Sparks, Soerens, and Friesen's "The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community" (Book Review)

Tami Echavarria Robinson
Whitworth University

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit http://www.acl.org/

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl

Recommended Citation

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.
Perhaps at times overshadowed by her personal relationship with and subsequent marriage to Lewis, Davidman was a substantial author and poet in her own right, and this collection highlights her poetic skill and winning tone. Ardent Lewis fans will certainly enjoy reading her poems from the time before they were married (“What a fool I was to play the mouse And squeak for mercy! What had you to give So small a creature when it wanted love?” [p. 306]), and those who seek to better grasp modernist work will appreciate this significant collection as well.

The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community,
$17.00. ISBN 9780830841158

Reviewed by Tami Echavarria Robinson, Coordinator of Instructional Services, Whitworth University, Spokane, WA

Cultural values in America have changed over time influencing all parts of American life including the churches. Our society emphasizes that we are independent and autonomous and lauds individualism above connections with others. These values are not in keeping with the teachings of Jesus, and many in current American culture find their fragmented, self-centered lives to be unsatisfying. While the Bible teaches values of a bygone America where relationships and neighborhood connections meant living life locally in a place, contemporary America has lost its sense of local place in favor of a mobile, superficial society. This book brings back the concept of parishes, churches engaged in local neighborhoods in a particular place they serve, by building relationships and answering the needs in their locale. The writing is enthusiastic, although sometimes repetitive. It is written to a lay audience rather than an academic audience, appealing to both pastors and ordinary citizens interested in practicing biblical values of caring for one another as a community and living together in community. The idea of parish is presented as new, but it is as old as the early churches to which Paul wrote letters. However, to a floundering church in an age of disengagement, fragmented lives, and dislocation, this book presents “new” ideas to a generation that does not recall a time of parish churches and community life.