HEART & MIND
What the Bible Says About Learning
Ruth Beechick
The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide reviews, from a Christian point of view, of both Christian and secular titles for the Christian reader. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of Christian Library Journal.
These newer book selection resources are geared to the general market.

A core collection for young adults / Rollie James Welch. (Teens @ the library series) New York: NealSchuman Publishers, 2011. LCCN 2010046693.

PAP, 9781555706920, $80.00
11.625 xii, 417 p.; 23 cm. + 1 CDROM (color; 4 3/4 in.) PROF Rating: 5

This new edition of A Core Collection for Young Adults includes nearly 900 main entry titles, plus more than 500 other titles listed within those entries. At least two-thirds of these titles have been published since 2000, while more than a tenth are classic titles. Librarian Rollie Welch has divided the book titles in this annotated bibliography into thirteen topical sections: Adventure tales, Cautionary novels, Classic literature, Coming-of-age stories, Fantasy novels, Graphic novels, Historical fiction, Humorous novels, Inspirational fiction, Problem novels, Readable nonfiction, Romance novels, and Science fiction. In each section, titles are arranged alphabetically by author’s last name, with the exception of the nonfiction titles arranged by Dewey classification numbers. Each main entry includes: author, title, number of pages, and publication information for various formats, followed by a paragraph-length annotation that may conclude with other related titles, appropriate grade levels, location of reviews, and awards received. Review sources cited are Booklist, Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal, and VOYA. Seven appendixes include Newbery, Printz, and Alex awards, plus a few “Top Ten” listings, all with titles annotated in this bibliography starred. In addition to the author index, the title index includes all “other titles” listed within the annotations. A CD-ROM included provides Excel files for authors, titles (main entries only), grade levels, and individual chapters.

The annotations include both descriptive and critical information. Particularly helpful are the comments, as appropriate, for violence, language, and/or sexual content—frequently with assigned grade levels for “mature” senior high students. Around one-third of the titles included carry these comments. Other content noted includes alcohol and/or drug abuse, suicide, spirits or vampires in fantasy fiction, and homosexual romances. Although many of the included titles might fit in more than one topical section, the only title listed in two different sections (with varying annotations) is Austen’s Pride and Prejudice. When the title index for this resource is compared with certain Christian book selection tools [the less inclusive The Book Tree by McCallum & Scott, 2008; the Core Collection for Small Libraries, 1997, and the Core Collection for Children and Young Adults by Schwedt and DeLong, 2008; and the more inclusive Honey for a Teen’s Heart by Hunt & Hampton, 2002] less than one-sixth of the titles in this secular Welch resource also appear in any of those Christian selection aids. While some chapters provide more useful titles for
Christian day schools or home schools than others, Welch’s well-annotated bibliography offers a valuable window into issues addressed in secular titles especially recommended for current middle school and high school students. This high quality resource is definitely recommended where indicated by local priorities and budgets.


PAP, 9781598849776, $40.00
28.162  244 p. : ill. ; 28 cm.

PROF Rating: 4

In Judy Freeman’s annual *The WINNERS! Handbook*, the author examines four highly respected annual lists of the best children’s books of the year: The American Library Association’s “Notable Children’s Books,” *Booklist*’s “Editor’s Choice,” *Horn Book*’s “Fanfare,” and *School Library Journal*’s “Best of the Year.” These lists often disagree with each other. In fact, for 2010, only 2 titles out of 162 titles appear on all four lists, and 79 titles appear on only one list. To these lists, Freeman this year adds 52 of her own additional choices. From this combined list, she has chosen 102 titles for the *WINNERS!* annotated book list (designed for use in Freeman’s one-day workshop), but then includes those titles not chosen in a separate list. She also adds in a separate list “Young Adult Books for Grades 7 and Up That Were on This Year’s Lists.”

As in earlier editions [cf. *CLJ* 15, 2 (2011)], entries in the 2010 *WINNERS!* bibliography are grouped by genre and then arranged alphabetically by author. Each entry includes Freeman’s own rating, “best” lists (see above) in which that book appeared, bibliographic information, descriptive annotation, a number of earlier related titles, subjects, plus a suggested “germ,” or library or curriculum related activity. Among the pages of additional features of this handbook are suggested considerations in book selection, listings of youth media awards for 2011, Freeman’s favorites 2001-2010, “99 Exemplary Picture Book Biographies for Grades 2-6,” a number of related websites, and pages of games and drama activities related to this year’s chosen annotated titles.
Review Rating System

*5 Outstanding—a beautifully written book which impacts someone’s life or thinking
5 Excellent—well written, among the very best
4 Good—definitely worth reading
3 Fair—to be read for relaxation or to meet a need for information
2 Poor—poor writing or editing; read only if very interested
1 —What can we say? Not much going for this title.

Recommended with caution (may be used with any of the above ratings)—Note reservations within the review.

Not recommended (may be used with any of the above ratings)—Note problems within the review.

With fiction, the rating includes the quality of plot development/pacing, characterization, sense of time and place, mood and atmosphere, dialogue, depth of perception, sensitivity of writing, use of humor. Be aware that some books are character driven, so character development is extremely important. Others are plot driven, so character development isn’t as critical; plot is.

Commonly used abbreviations in CLJ reviews

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HBB, 9780310716457, $15.99  
E 1 c. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 23 x 29 cm.  
PRI INT Rating: 3  

Karen Kingsbury pens another picture book aimed at young children but easily enjoyed by older children. *Brave Young Knight*, illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard, tells a story about a knight who decides to be honest, despite what others are doing.

Meant to be a companion to *The Princess and the Three Knights*, another children’s book by Kingsbury where knights battle to prove their love for the princess, *Brave Young Knight* shows that true bravery is choosing to do the right thing, even when others are not.

The young knight lives in the west village. He is helpful, intelligent, strong, and kind. Then the king announces that the bravest knight would be named as the new prince. When the young knight hears about his three competitors from the other villages, he becomes discouraged. But his father reminds him the bravest knight is not always the fastest, the strongest, or even the smartest. The other knights take shortcuts to win each competition. The king tallies up the score and rewards the bravest knight of all—the one who didn’t cheat.

*Brave Young Knight* shows that one doesn’t have to be the fastest, strongest, or even the smartest to be a winner. The beautiful pictures compliment the story. They are colorful and inviting; one feels drawn into the story. This book, although aimed at young children, ages 4-7 (publisher’s website) can be used with older children to teach them about making the right choice, even when it might cost you the competition.

Recommended for families, church libraries, Sunday schools, and school and public libraries.

*Carol Gehringer*


PAP, 9780825441844, $4.99  
Andi’s scary school days / Susan K. Marlow; illustrated by Leslie Gammelgaard. (Circle C beginnings ; 4) Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2011. LCCN 2010053234.

PAP, 9780825441837, $4.99  
Fic 74 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.  
PRI INT Rating: 3  

The Circle C Beginnings series offers new experiences for a younger Andi Carter as she begins to venture outside the safety of the ranch.

Everyone is excited about the state fair in *Andi’s Fair Surprise*. The whole family has to get dressed up and ride a train for hours just to get there. Then they stay in a hotel and eat in a restaurant, a new experience for her.

Andi likes seeing the horses, but her favorite animals are the lambs. They remind her of the lost sheep in the Bible story. Cattle ranchers don’t tolerate grass-destroying sheep, so the lambs are a novelty to her. When she wins a
lamb with her fair ticket, big trouble erupts as he gets loose in the midway and wreaks havoc. Andi has to make a hard choice to do what's best for the lamb.

Andi doesn't want to start school in Andi's Scary School Days. In fact she puts all her energy forth to resist the change. Because her big sister Melinda has to sit with the older students, Andi feels all alone. The rules are a mystery at first, and she doesn't understand how to behave at school.

Her new friend Cory brings a pet to keep Andi entertained, but a loose lizard in the classroom gets her in serious trouble with the teacher. She's supposed to put it outside, but instead she decides to run away from school. Brother Justin shows up to rescue her, and Andi learns that school isn't so bad after all.

The awesome team of author Susan Marlow and illustrator Leslie Gammelgaard bring the 1870's to life. Each book is comprised of ten short chapters interspersed with illustrations that teach about new experiences. Parents will find helpful additional resources offered on the website.

Deborah H. Rabern


George and Martha, that dear and somewhat ditzy hippo duo, delight audiences with another adventure in James Marshall's George and Martha: Full of Surprises. Originally released in 1976 as George and Martha: One Fine Day, the three stories still hold in their ability to produce a laugh these many years later. Possibly a modern classic, George and Martha, show the meaning of friendship through three simple stories that are the epitome of understated humor.

James Marshall is hailed as a comic genius, and George and Martha are proof of why this is so true. Who would think two hippos would prove so funny and so endearing? Each of the three stories explore a different facet of friendship. With few words and simple illustrations, Marshall is able to convey a variety of emotions. Martha's parenthetical eyes twitch at George in vexation while George's become pinpoints of apprehension. Each story is separate in its telling yet the surprise ending binds them together with gentle hilarity. Though Marshall is no longer with us, his books live on, and his George and Martha series are ready for another generation's appreciation.

Pam Webb


It is still winter when a young boy and his mother start anticipating summer in Nikki McClure's Mama, Is It Summer Yet? Each activity—seeing new buds on the trees,
planting seeds, watching ducklings in a pond—brings them closer to sunny days and sweet berries.

This is a tender vignette inspired by the author’s own son asking the title question. “Not yet, my little one,” is her gentle response, lovingly repeated on each page as mother and son together look for nests, listen for swallows, and wait for warmer winds. The sentiments will be familiar to anyone who has ever had cabin fever or entertained a child who can’t wait for bare feet and picnics.

The large, square size of the book and the simple text will engage preschoolers, while the folk-art quality of the images is rich and mature enough to please older children as well. The author captures beautiful elements of nature and many typical signs of the changing seasons with her unique cut-paper illustrations. The soft pastel pages provide a soothing background for the bold black silhouettes; parent readers will appreciate the artistic detail and should look for the Artist's Note on the last page that explains her technique.

Nina Ditmar


Dan and Ali Morrow have written a wonderful book that explains prayer to young children. We all know that children are full of questions about everything, and this book answers preschoolers’ questions about their beginning relationship to God.

At bedtime, after Mom reads a story and the child is ready to pray, Mom explains that prayer can happen at any time, not just before crawling into bed. This is a new concept for the child, who thinks about it as she goes to sleep.

The next morning, as the child wakes up, she looks for times to pray to God. Throughout the day, her mother helps her see situations when prayer is the natural thing to do—times such as thanking God for the sunshine, thanking God for friends, and asking forgiveness for a wrong attitude. Many situations during the day cause the child to see the need for prayer, and as her mother points them out, she whispers a prayer to God. Each time, the repetition of the title of the book, That’s When I Talk to God, becomes a phrase that the child can repeat as the pages are turned.

When it is bedtime again, the child recounts the times she talked to God. Then her mother explains how God talks to her, opening another new concept for her to think about.

Pictures along with each situation will help the child to vocalize his or her own feelings. One picture is of a coach with the little girl. She had a bad attitude during the game and she asks God to forgive her for that. Another shows a police car with a red light and the child prays for people who may have been hurt. Another time her brother helps her to be brave as she climbs a high slide and she thanks God for making her unafraid.

This delightful picture book is a refreshing answer for parents who want to teach their
children to pray in their own words. As the child listens, the text will provoke conversation for the parent to further instruct their children in times when they can call on God.

The unnumbered pages are illustrated with soft colored drawings that are consistent throughout. A first or second grader could easily read the book alone.

Juanita Wier Nobles


Curious George learns about hibernation and thinks it would be a great way to spend the cold winter. He tries to transform his bedroom into a cave and snuggles in for a long sleep, only to discover he has slept for only one night! His discouragement disappears when the man in the yellow hat reminds him of all the fun winter activities they can do together.

Most children are familiar with H.A. Rey's curious little monkey and his friend, the man in the yellow hat. This Level 1 "Green Light Reader" is based on a PBS Kids Curious George teleplay written by Craig Miller and recommended for ages 3-6. The story is sweet and simple, and offers young children a basic explanation of why animals hibernate. At the conclusion George learns to look for the positive in a disappointing situation, a wonderful lesson for all. Colorful, full-page illustrations capture George's creativity and perseverance as he tries to make his bedroom dark, quiet, and "cave-like" enough for hibernation. The expressions on George's face are especially endearing. A short educational activity and ideas for a related craft are included at the end of the book.

Nina Ditmar


Familiar childhood activities are captured in simple rhyme and chronicled in All Around the Seasons. Friends play, families gather, and nature provides the ever-changing backdrop for the traditions and memories that define each season of the year.

Barney Saltzberg's lighthearted rhymes and whimsical pencil and acrylic drawings are a delightful combination. All Around the Seasons is a sentimental journey through long picnic lunches (spring), creaky screen doors (summer), dizzy kites (fall), and gliding on ice (winter).

Though recommended for ages 2-5 (back cover), readers of all ages will enjoy revisiting the customary pleasures of each season. The rhyming verses are best read aloud, and children can watch for the small grey dog that appears throughout the scenes. There is a depiction of Halloween (carved pumpkins, broomsticks and candy) and winter holidays
(reindeer and sleighs).

Nina Ditmar

HBB, 9780807509142, $14.99

Fic 134 p. ; ill. ; 22 cm.

PRINT Rating: 5

Buddy, the therapy dog, is on the job with all his senses aquiver in The Case of the Library Monster. Mysterious happenings around the school have Buddy scouting for a ghost. Being a fair-minded detective-dog, Buddy considers the reasons a ghost could be present, and other things that could be possible explanations.

A rustling in the library bookshelves, followed by moving books, leads Buddy face to face with a monster. He asks him where he came from, but gets no answer. The stranger has a blue tongue and smells like lettuce and sand. He scampers up the bookshelves while Buddy pulls the books onto the floor in his eagerness to catch the intruder.

Barking, running, and making a mess of the books gets Buddy in trouble. He doesn't get to meet the Reptile Guy or his friends, but the next day several of the students read books about reptiles to Buddy. He starts to accumulate some interesting facts.

Dori Hillestad Butler has a winning series with The Buddy Files. This charming entry lets us see, hear, smell, and perceive through Buddy's senses. The student also learns the purpose for a therapy dog, and many facts about reptiles. It teaches the reader to use a logical thought process with Buddy as he figures out answers to his questions.

This ten chapter book is an enchanting romp with a lovable dog. The illustrators, Jeremy Tugeau and Dan Crisp, provide additional humor with their pen & ink drawings. The book has an appealing mix of fonts and icons. Buddy’s lists appear in bold, comic font with paws marking the bullet points. Conversation with other animals and raised voices are designated with all caps. Six to nine-year-olds will be eager to read more of these adventures.

Deborah H. Rabern


HBB, 9780375836886, $19.99

Fic 191 p. ; 22 cm.

INT Rating: *5

It's 1935, and times are tough. Turtle Curry's mother takes work as a housekeeper where children aren't allowed, so Turtle travels south to live with relatives she has never met in Key West, Florida.

In Turtle in Paradise, a spirited eleven-year-old girl lands in a close-knit “Conch” community filled with boy cousins, strange ways, hidden treasure, and family secrets. While Turtle bides her time until she can live in a beautiful home like a real family, she discovers that wherever you live with people that love you—well, that's a real home.

Jennifer Holm, the author of this 2011 Newbery Honor book, masterfully weaves snappy dialogue, authentic period details (Shirley Temple, Necco Wafers, etc.), tantalizing fore-
shadowing, and down-home wisdom into this story inspired by her own Key West relatives. The characters are refreshingly imperfect. However, just like Turtle—who has a tough shell but a soft underbelly—they pull together and love each other.

The author’s note shows period photos and fleshes out the historical setting. Jennifer Holm also earned Newbery Honors for her Our Only May Amelia and Penny from Heaven.

Carol Satta


HBB, 9780310720799, $12.99
Fic 267 p.: ill.; 23 cm.
INT Rating: 5

Jenn Kelly writes a humorous adventure story about a boy who wants to be a hero for once in his life. Great Aunt Harriet is always telling Jackson he needs to find his own story, and that is what happens in Jackson Jones: The Tale of a Boy, an Elf, and a Very Stinky Fish.

Jackson doesn’t have any friends, and he doesn’t understand algebra. He loves baseball but when he pitches, his team loses. Just once, he would like to be a hero who saves the day. When he falls into Great Aunt Harriet’s big, big hair (yes, into her hair!), he encounters a world of trap doors, elves, and hairy spiders providing perilous danger to Jackson and his new friend Meeka.

Another new friend, Josh, tells him about the Author who created each one of us. Some readers will recognize the Author’s description as that of the Creator God. Josh tells Jackson each “one of us has our own story, full of excitement and adventure, sadness and joy,” and more importantly, we each have a choice—to be “the hero in our own story and succeed, or try to be the hero in someone else’s story and fail” (p.172).

This story will have readers laughing out loud, especially as they read the chapter titles. The book is silly, quirky, and entertaining with pictures and text keeping the readers hooked. Illustrator Ariane Elsammak provides whimsical pen and ink drawings that complement the story. Jackson Jones is an excellent addition to Christian children’s literature, combining fantasy and science fiction to teach a lesson.

Recommended for church, school, and public libraries, as well as families.

Carol Gehringer


PAP, 9781591669838, $7.99
FIC 25 p.: col. ill.; 24 cm.
INT PRI Rating: 4

A Ram for Isaac presents Genesis 22 from the perspective of young Isaac. Abraham takes his son and two friends on a journey to make an offering to Jehovah. To the boys it is an adventure. On the third day Isaac and his father go ahead to Mt. Moriah to prepare a stone altar. Abraham tells his son they must trust and obey God, even as he binds Isaac, places him on the
altar, and raises his knife. God calls to Abraham not to harm Isaac and a white ram caught in the thicket is sacrificed in Isaac’s place.

This Christian fiction chapter book is recommended for ages 6-7 (back cover) and certainly children of that age who have read Bible stories already know the account of Abraham and Isaac and their test of faith. It is quite another thing, though, to see Keith Neely’s full-page illustrations of a smiling Isaac, happily carrying firewood alongside his father, then looking quizzically as the man he loves binds his wrists with rope. The boy’s thoughts are heart wrenching: “What is Father doing? Is he going to kill me? Am I the sacrifice? No, NO!” Isaac knows he must trust Abraham just as Abraham fully trusts God, but the boy is confused and frightened. The message is strong, but the images may be disconcerting for primary readers. Perhaps this is why author Ginny Merritt encourages the audience (presumably with a parent or teacher’s guidance) to “read the Scripture first and let God show you what He wants you to learn from the story.” A Ram for Isaac portrays Isaac as a playful boy of about 12. This book in its powerfully dramatized format may be more appropriate for readers closer to that age.

Nina Ditmar

Author of several children’s books, Laurie Myers presents Escape by Night: A Civil War Adventure about a brave boy and his dog. Inspired by a true story, this work of historical fiction is a welcome addition to juvenile literature.

As a wagon filled with wounded soldiers rolls through town, a one-armed soldier drops his small notebook. Tommy, the son of a Presbyterian minister, sends his dog to recover it, and tries to locate the wounded soldier at the makeshift hospital, the former First Presbyterian Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. When he finds the soldier, Tommy realizes there is something different about his new friend, Red.

Red treats Henry, a slave working at the hospital, with respect, but won’t talk to anyone except Henry and Tommy. As Tommy and Red talk, Tommy begins to question slavery and the meaning of friendship. Then Tommy discovers Red’s secret. He is surprised to discover that the soldier is actually a Yankee in disguise! Will Tommy help him escape or turn him in? If Tommy turns him in, Red will be sent to a prison camp. What is the right thing to do?

Myers introduces some serious issues (slavery, loyalty, and mercy) in a book written for 2nd-4th grade readers. The book is well-written and will make a good choice for a classroom novel read for elementary students.

In the author’s note, Myers explains the story of a young Woodrow Wilson inspired this book. As a boy, Wilson was known as Tommy, and his father was a Presbyterian minister whose church became a hospital during the Civil War. However, the book is fictional; it is only inspired by Wilson’s early life.

Recommended for public libraries, school li-
braries, and church libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer

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PAP, 9780781403795, $6.99
Fic 144 p. : ill. ; 20 cm.
INT Rating: *5


PAP, 9780781403801, $6.99
Fic 144 p. : ill. ; 20 cm.
INT Rating: *5

In Grandma’s Attic and More Stories from Grandma’s Attic are collections of stories told to Arleta Richardson by her grandmother, Mabel. As she was growing up in the 1930’s, Arleta spent invaluable hours with her grandmother. Grandma Mabel’s stories accompany many of the items in her home. From a sweet, small button in the button jar to a scrap of fabric from one of great grandmother’s aprons, delightful tales ensue.

Arleta Richardson expertly transports her readers into a time when horses pulled buggies, dishwasher meant the person washing the dishes and throwing out the dirty water, and being neighborly might even mean opening one’s home to a stranger. The setting, a small farm in Michigan in the late 1800’s, offers the backdrop for these tales of the past. Since the characters are true people, they are round, growing in each story. Many of the situations in which Mabel finds herself as a young girl offer humor, and some include a memorable lesson along with the story. For example, after one hilarious story about the day Mabel and her best friend, Sarah Jane, donned hoop skirts under their calico dresses, went to church, sat down and blushed furiously as their hoops flew up, Mabel tells her granddaughter, “...many times when I am tempted to be proud, I remember that horrid hoop skirt and decide that a proud heart is an abomination to the Lord!” p16, In Grandma’s Attic

I read the Grandma’s Attic books as a child and eagerly awaited the next book order, hoping to find another. After re-reading the books for review, I find the stories just as touching as an adult. I contacted my childhood best friend to see if she remembered them. Not only were they some of her favorite stories, but now she has shared them with her girls, and another generation has come to love and enjoy Mabel and her girlhood.

Kristi Wolcott

HBB, 9780310710868, $16.99  
226.9 1 c. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.  
PRI  Rating: 5

The Lord’s Prayer, beautifully illustrated by Richard Watson, contains only a few words found in Matthew 6:9-15, when Jesus taught his disciples how to pray.

Children of all races dressed in their native costumes open the first pages. The pictures, wonderfully intricate in detail, call for close inspection. Both the words and the illustrations draw the reader into the prayer our Lord taught.

Each phrase from the Lord’s prayer is printed on a double page, along with large, detailed artwork that compels the reader to look more closely. As the prayer continues, the pictures keep the reader engaged. The illustrator shows pictures of young ones from many ethnic backgrounds throughout the book’s pages, as well as on the inside covers.

Rick Warren, pastor of the Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, and a well-known Christian leader who wrote the best-selling Purpose Driven Life, provides an additional commentary. In Dr. Warren’s full-page comment, he emphasizes God’s love for the simple prayers of children. Author Richard Watson relates his personal feelings for this simple prayer. He hopes that today’s children will experience that same love for the Lord’s Prayer that he felt as a boy.

This book is sure to be a favorite for children as they examine the images depicting God’s love for children of all races and nationalities as they recite the Lord’s Prayer. The unnumbered pages are thick, ready for a child’s fingers. The final page contains the Lord’s Prayer, presented in its totality, for review. This will be a wonderful addition to any child’s collection. Richard Watson’s love for children and for God’s word is evident.

Juanita Wier Nobles


PAP, 9781433514012, $10.99  
227 87 p. ; 23 cm.  
INT (All ages)  Rating: *5


PAP, 9781433513985, $10.99  
231.7 109 p. ; 23 cm.  
INT (All ages)  Rating: *5

God’s Mighty Acts series by Starr Meade includes devotional books focusing on the power of God. The books may be used as an independent read for children, or a family read-aloud. Each devotion begins with a Scripture relating to a topic. The body of the devotion explains the Scripture and gives other Scripture references for support. Each devotion ends with a section titled “As For Me and My House.” This section contains a combination of food-for-thought, additional reading suggestions, prayer starters, and activities designed to reinforce the lesson.

God’s Mighty Acts in Creation is designed to prompt worship for our Creator God. The book contains 45 devotions, which systematically
work through the days of creation. Two main themes are present: creation displays the wisdom of God, and God owns His creation. Therefore, in each subset of devotions by creation day, the reader sees how God uniquely designed his work. Not only does this theme promote praise to God for his amazing creativity, but it also refutes the notion that such designs happened accidentally through an evolution process. The theme of God owning his creation is displayed through Scriptures showing how certain creations acted contrary to design. Because God owns His creation, He can change its rules on command.

*God’s Mighty Acts in Salvation* leads toward a clear understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The book contains 40 devotions based on themes from Paul’s epistle to the Galatians. Meade’s message is one of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. She writes conversationally and uses easy-to-understand illustrations in order for children to comprehend the danger of counting on good works to please God. The biblical concepts build on one another as Meade continues through Galatians. From understanding the authority of Scripture, to the final call to boast in nothing but Christ crucified, this devotional book repeatedly turns the reader to our amazing Savior.

Amy Arens


This book is appropriate for reading aloud. The text and pictures provide a staging area for conversation between the parents and their children ages 5-8. Each page provides an ample opportunity to consider how little ones experience the presence of God. They will want to linger over each illustration and think of the other ways they sense God. The paintings and text combine for dynamic, interesting encounters to help young ones understand more about God. Virginia Kroll and Deborah Jenkins have a winning combination. Any library would be proud to display this beautiful
publication.

Deborah H. Rabern


HBB, 9780310716631, $15.99
231.7 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 29 cm.
PS PRI Rating: 4

Kathy-jo Wargin adds another seasonal alphabet book with F Is For Fireflies: God’s Summertime Alphabet. Similar to her first book, K Is For Kite: God’s Springtime Alphabet, Wargin provides a rhymed text which explores a particular season, weaving in the exultation and praise for God’s creation. For instance, the letter "G" is for "Garden." The accompanying text reads: "God made the Gardens, and we help them grow, weeding and watering row after row."

As in the first book, the rhyming text is not perfect, but does capture the joy and appreciation for one of the favored seasons of the year. The bold painted illustrations rendered by Linda Bronson are lively, yet almost overshadow the text instead of complementing it. The illustrations of multi-cultural children make this a book easily shared with in a variety of settings and audiences. It is a reminder and worthwhile celebration of how special summer is, especially as a time of sharing moments with family members.

Pam Webb

Fix-it and forget-it kids cookbook: 50 favorite recipes to make in a slow cooker / Phyllis Pellman Good; Rebecca Good Fennimore, photography editor. (The fix-it and forget-it series) Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 2010. LCCN 2010021045.

HBB (spiral), 9781561487042, $19.99
641.5 128 p. : col. ill. ; 26 cm.
INT Rating: 3

Bestselling author Phyllis Good presents another cookbook in her Fix-it and Forget-it series, this one aimed at children.

While some recipes could be made in the microwave or the stovetop, Pellman deliberately chose the slow cooker. The book starts off with a welcome to the kitchen, a note to adults who cook with kids, tips on using the slow cooker, how to follow a recipe, learning to measure, equipment list, and safety tips.

The second part includes the fifty recipes, divided into breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner, and dessert. All the recipes have photos showing the finished product.

A glossary and index are included in the back matter. A cookbook diary is included for the young cook to record when they tried a recipe and how it turned out.

The colorful photos enhance the spiral bound cookbook, allowing it to lay flat. Many have small sidebars with recipe tips. Each recipe has easy-to-follow instructions, listing the required ingredients and necessary equipment.

This cookbook is an excellent way to get young cooks started. It shows them that a slow cooker can be used for any portion of the meal. While some of the recipes are not as healthy as they could be, it is a good collection of recipes that
might appeal to kids and encourage them to get cooking. However, they will need other recipes if they want to make an entire balanced meal. If the main dish is already cooking in the slow cooker, the slow cooker cannot be used for the dessert. In spite of this, this cookbook is a welcome addition to cookbook literature.

Recommended for public libraries and school libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer


Helen L. Wilbur’s F is For Friendship is part of the Alphabet Books series. The book describes the past and present history of the art of quilting across the globe as well as the friendships that quilting fosters. Quilting is discussed as both an art form, means of conveying a story or history as well as a useful household skill. Each page of the book incorporates a letter of the alphabet and includes color illustrations by Gijsbert van Frankenhuyzen. Each letter’s page includes a short verse in rhyme describing the scene as well as a much longer and more detailed description on the side bar. Topics for each letter’s page include types of quilts, patterns, fabrics as well as quilts as history and art.

A common element in the Alphabet Books series is that the books are appropriate for a wide range of elementary school ages. The pictures reinforce the story and both are of excellent quality. Colorful hand drawn illustrations and short rhyming verses on each page make this title suitable for read aloud settings as well as for engaging younger children. Moreover, older children will additionally appreciate the more detailed information and descriptions on each page. Wilbur’s book also creates a strong tie-in for history, world cultures, and social studies lessons as it incorporates aspects of the historical and social significance of quilting worldwide. F is For Friendship will pique the interest of even those who are unfamiliar with quilting.

Elissa Rizzo


Don Brown focuses on Thomas Edison’s early life in A Wizard from the Start. His mother taught him at home after a teacher labeled him as addled because of his daydreaming. Tom read on a wide variety of subjects, engaged in chemistry experiments in the basement, and learned the value of hard work.

At the age of twelve, he worked fourteen hours a day on a commuter train to Detroit, selling newspapers and other items. He continued chemistry experiments on board, setting fire to
the baggage car, provoking the anger of a railroad official who boxed his ear. By the age of fourteen, the young entrepreneur was printing his own newspaper from salvaged equipment discarded by a Detroit print shop. Several hundred subscribers paid eight cents a month for the budding journalist’s efforts.

Award-winning author and illustrator Don Brown offers a thirty-two page picture book illustrated with large delicate watercolors of Thomas Edison’s boyhood. He covers Tom’s fascination with the telegraph and his career as a traveling telegraph operator, before the inventor’s fervor kicks in full time.

Mr. Brown emphasizes Tom’s pursuit of knowledge through reading, and home schooled children may be pleased to identify with the eminent inventor who rose from the ranks of the home schooled. He speculates briefly on Edison’s early loss of hearing, but doesn’t elaborate on how it affected Tom’s work or perception of the world around him.

The author’s note on the last page gives additional perspective on Edison’s overall contributions and mentions his idea that nature is the “Supreme Intelligence that rules matter.” This book is an adequate introductory resource for ages eight to ten.

Deborah H. Rabern

PAP, 9780310717928, $6.99
Fic 137 p. : ill., map ; 22 cm.


PAP, 9780310717935, $6.99
Fic 136 p. : ill., map ; 22 cm.


PAP, 9780310717942, $6.99
Fic 126 p. ; 22 cm.


PAP, 9780310717959, $6.99
Fic 128 p. ; 22 cm.


PAP, 9780310716966, $6.99
Fic 122 p. : ill., map ; 22 cm.


PAP, 9780310717973, $6.99
Fic 112 p. : ill., map ; 22 cm.


PAP, 9780310716915, $6.99
Fic 144 p. ; 22 cm.


PAP, 9780310716921, $6.99
Fic 144 p. ; 22 cm.
MS Rating: 4

In A Horse to Love, thirteen year-old Skye Nicholson, a troubled foster child, is facing a choice—Chesterfield Detention Center, or foster care with Eileen and Tom Chamber, owners of Keystone Stables. Starting with counseling at Maranatha Treatment Center, and then at her new home at the stables, Skye has every chance at a better life.

In On the Victory Trail, Skye loves her new horse, Champ, and finally feels at home with Mr. and Mrs. Chambers. She’s learning to trust God, and getting to know Jesus. Her new found faith is about to be tested when an old school friend shows up at the stables with her own troubles. Sooze is sick, and needs real help. Instead, she just wants to run the other way.

In Southern Belle's Special Gift, a runaway in the midst of winter, hiding in the barn, finds her way to Keystone Stables. Tanya, with a background similar to Skye’s, has a bad attitude and is determined to not fit in. The Chambers’ and Skye, have their hands full. That is until Tanya meets Belle, a pregnant mare, with her own problems. God uses Belle in Tanya's life for some remarkable changes.

In Summer Camp Adventure, Mr. and Mrs. Chambers bring Skye to a Christian camp for the summer to help out with the campers. Skye is partnered with eight-year-old Jonathan who is deaf, stubborn, and doesn’t like to listen to anyone. That is until he discovers how much he loves horses—and Skye—and does everything
he can to get her attention.

In *Leading the Way*, blind Katie Thomas is coming for the summer to Keystone Stables. Skye is determined to understand being blind so she can help Katie, whose parents are talking about divorce. Skye wants to do her best for Katie and God. Katie just wants her parents to stay together.

In *Blue Ribbon Champ*, Skye at thirteen is still learning to be the teenage role-model at Keystone Stables, and the Christian she believes God is growing her into. Sometimes it’s not so easy. Joey Klingerman is spending the summer at the stables, and he sees Skye as his personal summer pal. Skye has other plans—like the Snyder County Horse Show

In *Whispering Hope*, the Chambers and Skye are just finishing their last days at the State Horse Show, when Skye stumbles across a runaway wielding a knife, and threatening to use it against her. Once again, the Chambers offer the culprit the stables as way for her to get her life together. This is Wanda, the wanna-be pro pool player. At the stables she even sleeps on top of the pool tables.

In *The Long Ride Home*, while stopping at a small diner in Charleston, S.C., the Chambers, Morgan, and Skye meet a woman who takes them all by surprise. For many years Skye has been wondering about her parents and any other family she might have, and this woman, Millie, claims to know who Skye is. It is a long ride home for everybody, but there are many surprises yet to be learned.

*Keystone Stables*, is a sweet series which will engage readers while showing the love of horses and the love of God. After the story, the author includes a plethora of information on horses that will be interesting to anyone reading this series. Each book is a stand-alone story, yet, readers will enjoy the entire set of eight.

*Debby Willett*


HBB, 9780805431339. OP; buy used

Fic 225 p.; 20 cm.

MS INT (HS) Rating: 5

In *The Way of the Wilderking* by Jonathan Rogers, Aidan Errolson's brother braves the Feechiefen Swamp to warn him that King Darrow is preparing to send 1,000 soldiers into the swamp to capture him. To prevent the needless death of those soldiers, Aidan abandons his refuge in the swamp. From a safe distance, Aidan tries to demonstrate to the jealous king that he remains a loyal subject, but in vain. During Aidan’s three years hiding in the swamp, some citizens of Corenwald calling themselves “Aidanites” have been training to oppose the king. Aidan wants no part in the efforts of others to bring about the fulfillment of the prophecy that he is the promised Wilderking. So as he discourages any treason from the Aidanite bands, Aidan and his feechie friend Dobro travel to join his family in a hidden canyon refuge.

This third and final volume in The Wilderking Trilogy follows the author’s earlier *The Bark of the Bog Owl* [*CLJ 10, 3 (2005)*] and *The Secret of the Swamp King* [*CLJ 10, 4 (2005)*]. In several
points, the adventures of young Aidan parallel elements of the life of the biblical David, but with significant differences in both plot and setting. The feechiefolk on the imaginary island of Corenwald would fit right into the terrain and climate of the author’s native state of Georgia during the years of its early settlers. Varied real and appealing characters grow through their experiences in an action-filled plot with some surprising twists. Themes for possible discussion include integrity, loyalty, duty to country, respect for other people groups, sacrificial unconditional love with forgiveness and mercy, and faithfulness to the One true God. This entire fantasy series is highly recommended for public, school, church, and home libraries.

Donna W. Bowling


PAP, 9780310722878, $9.99
Fic 202 p.; 22 cm.
MS (HS) Rating: 5

Kim Vogel Sawyer continues her contemporary series featuring a teen living in a small Mennonite community who is given the chance to attend public school. Katy struggles to maintain her faith as she interacts with teens raised in a secular world.

In Katy's Homecoming, Katy has just learned to embrace her dad’s new wife as her new mother when she is faced with her biggest challenge yet. Katy is elected to homecoming court, an event any teen would welcome! Rumors circulate that Bryce, the boy she has a crush on, might even ask her to attend with him. What would be more perfect?

But Katy’s Old Order Mennonite community forbids dancing, fancy dresses, and makeup. Since Bryce isn’t Mennonite, her dad might not allow her to go with Bryce. But he allows Katy to make the decision whether or not to attend the homecoming ceremony and the dance, as well as a forensics meet the following day. When one of her school friends loans her a beautiful fancy dress for the homecoming dance, Katy must make several decisions. Does she abandon her principles and attend this one special night, or stick to her convictions? Whatever she decides will have an impact on others.

Teens relate to Katy as she deals with her dilemma without losing face with her friends or compromising her personal values. Although many teens may not understand the standards of a Mennonite community, they can relate to being an outsider and trying to fit in. Katy's Homecoming also includes discussion questions to help the reader connect Katy's challenges with their own.

Recommended for middle school and teen collections in public and school libraries, especially for girls ages 10-16.

Carol R. Gehringer


HBB, 9780385738835, $16.99
Fic viii, 351 p.; 22 cm.
MS (INT) Rating: 5
Twelve-year-old Abilene Tucker is content riding the rails with her Daddy, but he sends her to Manifest, Kansas, to spend the summer of 1936 with folks from his youth. While there, Abilene lives with the interim Baptist minister and spies around town with two new friends, Lettie and Ruthanne.

Abilene is puzzled about her father’s connection to the town, so she searches for mention of him in old newspaper clippings and stories told by Miss Sadie, the local fortune-teller.

Although the main story of Moon Over Manifest takes place in 1936, flashbacks to the years 1917-1918 touch on prohibition, WWI, immigration, orphan trains, Spanish influenza, the KKK, and the unfair treatment of coal mine workers.

The author, Clare Vanderpool, has created something akin to a Richard Peck novel with laugh-aloud humor, “down-home” sayings, memorable characters, and tight-knit community relationships. On a deeper level, she infuses the story with powerful values such as hard work, patriotism, care for the homeless, neighborliness, etc.

Perhaps the author tried to accomplish too much in one book—weaving in many sub-plots and mysteries, many historical topics, etc. Also, the frequent interjection of newspaper clippings, personal letters, and flashbacks makes the story a bit choppy.

Although Abilene visits the local “medium, diviner, fortune-teller, spirit-conjurier” to get information about her Daddy, the Hungarian immigrant uses that persona as a ruse. In reality, she functions mainly as a natural healer and listening ear for folks in the community. There are several references to the Bible. All in all, this is a complex yet enjoyable story that teaches a lot of history. It won the 2011 Newbery Medal.

Carol Satta


HBB, 9780399246555, $15.99
Fic 134 p.; 22 cm.
MS Rating: 5

Sixth-grader Lonnie Collins Motion (a.k.a. Locomotion) and his younger sister, Lili, live in separate but loving foster homes. Peace, Locomotion is a compilation of his letters to Lili, telling her about his home and school life. Locomotion enjoys writing poetry, so some of his poems are interspersed amongst the letters, too.

Jacqueline Woodson weaves a tender story of family, grief, love, war, empathy, and friendship. Her descriptions of small human comforts—such as Miss Edna making Locomotion’s favorite meal or sewing a patch on his pants—feel natural. Woodson covers difficult intangibles such as grief and war just as masterfully, and her characters are so well drawn that they spring to life in the reader’s mind.

This is the sequel to Locomotion, but the reader can understand and enjoy this story without knowing the prequel. Because each of Locomotion's letters forms its own chapter, chunks of white space are common. The margins are wide and the pages are edged in silver-gray, giving the book the feel of a private
journal. The well-designed format matches the mood and pacing of the book perfectly.

This is an excellent choice for reluctant readers, especially middle school boys who will relate to Locomotion’s friendship with Clyde and his fond relationship with Miss Edna’s two older sons.

Carol Satta

HBB, 9780807509210, $16.99
371.5 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.
MS (INT) Rating: 4

Bullying and Me: Schoolyard Stories by Ouisie Shapiro opens with a letter to the reader that addresses bullying broadly and sends the message to anyone who has ever been bullied that you are not alone and it is not your fault. Thirteen personal accounts follow. Eleven come from school-age children and teenagers talking about their experiences with bullying in grades 5-12, while two come from adults who recall being bullied when they were younger. Every story includes a photograph of the narrator by Steven Vote and a comment from bullying expert Dorothy Espelage (“Dr. Dorothy”). The book concludes with six tips on dealing with bullies: Ignore the bully, don’t fight back, tell someone you trust, find your real friends, steer clear of bullies, and don’t stand by and do nothing.

Excellent photography makes the book visually appealing, but its concept is stronger than its execution for two reasons: Shapiro never really defines what bullying is, and Dr. Dorothy’s advice seems confusing or inconsistent in light of the stories selected. Dr. Dorothy sidesteps the issue of self-defense and when, if ever, it’s appropriate to respond to violence with violence. She tells one boy who fights back physically it is not his fault. She tells another boy who beats up his bully and threatens someone who was bullying a friend that he was brave and kind to help his friend, but that it’s dangerous to stand up to bullies.

As a picture book designed for ages 9-12, Bullying and Me focuses on raising awareness and does create an opportunity for meaningful discussion with children in this age group. Unfortunately, it does not move beyond the standard bullying advice for children to avoid it if you can, ignore it if you cannot avoid it, and ultimately just tell an adult.

Laurie A. Gray


HBB, 9780890515587, $17.99
398.23 24 p. : col. ill. ; 28 x 31 cm.
MS Adult Rating: 3

Dragons is a gorgeous coffee table book that covers dragon legends across six continents of the globe. Legends from Babylon, Greece, China, America, the United Kingdom and South America are tucked into tiny envelopes for the reader to unfold and enjoy.

One section of this twenty-four page volume is devoted to flying serpents that are depicted in the ancient art of civilizations as diverse as the Chinese, Babylonians, and Peruvians. The Roman philosopher Cicero and the historian Marcellius also cite documentation of these serpents’ existence. Additional eyewitness accounts are provided along with an 1890 newspaper article from Tombstone, Arizona. A scholarly commentary examines various theories about dragons, concluding that these accounts make sense if dinosaurs and people co-existed.

Biblical commentaries are referenced, along with twenty-four quotes from the King James
Version of the Bible that mention dragons. The book also includes a spread on saints and slayers.

This lovely illustrated publication presents information to stimulate the imagination. Its glossy, rich colored pages are filled with beautiful portrayals of dragons and dinosaurs. The word for dragon is listed in twenty-one different languages. Small inset books, maps, timelines, fold-out pages, and pictures behind hidden panels add appeal. The inside back cover offers a list of questions and answers based on the Bible.

This book does a commendable job of presenting a Biblical worldview with much anecdotal evidence to support the premise that dragon was the common term used for a variety of dinosaurs. However, no strong parallels are drawn between legend and the list of quotes from the Bible. The subject is covered with great thoroughness, but with little hard scientific evidence. Although it couldn't have been presented more colorfully or imaginatively, the volume doesn't verify or quantify any scientific facts. It is unlikely to convince a skeptic. Very young children may find the cover art and some of the pictures frightening. It's an interesting and appealing work, but unlikely to satisfy a serious student.

Deborah H. Rabern


How often do we consider the sweetening in our cake, candy, or ice cream? Sugar Changed the World by Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos demonstrates the story of sugar and how it fits into the picture of world history. An emphasis on the slave trade shows how the desire for sugar created barbaric practices in the endeavor to bring the seasoning to the blessed.

Eye-opening and a bit unsettling, sugar’s journey through the ages is chronicled by authors motivated by family history that entwine with the sugar trade. The science and production methods behind sugar are particularly fascinating.

However, in the attempt to be comprehensive, the book tries to accomplish too much. The scope of the book encompasses the entire globe, from early B.C. civilizations through the 20th century. The vastness of sugar’s story sometimes rabbit trails into side avenues that can become tedious, although the authors’ efforts toward thoroughness are appreciated. It should also be noted that personal opinions and some political asides can be found in the text, undermining the authors’ extensive research. This lack of objectivity makes it less appropriate for school use.

Songs, quotes, oral histories, and more than eighty archival illustrations, photographs, and maps help portray the history of sugar. Resources feature a list of notes, websites list, web guide to illustrations, index and a bibliography. The authors also include an essay on how they researched the book.

Not for the armchair historian, but ideal for those interested in food history, social justice,
or researching this topic.

Jaclyn S. Miller


PAP, 9781591280798, $15.00

823  168 p.; 22 cm.

MS HS Adult  Rating: 5

What I Learned in Narnia, by Doug Wilson, is a gem of a book for those who have already traveled to Narnia. Wilson, for his part, has breathed Narnian air since the first decade in which it seeped into our world, and his native status shows.

Wilson first developed the material in this book for talks he delivered to kids at his church. Some remarkable kids apparently attend that church, because only the kids old enough to understand what a "supposal" is (the idea that things and characters in Narnia have a relationship to things and characters in our world) will be able to grasp Wilson's analyses and lessons.

Wilson's book "moralizes" the Narnia series. this will sound dangerous to literature lovers and theologians—but it's not, because Wilson fits both of those roles and knows their concerns. He doesn't make the story fade away in order to focus on a bunch of dry principles. The story, he says, should be enjoyed first as a story. And stories, Wilson well knows, provide one of the best ways to really learn good theology. Wilson's book is the best kind of moralizing: he is only shining light on morals Lewis put there.

Those morals come to the reader in seven chapters: authority, confession of sin, nobility, spiritual disciplines, love of story, thorough grace, love for God. Wilson quotes from the stories liberally and shows true and false examples of the character qualities.

Wilson makes plain C.S. Lewis's penetrating insights into fallen human psychology. The selfishness of Edmund provides a window into adult selfishnesses. The faith of Lucy is a model for adult faith. That's why the Narnia series is beloved by children and parents alike. The illustrations and applications Wilson gives are, like Lewis's, picture-perfect for his target audience. Wilson, borrowing from Lewis' amazing skill, knows how to connect truth to the real life of children without sounding trite.

One unforgiveable typo (Iterion for Tirian!) is the only real criticism that could be made of this wonderful book, and all it shows is that a Calormen has crept in unwares and played with Canon Press's spell-checker!

Mark L. Ward, Jr.


HBB, 9780545130493, $19.99

940.4  116 p.: ill., maps ; 26 cm.

MS (HS)  Rating: 5

Truce by Jim Murphy highlights the Christmas Truce of 1914, a spontaneous agreement between soldiers on both sides of the trenches to suspend hostilities in order to celebrate Christmas. This truce was not officially sanctioned and has never been replicated in military history.

An illustration showing British and German soldiers exchanging gifts appears at the beginning of the book and captures the reader's attention. To the right is a quote by Winston Churchill from a
letter to his wife Clementine, dated November 23, 1914: "What would happen, I wonder, if the armies suddenly and simultaneously went on strike and said some other method must be found of settling the dispute?"

In the chapters that follow, Murphy gives background information regarding the events leading up to World War I. He explains the transition from the excitement of hand to hand combat to the inherent boredom of trench warfare. He also emphasizes the diminished confidence of allied and enemy troops as they realize that a swift victory is not forthcoming. Finally, he describes the Christmas miracle of a peace that lasted from two days to two months.

Many sepia tone photos, paintings, and charts obtained from museums, newspapers, and the author's own private collection are used to illustrate the book. Included, is a time line of World War I, a comprehensive bibliography of notes and sources, an index, and acknowledgments.

In the epilogue, Murphy compares the volatile situation between the Allied Nations and the Central Powers of Europe prior to World War I with the emotionally charged atmosphere following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Whether one agrees with his summation or not, Truce is a book worth reading and one which I highly recommend.

Carmen Redding
In Melody Carlson’s new offering, *Double Take*, readers get an insight into the Amish community through the eyes of a spoiled New York heiress. Seventeen year old Madison is so stressed about the demands placed upon her by friends and family that she jumps in her car and flees town. In trying to find answers to downsizing her complicated lifestyle she discovers an Amish girl, Anna, who is waiting for her uncle. Anna is also searching for answers and she believes they lay beyond her Amish community. On a whim, the girls decide to switch places since they resemble each other in looks. It’s only for a week, but what they learn from the switch will last them a lifetime.

Melody Carlson’s specialty is writing for the teen girl audience. She has covered a variety of subjects from college life to cults to kidnappings, and now her new book takes on the Amish culture. At first there is the tendency to think the book is trying to jump aboard the Amish craze; however, the deeper focus is the age old theme of appreciating what you’ve got when it’s no longer there. For spoiled uber-rich girl Madison, there is the realization of how she can get by on a little, and the discovery of who her true friends really are. For simple living Amish Anna, it’s learning to live reality and not live for dreams that can’t come true.

One other important aspect of the book is the message of judging others, which Carlson covers with a light touch that leaves a deep impression. Overall, even though the plot is fairly implausible, and the story gets a bit didactic when it comes to a character-driven discussion about Amish beliefs, this is an entertaining read, one Carlson fans with undoubtedly appreciate.

Pam Webb
circumstances. Mangum’s characters are easy for the reader to relate to, especially as they try to see God’s hand in the midst of their circumstances. A few loose ends are left at the end, but real life doesn’t always have a tidy conclusion.

Recommended for adults and teens in public libraries and high school libraries.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

**From darkness won / Jill Williamson.**  
PAP, 9780982598771, $17.99  
Fic 661 p.; map; 22 cm.  
HS (MS) Rating: 5

Jill Williamson presents the finale to *By Darkness Hid* (2009 Christy award winner) and *By Darkness Fled* (2010 Christy award nominee). From *Darkness Won* continues the story of Vrell and Achan amid the challenges they face after their dangerous journey into Darkness.

Lady Avrella flees an arranged marriage by pretending to be a boy, Vrell. She joins Achan, an orphaned boy training to be a squire. Together they encounter enemies as they venture into Darkness to rescue an imprisoned army to help them defeat the evil prince, Esek, and establish the new king chosen by Arman, the one true God.

While serving as a healer to another prince, Vrell is attacked and loses her memory of their relationship and their earlier adventures. She also forgets that Achan was selected as Arman’s true Crown Prince. She leaves him and resumes her original identity at Lady Avrella as he gathers troops loyal to him to claim the throne.

This book is both character and plot-driven. There are many twists and turns in the plot, making it a gripping story to read. Although the book is long (660 pages), it is highly engaging, especially to fans of speculative fiction. Given her track record with her first two books, Williamson has written another potential award winner!

Those who delight in swords, sorcery, good vs. evil, political and spiritual intrigue will be captivated by this well-written epic series in Christian fantasy. A brief interview with the author is found at the end of this book.

Recommended for middle and high school libraries, as well as young adult fiction collections in public libraries.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

**Once was lost / Sara Zarr.** New York: Little, Brown, 2009. LCCN 2009025187.  
HBB, 9780316036047, $16.99  
Fic 217 p.; 22 cm.  
HS Rating: 5

*Once Was Lost* is the story of a pastor’s daughter named Sam whose father has time for everyone except his family. Her mother is in court-mandated rehab after a DUI. Her father’s focus is on parishioners with a missing 13-year old. Everything about God that Sam has always taken for granted is up for questioning.

The kidnapping of Jody Shaw overshadows Sam’s own problems with her dysfunctional family. Sam wants God to step in with a miracle
to bring Jody home and fix everything that has gone awry in her life, but she can't quite muster the faith to believe.

Her father is busy serving as spokesperson for Jody's family. He has the right words for everyone except his daughter. The youth pastor seems to be encroaching on her mom's territory, and Sam's questionable choices have landed her at her former best friend's house for supervision.

Author Sara Zarr has garnered several well-deserved awards for *Once Was Lost*. She documents Sam's conflicting emotions that fluctuate between longing for the certainty of childhood faith and cynicism toward the clichés of church life. A wonderful passage shows Sam visiting the empty church and visualizing herself in the biblical scenes depicted in the stained glass windows.

Neither the pastor nor the congregation seem to have an issue with drinking. An affair between the female youth pastor and the father is implied, and he deceives Sam when she questions him. Three instances of crude slang appear.

Some readers may find a little moral ambiguity here. Others may find the book refreshingly non-judgmental. Relationships drive the story and allow insight into the way a teen-ager thinks and feels.

This novel would be of special interest to those whose parents are involved in pastoral ministry and an engrossing read for young people in general.

*Deborah H. Rabern*

The following fiction titles of interest to high schoolers are reviewed in the adult fiction section:

- Nobody's child  
  - Boyd, Austin
- Deadly disclosures  
  - Cave, Julie
- Pieces of light  
  - Cave, Julie
- Shadowed mind  
  - Cave, Julie
- Paradise Valley  
  - Cramer, W. Dale
- Chosen: the lost diaries of Queen Esther  
  - Garrett, Ginger
- Secrets  
  - Gunn, Robin Jones
- Indelible: a novel  
  - Heitzmann, Kristen
- The gift  
  - Litfin, Bryan M.
- The sword  
  - Litfin, Bryan M.
- Breach of trust  
  - Mills, DiAnn
- Pursuit of justice  
  - Mills, DiAnn
- Sworn to protect  
  - Mills, DiAnn
- The fire in ember  
  - Mills, DiAnn
- The sweetest thing: a novel  
  - Musser, Elizabeth
- Fallen angel  
  - Struecker, Jeff

PAP, 9781578593217, $21.95
500 viii, 679 p.: ill. ; 24 cm.
HS (Adult) Rating: 5

The Handy Science Answer Book, by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, updates the 2003 edition. It is part of a series answering basic questions on various subjects. Like the others, The Handy Science Answer Book is geared toward the general audience.

Pure science is the “knowledge of the natural world” (p.1), while technology is considered “applied science.” Arranged by subject, The Handy Science Answer Book covers physics and chemistry, astronomy and space, earth, climate and weather, minerals, energy, environment, biology, plant world, animal world, human body, and health and medicine.

Using a question and answer format, the book provides a quick refresher in several areas, as well as an introduction to the key concepts in each of these areas. Along with the 2,000 questions and the one or two paragraph answers, the text is interspersed with facts in sidebars, photos, graphs, and illustrations. An index is also included.

One does not need to read the book from front to back. In fact, it is designed to allow the reader to flip to the section of interest, finding the answer they need. It can also be used to supplement traditional texts by providing a quick review on a topic, as is the case with the other books in this series.

The book has significant value to the general reader who is interested in finding out more about what was the first computer game, how do fleas jump so far, to what is the average weight of a human brain. It is a user-friendly guide explaining scientific concepts in plain English.

Recommended for high school and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer


LIB, 9780766032705, $23.95
940.53 128 p.: ill. (some col.), col. map ; 25 cm.
HS (Adult) Rating: 5

Linda Jacobs Altman specializes in writing books about history and social issues for teens. This book by Altman discusses teens on the run during the Holocaust in Europe.

Escape - Teens on the Run uses primary sources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to share the ways teens and children escaped the Nazis, found places of refuge in Europe, and fought back as part of the resistance. One chapter tells of an eleven-year-old girl who faced execution several times but managed to escape, although the rest of her family did not.

Another chapter tells of their experience with Kristallnacht and having no country willing to accept the fleeing Jews. Many would flee one country only to find their “new” country was...
soon invaded by the Nazis, and their lives were in danger again. Families were split up with little time for goodbyes. Jews would find sanctuary only to face a new challenge: learning to build new lives in an unknown land.

Altman’s book presents seven chapters telling the stories of teens and children. Some stories were familiar with fathers being sent to prison while families fled the country. But others are unfamiliar, like the Japanese ambassador to Lithuania who issued thousands of visas for Jews to immigrate to Japan, and the Kinder-transport in which two hundred Jewish orphans went to England. Still other stories told of the valiant effort to fight back in big and little ways.

The poignant black-and-white photos enhance the stories. A timeline, chapter notes referencing the primary sources, a glossary, a bibliography for further reading, Internet addresses, and an index complete the book.

Recommended for school and public libraries.

Carol Gehringer

The following titles of interest to high schoolers are reviewed in the adult nonfiction section:

150. The handy psychology answer book
220.9 The whole Bible story
231.7 Should Christians embrace evolution? : biblical and scientific responses
248.88 The Christian's career journey : finding the job God designed for you
261.8 The global-warming deception
331.702 Occupational outlook handbook
530. The handy physics answer book
642.4 The reluctant entertainer : every woman's guide to simple and gracious hospitality

PAP, 9780310328193, $14.99
Fic 332 p.; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 4

Austin Boyd poses an interesting bioethics quandary in his novel Nobody's Child—a quandary that will likely be featured more frequently in our news sources and our court systems’ legal battles. What happens when a young woman becomes an egg donor for women wanting to give birth through in vitro fertilization? Does she have any legal claim to the baby conceived with her genetic material? What about the biological sperm-donor father? And what does that mean for the birth mother?

These questions do not have easy answers, as Laura Ann, an egg donor, discovers. After the death of her father she desperately tries to hold on to her family farm single-handedly. She turns to egg donation as a way to raise money to cover her mortgage payments. But when the birth mother of “Laura Ann’s” baby shows up on her doorstep, the complications begin. What seemed like a relatively easy way to earn money becomes something with consequences farther-reaching than Laura Ann anticipated.

Nobody's Child is a well-written cautionary tale. Boyd’s main character is especially realistic. Her emotions and thought processes are rendered with sensitivity, and she becomes a sympathetic character caught in a tangle that she didn’t really realize she was stepping into. Boyd uses Laura Anne’s experiences to educate his readers about the process of egg donation, and the little-known physical dangers it poses to the donor.

Although the outcome of the legal challenge is solved satisfactorily in the novel, this is only because extenuating circumstances surrounding various characters make the judicial ruling fairly clear. In real-life cases, one can see an almost impossible catch-22 arising—a danger that Boyd is eager for his readers to consider.

Sherri Beeler


PAP, 9781416556336, $14.99
Fic 316 p.; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 3

The Black Madonna is a sequel to Gold of Kings, and follows the crisscrossing paths of antiquarian Storm Syrrell, her friend Emily of Homeland Security, and Harry the intrepid treasure hunter.

The recession has hit the arts and treasures business hard. Storm’s company is saved by an infusion of cash from a mysterious buyer who sends her pell-mell across Britain and Europe to bid outrageous amounts on selected items. He has unlimited funds and a want list of fabled relics rumored to have supernatural powers.

Raphael Danton, the intermediary between Storm and her customer, is a pilot who organizes Storm’s international travels, transfers funds, and provokes her romantic interest. Complications arise when government agents begin tracking Storm’s movements to identify her client. Someone wants her out of the bidding or dead.
Meanwhile, a bomb explodes, injuring Harry. He escapes from Palestinian authorities into Jordan hot on the trail of a forged icon, the Black Madonna.

Davis Bunn’s dialog and action sequences are written with panache, and the flavor of foreign locales is vivid with detail. The plot could adapt well as a screenplay with some simplification.

However, the storyline is uneven and confusing in places. A major suspension of disbelief is required for the discriminating reader. Characters appear with dizzying rapidity, and apparently trust each other on sight. Relationships don’t evolve much. The romance between Storm and Raphael happens without enough prelude—too much too soon. More transition would be helpful.

All of the elements for a great thriller are here, but they don’t come together with either the cohesiveness or intensity prevalent in some of Bunn’s other novels. This title feels a bit like a collaborative effort although no one is listed. This book may not be a disappointment for diehard fans. It’s a decent read, but not Bunn’s best.

Deborah H. Rabern


PAP, 9780890515846, $9.99
Fic 288 p.; 22 cm.


Shadowed mind / Julie Cave. (Dinah Harris mystery ; 2) Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 2010. LCCN 2010936940.

PAP, 9780890515907, $9.99
Fic 301 p.; ill.; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 5

Julie Cave presents a suspenseful trilogy featuring FBI agent Dinah Harris who tries to find answers even as she struggles with her own depression and alcoholism following the death of her husband and son. From the disappearance of a high-ranking government official, to the world of neo-eugenics, to a serial bomber in Washington, D.C., Dinah works on the mystery and comes to terms with her own past and her future.

In Deadly Disclosures, FBI agent Dinah Harris works to find the answers to the mysterious disappearance of Thomas Whitfield, Secretary of the Smithsonian. When his body is found and others close to him start dying as well, a frightening conspiracy is uncovered, connected to Whitfield’s recent conversion to Christianity and the hostility in financially endowed academia towards believers.

No longer an FBI agent, Dinah begins her new career as a private consultant, in The Shadowed Mind. She uncovers a connection between the world of neo-eugenics and a serial killer deciding whose life has value to society and killing those who do not. Dinah must come to terms with her past before she becomes the next victim on the killer’s list.

Pieces of Light, the thrilling conclusion to this series, finds Dinah hunting down a serial bomber who is on a mission to rid Washington,
D.C., of religious buildings and icons. When it becomes clear that the bomber is angry at God and sees himself as a type of avenging angel dispensing justice, Dinah focuses on the killer’s humanistic motives of rage and revenge to solve the mystery.

Cave does an excellent job in giving the reader realistic suspense that keeps them guessing, believable characters, and a tightly woven plot, while at the same time delivering a biblical worldview perspective to current events. Kidnappings, political crimes, suspense, murder, political dramas, scandals, and more—things we see in our headlines—become an integral part of this series. This series is well-written and theologically sound as it deals with moral issues of our day.

Highly recommended for public libraries.

*Carol Gehringer*

**Paradise Valley / Dale Cramer. (The daughters of Caleb Bender ; 1)**

Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2011. LCCN 2010036780.

PAP, 9780764208286, $14.99

Fic 359 p.; 22 cm.

Adult (HS) Rating: 5

In *Paradise Valley*, police descend on a quiet Amish community and jail the fathers for not sending their children to public school. The state of Ohio doesn’t recognize religious objections in 1922. While the fathers are still in jail, deputies arrive to take the children to the county children’s home.

Caleb Bender refuses to allow his children’s faith to be tainted by worldly values. Thus begins the quest for a place where the family can be free from interference by the legal system. Paradise Valley in the wilds of untamed Mexico seems like the place to establish a new settlement. Although other families talk of leaving as well, only the Benders have the courage to face a radical change of environment—alone, if necessary.

Despite the hardships and language barrier, sisters Emma, Rachel, and Miriam adjust and even thrive in the new surroundings. However, Rachel’s budding romance with Jake Weaver seems doomed by the separation. The hard work, danger from roving bandits, and isolation does little to soothe her heartache.

Author Dale Cramer’s book is chock full of the details of homesteading and making a new life in foreign territory. He brings the time period alive with the challenges and adventures these Amish believers face with faith and fortitude.

His characters seem like real people with foibles and failures. He tells the story from Rachel’s viewpoint and never strikes a wrong note. Through her eyes, we experience solidarity with the Bender family.

Mr. Cramer takes an obscure event from his own family history to fashion a fascinating novel that is as strong and delicate as wrought iron scrollwork. You don’t have to be a fan of Amish fiction to fall in love with *Paradise Valley*. If you’ve never read a book by Dale Cramer, start now.

*Deborah H. Rabern*

**Chosen : the lost diaries of Queen Esther / Ginger Garrett. (Lost loves of the Bible ; 1)**

Originally published by NavPress, this reissue of Ginger Garrett’s *Chosen: the Lost Dairies of Queen Esther* is based on the biblical account of Queen Esther of Persia. An orphaned Jew living in exile with her people, Esther is ripped from the loving home of her guardian, Mordecai, to become a member of King Xerxes’ harem. There she endures rigorous daily beauty treatments to make her so pleasing to the king that he will choose her from all of the women of the harem to become his queen. Esther, however, mourns the loss of her first love, Cyrus, whom she had hoped to marry. Now her only friend is her diary. Esther struggles with why the Lord has let this happen to her but comes to accept her situation and trusts the future to God. Later, when she has indeed become Xerxes’ queen, she sees the fulfillment of God’s plan when she is instrumental in sparing the chosen people from genocide. Esther is portrayed as a faithful daughter of Israel and a quick-witted young woman who tells Xerxes that he must give her his heart before she will accept his advances, thus procuring her the crown. Esther’s faith and courage enable her to survive the cutthroat competition in the harem and, once she is queen, to be willing to sacrifice her life for her people. Garrett’s descriptive prose is almost lyrical at times and easily draws the reader into the exotic sights, sounds, and scents of Xerxes’ harem and palace, both places of great beauty but also of much suffering and intrigue.

Several brief fictional commentaries, which the author uses to make the story of Esther’s heroism relevant to modern readers, have been appended. When originally published, this title was named one of the top five novels of 2006 by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and received a Reader’s Choice Award from *Romantic Times Magazine*. More recently it was a finalist for the 2011 Christy Award.


In *Secrets*, twenty-five year old Jessica Morgan is hiding a secret that has caused her to create a brand new life: new job, new identity, and new name. Her plan to lie low as a high school English teacher in a small Oregon town is hindered when she is involved in a car accident just before her arrival. She is rescued by Kyle Buchanan, a kind and caring firefighter who soon makes it clear that he would like to be more than friends. Jessica faces new and old struggles as she tries to make a place for herself. Jessica’s principal, Charlotte, is jealous of Jessica’s growing relationship with Kyle and is determined to discover Jessica’s secrets. Jessica develops a friendship with her colleague Terri and is amazed by the peace that faith brings to both Terri and Kyle. But Jessica fears allowing anyone too close as she keeps her past carefully silenced. Jessica must decide if she will allow the secrets of her past to
Recently republished, *Secrets* is Robin Jones Gunn's first novel written for adults. First of eight books in the Glennbrooke series, this contemporary fiction story is set in the fictional Glennbrooke, Oregon, an idyllic small town where home and community have true meaning. The characters are well drawn although at certain points the plot seems to be underdeveloped. Kyle and Terri's faith is well represented by their actions and lives. Kyle's own past has prevented him from showing interest in anyone until Jessica comes to town. Jessica is a likable character for whom one cannot help but root as she struggles to come to terms with her past and find the strength to allow others to discover the real her. Overall, *Secrets* is a sweet and satisfying romance.

*Elissa Rizzo*

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**Indelible : a novel / Kristen Heitzmann.**


PAP, 9781400073108, $13.99

Once again Kristen Heitzmann has written a gripping suspense novel filled with complex and intriguing characters. Readers of her newest novel, *Indelible*, will want to read *Indivisible* first, as this second book in the series is full of references to previous characters, events, and relationships that will not make sense without the necessary background.

*Indelible* introduces us to Trevor, who rescues Natalie's young nephew from the jaws of a mountain lion. Natalie, a sculptor, has an incredible gifting that is both a blessing and a curse. Born with an eidetic memory, Natalie sees people's faces so strongly that not only does she see and feel the intensity of a person's emotions with an almost supernatural insight, but the image remains so imbedded in her memory that it actually blocks her real vision until she is able to “release” it into clay.

Trevor and Natalie's lives become more entwined as Trevor assists her in the care of her young nephew, and as Trevor comes under attack from an ominous source who begins sending him disturbing photos of actual children in extremely dangerous situations. When Trevor's own loved ones are targeted, Natalie helps him to come to terms with who he is as a rescuer of people, and helps him take tentative steps toward the God he once knew and loved.

Heitzmann's novel describes a town of misfits, each with odd quirks that set them apart, such as Natalie with her eidetic memory, a painter who is blind, a man who longs to be loved but can't bear to be touched, and so on. Along with mystery and suspense, part of the fascination of Heitzmann's novel comes in realizing that all of us are “crippled” in some way, yet God can make us whole, despite our weakness.

*Sherri Beeler*
Three sisters learn more about each other and themselves than ever before in one weekend spent dividing up their deceased grandmother’s belongings in The Fine Art of Insincerity. When Ginger learns that Gran’s house sold, she arranges a time with her sisters Penny and Rosemary to empty and clean it. Ginger, the oldest sister, still feels responsible for her younger sisters. Penny, the middle child, searches for fulfillment, and is eager to get out from under the thumb of her judgmental older sister. Rosemary, the youngest, struggles under a weight of guilt, and is making a decision that will forever impact the lives of the sisters. Three days together brings healing that they didn’t know they needed.

Angela Hunt’s tight writing moves this character driven book quickly. The first person point-of-view of each sister adds tension between the them, and a hint of mystery propels the book forward. The setting, mostly grandmother’s house on St. Simon’s Island, acts as an additional leg of the story, because just being in the home, going through grandmother’s things and being together, reignites buried memories. Hunt deals with some very sensitive issues in this book—marital unfaithfulness, discontent, and depression—which she handles with compassion. She deftly shows how broken relationships can be made whole again when people are willing to work through their issues honestly. The theme can be summed up as it was by one of the sisters, “...maybe it’s time for me to open my heart and be painfully honest with others.” p. 299

Kristina Wolcott


PAP, 9780310324546, $14.99

Fic 377 p.; 22 cm.

Adult Rating: 4

As Hostage in Havana opens up, Alexandra LaDuca has just recovered from a serious bullet wound and the death of her fiancé (adventures that can be read in her previous series, The Russian Trilogy). Now relocated, she’s trying to start life anew and devote all her time to her job. But when Paul Guarneri wants to cash in on a favor he did her months ago, she first balks; then slips illegally into Cuba to recover a large amount of hidden money. This isn’t her idea of re-payment. But when an assassin has her in his cross-hairs, the powers above think it’s a good idea to go to Cuba and lay low for a time. As if entering Cuba illegally isn’t enough, they give her an extra job—bring back an expatriate American who has valuable information and wants to return to America. Given her to-do list, Alex creates a mental list of her own; namely, what’s at stake for her. The only thing worse than losing her freedom is losing her life.

Noel Hynd brings to life a wonderful cast of believable characters in the first book of her new series, The Cuban Trilogy. Fans of Alex from The Russian Trilogy will be excited to see this spunky woman take on another seemingly insurmountable adventure. Paul Guarneri, while on the shady side of life, matches well with her—they made a tough team, both determined and focused on their mission. The writing is engaging, though occasional
sentences are choppy or don’t flow. It takes a little while to really get “into” the story, but once the action begins, the book becomes hard to put down. With two more books to follow in this series, Alex’s fans will be eager to find out what other adventures she will get mixed up with in Cuba.

Katie McCurdy


PAP, 9781433509254, $15.99
Fic 412 p.: map; 23 cm.


PAP, 9781433525162, $15.99
Fic 411 p.: map; 23 cm.

Adult (HS) Rating: 4

First time novelist, Bryan Litfin, who is also a Moody Bible Institute theologian and scholar, creates a stirring epic fantasy adventure with his Chiveis Trilogy. The first two books in the series, The Sword and The Gift build off the premise question: If a future society had no knowledge of Christianity, and then a Bible were discovered, how would it react? In Litfin’s series, the world as we know it was destroyed by a super virus compounded by nuclear wars. It is now 400 years in the future and the world has adopted a medieval form of society, complete with castles, kings, illiteracy, and an oppressive pagan religion.

In The Sword, Teo and Ana meet and their lives become solidly intertwined as they repeatedly experience dangerous adventures together. When they find themselves in The Beyond, that dangerous land where remnants of the Ancients are still visible, they come across an ornate building and discover a book, which is a Bible. Although only the Old Testament is undamaged, they nevertheless recognize its worth and bring it back to their people. Teo begins translating it and a small group of believers form in their belief of Deu. When Teo and Ana refuse to renounce their belief they are cast out of their village to the frozen wastelands. However, they persevere and their bond of friendship and commitment to one another and to Deu deepens.

Teo and Ana’s story continues in The Gift, the second installment of the trilogy. Teo and Ana become involved with the people of Likuria, who accept them though they come from the other side the The Beyond. Unfortunately, Ana falls into the hedonistic lifestyle of the aristocracy, while Teo is cast off as a soldier, instead of being lauded for his academic abilities. The two drift apart, but Teo is always watching out for Ana, protecting her, as he searches for a copy of the New Testament in this new land.

Litfin’s story, while entertaining and often enlightening is often marred by his stereotypical characters of the noble, rugged, intelligent warrior, and independent, beautiful chaste maiden. Litfin does not back away from the portrayal of evil and there are scenes of violence and sexuality in connection with evil. In terms of strengths, the books are riveting in their detail for fight and flight scenes, exotic cultures, and plot twists. Though the dialogue and character mannerisms tend to be stilted or even too contemporary at times, the overall thesis of these books, the search for knowing and serving the true God, is uplifting.
This is an admirable first novel offering and readers who crave faith-filled action adventure against the backdrop of Medieval times will no doubt want to check out the Chiveis triology.

Pam Webb

Breach of trust / Mills, DiAnn. (Call of duty ; 1) Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2009. LCCN 2008040512.

PAP, 9781414320472, $12.99
Fic 392 p.; 21 cm.


PAP, 9781414320526, $12.99
Fic 373 p.; 21 cm.

Sworn to protect / DiAnn Mills. (Call of duty ; 2) Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2010. LCCN 2009032537.

PAP, 9781414320519, $12.99
Fic 386 p.; 21 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 5

Award-winning author DiAnn Mills presents a contemporary romantic suspense series featuring FBI agents, CIA operatives, and Border Patrol agents fighting for justice, wrestling with their faith, and facing unscrupulous foes.

It is a CIA operative’s worst nightmare. Betrayed by someone she trusts, causing her mission to go wrong in Breach of Trust (Christy Winner, 2010), Paige Rogers is forced to disappear. After seven years of living under a new identity as a small-town librarian, a stranger comes around asking questions and threatening her new life. Her former betrayer, now a rising political figure, is behind it. The CIA asks Paige, a new Christian, to help bring him to justice, despite the fact that he threatens her loved ones and she has been living a lie.

In Pursuit of Justice (Carol award nominee, formerly ACFW, 2011), Border Patrol agent Danika Morales tries to protect the Texas border while uncovering her husband’s murderer from a few years earlier. Both activities put her life in danger as she discovers a traitor among the Border Patrol agents. She encounters drug cartels, illegal aliens, and threats as she uncovers clues pointing to a bigger conspiracy than just her husband’s murder.

FBI agent Bella Jordan is assigned to a case that is deeply connected to the past she has been running from for over fourteen years in Sworn to Protect (Christy winner, 2011). Three people have been recently killed in connection with the legendary Spider Rock treasure. Her father and a friend of hers were obsessive about the treasure years ago. When clues point to their possible involvement, Bella must courageously face her past, drawing on her skill and instinct to catch the experienced killer.

Mills does a superb job of character and plot development in this faith-filled series. Expect lots of twists and turns as these unpredictable stories unfold. The characters are realistic and likeable, except for the villains.

Each title in the Call of Duty series was nominated for recent book awards. Each book also includes author notes and discussion questions.

Highly recommended for public and high school libraries.

PAP, 9780310293309, $14.99
Fic 340 ; 22 cm.
Adult HS Rating: 4

Dirty and ragged looking, Bert leaves home on the horse she believes her brother has stolen. Wanting to return the horse, she is mistaken for the thief and is about to be hung when Deputy John Timmons arrives. The Fire in Ember is a historic romance set in 1888 Colorado, written by DiAnn Mills.

The deputy arrests Bert and takes her to his ranch to await trial. Bert works alongside John and his brothers until the night Mrs. Timmons gives every one a towel and a bar of soap. As they head toward the river, Bert hangs back. The other boys decide Bert should go in the water first. They grab his arms and pull. "Don't!" Bert screams. "Let me go. I'm a girl!"

John takes Bert to the house and explains the misunderstanding to his mother. The two ladies began working together, cooking, gardening, and doing other women's chores. Growing fond of John's mother, the girl reveals her real name: Ember. She has run away from her family, a father and three brothers, who abused her mentally, physically, and sexually.

When rumors of horse thieves arise among the ranchers, Ember suspects her family. She plans to sneak away from the 5T ranch, hoping this will keep her brothers from stealing the Timmons's livestock. She packs to leave, but night after night, she finds an excuse to stay. She has fallen in love with John Timmons, whom she could never marry because of their social differences.

A Fire in Ember by DiAnn Mills starts slowly, but soon the plot twists—a lack of law enforcement, deceitful individuals, and outlaws—turn it into an exciting page-turner.

Maxine Cambra

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PAP, 9780764208317, $14.99
Fic 397 p. ; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: *5

In The Sweetest Thing, Elizabeth Musser's story of life in Atlanta during the Great Depression is about friendship, jealousy, prejudice, forgiveness, and God's love. It is the story of two girls, opposites in every way, who find friendship, and the families and friends around them.

Anne Perrin Singleton is a spoiled rich girl who goes to an exclusive school and has everything she wants. Mary Dobbs Dillard is the daughter of a poor preacher in Chicago. They meet when Dobbs moves to Atlanta to attend school and live with her aunt and uncle.

They are not friends at first, but when a tragedy befalls the Singleton family, Dobbs befriends Perri and they become fast friends. The other girls' jealousy of Dobbs does not thwart her outspoken and independent personality. She keeps on professing her faith in God in spite of their ridicule. When Perri's family loses everything and they have to adapt to a new lifestyle, fears and prejudices overwhelm them. The friendship...
of these two girls carries them through. Old diaries written by the author’s grandmother from 1928 to 1932 inspired this book. First-person accounts by Perri and Dobbs are told in alternating chapters, an insightful way to get to know the characters and their feelings.

The question, “Does God provide in the midst of difficult circumstances?” is answered as Musser’s outstanding character development enables the reader to come to know each person, with his or her mannerisms and prejudices. As the author describes life in an affluent neighborhood in Atlanta and a poor neighborhood in Chicago, she shows how the Depression affected people, whether rich or poor. There are some startling discoveries as the book progresses and it is impossible to guess the ending. As in other books written by Musser, this one is a winner. The sweetest thing is friendship and love.

Juanita Wier Nobles

PAP, 9780764208508, $14.99
Fic 318 p.; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 4

Amy Gallagher is a frustrated writer who struggles with her inability to become published and her inability to keep her private life tidy, for Amy is all about not having too many loose ends.

Bethany Pierce provides a provocative coming of age novel with Amy Inspired. Even though Amy is about to turn thirty, and has a master’s degree and a decent job as a college writing instructor, she is still trying to figure it out. She feels life, friends, and family are moving on without her. She struggles with her definition of being a Christian and what that involves when it comes to relationships. As Amy deals with her issues, demands, and concerns, the mysterious Eli comes into her life. How far can their friendship go, and should it go farther begins to overtake Amy’s life, as she contemplates turning the big three-oh.

Of late, the past couple of years perhaps, Christian fiction has inched further and further into areas not previously explored. In Amy Inspired readers encounter a character who wrestles with her personal goals, ambitions, and relationships and how her beliefs fit into all of it. In short, Amy’s character reflects the real struggles most people deal with. Amy has her flaws and weaknesses, ranging from contemplating pre-marital sex to attending parties. She struggles with wanting much but not taking the time to prayerfully listen for answers. Gallagher gives readers an insightful look at a character whose struggles imitate real life.

Pam Webb

PAP, 9781433671401, $14.99
Fic xviii, 381 p.; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 5

A seemingly dead Chinese satellite suddenly comes to life and collides with America’s most sophisticated satellite containing secret technology. Eric Moyer and his Special Ops team are called in to locate and destroy the fallen machine before the Chinese steal it. This
takes them into Russian territory, where Captain Masters, son of the vice president of the United States, is held captive by Russian dissidents.

Moyer and his team race to intercept the satellite and rescue Masters, but they receive the shocking news that Moyer’s daughter has been abducted, and that it is likely connected to the team’s mission. Moyer’s struggles to manage his emotions and complete the mission safely, while specialists back home try to locate Gina’s abductors and identify the spy who is leaking information to the Chinese.

*Fallen Angel*, by Major Jeff Struecker and Alton Gansky, is an exciting military suspense novel that revisits characters from their previous novels; however, it can easily be read as a stand-alone. Some of the novel’s characters are Christians and some are not. Those who are rely on their faith to carry them through the hard times, even while they wrestle with the fact that the same hands they use to pull the trigger are the hands they raise in praise to God. The difficult question of God allowing evil to be perpetuated is also raised. No easy answers are given.

The interaction and banter between the Special Ops team members is humorous, serving as a reminder of the tightly-knit nature of a group of men who must implicitly trust each other with their lives. This humor helps balance the intensity of the novel’s action. Readers should be aware that the novel includes brief but chilling and somewhat graphic descriptions of torture, and employs slang and mildly crude language.

*Sherri Beeler*

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**Martha : a novel / Diana Wallis Taylor.**

*Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2011. LCCN 2011004041.*

PAP, 9780800734657, $14.99

Fic 245 p.; 22 cm.

Adult Rating: 3

Martha is infamously known as the busy, efficient, type-A personality who was rebuked by Jesus when she complained that her sister Mary needed to assist her in preparing a meal for Jesus and his disciples. She is also the brother of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead. This eponymous novel, by Diana Wallis Taylor, attempts to flesh out the story of Martha, imagining what her upbringing, life, marital status, and dreams might have been.

Since the death of her mother, and later on her father, Martha has been in charge of running the household for her younger siblings. When news comes of a teacher who heals people and claims to be the Messiah, Martha and her family are intrigued; they host him in their home several times during his travels around the area. Jesus later raises Lazarus from the dead, and things become especially dangerous after Jesus’ own resurrection, when Lazarus becomes a target of the High Council and religious leaders. Mary hastily marries the disciple Thomas, and Lazarus flees to safety in Damascus, leaving Martha to decide how she will care for the family home and lands on her own.

The challenge of writing a story that is already well-known to its readers demands a unique approach, or a more substantive treatment of the material than *Martha* provides. Despite its lack of depth and richness of character development, the novel is full of interesting
facts about the Jewish traditions and times in which Martha lived. Readers will appreciate the attention given to describing the observance of the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, as well as the types of jobs, foods, crops, and marriage traditions typical of the era.

Sherri Beeler


PAP, 9780746208218, $14.99
Fic 360 p.; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 4

Second chances is a prevailing theme in Lisa Wingate’s latest offering, Larkspur Cove. As a recent divorcée, Andrea Henderson and her fourteen-year-old son return to hometown ties to start over; however, Andrea finds this is tough to do since she must contend with living off her parent’s smothering good graces while balancing the demands of her new job and being a single mother of a somewhat rebellious teen.

When her paths cross with Mart McClendon, the local game warden, a tentative working alliance occurs concerning one of Andrea’s cases. Mart, struggling with his own past hurts, is ready to go beyond a professional relationship, yet Andrea is unsure she is ready to confront her feelings towards commitment so soon. As their wounded pasts intersect, Andrea and Mart begin to understand the meaning of redemption.

Lyrical writing, romance, mystery, and a vacillating viewpoint provide an intriguing variation of overcoming past hurts to embrace possibilities of the present. Wingate’s writing often illuminates how everyday people lose and gain their faith due to various circumstances. Although Andrea’s voice is not as distinctive as Mart’s, readers are able to experience both sides of the story through the alternating point of view. The chapter headings add a satisfying dimension to the story, and they become a signpost for the chapter emphasis. Readers familiar with Melody Carlson novels of small town life will appreciate Wingate’s style.

Pam Webb

PAP, 9781578592234, $21.95
150  ix, 502 p.: ill. ; 24 cm.
Adult (HS)  Rating: 4

Dr. Lisa Cohen covers the fundamentals of psychology in *The Handy Psychology Answer Book*. By introducing fun facts with history of psychology, as well as answering questions on how psychology applies to everyday issues, Dr. Cohen delivers a fascinating guide to a general audience.

The first section of the book gives an overview of psychology, while the second half applies psychology to everyday life. The history of psychology, brain and behavior, and psychological development across one’s lifespan are covered in the first half. Findings from the field of neuroscience are presented in the brain and behavior section to aid understanding in how learning takes place.

Over one thousand questions in the second half are answered in one or two paragraphs, making the book easily digestible by the non-academic reader. One does not need to read the book in order from front to back. In fact, it is designed to allow the reader to flip to the section of interest, finding the answer they need. Some topics do not lend themselves to brief answers, and the reader is encouraged to dig deeper. A glossary, index, and extensive bibliography are included. Numerous tables, graphs, and sidebars enhance the text.

Cohen claims “the entertainment value of popular psychology has overtaken the appreciation of serious science “ (p.vii). She wrote this book to show a middle ground between the serious academics of psychology while making it available to the general public. Although intended for the general reader, it can be used to supplement traditional texts by providing a quick review on a topic, as is the case with the other books in this series.

*The Handy Psychology Answer Book* is recommended for high school libraries and public library collections.

Carol R. Gehringer


HBB, 9780801013478, $24.99
220.5 283 p.: ill. (some col.) ; 24 cm.
Adult Rating: 5

With 2011 marking the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, it is clearly expected a tribute would be forthcoming, and Donald Brake and Sally Beach do so with *A Visual History of the King James Bible*. This attractive and informative account of how the KJB came into existence and its subsequent impact on the world is definitely a special commemoration to this all-important translation of the Bible. Brake’s passion and knowledge as a Bible scholar and collector resonate throughout the book and his sidebars of personal anecdotes offset the almost overwhelming voluminous textual detail, creating a balanced reference which blends warmth and expertise. The inclusions and variety of the many photographs, drawings, verse comparative
charts, appendices, and indexes create a resource and reference serious Bible scholars will no doubt want to add to their bookshelf offerings. One impression after reading this book is having experienced an armchair course in Bible history, complete with an appealing slide show. Readers wanting to know the background of one of the most influential and inspiring Bible translations will be more than satisfied with this timely edition.

As a side note, it is encouraged for readers to check out KJB: The Book That Changed the World, a documentary with John Rhys-Davies as the host, narrator, and guide. This docudrama available on DVD from Lions Gate, gives more illumination to the King James Bible history and proves to be a worthy complement to Brake and Beach’s book.

Pam Webb


PAP, 9780764208294, $12.99
220.9 300 p. : maps ; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 4

Dr. William H. Marty, a professor of Bible at Moody Bible Institute, has taken on the challenge of presenting the Bible as a narrative in his The Whole Bible Story in everyday language, and for the most part, succeeds. He focuses on the main details, forgoing the laws, genealogies, prophecies, and other fine points that can often detract from the mesmerizing stories contained within the Bible. Each of the familiar accounts such as, Exodus, Noah, Esther, Daniel, and the birth and ministry of Jesus are retold with both simplicity and depth. Despite its slim presentation of three hundred pages, Marty manages to recount many of the more important Bible events and stories; however, he does not actually live up to the subtitle of “everything that happens in the Bible.” He breaks down the retellings in plain English to the point stories are reminiscent of Cliff Notes summaries, leaving a feeling of incompletion. The book’s format is chronological beginning with Genesis and moves through the Old Testament up through Nehemiah, and from there it goes to the birth of Jesus, concluding with Acts, allowing a brief summarization of the epistles and Revelation. A consideration as a Bible companion or teaching resource, this might be a disappointment for those who want to study the Bible more thoroughly. For those interested in a quick refresher or retelling to some of the more popular or widely known accounts, this is an inexpensive resource to consider.

Pam Webb


HBB, 9780310327547, $18.99
231.3 236 p. ; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 5

Best-selling author Charles R. Swindoll expounds on the Holy Spirit in Embraced by the Spirit. The opening chapters bring the person of the Holy Spirit to light, who He is and His personal significance to the believer. The work
and power of the Holy Spirit are cited with accompanying scriptural references.

About a quarter of the way through the book, Dr. Swindoll teaches the process of receiving forgiveness for sin and embarking on a new life in Christ. This passage describes the blood of Christ as “the greatest detergent in the history of time.” (p. 94)

He debunks the notion that people are victims of sin, and provides important insights into the grace available through Jesus. He gives specific ways to know when you are led by the Spirit and quantifies the specifics of being filled with the Spirit.

Other chapters explain why we need the Spirit, how the Spirit keeps us free from sin, and explore the ramifications of healing as a function of the Holy Spirit. He discusses the five laws of suffering, God’s sovereignty, as well as the role of medical intervention interpreted in light of scripture.

Dr. Swindoll has written a classic that will draw established Christians and seekers alike into a more intimate relationship with the often-misunderstood third member of the Trinity. He provides practical real-life parallels to scripture that bring clarity. The chapter on “unidentified inner promptings” offers validation to a phenomenon that many experts are loath to address.

A complete bibliography concludes the book, along with a study guide with suggested Bible readings and questions to guide the reader to deeper investigation. Those who follow through are likely to discover a new dimension of spiritual connection. This volume won’t disappoint those who are familiar with Dr. Swindoll’s work. It’s a worthy addition to any library.

Deborah H. Rabern


PAP, 9781596382305, $14.99
231.7 220 p.: ill.; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 4

Is Darwinian evolution compatible with the Christian faith? Can it enhance the integrity of an orthodox biblical theology? Is it even good science? Such questions are brought to the forefront in Should Christians Embrace Evolution? edited by British geneticist Norman C. Nevin. This timely volume brings together scientific and theological contributions from a broad range of well-qualified Christian voices to address the crucial issue of the proper relation between the Christian faith and Darwinian evolutionary theory.

Following a foreword by theologian Wayne Grudem and a stage-setting preface, the discussion proceeds from historical orientation to the origins issue through an analysis of major theological challenges involved in the acceptance of Darwinian evolution. Individual chapters discuss such theological lynchpins as the language and literary criticism of Genesis, the historicity of Adam and Eve, the historicity of the fall and the entry of death into the world, the nature and redemption of man, and the nature and character of God. Scientific topics include the attributes of a science suitable for creatures fashioned in the image of God and
the interpretation of scientific evidence. A conclusion reiterates the basic contours of the origins controversy among Christians and expresses a conviction against the integration of Darwinian thought with Christian faith.

Brief biographic sketches introduce the contributors and contextualize the content of their respective portions of the overall work. Subheadings clarify the flow of each chapter’s argument, and footnotes highlight the relevant literature and provide supplementary insight. The most technical chapters contain numerous figures to illustrate the more complex information they present.

Mature adults, particularly those interested in the integration of faith and science or involved in apologetics ministry, will find this book an illuminating introduction to the far-reaching implications of Darwinian evolution for Christian faith. Young adult readers seeking a strong foundation in the faith will appreciate the clear presentation.

Bradley A. Poteat


Susan Whitcomb writes a practical and biblically-based resource for anyone on a career journey. The Christian’s Career Journey provides the reader with information needed to conduct an effective job search, whether it is for a new job, a career change, or to evaluate one’s calling for the marketplace or ministry.

The book begins with a three-page “About This Book” section, similar to an annotated table of contents. This section mentions the companion website that contains downloadable forms and additional resources. Whitcomb’s premise is “God created you to play a significant role in this world. He gifted you with a combination of talents and experiences like no other” (p. x).

The first part of this book establishes the basics for a successful career, including God’s key purposes for work, responding to God’s call, and how to make the right career decision. The second part covers planning your campaign and creating your career marketing documents. Executing your job search and avoiding problems during the interview or salary negotiations are discussed in the final part of the book.

All the chapters have sidebars with interesting tips and tidbits, such as coaching questions, quick tips for the job search, employer’s pet peeves about resumes, and more. Each chapter ends with a “pocket prayer” to help the reader talk to God about their career transition. A listing of Christian career and leadership coaches is found in the appendix. An index is also included in the back matter, and dozens of scriptures that relate to one’s career journey are sprinkled throughout the book.

This title is highly recommended for guidance counselors, high school libraries, and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer

PAP, 9781400074433, $14.99
261.8 217 p.; 23 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 4

In The Global-Warming Deception, Bible prophecy expert Grant R. Jeffrey weighs in on the fiercely debated issue of anthropogenic, or man-made, global warming (AGW). Using publicly accessible internet and print sources, he offers a detailed interpretation of what he views as the hidden agenda of well-positioned political elites to bring about a global socialist government through exploitation of the contemporary AGW movement. According to Jeffrey, pervasive propaganda and flawed or false science are now the weapons of choice against the free world, given the apparent worldwide failure of socialist and communist regimes to garner continued support and submission through more direct political means.

Following a discussion of the general plan of global government, Jeffrey analyzes the AGW movement in detail. Individual chapters deal with putative errors and misstatements in pro-AGW science and the movement’s major official documents, former US Vice President Al Gore’s AGW advocacy, and the widely publicized Climategate controversy involving the alleged manipulation of climate science data. Jeffrey then outlines in basic terms the science behind the rejection of AGW and interprets what he considers the true meaning of the international climate treaties and regulations. He ultimately extends his argument into the realm of Bible prophecy, exploring the importance of global religion to the interests and activities of those promoting global government, which he believes will be critical to end times events.

The text is well organized with section headings and illustrated by occasional graphs and tables. Extensive endnotes provide detailed citations and further discussion. A selected bibliography of recently published works is included to prompt further exploration into the global-warming controversy.

Adults and more mature young adults will find this eye-opening book a biblically informed, albeit controversial, interpretation of contemporary issues and events and their relation to Bible prophecy. Students will appreciate the popular introduction to important relevant scientific information and reference material.

Bradley A. Poteat


PAP, 9780830835362, $15
268.6 166 p.; 21 cm.
Adult Rating: 5

Joshua Choonmin Kang presents a convincing devotional for memorizing scripture in Scripture by Heart. He strongly encourages the need to memorize the Bible, presenting devotional readings interspersed with practices which help press home the importance of storing God’s word for daily nourishment. Kang’s teachings come from his
own training and experiences and his additional personal anecdotes help reinforce his teachings.

Kang's short and powerful book is not a quick course on how to memorize scripture; it is instead, an inspiring instructional expounding upon the reasons for the daily renewal and transformation which come from intimately knowing God's word. Kang has the ability to present his insights in a friendly and convincing way, recognizing memorization is not easy, believing it is an ongoing process.

Each short chapter begins with a selected scripture which introduces the chapter's topic. The book ends with an appendix of Kang's favorite passages for memorization. An inspiring resource, one which would be beneficial for individual and school instruction.

Pam Webb

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PAP, 9781593577377, $19.95

331.702 xlvi, 770 p. : ill. ; 28 cm.

Adult HS Rating: 5

“Glimpse the future to plan your career,” begins the introduction to this bi-annual reference guide. The Occupational Outlook Handbook, developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, is recognized as a valuable source in providing information for those seeking to make decisions about present and or future careers.

The OOH, revised every two years, covers such material as work conditions, training and education needs, wages, work environment and expectations, along with projections for hiring in the selected field. Educators, students, counselors, librarians, and those researching career decisions will undoubtedly want to seek out this vital resource.

The OOH is user friendly in its approach. Upfront in the table of contents page is a special features section highlighting attention to such notables as “the Personality-Career Quiz,” projection overviews, and how to best use the handbook. Each career section is clearly marked and once a section is located, the listing is broken down into significant points, nature of the work, training required, projection data, and then moves onto employment and job outlook, earnings and related occupations. Sources for additional resources are also provided. The index lists jobs alphabetically. Overall, this is an important resource and reference for both school and public libraries.

Pam Webb

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HBB, 9780307729293, $14.99

394.2 312 p. ; 20 cm.

Adult Rating: 4

Everything Christmas presents favorite Christmas stories, holiday recipes, the history of Christmas traditions, ideas for gift giving, seasonal quotations, Christmas carols, and inspirational poems together in a single volume. It is a well-rounded collection of
Christmas cheer.

Edited by David Bordon and Tom Winters, *Everything Christmas* includes the history behind traditions such as the nativity set and Christmas cards, and Christmas stories like “Why the Chimes Rang” and “Christmas Every Day.” The editors also include the words and history of Christmas songs such as “O Little Town of Bethlehem” and “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” as well as recipes for Christmas wassail, peanut brittle, and Christmas snowballs.

There are Christmas quotations by Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Andy Rooney; poems by Martin Luther and E. E. Cummings; Christmas memories by Cheri Fuller, King George V, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge; and finally, gift ideas for family members, romantics, grandparents, and others. Everything Christmas describes Christmas dinner in Argentina, Bulgaria, Denmark, England, France, Greece, Greece, Italy, Jamaica, Poland, Portugal, and Puerto Rico.

The book is divided into chapters that can be used as an Advent calendar, counting down the days until Christmas. A topical index and a list of notes is included in the back helps the reader locate their favorite stories, traditions, or recipes. The chapters are alternately printed on green and red paper. Filled with lots of factual information, the book is appealing in its presentation. However, the addition of photos or illustrations would enhance this text-dense book.

The book will delight readers, especially during the Advent and Christmas season. The size of *Everything Christmas* makes this book a perfect gift book for the holiday season.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

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PAP, 9780802486745, $12.99
394.2 252 p.; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 5

Bill and Penny Thrasher share their insights in *Putting God Back in the Holidays* on how to celebrate fifteen holidays with spiritual emphasis. This resource helps families think more biblically throughout the year.

The Thrashers’ book covers New Years, birthdays, Good Friday and Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Martin Luther King, Valentines Day, Presidents’ Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Arbor Day, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, Memorial Day / Veteran’s Day / 4th of July, Labor Day, and Halloween. In addition to these, the book includes spiritual birthdays and blessing parties. The book states “Holidays are days set apart to celebrate religious or historical events” (p.9).

The authors note holidays are often fatiguing—mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. For example, Christmas, considered a season of joy, is the time of year when suicides and depression are at their highest. This is most likely because of unfulfilled dreams and expectations.

The authors do not want to add more pressure
to families; instead they offer practical help and suggestions to creating more spiritual emphasis in our next holiday celebration. With the practical helps offered here, families can plan and personalize the next holiday celebration, and perhaps eliminate some of the things that are adding fatigue and stress.

This book is a valuable resource for families, filled with practical ideas in celebrating the milestones of our days. The purpose of their books is to “reflect the love of Christ to family and friends” (p.10) as families celebrate the holidays throughout the year.

Recommended for public libraries, church libraries, and families.

Carol R. Gehringer


Paul Zitzewitz, a well-respected physics educator, updates the 1998 edition of The Handy Physics Answer Book. The book is part of a series giving answers to basic questions on various subjects. Like the others, The Handy Physics Answer Book is geared toward the general audience but still of value to the scholar.

Physics studies the “structure of the natural world” (p.1). Therefore knowledge of physics is essential in understanding technology and the natural world. Arranged by subject, The Handy Physics Answer Book covers motion, momentum and energy, statics, fluids, thermal physics, waves, sound, light, electricity, and magnetism.

Using a question and answer format, the book is a quick overview or a refresher on several areas. Along with eight hundred questions with one or two paragraph answers, the text is interspersed with facts in sidebars, graphs, and illustrations. An extensive bibliography, a glossary, and index are also included.

A reader does not need to read the book in order from front to back. In fact, it is designed to allow the reader to flip to the section of interest, finding the answer they need. It can also be used to supplement traditional texts by providing a quick review on a topic, as is the case with the other books in this series.

This book has value to the general reader who is interested in finding out more about how radar guns work or whether lightning strikes in the same place twice or similar questions, as well as the student reviewing elementary theory. It is a guide to scientific theories and discoveries from everyday life applications to explorations in subatomic physics.

Recommended for high school and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer

Popular blog author Sandy Coughlin offers “mouthwatering recipes, practical advice, heartfelt encouragement, and thrifty tips” in her book, *The Reluctant Entertainer*. She offers a simple approach to help free women from the anxiety or fear that hinders them from showing hospitality to others.

Drawing from her experience as a frequent hostess, Coughlin offers steps to transform women from a reluctant to confident hostess. She claims many of us are so paralyzed by trying to be the perfect hostess that we stop being hospitable to others. Her encouragement and advice is economical, practical, and easily replicable.

She addresses the “joy busters” and presents the “ten commandments of hospitality” (which include “avoid perfectionism” and “demonstrate thriftiness”). She shares personal stories from her childhood as well as her family as she uses her successes and failures to demonstrate her tips. Coughlin tells us in her book, *Reluctant Entertainer*, that “best way to impress others” is to give them “genuine care and authenticity” -- that is the most important thing we can serve our guests.

Each chapter is filled with colorful photos, recipes, anecdotes, and spiritual principles. A recipe index (for recipes within the chapters as well as the index), acknowledgements, and a bibliography follow the two appendices containing pantry talk (i.e., how to organize and stock your pantry) and more recipes. The *Reluctant Entertainer* would make a welcome gift to any new bride, single adult, or anyone who wants to become a gracious hostess.

Highly recommended for public libraries and high school libraries.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

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**The 5 love languages : the secret to love that lasts / Gary Chapman. Chicago: Northfield, 2010, c2009. LCCN 2009037112.**

PAP, 9780802473158, $14.99
646.7 201 p.; 23 cm.
Adult Rating: “5”

In his book, *The Five Love Languages: the Secrets to Love that Lasts*, author, pastor, and counselor, Dr. Gary Chapman, explains that the secret to maintaining a lasting and loved filled marriage is for both spouses to understand and learn to speak each other's love language.

Dr. Chapman describes each person's love language as falling into one of five categories: “words of affirmation” (positive and uplifting speech), quality time (time spent together with a focus on each other), gifts (of all kinds), acts of service (serving in a way that is meaningful to your spouse) and physical touch (of all types). Within each of these five categories there exist varying “dialects” so that even spouses who innately speak the same love language will often need to work on communicating their love. We naturally show love for our spouse while speaking our own love language. However, few husbands and wives share the same love language and consequently may not understand or recognize the love expressed from their spouse.

Dr. Chapman has developed definitions for each love language including clear descriptions with examples from his over 30 years as a marriage counselor and pastor.
Chapman often reminds the reader that “love is a choice” and each person’s need is unique. Loving your spouse means taking the time to learn what matters most to the other person. Although it can be difficult to learn to speak a new love language, the lasting positive results upon one’s marriage are well worth the effort.

Exploratory questions are included at the end of each section to help the reader better understand each language in the context of their own marriage. The book also assists readers in identifying their own love language and that of their spouse. This informative book is an excellent resource for married couples as well as for small group discussions.

Elissa Rizzo


PAP, 9780801071652, $12.99
823 249 p.; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 5

For more than fifteen years, Devin Brown has been writing, teaching, lecturing, and helping readers understand the writings of C.S. Lewis. In his newest book, Inside the Voyage of the Dawn Treader: A Guide to Exploring the Journey Beyond Narnia, Brown takes readers inside the magic of Narnia to reveal the true spiritual depth of Lewis’ writings.

Brown takes each aspect and/or theme of The Voyage of the Dawn Treader and elaborates on what Lewis is teaching readers through his stories. The reader is truly transported into the characters of the book to see how all human beings have the capacity to learn and grow from various circumstances.

Throughout the book, Brown points to the fact that human beings grow and mature more through hard circumstances than through pleasant ones. Instead of only viewing the adventures of Narnia as difficulties to overcome, Brown shows how they are truly rare opportunities for growth—especially spiritual growth. The reader also learns about Lewis’ childhood and conversion experience and how both of those fit into the land of Narnia. Excerpts from other Lewis writings are used often as well and add to a purer understanding of the story.

Each chapter ends with discussion questions to help readers contemplate how they can personalize their own life adventures. Brown’s guide is a must read for all lovers of Narnia.

Elaine Price

Published by Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association, *Annotated Book Lists for Every Teen Reader* is a resource for every librarian who works with teens and young adults in a public setting. *Annotated Book Lists* covers 1,100 titles published between 2005 and 2010. The book, in four sections, has an integrated authors, titles, subjects, and series index.

The first three sections contain lists covering different readers, formats, themes and settings. “The Right Title for the Right Reader” ranges from avid and reluctant readers, innocent middle school girls, and tweens. “Recommended Titles by Format” includes audiobooks, nonfiction graphic novels, and picture books for teens.

Some “Recommended Titles by Theme and Format” are about chocolate, summer camp, and state books (state where story took place). The “Annotations” in the last section are fairly general, without a specific reference which list the title appears on. Titles may appear on more than one list, so the annotation is available in this section.

The book includes a CD-ROM with bibliographic information and annotations within the lists.

As the authors themselves note, the book is not intended to be the definitive word, but to create a starting point.

While a valuable resource for public and school libraries, it does not take a Christian worldview into account. In fact, Christian YA authors are not listed.

Because of the book’s worldview, Christians should exercise caution. The primary value will be to recognize secular literature that would be inappropriate for their students. Christians also would do well to check other resources for teen literature with a Christian worldview.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

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“How can I help Johnny learn?” Different “scientific” learning theories, and teaching techniques based on them, seem to help for a while. But eventually teachers encounter situations where such techniques are not effective.

In her *Heart and Mind*, Ruth Beechick suggests that theories that exclude the biblical teaching on the “heart” (nearly 1,000 references) lack an essential element. In spite of “scientific” bias against it, she offers research evidence that such an “immaterial” influence does affect learning. She compares the theories of “behaviorism” and “humanism” with her own “biblical” theory, and then offers her theoretical model. Parental love and discipline affect
both the levels of information learning and concept learning in the head and the higher “heart-set” (self-discipline) in the heart. These all interact and then work together to produce wise self-direction (creativity) at the top level of her model. Later chapters expand on the individual elements of the model and offer practical suggestions for teachers, concluding with projected levels of “spiritual developmental tasks.” An appendix provides research data on “heart” in the Bible, including uses for each of 981 citations arranged in biblical order. An index follows an annotated bibliography.

Dr. Beechick has taught in public schools, and more recently has written extensively for homeschooling parents on various areas of curriculum. She includes many references to secular brain research and learning theories with indications where their results may be useful, with limitations. This is a second edition of her earlier A Biblical Psychology of Learning: How Your Mind Works (1982), with extensive revisions in the later chapters and the addition of the appendix and index. Twelve helpful black and white diagrams accompany the text. Although Beechick occasionally refers to technical terms, this is written for home school, Christian school, and Sunday School teachers. Her valuable perspective is highly recommended for these teachers and their libraries.

Donna W. Bowling


Bible professor John Walton and his wife, Kim, a Sunday school educator, present a “resource for teaching 175 Bible stories to children of all ages” (back cover). The Bible teaches us about God through the use of stories. The Bible Story Handbook helps us to teach these stories accurately, faithfully, and insightfully.

The first part of the book covers the right and wrong way to use Bible stories by keeping the big picture of the Bible in mind. The Waltons discuss why Bible stories are useful to teaching us about God’s attributes, not just moral lessons. Addressing primarily Sunday school teachers and pastors, this book will be a good resource for parents too.

After laying this basic foundation in a lengthy introduction, there are ninety-seven stories from the Old Testament and seventy-eight stories from the New Testament. With the exception of a single story from Revelation, all the New Testament stories come from the four gospels. The New Testament stories have all the scriptural references. If a story appears in all four gospels, all four gospels are cited. The back matter includes a teaching index by lessons, a scriptural index, resources for further study (including children’s resources, and a helpful commentary), and maps.

Each lesson in The Bible Story Handbook examines the lesson focus, its application, interpretational issues, historical and cultural background, and mistakes to void. Each lesson is no more than two pages long, giving plenty of material for the reader to use over one to three years. This book is valuable to Sunday school
teachers, parents, and educators.
Recommended for church libraries, pastoral staff, Christian school libraries, and parents.
Carol R. Gehringer
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