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Stutzman's "Biking Across America: My Coast-to-Coast Adventure and the People I Met Along the Way" (Book Review)

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Book Reviews



Biking Across America: My Coast-to-Coast Adventure and the People I Met Along the Way,

by Paul Stutzman. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2013. 224 pp.

\$6.98. ISBN 0800721780

Reviewed by Robbie Bolton, Library Director, Spring Arbor University, Spring Arbor, MI

This book by Stutzman, a former restaurateur, is a follow up to his first book, *Hiking Through* in which he hikes the Appalachian Trail to confront the grief of losing his wife to cancer. In this adventure travel narrative, we join the author on his bicycle journey from Washington State to the Florida Keys.

Stutzman's purpose on this adventure seems less clear than his first book. He states, "I want to visit with families I meet and hear their stories." Regardless of the rationale for this journey, it is a light-hearted, enjoyable ride as he candidly allows us to experience his ups and downs, moments of despair, and times when God speaks to him. At times, he concludes the chapters with a preachy tone. This takes away from the larger truths God is teaching him or from the ways God is speaking to him through the people he meets along his ride. Fortunately, these moments are few and far between. Mostly, we encounter the times where God speaks to Stutzman through a friendly stranger, or how he deals with the trials that come with riding a bicycle for ten hours a day for a little over two months.

A Mennonite from Ohio, Stutzman is open to the lessons God teaches on his route from the northwestern corner to the southeastern corner of the United States. By the end of the book, it becomes clear this was more than a long-distance bicycle ride; it was a Christian pilgrimage in which the destination is not the goal, but rather experiencing God on the journey.

This book is a welcome addition to any church library. While certainly not an academic work, academic and theological libraries might consider adding this book if they include spiritual reflection literature in their collection.