Naylor’s "Postcard's from the Middle East" (Book Review)

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Genesis 1–2 to promote a different way of thinking about men and women. Some readings are papal encyclicals intended for bishops and other high-ranking church officers. Other readings address a general audience.

Pope John Paul II speaks about many aspects of womanhood, including virginity, marriage, and motherhood. When he writes about motherhood, it is in both the biological sense and in the metaphorical sense (“spiritual motherhood,” p. 59). As it is a Catholic work, there is an extensive section about Mary, the mother of Jesus. Also as a result of the specifically Catholic perspective, the Pope writes against ordination of women, citing Jesus’ calling of the Apostles (all men). However, the Pope affirms the role of women’s non-ministerial roles within the early church. Pope John Paul celebrates the dignity and humanity of women and stresses the need for women’s equality in most areas (with few exceptions). The overall tone is a deep respect for women and concern for women’s welfare.

_Pope John Paul II Speaks on Women_ will be a valuable addition for academic institutions that study church history. Scholars interested in the Church’s position on women’s roles will appreciate this anthology of Pope John Paul’s thoughts. It includes notes, a brief index, and a bibliography.

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**Postcards from the Middle East,**
ISBN 9780745956497

_Reviewed by Carrie Beth Lowe, Library Director, Johnson University, Knoxville, TN_

Before becoming the executive director of A Rocha International, author Chris Naylor and his family spent twenty years in cross-cultural Christian service in the Middle East. Naylor’s memoir describes the year he and his wife spent teaching in Kuwait as newlyweds, their return to the Middle East with a young family for language study in Jordan, and their many years in Lebanon, where Chris became the leader of an A Rocha project to preserve the Aammiq wetlands in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley. According to its website, A Rocha is an international Christian nature conservation organization involved in scientific research, community-based conservation, and education. The memoir touches on Arab culture, Arabic language, geography, environmental issues, and world events such as Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990, border conflict between Lebanon and Israel, September 11th, the 2005 assassination of a former Lebanese prime minister, and the Lebanon War of 2006.
Since Naylor’s mission service was directed toward education and creation care, this is not a typical missionary biography. The account is infused with Naylor’s Christian faith, yet there is little overt Christian content. This book would be a worthwhile addition for Middle Eastern studies, environmental science, and cross-cultural orientation collections. The final chapter, describing the Naylor family’s adjustment to their “home” culture after their return to England, would be useful reading for missionary families preparing for reentry.


Reviewed by John E. Shaffett, Director of Library Services, The Baptist College of Florida, Graceville, Florida

St. Thomas Aquinas continues to be admired by many Christian readers. Many readers feel intimidated by the size and style of the Summa Theologiae. Peter Kreeft has spent a lifetime of reading and teaching St. Thomas Aquinas. Kreeft has written an earlier book, Summa of the Summa, in which he chooses key philosophical passages of the Summa and adds commentary to it. Kreeft’s goal is to provide helps for the inexperienced reader of Aquinas. In his new book, Practical Theology: Spiritual Direction from St. Thomas Aquinas, he seeks to provide small, bite-size portions of Aquinas for the beginning reader with commentary on what it means. It is divided into 358 readings. His purpose is to balance his earlier book of mostly philosophical passages with this book emphasizing theological passages.

Practical Theology covers many theological subjects that will be of interest to Christian readers. These bite-size readings are meant to help readers as they journey to their ultimate end, union with God. The readings are meant to act as a spiritual director for a reader. It is like the reader is meeting with St. Thomas Aquinas for 350+ sessions. These readings include such topics as reason, faith, evil, the moral life, free will, predestination, and many more topics. Kreeft does a great job of making Aquinas understandable to the beginning reader. This book is recommended to both new and old readers of Aquinas.