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Resource Reviews

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The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians (The New International Commentary of the New Testament) by Gordon D. Fee. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009. 343 pp. \$13.95. ISBN 978-0-8028-6362-1.

Reviewed by Donald Dean Smeeton, Resources and Instruction Librarian, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA

For the last sixty years, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* series has provided the earnest student of scripture with tools that combined a thorough treatment of the Greek text with the most recent scholarship. Undergirding the series is the characteristic understanding that the text is the Word of God. Ned B. Stonehouse, serving as general editor from 1946-62, set the high standard for the series that was continued when F.F. Bruce took over and served in that capacity until 1990. Since that time NICNT has been in the capable hands of Gordon D. Fee (Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia) who has already contributed NICNT volumes on I Corinthians and Philippians. Under his leadership some of the older commentaries are being replaced to take into account the most recent understanding of the rhetoric and cultural setting of the New Testament writer.

Thus the general editor contributes to his own series and, in effect, retires the earlier volume by Leon Morris. The Morris commentary, although revised twice, embodies much pre-1950 scholarship and an update was certainly needed. In describing his methodology, Fee says that he writes the commentary by a serious consideration of the Greek text then he looks to the secondary literature. Following this methodology, he explains the flow of the argument, and then offers the theological-practical application. Then he interacts with the secondary literature, and he does it thoroughly.

Fee's aim is to show what the text meant in the first century and what it means today so that the "busy pastor" can preach biblically sound yet practical messages. The technical and grammatical ambiguities are treated in the footnotes rather than in the body of the text. Many of the arguments with the secondary literature are also confined to the notes. To add to its usefulness, there are indexes of modern authors, subjects, and scriptural passages. Most frequently, Fee refers to the scholarship of Ernest Best, F.F. Bruce, G.G. Findlay, Gene L. Green, J.B. Lightfoot, I. Howard Marshall, Earl J. Richards and Charles A. Wannamaker.

To his credit, Fee treats II Thessalonians as an independent and significant letter rather than a mere appendage to the earlier letter. II Thessalonians is given over 100 pages of comments, comparing well with the 200 or so pages dedicated to the first letter.

It is a fine, reliable work, well worth the price. It has been granted an Award of Merit as one of "The 2010 Christianity Today Book Awards" and certainly deserves space in any collection that serves undergraduate or graduate courses in New Testament.

Rowan's Rule: the Biography of the Archbishop of Canterbury, by Rupert Shortt. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008. 466 pp. \$30.00 9780802864611.

Reviewed by Garrett Trott, Instruction-Reference Librarian, Corban College & Graduate School, Salem, OR

Rowan Williams, an Anglican bishop and theologian, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 2003. Even though William is respected throughout the Anglican community, his appointment brought about a great deal of tension. His support of female leadership and his promotion of the legitimacy of homosexuality are two points of apprehension that Williams' appointment brought to center stage.

Because of this tension, some individuals feel a tremendous admiration for Williams, while others consider him a heretic. Then there are those who attempt to understand him without bias. Rupert Shortt attempts to do just this.

The author does an excellent job of explaining the complexities of Williams. Our culture tends to measure an individual by the tasks they accomplish and the positions they hold. However, Shortt makes certain that an individual reading his biography will not measure Williams simply upon his term as Archbishop of Canterbury. He gives a holistic picture of Williams, including education, family life, and ministry.

Shortt is a religion editor of the *London Times Literary Supplement*. *Rowan's Rule* reflects this. The author goes into Williams' theological upbringing, training, and opinion in a manner that keeps the reader attentive.

While writing this biography, Shortt had an opportunity to dialog with Williams on a regular occasion, including one face to face dialog. Thus, this biography includes several comments about occasions in Williams' life from Williams himself. This unique occasion enriches the biography.

Shortt does not present Williams with an intention to defend his views and actions as Archbishop of Canterbury. Nor does he attempt to defame Williams. Instead Shortt desires his readers to empathize with Williams while perhaps continuing to disagree with his political and theological positions.

The author accomplishes this task well by presenting a clear picture of Williams, warts and all. This picture assists the reader in clarifying Williams' position, allowing the reader to empathize while disagreeing with the Archbishop.

This book would be recommended to any library. Shortt does a commendable job of providing a readable, simple, yet thorough biography of Rowan Williams. Anybody interested in the positions Williams has taken should read this book. This book will not change one's mind on the positions, but it will provide some context to assist the reader in understanding Williams' intentions and goals lying behind his decisions.

Self-examination: The Present and Future of Librarianship by John M. Budd. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 281 pp. \$60.00 ISBN 1-59158-591-0.

Reviewed by Jeff Gates, Information Services Librarian, Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

The author, John M. Budd, is professor and associate director at the School of Information Science and Learning Technologies and University of Missouri Columbia. In this book he decries the lack of reflection within librarianship and guides the reader to ponder its purpose and role in the present and future. Budd begins the book by examining the history of libraries and how libraries grew to a place of prominence in American society. He focuses on how librarians see themselves and the related topic of their education for this role. His most intellectually challenging thoughts are presented in the middle chapters. He writes about the theory of information as it relates to librarianship and examines the ethical responsibility which librarians have in the pluralistic and information-laden American society. In the last chapter, Budd offers his solution – what he calls “dialectical phenomenology” – to the challenges he presents throughout the book. He suggests that librarians should reflect upon the conflicting ideas of librarianship and synthesize

them into guiding principles. Using this method he presents his own thoughts, i.e. that virtual libraries are good but that separating libraries from the educational process is not good. He discusses the importance of the library as a place and emphasizes the importance of the library in people's lives and the responsibility of librarians selecting information that is accurate or true to reality. He also insists that librarians see how the library fits into the users' lives rather than how users can fit into the library.

The tone of this book is philosophical, and a familiarity with such writers as, Pierce Butler, Kant, Mill, Shera, John Dewey, Rowls, and Jurgen Habermas is helpful. The author generally writes from a secular perspective, but seems open to metaphysical or spiritual reality. A positive aspect of the book is its very extensive bibliography and decent index.

Apocalypse Later: Why the Gospel of Peace Must Trump the Politics of Prophecy in the Middle East, by Abdu H. Murray. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2009. 202 pp. \$13.95. ISBN 978-0-8254-2978-1

Reviewed by Donald Dean Smeeton, Resources and Instruction Librarian, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA

One cannot judge a book by its cover nor, apparently, by its subtitle. One would expect a book with this subtitle to deal with politics, peace, prophecy or all three. In fact, the book is primarily about soteriology. Only the opening and closing pages, like book ends holding salvation in the center, consider the strife in the Middle East. Murray's point in these passages is that a certain form of Zionist eschatology sees the triumph of the modern state of Israel to be an essential indicator of the Lord's return and thus implies a second class status to all of Israel's neighbors. Thus the message Arabs heard is not the “good” news of salvation but the “bad” news of their secondary role in God's plan. Certainly some have focused on eschatology instead of evangelism and have used their theology to justify injustices. Such a perversion of the “good news for all the people” must be challenged.

Raised in a Muslim home and devout in his faith, Abdu Murray presents a systematic case for the validity of Christianity establishing his position by showing the historicity of the Christian faith and the death and resurrection of Christ. He offers strong reasons to place one's trust in Christ. Murray, a lawyer by profession, uses a mind trained in law to set forth a case for evidential/philosophical apologetics, much like Ravi Zacharias and C.S. Lewis, both of whom he frequently cites in his argumentation.

Murray's thesis is that if Jews and Muslims both placed their faith in Christ and showed his love, they would love each other and peace would come to the conflict that dominated so much of the twentieth century. The "gospel of peace" named in the subtitle would replace conflict and reconciliation would replace retaliation. Without a doubt America's strong support for Israel creates a significant obstacle to any Muslim investigating the claims of Christ. But one could question how strongly "the politics of prophecy" really influence American foreign policy when there are so many significant economic, social and political factors that motivate America's actions. Murray is correct in warning that followers of the King of Kings must not allow the Kingdom of God to be confused with any of the kingdoms of this world.

This book could be an effective evangelistic tool placed in the hands of anyone – Jew or Muslim – who is open to the claims of Christ, but it probably does not need to be added to many academic collections.

Green Revolution: Coming Together to Care for Creation, by Ben Lowe. Downers Grove: IVP Books, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2009. 206 pp. \$15.00 paperback. ISBN 978-08308-36246.

Reviewed by Mary Ann Buhler, Director of Library Services, Manhattan Christian College, Manhattan, KS

Green is an oft-referred-to color now days, but it does not refer to fashion. Instead it refers to the environment and the importance to striving to save our planet. Ben Lowe, a recent graduate of the Environmental Studies Program at Wheaton College, as a student participated in summer employment and internships that solidified his resolve to encourage fellow Christians to care for the planet that God gave us. To further his mission he is coordinator of Renewal, an organization that strives to encourage college students to "go green."

In his book he sets four principles for a framework for how we "do creation care," which is the terminology he uses for ecology: 1) start with repentance; 2) move toward doing less harm to the planet; 3) find more ways to do good; and 4) celebrate together. Scientists have sounded an alarm that too many people and churches have shrugged off. As he says, "For many years ... the evangelical church has remained largely disengaged from environmental issues in general and climate change in particular; we have committed sins of omission when it comes to environmental stewardship" (p. 80). He

discusses some churches and colleges that have addressed the issue, setting an example for those who have not, and includes a bibliography of books and organizations that will help. At the end of each chapter is a short essay by people are involved in environmental issues, putting their own slant on the environmental issue and Ben's involvement.

I highly recommend this book for academic libraries, as well as for public and church libraries. Every Christian should be involved in helping to save the environment, and this book will help them do so.

Reconciling all things: a Christian vision for justice, peace and healing, by Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. 165 pp. \$15.00 9780830834518.

Reviewed by Garrett Trott, Instruction-Reference Librarian, Corban College & Graduate School, Salem, OR

Reconciling all things is an introduction to a series by InterVarsity Press, entitled *Resources for Reconciliation*. By combining theologians with practitioners, this series desires to produce literature discussing how Christians should live in a broken and fallen world. *Reconciling all things* is an excellent introduction to this series.

It stands out from other books about reconciliation in many ways. The authorship of this book is one example of how it differs. It is written by an African catholic theologian and an American protestant practitioner. For two individuals of different race, different theological background, and different strengths to come together and write this book is an excellent context for reconciliation to be put into practice.

In the first chapter of this book, the authors discuss what reconciliation is not. Reconciliation is a popular term, thus it often carries political rhetoric. While the authors argue that this is not necessarily bad, true reconciliation must take steps beyond what many recognize. Secondly, reconciliation does not simply refer to an individual's salvation. One's salvation is important in the process, but reconciliation does not stop there. Reconciliation does not simply refer to the celebration of diversity. Reconciliation does not simply refer to addressing injustice. The authors argue that reconciliation is not putting out fires. Instead they argue that reconciliation must have vision. Decisions, actions, and consequences must align with that vision.

Katangole and Rice define reconciliation as the goal of God's story. The rest of the book fleshes out this concept. The authors argue that the purpose of the gospel is reconciliation at all levels. Thus, it is the responsibility of all Christians to be involved with reconciliation, at whatever level God has them placed.

Christians can argue that reconciliation does not align with their God-given gifts. The authors point out the dramatic difference between those who are professionally trained in the area of reconciliation and thus have those gifts and normal everyday people. Reconciliation is more than a single incident or a session, which a professional may be able to do well. It is a daily practice of sacrifice which the layperson and the professional make together.

This book would fit any library well. However, Katangole and Rice's work should be read with caution. It is a fairly easy reader but they touch upon areas that will make many readers feel uncomfortable. They point out several areas of injustice and inequality that are right next door to many who live in the United States. Katangole's and Rice's story will challenge perspectives on these issues and initiate the reader to react.

Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis. by Tammi J. Schneider. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 235 pp/ ISBN 978-0-8010-2949-3.

Reviewed by Dora Wagner, Archivist, Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN

Women of the Old Testament are most often distilled into single character traits and then studied as secondary characters playing supporting roles in a man's story. Dr. Tammi Schneider (Professor of Religion, Claremont Graduate University) reassesses this age old method of Biblical exegesis and instead approaches each of the female characters of Genesis as the subject of her own experience. In other words, Schneider looks at each time the named woman appears as a singular subject of a verb and explores why this woman is the subject and what that verb tells the reader about her place within the text. This innovative approach, coined "verbing the character," facilitates a fresh reading of time honored stories that are both enlightening and intellectually challenging.

The author divides the book into four parts; Matriarchs, Mothers of Potential Heirs, Mothers who Predate the Promise, and Women Who Do Not Bear. Each of these sections begins with introductory remarks on the women

studied. Following the introduction, Schneider spends time studying each woman individually. On occasion, "verbing the character" devolves into a clunky list of actions and footnotes, especially when the verb remains constant across a variety of women. These momentary lapses, however, are rescued by a clear and concise chapter synopsis and an equally readable section summary. In most cases, the reader finishes the chapter with a better understanding of each woman, her actions, and how her presence in the book of Genesis moves the narrative forward. In some cases, however, there is not enough information for any substantive gain in knowledge. The chapters on "Mrs. Lot" and "Mrs. Potiphar" are two such examples.

This book is a unique approach to reading the women of Genesis and puts forth a rarely explored thesis; "the primary role of women in Genesis is to determine who will inherit the promise from the Israelite Deity" (16). The author clearly explains her methods, makes a close reading of her peer's work, writes plainly on her subjects, and draws well supported and intriguing conclusions. This book is a helpful addition to the academic library collection but will in most instances prove too academic for either the public or church library.

Deeper: Living in the Reality of God's Love, by Debbie Alsdorf. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, c2008. 216pp. \$12.99. ISBN-13: 978-0-8007-3215-8.

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

Founder of Design4Living Conferences, speaker, and author, Debbie Alsdorf, invites women to go 'deeper' into the reality of God's love through the study of four truths from Psalm 139. Instead of striving for perfection and to please people, she desires women undertaking this Bible study to understand that God created them, knows them, values them, and protects them.

From the introduction, the goal of this work is identified as life transformation, heart change, and a shift from self-centered to God-centered living. The author shares from her personal experience in moving from looking like a Christian to living abundantly through Christ. More theology is not the objective but applied faith and hope in the ordinary and every day.

The twelve book chapters are divided into three steps: getting real with God; getting back to basics; and getting

reset for living differently. There are questions at the end of each chapter making this book appropriate for individual or small groups committed to going deeper in the reality of God's love.

I would recommend this book for a church library or public library collecting Christian living literature for women.

Rome & Canterbury: The Elusive Search For Unity, Mary Reath. Laham, Md.: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007. 158pp. \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-7425-5278-4.

Reviewed by Sue Aspley, Head of Reference Services University Libraries, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

Mary Reath, the author of this work, has been active in the Episcopal Church in New York City for a number of years. She most recently was a visiting scholar at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA, and is currently a governor of the Anglican Centre in Rome. The origin of this book arose from a class she took at the Centre in 1998, which was entitled "Continuity and Change." The class concerned the many ties which bind Christians to Rome, especially Anglicans/Episcopalians and Roman Catholics. From this class arose the genesis of this book, which traces the history of the original schism between Rome and Canterbury and the grand efforts over the decades to achieve a reunion between the two institutions.

The book is divided into three parts: the history of the breach; early efforts at reconciliation, including a discussion on authority; and, finally, a look at what the future holds for the work of reunion. The author aptly presents her two-part thesis that the Ecumenical Movement attempts to heal the more than 500-year-old schism that was never really intended, and that the work for reunion holds the key to a revitalized Christianity. The book also contains a valuable Appendix of important unification documents on such topics as the Eucharist, Ministry and Ordination, and Salvation. Additionally, there is an excellent detailed bibliography.

The author has been able to artfully condense a wealth of pertinent information into a succinct, practical rendition without sacrificing completeness. The major milestones on the road to reunion are chronicled. The ecumenical work toward reunion (which has been little discussed by church historians) is traced from its early origins. The numerous conferences on reconciliation are chronicled, including the Lambeth Conference, the Malines Conversations, the establishment of the World Council of Churches and the breakthrough Second Vatican Council.

Lastly, there is a frank discussion of the differences that still exist and the impediments that still need to be resolved to keep the reunion momentum. This is a scholarly work on attempts to reconcile church doctrines on the road to reunion for the churches of Rome and Canterbury. It is a unique chronicle and would be appropriate as a resource for both scholars and students of theological collections.

Hope Amidst Ruin: A Literary and Theological Analysis of Ezra, by A. Philip Brown II. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2009. 288 pp. \$22.95. ISBN 978-1-59166-942-5.

Reviewed by Jason Fowler, Archives and Special Collections Librarian, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Hope Amidst Ruin is the published version of the dissertation that A. Philip Brown II wrote while pursuing his doctorate at Bob Jones University. Brown is now an associate professor at God's Bible School and College in Cincinnati, Ohio. This work provides an analysis of the theological message and literary features of the book of Ezra. Brown wrote *Hope Amidst Ruin* because he believed that no one had published a full length literary and theological analysis of the book. Brown's treatment focuses primarily on the book of Ezra rather than analyzing the entire Ezra-Nehemiah narrative. He contends that Ezra used the literary composition of his book to communicate his theological message. In essence, this message is that there is hope for Israel's future because, "the God of Heaven, Who exercises sovereign control over history to fulfill His word, blesses those who seek Him and pours out wrath on those who abandon Him" (201).

Hope Amidst Ruin begins with an analysis of the book's literary features such as temporal ordering, plot, and point of view. Brown's discussion of temporal ordering explains how the well known anachronism that occurs in Ezra 4:7-23 actually serves to support the theological message of the book. After discussing the literary features of the book, Brown analyzes its themes of God, holiness, and continuity. He concludes by discussing the way in which specific literary features throughout the book undergird Ezra's theology of sovereignty and holiness.

Hope Amidst Ruin is a clearly written book, and its arguments are easy to follow. It appears to be well researched, and Brown interacts ably with the significant English-language literature pertinent to his topic. This work is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the academic literature on Ezra, but libraries considering purchasing the resource should be

aware that the full text of Brown's dissertation, "A Literary and Theological Analysis of the Book of Ezra," is currently freely available from bible.org (<http://bible.org/series/literary-and-theological-analysis-book-ezra>).

Ecclesiology for a Global Church: A People Called and Sent, by Richard R. Gaillardetz. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008. 312 pp. \$30.00 9781570757693.

Reviewed by Garrett Trott, Instruction-Reference Librarian, Corban College & Graduate School, Salem, OR

Change is constant. How a church adapts to or resists change will determine its vivacity in the twenty-first century. In his book, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, Richard Gaillardetz provides a framework in which the twenty-first century church should understand change and its impact.

Gaillardetz is a professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo and his vocation is embedded throughout his book. Even though the ideas developed in this book refer to the Roman Catholic Church, it does not limit its usefulness. Gaillardetz makes every effort while discussing Roman Catholicism to apply it to a wide ecumenical base.

The author argues that historically, Roman Catholicism had great theological, canonical, liturgical, and ecclesiological diversity under its wings. However, the author argues, modern discussion regarding this variety has been stifled by the reductive intellectual framework of orthodox versus dissent. Gaillardetz argues that Catholicism must break its stifling doctrinal dichotomy and recover the immense breadth of its great tradition.

He begins by defining Christian community. He notes four qualifiers that mark a Christian community: holiness, catholic, unity, and apostolicity. The remaining chapters are loosely organized around the qualifiers, looking at them from a global perspective.

Although there will be disagreements with his writings, many readers, including those outside Catholicism, will find Gaillardetz's work helpful. He argues that the diversity in Christianity must be seen at a new light. The axiom, "universality in essentials, liberty in doubtful matters, and in all things charity," will highlight the need for greater discrimination in the determination of what is essential for ecclesiastical unity.

Change is constant. However, some elements of ecclesiology, because of their historicity, cannot change. If culture causes too dramatic of a change, identity is at stake. Gaillardetz does a commendable job of noting what should change, and what should not. He notes holiness, catholic, unity, and apostolicity as ecclesiastical constants. However, how these constants are brought to fruition can vary dramatically and impact one's doctrinal position. It is unfortunate that the author does not develop what these elements would look like when brought to culmination.

Overall, this book would fit any library well. Even though many faculty and students that are represented by the Association of Christian Librarians may not agree with Gaillardetz's ecclesiology, his work provides a picture of ecumenical ecclesiology. There is much effort towards the sake of ecumenicalism. However, there is still much work to be done in putting theory into practice. Gaillardetz efforts of doing this in his research and writing are noteworthy.

The Toddler Book: How to Enjoy Your Growing Child, by Rachel Waddilove. Oxford, England: Lion Hudson, 2008. 192 pp. ISBN 978-0-8254-6274-0

Reviewed by Kent T. K. Gerber, Digital Library Manager, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN

Many years spent caring for children professionally and as a mother saturate the pages of *The Toddler Book* resulting in a practical and thoughtful primer on parenting toddlers. Waddilove has 40 years of childcare experience including time as a nanny, mother, grandmother and maternity nurse which requires a National Nursery Board Diploma (this fact is for US readers who may not understand the maternity nurse concept). She also consulted with Dr. Hazel Curtis to include the oversight of a pediatrician.

Parents will recognize, or soon recognize, the many issues and situations that are raised in this book spanning from the general condition of family life in the 21st century to helping a toddler use the potty. Her philosophy includes consistent and caring discipline and encourages parents to appreciate and take joy in their children.

The book is organized into chapters pertaining to all the major issues in a toddler's life covering societal conditions, behavior, sleep, eating, potty training, play, development, general care, illnesses, having another baby, building strong family life, and spiritual and emotional needs. Also included are helpful additions throughout the book such as a recipe for play dough and a sample routine chart for a toddler's day.

It is an excellent book for new parents of toddlers and provides a source of ideas for parenting with joy and consistency. Readers who want more details, especially of a medical nature, will need to consult other books but this is a strong foundation with which to understand and care for your toddler.

Plain Talk about Alzheimer's Disease: Alzheimer's Related Dementia and Wandering. DVD produced by The Truro Group of Agoura Hills, CA and distributed by Vision Video of Worcester, PA, narrated by Kimberly R. Kelly, 61 minutes \$24.99.

Reviewed by Ruth E. Martin, Director of Library Services, San Diego Christian College, El Cajon, CA

Kimberly Kelly, founder of Project Far from Home, narrates this educational tool about Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Aloysius Alzheimer first identified Alzheimer's in 1906-07 by examining the brain of a patient at her death. Part I explains what Alzheimer's disease is, its signs and symptoms, medications and behaviors. Since one in eight persons over the age of 65 can be diagnosed with Alzheimers and one in two at the age of 85 and over, this disease strongly impacts our lives and our communities. Kelly reports that this is currently the most feared disease in the U.S. and is expected to increase to 16 million sufferers by 2050. Alzheimer's disease affects the body and mind. Common behaviors include 1. Agnosia - visually seeing something different than those without Alzheimer's disease; 2. Aphasia - changing how they express themselves in language; 3. Apraxia - losing motor skills, 4. Dysphagia - experiencing problems swallowing, 5. Sundowning - becoming more confused and agitated at sun down; 7. Layering - dressing themselves illogically; 8. Wandering - leaving their surroundings; and 9. Violence - expressing their depression and confusion through violence. More details about wandering are shared in Part 2 including dangers and suggestions on how to minimize wandering. Since seven in ten persons with Alzheimer's disease live at home, making intentional changes within the home is wise. Kelly's own grandmother's diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and her background in search and rescue no doubt increased her personal interest in this disease. She articulates well and is a good communicator. It is highly recommended for psychology and counseling related courses as well as caregivers.

Encounters with John Wesley. Worcester, PA: Vision Video, 2008. 89 minutes. \$19.99.

Reviewed by Mary Ann Buhler, Director of Library Services, Manhattan Christian College, Manhattan, KS

The founder of one of today's largest mainstream denominations, John Wesley lived in England in the 18th century. Although ordained as an Anglican priest, he broke with tradition and faced violent opposition to travel more than 200,000 miles on horseback to preach in the open-air. This DVD presents highlights of his life in a 25-minute docudrama featuring Mark Topping as Wesley.

According to the *John Wesley on the Road* web site <http://www.revjohnwesley.com>, Mark Topping for eight years was the curator at Wesley's New Room and Charles Wesley's House in Bristol, and as such gave hundreds of dramatic presentations to thousands of visitors. The web site lists numerous events where Topping still appears as either John or his brother Charles Wesley.

In addition to the docudrama, Topping presents dramatized versions of four of Wesley's sermons: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth"; "Awake, thou that sleepest"; "Thoughts on slavery"; and "Thoughts on war." In addition, it includes a look at The New Room, which was Wesley's first chapel, and his brother's house in Bristol. An interview with Mark Topping is interesting and brings out his research into Wesley's life and the subsequent Methodism.

Somebody looking for an in-depth video about Wesley and Methodism would not find this one helpful, but it would still be appropriate for an academic or church library as an introduction to John Wesley.

Affectionately Yours, Screwtape: the Devil and C. S. Lewis. Worcester, PA: Vision Video, 2007. 52 minutes. \$19.99.

Reviewed by Mary Ann Buhler, Director of Library Services, Manhattan Christian College, Manhattan, KS

This video is a tool for examining C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*. In addition to discussing the book, the documentary also provides a brief biography of Lewis, particularly in how his life affected the writing of this book. The DVD extras include additional interviews with three scholars who are showcased in the video, PDF files that provide a copy of the script, and a five-part study for small groups.

Since my colleague, Ron Ratliff, is quite a student of Lewis, I asked him for his opinion of the video. He initially thought that the extensive background information about evil was unnecessary, but as the video progressed he found it to be helpful, particularly for those people who might be less familiar with it. On the whole, he found the video to be quite good, one he will probably use in his C. S. Lewis class that he teaches.

I highly recommend *Affectionately Yours, Screwtape* for academic and church libraries, as well as any C. S. Lewis aficionados.

Forgiving the Unforgivable. Worcester, PA: Vision Video, Catalog number #501328D, www.visionvideo.com, 2007. Video. 33 min., \$19.99.

Reviewed by Donald Dean Smeeton, Resources and Public Services Librarian, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA

The word “forgiveness” is frequently used but not often understood. Even the fundamental Christian understanding of forgiveness from God can be an elusive abstraction. Forgiveness can be difficult to accept and even more difficult to grant, but this video can be a helpful tool for a small group, Sunday school class or college class to explore this important subject. The three distinct segments of the DVD allow a teacher to select and combine material to achieve class objectives.

The first segment presents three case studies, each about ten minutes in length, of offering forgiveness even when the offense seems unforgivable. The first, the slaughter of Amish girls at their school in bucolic Lancaster County, drew the national spotlight on a people who shun publicity. Because of their understanding of the biblical necessity to forgive, the Amish community not only forgave but also extended practical support to the shooter’s family. A second vignette recounts the struggle of a Christian therapist who studied and taught forgiveness for years but was challenged to overcome his own emotional reaction when his 75-year-old mother was brutally murdered – and the murderer was freed because of a legal technicality. A final illustration highlights Dr. Martin Luther King’s theology of forgiveness that guided his struggle for racial equality. While old newsreels provide

the visual reminders of that period, the commentary is given by Rev. Joseph Lowery, the third president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

The second part of the DVD is a direct “man-on-camera” twenty-minute teaching segment featuring the principles of forgiveness developed by Dr. Everett Worthington, Jr. who was featured in the stories of forgiveness mentioned above. He had just co-authored *To Forgive is Human* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997, ISBN 978-0830816835) when his mother was slain and he was forced to apply what he had been teaching. His comments are structured on the acronym REACH (recall, empathize, altruistic giving, commitment and holding on). The content is clear but the background of a chemistry lab might suggest more support from the “hard” sciences than is appropriate to a “five steps to forgiveness” psychology.

The final segment of the DVD is a ten-page downloadable PDF study guide that could assist in a teaching situation. Each lesson consists of a synopsis of the video segment, the presentation of relevant scriptures, and discussion questions. This study guide allows the teacher to explore the biblical and personal implications not covered in the video itself.

This DVD is an abridgment of material from *The Big Question: A Film about Forgiveness* DVD which is also available from Vision Video (catalog # 501327D) for the same price. This presentation of the content in short segments allows the teacher to select the components most useful in a given setting and makes this DVD a recommended resource in any Christian college or local congregational library.

INTERESTED IN REVIEWING A TITLE?

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