated with photos taken by Lange and of Lange, the text covers Lange’s childhood through her death in 1965.

The author, Elizabeth Partridge, is the daughter of Lange’s assistant, Ron Partridge, and was treated as part of Dorothea’s extended family. Her text is enjoyable to read because it offers both the facts of Lange’s life, as well as insights into her character, enlivened by quotes from Lange as well as her close friends.

Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange begins with a foreword on the story behind her most famous photograph, taken in a pea picker’s camp after the crop had been ruined by freezing rain. It concludes with an afterward on the author’s reflections and memories of this remarkable woman, who called her "Bitie" and who both adored and inspired the daughter of Lange’s assistant. The twelve chapters in between recount Lange’s life in chronological order, taking the reader through Lange’s portrait photography, through the Great Depression, to the internment of Japanese Americans, and
across the globe as Lange’s restless spirit took her in search of the human spirit she so beautifully portrayed in her photography. Students will find this book inspiring and fact-filled. The bibliography and index are helpful additions for those interested in learning more on this incredible photographer and woman.

Lisa Wroble, Freelance Writer/Library Aide, Plymouth, Michigan


Iraq: Old Land, New Nation in Conflict by William Spencer, professor emeritus of Middle East history at Florida State University, is a competent, simply written, survey of the nation of Iraq from antiquity to the present. The author’s approach is chronological, beginning with Iraq’s Mesopotamian heritage and concluding with an account of the current tense situation pitting Saddam Hussein against the United Nations sanctions.

Professor Spencer elucidates the origins of Islam, the differences between the Sunni and Shia factions, and the Islamic worldview particularly well. His description of the origin and meaning of terms commonly encountered but not commonly known by westerners is fascinating. He describes, for instance, how the names Caliph, Sultan, and Shah were derived, as well as the fact that the “Ottomans” were originally “the sons of Osman.” Iraq itself means, “mud bank.” Over half of the book is devoted to the post World War I period, including chapters on the British mandate, the ill-fated monarchy, and the slide into one-man rule under Saddam.

Themes of Iraqi history presented include the Iraqi peoples’ pride in their long heritage, pride in Islam, and a faith in the somewhat nebulous concept of the “Arab Nation.” The Iraqis have also survived many conquests and amalgamated many cultures. Professor Spencer explains the origins of the Baath (Party of the Arab resurrection) and how it and Saddam control modern Iraq. Saddam, incidentally, means “he who confronts and is bold.” Professor Spencer delineates Saddam’s treachery and terror, but also notes some of his successes in nation building.

The book has appropriate illustrations and maps in black and white. It contains a competent index and an up-to-date bibliography. A facts index of vital statistics is presented at the end.

Two of the illustrations have their captions switched. There is a cross reference to an important battle, the battle of Qadisiya, that refers the reader to chapter one when, in fact, that battle was described in chapter two. This accessible and intriguing book deserved better editing.

David W. Rush, Public Services Librarian & History Instructor, Everett Community College

F. Africa—Fiction; Christian fiction; Love stories. 363 p. Adult (High school).

From Calgary, Alberta, Canada to Kenya, Africa, Laurel Binet travels to work with Joan Doyle in studying a troop of olive baboons. This opportunity fulfills a dream for Laurel of helping to understand and care for God’s creation. She feels this is her chance to make a real difference.

The first person she meets is Darren Grant, the pilot of a Cessna 210, who is to deliver her to Ndovu. Darren believes that caring for animals instead of investing in human life is contrary to God’s will. In the drought of Africa their opposing views clash as it seems only one species can survive. Darren doesn’t like to see Laurel join Joan Doyle who fights for her troop of baboons against the Meru people. The Meru are struggling to find pasture for their animals in the same territory the baboons occupy. Laurel is to find out just how far Joan will go to drive the Meru away.

Author Karen Rispin’s presentation of these two extreme viewpoints dominates the story, leaving romance in second place. African Skies does give a deeper understanding of African tribes and their struggles to simply survive. Century old tribal feuds make change difficult.

Myrlemay Pitman Crane, Freelance Writer, Editor, Alderwood Manor, Washington


F. Highlands (Scotland)—Fiction; Scotland—Fiction; Christian fiction. 542 p. Adult.

A unique book, The Final Quest by Rick Joyner, was published 1996, and is a fascinating read. Joyner describes what he has seen and learned on a “behind the scenes” journey to view life’s battles. From the very first page, the reader will be amazed and in awe of what is revealed in this page-turner. Understanding and ability to combat the enemy’s fiery darts will increase, and the reader will also gain discernment to deal with frustrating and sometimes devastating life circumstances.

More importantly, the reader will learn the importance of being a good steward of the Lord’s provision, and how to walk humbly with our God. This is a must for the young teen through the adult reader and will definitely hold the interest of all.

The Three Battlegrounds by Francis Frangipane presents an excellent and well-balanced view of what spiritual warfare is all about. To sum it up in one key phrase, “It’s about focusing on Jesus, not the enemy!” Frangipane breaks the book into three components: the mind, the Church, and the enemy; and shows how each plays a key part in spiritual perception. With acute insight, he not only presents a powerful account of Christ, but encourages the reader to discover identity in Him, to bring honor and glory to His name. Frangipane’s succinct points reveal why frustrations occur in our walk, and how to focus on our source of love (Jesus) rather than our fears. The reader will learn how to deal with difficult circumstances in life with praise and thanksgiving, and discover victorious living that lets Light shine forth to the world. His well-made point, “It is not Satan that defeats us, but our openness to him,” helps the Christian keep his/her focus and trust on the Lord!

Intercessory Prayer by Dutch Sheets is another gem of a read. Of course, prayer is a key issue in our spiritual walk, and he gives great insight and encouragement to be the “prayer warriors” the Lord calls us to be. With simple presentation and, at times, light humor, he presents an honest, heart-baring account that will help equip even the newest saint to become a capable, God-approved pray-er. Acknowledging the command to “pray without ceasing,” Sheets presents practical and exciting pointers that will enhance our faith and our personal relationship with the Lord.

These three books compliment each other and leave the reader well equipped not only for dealing with every day frustrations, but for facing with assurance and fine-tuned faith anything that presents itself. Our assurance is not in ourselves or what we have learned, but always in the Author and Perfector of our faith, Jesus Christ.

A Note from the Editor:  by Mary McKinney
In this sequel to The Legend of the Celtic Stone, Andrew Trentham, British Liberal Democratic Party leader, continues to search for his Scottish roots. With the aid of American BBC reporter Patricia "Paddy" Rawlings, who helped him to recover the fabled Stone of Scone, the puzzle pieces regarding the murder of Eagon Hamilton begin to come together and men at the highest levels of government are implicated. Andrew and Paddy discover that Scottish oil reserves, money, and power lie at the heart of the murder and the Stone's theft.

Andrew travels incognito through Scotland, historical research and he meets the clan of Finnlaggen Gordon. Andrew is especially taken with the petite daughter of the family, Ginevra. The Gordons believe that their new friend is Andy Trent and when they find out his true identity, they assume that he is attempting to find reasons to block Scottish devolution. As Andrew examines his own genetic and spiritual roots he finds his thoughts on Scottish independence changing and it soon becomes apparent that his vote on the issue will be vital.

Can he be the man of integrity he needs to be and still win Ginevra?

In Michael Phillip’s enthralling An Ancient Strife the reader is caught up in the modern day story of Andrew Trentham and the very real issues of Scottish independence and is equally entangled in the history of Scotland. As in the first book, modern day chapters are juxtaposed with chapters on the history of Scotland from 843 to the mid 1700s. Some readers may find the style of jumping back and forth a bit disconcerting, but not only is the main story very well told, but the shorter historical fiction stories are extremely involving and the way that they illustrate the current situation in Scotland adds a nice touch.

**Blessing in disguise, by Lauraine Snelling.**


Augusta Bjorklund is leaving Norway and joining her family in America. Single and thirty years of age, Augusta has no reason to stay in Norway. Traveling alone, with no comprehension of the English language, Augusta finds herself in trouble. She mistakenly boards the wrong train and ends up far from the town of Blessing. Kane Moyer is awaiting his "mail-order" bride from Norway, and is at the station when Augusta disembarks. Following a quick ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Moyer head back to the ranch, with Augusta thinking she has just signed papers for her citizenship. When Augusta’s trunks arrive in Blessing, with no Augusta, her family is in a panic. How will they ever locate Augusta when they have no idea where she ended up?

Lauraine Snelling has written an interesting story that holds the reader’s interest. One can not help but to sympathize with both Augusta and Kane, but at the same time, want to “shake some sense” into Augusta. The story line of Blessing in Disguise that evolves around these two characters is excellent, but the intertwining stories of the persons in Blessing causes confusion to the whole. I have personally read one other in this series, and was lost with the abundance of characters then, as I was again. Reading the series in order would certainly help, but if the author had fewer personalities in the series, the reader would derive more enjoyment from each story.

Tammy Williams, Freelance Writer, Social Worker, Port Orchard, Washington

**Blind justice : a novel, by James Scott Bell.**


Catherine Biddle, from the outside, looks like a woman who “has it all.” Her husband Blake is successful and her children are healthy. She wears the right clothes, drives the right car, and has the latest hairstyle. Inside, Catherine feels isolated and angry. She lets no one in, including her family. The unexpected interrupts Catherine’s life, and changes it forever. Blake’s older sister shows up on the doorstep with a suitcase, saying she has no where to go. It does not take Catherine long to reinforce her idea that Dottie is “one brick shy of a load.” Catherine resents Dottie’s intrusion into their lives. Her presence uncovers the ugliness and deception in their household. Her cheerfulness and eagerness to help makes Catherine feel inadequate and unhappy. Then new neighbors move in next door, and through their testimony, Catherine’s son Harry turns his life around, causing Catherine to face the emptiness in her family can’t believe he is guilty. Howie himself claims, “the devil did it.” Howie’s sister Lindsey, a devout Christian, believes his story. Desperate to clear him, Lindsey and Howie’s parents turn to a childhood friend of Howie’s, who is also a defense lawyer.

Jack Denney is a divorced alcoholic who hasn’t had a case in months. He goes to Howie’s small hometown of Hinton to work on the case with a private investigator named Trip who has helped him in the past. He and Trip, along with Lindsey, soon discover that the town of Hinton has some sinister secrets—secrets that could clear Howie’s name. The involvement of Satan worshipers confirm to Lindsey that Howie is telling about “the devil.” Trip, who is also a Christian, believes her, but Jack, a confirmed atheist, finds the whole idea ludicrous. But somehow he must legally use what he has learned to convince jurors of Howie’s innocence.

**By the light of a thousand stars, by Jamie Langston Turner.**


From each story...
own life. For so long she has lived with the façade that everything was perfect. Can she let down her guard and let someone in?

By the Light of a Thousand Stars is a modern day novel that demonstrates how God brings people into the lives of hurting and lost people to bring them to Himself. It also shows how God uses perhaps the "plain" or "unlovely," and how each of us is a living testimony to the world. The author, Jamie Turner develops interesting characters that are easy to identify with and she reaches deep into the lives of the characters. I found the story line interesting, unique, and it promoted self-examination into my own life.

Tammy Williams, Freelance Writer, Social Worker, Port Orchard, Washington


The Bradford Family saga continues with Matthew sailing to England to take possession of his inheritance and title. In his heart, he knows he is running away...from Abigail...from God. Innocent of the ways of the world, Matthew soon finds himself a victim of a devious financial scam. Broken and ill, Matthew returns home. Sam continues his pursuit of Keturah, but she continues to reject him. When Keturah moves to South Carolina to help Grace with her new baby, Sam despairs that he will ever convince her of his love. Grace knows she is running away from Abigail...from God. She offers asylum, but everything he undertakes to help Grace with her new baby, Sam, grows more deeply into the minds and hearts of the characters that are easy to identify with and she each of us is a living testify to the world. The author, Jamie Turner develops interesting characters that are easy to identify with and she reaches deep into the lives of the characters. I found the story line interesting, unique, and it promoted self-examination into my own life.

Tammy Williams, Freelance Writer, Social Worker, Port Orchard, Washington


Crown of Fire, by Kathy Tyers, is the exciting conclusion to the science fiction trilogy including Firebird and Fusion Fire. Summoned to Netaia to be confirmed as an heiress to the royal house Angelo, Lady Firebird is thrilled with the opportunity to bring about change in her home world, and to fight for the common folk so long ruled and ignored by the royal house. Firebird and her telepathic husband, Brennan, also hope their presence will draw out one of the evil Shuhr for capture. The Federation, under attack by the Shuhr, wants to employ mind access on their captive enemy and discover where the Shuhr intend to strike next. Firebird struggles with pride and independence, desiring to save her Netaian people by her own leadership and strength, rather than seeking the Eternal Speaker’s (God’s) will. Raised to believe that her actions must balance her shortcomings, Firebird pays a high price for her pride. Only through her husband’s sacrifice of life is she able to fully grasp the idea of atonement and realize that she owes her life to the Eternal Speaker, with no cause to be proud. Brennan likewise learns the vital lesson that in his own weakness, the One is made strong through Brennan’s complete surrender to Him. As Firebird and Brennan allow the One to work through them, they are called to fulfill the ancient prophecy predicting the destruction of a “nest of evil”—the Shuhr and their twisted genetic experimentation and breeding program. After a dramatic and surprising outcome of that battle, Firebird and Brennan, along with other faithful followers of the One, eagerly await the arrival of the promised messiah, the Word to Come.

Crown of Fire is a challenging read for the first half of the book, as it discusses complex political circumstances involving Netaia, Thyrica, Three Zed, the Federation, the Sentinels, and the Shuhr —issues that are more convoluted than several Deep Space Nine episodes. The second half of the book is more action oriented, and delves more deeply into the minds and hearts of Firebird, Brennan, and their relationship with God, the One. Tyers includes a “what has gone before” overview of Firebird and Fusion Fire to remind readers of what transpired in the first two books, both of which definitely should be read before tackling Crown of Fire. True science fiction fans will enjoy this trilogy greatly.

Sheri Beeler, Teacher, Cascade Christian High School, Medford, Oregon


Cry Freedom is double edged. The birthing of America and the flowering of faith are intertwined in this historical romance. The main focus is less on the romance and more on the development of steadfast trust in God’s leading. The intense inner struggle against overwhelming fears in choosing Christ over life in the face of harsh trials, brutality and death is beautifully detailed. Marlo Schalesky incorporates interaction with the historical figures and events of that era including the impact on society of George Whitefield and Samuel Adams. Taking place at this time is the seesaw for power between the English, French, and Native Americans during the King George War. The conclusion promises more to follow to develop secondary characters.

After the massacre of her missionary father and her people only Kwelik, a lovely Christian half-breed maiden and her brother remain. She surrenders her freedom so Little Cloud can vanish. Kwelik escapes one captor to become enslaved by another while inner demons compel her to give up as she continuously pleads with God for liberation. God appears not to be listening. A torturous death awaits but God whispers: “Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matthew 16:25)

Oppressed by the anguish of abuse, false piety, and dark secrets perpetrated by his father and now the mantle of lord of the manor being conferred on his equally domineering brother, Jonathan flees England. The American frontier offers asylum, but everything he undertakes to make a new life is torched into ashes. Without an example of a godly father Jonathan resists the summons: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

Delbbie Lindsey, Homeschool Parent, Eatonville, Washington


With the turbulence of the Civil War surrounding their plantation, Jesselynn, in shorn hair and britches, secrets away what is left of her deceased father’s prized Thoroughbred horse stock. Leaving Kentucky with her toddler brother and several freed slaves, their destination is Missouri to seek refuge with an uncle. Traveling by the stars, they encounter embrace several other individuals affected by the war as they wend their way.

In the meantime Jesselynn’s sisters are temporarily residing with an aunt in Virginia. Carrie Mae is soon to be married to a wounded ex-soldier while Louisa is volunteering at the hospital where she immerses herself in comforting the human wreckage spawned by the war.

Those who have appreciated Lauraine Snelling’s Red River of the North series will likely enjoy Daughter of Twin Oaks, the first volume in A Secret Refuge. The story leaps back and forth between Jesselynn’s trek and the sisters’ activities, with a sharper focus on Louisa. The trek is melodramatic due to the many interruptions of their travels in an attempt to carry the plot to the end, whereas the hospital depiction has more energy. Through Ms. Snelling’s research she strives to portray the horrors and desolation of this period in

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America’s history without zeroing in on violent details, but does include the use of an occasional ethnic slur in common usage at that time. The conclusion is a cliff hanger and fails to resolve the various characters’ dilemmas creating anticipation for the next volume in this series.

Debbie Lindsay, Homeschool Parent, Eatonville, Washington

The divine symphony, by Calvin Miller.

F. Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint—Fiction; Christian women saints—Palestine— Fiction; Creation—Fiction; Palestine— Fiction; Allegories. 290 p. Adult.

In The Divine Symphony, Calvin Miller combines his previously published A Requiem for Love, and A Symphony in Sand.

The story of Earthmaker, Regis, and Regina, in For Love
and A Symphony in Sand. The present strategy and God’s faithfulness. Slithe’s doubts upon Trouvere. Victory finally comes for Love after all.

The second book in the series, Everything I Long For, jumps right in where the first book leaves off. Maggie’s rocky start in Whispering Pines settles down with the success of receiving a grant she wrote to help make some very much needed improvements and repairs to the town. Unfortunately, her personal life hits some serious potholes making Maggie wonder if Whispering Pines is really what she had longed for after all.

What could have been yet another formula romance takes some interesting plot turns. The author has a touch for writing about realistic situations and giving dimension to the many characters involved. Maggie’s plucky enthusiasm, combined with her vulnerability makes her quite a likable heroine. Her reliance on the Lord is ever-present without being overbearing. These books could be a cross-over to Whispering Pines, Oregon. Her dreams of living a simplistic, uncluttered life become mired in the discovery that the town is slowly dying after the new highway bypassed it. Her reception is mixed between high expectations she will turn the town around, and open hostility since she is an outsider. Maggie also finds herself the focus between two very different men. Reconciling her mourning for her husband, and her attraction to these possible suitors, amidst all the other adjustments in her new life, keeps Maggie relying on the Lord all the more.

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


F. Oregon—Fiction; Christian fiction. 262 p.

Adult (High school).


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In December 1943, life in Lyon, France, becomes even more difficult for Giselle and Claude Munier, members of the French Resistance. Giselle takes their daughters, Jacque and Angie, to live in a safe place, but when she returns home she finds Claude gone. She wonders if informers betrayed them.

Jean Thornton, Giselle’s American cousin and a Red Cross worker, arrives for duty in Wales with two concerns: whereabouts of Tom, the Japanese man she loves, but who no longer loves her, and safety of Giselle. When she hears the Nazis have captured Giselle, Jean fancies and receives permission to rescue her. She practices the intricacies of parachute jumping, gun handling, and daily life in France before launching into the dangerous mission.

For Such A Time, by Elyse Larson, takes the reader through agonizing twists and turns that lead Jean, Giselle, Jacque, and Angie back to Wales. But even there the road goes bumpy before they feel safe. All the while, Jean longs for Tom and Giselle worries about Claude. Fearsome complications mount, despite all precautions. One night when an informer threatens them as well as Jacque, Angie, and Tom, Jean uses her gun to save the lives of those she loves. Although the plot dictates that Jean shoot a man, Larson emphasizes in the final pages the need to love and forgive everyone, even our enemies. She does this naturally, honestly, and convincingly through story.

Larson grabs the reader’s attention from the first paragraph, and does not let go until the final word. Her in-depth research of time and places carries the reader into the scenes all the way through the story. This, along with a skillful use of words and plot, bring alive the physical deprivation, pain, and emotional stress common for many during that time. She writes in a way that makes plausible her large cast of characters—a good balance of hateful people and delightful, caring folks.

The last sentence points to more about Jean and Giselle. For the story preceding For Such A Time, read Dawn’s Early Light, by Elyse J. Larson.

Betty M. Hockett, Freelance Writer, Teacher, Speaker, Newberg, Oregon
In *Heathersleigh Homecoming*, twenty-one-year-old Amanda Rutherford Halifax, a prodigal daughter, finds herself in the “faraway land” of disobedience, suffering the consequences of rebellion from her parents. Upon learning that Ramsey, her unfaithful husband of one month, belongs to a spy ring working against the Allies in World War I, she flees from Vienna by train, hoping to escape through Italy or France to London. Fearful that she will reveal their espionage secrets, Ramsey and evil Mr. Barclay pursue Amanda relentlessly.

After discerning Amanda’s forlorn countenance in the train station, and befriending her with a kind invitation, Gretchen introduces her to beauty and peaceful seclusion at the Chalet of Hope high in the Alps of neutral Switzerland. Here a group of Christian women dedicate their lives to the emotional and spiritual healing of others. But because healing is slow and painful and Amanda’s prideful independent spirit strong, she breaks away again to cross enemy lines.

Amanda is unaware that information she possesses about enemy spies in a secluded lighthouse on the English coast is intertwined with the duties of her father and brother on the battle cruiser Dauntless, responsible for torpedoing German U-boats in the English Channel. Cleverly disguised, she outwits Ramsey and Mr. Barclay, stalking them and eavesdropping. Amanda reaches London, begs Ramsey and Mr. Barclay, stalking them and eavesdropping. Amanda reaches London, begs

Abbie was married to Monte Farrell. Cole Jasper was a foreman on their ranch, but has known Abbie since they were teens. Cole has loved Abbie since he can remember, but after Monte’s death by a bull, Abbie dismisses Cole from his position on the ranch and vows she never wants to see him again. In book five, Abbie returns to the ranch with her new husband Cole Jasper, after outwitting the outlaw Crete Marlowe. Accompanying Cole and Abbie is Birdie, the sixteen-year-old saloon girl, with a large chip on her shoulder. Cole expects Abbie to accept Birdie as her own, and raise her alongside her niece Jenny and her son Elliot. With Birdie “making eyes” at Cole, Abbie struggles to accept and love her. Abbie knows that she loves Cole, but she continually compares him to Monte and is consumed with guilt. When Cole discovers that Crete Marlowe is after revenge, Cole is determined to see him to justice, even against the wishes of Abbie. Will Cole and Abbie’s marriage survive?

Kristen Heitzmann has written an interesting, if somewhat typical story of love in the west. I found it difficult to pick up all the details from previous books and was often confused or lost in the story. The theme of reconciliation was strong as well as the power of forgiveness. Murder and prostitution is included in the content, but not with much detail or graphics. 


F. Family life—Fiction; Western stories; Christian fiction. 317 p. Adult (High school).

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F. Great Britain—History—Roman period, 55 B.C.—449 A.D.—Fiction; Christian saints—Great Britain—Fiction; Boudicca, Queen, d.61—Fiction; Paul, the Apostle—Saint—Fiction; Soldiers—Rome—Fiction. 434 p. Adult.

Sergius, a Roman soldier, and Ailidh, a Celt, should be dire enemies, but they’re not. Despite the conflict between their two cultures as Rome attempts to subdue the inhabitants of Britain, Sergius and Ailidh unite themselves in Christ where there is “neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free.” Appointed as tribune of a Roman legion, Sergius participates in the destruction of the Druids, the Celtic intelligentsia believed to be responsible for stirring up the British tribes to rebellion. Later, Sergius faces Queen Boudicca and her warriors as they fight to protest the injustices of the Roman empire. Dismayed by the needless bloodshed of innocents, and sickened by the tortured human sacrifices Boudicca’s warriors offer to pagan gods, Sergius is forced to question his own role as a soldier and as a follower of Christ. Ailidh, once a Druidess before her conversion to Christ, finds herself an outcast among her people and griev ed by the revengeful, bloody nature of the tribes against Rome. Together she and Sergius vow to follow a better way.

**Imperial legions,** by Andrew M. Seddon, is a well-researched novel detailing the life and attitudes of those living in the first century A.D. The book includes a map, (very useful in keeping track of the numerous locations and military movements throughout the story), an extensive dictionary of Roman and British terms, and a list of sources. The book, which gathers intensity about midway through, is similar in style to the historical novels of Steven Lawhead, Francine Rivers, and Donna Fletcher Crow, although with more emphasis on the story than the internal workings of the main characters. The spiritual struggles of Sergius and Ailidh seem more of an afterthought rather than an integral part of their lives, resulting in a somewhat anticlimactic ending. While there are numerous characters involved, many of them historical figures, Seddon uniquely describes them so they are easily remembered. Seddon also does a good job of portraying both sides of the story—Rome’s and Britain’s. The book describes the violence of war realistically, but is reasonably non-graphic.


Having lost her beloved husband of twelve years to an aneurysm, Jenny Owens finds herself mired in severe depression and grief. Barely able to function, she relies on the strength of her two childhood best friends, Libby andTia, feeling that God has abandoned her. As Jenny works through the difficult stages of grief, she is faced with the startling news that the husband she idolized led a double life as a gambling addict who frittered away all their financial resources. Left with a heavy mortgage on her home, and no college degree or job experience, Jenny is forced to take control of her life in a way she never had to before.

When Jenny hires a gardener to put her huge yard back in order, the last person she expects to see is another person from her childhood—Mike, the rebellious “preacher’s kid.” As Mike works in the soil, weeding, planting, and fertilizing, he provides a listening ear for Jenny,


Lethal Harvest is a mystery novel of modern science. It is pleasingly complex, religiously genuine, and clinically correct. Perhaps too much so. One may choose to skim over the scientific details; no problem, the storylines carry the tale. An intriguing element about this book is that in America's high-tech society, cloning human eggs may some day become a reality. A wise person will consider the questions and consequences beforehand. Lethal Harvest, through an entertaining media, will help readers do just that.

Janette Oke has written a novel relevant to the difficult months. The little family through the difficult months. This intriguing story leads the reader on a romp through New York and its Underground Railroad system, a sea voyage, pirates, and its thrilling climax in New Orleans. The last leg of the adventure takes the reader up the Mississippi River to Missouri, and the start of a new life near Samuel's daughter Serenity and her new husband. Josephine and Samuel must face and adapt to the new reality. The story focuses on Virginia, granddaughter of Clark and Marty. Virginia has been raising Mindy, the child of her childhood friend for over six years. Virginia and her husband Jonathan consider Mindy to be theirs. Even though they have not heard from Jenny, Mindy's mom, for more than six years, they still pray for her each day. Little do they realize that their prayers are about to be answered. Jenny arrives and announces that she is there to claim her daughter for her own. How can Virginia lose a child? How can she fill the void that Mindy would leave in their home?

Janette Oak has written a novel relevant to issues faced by women today, but in an historical setting. Not only in regards to child custody issues, but she also writes a great deal in this story about dealing with aging parents/grandparents and accepting the changes that are inevitable. I found the story sensitive in dealing with painful issues, if a bit na"ive. It would have been helpful to have read the stories in this series, as it was difficult to categorize the numerous characters introduced throughout the story.


The combined talents of Sandra Glahn and William Cutrer, M.D. have created a new medical thriller, Lethal Harvest, that’s hard to put down. It’s like Robin Cook’s books with a Christian slant. Marnie Sullivan is shocked but not heartbroken when her husband, Tim Sullivan, drives into the Potomoc River one icy day in December. Although the body is never found, death is accepted. Marnie and five year old Emily must start a new life together.

In steps, Dr. Ben McKay, Tim’s silent partner, who is also a hospital chaplain, comforts Marnie, makes the memorial arrangements, and helps the little family through the difficult months. Eventually Ben introduces Marnie to Jesus Christ and the world of faith. She and Ben’s hearts begin to blend. Then through a series of oddities Marnie realizes things are not as they seemed. When Marnie receives an e-mail from her late husband Tim, she flies to Texas to meet him. She is disappointed, however, that he offers no love or apology for his staged death, just a warning. She and Emily are in danger. He wants only to concentrate on his medical research—cloning human eggs. Murder, litigation, and arson add spark to this unique novel of modern science.

Judy Driscoll, Retired Teacher, Poulsbo, Washington


Renny Jacobson finds that after the unexpected death of his wealthy father he has been virtually disinherited except for his membership in The List. A secret group formed during the closing days of the Civil War whose descendents still meet. On his way to a coastal inn in South Carolina to find out about The List, Renny meets Jo Johnston, an attractive Christian whose ancestors were also members of The List. She challenges him to find out more about the group which signs a covenant and seals it with blood. Renny is not only falling for Jo but is intrigued by her faith in Christ. As he journeys from unbeliever to Christian, largely through the prayers of Jo, his landlady, and Mama A, a friend of his deceased mother’s, he is torn between the desire to serve the Lord and the lure of the vast wealth of those involved in The List. It soon becomes clear that this is really a battle between good and evil and that demonic forces have been at work and curses have been loosed. Is he willing to sacrifice to bring about the destruction of The List, or will he be overcome by greed and blinded by the darkness that surrounds all who are involved in the unholy covenant?

Fast-paced and intriguing, The List is a mystery and a love story. Robert Whitlow has woven an involving plot that boldly discusses the battle that continually wages in the spiritual realm. Renny discovers that while evil is pervasive and strong, Christ is Light and can easily dispel the darkness for true believers. The author does an excellent job of portraying the importance of prayer not only to our daily lives but in times of spiritual crisis. It also emphasizes the personal aspect of the believer’s relationship with Christ.

Tammy Williams, Freelance Writer, Social Worker, Port Orchard, Washington

In an attempt to stop an ill-planned housing development project from being built in Pine Mountain, Maggie, a small-town newspaper editor, prints the truth about the developer’s other failed projects. However, she does not receive the support she expects from many of the local business owners who are desperate for...
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anything to help revive their sluggish economy—particularly since the winter snows have held off, thus delaying the start of the skiing and tourist season.

As she struggles to stand for what is true and right, she also encounters difficulty in her personal life. Maggie and Jed had an “understanding,” but that is put on hold when Jed’s long-lost daughter, newly reunited with her father, demands more and more of his time and attention. Maggie must learn to deal with her insecurity regarding her relationship with Jed, and come to a deeper understanding of why Leah seems determined to keep her away from Jed. Eventually the three of them work out their difficulties, and Maggie and Jed become engaged.

Looking For You All My Life, by Melody Carlson, is the third book in the Whispering Pines series. Readers will definitely need to read the first two books before this one, or they will be confused. There are numerous characters, and the author, assuming the reader is acquainted with their various backgrounds and relationships, does little explaining. While the book is generally well-written, it is not as riveting or realistic as the first two. Maggie and Jed get engaged, but never spend the time together investing in a serious relationship necessary for marriage. The land development project is brought up as a major conflict and focus of the story, but no satisfying closure is given to the issue.

Sherri Beeler, Teacher, Cascade Christian High School, Medford, Oregon


Lost Romance Ranch is subtitled A Romantic Comedy From the Roadside of Route 66 and comes with a gigue guarantee. Though there are a few amusing events, the subject matter of the plot is very cogitative. Tidbits of the history of Route 66 are part of the fabric as the characters maneuver their way through this story displaying that men and women truly appear to be from opposite planets. Annie Jones stimulates the reader to contemplate the sanctity of the marriage vows by setting aside self-absorption and considering a partner’s viewpoint so obstacles are able to be surmounted. Seeking God’s counsel is demonstrated to be extremely important before making drastic decisions. Also, the surrendering of pride becomes the restorative balm for damaged relationships.

Blind-sided by the letter left from his wife in the now empty house, Teague is confused. The typical family difficulties aside he is left with not a single clue to understand what has led up to his wife suddenly leaving with the children.

Everything he does is for the welfare of his most precious possession, his family.

Wendie broods over the numerous reasons to justify her actions—Teague’s all absorbing work ethic, charity functions, and other priorities that he places above his family’s happiness. By leaving with the twins, Wendie hopes to jolt Teague into awareness of the seriousness of their situation.

Will this be another marriage shattered on the rocks of today’s statistics?

Debbie Lindsay, Homeschool Parent, Eatonville, Washington


F. Actresses—Fiction; Women merchants—Fiction; Montana—Fiction. 221 p. Adult.

Isabel Leon, better known by her stage name, “The Marquesa,” has settled down in Cantrell, Montana, to manage a general store for her good friend Carolina Parks, who is in the East awaiting the birth of her first child. The Marquesa has also joined a venture to build a hotel in the rapidly growing boom town. Unfortunately, her partners and almost everyone else are in the gold fields.

When the Marquesa is approached by former army captain Dawson Mandara who offers to take charge of the construction of the hotel, she accepts his offer even though she resents his superior manner and pities the wife he mentions frequently. As work progresses on the hotel, the relationship between the Marquesa and the captain develops to a point where the Marquesa begins to envy the captain’s wife. As the Marquesa struggles with her feelings for the captain and her developing faith in God, she is increasingly distressed by the thought of the impending arrival of the captain’s family to Cantrell. The Marquesa also has other problems including a number of men from her past who pose complications, including having thrown in jail. Life in Cantrell is never dull with runaway horses, robberies, shootouts, and wild chases after outlaws. Throughout all of this activity, the Marquesa discovers that real life can be even more exciting and fulfilling than any role on the stage.

The Marquesa is the second book in the Heroines of the Golden West series by Stephen Bly. To fully understand many of the characters and incidents in the book, one should have read book number one, Sweet Carolina. As long as the reader remembers that this book contains a great deal more fiction than history, it is an entertaining book that will make an enjoyable light read.

Virginia Brown, Library Assistant, Freelance Writer, Former Teacher, Sheridan, Wyoming


F. Moses (Biblical leader)—Birth—Fiction; Bible. O.T. Exodus—History of Biblical events—Fiction; Midwives—Fiction; Egypt—History—To 332 B.C.—Fiction. 243 p. Adult (High school).

Brenda Ray draws on work credentials and a Master’s in nurse-midwifery, to fictionalize the account of midwife, Puah, and her mentor Shiphrah recorded in Exodus 1:15-2:10 in The Midwife’s Song: A Story of Moses’ Birth.

She portrays Puah with compelling suspense, colorful descriptions, and deep insight, as Puah defies the Pharaoh’s decree to murder all newborn males, endangering her and those she loves. Then Hattush, “who makes her heart sing,” accepts punishment for Puah and their unborn child when faced with the Pharaoh’s rage, leading to a gripping climax. Shiphrah remains a steady source of comfort and strength throughout the ordeal. Puah, at 98, tells this provocative story in chapter flashbacks to the children as they march into the desert, led by Moses.

Puah’s faith in God is reminiscent of Hadassah’s, the memorable heroine in The Mark of the Lion series by Francine Rivers. The reader cheers and then grieves as the story develops, and Puah’s deep faith is challenged, sometimes minute-by-minute.

Research for the book followed the biblical account, Jewish traditions, folklore, and ancient Near Eastern history. An outstanding first book of a planned trilogy, Ray’s account rings with courage, sometimes deception, but always with God at the center. This will become an often-read classic.

Gail Welforn, Freelance Writer, Everett, Washington


F. Custody of children—Fiction; Domestic fiction; Christian fiction; Love stories. 411 p. Adult.

A Moment of Weakness is a compelling story of two people, Jade and Tanner, childhood friends separated by a family scandal and reunited years later as adults. Their feelings for each other have remained and deepened and they soon find themselves in love. Jade commits her life to Christ and their desire to serve the Lord only strengthens their commitment to one another. But their feelings carry them away in a moment of weakness and their lives are changed forever. While Tanner is on a trip to Hungary, Jade discovers she is pregnant and contacts his mother for an emergency number so that she might get in touch with him. His ambitious mother, convinced Jade will never be the wife he needs to further his political career, fills her with lies about her beloved Tanner, and Jade leaves, a crushed and broken young woman, determined to never see Tanner again.
Ten years later their lives again cross, this time when Jade is in desperate need of a lawyer, about to lose her only child because of her faith in Christ; because of a bitter, angry husband with intentions to destroy her. Tanner is the only man who can help her in her darkest hour, yet so much remains between them and only God can heal the deep hurts each one harbors.

Author Karen Kingsbury ends the book with a letter to the reader defining her intention in writing *A Moment of Weakness*; the intention to demonstrate God’s truth about sin, particularly sexual sin, and His readiness to forgive and welcome sinners with open arms. Although the scenes of sexual desire are phrased delicately, this book is not written for young people but rather for adults. Its message is strong and clear and belongs on the shelves of church libraries.

Ceil Carey, Young Adult Librarian, Plano, Illinois


German military top secret project code name Omega Deception is being developed to annihilate thousands of New York City residence. Michael Jason Shaw, is recruited by American intelligence to stop this massacre of innocent people. This is the chance for vengeance Michael has been waiting for since he lost his beloved wife Barbara to a German torpedo, three years ago.

Michael infiltrates the German military as an SS officer assigned to oversee the Omega project. Michael’s life is spared through one catastrophe after another, and he finds himself praying and regaining his trust in God. Unable to find a way to keep the project from completion, Michael finds himself on the U-boat with minutes to launch, taking the last chance to save thousands from a most painful death. Michael lays his life on the line, knowing it is certain death. He races to reprogram the rocket and fails. As the rocket launches, Michael is blown into the freezing water of the North Atlantic Ocean. God sends an instant storm to change the path of the rocket, and a cargo ship to pluck Michael out of the water seconds before his death from exposure.

In *The Omega Deception*, author John E Bayer could have a page-turner. The violence is in line with the era and situation even though the characters do not leave a lasting memory, and the suspense stops short of being heart stopping. The plot is well thought out and a good story over-all. Glossary of German words is a great help and makes the story seem more authentic. Adult men who enjoy military history will find the cover and the story line appealing.

Marc Williams, Literature Reviewer and Critic, Port Orchard, Washington


The Scopes trial is the background for this murder mystery by author Rosie Dow. Deputy Sheriff Trent Tyson, recently moved to Dayton, Tennessee, finds suspicious deaths increasing in number. He discovers poisoning in two of the unexplained deaths and begins his investigation. In the meantime, city leaders decide to challenge the law about teaching evolution in school. Finding an ally in John Scopes, a high school science teacher, the town leaders fabricate events to bring notoriety and business to their small town. The reader travels with Tyson as he struggles with his own faith while confronted with the skepticism and anti-creation views of his friend the local doctor. In the midst of the sleuthing and self-discovery, Tyson’s father comes for a visit and declares that he is now a believer. The deputy’s whole foundation and belief system is challenged and through the course of the novel, he comes to terms with his wife’s death and his beliefs in God.

In an attempt to educate people about the importance of the landmark Scopes trial case, author Rosey Dow chooses a unique and interesting way of presenting the material in *Reaping the Whirlwind*. The mysterious deaths, budding relationships, and introspective musings are enough to make this book a page-turner. She keeps the reader in suspense as to who the real killer is while allowing interesting glimpses into the mind of Trent Tyson as he comes to terms with his own beliefs. The characterization is tight and consistent and the dialogue realistic. Dow also includes enough subplots to keep the story moving at a quick pace.

Eileen Zgarlalic, Freelance Writer/Editor, Grand Forks, North Dakota


F. Lancaster County (Pa.)--Fiction; Guardian and ward--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Aunts--Fiction; Amish--Fiction. 316 p. Adult.

Embrittered by being made to feel inferior by her older sister, and emotionally wounded by the death of one of her students, Sarah Cain gives up her teaching job and pours her life into the fast track of real estate, high commissions, and an extravagant lifestyle. However, when Ivy, her widowed sister, dies and names Sarah guardian of her five Amish children, Sarah is forced to deal with her bitterness and grief in a way she never would have dreamed.

At first the “plain” life-style seems stark and oppressive to Sarah, the “fancy Englisher.” Eager to return to her “real” life in Oregon, Sarah immediately makes plans to find an Amish family to take over the children’s guardianship. During her stay with Ivy’s children, Sarah begins to develop great respect for Lydia, the oldest, who keeps the family together and the farm running. And she finds that little Anna Mae, who struggles mightily to come to terms with her mother’s death, tugs at her heart in a way that her former student did. Gradually, the Amish ways become more appealing to Sarah in her search for peace. As Sarah reads her sister’s journals, she discovers the transformation her sister underwent when she accepted Christ as her Savior. Sarah, too, comes to know the Lord, and decides to stay on as the children’s guardian.

*The Redemption of Sarah Cain*, by Beverly Lewis, is a story of hope and healing. It illustrates the subtle ways greed can infiltrate our lives, and reminds us that ultimately, the things of this world will not satisfy us. While the story does not specifically promote the Amish lifestyle, it makes one want to take a deep breath, slow down a bit, and appreciate life’s many blessings. As with Lewis’ other books, the characters are richly developed, and endear themselves to the reader; their struggles with life are real, and answers to their problems do not come easily—but eventually they do come, in the Lord’s timing.

Sherri Beeler, Teacher, Cascade Christian High School, Medford, Oregon


F. Italian Americans--Colorado--Fiction; Women pioneers--Fiction; Colorado--Fiction; Christian fiction; Western stories; Love stories. 395 p. Adult (High school).

Ten thousand feet up in the crags of the Colorado Rockies, nestles the throbbing mining town of Crystal. With all of her belongings trashed at the bottom of a cliff and her hot Italian blood bubbling, Carina determines to claim the home she purchased through the ad that enticed her to this drab hole. Carina finds her home already occupied by coarse characters, so she marches to the nearest lawyer’s office and is heartily welcomed and reassured that her concerns will be cared for. Carina unwittingly becomes immersed in the underbelly of malevolent politics fueled by the town’s legends and superstitions.

The Rose Legacy is an abandoned gold mine with an eerie history; and Quillan is a by-product of its deceased owners. His father was a savage and his mother a prostitute. He tries to maintain a low profile in Crystal to keep from disturbing his sleeping memories. But due to Carina’s nosiness about the history of the mine, tensions escalate to volcanic proportions and burst, engulfing the citizens of Crystal. The aftermath leads to vigilante justice and grisly death.

Author of the Rocky Mountain Legacy series, Kristen Heitzmann’s talent has evolved with *The Rose Legacy* which begins the Diamond of the...
Rockies series. She captures the essence of the surroundings and plunges the reader into the heart and soul of the main characters with a gripping intensity. This novel offers a twist of mystery, legend, romance, and foul play brought to justice by the citizens due to the disallowance of the law. The response to the effects of the gospel is reminiscent of the Bible’s parable of the sower with the seed failing on a variety of conditions. Character interaction chastely crescendos to just prior to the consummation of marriage, then resumes with the thought and emotions that follow. The conclusion, though adequate will tantalize the reader’s desire for the sequel.

Debbie Lindsay, Homeschool Parent, Eatonville, Washington


F. Divorced women--Fiction; Clergy--Fiction; Stalking victims--Fiction; Models (Persons)--Fiction; Vietnam--Fiction; Christian fiction. 332 p. Adult.


F. Americans--Travel--Vietnam--Fiction; Stalking victims--Fiction; Models (Persons)--Fiction; Vietnam--Fiction; Christian fiction. 332 p. Adult.

Patricia Koehler’s seemingly perfect life as the wife of a doctor on an island in the Puget Sound is a lie. Although she has a daughter and is pregnant with her second child, it is only when her best friend, Susan, stops by unannounced and overhears the obvious sounds of violence that Patricia’s secret is revealed. Her husband, Russell, beats her. Patricia continues to believe that her husband’s abuse can somehow be controlled if she just finds the correct way to respond to him. He is always so loving and kind after each episode of violence. Surely she could not have been so mistaken in her choice of men to marry.

He had seemed like the answer to her prayers when she first met him. Russell Koehler began courting her during her second year of teaching elementary school and soon after her mother had died of cancer. The son of wealthy parents, he had the means to plan wonderful, fairy-tale dates. Although she is engaged to the handsome and wealthy movie star Ted Curry, Kim finds herself incredibly attracted to the mission trip leader, Mick O’Donnell. She resists him fiercely, clinging desperately to the pleasure she finds in her up-scale lifestyle, and status-symbol fiancé. But as the Lord impresses Kim Lan with the response to the effects of the gospel, she is surprised to find herself praying for her ex-husband and his new wife. Eventually she is able to let go of her bitterness towards them. As her attraction to Josh, Marilyn resists with all her might the Lord working on Marilyn’s heart and opinion of her relationship with Jesus. While Beete Peterson’s novel, Serenity Bay, realistically portrays how difficult it is for women to leave abusive relationships, the aspect of Patricia’s spiritual awakening and growth seems rather forced.

Lillian Heytvelt, Librarian, Pomeroy, Washington


F. Motion picture actors and actresses--Family relationships--Fiction; Mothers--Death--Psychological aspects--Fiction; Grandmothers--Fiction; Sisters--Fiction; Christian fiction; Domestic fiction. 380 p. Adult.

Five sisters were abandoned by a mother they never knew and raised by a grandmother who loved them dearly. Now in their twenties and early thirties, the five women, all with different lifestyles, must discover who they really are. They come together for their mother’s funeral, but none feel any grief. Instead they haggle over the hurts that haunt them and question their relationships with one another. Through it all they find their grandmother, Mattie, stands silently by, knowing the only thing that can heal their hurts is the power of God. Mattie creates a powerfully illustrative quilt of how she sees the family. It is made of six large blocks, representing Mattie and the girls, and has a thin slender thread woven throughout that connects the blocks, just they are all connected. Disagreements and spiteful words pull the sisters apart, but tragedy reunites them and opens their eyes to the importance of forgiveness and love.

A Slender Thread by Tracie Peterson tackles the difficult subject of parental abandonment and all the issues that accompany it. Her characters are realistic and the dialogue and action compelling enough to keep the reader’s attention. One of the sisters, Deirdre, develops a gambling problem. Although Peterson deals with the problem and has the character come to accept her addiction, Deirdre does so easily compared with real life. However, this was the only weakness noted in plotting. The author examines the meaning of true forgiveness and allows the reader glimpses at the heart-wrenching agony living with unforgiveness brings.

Eileen Zygarlicke, Freelance Writer/Editor, Grand Forks, North Dakota


F. Physicians--Fiction; Medical novels; Christian fiction. 351 p. Adult.

Cowboy Casey and Buck Oppenheim, along with Arthur and Alma Collins, meet disaster in Solemn Oath’s first four pages. From those scenes, Hannah Alexander, the pseudonym for the husband and wife writing team of Cheryl

Adult fiction

S P R I N G  2 0 0 1  6 6  C H R I S T I A N  L I B R A R Y  J O U R N A L
and Melvin Hoddle, takes readers directly into the Knolls Community Hospital emergency room. Dr. Lukas Bower, the unwilling temporary director, and Dr. Mercy Richmond, who maintains a private practice, treat the wounded.

Abner and Delphi Bell, Clarence Knight and his sister Darlene, the Cuenet family, and teenager, Shannon Becker bring various troubles to emergency. Their problems intertwine with a hospital investigation launched by Bailey Little, a bitter and guilty man. Ups and downs of the personal lives of Dr. Lukas and Dr. Mercy add another dimension, especially when Dr. Mercy's husband, Theodore, shows up after his release from detox. His presence affects her and their daughter, eleven-year-old Tedi. Dr. Lukas helps Theodore find his way to faith in Christ. But what about Dr. Mercy's faith?

A strong attraction between the two doctors puts each in personal turmoil as multiple fires make folks wonder if the Knolls community has an arsonist on its hands. Then, because of a major disaster at the hospital, many questions suddenly have answers.

Cheryl and Melvin Hoddle have fashioned a fast-paced story with one emergency after another, both inside the hospital and elsewhere. Since Melvin Hoddle practices emergency medicine, descriptions of injuries, illnesses, and medical procedures hold an aura of real-life. Several plots successfully woven together create the theme: compassion costs, but it's worth it.

A large number of characters, primary and secondary, with others who make only a minor appearance, add to the hustle and bustle of A Solemn Oath. The writer rounds them out as real people who create in readers disgust, sympathy, and love, along with chuckles. The medical setting makes a welcome change in current fiction.


F. South Carolina—Fiction; Separated people—Fiction; Evangelicalism—Fiction; Journalists—Fiction; Christian fiction. 389 p. Adult.

Suncatchers could carry the subtitle, The Revitalization of Perry Warren. What starts out as an assignment to write a book about “fire and brimstone fanatics” ends up as a life-changing year for Perry.

When cracks in his marriage to Dinah open wide, Perry leaves her and their son Troy behind and goes to Derby, South Carolina. He moves into his sister’s empty house; immediately his next-door neighbors, Eldeen, Jewel, and Joe Leonard, befriend him.

Eldeen, elderly, dressed in odd clothes and talking constantly but at times eloquently, amazes Perry. He finds Jewel and her teen-aged son, Joe Leonard, who plays the tuba, intriguing. Under the guise of studying them, he goes along to the Church of the Open Door. Folks there also welcome him, but he resolves not to become involved. Concerns for Dinah and Troy continually pierce his mind.

Sunday services, weekly prayer meetings, the Fourth of July celebration, Wilderness Gospel Camp, a wedding, youth activities, and Joe Leonard’s injury, melt Perry’s resolve like snow in the sun. He sometimes feels preached at and at other times wonders about authenticity of all Eldeen and others say about God and answers to prayer. He surprises himself with certain spontaneous reactions.

Turner has created a character-driven story that moves slowly, even sometimes tediously, yet steadily to accomplish her goal. No real twists and turns of plot to keep readers going, but the characters do that themselves. She reveals a master-hand at describing details and showing characters rather than merely telling about them. Eldeen, believable, humorous, and always replete with something to say, bears well the weight of spiritual admonisher. Her words spin out naturally, full of advice, Scriptures, love, and understanding. Well-crafted flashbacks, Perry’s remembrances, reveal much about him and Dinah.

In Suncatchers, Turner avoids a preachy tone while speaking to many real-life situations. She expertly presents a message of encouragement to believers and invitation to non-believers. The book’s title is a metaphor for this message. Readers will find at the end of the book sixteen questions intended as discussion helps for reading groups.

Succinctly, Turner avoids a preachy tone while speaking to many real-life situations. She expertly presents a message of encouragement to believers and invitation to non-believers. The book’s title is a metaphor for this message. Readers will find at the end of the book sixteen questions intended as discussion helps for reading groups.


Tidings of Peace is four novellas of love during World War II. The author writes of four different, unrelated couples, and their individual journeys to love. David is a young man who escaped death aboard the USS Arizona because he was AWOL. Fulfilling a promise given to his deceased captain, Kenny, David travels to Washington State to visit Kenny’s family. David is determined to end his life through suicide immediately following the visit. But, when David arrives, he finds a family ready to welcome him as if he was their own. David is sure that if they knew his past, especially Kenny’s beautiful sister Rachel, they would reject him, as so many had in the past.

In the South Pacific, Erik bails out of his burning plane and finds himself on an island that is either deserted or, worse yet, full of cannibals. Erik had not been receiving mail from his fiancee nor his family back home and has been filled with fear and rejection. Now, he is convinced he will never leave this island alive, because God must have rejected him, too.

Melody is facing the birth of her first child, and her husband is fighting in Europe. When her parents discovered she was pregnant prior to her marriage, they threw her out of their house. Will Melody find reconciliation with her family? Will she be able to face this pregnancy and delivery feeling so alone?

Clara is excited, because she has just discovered she will be stationed with the Red Cross in the same location as her fiancee in Europe. But, rumors circle around that his company will be moving out on the eve of their wedding day. Clara is determined that she will be married in a real white wedding dress. Now, she is not even sure it the wedding will take place.

The author, Tracie Peterson, writes these novellas in the style of Grace Livingston Hill. The similarities are in the content and also the settings/era of the stories. Having read other works by Tracie Peterson and enjoying them immensely, I found these stories to be lacking in depth and found my interest steadily decreasing.


Those who have read the first two books in the Ribbons West series, will be delighted to continue following the life of the Baldwin children as they move west to Sacramento and become part of the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. Jordana Baldwin, feeling out of sorts living with her brother and his new wife, decides to embark on a career of her own, writing stories for New York newspapers about the building of the Central Pacific Railroad. At the same time she forms an alliance with Charles Crocker, head of that railroad, to serve as a spy for him in trying to finger those responsible for the theft and sabotage which has been plaguing the railroad’s progress. Against her family’s wishes, she disguises herself as young male reporter Joe Baldwin, and lives in the railroad camps in order to be accepted by the rough railroad workers.

Across the continent, Jordana’s long time friend Captain Rich O’Brien leaves the army and (unbeknownst to her) is hired by the Union Pacific Railroad as their spy. The intrigue builds when their paths cross and they become involved in each other’s missions. The two young adventurers not only manage to solve the mysteries they face on the railroad, but at the same time explore and solve some of the
problems which they face in their personal lives, crises of faith, family, and career.

Authors Judith Pella and Tracie Peterson show their expertise as Christian writers in creating believable characters who are able to live and share their faith without clubbing others over the head with it. Their witness is natural without resorting to fantastic miracles and instantaneous conversions to make their point.

Judy Driscoll, Retired Teacher, Poulsbo, Washington


F. United States. Navy. SEALS--Fiction; Widows--Fiction; Christian fiction; Love stories. 352 p. Adult (High school).

SEAL is the acronym for an elite branch of the U.S. Navy special forces. From the sea, air, or land, they get the job done. This is the basis upon which True Devotion is built.

Kelly, a young widow whose SEAL husband Nick is killed in the line of duty, grapples with her loss. Blaming God, she flees spirituality before everyone, and now caught in the ocean’s riptide while attempting to rescue a surfer, they drift further out to sea. With plenty of time to scrutinize her life and possible death she confesses her folly.

Joe, Nick’s buddy and their mutual friend, is Kelly’s mainstay when she needs emotional cleansing and support following Nick’s death. They explore the possibility of becoming more than friends, but have many issues to surmount. Kelly yearns for a family but is reluctant to risk more than friends, but have many issues to surmount. Kelly yearns for a family but is reluctant to risk.

Dee Henderson infuses this romance with facts and information about the “unsinkable” Molly Brown, who not only survived the gold rush, but was also a heroine of the sinking of the Titanic.

Virginia Brown, Library Assistant, Freelance Writer, Former Teacher, Sheridan, Wyoming


F. Newspaper publishing--Fiction; Women publishers--Fiction; Colorado--Fiction; Western stories; Love stories. 332 p. Adult.

Newspaper editor, Jennifer DeSpain, and Jason Stone, her assistant, have established a successful newspaper in Virginia City during Nevada’s gold rush. Now they are ready to face new challenges. Jennifer, her children, Jason, and their good friends Lita and Abe are moving to Black Hawk, Colorado, to establish a newspaper in the Colorado gold fields. On the train to Colorado, the notorious Kissing Bandit steals all of Jennifer’s money as well as a kiss. Although all of Jennifer’s capital for the newspaper is gone, Jason and Abe still have some money, which they pool to get the paper started. A serious accident leaves Jason paralyzed, and Jennifer is unable to print the newspaper by herself. Help comes in the form of a preacher and a handsome rancher.

In Unseen Riches, Jennifer, her family, and friends face the temptations and tragedies of life in the Colorado gold fields together, but they all must work out their own problems through their faith in God. How they accomplish this, get the scoop of the century for the newspaper, and discover the identity of the Kissing Bandit keeps the reader turning pages right to the end.

Unseen Riches is the second in The Chronicles of the Golden Frontier Series. The reader who has not read Riches Untold may have a difficult time understanding the relationship between the characters. Although this book is historical fiction, some great liberties have been taken with history, with the characters riding from Salt Lake through the Colorado Rockies to Golden, Colorado. Actually, the Union Pacific ran north of Colorado through Wyoming to avoid the mountains. However, this book is exciting with a good Christian message. Hopefully the reader may also be inspired to read other true stories about heroines of the Colorado gold rush including Virginia Cornell’s Doc Susie: The True Story of a Country Physician in the Colorado Rockies, Ballantine Books, 1992. Many excellent books have also been written about the “unsinkable” Molly Brown, who not only survived the gold rush, but was also a heroine of the sinking of the Titanic.

Eileen Zygarlicke, Freelance Writer/Editior, Grand Forks, North Dakota


F. Women--Fiction; Identity (Psychology)--Fiction; Psychological fiction; Christian fiction; Depression--Fiction. 387 p. Adult.

Picture-perfect Maggie Stovall puts her name into the church’s prayer circle basket. When assigned to pray, Laura is faithful to the leading of God to pray at odd times and places, and the cracks in the mask begin to show. As Maggie experiences bizarre occurrences that lead her to fear a nervous breakdown, she checks herself into a private Christian hospital. In When Joy Came to Stay Karen Kingsbury manages to refer to a brief seduction in the past with no doubt that the consequences of that sin and the subsequent deception about the birth of a daughter given up for adoption have seeded Maggie’s current difficulty.

Maggie deludes herself that her husband Ben is to blame because of his standards of purity that engendered her fear of disclosure. Fearing that she will be unacceptable to him when the truth comes out, she refuses to see him and demands a divorce. Finally recognizing the necessity of vulnerability for growth and healing, Maggie finds her way through a maze of self-deceit and guilt to sort out the conflicts that have short-circuited her life.

Her bewildered husband, an assistant DA too busy building his career to see his wife’s pain until her abrupt departure, begins an odyssey to discover the reason for her behavior and any possible way out of the confusion for both of them. The truths discovered are made more difficult, as they are first thrown at him by a despicable character he can’t believe that Maggie ever knew. As he fits more pieces to the puzzle he fights through rage to indifference. Then surprised by a fierce love for the child he finds whose hope and faith overrides her sadness, Ben is led to compassion. He becomes

Helen Bradley, retired police officer, once again proves her agility when she survives being locked in a storage closet, pushed onto rocks, shot at, banged on the nose by a fleeing culprit, locked in a storage closet, pushed onto rocks, and being in a car accident. All this happens because Helen, a retired policewoman, cannot resist the temptation to help investigate two murders at Bay Village on the Oregon coast. Before Helen and the police find answers for all the questions facing them, they must solve a third murder.

Surprised to hear her grandmother has disappeared before she arrived, Sari is more surprised when no one seems to care. The whispering Sari heard is explained when she finds a secret passage in the wall. Oscar Drayton, her grandmother’s lawyer, is found stabbed. Jessica, Monty’s wife, becomes increasingly resentful of Sari. Ron, Jessica’s cousin, wants to know Sari better. Although Sari broke her engagement to Michael before leaving New York, she still loves him and can’t understand her attraction to Ron.

While searching her grandmother’s room for clues to where she may be, Marianne, the maid, interrupts and challenges Sari to forgive her grandmother. Realizing she needs God’s help to resolve her problems, Sari asks Him to forgive her. Although there are still questions to be answered and problems to be resolved, Sari is now able to face them.

Sally Hawthorne spins a tale of love and forgiveness. Her love and knowledge of castles is evident. Each chapter ends with a situation that urges you to read on.


Sari Wyatt resents being ordered to Arizona by a grandmother she has never met. Raised in India by her missionary parents, Sari blames her grandmother for much of the hardship in her life and harbors bitter feelings toward her. On arriving in Arizona, Sari discovers her grandmother lives in a castle and is a real Duchess. Although Monty, her grandmother’s adopted son, tries to reassure her, Sari wonders if the Whispering Stones in her bedroom are warning her to leave.

"Is he seeing another woman?" wonder, “Is he seeing another woman?” Patricia H. Rushford takes readers on a busy spin from first to last in When Shadows Fall. At the end, everything becomes clear, and Helen discovers her worst fears have melted away.

This Helen Bradley #4 will not disappoint anyone who has met her before. Once again Rushford brings her to life with everyday details—the kind of tea Helen prefers, color and style of clothes, feelings and emotions. The conversational writing style helps readers feel as if they participate in Helen’s life. She’s a good friend to take along on vacation or to invite in for a lazy day of reading.

Bettina M. Hockett, Freelance Writer, Teacher, Speaker, Newberg, Oregon


Lydia, as a young girl, is a headstrong tomboy. Her mother is absorbed in arts, drama, and music. Her father spends most of his time on his business, which leaves Lydia to her own devices. At sixteen she falls in love with Menander, and against her father’s better judgement he agrees to their marriage. After their first child is born, Menander decides to join the army. Shortly after he leaves, Lydia discovers she is pregnant again. When Menander is killed, Lydia is left to fend for herself and her children.

In a time when women did not normally deal in the world of commerce, Lydia makes her mark in Philippus. Even when she becomes a Christian late in life, her faith doesn’t seem to do much for her irascible character.

Author, Thom Lemmons has done his research. Careful attention to details puts the reader into the Roman colony of Philippus of 28 A.D. The characters drink wine, a normal part of that culture and does not depict drunkenness.

Mysteyman Pitman Crane, Freelance Writer, Editor, Alderwood Manor, Washington

ADULT FICTION
100’s—Philosophy & Psychology


This book is a good place to start for anyone interested in the areas of theology and bioethics. Written from an overt, non-apologetic Christian mindset, Eyer uses the format of real world situations that are used to model philosophies both old and new. This will benefit the reader greatly as many readers may not have had, or not had in a long time, a philosophy class that contained Christian thinkers. Eyer then systematically presents the mindset of each of these philosophies in the field of bioethics. This is a large field and Eyer admits that it is for each person to decide how to live out Christian ethics and be both old and new. This will benefit the reader greatly as many readers may not have had, or not had in a long time, a philosophy class that contained Christian thinkers. Eyer then systematically presents the mindset of each of these philosophies in the field of bioethics. This is a large field and Eyer admits that it is for each person to decide how to live out Christian ethics but he maintains that once the facts are presented the Christian will know the “mind of Christ” and therefore will know what action needs to be taken.

The book is attractive and the type easy to manage. There are end notes, a detailed bibliography, and an appendix which is especially helpful for its explanations. Reverend Eyer discusses topics such as abortion, quality of life, reproduction, and genetic engineering with great care and consideration.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Limwood, Kansas

200’s—Religion

★


Can a person come to faith through the intellect or is it merely an emotive response or is it some combination of the two? That is the question answered by Dr. Don Bierle, who although raised in a Christian home, was never a believer until he was in college. Like many others, he believed that faith in Christ was an ignorant superstition for the emotionally and mentally weak. In Surprised by Faith he takes us step by step through an apologetic breakdown of how a person truly comes to faith.

In this succinct book he leads the reader through the basic scientific proofs of Christianity through the essence of what belief truly is and then finally confronts the reader with the question we all must answer—“what will you do with Christ?” Each chapter has thought provoking quotes both by the faithful and by those who have chosen to reject or are undecided about faith in Christ. His style and arguments are reminiscent of Josh McDowell.
and C.S. Lewis. In fact, Dr. Bierle quotes Lewis quite a few times and the title *Surprised by Faith* is similar to *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis’ account of his own spiritual awakening.

Each chapter is concluded with several interactive questions which confront the reader with their applicability to one’s life. There is no loose ends but neither is the story or the life changed. Snell, an accomplished musician and author, offers insights into the nature of God through various evidences of the nature and ways of God. Although there are twelve commandments, each of six chapters is organized around facets of God’s character such as love, sovereignty, holiness, and truth. Scripture in boxes breaks up the text. A summary ends each chapter with a focus to pray and think about. Further, the authors guide readers through various evidences of the nature and ways of God. Each of six chapters is organized around facets of God’s character such as love, sovereignty, holiness, and truth. Scripture in boxes breaks up the text. A summary ends each chapter with a focus to pray and think about.


231.7. Providence of God; God--Attributes; Christian life. 180 p. Adult.

Beginning with the assertion that God’s ways are not our ways, the authors guide readers through various evidences of the nature and ways of God. Each of six chapters is organized around facets of God’s character such as love, sovereignty, holiness, and truth. Scripture in boxes breaks up the text. A summary ends each chapter with a focus to pray and think about. Five short chapters on leading a group discussion on the ways of God complete the volume. Numerous examples from scripture illustrate each point. The authors discuss ways people avoid truth, rationalize their actions, and avoid God’s assignments. We are encouraged to know his ways and thoughts so we can “identify and respond to his working in our lives.”

While a direct route may be the human choice, God’s purpose is more than the task at hand; it is the drawing of people to himself. First he makes himself available. Then God forgives, calls into being that which was not, teaches and works through those that fear and believe him. Insights into the nature of God enable us to find the purpose, promise, and reliability of his perfect love. Choosing to trust God, we can accept his wisdom and believe he will provide for us because he is sovereign over provisions, circumstances, and fears. We can allow God to shape our lives with his holiness through repentance and obedience. As we do so we are available to instruction and correction and escape the destruction of sin, becoming more fruitful. He says that his word will accomplish whatever he desires. Unbelief rejects the truth and Jesus rejects unbelief. God is eternal and the authors remind us that what we do here in time affects us in eternity. We move into alignment with God’s purpose when we can desire to share God’s power and love even with those who reject us.

Roy Edgemon and Henry Blackaby ask us in *The Ways of God* to recognize the contrast of living in time; of thinking we have time to forgive or repent later, needing to justify our anger or rebellion now. “Eternal life is a relationship with a person,” far beyond head knowledge. “The clearest way to know the ways of God is to know him personally through our covenant God; God’s sovereign ways, His ways of holiness and truth, and his eternal ways. As God transforms us into His image, we can function in his ways and serve his purpose.”

This book would be especially helpful for someone who is unsure where to start reading God’s word. Specific pointers to scripture encourage understanding of basic Christian principles, as well as the nature of God. While it doesn’t engender spontaneous enthusiasm for the subject, short periods of reading should engage and encourage thoughtful meditation in all but the most jaded reader. The guidance in this book would be useful for revitalizing perhaps even that unfortunate soul.

Carol B. Taylor, Freelance Writer/Certified Social Worker, Poulsbo, Washington


231.7. Covenants--Religious aspects--Christianity; Trust in God–Christianity. 278 p. Adult.

Covenant: perhaps this not so familiar word has escaped your notice and your understanding; yet, as a Christian, it is an essential and rich word that encompasses the very promises and blessings of God himself. Actually, it embraces the very essence of who God is. Kay Arthur, a well-known Bible teacher, presents a wealth of information about our covenant making-God. Without understanding what this covenant is, we cannot partake in or enjoy all that the Lord has intended.

In the book *Our Covenant God* we find rich truths that will bring the Christian into a closer and more relevant relationship with God. Although these precepts are not always simple to grasp, the reader will enjoy unfolding revelation of who God is and who we are in Him. Step by step, truth is revealed and celebrated in its simplicity and impact on the believer. Glimpses into the joy the author experiences in sharing these rich insights gives one an occasional sense of Max Lucado style—sincere and insightful eloquence and enthusiasm. Anyone desiring to grow in the knowledge and love of God will welcome the teachings within this book.

Mary McKinney, Former Teacher, Freelance Writer, Editor, Port Orchard, Washington


222.92. Jesus Christ--Nativity; Jesus Christ--Art; Jesus Christ--Biography. 95 p. Adult (High school).

In her own inimitable style, Sister Wendy Beckett presents the nativity of Christ using a series of beautiful miniatures and illuminations from manuscripts in the Vatican’s Apostolic Library. *Sister Wendy’s Nativity* expresses both the connection between stealing and self-respect. Significant theft. The discussion also notes a connection between stealing and self-respect.

Recommended for all church and Christian school libraries.

Lenny H FIRST LIBRARY JOURNAL 71 SPRING 2001


222. Ten Commandments (Bible. O.T.). 5 videocassettes (60 min. ea.); sd, col. Adult (High school).

Adrian Snell offers each commandment’s application, biblical context, and helpful points, and while he is talking, interesting pictures appear in the background. The viewer is introduced to a current day situation where another person is highlighted to accentuate the application of this commandment, e.g. in the Second Commandment, “Do not bow down to anything” we meet a woman, originally part of Koresh’s Waco commune, and her journey in coming to understand this commandment. There are no loose ends but neither is the contemporary story perfectly laid out—the viewer is able to think and apply the truths evident in the situation. Snell, an accomplished pianist and guitarist, and singer of such songs as “City of Peace” and “My Heart Shall Mourn,” has produced twelve solo albums over his twenty-five year musical career. His narration adds a quiet, smooth, inviting touch without any overtones of hokum.

The quality of the video and narration adds to the series. The discussion is short and easy to follow, and fast moving with the background scenes. In addition, the discussion includes the current day situation and other applications to probe the commandment’s meaning. Each commandment segment stands by itself and can be viewed in that setting. An introduction to the commandments, and periodic reference to another commandment, also notes how these guides fit together and present a picture of healthy life.

Teachers can use these with confidence in high school classes, and adults will be challenged at their applicability to one’s life. “There is no heavy theological jargon, and the viewer is likely to see the commandment in a new or expanded manner, e.g. Commandment Eight, “Do not steal,” considers overt theft and ripping someone off but also considers how negligence, waste, indifference, and disregard become significant theft. The discussion also notes a connection between stealing and self-respect.

Leroy H.
Gail Welborn, Freelance Writer/Reporter, Everett, Washington


234.'6120. Jesus Christ--Lordship; Salvation; Spiritual life--Christianity; Kingdom of God. 271 p. Adult.

“Tell me who your leader is—Boris Yeltsin, Louis Farrakhan, Gloria Steinem or Billy Graham—and I can immediately tell you all kinds of things about you...even if your leader is yourself, which is what most of us prefer,” writes Pastor Jan Hettinga, Senior Pastor of Northshore Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington.

In twenty-nine, short, easy-to-read chapters, Hettinga asks the thought-provoking question, "Who do you follow?" He addresses the current lack of worldwide leadership today. His research might surprise most readers. He bases his assumptions on personal observation, opinion polls, and a distressed, worldwide populace. He claims leadership is further compromised by the breakdown of the family unit where 50% of the western world is intimate with the word divorce. "Is it any wonder,” he asks, "why the coming generation’s motto is to question authority?” He says society should be able to look to the church for leadership examples and moral authority. But, the disturbing truth is that Christians struggle with these issues as well.

The chapters are broken into five sections. In each Hettinga shows why Jesus is the safest leader to follow. Then discusses why we reject the leadership of Jesus in an unsafe world filled with sin and rebellion. Next, he reveals how to get back on track and into personal relationship with Him, rather than just the practice of religion. After that he explains why there is no formula, only followers who teach by example through faith. Subsequently he discloses how to have a healthy fear of the Lord and blossom as a Christian within that context.

Each section ends with “Taking Another Step,” comprised of meditative questions to ensure a complete understanding. The author illustrates whom you follow determines where you go and cites the differences between following and believing. He writes, “Believing is a spectator sport, following is what makes you a player.”

An engaging and thought provoking read, Follow Me is sorely needed in our world today to show people how to experience a personal relationship with Jesus, one where you can become the follower He created you to be.

Haugen has seen so much hurting. As director of the United Nations genocide investigation, Haugen went to Rwanda and saw the carnage first-hand. Additionally, he has witnessed the effects of apartheid in South Africa and guerrilla war in the Philippines. But it was not only in the far corners of the world that Haugen saw others in need; he saw need for justice in the United States as well. Haugen doesn’t gloss over the carnage nor does he dwell on it as one who has no hope. He simply states the situation in all its ugliness to underscore the biblical teaching regarding God’s heart concerning justice. His goal is not only to bring together the ones with needs with those who can meet those needs such as attorneys, judges, officers, etc. but also to equip other Christians to pray, send money, or whatever needs to be done.

In 1994 the International Justice Mission was formed to make Christian public justice professionals available to serve Global Christian workers when they encounter cases of abuse or oppression in their communities. As a result, Christian workers have professionals they can call upon throughout the world to help them with matters involving injustice. If that were all this book did it would be required reading, but Haugen takes the issue of justice and shows it as dear to the heart of God. In three units Haugen provides an introduction to the injustice of our world, the character of our God, and the difference.

This book has specific questions and answers to pressing problems in the world. Haugen never over simplifies but rather states the exact reasons for why there needs to be this service and how it needs to be done. All of the situations are carefully noted in the back of the book. Additionally, there is a page for additional resources. This is a must read for the Christian church.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas


242.3.35. Christmas--Prayer-books and devotion-- English. Carols--English--History and criticism. 112 p. CD-ROM. Adult (all ages).

Kenneth W. Osbeck tells the stories behind twenty-five beloved Christmas carols in Joy to the World! Familiar carols such as “Silent Night!” “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,” and “Away in a Manger” are among the carols featured. Also included are less familiar ones like “While by Our Sheep,” “Once in Royal David’s City,” and “Lo! How a Rose E’er Blooming.”

Each chapter contains the inspiration behind the carol, a devotional thought, Scripture, and the complete musical score with lyrics. Interesting, little-known information adds new meaning to each song. For example, “Ring the Bells” was published in 1958 by Harry Bollback. He was standing in line at a bus station in Sao Paulo, Brazil, when he heard bells ringing for The Virgin Mary. His thoughts turned to the birth of Jesus and the words and music came to him.

When he arrived at his friend’s home, he sat down and played it. “I had nothing to do with the writing of it. The Lord just gave it to me.” Filled with inspiration, the volume is suitable for personal and family devotions. With twenty-five songs, there’s one for each day from December first through Christmas Day.

The book comes packaged with a CD also entitled Joy to the World! The Discovery Singers perform the carols found in the book. Families will appreciate this book/CD combo that adds enrichment to Christmas celebrations.

Lydia E. Harris, Freelance Writer & Educator, Seattle, Washington


This collection of international prayers expresses the act of praying from a variety of prayer-ers. Some are from individuals, others more generic like ‘women of Canada.’ Many of the prayers are contemporary and others from women of past ages. Some prayers are one-liners and others are longer and more reflective. Some lend themselves to use for public occasions and others for private use.

The prayers encompass life situations such as matters of trust and hope, forgiveness and devotion, excitement, and crying in desperation. Prayers are about work and friends, about families and individuals, about concerns for peace and justice, and sometimes, just about being.

Of particular help are an index of subjects, and an index of first lines of the prayers. One is sure to find something, whether it’s the quiet elegance of Helen Steiner Rice, “And little do we realize how contented we would be, if we knew that we were beautiful when our hearts are touched by Thee” or the direct approach of Stewart herself, “Here I am, Lord, inquiring of you. Please, is there an answer?” or Jan Pichard’s paraphrase of Psalm 105:1-5, “We thank you, God! We want to tell the world what you have done: your wonderful works…”

Stewart is also author of Women of Vision (Loyola Press, 2000).

Lorry Hemonding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida


The sixty short stories in The Perfect Catch weave real-life fishing experiences, scripture, and applicable lessons for life in general together. Even those with little or no fishing experience will find enough here to make the readings worthwhile. The stories lend themselves to meditation, or as a daily or periodic reminder about the eternal values of life. The careful blend of Old and New Testament stories make this a way to appreciate Scripture even more. Amid the fishing tips and fish tales (tall but true), one learns biblical thoughts about creation, learning, relationships, priorities, disappointments, and challenges.

Wright is an avid bass fisherman and a licensed marriage, family and child therapist. Macauley has provided some illustrations for this work, and as Wright’s adult daughter, shares his delight for fishing.

Lorry Hemonding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida


The modern-day proliferation of self-help gurus, New Age philosophies entering churches and schools, and the growth of humanism and pantheism serve as the backdrop to The Image Maker. Self-pride, self-esteem, and self-fulfillment are discussed and Crist offers a paradigm that enables the reader to understand one’s identity that comes from a biblical worldview and relationship with God. He enables the reader to understand that our God generated identity is the key to being free from addictions and dependencies. It makes for quality individual reading, and could also be used well for reflection in group discussion. I particularly like the way Crist is able to point out less than welcome developments in our culture without harping on the negativity but instead offering a positive way to move ourselves forward in Christ.

Crist is the father of three sons, spiritual overseer of a network of churches, and companion to wife Judith. He has an endearing knack to filter in the truths of Christianity into his discussion in a way that makes such heavy words like redemption, justification, incarnation, or righteousness seem not only right but easily digestible.

Recommended for church libraries and in collections where readers seek self-help guidance.

This is Laurie Hall’s second book. Her first, Affair of the Mind, discussed her ordeal with her husband’s addiction to pornography. She references that book in her new book taking the reader to the next level when there has been a betrayal in the marriage—forgiveness. Her book is written as if one is sitting across from her drinking coffee in the kitchen. Her honest discussions of her sadness and experiences will connect with those hurting. Most importantly, her appropriate use of humor make this book one to read and turn to in the hard times. She presents, in the opening chapters, an overview of our hurting society. She spends much of her time reporting statistics of the situation in the church and in the world. Throughout her book Hall doesn’t mince words or gloss over the situation of a hurting man or woman where trust has been destroyed. She simply states that there is a specific process that has brought her and her husband peace. She presents her ideas regarding how marriage is not understood well in three units entitled, dealing with the outward realities, dealing with the inward realities, and dealing with the ongoing realities.

Each chapter begins with a quote of an individual and scripture. She then proceeds to rip any pretense for the reader to remain unforgiving in their present situation. Each chapter ends with questions that force the reader to examine himself/herself rather than the other person.

The book is a quality paperback. Hall discusses depression, pornography and its effects, abuse, as well as other topics candidly. Appendix A is a table indicating how one can discern abusive leadership. Appendix B is a listing of recommended reading ordered by topicality. She qualifies this reading list by stating that she doesn’t endorse every book; she just found it generally helpful in her understanding of forgiveness. Her notes section is worth reading on its own.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas


Using the Book of Nehemiah as a running illustration, Visioneering describes the process of recognizing, developing, implementing, and maintaining a vision. The book constantly reminds the reader that visions begin, end, and have their purpose in glorifying God and expanding His Kingdom. The text introduces two new words into the lexicon: “visioneering,” the process of developing and maintaining vision; and “visioncasting,” the sharing of a vision with others.

Visioneering’s eighteen chapters thoroughly cover a number of topics: vision birth, prayer, faith, moral authority, and godly purpose. The book also addresses vital topics such as planning, public relations, organizational behavior, and team development. Visioneering covers the secular and religious aspects of vision in a natural, smooth manner. Appropriately, the book ends with a challenge: “Pay the price. Embrace the vision.”

Visioneering is well written, well researched and well organized. Author Andy Stanley marches through the Book of Nehemiah in an orderly, thorough way. Despite that order and structure, the book is an engaging read. Additionally, Pastor Stanley goes out of his way to tie everything, at every opportunity, back to our Lord and the building of His Kingdom.

Anyone who reads the text should develop a complete understanding of vision. The entire subject is made accessible and understandable. While remaining true to a scriptural and biblical basis, Visioneering does not become sanctimonious or dogmatic. It’s easy to imagine any secular businessman picking up this book and being enriched by its content.

Visioneering will, by its nature, be most valuable to the leaders and managers of organizations and institutions. Any parent, pastor, teacher or leader should find something of value within these pages. Happily, even those who seek to simply manage themselves with benefit from reading this book.

This book is a valuable and important resource for anyone who wants to get something done.

Kirk Hunt, Instructor, Pima County Community College, Business & Industry Division, Tucson, Arizona

Bunnie Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas

When couples pray together, by Jan Stoop and David Stoop struggled to pray together during their early years of marriage. Jan yearned for spiritual intimacy with Dave, but he resisted when she suggested they join in prayer. Problems like theirs are not uncommon. informal statistics reveal only four percent of Christian couples actually pray together on a regular basis.

Whether marriage partners already pray together or want to start, When Couples Pray Together has much to offer. It brims with stories of praying couples, answered prayers, and practical guidance. Written in a friendly tone, it covers why couples should pray together, why they don’t, and how to begin.

The Stoops, now grandparents, have prayed with each other daily for almost thirty years and list marital stability as an important benefit. While divorce statistics soar even among Christians, one marriage ministry reported: If
Parents of chronic kids will be comforted to know they aren’t alone in coping with their situations and will value this supportive resource. It offers tremendous help to raise well-adjusted children who know God has a purpose for their illness and lives. Also included are useful Scripture verses and an appendix with resources. I strongly recommend this resource for families with chronic kids and others who deal with them.

Lydia E. Harris, Freelance Writer & Educator, Seattle, Washington


Real Family Values sets out to clarify the values that are part of our cultural milieu and how these values help us understand the real forces at work in the changes we experience in life. It also seeks to offer suggestions and guidance as to how one can remove any moral confusion in the home and one’s family.

This book will be resource for anyone interested in issues involved in many topics including no-fault divorce, new definitions of what constitutes a family, safe sex, and values-neutral schools are affecting our culture. Lewis is able to bridge discussion and deal with the polarization of those who belong in one camp or another, e.g., pro-choice or pro-life, pro alternative lifestyles or anti homosexuals. His frank discussion and open-heart can enable adults to look farther, and discussion or study groups to probe the issues.

Lewis pastors a church in Little Rock, Arkansas, and he and his wife Sherard have four children. He has also helped lead and develop a Men’s Fraternity ministry. A graduate of the University of Arkansas, Western Theological Seminary, and Talbot Theological Seminary, Dr. Lewis has written several books, including *Rocking the Roles: Building a Win-Win Marriage* (Navpress, 1999). He has appeared on radio and television programs including Family Life Today, Focus on the Family, and The 700 Club.

Lenny Henningsrad, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District; Fort Myers, Florida


For many years, author Elisabeth Elliot has been an example of godly womanhood and faithful Christian service. Widowed in her twenties when husband Jim Elliot and four companions were massacred by Ecuador Indians they were attempting to reach for Christ, she returned to Ecuador with toddler daughter Valerie in tow to live for eleven years, ministering to the very tribe that had killed her husband. She was widowed a second time in later years when husband, Addison Leitch, died of cancer. Despite the tragedies she has endured, Elliot believes fervently in the goodness and mercy of God and, with the help of husband Lars Gren, shares her trust in and love for God with hundreds of thousands of people annually through her books, magazine articles, and radio program Gateway to Joy.

But how did she become the woman she is today? What is her secret? Part of the answer to that is in the pages of *The Shaping of a Christian Family*, as Elliot tells of her childhood and growing up years and the example and training she received from parents Philip and Katherine Howard. In the introduction she says, “Let’s live before our children that they may be able to truly honor us…” she then goes on to honor her parents and the way they chose to raise their children, using excerpts from her mother’s autobiography, her father’s speeches, her memories, and those of her siblings. She includes eight pages of family photos and a suggested reading list for parents and ends, in the afterword, by saying “[although] the principles [written about in this book] are sound and biblical, I believe, their application will differ in different times and in different homes” and then encouraging readers to ask God for help in building their own homes.

Betty Winslow, Librarian, Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio

This book is a must for any Christian who is living with depression personally or who knows anyone who is living with the disease. A Christian counselor who lives with depression discusses the deep pathos and mind-set of a depressed person. His writing resonates with the peace of God and yet the pain of depression. There are five parts with short, one to two page stories that provide the reader with clear vision into the mind of the depressed. There are mini chapters that clearly show the depressed are able to experience joy.

Coleman spends precious print space to remind others regarding what to do and not do as well as what to say or not say. These insightful suggestions are offered to help those suffering with depression as well as those who have loved ones experiencing depression. Coleman writes from the heart and his humor and self-analysis are powerful to read. Many of the mini sections end with a scripture verse. Especially helpful is

Lydia E. Harris, Freelance Writer & Educator, Seattle, Washington

One-third of American families are estimated to have children with life-altering diseases. Authors Elizabeth Hoekstra and Mary Bradford, both sisters and nurses, are mothers of such children. In *Chronic Kids, Constant Hope*, they share struggles and triumphs and offer help and encouragement to parents with chronically ill children. Written with compassion and sensitivity, the book brims with Scripture, hope, and practical advice.

The authors understand the hurt, disappointment, and grief parents feel and cover pertinent topics. They aren’t afraid to tackle difficult questions and provide honest answers. Subjects include anger towards God, prayers for healing, medical care, how to respond when others are insensitive, educating yourself about disease, bonding as a family unit, how chronic disease affects siblings, schooling for the ill child, and much more. The authors discuss ways to cope emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and encourage readers to hope in God, who will not disappoint them. They suggest parents write stories of their children’s illnesses so they can testify about God’s faithfulness, provision, and protection when asked about their children.


Loren Cunningham is the founder of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and knows from firsthand experience to expect big things from God. Daring to Live on the Edge is a book both for those who make a living doing ministry and those who are financial supporters of ministry. With chapters entitled Living by Faith in the 9 to 5 World and How to Ask for Money, Cunningham addresses these widely divergent audiences, and does so admirably. The subtitle, The Adventure of Faith and Finances, points directly to the goal of the book which is to encourage people to live by faith in both the giving and the receiving of money. This is not another Larry Burkett/Ron Blue how-to-budget-your-money book. Cunningham shows that a person choosing to live by faith will experience God in a deeper way. To support his stance, he uses numerous examples of people living by faith in extreme circumstances.

Though this book emphasizes faith, Cunningham carefully differentiates between God providing for our needs and God giving us our wants. This is not a book about God giving us our wants. It is about having faith in God’s provision when He has called you to minister. By giving, even a little, we may never know how much God can use our little bit to show his faithfulness to someone. Overall, Daring to Live on the Edge is a very balanced view of finances from one who has seen God do amazing things.

Robert M. Lindsey, Associate Library Director, Hannibal, Missouri


Chuck Colson’s book, Against the Night, first published in 1989, is available in this new printing which includes a new preface written by the author and a study guide. The book was widely read in its first release and will, no doubt, enjoy the praise of a new generation of Christians that is struggling with the same issues of how the Church of Jesus Christ should relate to the fallen culture in which it finds itself.

Colson sounds the clarion that the Church is not changing the world. Many times its ineffectiveness is linked directly to its desire to be “relevant” and “adaptable” to the pagan society. Unfortunately, this is not what God requires of His Church, Colson argues. Instead, the author reminds us that Christ calls His Church to be the Church, to be obedient to His commands. Of course, the upshot is that this obedience actually will result in a changed culture. Thus, much of our desire to “change the world” is misdirected and ill-advised. Our desire—challenges Colson—must be obedience to the Lord.

To support his claim Colson provides an outstanding series of essays that provide lessons in the history of culture. Colson transcends contemporary theological divisions as he effortlessly wraps quotations from Roman Catholic theologians around stories about pietistic evangelical successes. Colson is one whose experience sees beyond denominational labels to what God is actually accomplishing among His people. Quite often Colson shares personal anecdotes about his ministry experiences as a lecturer, lobbyist, and an advocate for prison reform. He peppers the narrative with examples from his days in the Nixon White House, Watergate, federal prison, and now the lecture circuit.

Christians who think about how the Church functions in a postmodern society marked by a seeming lack of absolutes are encouraged to read this book thoroughly; those who have read it before are advised to revisit it.

Daniel S. Brown, Professor of Communication, Indiana Wesleyan University, Indianapolis, Indiana


266.023. Wycliffe Bible Translators—Pictorial works; Bible—Translating—History. 168 p. Adult (High school).

October 1, 1991, was like Any Given Day in the Life of the Bible—except that on that day over 100 members of Wycliffe Bible Translators in fifty countries took thousands of color photographs to provide a glimpse into a portion of the many varied peoples and activities involved in the worldwide Bible translation effort. This lavish 8 1/2” x 11” book includes nearly 300 of those photographs, arranged by hours in a “dawn to dusk” sequence. Missionary linguists from several different countries go through the daily routines of their lives as they build friendships, learn unwritten languages, and work with native speakers to produce Bible translations for those who have never had the Scriptures in the language of their heart. The team of technical specialists supporting the work of Wycliffe field linguists includes radio technicians, airplane pilots, computer specialists, graphic artists, audio and video specialists, scholars, teachers for “missionary kids,” literacy workers, government liaison and administrative personnel, to name a few. As part of their language learning process, these missionaries often build personal friendships through medical and community development activities. Members of the lay ministry, Wycliffe Associates, contribute to hands-on building projects around the world.

The printing and binding are top quality—the gutters on the several double-page spreads line up beautifully. Several inset photos and occasional pages with black background and white text provide visual variety. Captions accompanying photos identify people groups, geographic locations, the names of personnel featured, and the photographers. (Due to low contrast, some eyes may need magnifying glasses to read text comments printed over a very few double-page spreads.) Scripture passages interspersed throughout the book relate to the diverse activities portrayed. Any Given Day demonstrates how many people throughout the world affect, and are affected by, the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Donna B. Bowling, Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics Library, Dallas, Texas


266.023. Wycliffe Bible Translators—Pictorial works. 148 p. Adult.

An oversized paperback book, In the Image of God contains page after page of illustrations depicting mankind from all over the world. The book is divided into the following areas: North America, Central America, South America, Eurasia/Asia, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. All illustrators are Wycliffe Bible Translators. The artists (amateur and professional) portray the image of God in a large sense, in conjunction with Bible verses. Hyatt Moore writes a paragraph of comments that correspond to the Bible verses and the artwork. The illustrations range from: pen and ink drawings, oil on canvas, photographs of sculpture, watercolor, and acrylic on canvas. For each geographic region, the illustrators have given the reader a glimpse of what the native people look like at work and at play.

There is no index nor is there a table of contents included. The illustrations are mainly color but there are some in black and white. The last page of the book explains the Bibleless People Prayer Project. An address and website are listed for those readers who may be interested in learning more about the project.

Connie J. Weaver, Church & Reference Librarian, Newville, Pennsylvania

266.902. El Sembrador (Honduras); Hawk, Don; Hawk, Twana; Missions--Honduras. 253 p. Adult (High school).

Kneeling in his cornfield, Don Hawk answers ye t o God’s unexpected plan for his life. Come What May is the true story of Twana and Don Hawk who left all they knew in 1947 to be missionaries in Honduras. Because their vision was unique, they were not given the financial support of the missionary board. Undaunted, the Hawks sold their prospering Ohio farm and moved to the Central American jungle using their own money. Through difficult times, they never waver from their goal to have a self-supporting farm school that teaches disadvantaged boys a vocation and tells them about Christ’s love. Overcoming many obstacles, the school is eventually self-supporting and also validated by the Honduran government. Many boys’ lives are forever changed, and many neighbors come to know Christ as a result of Don and Twana’s tireless work. The name of the school, “El Sembrador,” means The Sower. Many seeds of faith are planted at the school and many former students go on to the ministry. Some seeds are still waiting to sprout and Twana continues to pray for those. El Sembrador is still in existence today and operated by Don and Twana’s children and grandchildren.

Author Betty M. Hockett does a fine job of making the Hawk’s struggles, joys, and answers to prayer come to life for the reader. This book is an exciting biography with a touch of humor which adults and teens will enjoy reading. To make for easier reading, Hockett put the pronunciation for the many Spanish words in parentheses. A fifteen-page photo album is included. Putting faces to names adds an extra dimension to the story. Following God, wherever he leads, no matter what, is an important lesson at any age.

Elizabeth Coleman, Freelance Writer, Tumwater, Washington


This book is really two books enmeshed in one: a chronicle of the Youth With a Mission ministry, and a how-to on recognizing God’s direction.

Youth With A Mission (YWAM) started with a vision Cunningham saw of waves of young people spreading across continents with the good news of Jesus Christ. He took it from vision to reality by seeking God’s leading and learning to obey with pure motives. Along the way he battled with setbacks and with pride and struggled to keep in close relationship with God. He lists his failures as well as his successes, including what he learned from each.

He periodically went off by himself to fast, pray, and read scripture, inspired by Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness before His public ministry. He received confirmation of God’s leading through other people and through extraordinary means. And he saw his ministry multiply as he remained in communion with God.

Cunningham tells YWAM’s story in a straightforward but entertaining manner, recording the contributions of family, friends, and others. He closes the book with a chapter listing twelve principles to keep in mind while pursuing the Lord’s direction.

Andrea R. Hueslenbeck, Freelance Writer and Drama Minister, Tempe, Arizona


Companjen, as the general editor, has provided an excellent reference for Christians who would like information regarding how to pray more effectively for specific countries. He is the president of Open Doors International that deals with the persecuted church around the world. His commitment to the persecuted church is documented in the contributor page of the book.

Justin Long has done the research for this book. Long has had over ten years experience specific to missions and unreached peoples and countries. Companjen has selected 52 nations where prayer is critical. He chose 52 countries so one may pray for a different country each week. The countries are presented alphabetically in the book. On page eleven is a powerful chart indicating the 52 countries where persecution against Christians is the worst. Present in each chapter is a brief description of the country with a statistical box inset. Additionally, there are short paragraphs pertaining to church life in the country, persecution of people, the future for the country and/or church, and specific prayer topics. Every now and then the people who are in the front lines in the targeted country share an interesting story. This would be an excellent addition to any library.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas


Denise Marie Siino writes a gripping story about the kidnapping of Ray Rising in Colombia and his subsequent two years as a prisoner. Siino begins Guerrilla Hostage with a little background information on the political situation in Colombia and moves into the day of the kidnapping. The Risings were in Colombia working with Wycliffe Bible Translators. After his capture, Ray does his best to remain a faithful witness in circumstances that most of us cannot imagine. To remain hidden from the Colombian army, the guerrilla groups move often and change personnel frequently. Rising suffers the suspense of wondering which will kill him first, the kidnappers or the jungle. He experiences extreme loneliness and doubt. Allowed to have a New Testament that included some Psalms, Ray spends significant portions of each day reading and wrestling with the “why’s” and “how much longer’s.” Through it all, God shows that He is indeed in control even though Rising may never know why the Lord permitted this circumstance or what eternal effect his captivity will have.

Siino portrays the terrorists as human beings with feelings and motivations of their own. She assists us in picturing them as Ray came to see them. While some captors taunt and harass, Rising, others risk rebuke by befriending him. Beginning the book with some background on Colombia helps put the story in context. Additional features include appendix of names, eight pages of pictures and footnotes. Some important details contained in the footnotes are not used in the text. Readers from high school through adult would enjoy this journey of faith.

Robert M. Lindsey, Associate Library Director, Hannibal, Missouri

300’s—Social Sciences


308.81. Marriage; Marriage—Psychological aspects; Love, divorce; Interpersonal relationships. 198 p. Adult.

Writing from personal experience, Judy Bodmer in When Love Dies fills fourteen chapters with wisdom, doses of humor, and scriptures that restore hope for marriages headed toward divorce. Each chapter begins with a scripture text, or inspirational quote, and ends with an action item designed to challenge the reader. For example, chapter two tells these truths about divorce: a core of depression and a sense of personal failure pervades those who experience divorce; a divorcee’s standard of living for women will go down 73 percent; children are seriously affected for life. The action item in this chapter includes a prayer written by Thomas Kempis regarding surrender to Christ. Other recommended actions include acting in love toward your spouse because the Bible commands it, a specific plan to symbolically forgive your spouse, and reading Matthew 5, 6, and 7 of The Message.

“T he decision to leave your husband is not made in a moment; but is arrived at over time,” writes Bodmer. Then she illustrates how to recognize
your part in the estranged marriage and why forgiveness is the cornerstone to healing and peace. “Just as Christ’s forgiveness is unconditional so must yours be,” Bodner describes the path to forgiveness, what it means, and how to do it when it doesn’t seem possible. Her use of anecdotes to demonstrate hard truth is especially appealing because of the clarity each story brings.

Each chapter contains excellent information on issues found in divorce, such as anger, mental or physical sexual involvement, betrayal, and defining the real problems. A comprehensive notes and bibliography section provides further resources. This book is comparable to Anna Kristin Carrolls’ excellent resource, Together Forever, which is now out of print, and would make a good replacement. Bodner’s book could change the direction of your life and your marriage.

Gail Welborn, Freelance Writer/Reporter, Everett, Washington

Ted Goshulak, University Librarian, Langley, British Columbia, Canada


In 1979 Jim Trelease self-published the first edition of his The Read-Aloud Handbook. Many revisions later, it remains the quintessential guide to the correlation between reading aloud to children and their future academic success. What Trelease’s book does in scholarly fashion, Cullinan’s does simply and succinctly. Half the size of Trelease’s tome, Read to Me is less intimidating to parents who might be reluctant readers themselves.

In the first thirty pages, Cullinan makes the case for reading out loud to children. She shares some heartbreakingly statistics: 82% of prison inmates are school dropouts and 60% are illiterate. But female inmates can be coached to learn to read using children’s picture books— which they, in turn, read to their own children on visiting days.

Cullinan points out that just as a child needs models for speech, “he needs models for reading, too. He needs to hear what reading sounds like when it is done by a competent reader.” Otherwise, kids miss the flow, the larger picture, as they get bogged down in the chain of individual words.

If parents do not read to their preschooler, all is not lost. One teacher who began reading out loud to a class of struggling sixth graders saw a leap in their comprehension—and discovered the kids were reading ahead because they were eager to find out what would happen next. The body of Read to Me is made up of how-to chapters, with tips on getting started and suggestions for related activities. Cullinan describes how to read to a child from infancy through age twelve. Her book list is less extensive than Trelease’s, with briefer summaries, but she also includes a list of children’s magazines, wonderful tools to delight young readers. This inexpensive book would make a wonderful gift for new parents.

Andrea R. Hueslenbeck, Freelance Writer and Drama Minister, Tempe, Arizona


Originally published in 1995, Kids in Danger is meant to help parents, teachers, and all concerned recognize anger in children, its possible causes and manifestations, as well as definitive methods in handling the anger of a child. Dr. Campbell uses short, easy to understand vignettes of real life situations to exemplify his points. He also explains what anger is and what it is used for in a positive setting. Laced throughout is Scripture to undergird his points. Dr. Campbell spends much of his book discussing passive aggression. He sees this manifested in many young people’s (and adults) lives. His visual anger ladder helps individuals track the activities that display anger negatively or positively. Dr. Campbell also describes what he calls the “25%/75%” person. The 25%’s are people who are pro-authority and the 75%’s are those who are anti-authority. He believes that all people fall somewhere on the spectrum of these two categories. He also believes that proper identification of which one we lean to will help us handle our anger more effectively.

The book is an attractive paperback with many helpful sections. The notes section is useful as are his tables and visuals within the book. The two sections I like are the section for parents of children with special needs, and Christians and anger. The special needs child also needs to learn how to handle anger and Dr. Campbell helps the parent(s) to see how and why this needs to be done. The section discussion Christians and anger is helpful in showing how pastors have suffered from anger displayed to them and how unmanaged anger may create a sociopath in the sheepfold.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Lawwood, Kansas


813.54/20. Language and languages; Alphabet. 95 p. Adult (High school).

On the outskirts of Waxhaw, North Carolina, The Museum of the Alphabet stands as a unique educational resource. In a 4900 square foot building, the history of writing in the world’s many different languages and scripts comes alive. Using photographs and paintings, sculptures and weavings, quiz boxes and models, a special focus of this multimedia exhibition is on people who have contributed to this history. The museum is a dream-child of Cameron Townsend, the founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and utilizes the efforts of noted linguists, artists, and many volunteers.

This 9 x 12 book is not an ordinary museum guide book. Rather, artistically arranged full-color photographs of the museum’s paintings, maps, charts, and other artifacts illustrate the narrative history of writing in the diverse languages of the world. Fine detail in several illustrations invites the use of a magnifying glass. A floor plan of the museum in the introduction to The Alphabet Makers indicates

600’s—Technology (Applied Sciences)


In this book, David Myers introduces us to the world of the hard of hearing. Written in the form of an occasional journal over a period of ten years, Myers looks at this experience from both a professional and a personal perspective. For it is during this ten-year period that Myers himself wrestles with a gradual loss of hearing. As a professor of psychology at Hope College in Michigan, and, the author of a number of psychology textbooks, Myers is well qualified to chronicle the physiology and psychology of hearing loss. However, as a person enmeshed in the day-to-day struggle of coming to terms with his condition, Myers must face the uncertainties like the rest of us. It is here that his work shines.

He describes how to read to a child from infancy through age twelve. Her book list is less extensive than Trelease’s, with briefer summaries, but she also includes a list of children’s magazines, wonderful tools to delight young readers. This inexpensive book would make a wonderful gift for new parents.

Andrea R. Hueslenbeck, Freelance Writer and Drama Minister, Tempe, Arizona

The Museum of the Alphabet stands as a unique educational resource. In a 4900 square foot building, the history of writing in the world’s many different languages and scripts comes alive. Using photographs and paintings, sculptures and weavings, quiz boxes and models, a special focus of this multimedia exhibition is on people who have contributed to this history. The museum is a dream-child of Cameron Townsend, the founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and utilizes the efforts of noted linguists, artists, and many volunteers.

This 9 x 12 book is not an ordinary museum guide book. Rather, artistically arranged full-color photographs of the museum’s paintings, maps, charts, and other artifacts illustrate the narrative history of writing in the diverse languages of the world. Fine detail in several illustrations invites the use of a magnifying glass. A floor plan of the museum in the introduction to The Alphabet Makers indicates
the order of topics. More than forty different language scripts are described and illustrated. Several systems of numbers, musical notations, Braille and Moon alphabets for the blind, and one hand sign alphabet for the deaf are included. The development of the manufacture of paper and later the movable type printing press made significant contributions to the advance of writing. Through the years, the worldwide effort for Bible translation has benefited from, and frequently encouraged, the development of new alphabets. As previously unwritten languages are reduced to writing, they sometimes demand the invention of new alphabet letters to represent special sounds in those languages. Today computers facilitate the development and use of the special characters needed to produce printed materials. Attractive for browsing, this book is useful for study or reference. Includes generous bibliography, but no subject index.

Donna W. Bowling, Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics Library, Dallas, Texas
BOOK REVIEWS

000’s—Generalities


027.6. Church libraries—United States—Handbooks, manuals, etc.; Church libraries—Canada—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 288 p. Adult.

The Church Librarian’s Handbook by Betty McMichael provides all the information any size church library would need to get started or to make improvements in existing systems. Intended primarily for the church librarian, but also directed at other interested church staffers, McMichael’s book offers twelve chapters, four appendices, a lengthy bibliography and index.

The first chapter presents the hypothetical launching of a church library, delineating all the pitfalls one might encounter. Overall, however, the tone of this vade mecum is that of inspiration and enthusiasm. Ensuing chapters delve into staffing, book and AV selection, establishing policies, preparing materials, promotion of the library, financing, budgeting, and computer usage. The author intersperses germane biblical references throughout her text. There are a lot of ideas and guidance to draw from in this book and it is obvious the author has a great deal of experience.

Results from surveys of church libraries are provided in almost every chapter to arm the neophyte librarian with what is at least an “average” figure or goal. For example, the average church library has 240 square feet; 26% of church libraries check out 1-19 books per week. Church library budgets are recommended to fall within one-half to one percent of the total church operating budget.

At least half the value of the book is in the voluminous appendices, which give names and addresses of suppliers and associations, a classification system, and subject headings. The bibliography appears comprehensive but somewhat dated. Bibliography entries appear to be current as of the publication date of the book but there are titles that are too old to serve well—five years old. Also, the illustrations seem dated and, while computers are mentioned, primacy is given to doing things by hand.

David W. Rash, Public Services Librarian & History Instructor, Everett Community College

(Editor’s note: CLJ’s address has changed several times in the past five years. Please see our current address on the contents page of this issue.)

200’s—Religion


Over 400 figures of speech are indexed in this easy-to-use paperback designed primarily for preachers and teachers of the Word. Preachers who are teaching through the book of John may be interested in how other writers use the image of “bread,” for example. The index provides thirteen categories which show “bread” used to mean, among other things, “Christ,” “The Body of Christ,” “Sorrow/discipline,” “Poverty,” “Friendship,” and “Sin.”

The metaphors are arranged in alphabetical order from “Account” to “Wrestle.” The author confesses his own frustration in creating categories and assigning passages. When is a given passage metaphorical and when is it not? Eschatological concepts are considered symbolic and this, of course, reflects Wiersbe’s dispensational theology. Likewise, Paul’s text about “Isaac” and “Ishmael” in Galatians 4:28-31 is labeled “God’s Children” and “Legalism” respectively. Missing from the book is any significant commentary other than the brief introduction and acknowledgements; even the “brief phrases” that commonly appear in concordances are absent. The index is a list of biblical references formatted in three columns per page. From Wiersbe, the evangelical Christian reader expects more, frankly.

While the book is disappointing on these counts, it is important to note that preachers yearning for fresh and creative ways of exposing biblical truth are always looking for new tools to create their messages. This is one such tool that many will find helpful because it points them in the pathway of creative and original thinking.

Daniel S. Brown, Professor of Communication, Indiana Wesleyan University, Indianapolis, Indiana

300’s—Social Sciences


This atlas is a re-issue of Dowley’s earlier Atlas of the Bible and Christianity. The new title (just released in full 2000) more accurately reflects the scope and content of this unique reference book: it covers the span of church history. Organized in four sections—Old Testament, New Testament, Early Church, and Modern Church—the work is comprehensive and yet accessible to the curious. The atlas contains over 160 computer-generated maps in full color; 50 beautiful full-color photographs; numerous charts; latitude and longitude references; sound commentary; and an indispensable index and gazetteer. Dowley has edited numerous volumes on Christian history and doctrine over the years. This book is yet another pleasant and profitable fruit of his efforts. It not only includes the expected archeological maps of ancient Hebrew history and Paul’s missionary journeys; Dowley and his editing team have created maps and charts representing the spread of Christianity—its various Christian sects and movements—from the beginning of the church to the late 20th century. This is the type of reference that converts the casual consumer into a devotee. Reports of data are unbelievably manageable and understandable in this format. The graphics paint the history of Christian proliferation in page after page. Rather than focusing on stories of individuals, however, this reference work shows in sweeping detail the societal and cultural shifts in page after page. The various waves of Church growth and development are quite striking when viewed in this manner. The comparative religious details are impressive when seen graphically. The religious affiliations of the world population are visually summarized; scholarly commentary, including caveats and warnings about how to interpret and apply the information, is well done and written from an evangelical perspective throughout the work.

Daniel S. Brown, Professor of Communication, Indiana Wesleyan University, Indianapolis, Indiana
is extensive and clear, giving every help to the reader in finding the correct or most complete sense of an entry. Also impressive is the geographic scope. For such a small work, it touches on major traditions from all over the globe, excepting those from the ancient world. If there is any material weakness in Pickering’s work, it might be in its lack of a pronunciation guide for the many words from non-English sources and of a selected bibliography for those who would like to pursue this subject further.

Pamela A. Todd, Librarian/English Teacher, Chahlecdon Christian School, Cumming, Georgia

400’s—Language


243.1. English language—Synonyms and antonyms; Description (Rhetoric)—Dictionaries; English language—Terms and phrases; Figures of speech—Dictionaries; English language—Dictionaries. 560 p. Adult (high school).

Can’t think of the word on the tip of your tongue? Intrigued with discoveries when searching for that right word? Then consult Descriptionary by Mark McCutcheon. This 360-page volume fits perfectly on the shelf between a dictionary and a thesaurus. In doing a crossword, I needed a word for “age of majority.” I checked the alphabetical index “age of majority” where it says page 217. Going to 217, one finds the phrase in the criminal and tort law section with the description “when one legally becomes adult, usually considered to be of age 18.” Legal fit the crossword but even more interesting were the many words in law made simple and easy to understand.

McCutcheon’s reference aid is divided into twenty-two broad subject areas, e.g., architecture, medicine, tools; and these are divided further into 194 sub topics. The reader will find not only a definition and synonyms but components and technical words that make this journey a fun one. Under ‘space flight,’ e.g., one finds the various satellites and space probes with technical words such as avionics, blackout, gimbal, and retro rocket, and in addition a list of shuttle acronyms.

Dozens of new terms reflect current usage in fields such as the Internet, medicine, finance, the performing arts, science, sports, politics, and the government. A closing chapter, “1,050 Words and Expressions You Should Know,” include basic vocabulary and expressions to expand one’s comprehension. Examples include c’est la vie, hubris, Holy Grail, WASP, and wistful.

Adults will find this a tool one comes back to. Some readers will linger in the interesting directions offered when searching for a particular word. The unusual word arrangement enables one to find a variety of words to instantly increase practical vocabulary. Christian school libraries will find this a helpful title for high schools.


A Dictionary of Folklore, written by David Pickering, gives the reader of folklore and ethnic mythology a resource for quick identification of terms, symbols, and persons found in tales from around the world. Pickering’s book is most complete in its coverage of the European traditions, but it also contains entries from American Indian, African, and South American traditions as well as from the Far East. The explanations are succinct, noting terms within the definitions which are themselves defined elsewhere. Alternate names or terms are provided with “see” and “see also” references to direct the reader to the proper term or a fuller explanation of aspects of a given definition.

A Dictionary of Folklore is the perfect armchair guide for those just beginning to delve into the more serious treatment of the world of folk and fairy tales that is encountered in typical high school literature curricula. The definitions, arranged alphabetically regardless of source, are of the precise length and simplicity to satisfy the need for a quick explanation of those allusions often found in literature as well as those works falling into the fantasy genre. Cross-referencing


Whether you’re looking for K-12 home schooling or want to earn an undergraduate or graduate degree, this guide will help the reader discover the options available for Christian distance learning. As a reference tool, Baker’s Guide to Christian Distance Education features aspects of distance learning such as models of distance course delivery, understanding accreditation, and a directory of 100 different programs outlined with profiles covering kindergarten through high school and accredited Christian certificate and degree programs (ranging from bachelor’s through doctoral level) that are delivered via various distance education methods.

Baker has a passion to equip people with a biblical worldview. As a distance student himself, he writes with conviction and experience. His earlier books include Parents’ Computer Companion (Baker Book, 1999) and Christian Cyberspace Companion (Baker Book, 1997). He and his wife and two sons live in Baltimore, Maryland.

Christian libraries, and adults seeking to locate what is available for lifelong learning or to deepen skills, will find in this guide succinct, easy-to-follow advice and programs outlined in detail.

Lorny Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

500’s—Natural Sciences & Mathematics


With the continuing growth in the number of birders (or bird-watchers) in North America over the past two decades, it is hardly surprising that the number of new guides and handbooks published continues to escalate. Following in the footsteps of Roger Tory Peterson these three books all strive to assist the observer in accurately identifying the bird species they encounter. Kaufman, Sibley, and Zimmer are all part of the new generation of experts who are passing on their experience and expertise to a broader public in well-produced volumes of up-to-date information. Birds of North America most clearly follows the legacy of Roger Tory Peterson. However, Kaufman has ventured out into a new technological frontier as he uses digitally enhanced photographs to emphasize the significant field marks crucial to identifying a particular species of bird. Over 2000 photographs were scanned into computer files and corrected for color consistency, size, and lighting. This is the first field guide to adopt the technique. Besides the photo-enhanced images, the field guide itself primarily follows the familiar Peterson structure. The arrangement of species is not however consistent with the latest AOU list, as birds are grouped together by similar features rather than taxonomy. Color-coded tabs divide the book into sixteen sections for quick thumb indexing. The range maps and species and voice descriptions are well done, providing a succinct description of each bird, its habits, and habitat. Kaufman’s stated objective with this work is to attract a whole new section of the population to birding. Birds of North America does an admirable job of fulfilling that goal.

Within weeks of the publication of Kaufman’s book, a second guide made its appearance on bookshelves. David Sibley’s NAS Sibley Guide to Birds was more than ten years in the making, and is much larger in size and scope than
requests for titles in this new and growing genre. Contemporary Christian Authors by Delong and Schwedt focuses on writers who have achieved a wide readership through at least one outstanding contribution, although most have penned numerous titles.

Styles of the writers included here vary, from picturesque historical fiction to adventure stories to areas of spiritual warfare and prophecy, but all the works contain a commitment to a philosophy based on traditional values and a Christian worldview. Christian librarians will be able to suggest additional authors for patrons, and readers can learn a lot about individual authors.

The A to Z format of writer’s entries include a picture of the author, a professional section listing education completed, career, awards and memberships. The publications section offers an inventory of the author’s published works, and an expanded biographical narrative in the personal section offers glimpses into each writer’s research techniques and literary elements emphasized. A summary section highlights one or more titles that represent the author’s style with a brief synopsis.

Delong holds degrees in education and has taught in both public and parochial schools and along with husband, Robert, is raising four children. Schwedt holds a library science degree and has been a teacher and librarian in both private and public schools. She and husband, Ronald, have two grown children.

Lenny Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida


The clear, jargon-free style makes the 675 entries in this guide something high schoolers can use with understanding and skill, and which Christian libraries will find contains a lot of content in very short space. Both scholars and students can wean something from the analysis offered here. One particular strength is that the interpretations of the stories are not just factual synopses of the stories but energizing and new ways of looking at them.

Werlock is associate professor emeritus of English with a doctorate in American studies. She lives in Troy, Pennsylvania.


900’s—Geography, History, and Biography

The four volume reference set Chronology of World History is divided by the following time periods: Volume I: Prehistory-AD 1491, The Ancient and Medieval World; Volume II 1492-1775: The Expanding World; Volume III: 1776-1900, The Changing World; and Volume IV: 1901-1998, The Modern World. This series is compiled by a team of editors and overseen by advisory board of individuals from numerous universities and colleges.

Within each volume, the entries are divided into four main categories and twenty-five subcategories. The main categories are: Politics, Government, and Economics; Science, Technology, and Medicine; Arts and Ideas; and Society. The subcategories are arranged alphabetically beneath each category. Scattered throughout each volume are boxes of “special features” highlighting major events chronologically. Each time-period closes with a section on the births and deaths of prominent individuals.

An extensive index in the back of each volume assists the researcher in finding items of interest. Each entry of information is a sentence or two. With the information limited to a sentence or two, the references aid one more in the acquisition of trivia knowledge than a deep understanding of historical events. These books are “who” and “when” references. For information on the “why” and “how” of historical events one would use an encyclopedia or more comprehensive book.

The gems within the books are the mini essays found throughout the pages. For example, an entire page is dedicated to the Rise of Islam
It is interesting to note the editors’ choice to divide the volumes according to historically significant time periods in American history. Through Volume III, the books seem to be balanced with a variety of political, scientific, and cultural details.

Volume IV: 1901-1998, The Modern World, holds a more media dependent view. The editors allot ten to twelve pages per year to cover happenings in modern history. The second part of the 20th century dedicates a full page or more per year to movies released, naming the director and the actors. While Religion, Math, Education, and Health and Medicine sections contain a couple of paragraphs each, numerous sitcoms such as Gilligan’s Island, 3rd Rock from the Sun, and Friends each rate a paragraph detailing the program theme and the cast.

Top Tony, Emmy, and Oscar awards are listed for each year. Also, the sports section lists the results of the Super Bowl, Stanley Cup, and the World Series giving the appearance that the fourth volume is dominated by major U.S.A. media events rather than milestones in world history. This series is not illustrated.

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


Within the pages of the *Historical Atlas of Exploration, 1492-1600*, author Angus Knostam tackles the complicated history of global exploration authorized by the governments of Portugal, Spain, England, and France during the Age of Exploration. He touches briefly on the role of the Christian Church mentioning the “priests brought to convert the natives.” A section is given to critiquing the history of the church and the pope during the 15th century. Objectives listed for some of the explorers is to spread Christianity throughout the new found lands, along with a desire for exploration, wealth, and personal glory.

Beginning with Portugal’s Prince Henry the Navigator, the author provides biographical sketches of prominent navigators spanning a century and a half. The influence of European exploration toward native cultures is detailed including the brutality of the explorers and their crews. The author also discusses tribal behaviors such as cannibalism, slavery, and human sacrifices which occurred among some of the tribes encountered. The book is extensively illustrated with historic maps and paintings and drawings depicting the time period. The various artists have drawn the native people in their normal state of dress so partial nudity is commonplace.

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

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