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## Resource Reviews

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# Resource Reviews

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**Thirty Years that Changed the World: The Book of Acts for Today**, by Michael Green. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002. 287 pp. \$19.00. ISBN 0-8028-2766-7.

*Reviewed by Donald Dean Smeeton, Ph.D., Director, Squires Library, Lee University/Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, Tennessee.*

Michael Green is greater than the accumulation of his accolades. By title he is Senior Research Fellow at Oxford's Wycliffe Hall and by ecclesiastical title he is a priest in the Church of England. By fame is a significant scholar and an effective preacher; by reputation a statesman of world wide evangelicalism. As an evangelist, he calls on all to embrace a radical, prayer saturated, Spirit dominated, un-ecclesiastical, commitment to Christ; as a prophet, he states there is something fatally flawed about western Christianity.

If one is familiar with Michael Green, one will see continuity with his previous works. Even if one is unfamiliar with the him, one could easily compile the list of more than a dozen books, both scholarly and popular, that bears his name. His 1970 publication of the *Evangelism in the Early Church*, with its 55 pages of notes, established his reputation as a careful researcher and original thinker, but he has not been content to retreat to academia. For the last 35 years, he put all at risk in the experiment of attempting to replicate the experience of the early church.

It is in this context that one can appreciate *Thirty Years that Changed the World: The Book of Acts for Today*. It is a study of Acts with applications to the church today. It is neither a commentary nor a summary of the exegetical or doctrinal controversies generated by the text. By contrast, it is an unapologetic appeal to read Acts with a vision uncluttered with biases originating in doctrine and tradition. It is a call to recapture the values, message, methods, apologetics, social concerns, evangelism, obedience, joy, leadership styles and, perhaps

most importantly, the experiential life in the Holy Spirit that Luke describes as the church of the Book of Acts. By frequently contrasting Christianity in the developing world with the limp and ineffective religion seen in so much of western culture, Michael Green calls the church to move its life, practice and spirituality back to the biblical pattern.

Although *Thirty Years* lacks the footnotes and bibliography that characterize academic books, it is obvious that Michael Green is aware of the controversies and chooses his words wisely. He is deliberately non-divisive and tries to include the significant positive aspects of all sides in controversial issues. Although the early church was narrow in its essential message, it was broad in its methodology, structure and decision making procedures.

The work was first published in England as *Acts for Today* in 1993. Now with a new title, it is re-issued by Eerdmans with no indication of any revisions or additions.

This title is recommended for libraries that serve traditions that look to the early church as a model and for believers who hunger for a more dynamic, more spiritual and more effective church life.

**Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible**, edited by James D.G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003. 1586pp. \$75.00. ISBN 0-8028-3711-5.

*Reviewed by Donald Dean Smeeton, Ph.D., Director, Squires Library, Lee University/Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, Tennessee.*

This substantial one volume commentary deserves serious consideration by those wanting to build library collections, whether for an academic institution or for their own use. Its editors claim that it gathers the best of international scholarship and is the only one volume commentary to cover all the biblical text, including the Apocrypha. Rather

than providing the traditional verse-by-verse comments, the editors opted for a series of essays on the principal meaning of the units so that the reader does not get lost in the details. The idea is that such major context setting treatments allow an overview of the issues that encompass the text.

The list of contributors is ecumenical in that it includes both Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars representing a variety of theological positions. The commentators use the Revised Standard Version as the common translation but some offer their own rendering of the text. Most of the essays give only a brief comment about the author and date, but extended treatment of themes and arrangement of the text itself. This orientation results in a work that focuses, more on the meaning of the text as a literary item, rather than on scripture as a text for personal application or pastoral sermons. There is a bibliography of current and relevant sources with each essay to help those who want to continue their study beyond the introductory essay.

The volume presents itself as containing non-technical language that provides “reader-friendly” treatment for the “general reader.” The editors seem to assume that the “general reader” has a good sturdy desk because, at six pounds, the book is too heavy to hold for as long it takes to read more than a page or two. With fairly small type size and lots of text on the page, the presentation can be daunting. The “general reader” might also be intimidated by the text itself. Consider this passage from A.R. Pete Diamond’s comments on Jeremiah (admittedly robbed of an explanatory context): “The composition begins to construct a world in which not all claimants to Yahwistic oracular power are equal. They will also represent a world where oracular themes and traditions are distributed in applicability relative to “party” affiliations. In the process the claims of *Yahweh-alone* are factionalized, and the composition expropriates oracular power from “Jeremiah” to the compositional elite that “wield” him! (p. 557). Good luck, general reader.

Again, this one volume commentary is substantial in size and content. It is not for

the bookcase of the general reader, but for the shelves of institutions offering upper division and graduate level Bible courses. It is a significant collection of essays by an ecumenical team who capture in one volume the trends and currents of contemporary Biblical scholarship.

**Her Heart Can See: The Life and Hymns of Fanny J. Crosby**, by Edith L. Blumhofer. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005. 365 pp. \$20.00. ISBN 0-8028-4253-4.

*Reviewed by Elizabeth R. Pearson, Library Director, Montreat College, Montreat, North Carolina.*

This detailed and carefully researched biography will become the definitive scholarly source on Fanny Crosby, the blind American hymn writer whose prolific output contributed many gospel songs to evangelical musical literature. Blumhofer, professor of history and director of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals at Wheaton College, offers an objective assessment of Crosby’s life and her role in the larger evangelical setting of late 19<sup>th</sup> century America. In contrast to the many inspirational accounts of the composer’s life, this serious study draws on published and archival sources that provide context for Crosby’s work. Blumhofer makes a convincing case that Crosby earned a place among those who impacted evangelical Christianity.

Although music critics found Crosby’s gospel hymns lacking in substance and musical quality, Blumhofer notes that her work was widely circulated by the popular press and contained the very elements that her public found attractive. Characterized by light melodies and reassuring language, those hymns expressed the popular evangelical sentiment of the era. In her day, Crosby’s hymns figured prominently in the American Sunday School movement. A number of these hymns have survived and remain in denominational hymnals today.

The book’s arrangement is chronological and topical, beginning with a detailed family genealogy, a survey of the composer’s education from 1835 to 1845, and an account of the transitional years from 1845 to 1858. Following are chapters on the influence of faith, music, and her collaborators. The last section examines

the gospel hymns, Crosby's benevolent interests and the final years. The author notes that Crosby's blindness may have made it easier for her to make contacts and pursue opportunities other women of her generation could not. Crosby's early association with Lowell Mason, George Root, and William Bradbury nurtured her development as a successful hymn text composer. Her later association with Phoebe Palmer Knapp, William Doane, and Ira Sankey brought her work to the attention of a wide public and assured her of enduring acclaim.

This book fills a void in the scholarly literature about the composer and her place in American evangelicalism. Blumhofer's meticulous research dispels myths surrounding Crosby and brings to light what is actually documented about her life. This account is strong in interpretation, rich in detail, and engaging in writing style. The author draws upon local histories and a variety of primary and secondary sources that yield an authentic rendering and analysis of Crosby's life. The author's notes on her sources will be of value to researchers.

This book can be highly recommended to academic and public libraries.

**The Discipline for Pastoral Care Giving: Foundations for Outcome Oriented Chaplaincy**, by Larry VandeCreek and Arthur M. Lucas, Eds. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press. 2001. 174 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 0-7890-1346-0.

*Reviewed by Rev. Paul Thomas, Intern, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Program, Parkland Hospital, Dallas, Texas.*

Working as a chaplain intern while on sabbatical, I began to wonder, "So what? Are patients benefiting?" How could I integrate my ministry with that of doctors, nurses, and social workers, and become more relevant to them? Then my librarian wife suggested this article collection for review, and CPE took on a new dimension.

Eleven of 15 articles in this two-journal issues compilation come from Barnes-Jewish Hospital at Washington University, St. Louis. Feeling pressure from a budget-mediated emphasis on results orientation in other hospital disciplines, the chaplains there felt a need to make their

program relevant to secular administrators. They proceeded to systematize what they do, and to classify the patients they deal with in each hospital department (transplant, HIV, oncology, etc.). The outcome became described as *The Discipline* (TD).

A cycle of pastoral care visits to a patient using TD consists of six phases: (1) discovery of patient needs/hopes/resources; (2) profiling meaning, hope, community and patient concept of the holy; (3) proposing contributing outcome(s); (4) formulating an integrated plan; (5) making interventions; and (6) measuring outcomes. During long-term interactions with patients, this cycle may be repeated.

The articles mostly cover hospital chaplaincy. Two consider use of TD in parish ministry. Two cover integration of TD in the chaplain training process. As most articles come from the institution that has pioneered in TD, and since TD is spreading to other hospitals and even outside of hospital contexts, the articles are foundational for any pastoral counseling collection.

A couple criticisms are in order. A few of the articles seemed poorly reviewed or edited. Some graphics were crowded and some gray tones in them were so light as to almost fade into the paper. However, these do not detract significantly from the seminal concepts demonstrated in the book as a whole.

**emergingchurch.intro: Fresh expressions of church**, by Micheal Moynagh with contributions by George Lings, Stuart Murray Williams, and Howard Worsley. Monarch Books, Oxford, UK & Grand Rapids, MI. 2004, 253 pp. US ISBN 0 8254 6068 9.

*Reviewed by Dr. Edwin B. Fountain, Academic Librarian (Retired) Vidalia, Georgia.*

This is the latest import about how to worship God from a country where less than 5% of the people attend church with any regularity. It is a book that tells us that two of God's "experiments" have certainly failed: creation of man and now the Church that Jesus is still building. Mr. Moynagh and his friends now want mere man, God's colossal failure, to decide how man should worship this god of failure.

We are told that every culture should have its own personal manner of worship but he would like the “old failure” to finance the new multicultural (read alternate lifestyles) in their, “spiritual quests.”

The attempt here is to re-introduce the old “social gospel” movement that is defined by Millard Erickson as having “... a tendency to replace the gospel of regeneration with an emphasis upon transformation of society through the alteration of its structures.”

He is desperately insisting that diversity is good and ignores Amos 3:3, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” Besides, this scripture all we need do is take a look at what diversity has done to England, France, Germany and we have seen and are seeing it in the United States.

The book is a garden path to a world church where man casts aside the idea of faith as a gift of God and substitutes Albrecht’s idea that faith is based in “value-judgments.”

I would recommend this book if you want to learn to recognize one of the wolves in sheep’s clothing that faces Christianity today. We must know its face but remember that “the gates of hell shall not prevail” against the Lord’s Church.

**Out at Home**, by Jeannie St. John Taylor. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004. 137 pp. \$5.99. ISBN 0825437245.

*Reviewed by Karen L. Straube, Head, Technical Services Dept., George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon.*

Jeannie St. John Taylor is the author of many Christian books for children and adults, both fiction and nonfiction. In her novel *Out at Home* 13 year-old Dakota Anderson is suddenly confronted with the divorce of his parents. Without knowing the facts he takes his father’s side and blames his mother. Dakota decides that if he becomes a better baseball player his father will be proud of him and want to return home. A troubled older boy coaches Dakota outside of practice, but makes him pay for the batting cages and other activities. Dakota doesn’t realize that this isn’t a true friendship, and soon abandons his old friends in favor of his new one.

One evening Dakota finds that his mother and sister became born-again while out for a walk, after being drawn into a neighborhood church by the inviting music. Their conversion seems abrupt, but St. John Taylor realistically shows the resulting changes in their lives through their actions and attitudes. While his mother and sister seek to draw him near, Dakota further distances himself. When he learns that the divorce was actually caused by his father’s affair, Dakota abandons his sports goal and instead focuses on revenge. His actions snowball until he finds himself in trouble at home, in school, and with the law. As everything in his life falls apart, his eyes are opened to his behavior and his need for forgiveness. He accepts Christ as his savior, forgives his father, and reconciles with his mother and sister.

This story illustrates the power of forgiveness and the impact of one’s actions on others. This novel is sure to appeal to preteens and is recommended.

**Gifts of the Wise Men: A Treasury of Christmas Stories**, by Colleen Reece. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004. 76pp. \$14.99. ISBN 0-8254-3607-9.

*Reviewed by Melissa Moore, Reference and Reader Services Librarian, Union University, Jackson, Tennessee.*

Known mainly for her Christian romances and involvement in Heartsong Presents, Colleen Reece has put together an attractive package of short stories which complement the Christmas story. Some of the stories are historical, set in Bethlehem, while others are more personal in nature and reflective of Reece’s snowy holidays in rural Washington State. Lovely pictures and an attractive cover do not make up for the uneven writing within. Only a few pieces (such as “Too Far to Christmas” and “Store-Bought Christmas”) stand out for their touching portrayals of Christmases long past. Intended to be a gift book, this volume does not really belong in any library except those with a faithful Reece readership.

**Out of the Depths: The Autobiography of John Newton**. Revised and Updated for Today’s Readers by Dennis R. Hillman. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2003. 159pp. \$10.99. ISBN 0-8254-3319-3.

*Reviewed by Melissa Moore, Reference Librarian and Team Leader for Public Services, Union University, Jackson, Tennessee.*

This abridgement is the incredible testimony of John Newton (author of “Amazing Grace,” as well as over 200 other hymns with William Cowper). Newton lived in the 1700s and, though rose by a godly mother who died when he was seven, spent many years astray, pursuing worldly philosophy and atheism. His story is reminiscent of the prodigal son, even to the point of sharing his food with the hogs and appealing to his father. Many times providence intervened and he narrowly escaped death. He was a slave trader in Africa with no morals excepting honesty when he began to seek the Lord. He frequently expresses his salvation experience as a work of unmerited favor and grace.

Originally told in a series of letters which Newton later expanded at the request of friends, this brief work recounts in Newton’s words (which have been modernized for contemporary readers) his waywardness and God’s faithfulness. The climax is Newton’s salvation, though later life events (such as his ministry at St. Mary Woolnoth and his wife’s sickness and death) are briefly related in Appendix I. The inclusion of pithy statements by Newton (as Appendix II) is a nice touch and added bonus. This volume is highly readable (in both tone and content) for the modern student, and has a rightful place in collections of biography, hymnology, and theology.

**Thinking Right When Things Go Wrong: Biblical Wisdom For Surviving Tough Times** by John C. Hutchinson, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005. 256 p. \$10.77; ISBN 0825428106

*Reviewed by Deborah Powell, Cataloging Manager, Memphis Public Library and Information Center, Memphis, Tennessee.*

“Trials have an important positive purpose in the Christian life.” And yet when things go wrong it is difficult to keep in the forefront of one’s mind the “positive purpose” of the trial. Nevertheless, John C. Hutchinson does a remarkable job of communicating and transcending life’s difficulties into a format that

clarifies and eases the challenges faced on this journey called life. This resource is loaded with insightful healing and contagiously practical advice that will help stabilize anyone going through a trial or suffering. Divided into three distinct parts, Hutchinson concentrates on “Life’s Hardships and Heartaches and what’s in it for me, what’s in it for you, and thinking right when things go wrong.” This is an excellent resource for the individual, pastor, Bible teacher or group. Housed within, Hutchinson even provides suggestions for small groups and a list of scriptural text for those seeking Biblical wisdom. This resource will assist in minimizing the devastating effect resulting from an oncoming or ongoing crisis. It is in the pages of John C. Hutchinson’s book that you will come to know that, “*God is faithful, loving, and gracious. He provides strength during our times of weakness and enough grace to bear up under every test and temptation.*”

**Dead Man’s Rule**, by Rick Acker. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005. 316 pp. \$12.99. ISBN 0-8254-2006-7.

*Reviewed by Melissa Moore, Reference and Reader Services Librarian, Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.*

Ben Corbin is trying his best to build his Chicago law practice while he struggles to pay the bills and shares office space with his wife, Noelle. When Dr. Mikhail Ivanovsky asks Ben to take an apparently open-and-shut case on the legal ownership of a safe-deposit box, Ben agrees. But things move quickly out of control when the other party turns up dead and Dr. Ivanovsky finally agrees to tell Ben the rest of the story, that the box contains biochemical weapons plans and directions to their location. Ben knows that he must do everything in his power to win the case, to keep the biological weapons out of the hands of Chechen terrorists who will do anything to get into that box.

Part legal thriller (a.k.a. John Grisham), part murder mystery, this nicely-crafted story begins with a bang (literally) and never lets up. Characters are well-developed and realistic, the tone is not preachy or moralizing, the mystery twists and turns. Acker is not afraid to kill off main characters, to show the seriousness of

what is at stake. *Dead Man's Rule* seems all-too-real at times and unsettles the reader with its timeliness. This nearly flawless novel belongs in every library where well-written suspense novels are enjoyed. Hopefully, Acker will continue to take time out from his real-life job as a litigator to write more fast-paced, timely stories.

**First Dawn**, by Judith Miller. Book one in the Freedom's Path series. Minneapolis: Bethany, 2005. 379pp. \$12.99. ISBN 0-7642-2997-4.

*Reviewed by Melissa Moore, Reference and Reader Services Librarian, Union University, Jackson, Tennessee.*

Set shortly after the emancipation of the slaves, *First Dawn* follows the story of a community of sharecroppers who have given what little they have to own a piece of land they can farm in Nicodemus, Kansas. Unfortunately, that's all it is – a piece of land. There is no town, and the poor sharecroppers are not prepared to meet the harsh conditions of a Kansas winter on the prairie. Thankfully, a doctor in the neighboring town of Hill City can help in several ways, and Samuel has always been supportive of blacks no matter where he lives. Samuel and his family don't have much, but at least they aren't living in a dugout and making do with gruel and wild rabbit. This novel follows the story of the two communities and the families they hold through their first winter.

She has collaborated with Tracie Peterson on several novels, but this is her first solo flight. Though the premise is good (and based in history), Miller's writing is uneven. She has a good awareness of place, and is able to write lyrically about the unending flat plains of Kansas. Several of her black characters, especially Ezekiel Harban and his oldest daughter Jarena, are well-drawn and show depth of character and engaging personal conflict, but others (particularly the doctor's grown children Macia and Harvey) are erratic and act out of character frequently. Scenes intended to be suspenseful fall short because so much has been given away previously. While Miller has a great idea, it is doubtful if the Freedom's Path series will succeed. Only for large Christian fiction collections.

**To Our Bodies Turn We Then: Body as Word and Sacrament in the Works of John Donne**, by Felecia Wright McDuffie. New York: Continuum, 2005. 176 pp. \$23.95. ISBN 0-8264-1677-2.

*Reviewed by C. Rebecca Rine, Research and Writing Specialist, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.*

Literary scholars have examined John Donne's representations of the body without reference to his theology. Theologians have studied Donne's religious sensibilities without reference to his perspective on the body. Felecia Wright McDuffie recognizes that Donne's theology and his view of the body are related, and indeed, essential to each other. Thus, she sets out to provide a "comprehensive interpretation of Donne's reading of the body" (ix).

McDuffie structures her work using the same theme that she perceives in Donne's treatment of the body: the trajectory of salvation history through creation, fall, redemption, and resurrection. Chapters one through four examine Donne's portrayals of the created body, the fallen body, the body redeemed and redemptive, and the eschatological body. Chapter five contains sample readings of Donne's *Anniversaries* and *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* in light of the theme of salvation history and Donne's preoccupation with the body. Through extensive citation and analysis of the full range of Donne's works, the author provides ample evidence to support her claims.

This scholarly yet accessible book is appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate students. While McDuffie includes Donne's Latin phrases for the advanced reader, she accommodates the novice by offering English translations as well. She assumes a substantial level of theological knowledge, using terms such as eschatology, ontology, and teleology without pausing to define them; however, she often clarifies literary terminology and archaic references. Her attention to the philosophical, theological, and literary traditions that informed Donne's work will prove quite useful to the scholar, yet her entire presentation is straightforward, easy to understand, and readily available even to a

person unfamiliar with scholarship on Donne or his milieu.

Felecia Wright McDuffie is the T. Jack Lance Professor of Religion at Youth Harris College, Georgia. Though her book was written with both literary and theological aims in mind, readers may be surprised at the depth of pastoral imagination that emerges within its pages. The book is useful not only for the study of Donne and his writings, but also for the study of the art of preaching and the pastoral ramifications of one's view of the body. Thus, patrons of both college and seminary libraries should value McDuffie's approach.

**The Crime of Living Cautiously: Hearing God's Call to Adventure**, by Luci Shaw. Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005. 140 pp. \$14.00. ISBN 0-8308-3280-7.

*Reviewed by Elizabeth Pearson, Library Director, Montreat College, Montreat, North Carolina.*

Luci Shaw is a poet, writer, and editor and has served as a writer in residence and lecturer at Regent College in Vancouver, Canada. In *The Crime of Living Cautiously*, she shows what it means to "live the adventure." Drawing upon her own experiences, her poetry, and selected narratives from Scripture, Shaw examines the concept of risk-taking in Christian perspective. This book offers vivid insight into the challenges Christians face and the risks we are called to take as faithful believers. It points the way to a richer experience in Christian living as we learn to embrace risk as a moment of opportunity to respond to God's call.

Adventure is a vital human drive. But when adventure beckons, is it really guided by the Holy Spirit or by our own self-interest? Motivation, the author emphasizes, helps distinguish between the foolhardiness and the faithfulness of our actions. The motive behind our actions should be for the benefit of others. When the risks we take advance God's purpose, the author notes, then we have acted in faithful obedience.

Risk-taking is portrayed in all its aspects, including the risk of relinquishing our influence to become servants rather than authority figures, the risk of listening to God and yielding control of our lives, the risk of

dissenting and telling the truth to right a wrong, the risk of committing to relationships in lieu of pursuing independence, and the risk of moving out of our comfort zones and into unknown territory in obedience to God.

The final chapters reflect on several unlikely biblical characters who were risk-takers for God. In conclusion, the author recalls both biblical and contemporary role models who stepped out into the unknown, in spite of their misgivings, to discover God's call to a more dynamic level of faith. The message is clear: if we are able to trust and take risks, God can prepare us for something bigger than we can imagine.

This book will appeal to general readers and is appropriate for academic and church libraries.

**Marriage on Trial: The Case Against Same-Sex Marriage and Parenting**, by Glenn T. Stanton and Dr. Bill Maier. Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 198 pp. ISBN 0-8308-3274-2.

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

Glenn T. Stanton is director of social research and cultural affairs, and senior analyst for marriage and sexuality at Focus on the Family. Dr. Bill Maier is a child and family psychologist who serves as vice president of Focus on the Family and as its psychologist in residence.

The debate over same-sex marriage and a constitutional marriage amendment continues to escalate. We rarely hear "concrete" reasons why same-sex marriage and parenting is a good idea or is not a good idea. Glenn T. Stanton and Dr. Bill Maier make a convincing argument why same-sex marriage and parenting is not a good idea. Using a question and answer format, they provide answers to key questions asked by the same-sex marriage proponents: Why shouldn't homosexuals be allowed to marry or how would legalizing same sex-marriage threaten the traditional family or "don't children just need loving parents"?

The book is divided into three sections. Section one answer the same-sex marriage proponents' questions. The second section

explains why traditional marriage matters to adults, children, and society. The last section refutes myths about homosexuality, including are homosexuals born gay, or can they change their sexual orientation. The book includes in the appendix a discussion of change and hope with Mike Haley and Melissa Fryrear.

Based on current social science research, the authors show that same-sex marriage does not provide for children or society the same benefits as traditional marriage. Stanton and Maier's purpose is to help the reader "to understand and explain (1) how harmful same-sex marriage and parenting can be to people and our culture, and (2) why natural marriage between one man and one woman is so important to the health of humanity" (p.13).

This book is highly recommended for all libraries. It will help every reader to better understand what is at stake in the debate over same-sex marriage and parenting.

**Why The Rest Hates the West**, by Meic Pearse, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 188 pp. \$15.00; ISBN: 0-8308-3202-5.

*Reviewed by Mike Starasta, Reference Librarian, Chatham Area Public Library, Chatham, Illinois.*

Why do the Western and Non-Western worlds seem to be in such conflict? A number of explanations have been put forth by Historians and Political Scientists. These explanations have included issues such as economic disparity, industrialization, and the war in Iraq. However in *Why the Rest Hates the West*, Historian Meic Pearse argues that the primary cause of conflict between the West and Non-West is cultural (although he notes that religion does play an important role).

According to Pearse, Western culture has actually become an anti-culture that is forcing itself on the non-western world. This western anti-culture is opposed to many of the values that hold societies in the non-Western world together. For instance, the Western world no longer views religion as being a motivating force in life. Ancestors are not respected. "Sexual freedom" has become accepted as a matter of principle and has led to the destruction of the traditional family. Individual rights have

replaced notions of honor and obligation. Western political systems are viewed as large impersonal states. As a result "Westerners are viewed as rich, technologically sophisticated, economically and politically dominant, morally contemptible barbarians" (P. 34).

Pearse clearly explains the historical reasons why the West has adopted these concepts and offers suggestions for healing between the West and the Non-West (P. 171-180). In *Why The Rest Hates the West* Meic Pearse succeeds in providing an easy to understand, clearly defined introduction to sources of conflict between the Western and Non-Western worlds.

**7 Tools for Cultivating your Child's Potential**, by Zan Tyler. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005. 238pp. \$14.95 ISBN: 0805440208.

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

Zan Tyler has been a home schooling mother, lobbyist, and a spokesperson for home schooling for over twenty years. She and her husband, Joe, founded the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools in 1990 and Zan served as its president for 10 years. She is the Home school Resource and Media Consultant for Broadman & Holman Publishers and the Home school Editor for LifeWay.com. Zan speaks on a wide variety of home schooling topics and finds it one of her greatest joys in life to encourage other home schooling mothers.

The book's purpose is to teach parents how to maximize their child's potential spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and vocationally. Tyler presents biblical principles that will help parents to raise "dynamic, successful children" who love the Lord and each other. It also presents ways to pass on the biblical worldview to our children. She believes that "God has appointed the home as the place where true education occurs and where learning flourishes best." Tyler's ultimate goal in this book is to help parents understand the opportunity that God has given them to "positively shape the lives and hearts of the next generation for Christ".

7 *Tools for cultivating your Child's potential* is an excellent book. It is well written and provides many good ideas on nurturing a child's potential. It is especially recommended to all parents, but will be helpful to anyone who works with children. The author's journey of homeschooling demonstrates the struggles parents have faced in exercising their rights to educate their children.

**Simple Acts of Kindness: Practical Ways to Help People in Need**, by Terri Green. Grand Rapids: Revell, 2004. 173pp. \$10.99 ISBN 0-8007-5879-X.

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

The author, a member of the congregation of Saddleback Valley Community Church pastored by Rick Warren, received the Volunteer of the Year Award by the State of California for her work with people with developmental disabilities. Her own amazing story of Kara, her oldest daughter with severe cerebral palsy, inspired her to be involved in programs for others with like needs at her local church, community organizations and the United Cerebral Palsy Association.

The book is divided into 3 main parts: 1. Give your self to others-God will help; 2. You care, but God cares even more; and 3. Group Giving. Each chapter provides suggestions for how the reader could respond to others in need. A verse from Scripture is given at the end of each chapter. Terri writes an incredible story of faithfulness and perseverance as she shares about herself, her husband Brad, and children Kara, Tayler and Paige.

The Table of Contents is helpful in that it provides a brief comment about each chapter entry and could enable the reader to read by topic though it is recommended that it be read in chapter order.

Terri concludes her story in the last two chapters by telling the reader that it is never too late to help others and that God will give strength when needed.

This book is recommended for any person that has a loved one in crisis as it provides practical

suggestions and could be helpful in ministry and psychology courses.

**Selah: Your Moment to Stop, Think, and Step into Your Future**, by Nanci Carmichael. Grand Rapids: Revell, 2004. 221pp. \$12.99 ISBN 0-8007-5957-5

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

Selah, as defined by the author, is "... the pause that God gives us." (10) This pause is the time when women are encouraged to pursue what matters most by examining priorities. Carmichael interviewed over thirty women with a variety of occupations, experiences and ages. The common thread woven between these women was their love for God and their passion to make a difference.

Carmichael divides the book into three parts. The First Calling, Part One, is when life is all about making a living or caring for growing families (44). Selah, Part Two, is that time of life when a transition happens (14), maybe being prompted by a major change in your life, when taking the time to stop and think is so important. Your Second Calling, Part Three, is the place in life where you have learned (hopefully!) from your experiences and can invest more fully in the lives of others.

The 12 chapters give examples of specific women in the Bible. These chapters include the woman at the well, the Proverbs 31 woman, Mary & Martha, the widow in II Kings 4, the ten virgins, Sarah, Mary the Mother of Jesus, Naomi, Rahab, Esther, and Mary of Bethany. Each chapter ends with a prayer and thoughts for mapping out the next step of one's life.

This title is recommended for women who are evaluating their lives and group Bible studies.

**The Heart of Thornton Creek**, by Bonnie Leon. Grand Rapids: Revell, 2005. Book One in "The Queensland Chronicles." 344pp. \$12.99. ISBN 0-8007-5896-X.

*Reviewed by Melissa Moore, Reader Services Librarian and Professor of Library Services, Union University, Jackson, Tennessee.*

Rebecca Williams has grown up in Boston in the late 1800s and has fiercely independent

streak that speaks to modern women but was considered too forward and unladylike for her day. When tragedy strikes and she is left alone with family debts, she takes a chance and accepts Daniel Thornton's offer of marriage, even though she must follow him to the outback to do it. What follows is a difficult period of adjustment to life in Australia, with its huge open spaces and lack of amenities (like indoor plumbing), and to life with Daniel, who will not stand up to his legalistic, domineering father, even in Rebecca's defense. Rebecca wants to do what's right, but has a hard time finding her way.

Leon is a gifted writer of historical fiction, and with the beginning of a new series, she has done an excellent job of capturing the rugged, harsh beauty of Australia and the difficulties of a marriage of convenience. Her characters are well-developed and dimensional, and the tension among the Thornton family is palpable. While the conclusion may be a little too convenient, in other ways it is realistic and holds out hope for Daniel and Rebecca, that they might make it after all. This novel has a place in all collections where historical fiction circulates well and has books two and three coming right behind.

**Becoming a World Changing Family: Fun and Innovative Ways to Spread the Good News**, by Donna S. Thomas, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004. 160 pp. \$11.99; ISBN 0-8010-6512-7.

*Reviewed by Leslie Starasta, Information Services Librarian, Lincoln Christian College & Seminary, Lincoln, Illinois.*

Many Christian parents may wonder how they can be involved in missions particularly when they do not feel called to the mission field. Donna Thomas, founder of Project Partner with Christ and Christian Vision Ministries, has written a practical book to help Christian families intentionally incorporate world missions into their life. *Becoming a World Changing Family* consists of 12 short chapters designed for parents to read together. Each chapter includes a section entitled "What You Can Do Today as a Family" to help families put the contents into practice.

Thomas begins by discussing how the international world is literally at our doorsteps and can easily be embraced. An expanded discussion defines Great Commission family and kids setting the stage for a variety of easily implemented, fun ideas to learn about the world and missions. Some ideas, such as hosting missionaries in your home or having an international pen pal or e-pal, are expected, but Thomas also includes suggestions for putting a missions twist on parties and games. Practical tips, gleaned from her personal experience, are shared on taking short-term missions trips with your family. Thomas also includes a special chapter on the role of grandparents in a Great Commission family.

*Becoming a World Changing Family* is highly recommended for families and church libraries. Parents will find the ideas included easy to implement without seeming overwhelming and will welcome the freedom to pick and choose as appropriate for their situation. Individuals involved in Christian education or missions committees in their local church will find the ideas included useful for ministry settings as well. Academic libraries serving missions and Christian education students will also find this work useful.

**When I Don't Desire God**, by John Piper. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004. 272 pp. \$12.99. ISBN 1-58134-652-2.

*Reviewed by Michael Powell, Freelance writer and founder, To Be Read Aloud Publishing, New York, New York.*

John Piper may presently be America's greatest Christian thinker. In over twenty books, he has yet to divert his famous thesis, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." In his recent book, *When I Don't Desire God*, the theologian yields a bit to the pastor as Piper gives counsel on how to fight for joy.

According to Piper, humans deep desire for joy does not contradict the divine command to embrace Christ. Instead, embracing Christ gains the deepest and most permanent joy. Still, Christians don't desire God as they ought. This makes fighting for joy crucial to the Christian experience. Piper explains this well with a

plethora of scripture references and especially keen logic.

Anyone who has never read one of Piper's books will find *When I Don't Desire God* revolutionary, perhaps shocking. Others, who have read John Piper before, may find him repetitive.

**Reconcilable Differences: Hope and Healing for Troubled Marriages**, by Virginia Todd Holeman. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 247 pp. ISBN 0-8308-3219-x.

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

Dr. Virginia Todd Holeman is professor of counseling at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist. Prior to joining Asbury, she served as a full-time counselor in a private practice. She has extensive experience in marriage and family therapy.

Dr. Holeman attempts to answer four major questions in this book: "Can couples reconcile when their marriage has been severely damaged by moral wrongdoing? What roles do forgiveness and repentance play? Do other elements contribute to marital reconciliation in addition to forgiveness and repentance? Do reconciled marriages look alike, or are their contours unique, given the various contexts in which couples find themselves?" (p.9).

These questions led her to interview twelve couples from across the United States and Canada to talk to her about their marriage. The interviews sought to answer the question what went wrong in their relationships and what they did to repair their relationships. Dr. Holeman "developed a list of essential items for repairing damaged relationships in general and marriage relationships in particular" based on her studying these interviews, social science research, and theological studies. These essential items are "commitment to Christ, commitment to reconciliation, commitment to a reconciliation-friendly community, emotionally growing up, repenting, forgiving, restoring truth and trustworthiness" (28).

The author does a good job in communicating

these points. She shows how these points are supported by social science research. Including the stories of these couples add a personal touch to the book. It illustrates these essential points to the reader intelligibly or in a way that is easy to understand.

This book is recommended for all libraries. It will be helpful to couples who are experiencing difficulties in their marriages. It will be helpful to all couples in learning essential truths for gaining intimacy in marriage.

**Yeshua/Jesus : exploring the Jewish roots of Jesus**, by Marc Villiger Productions, Worcester, PA: Marc Villiger Productions, 1999. 60 min. \$19.99; EAN 727985008141

*Reviewed by Deborah Powell, Cataloging Manager, Memphis Public Library and Information Center, Memphis, Tennessee.*

Jewish customs and traditions have remained unchanged for over 1,000 years. In this stunning two-part documentary on the Jewish roots of Yeshua the viewer is catapulted into a historical journey of adventure and insight in Jewish religious customs and practices. Much like being taken in a time capsule to the historical religious atmosphere and tradition of the life of Christ part one sets the tone making the transition to understanding this period in time both educational and informative. From Qumran to the Mount of Olives, from gaining insight in the Torah to the Essenes, the Jewish traditions during the time of Christ are still being practiced today. In part two, viewers delve into the messages communicated by Christ and the way of life experienced by the Rabbi.

This resource is a must for any historical buff, individual or institution seeking factual documentation on Jewish traditions and customs. The footage alone will captivate and transform the viewer into a period in time that will tantalize and transform the soul.

**The Uttermost Part of the Earth: A Guide to Places in the Bible**, by Richard R. Losch. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005. 260pp. +xi. \$16.00 ISBN 0-8028-2805-1.

*Reviewed by Ernest J. Schmidt, Acting Dean, Faith Baptist Theological Seminary, Ankeny, Iowa.*

Richard R. Losch, retired rector of St. James Episcopal church, Livingston, Alabama, writes to introduce the reader to key geographic locations that are mentioned in the Bible. He also deals with significant areas not mentioned in the Bible, but are important in understanding the milieu of the Bible world. The author does not intend to be technical, but popular, in his approach. His goal is to communicate the big picture and stimulate his readers to do further research on their own. He accomplishes his objective!

After a brief history of the Holy Land, he deals with specific locations of the lands of the Bible. The alphabetical treatment of sites, towns and regions take the reader from Ai to Ur of the Chaldeans. Each entry enables the reader to survey basic geography, the history of the site and, as appropriate, basic archaeological information.

The book concludes with maps that identify the locations of the areas described in the body of the book. A helpful Guide to Pronunciation concludes the volume. Both are specific to the material of the book. Thus, they are a precise complement to the content.

The history of each location is the strength of the entries. The historical summaries are of immense value. Other resources of a similar genre usually major on geography or archaeology. This resource majors on the history in such a way that the reader senses he has a grasp on what happened there historically, especially during biblical times. The book well worth purchasing and pursuing. The reader will gain an overview of ancient Near Eastern history, as well as very helpful insights on each site as he reads. The reviewer leads academic trips to the Bible Lands. Reading the book has added a great deal to his overall grasp of the history of the ancient Near East and useful insights on many individual locations.

Those who want a survey of biblical history site by site will profit from the book. It has carved out a niche with its popular treatment of Bible history and geography. Both laymen and scholars will appreciate the wealth of information. It is a book you can put down after reading an entry, but the content will

probably make you want to pick it up again and read the next for added valuable insight into history and Scripture.

**Raising Dragons**, by Bryan Davis. Chattanooga, TN:AMG. 2004. 400 pp. \$14.99. ISBN 0-89957-170-0.

*Reviewed by Sandy Casto, Cataloging Associate, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California.*

This is a very exciting Christian Fantasy. It was hard to get into but well worth it. I almost put it aside and missed this captivating story because of the way the boy's character came across in the beginning. As a grandmother of seven boys I found it hard to relate to Billy, the main character, who comes across to syrupy sweet in the beginning. He offers to do the dishes before school; wants to give all of the money he makes to the Humane Society; is overly concerned about his father's health and weight (p.7-10). I just don't see boys of today thinking about doing these things.

Bryan Davis, the author, pulls you into his wonderful tale of dragons and hooks you with the mystery he weaves. It is full of danger and breathtaking situations throughout the book. You will find it hard to put down. This is clearly good triumphing over evil and I love the fact that the main characters pray when in difficult (to say the least) situations.

I believe younger readers may find some parts too violent. It is a little graphic when some characters get hurt, this may scare them. However, saying all this, I can't wait to read the next book in the series.

**Video Series Book by Book Old Testament: Genesis with Anne Graham Lotz**, with co-hosts Richard Bewes and Paul Blackham. Worcester, PA:VisionVideo, 2003. 178 minutes. \$34.99. ISBN 1-56364-674-9.

*Reviewed by Sharon Hinton RN, BSN, LP, Librarian, First United Methodist Church, and RNR Parish Nurse Community Outreach, Floydada, TX*

Vision Video has produced another excellent selection in their study of the Old Testament. Guest Anne Graham Lotz is a speaker and writer and the daughter of evangelist Billy

Graham. Her insight and comments add depth and interest to the ten video segments covering Genesis. Each segment is approximately fifteen minutes in length. Viewers are then encouraged to stop the tape for discussion accompanied by the video study guide. The study guide is written by Blackham and includes in each Bible study segment key truths, short discussion of content, additional questions, and daily reading suggestions. The video follows a straightforward discussion format that will not appeal to those interested in entertainment styled Bible study. The discussions are well thought out and follow scripture. Bewes, rector of All Souls Church in London and Blackham, a theologian, provide continuity as hosts for each Book by Book study. It is appropriate for congregational and academic libraries as well as small group Bible study.

**Teach With Your Strengths: How Great Teachers Inspire Their Students** by Rosanne Liesveld and Jo Ann Miller with Jennifer Robison. New York: Gallup Press, 2005. 205pp. \$24.95. ISBN 1-59562-006-0

*Reviewed by Liz Leahy, Associate Dean of University Libraries and Chair, James L. Stamps Theological Library, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA.*

What makes a teacher great? The authors contend that teachers who understand their natural talents and utilize them well are happiest and are the most influential in the lives of their students. Based upon the Clifton StrengthsFinder survey, the authors give a brief overview to the StrengthsFinders program, targeting each of the 34 strengths specifically to the teacher and present practical ideas on how each of the strengths might be observed and nurtured in the classroom.

Many readers may already be familiar with the StrengthsFinders program. This is a web-based assessment instrument that measures talents from the perspective of Positive Psychology, wherein emphasis is given to the encouragement and development of individual strengths. The tool measures talents in 34 areas or themes. The Gallup Organization defines these talents as “naturally recurring patterns

of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied” (49). Effectively, these lie in the essence of who you are – the way you behave instinctively. The authors write that talents, combined with relevant skills and knowledge, equate to a strength; while true talents are innate, they can be identified and nurtured.

The book provides a single user access code to take the 30 minute online test. Results for the individual’s top 5 strengths appear at the conclusion of the test. The majority of the text involves a review of each of the strengths, beginning with a background statement to familiarize the reader on the strength, action items in developing this strength in the classroom, and then two brief examples from teachers who have this strength so a reader can view a short practical application.

Although the book seems to be designed more towards the K-12 teacher (through the use of examples of great teachers), it also provides helpful materials for newer college classroom faculty and may be an encouragement for librarians who have regular instruction assignments in the classroom. It might also serve as an excellent classroom tool for educators who mentor future teachers. The book is appropriate for personal development collections, as well as for public and academic libraries. As only one access code is provided per book, it will be most helpful to library collections where there is an awareness of the StrengthsFinder program.

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