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Christian Library

J O U R N A L

God in the Flesh

What Speechless Lawyers,
Kneeling Soldiers
and Shocked Crowds
Teach Us About Jesus

Don Everts

author of Jesus with Dirty Feet



Christian Library



J O U R N A L

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New Christmas Books Worth Keeping

by Kim Harris

Apple tree Christmas / written by Trinka Hakes Noble. LCCN 2005017679. Chelsea, Mich. : Sleeping Bear Press, 2005.

HBB, 1585362700, list price: \$16.95.

E. Trees--Fiction; Apples--Fiction; Christmas--Fiction; Blizzards--Fiction; Farm life--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : ill., mostly col. ; 29 cm..

Grades PS and up. Rating : 5.

In *Apple Tree Christmas* by Trinka Hakes Noble, Katrina, sister Josie, Mama, and Papa live in an old barn next to an ancient apple tree with a grape vine swing. The family picks and prepares the apples for winter, Josie enjoys the swing, and Katrina has her own branch to sit on that, because of its vantage point and nice flat surface for drawing on, is the perfect drawing studio.

Just before the Christmas of 1881, an ice storm falls the old apple tree and the family mourns its loss. Christmas, however, brings many fun surprises. The joy of the apple tree is resurrected in the form of sweet smelling apples hung on the Christmas tree; a vine swing for Josie hung from the beams of the barn; a drawing board for Katrina made from apple tree wood, stocked with drawing paper and willow stick charcoals. Illustrations warmly depict pioneer farm life, nature, and the family holiday. Noble is the award winning author of several books, including the *Jimmy's Boa* series.

Apple Tree Christmas reminds the reader of a simpler life, in which holidays are warm, sweet smelling, cozy, and sparse. Stark white snow is softened with gray shading and brightened with red, green, and blue to produce a simple, Little House on the Prairie feel.

Josie's gift / Kathleen Long Bostrom ; illustrated by Frank Ordaz. Nashville : Broadman & Holman, 2005.

HBB, 0805430202, list price: \$16.99.

E. Christmas--Fiction; Giving--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 35 p. : col. ill. ; 26 x 29 cm..

Grades PS and up. Rating : 5.

In contrast to the lights and brights of *Apple Tree Christmas*, *Josie's Gift* by Kathleen Long Bostrom; illustrated by Frank Ordaz, emanates a warm, golden glow. Although the story is set during the Great Depression Era, warmth and love still radiate from the pages. The story begins: Papa used to say "Christmas is not about what we want. It's about what we have." The first Christmas after he died of the fever is tough for Josie, Mama, and little brother Bobby Joe. Even though Mama tells her they can't afford much this year, with Papa gone and Mama now the family's breadwinner, Josie has her heart set on receiving the soft blue sweater from the window of the elegant clothing store for her Christmas gift. Josie laments over special Christmases past, when Papa carved Nativity pieces and the family attended Christmas Eve services together. When she receives the sweater for Christmas she is happy, but continues to grieve over the loss of her Papa. In the evening, wearing her new sweater, Josie walks out to the barn to check on the animals and finds a homeless couple with their newborn child who have sought shelter in the barn. Deeply moved by the scene, Josie gives them her sweater to wrap the baby in and, in giving, discovers the true joy of Christmas. Illustrations appropriately depict the family closeness and scarcity of possessions of farm life during the Great Depression Era.

Good King Wenceslas / John M. Neale, Tim Ladwig. LCCN 2004010237. Grand Rapids : Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2005.

HBB, 0802852092, list price: \$16.00.

782.28/1723. Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia, ca. 907-929 --Juvenile literature; Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia, ca. 907-929; Carols, English--Texts; Christmas music--Texts; Carols; Christmas music. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm..

Grades PS and up. Rating : 5.

Good King Wenceslas by John M. Neale and Tim Ladwig, is a story that starts in the modern-day Czech Republic city of Prague. Singers in the square surround the statue of Good King Wenceslas, the country's patron saint, and sing of days past. One day the King looks out onto the courtyard and sees a poor man gathering wood. He orders his page to purchase wood for a hearty fire and food for a feast. Accompanied by their faithful hound, both King and page set out through a blizzard to present these gifts to the poor man and his family. Reaching beyond rank and status, they share the blessings of Christmas together. Text was written by John

M. Neale, an Anglican priest in 1853, to encourage sharing with those less fortunate on Saint Stephen's Day (Dec. 26th).

Tim Ladwig's illustrations, consisting of watercolor, liquid acrylic, and oil on paper, have been added to the original Christmas carol about the compassion of Wenceslas, duke of Bohemia. In contrast to the brights and starks of *Apple Tree Christmas* and the warm glow of *Josie's Gift*, *Good King Wenceslas* vibrates an evening light that is both stormy and frosted in soft purples and blues.

Sacred songs of Christmas : a family treasury / illustrations by Andrea Eberbach, Paine Proffitt, Nicole Wong. St. Louis, Mo. : Concordia, 2005.

HBB, 0758607210, list price: \$19.99.

808.81/933. Christmas music; Carols. 59 p. : col. ill. ; 29 cm. ; incl. CD-ROM..

Grades PS and up. Rating : 5.

Sacred Songs of Christmas: A Family Treasury, includes a CD of Christmas carols sung by a children's choir, entitled "Voices of Children." Illustrations by Andrea Eberbach, Paine Proffitt, and Nicole Wong are reminiscent of an Advent Calendar in theme and short-takes style. While *Apple Tree Christmas*, *Josie's Gift*, and *Good King Wenceslas* each reflect the spirit of giving, they are single tales. This treasury includes poems, music and lyrics, recipes, crafts, activities, and single-page stories that can easily be broken up into segments appealing even to young children with limited attention spans. Scripture references throughout are taken from the NIV Bible. Themes include the Legend of Santa Claus; the story of Jesus' mother, Mary; the tale of Martin Luther; religious traditions; descriptions of angels; instructions for making Christmas crafts and activities; and ideas on how to refocus the holiday on sharing and giving, rather than commercial hype. Colorful illustrations are rendered by Andrea Eberbach, Paine Proffitt, and Nicole Wong.

Each story is unique in its theme and illustrations, yet all remind the reader of the real focus of the season...Jesus. All four books highly recommended for all Christmas collections.

Learning Native American Culture

Through Books

by Jane Mouttet

In the last column in this series, these books include information about more than one tribe of people and would be useful only for basic introductory information. Finally are a few books about

specific tribes which were not included in the column on that region of the country.

GENERAL BOOKS

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Atlas of Indians of North America / written and illustrated by Gilbert Legay. LCCN 95013019. Hauppauge, N.Y. : Barron's Educational, 1995.

HBB, 0812065158, list price: \$18.95.

970.004/97. Indians of North America--Social life and customs--Handbooks, manuals, etc.; Indians of North America--History--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 95 p. : ill. (some col.), col. maps ; 32 cm.

Grades 6-9. Rating : *5.

This atlas is a good starting point for those researching Native American tribes. The book is divided into geographical regions. Within the chapters there is general information about the region and boxes of information on individual tribes. Students could use this book as a springboard for deciding which tribe to further research. Gilbert Legay avoided stereotypes in both his text and his full-color illustrations. The book is well-researched and accurate. The table of contents and the index increase the book's usefulness as a reference book. If you can only have one general reference book about Native Americans, give this one first consideration.

Buffalo / written and illustrated by Beverly Brodsky. LCCN 2002009639. New York : Marshall Cavendish, 2003.

HBB, 0761451331, list price: \$18.95.

599.64/3/0978. Indians of North America--Great Plains--Juvenile literature; American bison--Juvenile literature; Indians of North America--Great Plains. 32 p. : ill. ; 26 cm.

Grades 3-5. Rating : 4.

Using selections from Native American songs and poems as well as her own words, Beverly Brodsky tells the story of the buffalo. From the European wisent, a cousin of the buffalo, to the near destruction of the American buffalo and its

restoration, Brodsky tells how the animals were portrayed in cave paintings (including how the paint was made) and how they were used by the Native Americans. Some information about native culture is included, both in the text by Brodsky and the included Native American songs and poetry. From the illustrations in *Buffalo* it is evident that Brodsky has studied the Native American style.

The great change / text by White Deer of Autumn ; illustrations by Carol Grigg. LCCN 92014501. Hillsboro, Ore. : Beyond Words Publishing, 1992.

HBB, 0941831795, list price: \$14.95.

Fic. Death--Fiction; Indians of North America--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 30 cm.

Grades K-3. Rating : 3.

The Great Change is a story of death. Wanba's grandfather has just died. Grandmother finds talking about the death difficult. She finally explains it comparing death to a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. Death is not part of the Circle of Life—instead it is the Great Change. There are not illustrations on every page. Carol Grigg used watercolors to illustrate the text.

Native crafts : inspired by North America's First Peoples / Maxine Trottier ; illustrated by Esperanca Melo. (Kids can do it.) Toronto : Kids Can, 2000.

PAP, 1550745498, list price: \$5.95.

745.5089/97. Indian craft--Juvenile literature. 40 p. : ill. ; 26 cm.

Grades 3-5. Rating : 4.

Native Crafts contains sixteen craft projects related to different Native peoples groups. A brief description of the projects relationship to Native Americans is given with each project. Maxine Trottier's instructions are clear and Esperanca Melo's illustrations contribute to the understanding of them. Used alone, readers will

not learn much about Native Americans, but the book could be used as a supplement to a study of Native Americans giving students some hands-on activities.

The people shall continue / written by Simon Ortiz ; illustrated by Sharol Graves. LCCN 88018929. Emeryville, Calif. : Children's Book Press, 1994.

HBB, 0892391251, list price: \$14.95.

973.04/97. Indians of North America--History. 23 p. : col. ill. ; 25 cm.

Grades 1-3. Rating : 3.

The People Shall Continue is the general story of all Native Americans from creation on. Simon Ortiz recounts the differences and similarities of the Native People. The coming of the Anglos brought trouble to the Native Americans. They lost their lands; they were treated as slaves; their children were taken away and sent to school. The book ends with a call for all people regardless of skin color to come together and share their struggles. Simon Ortiz is Acoma, his book portrays frustrations and some bitterness at the way Native Americans have been treated. *The People Shall Continue* accurately shows the Native American perspective. Sharol Graves' brightly colored illustrations show Native American history from creation to the present.

Pilgrims and native Americans : hands-on projects about life in early America / Jennifer Quasha. (Great social studies projects.) LCCN 00028008. New York : PowerKids Press, 2001.

HBB, 0823957004, list price: \$19.95.

974.4/8202. Handicraft; Indians of North America--Massachusetts; Indians of North America--Massachusetts--History--17th century--Study and teaching--Activity programs--Juvenile literature; Pilgrims (New Plymouth Colony)--Study and

teaching--Activity programs--Juvenile literature; Massachusetts--History--New Plymouth, 1620-1691--Study and teaching--Activity programs--Juvenile literature. 24 p. : col. ill. ; 22 x 26 cm.

Grades K-2. Rating : 4.

The story of the Pilgrims and the Native Americans they met are expertly woven into this book of hands-on projects. *Pilgrims and Native Americans* is part of the Great Social Studies Projects series. The book is illustrated with photographs depicting the craft projects. The book would be useful for teachers and home schooling parents who are looking for Thanksgiving craft projects.

Ten little rabbits / by Virginia Grossman ; illustrated by Sylvia Long. LCCN 90002011. San Francisco : Chronicle Books, 1991.

PAP, 0811810577, list price: \$6.95.

E or 394/.08997. Indians of North America--Social life and customs--Juvenile literature; Counting-out rhymes--Juvenile literature; Indians of North America--Social life and customs; Counting. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Grades PS-1. Rating : 3.

Ten Little Rabbits is a counting book using cultural information from ten different Native American tribes. Each two-page spread contains something to count, illustrated with details from the native tribe. Author Virginia Grossman includes back matter which explains the portion of the tribal culture shown. Illustrator Sylvia Long chose to use rabbits in place of people as Native Americans; some Natives are offended by this. For the number two, Tewa rain dancers are portrayed; Christian natives have objected to these illustrations. It is a cute book, but I wouldn't consider purchasing it unless you have no Native Americans among your patrons.

Touching the distance : Native American riddle-poems / Brian Swann ; illustrated by Maria Rendon. LCCN 96039354. San Diego : Browndeer Press, 1998.

HBB, 0152008047, list price: \$16.

811/.54. Indian riddles--Juvenile poetry; Children's poetry, American; American poetry; Indian riddles; Riddles. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.

Grades 1-3. Rating : 3.

Touching the Distance is a book of Native American riddles. Written in free verse form, each page is a description. Answers and indication of which tribe the riddle is associated with are found in the back of the book. Maria Rendon illustrated the book using mixed-media constructions. The book would have been more effective if more information had been included about the tribes.

Wolf stories : myths and true-life tales from around the world / Susan Strauss, storyteller ; Gary Lund, illustrator. LCCN 93018382. Hillsboro, Ore. : Beyond Words Publishing, 1993.

HBB, 0941831841, list price: \$11.95.

398.24/52974442. Wolves--Folklore; Tales. 64 p. : col. ill. ; 20 cm.

Grades 3-5. Rating : 3.

In *Wolf Stories*, Susan Strauss has collected stories about wolves from around the world. Folktales from Japan, Persia, Norway, and Russia are included, as are real-life stories about wolves. One of the myths included is from the Lakota Sioux and another is from the Skidi Pawnee. These two myths tell a little of those tribes beliefs about wolves. The black and white sketches of Gary Lund are accented with purple

LAKOTA SIOUX

Shota and the star quilt / written by Margaret Bateson-Hill ; illustrated by Christine Fowler ; Lakota text by Philomine Lakota. LCCN 98026678. New York : Zero to Ten, 2001.

PAP, 1840890231, list price: \$7.95.

497/.5. Lakota dialect--Texts. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 30 cm.

Grades 2-4. Rating : 4.

Shota and the Star Quilt is a bi-lingual book. Philomine Lakota translated the text into Lakota. Shota is a Lakota girl whose family has moved to the city. The man who owns the apartment building where she lives wants to tear down the building. While Shota and her best friend Esther are visiting Shota's grandmother on the reservation, they work on a traditional Star Quilt. After they return home, the girls decide to give the quilt to the landowner, a move which causes the man to change his mind. When he was young, his mother had sung to him a song with the words, "Find the star that's a gift from the skies. In its patchwork of light true happiness lies." The full color illustrations of Christine Fowler are done in an Early American Primitive style.

NAVAJO

Ashkii's journey / written and illustrated by Verna Clinton ; Navajo editing, Elavina Perkins ; English editing, Jerrold T. Johnson. LCCN 2001006345. Flagstaff, Ariz. : Salina's Bookshelf, 2001.

HBB, 1893354318, list price: \$17.95.

Fic. Navajo Indians--Juvenile fiction; Navajo Indians--Fiction; Indians of North America--Southwest, New--Fiction; Coming of age--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 30 cm.

Grades 3-5. Rating : 4.

Ashkii's Journey is the story of an orphan Navajo boy's life as he lives near his demanding aunt and evil cousins. While this is not a story of the Navajo Long Walk, Ashkii does recall his grandfather's stories of that period. Most, but not all, Navajo words are defined within the text. Navajo culture and history are shown in the story.

Ashkii's Journey is a picture storybook written and illustrated by Navajo Vera Clinton. There is a lot of text on each page which is why I designated this for older elementary students. A full page color illustration is opposite almost every page of text. The illustrations are similar to that of other Navajo artists, while they do have some perspective (farther items are smaller) the pictures seem to lack depth.

OJIBEWA

A portrait of Spotted Deer's grandfather / Amy Littlesugar ; illustrated by Marlowe deChristopher. LCCN 96002704. Morton Grove, Ill. : Albert Whitman, 1997.

HBB, 0807566225, list price: \$15.95.

Fic. Catlin, George, 1796-1872--Juvenile fiction; Catlin, George, 1796-1872--Fiction; Indians of North America--Juvenile fiction; Indians of North America--Fiction; Artists--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

Grades K-2. Rating : 4.

In the 1800's, George Catlin traveled the American West painting and drawing portraits and pictures. Author Amy Littlesugar based this story on one of his visits to a Chippewa village. One of the elders of the village is not sure about having his face put on a canvas. His grandson convinces him that it is a good idea. Marlowe deChristopher used oils to illustrate the text. His illustrations complement the text and accurately portray Native American life.

Jane Mouttet worked for twenty years as a school librarian on the Navajo Reservation. She would enjoy hearing from you on how these columns have helped you and on how you use children's literature to teach Native American Culture. Jane can be reached at jane@nativeamericanchildrenslit.com.

Jack – Who Built the Land of Narnia

by Donna W. Bowling

Many consider Clive Staples Lewis one of the most influential religious writers of the twentieth century. In their book, *100 Christian Books That Changed the Century*, William and Randy Petersen included three very different titles by C.S. Lewis. Only one other author [Catherine Marshall] had as many as two separate books listed. One title by C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), has been discussed in previous issues of *Christian Library Journal*.

Like the *Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* (1942) is also included in *Christianity Today's* listing of "Books of the Century." This perceptive satire features the advice of a senior demon, Screwtape, as he counsels his nephew Wormwood, on ways the young demon could profitably tempt his "patient" away from their Enemy and His will. After many requests for a sequel, Lewis wrote his short "Screwtape Proposes a Toast" (1959), set at an imaginary "annual dinner of the Tempters' Training College for young Devils."

The third Lewis title in the Petersen list, *Mere Christianity* (1952), appears at the top of the *Christianity Today* list and also in the *World* list of "The Century's Top 100 Books," compiled by Veith and Olasky. *Mere Christianity* brings together a slightly edited version of his four series of radio addresses on religious topics that were broadcast on BBC during World War II. These were originally published in three separate collections: *Broadcast Talks* (1942), *Christian Behaviour* (1943), and *Beyond Personality* (1944). By "mere Christianity" Lewis means key elements of the Christian faith that all believers agree on. He deliberately avoids areas of partisan "denominational" disagreement. He seeks to dispel false concepts about the nature of God, while at the same time indicating the appropriate response that believers should make in their daily lives.

By 1949, C.S. Lewis had already made such significant contributions on the religious scene that Chad Walsh published the first book about the impact of C.S. Lewis: *Apostle to the Skeptics*. (Much of Lewis's imaginative and scholarly work was still in the planning stage at that time.) Lewis received many requests inquiring into factors that had contributed to his conversion from atheism to Christianity. Although his fictional *The Pilgrim's Regress*, originally published in 1933, was largely an autobiographical allegory, Lewis began work on an additional book in response to those requests.

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Surprised by joy : the shape of my early life / C.S. Lewis. LCCN 56005329. New York : Harcourt Brace, 1995, c1955.

HBB, 0151001855, list price: \$17.00.

B or 823/.912. Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963--Childhood and youth; Christian biography--England; Anglican converts--England--Biography; Authors, English--20th century--Biography. x, 230 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : *5.

C.S. Lewis states in the preface to *Surprised by Joy* that the book "aims at telling the story of my conversion and is not a general autobiography." In the first chapter he describes a recurring experience; "it is that of an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction. I call it Joy, which is here a technical term and must be sharply distinguished both from Happiness and from Pleasure." This experience of a stab, a pang, of longing is sometimes referred to as "sehnsucht."

Clive Staples Lewis was born in Belfast, in northern Ireland, in 1898. His father was an attorney and his mother the university-educated daughter of a clergyman. Their home was filled with books of all kinds. From early childhood, C.S. Lewis preferred to be called "Jack." He had one brother, Warren, (or "Warnie"), about three years older than he. The brothers were always close, but especially so after the devastating death of their mother by cancer in 1908. They spent much time together, often inventing imaginary worlds—writing histories, and drawing maps and related illustrations. It was a small imaginary garden made by Warren that first prompted a response of "Joy" in the younger brother.

After learning to read and write at home, with some grounding in French and Latin from his

mother, C.S. Lewis was sent to boarding school in England, an experience that he likened to a concentration camp. He missed his privacy, and he detested the mandatory sports and the sometimes brutal class system. (Some readers might be concerned by his discussion of moral problems in the boarding school situation.) But during that time he also learned to appreciate the atmosphere of the legends of the North. In his teen years, both his study of world mythologies, and his disappointment in his own earlier religious attempts, contributed to his great relief in adopting atheism with its lack of rigid restraints. After several unhappy school experiences he was sent to study with a personal tutor where he thrived. When one day he randomly picked up a copy of George Macdonald's *Phantastes* (1858), its impact on him was to "baptize" his imagination.

Young Lewis had a few months in Oxford University before he became eligible for service in World War I. He served for some time as a junior officer in the trenches in France before he was wounded by friendly fire and hospitalized for months. Even in wartime he continued to read and write, mostly poetry, as circumstances allowed. After his recovery and discharge from the army, he returned to Oxford, where he took degrees in Classics, then in "Greats" and finally in English. He served as a tutor for one year in Philosophy, but then he was elected to a fellowship in English in Oxford's Magdalen College, a position he held for many years. There he became friends with J.R.R. Tolkien and other Christians whose influence contributed to his conversion, initially to theism only. Driven by his intellectual honesty to acknowledge God, he then described himself as "the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." As he learned more about God in the following months he finally recognized the claims of Jesus Christ and became a committed Christian. During this time Lewis realized that to focus on looking for Joy is not only futile, but also counterproductive. This experience of longing occurs only as a by-product of a focus on something "other, outside." In fact, the function of Joy is primarily to point seekers to the only real and lasting source of satisfaction in God Himself.

Although this narrative ends with the conversion of C.S. Lewis in 1931, more than thirty years before his death, it is a key resource for libraries with scholarly, theological, or fictional works by Lewis. For the same reason, this book is also frequently cited in the titles discussed below. Very readable and easily accessible to high school readers, it is highly recommended for church, school, public, and home libraries.

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Jack's life : the life story of C.S. Lewis / Douglas Gresham. Nashville : Broadman & Holman, 2005.

HBB, 0805432469, list price: \$16.99.

B or 823/.912. Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963; Authors, English--20th century--Biography; Chronicles of Narnia; Narnia (Imaginary place); Christian biography--England. viii, 107 p. : photos. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Jack's Life, by C.S. Lewis's stepson Douglas Gresham, is unlike other biographies that focus primarily on Lewis as a scholar, or popular theologian, or writer of fantasy. Gresham is more concerned with Lewis's daily life and how he dealt with his often "exceedingly demanding domestic existence." Gresham reports in some detail on the life-changing impact of a promise Jack Lewis made to his army buddy Paddy Moore during World War I, to take care of Paddy's mother and sister if the latter died in battle. In spite of many challenges, Jack stayed faithful to that commitment until Mrs. Moore's death in 1951. A few years later author Joy Davidman Gresham traveled from the United States to England and arranged to meet the famous writer who had been influential in her conversion to Christianity. Her son tells of the friendship that led through cancer to marriage and a few happy years together. During that time, Jack accepted the offer of a Chair of Medieval and Renaissance English Literature at Cambridge University, and arranged to commute from Cambridge to his home in Oxford for weekends and during vacations. After Joy's death, Jack continued to care for his two stepsons until his own death on November 22, 1963.

Douglas Gresham had read every biography of his famous stepfather, but none merely told "the story of Jack's life" as he lived it. So in *Jack's Life*, Gresham writes a biography that he would have liked to read. He includes a few pages with black and white photographs of family and friends. Douglas Gresham was eight years old when he first met Lewis in 1953, and he was surprised to find that the stout, slightly balding, professor looked nothing like a character out of the Narnia Lewis had created. From living in the home for several years with Jack and his bachelor brother Warnie Lewis, Gresham learned much about Jack's life in the past and had opportunity to observe first-hand contemporary situations as they transpired. Gresham recommends and gives credit to two fine biographies of Lewis written by personal friends of Lewis, George Sayer's *Jack* (1994), and Green and Hooper's *C.S. Lewis* (1974), as well as to Hooper's *Companion and Guide* (see below). In his own earlier autobiography, *Lenten Lands*, Gresham told the story of the marriage of his mother, Joy Davidman Gresham to C.S. Lewis, and the ten years he shared with a man who was the best Christian he had ever known. In this perspective portrayal of Jack's

life, Gresham retains his sense of deep appreciation for Lewis as a very human but godly man. In the accompanying half-hour long DVD "A Conversation with Douglas Gresham," Gresham describes Lewis as a jovial man, full of laughter. He also explains his own involvement with the producers of the 2005 movie of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to maintain its integrity to the original book. Gresham's style is personal and very readable, and is accessible to high school as well as adult readers. Highly recommended for public, school, church, and home libraries.

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The Narnian : the life and imagination of C.S. Lewis / by Alan Jacobs. LCCN 2005046151. San Francisco : HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

HBB, 0060766905, list price: \$25.95.

B or 823/.912. Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963; Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963--Religion; Authors, English--20th century--Biography; Chronicles of Narnia; Narnia (Imaginary place); Christian biography--England; Christian fiction, English--History and criticism; Christianity and literature--England--History--20th century. xxvi, 342 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Alan Jacobs is a professor of English at Wheaton College where he has access to the resources of the Marion E. Wade Center. The Wade Center houses a major research collection of materials related to C.S. Lewis and other related British authors. Jacobs refers to more than fifty sources, including the eleven volumes of unpublished *Lewis Papers* compiled by C.S. Lewis's older brother Major Warren Hamilton Lewis. (After the death of their father, Warnie moved in with Jack and spent years in organizing and typing up the documents their father had accumulated. He later compiled the first published collection of the *Letters of C.S. Lewis*.) In his *The Narnian*, Jacobs narrates the life of Lewis, bringing out details of the varied sources that had influence on Lewis's writings. Through each chapter of Lewis's life, Jacobs includes significant quotations that illuminate for the reader their contribution to Lewis's own writing, either explaining a source or pointing out a resulting passage that C.S. Lewis wrote later. The endnotes section giving references for these quotations is a particularly useful resource. For example, readers who might be puzzled by certain passages in Lewis's *Surprised by Joy* may find helpful explanations in this well-indexed volume. In one chapter particularly, Jacobs points out the interaction between Lewis and other literary figures. He especially focuses on the Inklings, the small informal group of like-minded writers in Oxford that met regularly to hear each other's writing in progress. That group included J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, his brother Warren Lewis, and a few others that varied from time to time. In his Afterword, Jacobs discusses the enduring future of Narnia and high fantasy from a Christian

perspective in a modern culture that rejects the values of authors like Tolkien and Lewis.

The eight pages of plates offer well-chosen black and white photographs that span the life of C.S. Lewis. The book includes an index. This excellent book is highly recommended for all libraries where there is interest in this specialized perspective on Lewis.

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C.S. Lewis: a complete guide to his life and works / by Walter Hooper. San Francisco : HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

PAP, 006063880X, list price: \$19.95.

B or 823/.912. Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963; Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963--Religion; Authors, English--20th century--Biography; Chronicles of Narnia; Narnia (Imaginary place); Christian biography--England; Christian fiction, English--History and criticism; Christianity and literature--England--History--20th century. xvi, 940 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Walter Hooper's *C.S. Lewis : a Complete Guide to His Life and Works* was originally published in a hardbound edition under the title of *C.S. Lewis : a Companion and Guide*. This volume of over nine hundred pages begins with a "Life of C.S. Lewis" and a six-page chronology of his life. Lewis's writings are grouped by juvenilia (Boxen), poetry, autobiographical, novels, theological fantasies, theology, Chronicles of Narnia, and literary criticism. For each title in each category, Hooper provides several pages with date of publication, the background and a summary of the work, followed by excerpts from representative reviews. Next, three particularly useful sections are each arranged alphabetically, with frequent cross-references: key ideas, who's who, and what's what. Entries vary in length from a single paragraph to several pages. Then a comprehensive bibliography of the writings of C.S. Lewis includes: books; short stories; books edited or with prefaces by C.S. Lewis; essays, pamphlets and miscellaneous pieces; single short poems; book reviews; published letters. Many of the single shorter pieces are also included in posthumously published collections, edited primarily by Hooper. The extensive index does not include the bibliography.

Walter Hooper first came to England to meet C.S. Lewis in June 1963. After reading his books and some years of correspondence, Hooper hoped to write about Lewis. Lewis befriended the young American and soon asked him to meet his need for a secretary. After Lewis resigned from Cambridge because of poor health, his books and other belongings in his rooms there were brought to Oxford, and Hooper began to organize them. He left in September to fulfill his commitment to teach a course at the University of Kentucky, intending to return to England in January 1964 to continue his work with the Lewis papers. After C.S. Lewis's death in November 1963, the Lewis

estate encouraged Hooper to proceed as planned. To make them more accessible to the public, Hooper compiled and published posthumously several collections of Lewis's essays and other works. Certain scholars, including Lindskoog, have questioned the authenticity of some of these posthumously published works. Although there are occasional noticeable omissions (e. g. Although several references appear, the groundbreaking critical work, *The Allegory of Love*, has no individual critique like the other books.), Hooper's section on writings gives more detail than the more restrictive earlier Kilby book. His guide brings together in one place much information of interest to the curious reader of C.S. Lewis that is not easily found elsewhere. In spite of some unresolved concerns, this book is definitely recommended for all libraries where there is interest in the writings of C.S. Lewis.

Companion to Narnia : a complete guide to the magical world of C.S. Lewis's The chronicles of Narnia / Paul F. Ford ; foreword by Madeleine L'Engle ; illustrated by Lorinda Bryan Cauley. 5th ed. San Francisco : HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

PAP, 0060791276, list price: \$16.95.

823/.912. Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963. *Chronicles of Narnia--Dictionaries; Narnia (Imaginary place); Children's stories, English--Dictionaries; Fantasy fiction, English--Dictionaries.* xxvi, 530 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Pocket companion to Narnia : a guide to the magical world of C.S. Lewis / Paul F. Ford ; illustrated by Lorinda Bryan Cauley. Rev. ed. of: Companion to Narnia. LCCN 2005048349. San Francisco : HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

PAP, 0060791284, list price: \$9.95.

823/.912. Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963. *Chronicles of Narnia--Dictionaries; Narnia (Imaginary place); Children's stories, English--Dictionaries; Fantasy fiction, English--Dictionaries.* xiv, 368 p. ; ill., maps ; 16 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

The major body of Paul Ford's *Companion to Narnia* is an alphabetically arranged reference tool of more than four hundred pages, with entries varying in length from one sentence to several pages. Each entry for a person, place, thing, or idea is followed by a citation in one or more of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. References within individual entries to other entries in the volume are indicated by all capital letters. Many notes at the ends of entries also cite other works by C.S. Lewis that shed additional light on the item. Among the longer entries are: Aslan (over ten thousand words), Biblical Allusions, and Knowledge. The introduction includes, among other things, background on Lewis's writing of the *Chronicles*, major characters and places, and a guide to the most important entries. Appendix one provides an instructive chart that illustrates

the chronology of the composition and publication of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Appendix six is A Narnian Atlas, by Stephen Yandell, with several pages of text, a lengthy chart of journeys, and eleven diagrams from several perspectives. Over twenty sensitive full-page black-and-white drawings, plus additional maps, by Lorinda Bryan Cauley are scattered throughout the volume. The caption with each illustration includes a citation to the related location in the *Chronicles*. This work includes indexes to biblical references and to real persons mentioned within entries.

Paul Ford is a professor of theology who has studied the work of C.S. Lewis for more than forty years. He wrote both his master's and his doctoral theses on various aspects of the work of Lewis. His *Companion to Narnia* is in its fifth edition. The preface to this edition itemizes the major additions and improvements he made with each successive edition. He provides at the end of the book a website for updates and "other Narnian helps." This comprehensive companion contains a wealth of information of interest to fans of Narnia. At the recommendation of the publisher, Ford selectively reduced some less crucial content, including nearly three hundred entries, to produce the *Pocket Companion to Narnia*. (The Aslan entry is down to 538 words.) Most of the illustrations are retained in the smaller volume. This *Pocket Companion* was tested with young people who appreciated its more convenient size. Ford is very knowledgeable and his *Companion* is accessible to middle and high school students. The *Companion* is highly recommended for all libraries that have the *Chronicles of Narnia* in their collections. The *Pocket Companion* also has much valuable information, and could be useful in library circulating collections.

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(Winter 2002)]

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MacDonald, George. *Phantastes: a Faerie Romance*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981.

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A was once an apple pie / adapted by Suse MacDonald from the poem by Edward Lear. LCCN 2004025683. New York : Orchard Books, 2005.

HBB, 0439660564, list price: \$12.99.

E. Alphabet; Nonsense verses; English poetry; Children's poetry, American; Alphabet rhymes. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

Ages 2-6. Rating : 5.

Do you know a young child who loves animals? Consider *A Was Once an Apple Pie* as a gift. Almost every page includes an animal — a bear, a fish, a green eel, several birds, and even a skunk! A friendly-looking yak carries a package on its back.

Y was once a little yak,
Yacky, wacky, tacky, yacky,
Backy-packy, little yak!

A large, blue whale graces two pages.

W was once a whale,
Whaly, scaly, shaly, whaly,
Tumbly taily, mighty whale!

The author, Edward Lear, first published his whimsical alphabet rhymes in 1871. Suse MacDonald recently adapted and illustrated Lear's work. Most letters of the alphabet include large drawings. Tiny details add interest, without distracting from the main focus. Steam

from the apple pie indicates freshness. A mouse eats cheese, and flowers intertwine on a vine.

Although the rhymes may appear silly, each catchy phrase teaches facts. For instance, the owl is a "browny fowly." The kite is "flighty, kity, out of sighty, little kity." This fun method of learning allows little ones to easily absorb facts. Those rhymes are an excellent teaching tool. More information is on www.scholastic.com.

Roberta Lou Jones

Bethlehem night / written by Julie Stiegemeier ; illustrated by Gina Capaldi. St. Louis, Mo. : Concordia, 2005.

HBB, 0758609078, list price: \$12.99.

R A T I N G S Y S T E M

* Outstanding quality

5 Excellent quality

4 Very good quality

3 Good quality

Recommended with caution - note reservations within the review

Not recommended - note problems stated within the review

Commonly Used Abbreviations in CLJ Reviews

LCCN Library of Congress
Cataloging Number

C Canadian Library Cataloging
Number

ISBN International Standard Book
Number

HBB Hardbound book
PAP Paperbound book

LIB Library edition
LGP Large print book

PBB Paper board book
CAS Audiocassette

CDR CD-ROM

DVD Videodisc

VID Videocassette

LLB Loose-leaf binding

E. Christmas; Jesus Christ--Nativity. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

Grades PS-1. Rating : 3.

The story surrounding the birth of Jesus is told in poetic form using short, simple words for easy reading by young children. Written by Julie Stiegemeyer, *Bethlehem Night* takes the reader on the journey to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph and their search for a place for the imminent birth of their baby, the Baby Jesus. The reader follows the angels as they visit the shepherds and then spread the word about the birth of the Christ child for whom they've waited so long. Bright, rich colorful illustrations by Gina Capaldi capture and hold a young child's attention, while the rhythmic cadence of the story will have youngsters eagerly turning the pages. The illustrations show Mary and Joseph being much older than the ages presented in the Bible, a small detail which young children probably won't even notice or care about.

Sherrri Myers

Buzby : the misbehaving bee / story by Troy Schmidt ; illustrations by GlueWorks Animation. (Max Lucado's Hermie & friends.) LCCN 2004020827. Nashville : Tommy Nelson, 2005.

DVD, 1400304830, list price: \$14.99.

E. Behavior--Fiction; Rules (Philosophy)--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction; Bees--Fiction; Insects--Fiction; Frogs--Fiction. 1 videodisc (60 min.) ; sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.

Ages 2-8. Rating : 4.

Buzby The Misbehaving Bee is a fun story about rules and the consequences of breaking them. Writer Troy Schmidt has set the story in a garden; the characters include inchworms, ladybugs, a fly, a snail, and an ant colony. The insects talk to God and God talks back to them.

Using colorful animation and an Elvis impersonating bee, this Hermie and Friends DVD will grab children's attention, helping them to learn about rules and the importance of keeping them. Buzby is one cool bee who does not like keeping rules. What he likes is spelling and having fun. During one of his escapades in the garden, his hive falls and breaks. An ant colony finds it and decides to show kindness and fix the hive. After Buzby breaks an important rule and puts the whole garden in danger, he finds his repaired home and has a change of heart. He rescues the garden residents and promises to follow the rules. Buzby learns that God's rules are made to keep everyone safe. Max Lucado makes an appearance and talks with Hermie the Inchworm to reinforce the lesson in the story.

Pam Halter

Ella takes the cake / by Carmelo D'Amico ; illustrated by Steven D'Amico. LCCN 2004023432. New York : Arthur A. Levine, 2005.

HBB, 043962794X, list price: \$16.99.

E. Bakers and bakeries--Fiction; Elephants--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

Ages 3-6. Rating : 4.

Carmela D'Amico promotes good character traits in *Ella Takes the Cake*. Ella Elephant is cute, well intentioned, friendly, and patient. Most of all, petite Ella wants to help in Mother Elephant's bakery by the sea. Poor Ella! The sharp knife and the hot oven are too dangerous for her little hands.

Mother eventually allows Ella to deliver a three-tiered cake to Captain Kernel. With her bicycle, small wagon, and lucky hat, Ella escapes many near-disasters. Finally, Ella delivers the cake. She is so happy, "...because more than anything else, Ella loved to help." Mother Elephant rewards Ella by letting her help bake a Zanzibar cake. (*Ella Takes the Cake* does not discuss the location of Zanzibar, but that exotic place is an island in the Indian Ocean.)

Steven D'Amico's gorgeous artwork presents deep sea blues, terracotta, brown, and shades of green. His rendering of Little Village shows a comfortable, friendly seaside town. Buildings in Little Village include many minarets. One covers a tollbooth, others adorn general buildings. (Minarets are often, but not always, associated with Islamic mosques. No religion is mentioned, however.)

Sturdy binding and quality paper make this selection a good choice for any hard-use situation. For more information, check www.arthuralevinebooks.com. Also, consider the companion book, *Ella the Elegant Elephant*.

Roberta Lou Jones

The nineteenth of Maquerk : based on Proverbs 13:4 / written by Aaron Reynolds ; illustrated by Peter Whitehead. LCCN 2004012260. Grand Rapids : Zonderkidz, 2005.

HBB, 0310709547, list price: \$12.99.

E. Bible. O.T. Proverbs--Fiction; Stories in rhyme; Caterpillars--Fiction; Work ethic--Juvenile fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Grades K-2. Rating : 3.

Breaking out of the bungle bird : based on Proverbs 13:10 / written by Aaron Reynolds ; illustrated by Peter Whitehead. LCCN 2004012357. Grand Rapids : Zonderkidz, 2005.

HBB, 0310709563, list price: \$12.99.

E. Bible. O.T. Proverbs--Fiction; Stories in rhyme; Escapes--Fiction; Insects--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Grades K-2. Rating : 3.

The Willow Creek Children's Series books by Aaron Reynolds are based on a Proverbs verse per book. These books are done in a style similar to Dr. Seuss, with the story written in rhyme. Peter Whitehead's illustrations are

cartoonish and zany. Each book has a question and challenge page after the story.

The Nineteenth of Maquerk is based on Proverbs 13:4 and is a story about two bugs who must start building cocoons in the month of Maquerk. They must be finished by Day 17. One bug builds his cocoon and the other bug does not. At the end of the 19th Day of Maquerk, the bug who built his cocoon turns into a butterfly. The next day the lazy bug discovers what happened to his friend and he gets angry and makes excuses for not doing what he was supposed to do. It is a good lesson for children who think they can get something for nothing. The last page of the book asks readers a question and gives them a biblical challenge.

Breaking Out of the Bungle Bird is based on Proverbs 13:10 and is story about two bugs, Sue and Fleeya, who are best friends. Their friendship is tested after they are swallowed by a Bungle Bird. They argue about how to get out. Sue refuses to listen to Fleeya's suggestions. After a time, Fleeya escapes, leaving Sue in the stomach of the bird. The moral is to listen to your friend's advice. Some younger children may feel upset that Sue doesn't get out of the bird's stomach and is probably digested. This book also has a biblical challenge at the end.

Pam Halter

The numbers dance : a counting comedy / by Josephine Nobisso ; illustrated by Dasha Ziborova. LCCN 2005000199. Westhampton Beach, N.Y. : Gingerbread House, 2005.

HBB, 0940112116, list price: \$16.95.

E. Counting; Stories in rhyme; Dance--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 31 cm.

Grades K-2. Rating : 5.

"And-a-1, and-a-2, and-a-3, and-a-4" begins the dancing and prancing, and swirling and curling numbers in Josephine Nobisso's *The Numbers Dance*. Numerals one through six take the reader through elegant waltzes, fluttering jitterbugs, and swinging sambas and congas. Then enter seven through ten in western gear, "leaping and hoofing and tramping...kicking up heels in a wild Line Dance!" Their stampede gets out of control until they get lassoed and bronco-busted by their light-footed friends. In the end, all ten "shimmy and boogie and twist and reel" together as they learn to appreciate each other's individual styles. Nobisso, author of over two dozen children's books, provides in this story a good example of how different people can learn to get along happily while not stifling one another's uniqueness.

Using digital and mixed media, Russian-born illustrator Dasha Ziborova has created a visual delight with colors and patterns that complement the rhyme and movement of the lyrics. Attractive borders list the numbers vertically with corresponding dots that help

children learn to count. Combining fun to pronounce words and visually appealing illustrations, *The Numbers Dance* will give lots of enjoyment to five to seven-year-old readers.

Floss Craig

The shepherd's Christmas story / by Dandi Daley Mackall ; illustrations by Dominic Catalano. St. Louis, Mo. : Concordia, 2005.

HBB, 0758609043, list price: \$12.99.
E. Christmas--Fiction; Shepherds--Fiction; Angels--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.
Grades PS-2. Rating : 4.

The story of Christmas and the birth of Jesus is told through the eyes of a young shepherd boy in *The Shepherd's Christmas Story*. The amazing choice God made to have the angels visit the lowly shepherds with such an important message at the birth of his son is truly a sign of his love for all mankind. As the story points out, while God could have chosen more important people to first hear the message of the Baby Jesus' birth, he instead chose the lowliest of humans to be the first to hear the announcement the world waited thousands of years to hear.

Written by the prolific children's author Dandi Daley Mackall, *The Shepherd's Christmas Story* will delight young children with its wonderful message written in a rhyming style. Soft, chalk-type illustrations by Gina Capaldi help bring the story to life, describing the visit of the angels to the shepherds and the scenes surrounding Jesus' birth at the stable. This delightful book will surely be a children's Christmas favorite for many years to come.

Sherri Myers

The Something Wonderful : a Christmas story / Karen Hill ; illustrated by Susan Reagan. LCCN 2005010507. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2005.

HBB, 1581347324, list price: \$15.99.
E. Jesus Christ--Nativity--Juvenile fiction; Jesus Christ--Nativity--Fiction; Animals--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.
Grades PS-3. Rating : 3.

"Long, long ago in Bethlehem," something wonderful was about to happen. The animals in the stable didn't know what it would be, only that God was sending it to them. So they began making wonderful... or maybe not so wonderful... plans to prepare for it.

Donkey insisted there be a parade and a party, so all the animals began extensive arrangements. "But it wasn't wonderful. Not yet." Each animal soon had a very vocal complaint to make about how the plans were proceeding. Then the complaining turned to actual arguing. It took Lamb and Cow to explain that if they simply watched and waited for The Something Wonderful, God would show them what it was.

The Something Wonderful is Karen Hill's look at one aspect of the Christmas story. Although on the surface it's about a group of animals preparing for an unknown event, deep within Hill's smoothly-written text are subtle parallels to the true meaning of Jesus' birth. For instance, the animals stress that no fancy preparations are necessary: "God will give us The Something Wonderful just because he loves us." Also part of the message: the importance of being kind to—and loving—one another. The story ends with Jesus' birth and the statement "and this time it was wonderful" with no other explanation, although Luke 2:1-20 immediately follows.

Hill's prose is dialog-rich and filled with vivid descriptions (dusty old camel; Rooster had a fuss), yet it's simple enough for youngsters reading on their own. Susan Reagan's illustrations are delightful. Done in muted earth tones, they exquisitely depict the animals and their expressive facial features.

In a genre that is saturated with titles, *The Something Wonderful* offers an important message. It is different enough to make it a worthy choice for the picture book audience.

Rosemarie DiCristo

The surprise doll / story by Morrell Gipson ; illustrations by Steffie Lerch. LCCN 2004110398. Cynthia, Ky. : Purple House Press, 2004.

HBB, 193090018X, list price: \$15.00.
Fic. Dolls--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 21 cm.
Grades PS-2. Rating : 3.

Purple House Press, a reprint publisher specializing in "bringing back the finest books for children," has recently reprinted, in its original forty-six page format, Morrell Gipson's *The Surprise Doll* (first published by Wonder Books in 1949).

The story is simply told, but manages to touch on the fascination little girls have for their dolls. Mary, the heroine, owns six dolls, each brought back from a voyage her sea captain father has taken. Mary loves all her dolls, but once she realizes she has a doll for every day of the week but Sunday, she begs her father for one more doll from his travels. When he refuses ("Six dolls are enough for any little girl"), Mary asks the town doll maker to make her a Sunday doll. He agrees, and ends up making a very special doll.

Steffie Lerch's dreamy yet colorful illustrations suit the story, lending a special charm to Mary and her dolls (each of which shares one characteristic with Mary herself). The book is produced in a nicely bound, hardcover format that should stand up to repeated use. While the story isn't exactly electrifying, it is supremely charming, and would definitely capture the

interest of young readers. A nice choice for home use, or for school and church libraries.

Rosemarie DiCristo

The visit / Reeve Lindbergh ; pictures by Wendy Anderson Halperin. LCCN 2002013245. New York : Dial Books for Young Readers, 2005.

HBB, 0803711891, list price: \$16.99.
E. Sisters--Fiction; Country life--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.
Grades K-3. Rating : 4.

Reeve Lindbergh, youngest child of Charles Lindbergh, has written a mood poem about two sisters' and their visit to an aunt and uncle's home in the country. She writes four line verses in couplet form, repeating the first line as the last line in the stanza. Short sister Jill and tall sister Beth share adventures with big sister looking after little. Rural sounds, sights, and smells bound in the verse. Wendy Halperin has created pencil and watercolor illustrations in arch shaped windows anchored by a four-pane frieze along the bottom.

This gentle title reminds me of trips to the country to visit aunts and uncles. Halperin's delicate, realistic, detailed pictures are like viewing a scrapbook from the forties or fifties, except the pastel pictures are in color, not black and white. Between the main arched picture and the small strip along the bottom, each of the words in Lindbergh's verses is depicted. The title is a pretty book which many fifty-and-sixty-somethings will enjoy. Share with small groups, or one-on-one, for the bottom pictures are too small and detailed for a larger group.

Marion Mueller

When an elephant comes to school / Jan Ormerod. LCCN 2004019797. New York : Orchard Books, 2005.

HBB, 0439739675, list price: \$16.95.
E. First day of school--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Elephants--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm.
Grades PS-3. Rating : 4.

Many children are anxious about starting school for the first time, and Jan Ormerod's *When an Elephant Comes to School* is a great way to introduce children to the routine and activities they'll encounter. A new friend shows Elephant some important things like where to hang his lunch box and where the bathroom is. He enjoys craft projects and playing in the sandbox. Elephant experiments with bubbles and to his delight, discovers that his trunk works better than a straw. Lunchtime is also fun, but Elephant does not like to share—he prefers having the ball all to himself. This bad behavior is not corrected. Like young children, Elephant needs quiet time with a book and cozy nap, then he's revived to dance and march to music before heading home with his mommy.

Omerod's lively watercolor illustrations will hold the attention of little eyes as they watch Elephant's interaction with his teacher and classmates throughout the story. They convey the enjoyment, fun, and emotions of the young student in a new environment. This award-winning author and illustrator has published over fifty books including *Miss Mouse Takes Off* and *I Am Not Going to School Today*.

Floss Craig

With a little help from daddy / by Dan Andreasen. LCCN 2002002694. New York : M.K. McElderry Books, 2003.

HBB, 0689845650, list price: \$15.95.

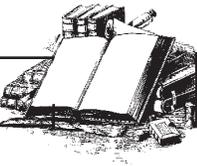
E. Individuality--Fiction; Fathers and sons--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

Preschool. Rating : 4.

In this amusing and encouraging picture book, *With a Little Help From Daddy*, preschoolers learn from a little blue elephant and his father how to be best in several ways—just to name a few: tallest, strongest, cleanest, cutest, silliest, noisiest, safest, happiest.

Popular illustrator and author Dan Andreasen draws on his experience as a son with a fine father and as a father with a wonderful son. Each two page acrylic illustration, full of color, fun, and activity, highlights the brief sentence describing the action. Little listeners will enjoy 'reading' the pictures. Older siblings will enjoy reading the words to the little ones. If you are in the market for a new picture book, consider this one.

Donna Eggett



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Aaron and the Green Mountain Boys / by Patricia Lee Gauch ; pictures by Margot Tomes. LCCN 70169246. Honesdale, Pa. : Boyds Mills, 2005.

HBB, 1590783352, list price: \$16.95.

Fic. United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Fiction. 62 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Grades K-3. Rating : *5.

Nine-year-old Aaron Robinson thinks the whole War of Independence is passing him by. He wants to go help the Green Mountain Boys fight the British, but everyone from his father to his grandfather to General John Stark himself tells him to stay home and help chop wood and bake bread. Aaron can't conceive of how his loathsome chores are in any way helpful or glorious. He soon learns a lesson about how an army really travels and what it needs to help it win.

Set in 1777 Vermont, this wonderful story by Patricia Lee Gauch hearkens back to a day when schoolchildren were taught to admire patriots and their causes. *Aaron and the Green Mountain Boys* shows even the youngest child that his or her actions can make a big difference in a time of trial. It provides a great opportunity to teach obedience, diligence, and perseverance, but through a well-crafted story.

I wasn't sure the illustrations would hold up against the fancy color prints children see today, but my kindergartners through second graders were enchanted with Margot Tomes' pen and ink line drawings and crowded around to study them in detail. They all wanted to check the book out as it is a "chapter book" but readable for all of them. This is an excellent companion book to *Sam the Minuteman* by Nathaniel Benchley. It would be a fun book to use along with a science activity of baking fresh bread!

Kelley Westenhoff

barthpenn@heaven.org : the story of young Jordan Mink and the email he got from Heaven / Kevin Scott Collier. (A Tweener fable ; 1.) Winona Lake, Ind. : Tweener Press, 2004.

PAP, 0975288024, list price: \$10.95.

Fic. Fables; Heaven--Fiction; Angels--Fiction. 159 p. ; 23 cm.

Grades 4-6. Rating : 4.

Bartholomew Pennington—better known as Bart Penn—is an Angel, 2nd Order, on Cloud Nine in Heaven. He's very good at his job but doesn't quite understand Heaven's new email

system. One day he accidentally sends an email meant for a recently-deceased man named Jordan Mink to a ten-year-old boy with the same name. This is bad enough, but the boy, initially intrigued by the possibility of emailing Heaven, threatens to forward Heaven's email address to everyone he knows when Bart doesn't respond to his questions quickly or thoroughly enough.

barthpenn@heaven.org is a funny, well-written book that is designed to resemble a series of emails between the heavenly Bart and the all-too-human (and all-too-rambunctious) Jordan. It's a clever concept that author Kevin Scott Collier pulls off beautifully. Despite the restrictions of "only" writing in emails, he fully develops the characters of Bart and Jordan as well as several secondary characters. Collier also manages to inject a sense of poignancy as well as humor when, after a rocky start, Bart and Jordan grow to truly care for each other. Both characters mature as a result of their friendship, and both become much better people.

Some cautions: Jordan is initially an insecure, angry boy, who uses words like 'loser' and 'spaz' in his emails to Bart. (He also tells Bart to 'drop dead' in an early email). Also, Bart, like all angels in this depiction of Heaven, was once an ordinary human on Earth; he advanced to his position on Cloud Nine through successfully completing various Heavenly assignments, and can now help people (and influence events) on Earth. Finally, the fact that the emails have actual dates (from 2003) might date the book in some readers' eyes. But these are minor complaints; the story is wonderful, and should have great appeal.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Best little wingman / by Janet Allen ; illustrated by Jim Postier. LCCN 2005297923. Honesdale, Pa. : Boyds Mills, 2005.

HBB, 159078197X, list price: \$15.95.

F. Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Snow removal--Fiction; Snowplows--Fiction; Night--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

Grades K-5. Rating : 5.

Best Little Wingman is the story of a girl who helps her father with his snowplow. Her job as wingman is explained in the story, which also describes some of the people they help one snowy night.

This heart-warming and fun book will delight both boys and girls as they learn about Janny and her job as wingman for her father. The realistic illustrations by Jim Postier add depth to

the story, and readers will enjoy both as they travel through the winter night on the snowplow.

This book is well-suited for independent reading and would also make a wonderful winter bedtime story. Even children living where there is no snow may be able to imagine what it is like to ride through the snow and enjoy hot chocolate and warm biscuits. A nostalgic and heartwarming ending is provided by author Janet Allen. This book will be enjoyed over and over again by children of all ages.

Pam Halter

Roanoke : the lost colony : an unsolved mystery from history / by Jane Yolen and Heidi Elisabet Yolen Stemple ; illustrated by Roger Roth. LCCN 2001020729. New York : Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003.

HBB, 0689823215, list price: \$16.95.

Fic. Roanoke Colony--Fiction; Roanoke Island (N.C.)--History--16th century--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.

Grades 3-5. Rating : 5.

Another in the acclaimed picture book *Mystery from History* series, *Roanoke: The Lost Colony* is narrated by an elementary school student intrigued with unsolved historical mysteries. In a lively, truthful, imagination-catching fashion she presents all the history known about Roanoke plus several theories.

Additional information inset on relevant pages includes definitions and extra, appropriate data. A concluding time line ties all the facts together.

Award-winning poet, novelist, and storyteller Jane Yolen and her parole officer-become-author daughter Heidi Stemple catch their audience's interest from the first page of this absorbing history. They also aptly explain how a history detective works.

Noted artist and illustrator Roger Roth has created classic pencil and watercolor two-page pictures that breathe with life and color. Full of important detail, the illustrations enhance this chronicle.

Roanoke: The Lost Colony will be appreciated by both the history and art class. Recommended for all schools, libraries, and interested individuals.

Donna Eggert

Schoolroom in the parlor / Rebecca Caudill. LCCN 2005925056. Bathgate, N.D. : Bethlehem Books, 2005. Series info?

PAP, 1883937825, list price: \$11.95.
Fic. Schools--Fiction. 145 p. : ill. : 22 cm.
Grades 3-5. Rating : 4.

The fourth of four books in Rebecca Caudill's Fairchild Family series, *Schoolroom in the Parlor* finds main character Bonnie Fairchild, six years of age, and going on seven, spending the winter months—when the snow is too deep for anyone to get to the town school—being taught by her fourteen-year-old sister Althy in the Fairchild parlor. Also attending this “school” are the other Fairchild siblings Debby, Emmy, and Chris. Chris, the only boy, is initially rebellious; he'd expected to spend the winter doing “man stuff”—trapping rabbits and chopping wood. But school is only for half the day, and Chris and the others have every afternoon free.

Schoolroom in the Parlor is a charming book. Not much happens, other than the day-to-day descriptions of what the children learn or what they do in their spare time, but the book provides a vivid look at life in the Kentucky hills of early 20th century America. Readers can vicariously experience the simple pleasures of ice skating on a brisk winter's day, being snowbound during a big blizzard, or waking up late at night merely to see the Northern Lights. Through it all, readers also learn about a warm, nurturing family where parents and children truly love each other... and work together in a spirit of cooperation.

Caudill's series is reminiscent of the Little House books, or Maud Hart Lovelace's Betsy-Tacy novels. They may not appeal to children accustomed to the fast-paced modern world, but they surely make lovely historical novels, and are terrific books for young girls who enjoy thoroughly immersing themselves in a beautifully-depicted fictional world.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Tell me the story / by Max Lucado; illustrated by Ron DiCianni. 2nd ed. LCCN 92026963. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2005.

HBB, 1581345232, list price: \$16.99.
Fic. Children's stories, American; Christian life--Fiction; Short stories. 50 p. : col. ill. : 27 cm.
Grades 3-5. Rating : 4.

In his typical, gentle fashion, Max Lucado brings alive several essential truths of the Bible in *Tell Me the Story*. He begins with Creation, with the Archangel Michael an eyewitness to the delight God has in His work. The Fall is retold through the story of a naughty child who seeks escape from confinement, then is dismayed and frightened when he achieves his escape. A Roman soldier named Claudius gives us a view

of the Resurrection that is unforgettable. Forgiveness, spiritual warfare, and the prodigal son are similarly covered through “think-about-it” stories. The final entry, an altar call set in a vaguely science fiction-type setting, is provocative.

The stories are delicately crafted to convey the truth, but also to allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. Scripture references are footnoted when necessary, and each topic begins with a passage from scripture and the verse the story illustrates. For example, the story about forgiveness begins with, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God,” Matthew 5:8 (NIV). Since these stories are appropriately framed, they become more than just interesting dialogues between characters. Instead, they transform to become character-builders for the observant reader or listener.

While this is an easily-read book, and the beautiful paintings by Ron DiCianni enrich each passage, the librarian or teacher will get the most use out of the volume as a read-aloud to students. It is styled a gift book, and the gift is in sharing it with others.

Kelley Westenhoff

The whipping boy / by Sid Fleischman ; illustrations by Peter Sis. LCCN 85017555. New York : Greenwillow Books, 1986.

HBB, 0688062164, list price: \$16.99.
Fic. Adventure and adventurers--Fiction; Robbers and outlaws--Fiction; Newbery Medal. 90 p. : 23 cm.
Grades 5-7. Rating : 5.

This suspense-filled, mythical adventure exposes the reader to cheeky Prince Brat and his whipping boy, Jemmy-Of-The-Streets. The arrogant prince keeps the castle in constant turmoil with his ornery pranks that overwhelm their stately guests. The King then shouts, “Fetch the whipping boy.” Because, you see, it is “forbidden to spank, thrash, cuff, smack or whip a prince.”

The royal heir enjoys seeing his whipping boys howl like stuck pigs, but Jemmy endures the discipline with impassive contempt. This angers the prince and causes him to threaten eviction. That suits Jemmy; he wants to leave the castle. He loathes wearing velvet breeches and silk stockings. He longs to return to the germ-infested gutters to work as a rat-catcher like his Pa. One night, while dreaming of being back home, he is awakened by the royal prince who wants to run away and needs his manservant to accompany him.

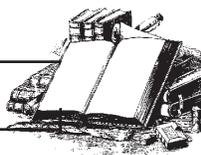
The boys leave, get lost, and are captured by two terrifying villains, Hold-Your-Nose Billy and Cutwater. When they discover the prince's crown, the villains decide to hold the boys for ransom. In the way of good fiction, this journey

into unknown territory, thick with suspense, manages to change both boys' lives.

Sid Fleischman won the 1987 Newbery Medal for this enchanting middle-reader novel. The cover of this book tells us that in past centuries, royal households did exploit a whipping boy such as Jemmy, as occurs in Mark Twain's novel, *The Prince and the Pauper*.

The Whipping Boy has an intriguing, fast-paced plot that rushes through the pages amidst brilliant dialogue and humor. All characters are written with a magnificent charm that will excite middle readers, and could be introduced to second through fourth graders with discretion. Peter Sis's uncanny full-page black-and-white illustrations expand and enhance this event-filled story. A recommended read.

Maxine Cambra



Nirv kids' quest study bible / [edited by] Catherine DeVries. Rev. ed. LCCN 2004107906. Grand Rapids : Zonderkidz, 2005.

HBB, 0310708788, list price: \$27.99.

220.5/20814. Bible--Study and teaching. xi, 1680 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.

Grades 1-6. Rating : 5.

The *NIRV Kids' Quest Study Bible* is an exceptionally innovative Bible for children ages 6-12 and is well worth the \$27.99 asking price. The complete biblical text is presented in New International Reader's Version, which is a simplified version of the New International Version, making it an excellent choice for younger readers.

Special additions to this Bible include a dictionary and topical index, and each chapter tells who wrote that particular book, why, when, where it was written, and why that book is special. Sprinkled throughout are quest challenges that encourage kids to explore further. Over 500 kids' questions are answered with simple but complete explanations, such as 'Does God ever get tired of answering prayers?' and 'Will I see people I love in heaven?'

The use of blue for the color of the print and red for the chapter headings and questions is quite eye-catching, and the illustrations are cute and often silly. Written at a third grade reading level, this Bible is an excellent choice for parents looking for an edition of the Bible for their children that is easy to understand and can be read independently.

Sherri Myers

Scholastic first picture dictionary / [conceived and written by Genevieve de la Bretesche ; illustrated by Charlotte Voake] . [et al.]. LCCN 2004052522. New York : Scholastic Reference, 2005.

SPR, 0439719933, list price: \$14.95.

423'.17. English language--Dictionaries, Juvenile; Picture dictionaries, English--Juvenile literature. 107 p. : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

Grades 2-6. Rating : 4.

The *Scholastic First Picture Dictionary* describes over 800 objects with pictures, interactive riddles, and several transparent pages. Genevieve de La Bretesche wrote the book in French, but Jennifer R. Vetter did the English translation. Charlotte Voake and 16 other artists offer interesting illustrations with ethnically diverse people.

You'll find something for every interest. Eighteen musical instruments entice wee musicians. Farm animals, city scenes, and camping equipment add variety. Children will learn about computers, a DVD player, microwaves, and a stylish bike helmet. See what is in a garage, a broom closet, or a garden. I especially liked the "We go to school" transparency, linked with "In the classroom." The "We go shopping" transparency and the food section offer universal appeal. The drawings possess a slight European flair.

Spiral bound books are often associated with torn pages and a short shelf life. I predict a better future for this picture dictionary. A sturdy outer cover protects the spiral binding, and the pages are extra heavy. Moreover, the spiral binding allows easy page turning. Children can enjoy the bright pictures all by themselves. Add a supervising adult, and you'll promote good discussion about everything from accordion to zucchini.

Roberta Lou Jones

Seven wonders of the modern world / Doreen Gonzales. (Seven wonders of the world.) LCCN 2004015255. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2005.

HBB, 0766052923, list price: \$25.26.

620. Engineering--Juvenile literature; Seven Wonders of the World--Juvenile literature; Architecture--Juvenile literature. 48 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Seven natural wonders of the United States and Canada / Cheryl L. DeFries. (Seven wonders of the world.) LCCN 2004010072. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2005.

HBB, 0766052915, list price: \$25.26.

333.78/3/0973. National parks and reserves--United States--Juvenile literature; Natural monuments--United States--Juvenile literature; National parks and reserves--Canada--Juvenile literature; Natural monuments--Canada--Juvenile literature. 48 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Seven wonders of the natural world / Amy Graham. (Seven wonders of the world.) LCCN 2004009085. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2005.

HBB, 0766052907, list price: \$25.26.

910/.02. Landforms--Juvenile literature; Natural monuments--Juvenile literature. 48 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Grades 4-9. Rating : 4.

The author for each title in the Seven Wonders of the World Series has selected her particular seven wonders using a variety of criteria. The wonders enumerated in the United States and Canada volume were selected because they

"seemed to be the most famous and most studied," and include the Everglades, Yosemite National Park, the Grand Canyon, the Mississippi River, Mount McKinley, Niagara Falls, and the Redwood Forest. Selections for Modern World volume were determined by the American Society of Civil Engineers, and are engineering accomplishments from around the world such as the Panama Canal, the North Sea Protection Works, the Empire State Building, the Golden Gate Bridge, the CN Tower, the Itaipu Dam, and the Channel Tunnel. Choices for Natural World volume include Mount Everest, Victoria Falls, the Grand Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef, the Northern Lights, Paricutin Volcano, and the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro, and were chosen because they are "the most magnificent views nature has to offer" and "remaining astonishing sights of nature." Each book is complemented with colored photos and web shots of sites recommended in the book. Bibliographic reference materials are appended for websites, chapter notes, and further reading. A glossary is also appended.

This series is a school report series. Even the title announces that use. However, the series is a cut above most series titles, for the writing, while factual, is at times literary, not encyclopedic. Each "wonder" is not presented in a template format, which is both a positive and a negative feature, for readers won't necessarily find the same types of facts for each "wonder," but will find what is most interesting about the "wonder." Bold headings in red add to the usefulness for research. The feature which makes the series unique is the selection of and connection to websites via the publisher's site. While the choices are excellent, a question remains about the long-term viability of each site and even the publisher's site. Be aware also that there are geologic references to millions of years. Very useful for school and home school readers doing reports.

Marion Mueller

Galen and the gateway to medicine / by Jeanne Bendick ; pictures by the author. (Living history library.) LCCN 2002108552. Bathgate, N.D. : Bethlehem Books, 2002.

PAP, 1883937752, list price: \$13.95.

610/.937. Medicine--Philosophy--Juvenile literature; Medicine, Ancient--Juvenile literature; Medicine, Greek and Roman--Juvenile literature. xi, 131 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.

Grades 4-7. Rating : 4.

In *Galen and the Gateway to Medicine*, Jeanne Bendick presents a clearly written, easy to understand, and delightful look at the life and work of the Roman physician and philosopher.

The culture Galen lived in and the basic details of his life are given, as well as thorough discussions of his many theories and discoveries. In areas where modern thought has surpassed Galen's medical discoveries, the reasons why Galen's ideas are incorrect are shown, and the correct theories are fully described (although, occasionally, these explanations could be a bit more clear). The final chapter explains why Renaissance and later scientists turned away from much of Galen's work.

Bendick writes in a way that would capture the attention of even a reluctant child reader. For instance, the descriptions of Roman life contain a detailed, exciting look at the world of the gladiator, yet the more violent aspects of gladiatorial combat are played down. (The descriptions of surgical instruments of the time, including a description of vivisection, are a bit more grisly).

Roman gods and goddesses are mentioned, but only briefly. Bendick writes that Galen believed God created a "perfect design" for the body and the working of each of its parts.

Galen and the Gateway to Medicine is geared to both the school and home school audience. Eight "essay questions for student writers" are provided. The pronunciation of Roman names is included in the text. There is also a short bibliography. Bendick has written a similar book on the life of Archimedes, entitled *Archimedes and the Door of Science* (Watts, 1962).

Rosemarie DiCristo

Reading Roll of thunder, hear my cry / Stacy Glenn Tibbets. (The engaged reader.) LCCN 2005009525. Philadelphia : Chelsea House, 2005.

LIB, 0791088324, list price: \$25.00.

813/.54. Taylor, Mildred D.--Roll of thunder, hear my cry--Juvenile literature; African American families in literature--Juvenile literature; Racism in literature--Juvenile literature; Mississippi--In literature--Juvenile literature. 88 p. ; 25 cm.

Grades 4-6 (teacher resource). Rating : 3.

A new series by Chelsea House, "Engaged Readers," strives to turn readers of classic novels into just that. One of the first six books in the series is *Reading Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Stacy Tibbets begins exploration of the Newbery Medal winner with the front cover and proceeds idea by idea to establish a framework for the book. Narrative techniques illustrate viewpoints and voice, followed by Chapter Three summarizing the plot. This chapter also contains a photo of author Mildred D. Taylor and marvelous color photos of scenes

typical of those described in the novel. Chapter Four describes the characters. Chapters Five and Six address the function of setting and understanding themes and symbols. The final chapter is the most useful, discussing the controversies surrounding the book including the role of Christianity during the time of slavery, as well as the use of the "n" word. A bibliography and index conclude the volume.

Although this book is well written, it struggles between being a book for the children wanting to know more about the story, and an aide for teachers. For example, sprinkled throughout the book are sidebars called "on your own activities." For an individual student they are thought-provoking questions but for a class they are excellent discussion questions. I offered this book to two 11-year olds who had read, and loved, Taylor's masterpiece. One loved using this volume to more fully experience *Thunder's* world. The other thought it detracted from her appreciation of the novel by over-analyzing what she had richly enjoyed on her own. Her comment was, "it changes the pictures I made in my mind." I think I would err on the side of using this as a teacher resource to teach this great American novel.

Kelley Westenhoff

energy and action, reflecting accurate contemporary street and domestic scenes. Teedie always looks the same, from early childhood to teenager: a large caricature young adult head on a skinny child's body. A fun read, but not a research tool.

Marion Mueller

Aristotle : philosopher and scientist / Margaret J. Anderson and Karen F. Stephenson. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2003002270. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2004.

HBB, 0766020967, list price: \$19.95.

B or 185. Aristotle; Philosophers; Scientists. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Archimedes : mathematical genius of the ancient world / Mary Gow. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2004028480. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2005.

HBB, 0766025020, list price: \$19.95.

B or 510/.92. Archimedes; Mathematics; Mathematicians. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Copernicus : founder of modern astronomy / Catherine M. Andronik. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2001001815. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2002.

HBB, 0766017559, list price: \$19.95.

B or 520/.92. Copernicus, Nicolaus, 1473-1543; Astronomers. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Edwin Hubble : discoverer of galaxies / Claire L. Datnow. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 96037095. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 1997.

PAP, 0766018695, list price: \$9.99.

B or 520/.92. Hubble, Edwin Powell, 1889-1953; Astronomers. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Johannes Kepler : discovering the laws of planetary motion / Mary Gow. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2002014588. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2003.

HBB, 0766020983, list price: \$19.95.

B or 520/.92. Kepler, Johannes, 1571-1630; Astronomers. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Tycho Brahe : astronomer / by Mary Gow. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2001003269. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2002.

HBB, 0766017575, list price: \$19.95.

B or 520/.92. Brahe, Tycho, 1546-1601; Astronomers. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Niels Bohr : physicist and humanitarian / Naomi Pasachoff. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2002003887. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2003.

HBB, 0766019977, list price: \$19.95.

B or 530/.092. Bohr, Niels Henrik David, 1885-1962; Nobel Prizes--Biography; Physicists. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Ernest Rutherford : father of nuclear science / Naomi Pasachoff. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2004013402. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2005.

HBB, 0766024415, list price: \$19.95.

B or 539.7/.092. Rutherford, Ernest, 1871-1937; Nuclear physics--History; Physicists; Nuclear physicists. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Lise Meitner : pioneer of nuclear fission / Janet Hamilton. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2001002119. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2002.

HBB, 0766017567, list price: \$19.95.

B or 539/.092. Meitner, Lise, 1878-1968; Women--Biography; Physicists; Nuclear fission. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Antoine Lavoisier : founder of modern chemistry / Lisa Yount. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 96041296. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 1997.

PAP, 0766018652, list price: \$9.95.

B or 540/.92. Lavoisier, Antoine Laurent, 1743-1794; Chemists. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Carl Linnaeus : father of classification / Margaret J. Anderson. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 96048900. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 1997.

HBB, 0894907867, list price: \$19.95.

B or 580/.92. Linnæ, Carl von, 1707-1778; Naturalists. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Jonas Salk : creator of the polio vaccine / Salvatore Tocci. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2002003888. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2002.

HBB, 0766020975, list price: \$19.95.

B or 610/.92. Salk, Jonas, 1914-1995; Poliomyelitis vaccine; Scientists. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Alexander Fleming : the man who discovered penicillin / Salvatore Tocci. (Great minds of science.) LCCN 2001003072. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2002.

HBB, 0766019985, list price: \$19.95.

B or 616/.014/092. Fleming, Alexander, 1881-1955; Penicillin--History; Scientists; Bacteriologists--Great Britain--Biography--Juvenile literature. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Grades 4-6. Rating : 5.

The Great Minds of Science series, published by Enslow, is consistently well-written and well-organized. Each book covers the biographical and scientific accomplishments of the featured individual in age-appropriate detail. The series brilliantly places each scientist's work and life in the context of his or her times. Each book also includes a chronology, chapter notes, glossary, a section for further reading (bibliography), and internet addresses. A section on activities that demonstrate some of the essential principles the profiled scientist either discovered or explored follows the biographical material. Written in narrative form, these latter sections are adequate, but without illustrations. A student might not realize they are actually experiments.

Illustrations throughout each book vary from maps to drawings to photographs, depending on the subject of the biography. The importance of religious life is covered in a respectful manner wherever it influenced a particular scientist. The impact of war upon men and women of science is also clear. The volumes authored by Mary Gow stand out as the best of the series, elucidating even the most difficult subject matter.

Astronomers are profiled in four books in the series. The great minds and work of Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, and Edwin Hubble are interwoven in four separate volumes. They are interesting to read together though, as so much of their work overlapped. The thread which connects all four of these men was a drive to understand things that were yet unexplained. For the student using these volumes, it will be illuminating to discover that the work started nearly five hundred years ago by Copernicus led to predictions by Brahe and Kepler during the Renaissance that were only confirmed by sight centuries later, through Hubble's work. An astute student will draw the connection between the quests of these individuals to explain the universe in a way that honors the Creator.

Archimedes appears in his biography as a naturally gifted mathematician. His observation of his world, curiosity about why things were so, and propensity to leave records gave us the foundation for geometry as well as many simple machine experiments. Even someone who doesn't like math can appreciate his impact after reading this well-written biography. Staying

with the ancients, a book on Aristotle, who lived nearly 2500 years ago, and his impact on the present day world is illuminating. His work on classifications of animals led many centuries later to Carl Linnaeus, profiled in yet another volume in this series. Originally sent to study for the pastorate, Linnaeus was a miserable seminary student. Upon the advice of his professor he began studying plants and developed the system of classification that we still use today.

Of the three books on nuclear scientists, two names are very familiar (Rutherford and Bohr) and one less so (Meitner). Lise Meitner was a brilliant scientist in Germany prior to World War II. A non-religious Jew in Germany, she believed her status as a scientist would preserve her, only to have to be smuggled out later to save her life. One of the scientists behind the smuggling was Neils Bohr. His biography explains his own complex work as well as his life of blessing others. Ernest Rutherford's leaps forward in nuclear science are also explained for the layman. Interestingly, he too was personally involved in the effort to rescue scholars and scientists from Nazi Germany. It's a fascinating tie between these three that will give the student a clear example of God's providence working through His people.

The best of the books is a fantastic biography of Robert Boyle by Mary Gow. An early pioneer of chemistry, Boyle's faith in Christ was as powerful as his curiosity. Gow respectfully portrays this powerful faith, something you are unlikely to find in most biographies written for this age group. Following Boyle's era was Antoine Lavoisier, whose inquisitive mind formed the basis for modern chemistry, but whose life was cut short by the French Revolution. Moving into the modern era, books on Jonas Salk and Alexander Fleming will educate students on how one scientist set a goal of getting rid of a horrible disease and the other turned a serendipitous accident into an opportunity to explore more of God's creation, eventually leading to the discovery of life-saving penicillin.

Kelley Westenhoff

Archimedes and the door of science / by Jeanne Bendick ; pictures by the author. (Living history library.) LCCN 95078182. Bathgate, N.D. : Bethlehem Books, 1995.

PAP, 1883937124, list price: \$13.95.

B or 510/.092. Archimedes--Juvenile literature. x, 142 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.

Grades 4-7. Rating : 4.

Simply written and engaging, *Archimedes and the Door of Science* can be used as a biography of Archimedes, as a guide to his scientific and mathematical ideas, and as an overview of ancient Greek culture.

Early chapters discuss Archimedes' life as well as the times he lived in. Succeeding chapters discuss his discoveries, from his experiments with levers and why an object displaces its own weight in water, to his ideas concerning shapes and numbers. Also discussed is his work in astronomy.

Jeanne Bendick, author and illustrator of many science books, shows a remarkable ability to write about tough concepts in easy-to-understand language. Children will get a clear picture of who Archimedes was and how vastly he influenced modern thought. They will also get a clear understanding of the principles behind his ideas. Bendick's illustrations and diagrams further clarify the book's concepts.

Included are simple experiments readers can do in a school or home school setting (the introduction contains a special note for home educators). Interesting facts (that a page in Archimedes' day was ten times longer than the average room; why the Leaning Tower of Pisa doesn't fall) are recounted in ways likely to stick in a reader's mind.

Bendick once remarks that Archimedes' success was due to Greek gods having "looked kindly" on him. A passing comment that ancient Greeks considered Africans "gorillas" may offend some readers. And Bendick tends to mention the Greek worldview (including that humanity began "in the sea") without mentioning ideas about God and creation. But those are the only possibly questionable aspects in an otherwise wonderful book.

Rosemarie DiCristo

You're on your way, Teddy Roosevelt / by Judith St. George ; illustrated by Matt Faulkner. LCCN 2003021534. New York : Philomel, 2004.

HBB, 0399238883, list price: \$16.99.

B or 973.911/092. Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919 --Childhood and youth--Juvenile literature; Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919 --Childhood and youth; Presidents--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Presidents. 1 v. (unpaged) : ill. ; 29 cm.

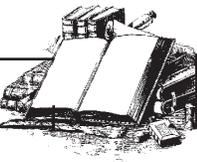
Grades K-3. Rating : 4.

Judith St. George begins a new presidents' series "Turning Point" with *You're On Your Way, Teddy Roosevelt*, a title about the young Theodore "Teedie" Roosevelt. In six brief chapters, Teedie is introduced as a sickly, puny, pale child, but a youngster with great determination and tenacity. Father Roosevelt "took charge," attempting to find cures for a variety of ailments from asthma to poor eyesight to lack of body strength. The wealthy Roosevelt family makes yearlong trips to Europe and Egypt where doctors are also consulted. Meanwhile, Teedie is interested in natural sciences, is a voracious reader, an inquisitive child, and is learning to be a "take charge" person, too. An author's note about Theodore Roosevelt's adult life is appended, as is a

bibliography including two autobiographies. Matt Faulkner uses gouache and caricature style for his full-page color illustrations.

When the reviewer was growing up, she read the entire, still available series, *Childhood of Famous Americans*. St. George's childhood version of Theodore Roosevelt and the latest in the series about George Washington, are much briefer and could easily be read aloud for primary students. The average third grader should be able to easily read and comprehend the text. St. George presents a positive, non-critical view of Roosevelt's luxuriant childhood, hinting at the assertiveness of the future President. Faulkner's pictures are full of energy and action, reflecting accurate contemporary street and domestic scenes. Teedie always looks the same, from early childhood to teenager: a large caricature young adult head on a skinny child's body. A fun read, but not a research tool.

Marion Mueller



Belle Prater's boy / Ruth White. LCCN 94043625. New York : Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996.

HBB, 0374306680, list price: \$17.00.

Fic. Cousins--Fiction; Mother and child--Fiction; Loss (Psychology)--Fiction; Identity--Fiction; Newbery Honor Book. 196 p. ; 22 cm.

Rating?

The search for Belle Prater / Ruth White. LCCN 2004050600. New York : Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005.

HBB, 0374308535, list price: \$16.00.

Fic. Abandoned children--Fiction; Cousins--Fiction; Family life--Virginia--Fiction; Virginia--History--20th century--Fiction. 176 p. ; 22 cm.

Grades 8-12. Rating : 5.

Ruth White has written two wonderful stories for middle grade readers about Belle Prater, her boy Woodrow, and Woodrow's cousin, Gypsy. Belle Prater is missing and everyone in town, Coal Station, Virginia, that is, has a theory about what happened to her. Gypsy is more forthright than her cousin, who keeps his own counsel, and when he moves in next door she is determined to find out what really happened!

In *The Search for Belle Prater*, Gypsy and Woodrow become best friends, joined by their love for reading, stories, and the magic contained in words. When some suspicious events occur, the cousins are certain they point to Belle and set out to track her down. Helped along the way by a new friend, Cassie Caulborne, a girl with second sight, Belle still proves elusive and beyond their reach.

Woodrow's search for his mother proves fruitless, a disappointing event in itself, but harder than that is wondering why she would leave in the first place. White writes of friendships, different ways of finding the strength to face the truth, and the importance of finding your own way in the midst of pain. Either book is a stand alone read but together they make a great pair with readers hoping for a third that might solve the mystery of the missing Belle.

Ceil Carey

Chopstick / by Sandra Byrd. (Friends for a season ; 2.) LCCN 2005005868. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2005.

PAP, 0764200216, list price: \$9.99.

Fic. Music--Competitions--Fiction; Competition (Psychology)--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 234 p. ; 22 cm.

Grades 5-8. Rating : 4.

Two girls, but only one winner. Paige and Kate are brought together by a singer-songwriter

contest and their love for music. For Paige winning is about recognition from her family, whom she feels has forgotten her. While Kate, who comes from a poor family, hopes to be seen as more than a second class citizen. Both girls have promised the \$400 winnings to worthy causes. A friendship blossoms as they work together preparing for the contest. God has led both girls to enter the contest. Who will be the winner? And can their friendship survive the competition?

Second in the Friends for a Season series by Sandra Byrd *Chopstick* is an enjoyable read. Told in alternating chapters by Paige and Kate, both sides of the story are revealed to the reader. Although not a deep, thought provoking novel, the book does bring up important issues such as friendship, money, family, and doing what is right. One character must make a difficult decision on something in a very gray area. Some may agree with her choice, some may not as she consults God and follows her heart. Both girls struggle with God and themselves while deciding what they should do. Church attendance is an important part of family life and Kate's father is a minister. If you want to learn more about the series, the book, and the characters search the website at www.friendsforaseason.com.

Christine J. Horn

The chronicles of Narnia : never has the magic been so real / by C.S. Lewis. Colorado Springs : Focus on the Family, 2003.

ABK, 1589971493, list price: \$80.00.

Fic. Fantasy. 19 sound discs (ca. 22 hrs.) : digital ; 4 3/4 in.

Grades 5-8. High schoolers and adults enjoy reading this. Rating : 5.

C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* are familiar to nearly any English reader of children's books, but as Lewis himself said, the best children's books are those which can be read and re-read enjoyably even by adults. The *Narnia* books certainly meet this standard. Generations of children and their parents have loved these stories.

Now Focus on the Family Radio Theater—the same people who brought the excellent radio drama series *Adventures in Odyssey*—produced these closely faithful adaptations of each of the *Narnia* books in radio drama format. This means that director and adapter Paul McCusker took much of the dialog and narration verbatim from Lewis' books, but that he had to adjust a

few (very few) lines here and there because of the demands of the format.

The British actors whom Focus on the Family assembled to play the various parts are top-notch, and the original musical score and the sound design are film-quality (wait till you hear Aslan's roar, which sound designers made with a combination of lion and polar bear!). Libraries with audio book sections could do to have more than one copy of the 19-CD set, because the popularity of the new *Narnia* movie is likely to keep interest in *Narnia* high for some time. Stories may also be ordered individually, though that method is substantially more expensive.

Mark L. Ward, Jr.

The heaven shop / Deborah Ellis. Markham, Ont. : Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2004.

HBB, 1550419080, list price: \$16.95.

Fic. AIDS (Disease)--Fiction--Juvenile literature; Grandmothers--Fiction--Juvenile literature. 186 p. ; 21 cm.

Grades 8-12. Rating : 5.

Binti Phiri has a good life in Malawi. She lives with her father, older sister, and younger brother, and stars in a popular radio program. They aren't wealthy, but they are better off than many as her father (Bambo) is a skilled coffin maker. His shop is called "Heaven Shop Coffins" and the family prides itself on sending people to heaven in a worthy coffin. But the children's life is torn apart as Bambo dies from AIDS. The relatives he has been supporting for years descend upon the children. Taken in by cruel relatives, Binti is no longer the child star and good student. Instead she is treated as a contagious slave, receiving beatings for the slightest offense. After her older sister disappears, Binti can't stand it anymore, and runs away to find her grandmother, Gogo. What she encounters there is poverty in fact, but wealth in spirit as Gogo runs a group home for orphans. Eventually the three children are reunited with some poignant results.

Deborah Ellis has written a sad yet engaging story about the tragedy of AIDS in Malawi, a story repeated in many countries in Africa. Part of the story line portrays silence and shame as the cause of the spread of AIDS that has allowed it to flourish in the dark. *The Heaven Shop* is dedicated to forcing the tragedy out in the open and all profits go to UNICEF to help AIDS orphans. The book is gritty, with AIDS openly discussed and the older sister resorting to prostitution to survive. Yet the children find comfort and happiness by adjusting to what life

has become, and prizing what is of value. A section at the end discusses the disease in great detail so this book should be reserved for mature students. As a parent, I would want to know my child was reading this book.

Kelley Westenhoff

The innkeeper's son / Ken Anderson. LCCN 2004110907. Winona Lake, Ind. : Tweener Press, 2004.

PAP, 0972925694, list price: \$10.95.

Fic. Jesus Christ--Nativity--Fiction. 96 p. ; 23 cm.

Grades 6-8. Rating : Not recommended.

The Innkeeper's Son provides a fresh look at the Christmas story. Bal Nahor, the innkeeper in Bethlehem, is a roaring drunkard, abusive to his wife and his son, Elysmus. He's also greedy, so when a traveler and his pregnant wife need lodging at his already-overcrowded inn, Bal Nahor places them in the stable and sends Elysmus to the street. Elysmus is angry at this mistreatment, but soon notices a brilliant star above the stable, and, right after that, a chorus of heavenly singing. The boy realizes the Messiah has come and tries to alert the townspeople. But, aside from some shepherds, no one cares.

The Innkeeper's Son has a formal, almost biblical tone to the writing that suits it well. The scene where Elysmus and the shepherds first see the baby Jesus is breathtakingly beautiful. Ken Anderson's characters are well developed. However, the book has troubling aspects.

It's a small book with large type and it has a young boy protagonist, making it seem perfect for middle grade readers. Yet it's somewhat slow moving, taking two chapters merely to set up Elysmus's family situation, with many more chapters showing Elysmus doing little else besides running around seeking someone who believes the Messiah has come. A greater complication: many scenes seem inappropriate for children. Bal Nahor's drunkenness is shown in great detail; he steers a visitor he cannot fit in his inn to Megira since "she shares her bed with anyone who pays the price." The men of Bethlehem are a rambunctious lot, and even worse drunkards than Bal Nahor. A lengthy scene finds them singing "obscene songs" about a slave girl and a Pharisee, and simulating obscene gestures in a dance imitating "a woman of lust and passion." There's also the implication that one man wants to have gay sex with Elysmus.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Katelyn's affection : a novel / Kirsten L. Klassen. LCCN 2004004324. Scottdale, Pa. : Herald Press, 2004.

PAP, 0836192818, list price: \$11.99.

Fic. Divorce--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; Interpersonal relations--Fiction; Mennonites--Fiction. 277 p. ; 20 cm.

Grades 8-12. Rating : 3.

Katelyn's life is changing fast. Her parent's divorce is on the horizon and her best friend has chosen to spend all of her time with a boyfriend. Also, Katelyn has not heard a word from her friend Nathan since he left for college. When outgoing Shawn asks her for a date she agrees to go. Their feelings for one another begin to grow when suddenly Nathan returns from college and Katelyn must face how she feels about both boys.

A lot is packed into this book including extensive discussions on divorce and its effects, what happens when family members are alcoholics, as well as the dangers of a possessive and abusive boyfriend. The scenes involving this abusive boyfriend are somewhat unsettling, especially in an otherwise gentle read.

Katelyn's Mennonite upbringing and beliefs show the reader a lesser known Christian denomination. While we don't often see the characters' relationship with God they do attend church and pray at the dinner table. The Mennonite non-violent position is often discussed including a conversation about a church Halloween party where costumes were more likely to include weapons.

Although the book does not present characters with apparent personal relationships with Jesus, overall, *Katelyn's Affection* is an enjoyable book. Perfect for a teen looking for a romance with substance.

Christine Horn

Operation Red Jericho / Joshua Mowll ; [illustrated by Benjamin Mowll, Julek Heller, Niroot Puttapipat]. (The guild trilogy ; 1.) LCCN 2005045382. Cambridge, Mass. : Candlewick Press, 2005.

HBB, 0763626341, list price: \$15.99.

Fic. Ships--Fiction; Uncles--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Adventure and adventurers--Fiction; Secret societies--Fiction; China--History--1920-1928--Fiction. ix, 271 p. : ill., maps ; 20 cm.

Grades 9-11. Rating : 3.

Becca and Doug MacKenzie are determined to find out how their parents disappeared, but no one seems to want to help them. Their uncle's ship, the *Expedient*, contains more questions than answers and seems in constant danger. Adding to the mystery is the existence of a secret society called the Honorable Guild of Specialists, with which their parents, uncle, and the whole crew seem connected. In their quest for answers, Becca and Doug find adventure on the high seas in 1920s China.

The characters and plot of this book develop rather slowly. However, once the plot gets going, the reader becomes thoroughly engaged. It is sometimes hard to remember that *Operation Red Jericho* is indeed fiction, especially since the introduction states that the author became the curator of the archives of his great-aunt,

Becca MacKenzie, upon her death in 2002. This statement, as well as the characterization of the MacKenzies as inquisitive and sometimes mischievous teenagers draws the reader in, and the events seem real enough to be an actual part of history. Coupling that with a constant air of mystery and suspense, Joshua Mowll has created a fine work that will instill in his readers a value of perseverance and learning as essential to survival.

Elizabeth Norton

The perilous road / William O. Steele ; with an introduction by Jean Fritz. LCCN 89019843. San Diego : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, [1990], 1958.

PAP, 0152606475, list price: \$6.00.

Fic. Prejudices--Fiction; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Fiction; War--Fiction. xi, 156 p. ; 20 cm.

Grades 5-9. Rating : 5.

It is 1863 in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, and eleven-year-old Chris Brabson is full of hatred toward the Yankee blue-bellies. Silas told him the Yanks stole the deerskin shirt he had worked so hard on; now he watches as they take his family's "onliest horse" and their food stored for the winter. Then his brother Jethro joins the Federal army, which brings some neighbors out against the whole Brabson family. Chris secretly manages to harass the Feds, but when he learns that his brother might be in danger, he rushes away from home to look for Jethro and warn him against a Rebel attack. After some kind Union soldiers help him search for his brother, Chris finds himself in the midst of a real battle scene. While his family frantically searches for him, Chris manages to escape and return home.

Author William O. Steele has written several carefully researched, exciting historical novels for children. In *The Perilous Road*, his best known book, he portrays some of the human impact of the Civil War upon families and their communities. His dialect is faithful to the period, even to the point of occasionally reflecting a negative view of American Indians. Steele includes times of family fun to balance the intensity of Chris's passion. The characters are well drawn. Chris grows through his traumatic experience to understand his parents' view that people of integrity can sometimes differ. They prefer to follow the scriptural maxim "blessed are the peacemakers." Highly recommended for home and Christian school libraries. Newbery Honor book, 1959.

Donna W. Bowling

The reveal / Sarah Anne Sumpolec. (Becoming Becca ; 4.) LCCN 2004028016. Chicago : Moody Press, 2005.

PAP, 0802464548, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Christian life--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; High schools--Fiction; Suicide--Fiction; Haiti--Fiction. 259 p. ; 21 cm.

Grades 9-12. Rating : 5.

The Reveal, fourth book of the Becoming Beka series, is teen fiction at its best. A brief mission visit to Haiti with her church, strengthens Beka's faith and upon returning home, puts it to the test. While Beka works through her senior year at school as editor of the school newspaper, she must fight temptation in order to maintain her purity, watch over her younger sister, let go of the past and accept someone new into her family, forgive an old enemy and turn her into a friend, struggle against peer pressure, and learn to exercise leadership. Woven throughout these learning experiences is an inspiring story of boyfriends, girlfriends, school bullies, family problems, heartaches, joys, successes, and failures that everyone experiences at one time or another on the path of life.

Sarah Anne Sumpolec is not afraid to confront the issues: peer pressure, life or death choices, romantic and sexual decisions, family relationships, and at the core of it all is a young girl, seeking the heart and mind of God. Beka asks valid questions that teens struggle to answer, like "How are you supposed to know what [God] is saying to you? How can you follow somebody if you don't know where they're going?" (p. 34) and "What [does] it look like to forgive someone...?" (p. 51) or "How [am] I supposed to love someone I [can't] stand?" (p. 81) Beka is genuine, the characters are convincing, the issues are authentic, the solutions are valid. This reader did not want the book to end—neither will you!

Pamella A. Russell

The rose round / by Meriol Trevor. LCCN 95078062. Warsaw, N.D. : Bethlehem Books, 1995.

PAP, 1883937094, list price: \$11.95.

Fic. Christian life--Fiction; England--Fiction. 211 p. ; 22 cm.

Grades 6-10. Rating : 4.

Originally published in 1963 and reprinted as part of Bethlehem Books' "Young Adult Historical Bookshelf," *The Rose Round* is a beautiful, richly-written novel, the type of book to be savored rather than quickly read. Its old-fashioned feel makes it reminiscent of writers like Mary Stewart, but its strong story and unforgettable characters should make it appeal to preteen and teen girls who love to read.

Set in England and told from the point of view of Matt, a thirteen-year-old orphan, the story really concerns the romance of his older sister Caroline, who's engaged to the arrogantly-rich Jasper Hartnoll but who becomes increasingly fond of his homely, crippled cousin, Theo Ayres. Carolyn, a cook, lives with Matt on the Ayres estate, a crumbling old property with few inhabitants and even fewer servants. It's run by

the bitterly imperious Madame Ayres, who lives there with son Theo and a wildcat of a granddaughter, 13-year-old Alix.

Madame is still grieving the death of her only daughter, Rosario, who died while a child. She's also grieving the wartime death of her favored son, Julian, and despises Theo, her only living child, for being crippled, and for what she perceives as weakness. Theo's "weakness" actually is his attempt to live out his Christian faith; the story revolves around how this faith softens Madame, Alix, and of course the beautiful Carolyn.

In *The Rose Round*, Meriol Trevor includes passing reference to Catholic doctrine, including purgatory, the rosary, and the Virgin Mary. The story puts much more emphasis on forgiveness, a person's need to return to God before he dies, and the supreme sacrifice God made by coming to earth as the Son.

Rosemarie DiCristo

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The secret of the swamp king / Jonathan Rogers. (The wilderking trilogy ; 2.) Nashville : Broadman & Holman, 2005.

HBB, 0805431322, list price: \$15.99.

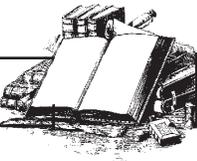
Fic. Adventure and adventurers; Fantasy. 229 p. ; 20 cm.

Grades 4-9. Rating : *5.

The Secret of the Swamp King is the second book in the Wilderking trilogy by Jonathan Rogers. It is an action packed adventure that will be cherished by young and old alike. Aidan Errolson has spent the past few years living in the castle of King Darrow as an honored guest and the best friend of the king's son. However, all of that comes to an end when important noblemen sing Aidan's praises too often. The king begins to feel threatened and he sends Aidan on a dangerous mission deep into the heart of the Feechifens swamp.

In this fantasy inspired by the adventures of King David there is much to enjoy. Action, adventure, and solid moral teachings abound. The strength of the story lies in its ability to be both entertaining and thought provoking. It raises questions about the environment, about what or who runs our lives, and even about the nature of good and evil. Portions of the plot may be somewhat predictable for older readers, but that does not distract much from the enjoyment of this delightful story. *The Secret of the Swamp King* could provoke deep discussion in classrooms or simply be enjoyed as a "just for fun" read. Also, even though the mention of the "one true God" is noticeably Christian, it is accessible to non-believers because it's not overly didactic in its tone. As such, Jonathan Rogers' novel is highly recommended for church, school, and public libraries alike.

Tinna D. Mills



The case for a creator : a journalist investigates scientific evidence that points toward God / Lee Strobel with Jane Vogel. Student edition. LCCN 2004010002. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2004.

PAP, 0310249775, list price: \$8.99.

212/.1. God--Proof, Cosmological; Religion and science. 103 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.

Grades 12 - Adult. Rating : 5.

Lee Strobel, former skeptic and Yale Law School graduate, offers an excellent defense of God as Creator. *The Case for a Creator* is exactly as the name implies—scientific evidence pointing toward God. An earlier doubting Strobel plotted a careful case against the God who Christians believed made the world. One by one, the presumed facts fell. The author writes: “I was left with an origin-of-life experiment that science has now rendered irrelevant, a tree of life that had been uprooted by the biological Big Bang of the Cambrian explosion, doctored embryo drawings that don’t reflect reality, and a fossil record that stubbornly refuses to reveal the proliferation of missing links....Doubts piled on doubts....the central pillars of evolutionary theory quickly rotted away....”

Strobel writes in a down-to-earth fashion. You’ll not be intimidated by the Kalam argument, mention of quantum physics, Behe’s mousetrap, or the Intelligent Design Movement.

This student edition has an attractive green cover, some charts, and several sidebars. A few pages of footnotes suggest further study. Strobel’s *The Case for Christ*, and *The Case for Faith* are also available in student editions.

An inspiring part of the book regarded Strobel’s wife. She “decided to become a follower of Jesus.” Her testimony led him to investigate the claims of Christ. Although evangelism is not emphasized, *The Case for a Creator* can also inspire all Christians to witness more fervently!

Roberta Lou Jones

At Jerusalem's gate : poems of Easter / by Nikki Grimes ; with woodcuts by David Frampton. LCCN 2003001089. Grand Rapids : Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2005.

HBB, 0802851835, list price: \$20.00.

232.96. Jesus Christ--Passion--Juvenile poetry; Jesus Christ--Passion--Poetry; Easter--Juvenile poetry; Children's poetry, American; Christian poetry, American; Easter--Poetry; American poetry. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 32 cm.

Grades 6-8. Rating : 5.

Nikki Grimes has written twenty-two poems about the passion of Christ, beginning with His entrance into Jerusalem on a donkey and ending with the ascension. In the author’s note, Grimes acknowledges that the “resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central theme of Easter—and the cornerstone of the Christian faith.” She also notes she finds remaining questions about Easter which she thinks are answerable in poetic imagery, form, and imagination. Each poem is introduced with a narrative about that particular Easter event. Appendix material includes notes and biblical references for each poem. David Frampton has created at least one woodcut to illustrate each poem plus other decorative elements throughout.

Grimes and Frampton have produced an elegant banquet of poems and visuals about the Easter story. The poems are thoughtful, imaginative, yet biblically based. Grimes forces the reader to examine the Bible texts from a variety of perspectives, often from the viewpoint of participants in the events. A subtle evangelical message enters several poems: “Evidence of Mercy,” “Simon, Father of Rufus,” and “The Highwayman.” Frampton, however, makes the book a special feast. Using simple woodcuts, reminiscent, in design, of early Christian or Byzantine artwork, he catches the message and mood of each poem. Small detail designs reflect the culture, as do the colors of tan, brown, yellow, and orange sparked with jewel tones amidst the heavy black lines of the woodcuts. This reviewer will share each poem with the biblical references with middle school students during Holy Week. Praises and hosannas for this title.

Marion Mueller

Being a girl who serves : how to find your life by giving it away / Shannon Kubiak Primicerio. (Being a girl.) LCCN 2005032387. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2006.

PAP, 0764200909, list price: \$11.99.

248.8/33. Teenage girls--Religious life; Christian teenagers--Religious life. 176 p. ; 21 cm.

Grades 10-12. Rating : 4.

Being a Girl Who Serves is book two in the *Being a Girl* Series by Shannon Kubiak

Primicerio. Teenage girls are encouraged to look past their own needs and wants and use their time and talents to help others. Ms. Primicerio explains to young girls how they can be used of God to be servants for Him, and that it doesn’t matter who you are or where you’re from, anyone can be used to help others. In order to be more like the shining example of Jesus, who came to serve man, we must humble ourselves and serve others also.

Being a young woman in her early twenties herself, Shannon Kubiak Primicerio easily identifies with the young teen girls for whom she writes this book. Written in language on their level, these girls will read of simple ways to help others and not feel as if they are being preached at. In a world where many think of themselves first, this book instead encourages teen girls to think of others first, much like Jesus did. I highly recommend this book to parents of teen girls, and for Bible study groups and youth groups alike.

Sherri Myers

God called a girl : how Mary changed her world—and you can too / Shannon Kubiak. LCCN 2004020639. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2005.

PAP, 0764200291, list price: \$11.99.

248.8/33. Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Juvenile literature; Teenage girls--Religious life--Juvenile literature; Christian life--Juvenile literature; Conduct of life--Juvenile literature; Spirituality--Juvenile literature. 173 p. ; 21 cm.

Grades 9-12. Rating : 3.

One of the struggles the evangelical community has is with being real. Christians make bad choices all the time, but are afraid to reveal them to other Christians for fear of disclosing a tarnished halo. Similarly, *God Called A Girl* has trouble with transparency. One would think, reading this book, that the author never made any bad choices. Yes, she talks about some bad experiences and pain, but not as linked to her own choices. Credibility with the target age group requires transparency. I give her credit for directing the reader’s focus back to Scripture, but there is a flavor of “do it this way” throughout the book. Be aware that it is written from a reformed evangelical point of view about Mary.

Kelley Westenhoff

A young woman's walk with God / Elizabeth George. LCCN 2005029083. Eugene, Ore. : Harvest House, 2006.

PAP, 0736916539, list price: \$9.99.
248.8/33. Teenage girls--Religious life; Christian teenagers--Religious life. 195 p. ; 21 cm.
Grades 7-10. Rating : 3.

Elizabeth George has written *A Young Woman's Walk with God* as a step-by-step journey that young women can use to "take apart and inspect" each fruit of the Spirit. It's meant to help them learn how the fruit can fit together in their lives, and to help them become more like Jesus. Smoothly written and using simple language, the book promises its readers how to find peace despite school or family pressures, how to experience joy when facing difficulties, how to be positive, and how to control bad habits. It's divided into three sections: Getting the Right Attitude, Getting Along with Everybody, and Getting Your Act Together.

The book delivers all it promises. Unlike similar books that imply readers will become better Christians with almost no effort (other than reading the book), *A Young Woman's Walk with God* makes it clear that success will take a conscious effort. It also offers concrete ideas to put its concepts into practice. Another plus: George addresses the reader in the manner of a concerned friend, making the book easy to read.

A Young Woman's Walk with God is carefully constructed. Important points are reinforced, often as questions George asks, then immediately answers. Also, each chapter's message is summarized with a list of "Things to do today to ..." and questions and answers styled "Would you like to know more about ...?" Previous chapters' messages are frequently reiterated in succeeding chapters. Confusing or "biblical" words are explained. However, the chapter on patience tells readers to "do nothing" when dealing with persons who are "hostile, mean, or... insult you;" this may be dangerous or naïve in genuinely hostile situations. Also, a passage implying that not "giving in" to hunger results in a blessing of the Spirit may convince anorexics their behavior is somehow biblical.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Encyclopedia of careers and vocational guidance / 13th ed. LCCN 2004022855. New York : Ferguson, 2005.

HBB, 081606055X, list price: \$249.00.
331.702. Occupations--Encyclopedias; Vocational guidance--Encyclopedias; Occupations--Handbooks, manuals, etc.; Vocational guidance--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 5 v. : ill. ; 29 cm.
Grades 9-12. Rating : 5.

This thirteenth edition of a truly one-stop five volume series remains the definitive comprehensive career reference in print, now in print for more than thirty years. With 550 black-and-white photographs and more than 320 on-

the-job interviews, students are sure to find helpful insights and practical points.

Volume 1 concentrates on career guidance (choosing a career, starting a career, what to expect) along with appendixes and indexes, and career fields which consists of an overview of the ninety-three industries covered. Volumes 2 to 5 contain the career articles, listed from A to Z. Each article (with revisions and update to all articles and more than sixty new career articles in this edition) offers career information, a bibliography, sidebars, requirements, and helpful outlook summary.

The lower cost and comprehensive coverage of this series makes this a worthy addition to high school and all public libraries.

Leroy Hommerding

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Peterson first guide to butterflies and moths / Paul A. Opler ; illustrated by Amy Bartlett Wright. (Peterson first guides.) LCCN 93005751. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

PAP, 0395906652, list price: \$5.95.
595.78/0973. Lepidoptera--North America--Identification; Butterflies; Moths. 128 p. : col. ill. ; 19 cm.
Grades 7-Adult. Rating : *5.

As a college biology major in the 1960's, I collected the hardback Peterson Field Guides. My antique books, now dog-eared, represent many pleasant tromps through the woods and fields. Peterson Field Guides were dependable forty years ago. They remain so in 2006!

Butterflies and Moths, by Paul A. Opler, represents the Peterson First Guides series. As the name implies, First Guides are more elementary than the hardback versions. Yet, *Butterflies and Moths* includes over 180 illustrations by Amy Bartlett Wright. Her superb artwork showcases the most common butterflies and moths in North America. Arrows highlight distinctive markings, and some species reside on a typical leaf or flower.

Novice naturalists will appreciate miscellaneous information. A small section discusses how to plant a garden for butterflies and moths. Occasional references to habitat needs include the mention of Schaus' Swallowtail as an "endangered species on a few islands in the upper Florida Keys." The Xerces Society, dedicated to the preservation of all invertebrates, rates one sentence.

Public, church, and school libraries can buy Peterson's *Butterflies and Moths* with complete confidence. Christian families will find this book helpful for teaching creation lessons to children. Find a park, a stream, or a field. Take the field guide and your Bible. (See Genesis 1 and 2, John 1:1-3, and Colossians 1:14-17.)

Roberta Lou Jones

The Ferguson guide to resumes and job hunting skills : / Maureen J. Hinds. LCCN 2004024445. New York : Ferguson, 2005.

HBB, 0816057923, list price: \$45.00.
650.14. Job hunting; Resumes (Employment). vii, 248 p. : ill. ; 29 cm.
Grades 9-12. Rating : 3.

Hinds, a freelance writer and a member of the National Resume Writer's Association and Career Masters, has compiled over 100 samples illustrating different types of resumes and cover letters. She provides an introductory section, particularly applicable for students, that focuses on self-assessment, the basics of job searching, looking beyond the classified, getting organized, and the purpose of and how to prepare a resume.

The sample resumes and cover letters complement in public libraries *The Resume Handbook* (Adams Media Corp, 2002), *Resumes That Knock Them Dead* (Adams Media Corp, 2003), and *Resumes for Dummies* (For Dummies, 2005). School libraries needing a guide to explain the process of job searching can recommend *The Ferguson Guide* to students as it's easy to follow and basic, and follows samples for students to digest.

Leroy Hommerding

The Facts on File companion to the British novel / Virginia Brackett and Victoria Gaydosik. LCCN 2004020914. New York : Facts on File, 2005.

HBB, 081606377X, list price: \$130.00.
823/.509. English fiction--History and criticism--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2 v. ; 24 cm.
Grades 9-12. Rating : 5.

Spanning the early seventeenth century to the present, the two volumes of *The Facts On File Companion to the British Novel* offer a comprehensive study of the writers, works, and concepts important to this genre. Each A to Z encyclopedia contains hundreds of clearly written entries on authors, literary works and terms, themes, and historical places.

Brackett and Gaydosik both hold a Ph.D. in English and have a background in literature. Their attention to indexes, appendixes, bibliographies for many entries, glossaries of important terms, and extensive cross-references makes this set invaluable.

Libraries having high school and college students studying British drama, short stories, novels, and poetry will find these frequently used. Students are likely to find this helpful as the writing style is directed to readers between the ages of twelve and twenty-two with particular attention paid to narrative structure where students may have difficulty in

identifying point of view and other formal features.

Leroy Hommerding

Stories of young pioneers in their own words / Violet T. Kimball. LCCN 10410. Missoula, Mont. : Mountain Press, 2000.

PAP, 0878424237, list price: \$14.00.

978/.02. Overland journeys to the Pacific; Frontier and pioneer life--West (U.S.); Pioneer children--West (U.S.)--Social life and customs; Pioneer children--West (U.S.)--Biography; Pioneers; Overland trails; West (U.S.)--History. vii, 225 p. : ill., 1 map ; 23 cm.

Grades 6-10. Rating : 4.

As implied by the title, *Stories of Young Pioneers In Their Own Words* uses quotes from the diaries and letters of "young pioneers" (aged nineteen and younger) to relate the experiences these pioneers had on the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails.

Violet Kimball, a "self-described 'trail nut'" who has traveled on all of the major overland trails, has written an interesting, readable book. The first-person material, interspersed with Kimball's copiously-researched text, helps the book come alive. Topics include getting ready for the trek west, daily life on the trail, the types of work done, how children kept up their education, and what pioneers did for fun. Profiles of selected young pioneers are included. Each chapter ends with a summary of its main points. The book also contains a twelve-page bibliography and a separate Teacher's Guide.

Mention of religion comes mainly through brief accounts of the pioneers' faith, although there is one somewhat negatively-worded section describing Protestant missionaries' attempts to Christianize Native Americans. Many passages describe the Mormon pioneer experience although there's little mention of specific religious beliefs.

While *Stories of Young Pioneers* is suitable for young teens, its use of first-person accounts means some material may be blunt. Death on the trail (including the experiences of the Donner party) is honestly depicted. The Victorian moral code is described for today's readers who'd be unfamiliar with it; occasional sexual lapses are also described. There's mention of a "whiskey cure" for cholera, references to scenes of "oath-filled chaos" or pioneers who "swore loudly," a passage about an Indian toddler who wore a red ribbon around his "pee-pee," and a detailed description of a boy who gets drunk on white lightning (however, his experience was so bad, he never touched liquor again). None of this is portrayed luridly.

Rosemarie DiCristo

American scientists / Charles W. Carey, Jr. (American biographies.) LCCN 2005000683. New York : Facts on File, 2006.

HBB, 0816054991, list price: \$65.00.

B or 509/.2/273. Scientists--United States--Biography. xiii, 434 p. : photos. ; 24 cm.

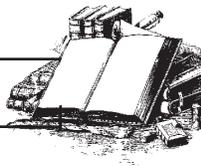
Grades 9-12. Rating : 4.

Carey is well prepared for this volume documenting the stories of the men and women who have influenced the course of society and the scientific community. He is the author or editor of at least twelve books and has written more than 150 biographical entries for American National Biography.

American Scientists could aptly be subtitled *American Scientific Greats from A to Z*. This easy to read volume provides almost 300 entries on scientists, and each entry covers the scientist's background, including details about the individual's professional career and accomplishments within the scientific world. Cross-references, a general index, two subject indexes—one by discipline, one by year of birth, and seventy-four photographs enable students to digest the theories and experiments. A further reading list at the end of each entry includes applicable web sites for more information.

Public and school libraries having students who do research on American scientists will want to add *American Scientists*. Those libraries who carry *American National Biography* will find students can digest these entries more easily. General readers with an interest in a particular individual or Nobel Prize winner will find the entries concise with profiles offered placing the scientist in historical context.

Leroy Hommerding



All she ever wanted / Lynn Austin. LCCN 2005018574. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2005.

PAP, 0764228897, list price: \$13.99.

Fic. Conflict of generations--Fiction; Mothers and daughters--Fiction; Grandmothers--Fiction; Christian fiction. 400 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

Kathleen Seymour ran away from home as a teenager to escape the poverty and shame it subsequently caused, but now many years later is faced with disclosing her past in order to salvage her relationship with her daughter. An unexpected and unwanted invitation to attend a party for her father eventually leads to a trip back home to a family she hasn't seen for three-and-a-half decades, and a disclosure of memories and secrets she'd rather have never allowed to see the light of day ever again. As Kathleen opens up to her daughter, she begins to discover things about her past she never knew. As she learns answers to her questions, the more she seeks to know, leading to healing and forgiveness for everyone involved.

Lynn Austin is one of the most engaging authors I have ever had the privilege to read, and her realistic characters cause the reader to search their own hearts in the process of reading and savoring each of her offerings. Such is the case with *All She Ever Wanted*, an emotionally charged novel of a mother who wishes only to forget her past and provide a different kind of life for her own daughter. This inspirational contemporary holds the reader's attention, and the message of God's love and redemption floods the pages as Katherine forgives and reconciles with her family, strengthening her once-strained relationship with her daughter at the same time. Highly recommended!

Sherrri Myers

Blessing / Deborah Bedford. New York : Steeple Hill, 2005.

PAP, 0373785461, list price: \$12.95.

Fic. Colorado--History--Fiction. 312 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

Having saved the Tin Cup town marshal from an apparent attack by a gunman, Uley Kirkland is the mining town's hero, albeit a rather reluctant one—especially since the gunman knows a secret Uley is loathe for him to reveal: disguised beneath the manly mining boots, breeches, and cap is a young woman. Gunman Aaron Brown agrees to keep her secret—for a price. But when Aaron's sister comes to town for his trial, Uley becomes aware that not only is Aaron a fellow-believer, but she is falling in love with him.

Disguised as a man as a means of self-protection in this rough town, Uley begins to understand the importance of truthfulness as she realizes the impossibility of developing a relationship with Aaron in secret. Faced with difficult choices, Uley takes a bold step to be the woman God intends her to be, even if it might mean losing Aaron.

Deborah Bedford's *Blessing* is a light-hearted romance where moments of suspense are intermingled with surprise twists. The book also carries the important lesson of acting in the will of God, rather than in the wisdom of men, and illustrates the redemptive power of God in not only Uley's life, but in Laura's as well—a "soiled dove" whom Uley befriends and encourages to live a new life in Christ, despite societal opposition. The book does contain one use of the exclamation "hell," and somewhat descriptive kissing scenes, but most readers should find this story an enjoyable read.

Sherrri Beeler

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A crown in the stars / Kacy Barnett-Gramkow. LCCN 2004025795. Chicago : Moody Press, 2005.

PAP, 0802413692, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Bible. O.T. Genesis--History of Biblical events--Fiction; Babel, Tower of--Fiction; Religious fiction. 420 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 9-12). Rating : *5.

Shoshannah, six generations removed from Noah, has grown up hearing stories of the world before the Flood, but knows little about her mother's enemies in the Great City. A visit with relatives places her into the hands of those who live in defiance of the Most High. A pawn among leaders lobbying for power, and expected to take her mother's place as priestess of the still-unfinished Tower, Shoshannah only longs to escape. But the Most High has plans beyond her comprehension.

Continuing the steady, intricate pace of her previous novels, the author adds layers of conflict and insight in *A Crown in the Stars*, the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. While the multitude of relations among the characters may confuse even those who have read the previous books in the series, a chart at the end of the book helps straighten things out. The well-crafted characters bring the story to life. One interesting reality the author explores is the reaction to shortening life spans, as parents begin to outlive their children. The detailed setting suits the time period, giving a sense of

realism without ducking into vagueness or fantasy. Meshing an ancient story with relevant themes, Kacy Barnett-Gramkow concludes her sweeping saga of faith—from Noah to Abram.

Katie Hart

Footprints on the horizon / Stephanie Grace Whitson. (Pine Ridge portraits ; 3.) LCCN 2005008960. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2005.

PAP, 0764227874, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. World War, 1939-1945--Nebraska--Fiction; Ex-prisoners of war--Fiction; Soldiers--Fiction; Widows--Fiction; Fort Robinson (Neb.)--Fiction; Historical fiction; Christian fiction. 317 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Stephanie Grace Whitson's *Footprints on the Horizon* is book three in her Pine Ridge Portraits series but is easily read as a "stand-alone," since enough background detail is given about the past relationships of the key characters. Detailing a little-known piece of American history during World War II, Whitson describes the life of German prisoners kept at Fort Robinson in Nebraska. With a majority of able-bodied men fighting overseas, C.J. Jackson is hard-pressed to keep her horse farm running. When she completes an application to have German prisoners work on her farm, she meets strong resistance from the man she loves, as well as from the folks in Dawes County who want nothing to do with the Nazis.

Moving back and forth from first person to third person point of view, Whitson weaves together the stories of C.J.; her niece, Josephine; and Helen, whose husband returns home maimed and terribly burned from the war. Although the characters are somewhat superficially developed, these three women, able to see beyond the "Nazi" label to the humanity of each prisoner, learn that war is not as clear of an issue as they would like it to be: when they pray for the success of their men, it means they are praying for the deaths of other men, and the destruction of cities where women and children—much like themselves—live. They learn to see with more open eyes, to bless their enemies, and they realize that love can bridge even the widest cultural gap.

Sherrri Beeler

Gilead / Marilynne Robinson. LCCN 2004047063. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

HBB, 0374153892, list price: \$23.00.

Fic. Clergy--Fiction; Grandfathers--Fiction; Fathers and sons--Fiction; Children of clergy--Fiction; Reminiscing in old age--Fiction; Kansas--Fiction; Conflict of generations--Fiction; Christian fiction. 247 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

There are a thousand thousand reasons to live this life, every one of them sufficient (243).

Rev. Ames lives in Gilead, the same small town in Iowa where he grew up and where his father and grandfather pastored. In 1956 he is in his mid seventies, with a much younger wife and a young son. Rev. Ames's first wife died decades ago in childbirth, followed shortly by his child. For decades he was a single pastor reading Feuerbach and Barth and preaching faithfully to his Congregationalist flock. Now he is dying, and he wants to leave a written legacy of counsel and story to his only child. *Gilead* is that legacy, and consists of the personal jottings and musings—some a paragraph long and some several pages—of the Rev. John Ames.

John Ames has a no-good namesake. Rev. Ames's best friend, another local pastor, named his child after Ames as a gesture of love after the death of Ames's own child. However, that boy has proven himself to be depraved—and just plain mean—his whole life, despite the love his whole family has showered on him. Now he is back in town and hanging around Ames' home, where Ames' young wife (soon to be widowed?) and son are attracted to his charm. Ames is caught between his unwillingness to speak evil of any man and his desire to warn his wife—and his own difficulty in forgiving and loving this surrogate son.

Marilynne Robinson shows a remarkable knowledge of pastoral life and even the finer points of theology in *Gilead*, though at a few key moments Rev. Ames falters theologically and one wonders where Robinson's views figure in. Robinson shares memorable and quite pastoral insights throughout her story, and her flowing prose style has garnered much praise. *Gilead*, in fact, won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2004.

Mark L. Ward, Jr.

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Giver of roses / Kathleen Morgan. (The guardians of Gadiel ; 1.) LCCN 2005007727. Grand Rapids : Revell, 2005.

PAP, 0800730941, list price: \$13.99.

Fic. Quests (Expeditions)--Fiction; Princes--Fiction; Fantasy fiction; Christian fiction. 447 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 11-12). Rating : *5.

Held captive for three years, Danae has grown to love the royal family she serves, including Prince Vartan. When her people attack the city, Vartan is left for dead, and Danae's life takes an unexpected turn. Pursued by evil and haunted by an ancient prophecy, Danae flees with the wounded and blind prince. A twisted ruler has

given himself over to the Dark Lord, threatening to overtake the whole land with evil. Vartan and Danae face long journeys and deserts, dragonmaids and nomads, sorcery and doubt in their quest to follow Athan's will and free Gadiel.

Giver of Roses immediately draws the reader in, thrusting its main characters against insurmountable odds and sustaining both risk and adventure throughout. Each of the characters is expertly drawn, creating a blend of emotions and motivations that allows readers to step into their shoes while still having the epic feel for which fantasy is known. The fantasy world is well-drawn, but offers little that is unique from other books of the genre, becoming merely backdrop. The measured dialogue adds little humor but fits the sweeping, somber tone of the novel. Sorcery, demon possession, and the supernatural all have a part in the book, but the lines of good and evil are clearly set.

Katie Hart

In plain sight / Lorena McCourtney. (Ivy Malone mysteries ; 2.) LCCN 2004023867. Grand Rapids : Revell, 2005.

PAP, 0800759559, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Women detectives--Fiction; Organized crime--Fiction; Motor homes--Fiction; Christian fiction; Mystery fiction. 311 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

Ivy Malone is a "little old lady with an attitude." After taking down a crime syndicate, she's ready to return to her calm life, but the bad guys don't seem to want to leave her alone. Afraid she's a target, Ivy decides a three month visit with her niece in the Ozarks might allow her some breathing room. Although her niece and her husband have been transferred to Hawaii, Ivy makes the trip and becomes the guardian of her grandniece, Sandy while they are away.

Ivy has a way of getting herself into interesting predicaments. She takes a job with a reclusive woman and happens to discover a murder. Since no one sees Ivy as a threat, she decides to put her sleuthing skills to work once again. With the help of Sandy, an unusual character named Baby, and an incredulous police detective, Ivy is determined to show the world that she's up to the challenge.

In Plain Sight is the second mystery featuring senior citizen sleuth Ivy Malone. Sprinkled with humor and light hearted suspense, this is the perfect cozy mystery to meet inspirational readers' needs. Widowed Ivy is a unique character with quite a few quirks. The reader gets to know her thoughts and motivations well through her first person point of view. The character of "Baby" is lovable and hilarious in his own right, and that only adds to the enjoyment of the story.

Although the mystery and thematic elements are appropriate for high school level readers, the

idea of an elderly protagonist may not hold a great deal of appeal. The spiritual portion is present, although not truly a central part of the plot. Highly recommended for church library collections, *In Plain Sight* will delight mystery readers, especially those of Ivy's generation.

Melissa Parcel

Intimidation / Wanda L. Dyson. Uhrichsville, Ohio : Barbour Publishing, 2005.

PAP, 1593102445, list price: \$12.95.

Fic. Kidnapping--Fiction; Mystery fiction; Suspense fiction; Christian fiction. 345 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult (Grades 11-12). Rating : 4.

God-given intuition leads Zoe Shefford to pray for a woman in danger. Observation leads Zoe to pray for her hurting friends, including boyfriend J.J., who was recently suspended from the police department. When F.B.I. agent Donnie Bever's wife is abducted, both Zoe and J.J. immediately try to help their hurting friend find his wife. Their search leads them into a web of corruption that extends into powerful, political positions. Suddenly the search for Donnie's wife explodes into a mission to save hundreds of lives.

Intimidation is a nail-biting, suspense fiction book. The plot shifts quickly between seemingly disconnected scenes until the progression of events connects the characters and scenes. Characters exhibit limited personal growth through their struggle with common decisions. For example, Zoe, a Christian, continues to date J.J., who "was still trying to figure out if God could be trusted with his soul, much less his whole life." (p.78) While Zoe does take time to pray about the relationship, she doesn't break it off. Some characters experience extraordinary situations with extreme growth potential. For example, Donnie is forced to trust God while his wife is missing. Dialogue guides the actions of the characters in this intense book. The theme, trust God, weaves its way around the characters. "...If we truly believe that God is in charge and working on our behalf, we have to step out in faith and follow Him." (p.171)

Kristi Wolcott

The moon by night / Lynn Morris and Gilbert Morris. (Cheney & Shiloh : the inheritance ; 2.) LCCN 2003023585. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2004.

PAP, 1556615728, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Duvall, Cheney (Fictitious character)--Fiction; Women physicians--Fiction; New York (N.Y.)--History--1865-1898--Fiction; Historical fiction; Christian fiction; Medical novels. 381 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Dr. Cheney Duvall Irons-Winslow and her husband Shiloh Winslow return home from their honeymoon to New York City to begin their respective jobs. Cheney is a senior partner

practicing medicine at St. Luke the Physician Private Hospital, while Shiloh returns to his managerial position at Winslow Brothers Shipping. In spite of running a top rate operation that is above the accepted standard, deaths are suddenly plaguing the hospital. Cheney, with help from Shiloh and a policeman friend, searches to find the problem. With so much happening at the hospital, Cheney has little time to spend at home. Will her commitment to her occupation hinder her marriage?

This captivating inspirational historical thriller showcases post Civil War Manhattan through a fine cast of characters. Cheney is a terrific female lead while Shiloh plays a support role to his dynamic spouse who seems more like a modern day woman. The exciting tale exhibits many of the medical advances available in 1869 and also demonstrates how easily deaths occurred from what today are considered simple diseases. In their characteristic "series" style, Lynn and Gilbert Morris open up doors for a few more twists in the lives of Cheney and Shiloh, so look for more to come. Readers will profit from the many expressions of faith sprinkled throughout this 19th century medical thriller.

Angela Andrews

My servant Caleb : a Jewish boy, a gentile girl, a world at war / Kerstin Sheldrake. Oxford, Eng. : Monarch; dist. by Kregel, 2004.

PAP, 0825460573, list price: \$13.99.

Fic. Christians--England--Fiction; Jews--England--Fiction; World War, 1939-1945--England--Fiction; Israel--Fiction; England--Fiction. 478 p. ; 20 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Utilizing pre, mid, and post WWII as a backdrop, Kerstin Sheldrake explores the lives of a Jewish man and an English woman in *My Servant Caleb*. Caleb Levine, son of converted Jews, resents his parent's conversion to Christianity, and continues to practice limited Judaism. Lady Celia, daughter of the Earl of Besthorpe, knows little of Christianity beyond her Christmas and Easter church attendance. Celia thrills Caleb as she probes him for information about God. As they fall in love, Caleb struggles with the idea of marrying a Gentile girl. Celia's parents strongly oppose the idea of their daughter's marriage to a Jew. After a trip to Berlin, Celia wonders if she has the courage to marry a Jew.

So much more than a complicated love story, *My Servant Caleb* covers many topics including why Jesus is the Messiah, who God is, how Jews were treated in WWII England, Germany, and Israel. Mostly these topics are presented in interesting dialogue, and more than once characters engage in spirited debate. Celia and Caleb fight their way through challenges that grow increasingly difficult throughout the book,

and the growth in their characters is consistent with the situations in which they live. The hurts that both characters experience are thoroughly and sensitively explored without much use of humor. The mood of the book follows the moods of Celia and Caleb, mostly serious. But the theme of service to God and Israel prevails throughout the book, always offering the hope God wants for His people. "I have no other homeland." p.478

Kristi Wolcott

Oksana / by Susan K. Downs and Susan May Warren. (Heirs of Anton ; 1.) Ulrichsville, Ohio : Barbour Publishing, 2005.

PAP, 1593103492, list price: \$12.95.

Fic. Americans--Soviet Union--Fiction; Soviet Union--History--Revolution, 1917-1921--Fiction; Romantic suspense fiction; Christian fiction. 286 p. ; 20 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Marina / by Susan K. Downs and Susan May Warren. (Heirs of Anton ; 2.) Ulrichsville, Ohio : Barbour Publishing, 2005.

PAP, 1593103506, list price: \$12.95.

Fic. Russia--Fiction; Americans--Russia--Fiction; World War, 1939-1945--Russia--Fiction; Adventure fiction; Christian fiction; Romantic suspense fiction. 279 p. ; 20 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Nadia / by Susan K. Downs and Susan May Warren. (Heirs of Anton ; 3.) LCCN 2005280996. Ulrichsville, Ohio : Barbour Publishing, 2004.

PAP, 1593101635, list price: \$12.95.

Fic. Russia--Fiction; Cold war--Fiction; Romantic suspense fiction; Christian fiction. 285 p. ; 20 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Ekaterina / by Susan K. Downs and Susan May Warren. (Heirs of Anton ; 4.) LCCN 2004558107. Ulrichsville, Ohio : Barbour Publishing, 2003.

PAP, 1593101619, list price: \$12.95.

Fic. Americans--Russia--Fiction; Russia--Fiction; Romantic suspense fiction; Christian fiction. 280 p. ; 20 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Imperial Tsar Nikolai entrusts the life of a chambermaid of the Royal House of Romanov, Oksana, along with the jewel-encrusted Crest of Saint Basil the Blessed, to Anton Klassen, a Russian Mennonite. As the Russian Revolution of 1917 threatens to destroy the Romanov dynasty, Anton struggles to protect both Oksana, and the Crest with his life. All the while, Oksana harbors a secret so dangerous that only faith in God's promises can save the Heirs of Anton.

Hitler's Third Reich has invaded Russia. Sharpshooter Marina "Magda" Vasileva, a partisan, has just buried her husband Dmitri and discovers that she is expecting his child. American OSS agent Edward Neumann is helping the partisans destroy German supply

lines into Moscow. As Edward and Magda gain each other's trust, their love grows and finally compels them to make choices that can only be born out of true love, faith, and unquestionable obedience to God.

CIA agent Hope "Nadia" Moore returns behind the Iron Curtain to Cold War-era Communist Russia to rescue her husband, Michael, from a KGB prison where he is awaiting execution. They must prove to the CIA that Michael is not a traitor to his country, but a ruthless double agent is not about to let the spy duo get away. As they attempt their escape, they must learn to trust their hearts and the Lord in order to identify the one who is betraying them. At the same time, they must learn to release their wills to the perfect will of God.

Armed with a brass key, a Bible, and an old photograph, Ekaterina "Kat" Hope Moore travels to modern-day Russia in search of information about her identity. When her key sets off security in Moscow's international airport, Captain Vadeem Spasonov, of the International Crime Task Force of the Russian Secret Service, rescues her out of the hands of a dangerous antiquities smuggler searching for ancestral treasures. As Kat flees the Russian underground pursuing the secrets that will shed light on her Russian heritage, Captain Vadeem runs from the nightmare of his own past. Together, the treasures they find unleash an avalanche of God's design.

Susan K. Downs and Susan May Warren are not strangers to Russia and its culture. Ms. Warren served with her family for eight years as a missionary in Khabarovsk, Russia, and Ms. Downs traveled extensively in Russia as an adoption coordinator.

The quality of writing is consistent through most of the series. *Nadia* is the exception. Her character as a master spy is unrealistic. Her relationship with her husband creates more frustration than suspense, but it doesn't diminish the enjoyable reading experience. Readers fascinated with Russia will appreciate the tastes, smells, sights, and sounds that emerge from the pages of this series. Overall, the authors handle the foreign words well, but a glossary of foreign terms at the end of each book would benefit the reader, as would a genealogy of characters.

Above all, these are easy-reading romances with a dose of history, mystery, and spirituality woven into the storyline. They contain characters whose lives are mindful of the will of God. Psalm 100:5 is a recurring theme: "The Lord is good, and His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations." Authors Downs and Warren bear out this truth through their Heirs of Anton.

Pamella A. Russell

On the run / Lorena McCourtney. (An Ivy Malone mystery ; 3.) LCCN 2005016515. Grand Rapids : Fleming H. Revell, 2006.

PAP, 0800759567, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Women detectives--Fiction; Organized crime--Fiction; Older women--Fiction; Oklahoma--Fiction; Christian fiction.; Mystery fiction. 317 p. : 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

Ivy Malone is a LOL (Little Old Lady) with a nose for trouble—she always seems to find it wherever she goes. Or maybe trouble finds her. Either way, the elderly Ivy has once again found herself with a murder to solve—and the strange circumstances surrounding it will test her sharp intellect. Ivy discovers a dead couple that appears to be a suicide/homicide and the police are ready to close the books on the case, but Ivy senses things aren't quite as they at first appear. With two cases already solved, Ivy has her work cut out for her convincing the police to allow her to investigate further. A flock of emus, paintball splatters on trees, and enough toilet paper and canned food to last for years only add to the quirky clues Ivy uses to solve this case. This time Ivy has a helper, a hitchhiker named Abilene who is running away from her abusive husband. Can they uncover the killer together?

Mystery readers will quickly become devoted fans of the Ivy Malone series. Witty and charming, Ivy Malone is a sleuth in her senior years reminiscent of Jessica Fletcher from the TV show *Murder She Wrote*, but only a much funnier version. Lorena McCourtney writes an action-packed, humorously quirky mystery that readers will have a hard time putting down.

Sherry Myers

Premonition / Randall Ingermanson. (City of God series ; 2.) LCCN 2003010003. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2003.

PAP, 0310247055, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. James, Brother of the Lord, Saint--Fiction; Bible. N.T.--History of Biblical events--Fiction; Church history--Primitive and early church--Fiction; Christian saints--Fiction : Time travel--Fiction. 350 p. : ill., map ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

Retribution / Randall Ingermanson. (City of God series ; 3.) LCCN 2004005344. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2004.

PAP, 0310247071, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Jews--History--Rebellion, 66-73--Fiction; Americans--Jerusalem--Fiction; Jewish Christians--Fiction; Time travel--Fiction; Palestine--History--To 70 A.D.--Fiction; Rome--History--Nero, 54-68--Fiction; Jerusalem--Fiction. 333 p. : maps ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Transported irreversibly from the twenty-first century, Ari and Rivka have made the best of their life in first century Jerusalem. Highly capable people in their own time, in *Premonition* they find themselves practically useless. Rivka particularly chafes against the limitations she has as a woman in this society. She struggles mightily with her faith while she

actively rejects submission to God but nonetheless tries to convince Ari that he should submit to Jesus. Ari cannot reconcile the loving followers of Christ he finds here with the evil done in the name of Christianity that he knows the future holds. Rivka's near eidetic memory is a mixed blessing, as they become friends with James, the brother of Jesus. Deeply loving this man of God, Rivka fears what she knows about his impending death. With typically American twenty-first century self confidence she believes that not only can she change the outcome, but that she should. Ari is less optimistic of what Rivka's knowledge can do. In this he exhibits a deeper understanding of God's sovereignty than does his more "enlightened" wife.

Retribution continues the story with each of them a bit closer to submission to God, but neither ready to give up self. Finding a way to be useful, Ari is drawn further into the violent militant groups helping them build weapons to use against the Romans. A crisis in Rivka's new pregnancy set against the backdrop of increasing danger produces a series of circumstances which will deliver her and her family from Jerusalem at just the right time to escape its destruction, but at an extremely high personal cost.

Randall Ingermanson has written a provocative fast-paced series. Rich with detail of the time and culture, they are, at first blush, great stories. Meditating on them reveals an awareness of our own inability, despite claiming to follow Christ, to truly submit to him. If we were stripped of everything that makes us significant in our own time, would we then, finally, fully rely on God? Although I doubt that Ingermanson intended this series as a basis for Bible study, a creative teacher could easily use this with older students to explore their own depths of faith while discussing Rivka and Ari's choices. Warning: this is not reading for the faint-hearted. *Retribution's* detail, especially in describing the crucifixion of men, women, and children, is disturbing and stomach turning.

Kelley Westenhoff

The ransom / Kathi Mills-Macias. (Toni Matthews mysteries ; 3.) LCCN 2004302013. Nashville : Broadman & Holman, 2004.

PAP, 0805430512, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Private investigators--Fiction; Missing persons--Fiction; Mystery fiction; Christian fiction. 297 p. : 23 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 3.

Private detectives, Abe and Toni Matthews, interview a man trying to find his long lost brother. The man states that his brother disappeared many years before, but had called his mother from their tiny Washington town. On the surface, it appears to be a run-of-the-mill missing persons case, but Toni has a feeling that the man is not telling them everything about the situation.

Their lives outside of work go on as normal. Both Toni and Abe feel God calling them to become involved with prison ministry. Abe's Jewish Aunt, Sophie, is struggling with Abe's Christianity and is having questions of her own about Jesus. And Melissa, Toni's younger sister, is involved with her first love relationship. When all of these areas of their life intersect, will Toni and Abe have what it takes to stand firm for their beliefs?

Although *The Ransom* is the third in a series of books, it easily stands alone. Unfortunately, incidents from previous novels are continually inserted into *The Ransom*, which becomes quite tedious. The characters are unique and the storyline dealing with Melissa's dating experiences is timely and thought-provoking.

Overall, Ms. Mills-Macias has crafted an interesting story that will keep readers interested. The spiritual truths mesh well with the main plot. The daily occurrences in the characters' lives serve as unique spiritual object lessons. The combination of contemporary issues with a suspense story will appeal to a wide variety of readers.

Melissa Parcel

Savannah from Savannah / Denise Hildreth. LCCN 2004005932. Nashville : Westbow, 2004.

PAP, 0849944554, list price: \$14.99.

Fic. Women--Georgia--Fiction; Mothers and daughters--Fiction; Young women--Fiction; Savannah (Ga.)--Fiction. 330 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

Savannah Phillips was born and raised in Savannah, Georgia. Her mother, Victoria, is a former Miss Georgia United States of America and is incredibly proud of her heritage and her city. Savannah has tried to live a more low-key life, out of the spotlight in which her mother revels. Savannah has her sights set on being a famous author and novelist, yet when she discovers her mother has once again tampered with Savannah's future, it's time to take matters into her own hands.

Savannah quietly pursues and receives an opportunity as a feature writer for the Savannah, Georgia, newspaper. She moves back home and forges a loving truce with her family, while trying to break away and become her own person at the same time. When her investigative research threatens to uncover unsavory details about the pageant world—and her mother's claim to fame—will Savannah do the right thing or the easy one?

Savannah from Savannah is light and enjoyable Christian chick lit. It has moments of depth and introspection, but for the most part it's entertaining fun. The pageant portions, as well as the conversations with people involved with them are hilarious and well-placed. Although Savannah is a recent college graduate, she

comes across as significantly more mature than most young women that age.

The plot is interesting enough to keep the reader involved, and although there is a hint of a developing romance, nothing definite moves forward. Ms. Hildreth sets the stage for future books featuring Savannah and her life as a journalist in the town where her mother reigns as queen bee. *Savannah from Savannah* will appeal to adults and teens looking for chick lit from a Christian perspective.

Melissa Parcel

The scent of lilacs / Ann H. Gabhart. LCCN 2004029366. Grand Rapids : Revell, 2005.

PAP, 0800730801, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Clergy--Fiction; Children of clergy--Fiction; Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Christian fiction; Domestic fiction. 345 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 11-12). Rating : 4.

Thirteen-year-old Jocie Brooke has been praying two prayers for years. One is for a dog, and the second is that her sister, Tabitha, would return home. Seven years earlier, Jocie's mother took Tabitha and left the small town of Hollyhill, Kentucky, for San Francisco. Jocie's pastor father David has raised Jocie with the help of his Aunt Love. Over the course of a few days in 1964, both of Jocie's prayers are answered, but the repercussions reach farther than she could have imagined.

Why did Jocie's mother leave in the first place, and why did she take one daughter and not the other? Jocie searches for answers to her deeply felt questions with the help of family friend Wes, Aunt Love, Tabitha and other members of their close-knit community. Is she mature enough to handle the truth?

The Scent of Lilacs combines straightforward small-town storytelling with the heartfelt longings of a blossoming adolescent. Even those who have never experienced abandonment as Jocie has will feel for her struggles and sympathize with her quest for answers. Although she's naïve in many ways, Jocie's love and devotion to her family and friends is realistic.

Although slow at times, the plot diligently moves forward and the reader is left with closure, yet not so neatly tied up as to be unbelievable. Readers searching for a quiet, nostalgic look back at small town life in the 1960s will savor *The Scent of Lilacs*. Jocie's ultimate encounter with God and his protection is worth reading the entire story to experience.

Melissa Parcel

Shattered justice : a novel / Karen Ball. (Family honor series ; 1.) Sisters, Ore. : Multnomah, 2005.

PAP, 1590524136, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Teenagers--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; Oregon--Fiction; Suspense fiction; Christian fiction. 362 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 5.

As a sheriff's deputy, Dan Justice fights for justice in Jackson County, Oregon, everyday. He passionately loves his wife, Sarah, and their two kids. His days revolve around his work, relationship with wife and kids, and relationship with God. When Sarah tragically dies, Dan goes through the motions of life, doing his best to take care of his kids. They move to Sanctuary, Oregon, where Dan is the only police deputy in town. Tentatively, Dan starts to reach beyond his hurt once again, trying to help and love others. Just as Dan is healing, the day comes that threatens to shatter Dan Justice forever.

Karen Ball tackles the 'why-does-God-allow-bad-things-to-happen' issue as she wraps her characters in real life. Tears water the roots of tragedy and the characters reap a harvest of wisdom. Dialogue rounds out the characters and occasionally provides much needed comic relief. The pace moves quickly, creating and maintaining interest. This contemporary fiction book reaches many different emotions, and Ball very sensitively approaches the terrifying reality that occasionally accompanies life's journey. She also very effectively shows how God can take the worst imaginable pain and transform it into something healed and beautiful.

Kristi Wolcott

Sutter's cross / W. Dale Cramer. LCCN 2002151496. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2003.

PAP, 0764227831, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Drifters--Fiction; Resorts--Fiction; Appalachian Region, Southern--Fiction; Christian fiction. 394 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Two storms are converging on the comfortable town of Sutter's Cross, in the Appalachian foothills of northern Georgia near the southern end of the Appalachian Trail. One storm is spiritual in the unlikely form of a drifter named Harley who shows up at the annual Sutter's Cross Community Church picnic, and begins to transform the comfortable lives of the Christians and other residents of Sutter's Cross. The other storm is meteorological in the form of a Tropical Storm named Elise and its rains that bring life-threatening floods and help create spiritual transformation in Sutter's Cross.

Harley shakes up the comfort level of everyone in Sutter's Cross from the first day of his arrival until the end of the story. He undergoes a life changing spiritual transformation with a near death experience and by personal salvation through the Bible given to him by Miss Agnes, and the wilderness solitude of the mountain top named Joshua's Knee. Harley teaches the

people of Sutter's Cross to live the phrase "We are the Arms of God."

Narrated by Jake Mahaffey who befriends Harley, there are numerous endearing Southern characters in *Sutter's Cross* including the agnostic Web Holcombe, the developer in Sutter's Cross who will do anything to acquire the land for his real estate projects, and Miss Agnes, the elderly home town woman who befriends Harley and offers forgiveness, compassion, and an example of grace to Holcombe.

Sutter's Cross is W. Dale Cramer's first novel, but you could not tell it from his in-depth character development, his detailed descriptions of the Southern woods, mountains, and its people, and intricate plot development. Cramer's prose is sweet and embodies the slow Southern climate, and his dialogue is that of a professional fiction writer, not that of a first time author.

If the wonderful descriptions of the Southern landscape and people were all there was to *Sutter's Cross* the book would still be highly recommended. Cramer has richly crafted and threaded Christian philosophy and biblical teachings into his story. *Sutter's Cross* made me laugh, made me pray over its spiritual teachings, and the ending made me cry. What else could a reader ask from a book? *Sutter's Cross* is highly recommended for its inspirational story and its powerful Christian message of God's love, salvation, and grace.

David Hajdik

A tender reed / Teresa D. Slack. LCCN 2005014926. Reedley, Calif : Tsaba House, 2005.

PAP, 0972548637, list price: \$15.99.

Fic. Aunts--Fiction; Family farms--Fiction; Women farmers--Fiction; Rejection (Psychology)--Fiction; Abandoned children--Fiction; Psychological fiction. 334 p. ; 23 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Gypsy's pre-dawn barking prompts Michelle Hurley to investigate her yard. Shocked, she discovers two shoeless children, sitting under a bush. Her shock doubles when she realizes the two children are her niece and nephew, Emma and Jonah. Michelle's organized life suddenly experiences the chaos two children add to any family, and Michelle resents her sister, Nicole, for stealing her independent lifestyle. Also, because Michelle and her sister were abandoned as children, unsettling memories resurface. Surprisingly, Emma and Jonah gradually captivate her heart, and even introduce Michelle to others who hope to captivate her heart. After years of hating God because of her experiences, Michelle not only opens her heart to Emma and Jonah, but also she considers opening her heart to God.

A Tender Reed, a contemporary fiction book, unfolds quickly from the discovery of Emma and Jonah to the changes that they make in Michelle's life. Michelle's character gentles as she opens herself to the children and as she realizes how much others love her. She even begins to recognize some of her personal faults and begins to correct them. As Michelle deals with overwhelming emotions, the mood is tense. However, the kids and Michelle's aunt and uncle splatter humor throughout. The dialogue further develops the characters and moves quickly. Teresa Slack develops Emma, Jonah, Michelle, and Nicole with great care, sensitive to the thoughts, feelings, and potential actions of those who have been abandoned. A thread of grace weaves its way through this story as a tender reed of love grows in Michelle's heart.

Kristi Wolcott

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Unforgotten : a novel / Kristen Heitzmann. (Sequel to: Secrets.) LCCN 2005009757. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2005.

PAP, 0764228285, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Triangles (Interpersonal relations)--Fiction; Christian fiction; Romantic suspense fiction. 414 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : *5.

Unforgotten, Kristen Heitzmann's sequel to *Secrets*, continues the story of the solitary, self-controlled Reese, and her volatile relationship with the passionately emotional Lance, who brings her into his world of a close-knit Bronx Italian family where there are no secrets—except one: the one Lance is compelled to uncover for his fragile grandmother.

The story flashes back and forth, describing Nonna Antonia's story as a young woman, the death of her father, and then her husband, forging ties to Lance's present family—ties to the mob—a vendetta, a curse that was unavenged for the blood of his family members which "cries out from the ground to God." What the Lord demands of Lance is uncertain, but he knows that he must forsake all—even his family, and Reese—to take up his cross and follow where God leads him in dealing with this vendetta. As Lance wrestles with God, as he looks at the sacrifice of Abraham who was called upon to offer his only son's life to God, Lance learns obedience to the Lord, regardless of the cost.

The relationships, circumstances, and emotional psychology of *Unforgotten* are so intricately crafted based on previous events that the novel cannot be understood without first having read *Secrets*. But the story carries within it the same intense depth of character development and mystery, the same substantive spiritual struggle and growth, illustrating in a very powerful way the concept of spiritual warfare. Subplots

dealing indirectly with schizophrenia and childhood abuse show how God reaches out to flawed, imperfect people with healing love, strength, and hope—but not necessarily with quick, easy answers. This is a "meaty" book, well worth reading.

Sherri Beeler

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Unspoken / Angela Hunt. LCCN 2004020483. Nashville : WestBow, 2005.

PAP, 0849944821, list price: \$14.99.

Fic. Gorilla--Fiction; Animal welfare--Fiction; Human-animal communication--Fiction; Christian fiction. 320 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : *5.

For the past eight years, Glee Granger has raised a gorilla named Sema. With the blessing of the zoo where Sema was born, Glee has taught and cared for Sema at her own home almost as if she were Glee's own child. Glee and Sema communicate through sign language, and Glee's research into animal communication behavior is progressing in exciting directions.

When the zoo sues Glee for custody of Sema, Glee is ready to put up a fight. However, when she considers the best situation for Sema, she is forced to surrender her beloved gorilla to the captive environment or risk losing all contact with Sema forever. But no one could imagine what would happen next.

Unspoken is a truly unique, emotion-packed novel. At first, it's difficult to sympathize with Glee and her efforts to keep Sema from the zoo, the gorilla's rightful owners. Yet watching the story unfold allows the reader to get a richer sense of Glee's emotional state and parent-child relationship with Sema, who can communicate and understand people. Giving Sema up would be like giving up a beloved eight year old child.

The spiritual aspect of *Unspoken* is what takes this novel past enjoyable and makes it truly spectacular. Glee begins as a non-believer with a believing grandmother. Through that relationship and Sema's testimony, both Glee and the reader can clearly see the glory of God. Animal lovers will delight in the well-researched and detailed storyline of *Unspoken*. However, some issues discussed, as well as the ultimate climax of the novel, may be too intense for younger and more sensitive readers. This is a superb, not-to-be-missed book.

Melissa Parcel

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Wounded healer / Donna Fleisher. (Homeland heroes ; 1.) LCCN 2005002987. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2005.

PAP, 0310263948, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Iraq War, 2003--Fiction. 310 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : *5.

Warrior's heart / Donna Fleisher. (Homeland heroes ; 2.) LCCN 2005013227. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2005.

PAP, 0310263956, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Iraq War, 2003--Fiction; Portland (Ore.)--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Floods--Fiction. 302 p. ; 21 cm.

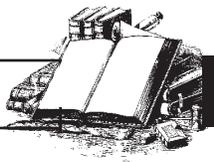
Adult. Rating : 4.

From its heart-stopping opening to its heart-stopping conclusion, *Wounded Healer*, by Donna Fleisher is a book that runs with break-neck intensity from the opening page, to the last. Traumatized and scarred from childhood abuse and from the loss of a fellow team member in Desert Storm, Christina refuses to let anyone get close to her—she can't even stand to hear someone say to her, "I love you." But Erin, who served with Christina on a medical trauma team in Desert Storm, is impelled by her love for Christ to love Christina, no matter how great the cost to herself, and no matter how much Christina resists. When a traumatic incident turns Christina onto a path of self-destruction, Erin fights the spiritual battle necessary to offer Christina the hope and healing that only Christ can bring.

In book two of the series, *Warrior's Heart*, Christina and Erin's husband must resolve their differences and learn to trust each other, as Christina must decide whether she will stay in Portland to become part of an inner city ministry team with Erin and other Desert Storm friends.

Readers who enjoy books by Dee Henderson and Terri Blackstock will certainly enjoy the "edge of your seat" action and suspense in Donna Fleischer's *Wounded Healer*, as well as the substantive, psychological character development. The gospel message is clearly presented in such a way that it avoids the time-worn clichés and illustrates the intense struggle in the soul over dying to self to live new and free in Christ. *Warrior's Heart* runs a little slower; the conflict seems more contrived—less "real" than in *Wounded Healer*—but the climax in the last few chapters reveals once again just how eager God is for even the worst of sinners to turn to Him. The Homeland Heroes books are not stand-alones—they must be read consecutively in order to fully understand the events, character histories, and relational dynamics.

Sherri Beeler



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How to read Genesis / Tremper Longman. LCCN 2005001666. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 2005.

PAP, 0877849439, list price: \$13.00.
222/.1107. Bible. O.T. Genesis--Criticism, interpretation, etc. 192 p. ; 21 cm.
Adult. Rating : *5.

This title is not a commentary on the book of Genesis. It is, rather "an exploration of the proper interpretive approach to [Genesis]..." (p. 17). And it is an important text because accurate understanding of Genesis is foundational to understanding the remainder of the Bible, the history of Israel, and man's redemption. *How to Read Genesis* is also a comparative study, examining Genesis as a work of history and as the foundation stone of the Word of God.

Dr. Longman's book is a scholarly work and will appeal more to the serious student of the Bible rather than to one exploring the Bible for the first time. The author successfully challenges interpretation and traditional thinking. He prods the reader from one principle or premise to the next in logical movements, ultimately guiding the reader to a fresh realization. The book is structured in such a way as to motivate investigation and encourage critical thinking.

At the end of each section there is a list For Further Reading and at the end of the book there is an Appendix consisting of a bibliography of commentaries, extensive Notes, as well as Names and Scripture indices.

This title is highly recommended for theological collections in seminaries and academia, as well as church and synagogue libraries.

Pamella A. Russell

Fool's gold? : discerning truth in an age of error / John MacArthur, general editor ; Nathan Busenitz, Scott Lang, Phil Johnson, associate editors. LCCN 2004030155. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2005.

PAP, 158134726X, list price: \$12.99.
230/.04624. Evangelicalism; Discernment (Christian theology); Christian life--Biblical teaching. 224 p. ; 22 cm.
Adult (Grades 11-12). Rating : 3.

Written to help readers determine which ideas popular in today's permissive society are truly biblical and which are false teaching, *Fool's Gold* is a thought-provoking volume that's bound to be controversial.

It not only covers false teachings (for instance, that all religions lead to God) but also some currently-popular Christian ones: that God's word must be made palatable to nonbelievers; that sermons should be short, catchy, and focused on emotional rather than biblical issues. Books such as *The Purpose-Driven Life* and the *Revolve Bible* are discussed and criticized, as are altar calls, contemporary Christian music, and the political activism of the religious right.

For the most part *Fool's Gold* is clearly written, although it occasionally slips into talk about "ecumenical compromise" and "pragmatic sanctification." It also goes into such deep discussions of doctrine or the workings of the early church that a casual reader might skip ahead. It presents a balanced look at the issues it covers, but the fact that editor John MacArthur and every contributor come from the same church may raise questions about objectivity. Also, the book's focus on modern books and issues may date its message.

Fool's Gold would appeal to a general audience, but it's best for pastors and other church workers wanting to understand how modern trends can affect the church.

Rosemarie DiCristo

The feminist mistake : the radical impact of feminism on church and culture / Mary A. Kassian. Rev. ed. LCCN 2005000504. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2005.

PAP, 1581345704, list price: \$17.99.
230/.082. Feminism--Religious aspects; Feminist theology; Kassian, Mary A.--Feminist gospel. 336 p. ; 22 cm.
Adult. Rating : 3.

The Feminist Mistake is an updated version of Mary Kassian's 1992 book, *The Feminist Gospel*. The title is a play on Betty Friedan's *Feminist Mystique* (in fact, the cover has "mystique" crossed out and replaced by "mistake"); the book is a scathing indictment of feminism in general, as well as feminist tendencies in the modern church (including seemingly-innocent trends towards gender-inclusive language and the purging of "patriarchal" hymns and liturgies).

Kassian thoroughly covers the development of secular and religious feminism, focusing on the writings of Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Dale, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Virginia Mollenkott. All material is meticulously backed up with endnotes. However, despite Kassian's claim that she's written *The Feminist Mistake* for general audiences as well as for students in

courses on women's issues, the book is best for those students or for church leaders. Kassian implies she'll cover the effects the "tsunami" of feminism had on modern culture but that portion of the book takes only the final twenty of its 336 pages. Kassian is most concerned with feminism's effect on (and its gross misinterpretation of) church teaching. (The language used also makes the book best for college-educated audiences).

Kassian strongly addresses the dangers of feminist thought, but by recounting those views in such detail (especially their claims that church and society have oppressed women), she may inadvertently cause young women raised in today's culture to think the feminists were right. In a footnote Kassian "agrees" the church "abuses and oppresses" women, but refers readers to another of her books for details. Similarly, while stating the Bible doesn't insist "men fix the cars, women do the baking," she doesn't give a clear idea of what it allows women to do. Can evangelical women fly planes, or does Christianity only offer motherhood? Kassian doesn't say.

Rosemarie DiCristo

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God in the flesh : what speechless lawyers, kneeling soldiers, and shocked crowds teach us about Jesus / Don Everts. LCCN 2005005130. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 2005.

HBB, 0830832874, list price: \$16.00.
232.9. Bible. N.T. Gospels--Criticism, interpretation, etc.; Incarnation. 175 p. ; 23 cm.
Adult. Rating : *5.

Don Everts takes a unique approach in trying to reveal the nature of Jesus. Instead of focusing on the words that He spoke, Everts focuses on the reactions of those Jesus encountered. These tidbits are hidden in what Everts calls the "stage directions" in the "boring verses". He explores the passages where people are falling down, kneeling, and trembling in awe in Jesus' presence, and he invites the reader to become more focused on this man who evokes such responses. Everts also provides an excellent Questions and Applications section at the end that is truly thought-provoking.

God in the Flesh is divided into five books. Each examines a different aspect of Jesus—His life, presence, authority, compassion, and His call. Everts shows the impact an encounter with Jesus did, and still does, have on everyday people. He makes his points with clarity and an

interesting style that delves just deep enough into the meat of the topic without getting bogged down in heavy theology. The brown and black cover with simple white lettering is drab and uninviting, but between the covers is a challenging message that flows smoothly. The principles are solid and the book encourages the reader to look at Jesus from a different perspective to gain valuable insight into the One who truly was God in the flesh.

Jeff Friend

The three wise women : a Christmas reflection / Christin Ditchfield. LCCN 2005003641. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2005.

HBB, 1581346360, list price: \$10.99.

232.91. Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Meditations.; Elizabeth (Mother of John the Baptist), Saint--Meditations.; Anna (Biblical prophetess)--Meditations.; Jesus Christ--Nativity--Meditations.; Christian women--Prayer-books and devotions--English. 80 p. : ill. ; 19 cm.

Grades 10-Adult. Rating : 3.

The Three Wise Women focuses not on the wise men of the gospel of Matthew (of whom little is known, including the actual number of men) but on three biblical women who are named in the Bible and play an important role in Scripture: Mary, the mother of God; Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist; and Anna the prophetess.

Christin Ditchfield, host of the syndicated radio program "Take it to Heart" and author of over forty books, uses examples from these women's stories to focus on what makes them wise as well as what makes them beautiful. They were wise, Ditchfield writes, because they "chose to fear the Lord, to reverence Him, to trust Him." They were beautiful because they offered themselves as living sacrifices to Him, and cultivated gentle, quiet spirits. By being called upon to emulate Mary's willing heart, Elizabeth's hearing heart, and Anna's faithful heart, readers are shown ways to get a closer relationship to God.

Ditchfield's easy-to-read, smoothly-written text makes her message simple enough for readers new to or unfamiliar with Christianity, but it will also interest long-time believers. Since it's a small-sized hardcover that fits nicely in the palm of the hand, and has a lovely gilded dust jacket and beautiful paper stock in the interior pages, it's probably best as a gift book, but the book can be used by readers wanting a fuller understanding of the story of Jesus' birth (one not ordinarily focused upon). It can also be used as a devotional during the Christmas season.

Rosemarie DiCristo

How do you know you're not wrong? : responding to objections that leave Christians speechless / Paul Copan. LCCN 2005007932. Grand Rapids : Baker Books, 2005.

PAP, 0801064996, list price: \$14.99.

239. Skepticism; Apologetics. 268 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 3.

Christians are often stumped by the questions of skeptics. *How Do You Know You're Not Wrong* attempts to help answer some of those tough, philosophical claims. It shows the flaws in the idea that truth is relative. In fact, Paul Copan's logic shows the flaws in many worldviews like pragmatism, scientism, and naturalism. Copan also explains ideas related to Christianity, like the oddity of some of the Old Testament laws and why certain books were included in the canon and others weren't. Thorough, logical explanations are supported by scriptural references or references to other philosophers, scientists, and theologians. In a rebuttal to supporters of naturalistic evolution, Copan briefly explores the idea of theistic evolution "for the sake of argument." (p. 128)

How Do You Know You're Not Wrong? was written for "Christians in general, but particularly Christian students in high schools and universities (and their parents!)" (p.12); however, this book is mostly written at a college level and feels a little tedious at times. Helpful summaries as well as books for further reading at the end of each chapter do help the reader assimilate information. A few chapters include helpful charts. At the end of the book a section of "notes," basically bibliographic information and a few additional thoughts, is included. Attention to the techniques used to present and rebut challenges could potentially help Christians develop logic and face skeptics, but the best advice in this book is "the believer's winsome character and the support of a loving Christian community must increasingly characterize our witness in the marketplace of ideas." (p. 13)

Kristi Wolcott

So, you want to be like Christ? : eight essentials to get you there / Charles R. Swindoll. LCCN 2005299384. Nashville : W Publishing, 2005.

HBB, 084991731X, list price: \$22.99.

241/.4. Spiritual life; Virtues. xvii, 192 p. : ill. ; 25 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

In this book, noted pastor Charles Swindoll challenges the reader to heed the advice of Paul found in I Timothy 4:7, which says "Discipline yourself for the purpose of Godliness." Swindoll carefully selects eight spiritual disciplines and, using Philippians 3:10 as a theme verse, shows us how we can begin living the life that Christ intended. He reminds us that though these disciplines demand a strenuous

workout, the end result will be worthwhile, as the Holy Spirit shapes an individual from the inside out into the person Christ wants him to be.

Through this book, Charles Swindoll uses his gentle humor, insight, and teaching to compellingly persuade us to take a hard look at our Christian life. Each chapter is a mini book filled with applicable scripture, insight, and illustrations helping the reader to gain a clearer understanding of each spiritual discipline. While providing commentary explaining each passage of scripture, Swindoll writes in a succinct way that all can understand. This is a well-written book that challenges Christians to become "less self-centered and more God-centered."

Chris Carroll

Grace for each hour : through the breast cancer journey / Mary J. Nelson. LCCN 2004024238. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2005.

PAP, 0764200240, list price: \$12.99.

242/.4. Breast--Cancer--Patients--Prayer-books and devotions--English; Christian women--Prayer-books and devotions--English. 266 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Hardly a day goes by, but something reminds women of breast cancer. Mary J. Nelson traveled that bumpy road, and wrote *Grace for Each Hour : Through the Breast Cancer Journey*. She is an elder in her church, and prefers the New Living Translation or the New International Version. Over 125 devotions challenge women to grow spiritually during the testing of breast cancer. Read the devotions in any order, as each is self-contained.

She confessed, "My brokenness turned my occasional Bible dabbling into a serious hunger for the Word of God." Further, she realized, "My suffering could be a blessing to others." Nelson is realistic. She writes of physical pain and emotional upheavals. Her bare head and the time required for treatments were both problems. Yet she coped in the darkest hours by reaching out "to others who were suffering."

I recommend *Grace for Each Hour* for many women with health problems...not just breast cancer.

Roberta Lou Jones

From dream to destiny / Robert Morris. LCCN 2004027348. Ventura, Calif. : Regal Books, 2005.

HBB, 0830736743, list price: \$18.99.

248.4. Joseph (Son of Jacob); Christian life--Biblical teaching; Success--Biblical teaching. 208 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

In this book, Pastor Robert Morris extends an invitation to the reader to discover the destiny that God has for each person. Using the

powerful story of Joseph, Morris shares with the reader 10 tests that Joseph encountered, as will we. By facing and overcoming these 10 tests we will begin to understand the magnificent calling that has been individually placed upon each of us by God. Morris believes that we are all on a journey towards destiny and "every one of us is destined to do great things for God and His kingdom." These tests will be difficult to overcome, yet faithful obedience to God will help us to pass each test and draw closer to God's will for our lives.

Through this book, Robert Morris provides engaging supportive help in overcoming the difficult tests that await each individual in discovering their destiny. Each chapter is devoted to one of the ten tests and is filled with applicable scripture, insight, and illustrations which will help the reader gain a clearer understanding of each test that we will face. This book will uplift and encourage the Christian who is struggling in his walk of faith and is currently battling one of these tests. It will allow him to discover that God has a plan for our people and it provides vital truths about the tests that all will face on their road to destiny. A positive, encouraging book designed to prevent the Christian from giving up in his journey towards his individual God-given destiny.

Chris Carroll

Pathway to purpose for women : connecting your to-do list, your passions, and God's purposes for your life / Katie Brazelton. (Pathway to purpose series.) LCCN 2004028853. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2005.

HBB, 0310256496, list price: \$18.99.

248.8/43. Christian women--Religious life; Vocation--Christianity. 253 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Pathway to Purpose for Women provides a structured, scriptural based approach to finding and following your purpose in life. The author builds on the five purposes (fellowship, discipleship, ministry, worship, and evangelism) outlined by Rick Warren in his book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, but slants them toward a woman's point of view and life experiences. The book is a pep-talk to encourage women to seek their true calling that is reflective of God's purposes for their life. The author, a Women's Bible Study Director at Saddleback Church, draws on her search for a calling to elucidate her key themes. Overall, the author is unwavering in her guidance to women about letting God provide direction in their search for a calling that is aligned with their passions and their day-to-day life experiences.

The book focuses more on the process involved in finding one's true calling, but does not offer in-depth guidance on how to uncover one's passions or strengths. Much of the material is

superficial in its exploration of these issues. While the section Personal Pathway Questions at the end of each chapter may stimulate some thought about potential avenues for integrating life experiences with a calling, they don't go far enough to capture the myriad considerations that influence decisions about callings, career, or purpose.

For those readers who are seeking a substantive approach to finding their calling that fulfills their passions and that serves God's purposes for them, this book falls short. However it is a helpful resource in grappling with the interplay of self understanding, feelings and beliefs, and relationships in uncovering one's calling in life.

Shirley Copeland

The American prophecies : ancient scriptures reveal our nation's future / Michael D. Evans. LCCN 2004005809. New York : Warner Faith, 2004.

HBB, 044652252X, list price: \$18.95.

277.3/083. Christianity--United States; September 11

Terrorist Attacks, 2001--Religious aspects--

Christianity; Terrorism--Religious aspects--

Christianity; United States--Religion. 310 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Those familiar with Evans' *Beyond Iraq* (Whitstone, 2003) will find the same detailed approach in *The American Prophecies* along with regular references to Scripture. As a fundamentalist Christian minister, Evans is both articulate and forceful with strong writing and research. His ability to probe the subject enables the reader to have a better understanding of historical and current events, and better foundation in grasping the Bible.

He holds that the return of Christ will be the greatest prophetic event in America's history, indeed the history of the world, and stresses it's likely this will happen in our lifetime. He focuses frequently on the battle of Israel for its land and for America helping to reestablish and land and a state for the Israelites. Some may find his interpretation of Scripture more literal and subjective than desirable, but few will doubt his sincerity and love of Scripture. Those without Evans' more literal orientation may not be influenced by his arguments.

Libraries seeking an array of works to highlight and probe history can add this. *The American Prophecies* makes a natural title for religion and history collections.

Leroy Hommerding

Raising maidens of virtue : a study of feminine loveliness for mothers and daughters / by Stacy McDonald. Barker, Tex. : Books on the Path, 2004.

HBB, 0974339016, list price: \$17.99; buy direct: www.booksonthepath.com.

306.7/0835. Sexual ethics--Biblical teaching; Sexual ethics; Mothers and daughters--Religious aspects--Christianity; Parenting. 224 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Are you weary of skimpy clothing and seeing too much skin on young women? Do you wish for a resource to read for yourself, or to share with other parents? Stacy McDonald, the mother of seven daughters, believes girls should respond to "God's call to purity and feminine loveliness." The world is a "morally polluted culture," yet young girls can be taught to think biblically.

Nineteen chapters in *Raising Maidens of Virtue* include titles such as: Daddy's Fair Maiden, Taming the Tainted Tongue, Twinkling Feet, and The Heart of a Maiden. In addition to the main topic, each chapter has a prayer, scripture, and questions for discussion. Appendices include A Multi-Generational Project, Memory Making Projects, A Literary Maiden Luncheon, and Sources for Modest Clothes.

Johannah Bluedorn's watercolor vignettes are beautiful! Several drawings show family scenes. Parents and children bake raisin bread, read, and enjoy a tea party. I especially enjoyed the drawing of a young girl playing with her doll.

Some of the activities for young girls included fathers. We realize many modern maidens lack an involved father. This book seemed to assume a father for each family. Single mothers, however, can profit from the ideas. Perhaps they can select a male role model to help them rear maidens of virtue.

Roberta Lou Jones

The international book of days / by Stephen G. Christianson ; edited by Lynn M. Messina ; contributors, Jennifer Peloso, Norris Smith, Laura Ware. LCCN 2004042285. New York : H. W. Wilson, 2004.

HBB, 0824209753, list price: \$140.00.

394.26973. Holidays; Fasts and feasts; Festivals. xxxi, 889 p. : ill., maps ; 26 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

This encyclopedic work is H.W. Wilson's companion volume to its *American Book of Days* (2000), accompanied by a first-class forty-six page double-columned index. It includes more than 1,500 political and cultural events, holidays and celebrations, and birthdays for each of the 366 days of the year (including February 29th). The opening twenty-two page summary of all the events covered is followed by eight hundred some pages of well-written essays between 200 and 1,000 words and enhanced by nearly 400 photographs and maps.

Appendices include helpful information about today's calendar and common era, the days of the week.

The lucid writing and scholarly research makes this a work worthy for any public library, and for school libraries where students research important events throughout the world. Those having *The American Book of Days* will find minimal repeating of information. Helene Henderson's *Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations of the World Dictionary* (Omnigraphics, 2005) is less detailed. Overall, a unique reference tool likely to be used many times.

Leroy Hommerding

Living with less / Mark Tabb. Nashville : Broadman & Holman, 2006.

PAP, 0805432965, list price: \$12.99.

640/.22. Conduct of life; Cost and standard of living; Time management. 185 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Mark Tabb encourages us to actually live with more—more joy and more fellowship with God and people. True, his book is entitled *Living With Less*. Tabb, however, encourages less stuff, less activities, and less egotism. Men and women should quit plugging, “a little of God into our warp-driven, overstuffed lives. “Choose smaller, simpler, and slower.”

Sixteen chapter titles include, “The Power of Contentment,” “Finding Peace in the Minivan,” and “This Ain’t No Doris Day Movie.” The author offers Scripture references, comments, and illustrations. “But I Live in the Real World” contains “ten suggestions for making simplicity a vital part of your daily life.” Practical ideas include living below your means, buying useful items rather than things for status, de-accumulating, and seeing your money as God’s possession.

The Bible affirms good stewardship. Yet, I’ll use care in judging fellow believers. I write this review from a plain house, heated with a woodstove. Nearby shelves hold home-canned fruit and meat. Bins overflow with potatoes. I sew, and hoe. That is my chosen lifestyle, but I realize God calls other people to a lavish life. Caring Christians in elegant homes can serve in special ways. Readers of *Living With Less* should pray over Tabb’s excellent ideas. Our Heavenly Father may say, “Simplify!” But, He might urge, “Use your stuff and your activities to serve Me!” Always, of course, God says, “Toss your ego!”

Roberta Lou Jones

Beyond the next mountain / a presentation of Inspirational Films Distributors, Inc. ; directed by Rolf Forsberg and James F. Collier ; produced by J.D. Kenneth Bliss ; screenplay by Rolf Forsberg. Worcester, Pa. : Vision Video, 1991.

DVD, 1563647907, list price: \$19.99.

B or 209.2. Pudaite, Rochunga; Christian biography--India. 1 videodisc (97 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Beyond the Next Mountain, a drama can be viewed on the DVD in English, Spanish, Korean, or Hindi, with or without English subtitles. There is also a feature highlighting biographical information on Rochunga Pudaite.

The story follows the Hmar people of northeast India. Labeled by the British at the close of the 19th century as “the worst headhunters,” *Beyond the Next Mountain* follows the introduction of a single copy of the Gospel of John in a village of the Hmar people. Through that single copy, Chawnga, the father of Rochunga Pudaite, was introduced to a revolutionary “new life in Christ.” This is the story of Rochunga’s personal pilgrimage to bring the Scriptures to the entire Hmar tribe in their own language.

Filmed in India, Hawaii, Scotland, and America, the story is a faithful missionary rendition. The quality of the filming does not meet the expected quality of many DVD films today and this may limit its audience in some localities.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding

Run, baby, run / Nicky Cruz with Jamie Buckingham. Worcester, Pa. : Vision Video, n.d..

DVD, 1563647796, list price: \$19.99.

B or 248.24. Cruz, Nicky. 1 videodisc (52 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 3.

Nicky Cruz was born into a family of witchcraft practitioners in Puerto Rico. He was physically abused and belittled by his parents, and was sent as a teenager to New York City to move in with his brother due to his rebellious nature. After his arrival in New York, things went from bad to worse as Nicky became involved with street gangs and quickly rose to the position of leader of one of the most violent gangs in America, the Mau Maus. Nicky was on a fast track to a certain death until he crossed paths with a young street preacher named David Wilkerson. After Nicky gave his life to Christ, he left the gang and determined to dedicate his life to saving other kids from the streets and the gangs who ran them.

Run, Baby, Run is the autobiography of Nicky Cruz, and is a live-action DVD narrated by Nicky Cruz himself, along with past members of the Mau Maus and relatives of Nicky. This inspiring story of a life ruined by drugs, violence, and witchcraft transformed into a powerful witness for Jesus Christ is a fabulous tool for reaching unsaved people and to inspire saved ones to do more to win others to Christ. Some descriptions are violent and somewhat disturbing, so this DVD isn’t for young children. Mr. Cruz’s accent makes certain parts of the movie hard to understand, but the viewer becomes accustomed to it after awhile. I recommend watching it once for the story, and

then re-watching it to catch the parts that were a bit harder to catch the first time through.

Sherri Myers

Is that really you, God? / by Loren Cunningham with Janice Rogers. LCCN 84001862. Seattle, Wash. : YWAM Publishing, 2001, 1984.

PAP, 1576582442, list price: \$9.99.

B or 267/.61/0924. Cunningham, Loren; Youth With a Mission, Inc.; Christian biography--United States. 203 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult (Grades 10-12). Rating : 4.

Youth with a Mission founder Loren Cunningham uses personal detail and attention-grabbing narrative to relate his journey in growing to hear the voice of God and how that journey affected the genesis and development of his world-renowned organization. Cunningham’s tale is not only historically relevant, spanning several decades, but serves as testimony to how supernatural events can reveal the sovereign plan of God in the life of the believer. The breadth and depth of Cunningham’s experiences evidence the importance with which he treats the happenings detailed in this book.

As an author, Cunningham’s uncomplicated technique is not likely to impress the theologian or academician. He does not present any earth-shattering, new theological concepts nor does he pretend to. However, his simple stories of God’s intervention and direction are powerful enough to cause the reader to examine their ability to hear and obey the voice of God. As Cunningham says, “The discoveries are never just theory. They come out of our own adventures.”

To further guide the reader, an appendix at the book’s close features twelve points of emphasis Cunningham employs to assist the reader in what can often be a very intimidating endeavor.

While Cunningham’s spiritual voyage may be of special interest to those considering vocational ministry or intimately acquainted with YWAM, the book contains enough wisdom amidst such a variety of settings and situations, most Christians should find the material applicable in some form or fashion.

Aarik Danielsen

Faithful women & their extraordinary God / Noël Piper. LCCN 2005006519. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2005.

PAP, 1581346735, list price: \$12.99.

B or 270.8/092/2. Women in Christianity--Biography. 174 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Faithful Women and Their Extraordinary God contains five short biographies of faithful women: Sarah Edwards, Liliias Trotter, Gladys Aylward, Esther Ahn Kim, and Helen

Roseveare. The book introduces five particularly fascinating servants of the Lord—women who have significantly impacted the author. While the women share a common thread, their zeal in serving the Lord, they represent several countries and many decades of Christian history. Each of these women suffered in her own way, but did so joyfully, knowing that she suffered for the Lord. Noel Piper holds up each woman's life as an example of what it means to be truly faithful.

A great deal of the value of this book lies in the author's closing comments for each of the chapters. Piper dedicates each biography to a person who has touched her life directly, who displays the same qualities and dependence on God as the woman just described. Learning about these women will challenge believers to make a difference for Christ in their own spheres of influence. The book is well foot-noted and contains internet links to places where someone can find more information about the woman's experiences. The sketches provide overviews of each devoted woman's life but encourage seekers to search out more complete references. Observers will learn much about serving Christ faithfully by studying the stories of great Christians of the past. As the reader understands the lives of these loyal followers of Christ, she will come to understand God just a little better.

Angela Andrews

Blue like jazz : nonreligious thoughts on Christian spirituality / Donald Miller. LCCN 2003002223. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 2003.

PAP, 0785263705, list price: \$13.99.

B or 277.3/082/092. Miller, Donald, 1971-; Christian biography--United States. ix, 243 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.

Adult/College. Rating : 3.

Donald Miller is cool—in a Pacific Northwest counterculture, perpetually unmarried but having lots of friends sort of way. He is also a Christian, a somewhat messy one. And he is a writer who writes short, wry—but endearing sentences. All of these qualities have made *Blue Like Jazz* a popular title among the post-college single set.

Blue Like Jazz is an autobiographical exploration of various faith themes as they popped up in the author's quite interesting life. Miller manages not to sound like a deep thinker while still carrying his readers through some insightful reflections on the nature of faith, hypocrisy, sin, and, of course, love. Miller can be surprisingly and refreshingly hard on American evangelical worldliness. And he can elicit more than a few laughs with his believable self-deprecation.

Miller's work shows some affinity with the "Emergent church" (emergent leader Brian McLaren has a blurb on the back), though it is the feel of the book, the ambience, where that

affinity lies. Miller is a postmodern (?) Christian, and therefore a bit prone to ambiguity and a bit fearful of even appropriate dogmatism. He makes some theologically questionable statements ("Peter finally believed the gospel after he got yelled at by Paul"?), but for theologically discerning singles the book is an entertaining and even spiritually challenging journey.

Mark L. Ward, Jr.

George W. Bush : faith in the White House. Baker, Ore. : Grizzly Adams Production, 2005.

DVD, 1931602832, list price: \$14.95.

B or 973.931. Bush, George W. (George Walker)--1946- --Religion; Church and state--United States; United States--Religion. 1 videodisc (70 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.

Adult. Rating : 4.

National radio talk show host Janet Parshall narrates this film which shows the heart behind George W. Bush. She highlights people who have been touched by his compassion in the midst of tragedy. This DVD looks at the change that has occurred and transformed George W. Bush's life since he accepted Christ as his Savior. It contrasts his life before Christ with his life after Christ. And it also looks at critics, who believe that faith should play no part in the life of a politician. The film also features quotes from some historical figures that highlight the history of faith in American history.

George W. Bush: Faith in the White House shows the value of prayer in the president's life, from a conservative viewpoint. And it shows how fearful critics are when they believe that they do not have control. Both adults and young adults alike will benefit from this documentary, which highlights the genuine faith of the president and shows the humility with which he lives his life. And all will benefit from seeing a current example of the value of prayer and genuine faith.

Angela Andrews

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