



Volume 56
Issue 1 *Volume 55:2 and Volume 56:1 Combined Issue*

Article 13

5-2013

Resource Reviews

Phyllis Fox

Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego

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

Fox, Phyllis (2013) "Resource Reviews," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 56 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol56/iss1/13>

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 arolf@georgefox.edu.

Long Road Back: Ex-offenders' Struggle for Acceptance. 2009. Worcester, PA: Vision Video (www.visionvideo.com). DVD. 51 min. \$19.99

Reviewed by Lisa Hayes, Off-Campus Library Services Librarian, Indiana Wesleyan University, West Chester, OH

The United States has the world's highest incarceration rate. What happens to those prisoners when they are released? This DVD highlights the struggles offenders with a felony conviction face when they re-enter society.

Personal stories of ex-inmates illustrate the pull of the street, the nagging feeling that it is "easier" in prison as well as the difficulties these men and women face when simply turning in a job application. Answering "yes" to the question, "have you ever been convicted of a felony?," is usually the end of the application process. Regardless of the crime, the word "felony" sends a message of mistrust to potential employers. It might as well be tattooed across their foreheads – the stigma is that great.

Ex-inmates also struggle to rebuild their lives in other ways. Finding housing, paying bills, regaining custody or visitation rights to children, obtaining medical care all usually while unable to drive or even afford a car – are huge challenges. The person's success in each area depends on the job search being successful. It's no wonder they often feel they are "still doing time" only in a different way.

The DVD points to church-sponsored ministries that slow and guide the re-entry process. "Transitional therapeutic communities," often called "half way houses" in the past, offer a chance to learn necessary life, social, job and parenting skills to people whose life has been lived in "another world" for months or even years. A holistic approach is shown as successful in moving ex-inmates back into society. Behavior counseling, help with formulating realistic goals, tips for job interviews, as well as a supportive "home" life while transitioning all help to foster success in the ex-inmate.

This is a good addition to any criminal justice, social work, ministry or church library collection. A discussion guide can be downloaded from the producer's website. Spanish subtitles are included.

Mark's Gospel, Late-Breaking Productions/Fellowship for the Performing Arts, Worcester, PA, Distributed by Gateway Films/Vision Video (www.visionvideo.com). 2010. Format NTSC. Color. English. 94 min. \$19.99.

Reviewed by Douglas L. Fruehling, Instructional Services Librarian, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA

Max McLean's one-man show Mark's Gospel brings the New International Version of the scripture come alive. Filmed before an audience McLean's script is simply the New Testament book of Mark. Simple and yet so much more.

Mark's Gospel is a production of the Fellowship for the Performing Arts. Their mission statement is "To produce theatre from a Christian worldview that engages a diverse audience." With this production they have done just that. McLean has done audio recordings of the Bible and Classics of the Christian Faith. More recently he has appeared on stage as the title character in C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. He gives the Biblical characters voices and mannerisms in keeping with their character.

Mark's Gospel takes place with minimal staging. A few blocks set on a ramp. Lighting reflects mood and the many characters Christ interacts with. An animated Holy Land map that was projected on the stage is edited into the film with McLean's voiceover. His costume is contemporary clothing helping move the story from the past to the present. Audio is clear. Minimal sounds effects were part of the live performance. At one point there is an echo in keeping with Christ addressing the crowd outdoors from a boat. When the story moves from one book chapter to another the number appears on screen. The viewer can also fast forward to a specific chapter.

The presentation was shot in wide screen with at least two cameras permitting various angles and close-ups.

The DVD is highly recommended for theatre and Bible collections.

The Social Transcript: Uncovering Library Philosophy, by Charles B. Osburn, Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2009. 335 pp. \$45.00; ISBN 1-59158-758-1.

Reviewed by Jeffery S. Gates, Information Services Librarian, Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

The author of *The Social Transcript* was Dean and Professor Emeritus of the University Libraries at University of Alabama and adjunct professor in the School of Library and Information Studies. In its pages, he extensively quoted and referred to the literature of science, philosophy, and librarianship to support his statement that the role of libraries was the stewardship of the written record - which he called the social transcript. For Osburn, the library ensured the advancement of culture by enabling past generations to communicate culture to present and future generations. In Part I of *The Social Transcript*, the author delineated past attempts to produce a library philosophy and insisted that libraries must be based on people and ideas. Therefore, he argued, library philosophy must be founded on social science rather than science. In Part II, Osburn expounded on such seemingly diverse subjects as culture, mind, language, knowledge and learning, entertainment, and technology. This was the most difficult part of the book to read because the author seldom related these topics to the purpose of the book, i.e. developing a library philosophy. Part III, on the other hand, was much more focused on library philosophy. In this section, the author rewarded the person who patiently read through the first two parts of the book by pulling together all the ideas presented and showing their importance for developing a library philosophy. While the author primarily emphasized the role of libraries, it would have been helpful if he could have taken more pages to discuss how this relates to librarians. Nevertheless, for those who are interested in library philosophy, this book should not be overlooked.

Reference Reborn: Breathing New Life into Public Services Librarianship, edited by Diane Zabel. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited-ABC-CLIO, 2011. 401 pp. \$55.00. ISBN 978-1-59158-828-3.

Reviewed by Steven Paschold, Research Services Librarian, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR

Over the past several years it has been commonly observed that there exists less demand for library reference services. *Reference Reborn* is a collection of chapter articles edited

by Diane Zabel, a librarian at Pennsylvania State University. As its title and subtitle suggest, *Reference Reborn* seeks to withstand the possible decrease in services, and overall to inspire optimism in the reference profession, within an environment of constant change. The book covers a wide array of topics, including users, service modules, reference librarian roles, technology, collection development, staffing, and education and training. Although the book deals with both academic and public libraries, many of the chapters do focus on the academic setting.

Reference Reborn is comprised of twenty-five chapters, authored or co-authored by thirty-three contributors, including the editor. The book is divided into seven sections, and while many readers will not feel impressed to proceed through this weighty volume from cover to cover, one can navigate fairly well among sections. Over time all or most of the chapters should be read, however, because of the comprehensive treatment of the subject. In her "Introduction" the editor Diane Zabel summarizes themes treated in the book. These themes include attending to the profession's core values; tracking economic, cultural, social, and technological trends (such as through the Pew Internet & American Life Project); practicing multiple roles of reference delivery; and going to where users are (xviii). Zabel acclaims "tremendous optimism about the ability of librarians to adapt to change" (xix), and Sally W. Kalin concludes that librarians who "thrive and excel" in this challenging environment do so by combining technical skills with personal competence (283).

In its coverage of the volatile nature of library reference services the book does deliver on the promise of its title, concluding with a spirit of hope and optimism for the profession. Librarians who read the book will no doubt alternately feel chagrined in not doing things differently in their libraries, and inspired to change their thinking and to implement practices suggested by the authors to reinvigorate reference services. It should be noted that this book is similar in title and content to *Reference Renaissance: Current and Future Trends* (Neal-Schuman, 2010), co-edited by Marie L. Radford, a contributor to the present volume under review. *Reference Reborn* is recommended for librarians and administrators in academic libraries both large and small.

A Promise to Love: A Novel, by Serena B. Miller. Grand Rapids: Revell, 2012. 332 pp. \$14.99 ISBN: 978-0-8007-2117-6.

Reviewed by Phyllis E. Fox, Instructional Services Librarian for Graduate Studies, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA

Whenever a book comes across my desk displaying a beautiful, young woman with blonde flowing hair, I typically pass the book along to a colleague or friend to read. Books about romantic fiction do not normally hold my interest. However, mysteriously I opened this book to read the first few pages and didn't close it until I finished reading the book a few hours later.

Serena Miller has written a compelling story about a young Swedish immigrant living in Michigan after the Civil War searching for her twin brother who has disappeared in the nearby lumber camps. The characters are well developed and I was drawn in to know more about their story. I felt as if I was reading a further episode of Little House on the Prairie. There is the mean, spiteful woman married to the kind-hearted shopkeeper, who at crucial moments, decided to stand up to his wife; and the poor farmer, who ventured to the lumber camps in order to provide for his family. The author's story is fascinating and as I said before

I recommend this book for any library which has a historical romance collection.

The Gospel-Driven Life: Being Good News People in a Bad News World, by Michael Horton. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009. 271 pp. \$19.99; ISBN 978-0-8010-1319-5.

Reviewed by Terri Bogan, Associate Librarian, Hope International University, Fullerton, CA

The Gospel-Driven Life is Michael Horton's follow-up to Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church. Whereas Christless Christianity is a critique of a self-centered American church, The Gospel-Driven Life presents solutions for that same church. Though they are companion books, one does not need to have read Christless Christianity before reading The Gospel-Driven Life.

The Gospel-Driven Life is divided into two sections: "Looking Up, Looking Out: Breaking News" and "Looking Around, Looking Ahead: A Cross-Cultural Community." The first six chapters explore God's "breaking news" (the gospel), while the rest of the book concentrates on the community that the gospel creates (the church). Horton keeps the reader focused on the work of God, the historical event of the resurrection, reminding us that "we don't find the truth about God, ourselves, or the world by looking within, but by being drawn outside of ourselves." The problem with contemporary Christianity is that it has turned from an objective to a subjective gospel, or as Horton puts it, we've become "curved in on ourselves." Horton uses news metaphors as his presentation method to show the urgency of the gospel and to show that only by looking and acting outwardly does the church become the means by which "the gospel brings a new creation into this present age of sin and death."

The Gospel-Driven Life is a solid bit of theological reading written for laypeople familiar with and conversant in the Christian faith and would be a good addition to either Christian academic libraries or church libraries. A notes section is included at the end of the book, but it is lacking any kind of index making it difficult to use for study. Topical and scriptural indexing would be both appropriate and helpful.

This book is a powerful reminder of the centrality of the gospel in our lives, not just for salvation but for continuous sanctification.

A Different Kind of Cell: The Story of a Murderer Who Became a Monk, by W. Paul Jones. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011. 122 pp. \$14.00. ISBN 978-0-8028-6651-6.

Reviewed by Erin L. Crane, Ebooks Librarian, Collection Management Dept., Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

In this work W. Paul Jones tells the inspiring story of Clayton Fountain, a prisoner convicted of murdering five people, and his conversion to Christianity. As he passes the years in an isolated cell with minimal human contact, he focuses on self-improvement spiritually and educationally. Jones, a Trappist brother at Assumption Abbey, meets Clayton after his conversion and they remain close friends until Clayton's death. Jones tells Clayton's story partly at the request of the family (122) and partly to critique capital punishment

and the penal system in general. Jones notes that he came to feel that prisons are more “out-and-out institutions of punishment” than they are “re-formatories” (80). While the story is inspirational, it is not well-documented. While Jones cites some sources, more often he leaves a source unnoted and there is no bibliography. This lowers the biography’s scholarly value. The book is also thoroughly a case study as Jones does not introduce other similar stories as more evidence against capital punishment. Its main appeal for a scholarly collection is its unique record of Clayton Fountain’s conversion and spiritual transformation. Overall, this work is more appropriate for recreational or Christian inspirational reading than academic research.

Finish the Race: The Eric Liddell Story, by John W. Keddie, Christian Focus Publications, Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland, UK, 2011. 159 pp \$8.99; ISBN 978-1845505905.

Reviewed by Douglas L. Fruehling, Instructional Services Librarian, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA

Eric Liddell first came to this reviewer’s attention in the motion picture *Chariots of Fire*. Eric, known as the “Flying Scotsman,” ran in the 1924 Paris Olympics. He was also known as the man who wouldn’t run on the Sabbath, a decision that impacted track events in which he could participate. Keddie provides much more of Eric’s life than the drama occurring in the film.

Keddie is the author of *Running the Race: Eric Liddell – Olympic Champion and Missionary*. He wrote *Finish the Race* for an audience from older children to mid-teen but anyone can enjoy the biography. There is a timeline of Eric’s life. The author includes a spelling guide for Chinese place names.

Keddie tells of Eric’s Christian heritage starting with his grandparents. Eric’s interest in China missions came from his parent’s work there. It is also where he was born. We get a history of early to mid-20th century missionary work challenges. There is family separation for education. There are political uprisings. And finally captivity and deprivation in prison camp.

When it came to running, Eric records lasted for decades. But his ministry continues with this book. This book would make a good individual or group study. Each chapter has questions that address an issue Eric faced. These can lead

to personal contemplation and/or group discussion. Sports enthusiasts may see themselves in his life. Having read the book readers will know much more of Eric than his Sabbath observance. They will see a great example of one who truly ran and finished the race (Hebrews 12: 1-2).

The Liberating Truth: How Jesus Empowers Women by Danielle Strickland. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Monarch Books 2011. 160 pp. \$12.99. ISBN: 978-0-85721-019-7.

Reviewed by Kathleen Kempa, Reference and Electronic Services Librarian, Steelman Library, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL

Danielle Strickland’s *The Liberating Truth* is a very quick and easy read. It is somewhat like a how-to-do-it with the feel of a tell-all. Her mission in the book is to convince Christian readers that the traditional church-approved view of women has been wrong for many of the centuries following the early days of Christianity. She points out the pastor/wife paradigm of male-leader/woman-helper gender based ministry roles, as a deeply ingrained assumption among many Christian churches as an indication of the gender limiting mindset.

Danielle starts the book with her personal reaction to a Christian book purportedly encouraging women to become their best gender determined self – a princess. She uses anecdotal descriptions of Muslim women who are content with their burqa-hidden lives. She provides descriptions of prostitutes with whom she has discussed their lives and dreams. And she presents reports of the atrocities perpetrated against women in developing nations, whose cultures demean women strictly because of their gender. She argues that while Christian women in developed countries are generally not subjected to persecution, they are, however, systematically blocked from responding fully to their calling if it does not fit within gender defined roles.

In the second part of the book, Danielle Strickland argues from Scripture, pointing out obvious Scripture passages which support her argument. Then she introduces the Scriptures which have often been used to justify a minimized role for women in the ministries of the church. She also discusses women’s and men’s roles in marriage, as described in Scripture.

This is a very fine book for any Christian library.

Hearing the Call: Liturgy, Justice, Church and World, essays by Nicholas Wolterstorff; edited by Mark R. Gornik and Gregory Thompson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 440 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 978-0-8028-6525-0.

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

Nicholas Wolterstorff has written many thoughtful works over the years. *Hearing the Call* is a collection of essays he has written over a fifty year period. "This collection of popular and semi-popular essays" is his response to certain issues he considers of the utmost importance: liturgy, justice, the church, and the world. Wolterstorff stands in the Dutch Reformed tradition and has been influenced by the thought of Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch theologian and statesman of the nineteenth century. This book is meant for a wider audience, however. The author and editors chose essays that would be applicable to people outside of the reformed tradition.

The book is divided into four part parts: liturgy, justice, church, and the world. The book also includes two interviews with the author. These interviews and the two autobiographical essays fit in well with the collection of essays. The author and editors have been careful to keep the essays from repeating itself. Wolterstorff writes clear, understandable prose. *Hearing the Call* is written for a broad audience and succeeds in addressing key issues that will be clear to this audience.

Some of the key issues addressed in this book are the difference between justice and love. The author believes that all persons bear the image of their creator and that they have certain rights. He shows how justice is emphasized by the Old Testament prophets. Wolterstorff describes how he became confronted with the issue of justice in regards to the Palestinians and the blacks of South Africa. He also addresses the issue of women in the ministry. Other issues addressed by Wolterstorff: patriotism, church architecture, art, economics and many other issues.

Wolterstorff has addressed important issues in a thoughtful way. He has shown how both the liturgy and working for justice is important. He thinks one of the most important things that the Christian scholar can do is to keep alive the memory of Christian tradition. He draws from this tradition in many of his essays. It is no accident being a teacher for many years that Wolterstorff teaches us many important truths that we need to know.

Psalms Alive, Part I, with Billy Angel [DVD], DVD Authoring: OCM, Films, UK; Copyright: Entertaining Angels; Distributed by Gateway Films, Vision Video, Worchester, PA, c2010. 80 minutes plus bonus segments. \$19.99.

Reviewed by Noelle C. Keller, Technical Services Librarian, Shipman Library, Adrian College, Adrian, MI

Billy Angel is the director/actor/producer of *Psalms Alive, Part 1*. This 80 minute DVD is part of the series *Word in Action*. In this DVD, Billy Angel presents an oral interpretation of 22 Psalms in diverse contemporary settings. The menu options allow one to play all or select one at a time for individual play. The dramatic readings are from the King James Version of the Bible. There is the option to play with English subtitles to read along the words of the Psalms as they are dramatically read by Billy Angel.

These are not idealized settings with the spoken word and evocative music for relaxation, contemplation, and meditation. The intent is to be to provide a learning tool for memorizing scripture. There are approximately a half an hour of bonus features including an 11 minute introduction to reading the Psalms and a 17 minute section on "Learning the Scripture by Heart".

This is an optional purchase for an adult Sunday school class or a mature individual interested in trying to memorize Psalms and scripture. Not recommended.

Amish Values for Your Family: What We Can Learn from the Simple Life, by Suzanne Fisher Woods. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, c2011. 188pp. \$12.99. ISBN-13: 978-0-8007-1996-8 9.

Reviewed by Noelle C. Keller, Technical Services Librarian, Shipman Library, Adrian College, Adrian, MI

Suzanne Fisher Woods is the bestselling author of the popular Christian fiction series "Lancaster County Secrets". Her non-fiction books, *Amish Peace* and *Amish Proverbs*, along with this book, *Amish Values for Your Family*, seek to apply the lessons of Amish living to the wider Christian community living in contemporary society.

The introduction of *Amish Values for Your Family* emphasizes the stress and strain of modern living and its impact on childhood and the family structure. The author contrasts this with the strong family structure still evidenced in the Amish communities. The premise of this book is that the Amish

way of life has lessons for family life today including: “to help prioritize what’s truly important, to simplify decision making, to slow down as a family, to safeguard time together, and when age-appropriate, to let go.” (p.13)

The book is organized into four main sections or themes. Each chapter begins with an Amish proverb and contains stories, reflections, vignettes, and quotations from Amish life and families. Each chapter ends with an application section that offers ways to translate each lesson from Amish life to today’s family.

I would recommend this book to public and church libraries alike. It is a fascinating look into the real lives of the Amish. If you love Amish themed Christian fiction, this book will not disappoint. So turn off the television and computer, sit down with this book and read.

Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice, by David Lyle Jeffrey and Gregory Maillet. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011. 335 pp. \$24.00. ISBN 978-0-8308-2817-3.

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

Christianity and Literature is part of the Christian Worldview Integration Series. It examines the relationship between Christianity and the study of literature and is written for Christian students of literature at college level. The authors intend to show how a Christian worldview provides a way to approach literary study. They do this by examining great literary works in light of how they are informed by Christianity. The authors state that a true appreciation of literature requires a curriculum that recognizes Christian influence on literary work while acknowledging the varied responses to Christ of individual writers.

The book begins with discussion of classical and religious foundations of literature, including chapters on the quest for truth by means of literature, the establishment of a coherent foundation for a distinctively Christian approach to literary criticism, the influence of biblical narratives in the development of Western literary tradition, and the importance of scripture in the development of the humanities in Western intellectual life. An appreciation of the literary character of the Bible is recognized as prerequisite to a full understanding of how faith has informed literature through the centuries. The authors also address the value of a

Christian philosophy of literature as a foundation for literary criticism and the elements to consider in such a philosophy.

The next five chapters focus primarily on significant Christian writers and provide a guide to landmark works that college students should read. Also considered are many writers who are not Christian and whose work illustrates basic issues and the evolution of literary thought. Each chapter provides a historical introduction to the writers, works, ideas, and moral issues that have impacted Christian literature through the centuries. Included are chapters on each major historical period from medieval times to the early 21st century. Although not intended as a literary history, the book does offer insights on evolving perspectives on literature and faith over time.

In the final chapter, the authors suggest that recent literary study is in a decadent phase in which fiction and poetry seldom reflect truth. The authors remark on the emptiness of much of contemporary Western literary culture and challenge Christians to recover the religious power of great literature. They argue that Christians should study 20th and 21st century literature to recognize modernism and postmodernism, to see how Christian writers have challenged nihilism with a biblical response, and to discover Christian writers who contradict the contemporary literary ethos by expressing enduring truths of Christian faith.

This book serves as a good starting point for readers who want to view literary studies from a Christian perspective. Each chapter concludes with a helpful bibliography of suggested works. An author index and a scripture index are included. This book is highly recommended for academic libraries and will be of particular interest to faculty and students of English literature.

Resonant Witness: Conversations Between Music and Theology, ed. by Jeremy S. Begbie and Steven R. Guthrie. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2011. 497 pp. \$34.00. ISBN 978-0-8028-6277-8.

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

Resonant Witness is part of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies Series and is edited by Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology at Duke University. The book presents a cross-disciplinary approach to the integration of theology and music and

includes seventeen essays, most of which originated from a 2002 Music and Theology Colloquium. The purpose of this collection is to examine how music enriches theology and how theology can promote a greater understanding of music. The essays are arranged in four groups: music and cosmos, music and culture, music and theology, and music and worship. Among the contributors are Nancy van Deusen, Daniel Chua, Margot Fassler, Jeremy Begbie, C. Michael Hawn, Richard Plantinga, Steven Guthrie, John Witvliet, and Robert Sholl.

As a scholarly work, the book effectively examines topics such as Augustine on the art and value of music, Martin Luther's perspective on the role of music in proclaiming the gospel, Bach's music as an expression of creation's beauty, and the interrelationships among music, mathematics, and theology. Other essays explore the relationship between musical postmodernism and religion, how the truths of Christianity are evoked in the music of Olivier Messiaen, and a theological perspective on the modern discourse on music. One essay examines the part music plays in the theological thought of Barth and Bonhoeffer, noting that both theologians perceived music as a witness that links the spiritual and worldly realms of existence. Another essay argues that both jazz and Christian texts grow out of improvisation. The last section addresses music's emotional power and the impact on worship, with one contributor noting that singing in corporate worship is a way by which God is made known and a means through which the church grows in wisdom and understanding of God.

This book effectively promotes the dialogue between theology and music and will be accessible to those with at least a foundational knowledge of music. It is a good choice for music scholars, faculty, and advanced students who seek to integrate faith with their discipline and who want to explore the intersection of music and theology. Overall, this collection of essays provides insights on a wide range of topics and offers a rich resource for musicians and theologians alike. The thought-provoking essays are well documented and indexed and a glossary of musical terms is included. This book is highly recommended for academic and seminary libraries.

INTERESTED IN REVIEWING A TITLE?

Contact:

Phyllis Fox
TCL Review Editor/Copy Editor
Point Loma Nazarene University
3900 Lomaland Drive
San Diego, CA 92106
Pfox@pointloma.edu