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Bruno's "The Comfort of Little Things: An Educator's Guide to Second Chances" (Book Review)

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**The Christmas Virtues:
A Treasury of Conservative Tales for the Holidays,**
edited by Jonathan V. Last. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2015.
203 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781599475059

Reviewed by Carrie Beth Lowe, Library Director, Johnson University, Knoxville, TN

Weekly Standard senior writer Jonathan V. Last has compiled a collection of original Christmas essays written by fellow political commentators. Authors of the essays in this compilation include Rob Long, P.J. O'Rourke, Joe Queenan, Stephen F. Hayes, Jonah Goldberg, Mollie Hemingway, Christopher Buckley, and others. In addition to the *Weekly Standard*, the essayists are affiliated with news organizations such as *National Review* and Fox News.

The essays offer both secular and religious perspectives on Christmas, with most focusing on American cultural customs and family traditions. The general tone is both humorous and nostalgic. Atheist, Catholic, Jewish, and evangelical viewpoints are all represented in the collection. Librarians at religiously affiliated institutions considering this book for selection should be aware that several of the essays contain language that may be offensive to some readers.

The collection as a whole is suited more for public library collections than for academic library collections. Libraries supporting programs or courses in journalism may want to add this as an example of commentary on popular culture from a conservative perspective. Kirsten Powers' essay describing her conversion to Christianity earned this book a place in Johnson University library's collection.

The Comfort of Little Things: An Educator's Guide to Second Chances,
by Holly Elissa Bruno. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2015.
174 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781605544090

*Reviewed by Lisa Cutforth-Anderson, Learning Resource Coordinator and
Old Testament professor, Alberta Bible College, Calgary, AB, Canada*

Holly Elissa Bruno is an encourager. She has combed inspirational literature from disparate sources to empower educators through the written word. The inspirational quotations throughout the book urge educators to give learners, but more importantly, themselves, second chances to do better, and be better. Although written for a secular audience, Bruno claims a personal spirituality, and briefly

mentions attending church, yet the Christian educator will still find much useful information on the power of second chances in these pages. We know we serve the God of second chances.

To Bruno, "... a second chance is the opportunity to come alive in the moment with the wonder of a child, witnessing people and situations as if for the first time" (p. 4). It is also freeing ourselves from what holds us back, as people and as educators. It is accepting that people are flawed, and most people will choose better if given another chance to choose a response or action. Yet, if they disappoint again, we may have to change our expectation that people will be who we think they should be. As she wrote this book for educators, she includes several case studies of real-life choices and behaviors that model giving and receiving second chances in educational settings. However, this book is not about being warm and mushy; because besides being an educator, among other vocations, Bruno is an attorney. Her case studies set the bar high for transformational learning while working in federally and state-legislated educational systems. While these case studies are not indexed for easy reference, they are set apart by font and spacing from the main text of the book, and so are easy to locate.

As mentioned, the book lacks an index, but the formatting of the text allows for easy access of different types of information. Many of her sources are online: search terms or links are provided in grey boxes in the margins. Her attributed inspirational sayings are set in italic font in the margins. Self-reflection questions are numbered in the main body of the text. Any ideas she wants her readers to internalize are highlighted with bullet points in the main text, and much of her scientific research is set apart in bordered textboxes in the main text. Lastly, her encouraging suggestions for giving second chances are in plain typeset in the margins. Due to the formatting, this book is an easy, quick, must-read for educators. Though written for child educators, every suggestion may be tweaked and applied to any educational setting.

The Community of Believers: Christian and Muslim Perspectives,
 edited by Lucinda Mosher and David Marshall. Washington, DC: Georgetown
 University Press, 2015. 171 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781626161955

Reviewed by Elizabeth Pearson, Library Director, Montreat College, Montreat, NC

The Community of Believers contains edited versions of the lectures presented at the 2013 Building Bridges Seminar, an annual meeting of Christian and Muslim scholars now hosted by Georgetown University. The purpose of the seminar is to promote understanding and the building of stronger Christian/Muslim bonds. Lucinda Mosher is faculty associate in interfaith studies and director of the Multifaith