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Resource Reviews

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Resource Reviews

To Realize a Dream: 100 Years of Zionism, written and directed by Yaakov Gross. Narrated by Janet Amid and Yosef Yaakov. Clarksburg, NJ: Alden Films, 732-462-3522, www.aldenfilms.com, 1997. 30 minutes. \$19.95 VHS (\$24.95 DVD).

Reviewed by Louis Igou Hodges, Theological Research Associate, Columbia International University, Columbia, South Carolina.

This film, produced by the Israel Film Archive, Jerusalem Cinematheque in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dept. of Public Affairs, chronicles the modern history of Zionism from its inception until the present. It traces the seminal ideas of Theodor Herzl (*Der Judenstaat* [The Jewish State], 1896) and their “miraculous” development from the First Zionist Congress in 1897, along with the contributions of other founders such as Borochof, Syrkin, Sokolow, Ussishkin, Weizmann, Jabotinsky, and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the father of modern Hebrew, to the establishment of the permanent Jewish state by the U. N. General Assembly on November 29, 1947. It also includes the outworkings of the Zionist mandate in Israel’s economy, building programs, banking, education, politics, festivals, and military development.

The editor has included, and thereby preserved for posterity, photographs of Herzl and the First Zionist Congress and film clips of a number of epoch-making milestones in Zionist history, such as the liberation of Jerusalem by General Allenby in 1917, Winston Churchill’s speaking at the opening of the Hebrew University, Chaim Weizmann addressing a Zionist meeting, and David Ben Gurion reading the Declaration of Independence in 1948. It lauds the unstoppable pursuit on the part of the half million immigrants to establish a state of their own despite the countless hardships and obstacles. In fact it is dedicated to those pioneers who turned the Zionist dream into the reality of the Jewish state.

The film is especially suited for those studying the history and development of the modern state of Israel, whether privately or in a

classroom setting, from the perspective of the Jewish thinkers and immigrants. Though made more suggestive than exhaustive by its brevity, it captures well a unique mood, mind set, and a unifying determination on the part of the Zionists to establish their own homeland.

Perfecting Ourselves to Death: The Pursuit of Excellence and the Perils of Perfectionism, by Richard Winter. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005. 203pp. \$16.00. ISBN 0-8308-3259-9.

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

I think I’ve always been something of a perfectionist. When I asked family and co-workers, they agreed wholeheartedly. So I was anxious to read this book by a psychiatrist and professor of practical theology at Covenant Seminary (St. Louis). Mr. Winter argues that there is a range of individuals, from totally carefree (or careless, depending on your viewpoint) to completely obsessed perfectionists, and that our goal should be what he calls “healthy perfectionism.” In a candid, easy-to-read style, he examines how perfectionist tendencies can harm our relationships and our health. He looks at the role of genetics, and of eating disorders. He explores the interrelationship between perfectionism and anxiety (and its frequent companion, depression), and he delves into obsessive-compulsive behavior and its devastating effects. He leads readers in an investigation of Biblical shame and guilt, and offers help (from a Christian viewpoint) for all of us who are so keenly aware of our imperfections. With both a subject index and Scripture index, this book is an excellent choice for all libraries (unless none of your patrons are perfectionists).

A God-Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards, by John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004. 287 pp. \$17.99. ISBN 1-58134-563-1.

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

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Resulting from a conference that celebrated the 300th birthday of Edwards (1703-1758), the book is a collection of essays by eleven contributors whose purpose is to introduce readers to Edwards and his "God-entranced vision of all things." This book reflects on themes that emerge from Jonathan Edwards's life and thought with an emphasis on the spiritual and evangelical aspects of his vision. The essays include biographical and historical accounts of Edwards, teachings from his work that we can apply today, and expositions of three of his major theological works. The appendices include an Edwardsean sermon and recommended resources for further study. Looking at the relevance of Edwards's thought for us today, the contributors present insightful explanations of his beliefs concerning the concept of revival, the mystery of the trinity, the pursuit of God through spiritual disciplines, and the reassertion of church discipline as reflected in Edwards's understanding of communion as an ordinance for believers.

The final section of the book offers analyses of "The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin," "Freedom of the Will," and "Religious Affections." These thought-provoking commentaries are one of the strengths of the book.

Primary and secondary sources are noted in each chapter, and annotated bibliographies appear in the concluding chapters. In summary, the contributors offer a good introduction and critical response to the thought of Jonathan Edwards. He is portrayed as a man of many facets who represented the conservative theological position of his Puritan and Reformed heritage and who has something meaningful to say to us today. This book is highly recommended for academic libraries.

New Directions in the Study of Late Life Religiousness and Spirituality, Susan H. McFadden, Mark Brennan, Julie Hicks Patrick, editors. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2003. 242 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 0-7890-2039-4.

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

This book consists of twelve scholarly papers presented in several symposia at the 2001

meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. This collection was also published as *Journal of Religious Gerontology*, volume 14, numbers (1) 2002 and (2/3) 2003. The editors, all professionals in psychology and adult development, selected studies for inclusion that focus on recent research on religion and spirituality, a topic that has been omitted from the gerontological mainstream until recent years.

The purpose of this collection is to examine the role of religion and spirituality in the lives of older adults and to enhance awareness among practitioners and researchers of the complexities involved. Following an overview by the editors, the papers are presented in three sections covering epistemological assumptions in the study of religiousness and spirituality, the difficulty of establishing consensus on the meaning of the terms religion and spirituality, and the benefits of the religious life for older adults. Part I looks at methodology and data analysis in gerontological research. Part II examines the problem of reaching a common definition of religion and spirituality for research purposes, and part III studies the psychological well-being of older adults in the context of life experiences. The book concludes with an afterword about the theories, definitions, and applications presented.

Some of the papers presented assume a familiarity with basic concepts and statistical methods in the social sciences. Each article includes the credentials of the contributors and contains bibliographic references. This book reflects the interdisciplinary nature of an evolving field of study and would be appropriate for practitioners, researchers, and students interested in gerontology, adult development, and aging and spiritual life.

The Limitations of Scientific Truth : Why Science Can't Answer Life's Ultimate Questions, by Nigel Brush. Grand Rapids, MI.: Kregel, Academic & Professional, 2005. 300pp. \$14.99 ISBN 0-8254-2253-1.

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

Nigel Bush is the assistant professor of geology at Ashland University in Ohio. He has a Ph.D

in anthropology and has done post-doctoral work in geology. He is a committed Christian and scientist. He has conducted archaeological, geological, and environmental fieldwork in England, Canada, and the United States.

Limitations of Scientific Truth is not an attack on science. It addresses the myth of the infallibility of science. Dr. Brush addresses “the limitations of the scientific technique as a means for obtaining absolute truth (7).” He thinks that “science is a powerful tool for studying God’s creation (7).”

The book is divided into seven parts. Part 1 addresses the human quest for truth, the ultimate questions of humanity, and alternative paths to truth: religion, philosophy and science. Parts 2 through 6 presents evidence from natural science, social science, and philosophy of science that proves the limitations of scientific truth. Part seven presents an alternative model of science that takes seriously the limitations of scientific truth.

Nigel Brush has effectively argued that science has its limitations and it cannot answer life’s ultimate questions. He has convincingly demonstrated that science is not the only path to truth. On the other hand, he has shown that science is an effective path to knowledge of the universe. This book is highly recommended to all college students and people of religious faith.

God’s Advocates: Christian Thinkers in Conversation. By Rupert Shortt. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005. xii + 284pp. \$20.00 (paper). ISBN: 0-8028-3084-6.

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

Rupert Shortt studied theology at the Universities of Oxford and London. He is the religion editor of the London *Times Literary Supplement*. He is also the author of *Rowan Williams: An Introduction and Pope Benedict XVI: Commander of the Faith*.

The description on the back cover states that “Shortt’s lively interviews introduce

readers to eighteen respected thinkers who have contributed to the recent renaissance in theology.” These thinkers are: Tim Beattie, David Burrell, J. Kameron Carter, Sarah Coatley, Stanley Hauerwas, Christopher Insole, Jean- Luc Marion, David Martin, John Milbank, Joan Lockwood O’ Donovan, Oliver O’ Donovan, Simon Oliver, Alvin Plantinga, Christopher Schwobel, Janet Martin Soskice, Miroslav Volf, Samuel Wells, and Rowan Williams. The interviews addressed some of the following themes: objections to Christian belief, philosophy of religion, systematic theology, the Trinity, Radical Orthodoxy, Aquinas and Muslim-Christian dialogue, faith-based approaches to ethics and politics and new developments in feminist and black theologies.

The interviews displayed a wide spectrum of Christian thought. The interviews were “stimulating and informative.” The autobiographical comments were especially interesting. For example, Miroslav Volf grew up in communist Yugoslavia and pursued a theological education” against the odds. (214). This book is an excellent introduction to some of the leading Christian thinkers of our day. The participants displayed a strong confidence in the Christian Tradition and its ability to answer tough questions of our day. The format of the book makes it accessible to a wide audience.

Shortt does a good job in directing the conversations. He, in some sense, takes the role of Socrates in questioning the participants. The interaction between Shortt and the Christian thinkers enhances the themes explored. This book is intended for both academic and non-academic audiences.

Homeschooling Methods: Seasoned advice on Learning Styles, by Paul and Gena Suarez, General Editors. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006. 269 pp. \$14.00 ISBN: 0805440178.

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

Paul and Gena Suarez are the publishers of *The Old Schoolhouse* magazine for homeschoolers. They have homeschooled their four children

from birth. The Suarezes bring together over twenty experts to provide real-world advice and the pros and cons of ten of the most popular methods for homeschoolers. The models include Classical Education, Principle Approach, Traditional Textbook, Charlotte Mason, Unit Study, Special Needs, Carschooling, Ecclectic, Unschooling or Delight Directed Studies and Whole-Heart Learning. As the cover says, it is “a homeschool convention in a book” that will help parents to “discover what will work for your family and why.” Contributors include such well known homeschool veterans as Christine Field, Jessica Hulcy, Dr. Raymond Moore and Dr. Ruth Beechick. My personal favorite was the article on “The Power of Books and Reading” by Sally Clarkson. It is worth the price of the book.

Homeschooling Methods is a great resource for families exploring the option of homeschooling; beginning and more experienced homeschoolers searching for the best method of homeschooling for their families. It will help parents to develop an “effective educational game plan” and to choose a model that would be right for their family. It is separated into short, readable chapters. It can easily be read in one or two sittings. It is highly recommended for all libraries.

Familiar Stranger: an Introduction to Jesus of Nazareth, by Michael J. McClymond. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004. 212 pp. \$16.00. ISBN 0-8028-2680-6.

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

In this book McClymond, a professor of theological studies, provides a basic introduction to the person “Jesus of Nazareth.” The author states that although “in a sense the whole world knows Jesus. Yet this most familiar person continues to be unfamiliar.” The goal of the book is to provide a summary of the recent historical research on the life of Jesus and to evaluate various points of view. It is intended for Christians of all faith traditions. The text is

well written, interesting, and informative for those beginning, as well as those who are well acquainted with studies of Jesus. Chapters are documented with references. Topics include Jesus a thumbnail portrait, the history of Jesus, research sources and methods, geography, politics economy and religion, John the Baptist, the central message, healings exorcisms and other works of wonder, sayings and parables, career and controversies, the final week, the resurrection, historical reflections and a critique of contemporary images of Jesus. This book is appropriate for congregational and academic libraries and is a helpful addition for collections dedicated to the study of Jesus.

Jesus Now and Then, by Richard Burrige and Graham Gould. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004. 215 pp. \$16.00. ISBN 0-8028-0977-4.

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

Author Richard Burrige is the Dean of King’s college and coauthor Graham Gould is a freelance theology lecturer and writer. Their text, *Jesus Now and Then*, is a compilation of nine lectures focused on the impact and relevance of Jesus from the first millennium until current times. The text is written for “anyone who wonders why Jesus was important enough to set the calendar from his birth, long ago in the past, and what he might have to say to us still now, today.” (XII) Divided into a prologue, and two sections, topics include Part One: New Testament historical Jesus, Jesus in the gospels, Jesus and Paul and New Testament use of Jesus. Part Two includes the early church and teaching of Jesus, Jesus in early Christian worship, Jesus divine and human, and modern understanding of Jesus. References and further reading suggestions are included with helpful definitions in highlighted boxes. This book is well thought out, informative and easy to follow. It challenges the reader to contemplate the realization that regardless of what people do or do not believe about Jesus, his life and death had and continues to have a huge impact not only on religion, but also on areas of life

such as health, justice, and societal issues. Jesus in ancient and modern art and literature is also discussed. Because of its extensive research of Jesus literature, this book is appropriate for congregational and academic libraries and is a must for students of Jesus studies and early church history.

The Strategic Stewardship of Cultural Resources: to Preserve and Protect, edited by Andrea T. Merrill. New York: Haworth Press, 2003. 237pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-7890-2091-2.

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

This text is a “must-read” for everyone who works with books and other resource collections! The contents originated as papers presented to the Library of Congress and discuss critical safety and preservation issues for librarians, museums, and archives. Each section is well written and very informative. I especially appreciated chapters 12-14 under the *Building the Budget: Promoting Your Program & Meeting Funding Demands for Preservation and Security*. Funding is always an issue and the chapters listed here provide insight to survive budgeting while meeting safety & preservation needs. Chapter 11 on disaster recovery is also a helpful.

All topics covered in this text are highly relevant to those who work with books and other resources including digital materials. Contact information for obtaining additional information and resources is included. Appropriate for educational and congregational libraries, I would also strongly recommend *The Strategic Stewardship of Cultural Resources* to all employees of libraries, museums, and archives.

Ministry in the Spiritual and Cultural Diversity of Health Care: Increasing the Competency of Chaplains, Edited by Robert G. Anderson & Mary A Fukuyama. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2004. 86 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 0-7890-2557-4.

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

Robert G. Anderson is a Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor and Chaplain with 32 years experience. Mary A. Fukuyama is a Clinical Professor and Counseling Psychologist with a professional interest in Multicultural Counseling and Training. She states that her theoretical orientation is humanistic-existential. Each chapter of *Ministry in the Spiritual and Cultural Diversity of Health Care: Increasing the Competency of Chaplains* presents, for the reader’s consideration, an aspect of cultural and spiritual diversity encountered within the healthcare setting. Topics include discussions regarding the search for spiritual/cultural competency, cultural diversity in pastoral care, steps toward multicultural competencies in clinical settings, definitions, obstacles, and standards of care, and the path of cultural and spiritual sensitivity. The material is well-written, easy to understand, and helpful to chaplains as well as other healthcare providers interested in gaining competency in the area of spiritual/cultural diversity. I particularly appreciated the discussion of the need for spiritual and cultural self-awareness and willingness to learn as a trait for healthcare providers. This text would work well in training programs and for continuing education for chaplains and parish/faith community nurses. It is appropriate for educational and congregational libraries.

The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way, by Eugene H. Peterson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 289 pp. \$22.00. ISBN 978-0-8028-2949-8.

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

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). With this well-known scripture verse Eugene Peterson begins *The Jesus Way*, the third book in his series on spiritual theology, following *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* and *Eat This Book*. Peterson, professor emeritus at Regent College and prolific author, is perhaps best known for his Bible translation *The Message*. In *The Jesus Way* Peterson contends that Christians often focus on the truth of Jesus but do not consider fully Jesus’ way.

We cannot skip the way of Jesus in our hurry to get the truth of Jesus as he is worshiped and proclaimed. The way of Jesus is the way that we practice and come to understand the truth of Jesus, living Jesus in our homes and workplaces, with our friends and family (4).

Peterson's thesis is that scripture reveals Jesus' way so that we can follow the Way, which is often at odds with the ways of church and culture.

The author succeeds in developing his thesis, but he does so in an unusual manner. In the first section, covering over half the book's length, he discusses such Old Testament saints as Abraham, Moses, and David, treating these persons as forerunners to Jesus, whose ways are exemplified and completed in Jesus Himself. In the second section he deals with Herod, Caiaphas, and Josephus as contemporaries of Jesus whose ways of living are contrary to the way of Jesus. Peterson loves using metaphor to develop his ideas, and here his metaphor of Jesus as Way carries throughout. But because most of the book features lengthy narratives and commentary about persons other than Jesus, the reader will need sustained attention to the Way metaphor to follow Peterson's argument about the ways Christians should live and follow Jesus. Such careful attention should reward the thoughtful reader.

The Jesus Way is recommended for academic libraries as an admirable and worthy addition to the Eugene Peterson corpus. The book should especially be acquired as it continues the "conversation" of the first two volumes in Peterson's series on spiritual theology.

Short Trip to the Edge: Where Earth Meets Heaven – A Pilgrimage, by Scott Cairns. [San Francisco]: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007. 263 pp. \$22.95. ISBN 0-06-084322-5.

Reviewed by Steven Paschold, Instructional Services Librarian, John Brown Univ., Siloam Springs, AR

Within the Christian community and beyond, Scott Cairns has gained a reputation as a poet of distinction. Currently he serves as Professor of English and creative writing at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a few years ago he joined the Orthodox Church. At age forty, however, he experienced a crisis of faith,

realizing he did not know how to pray. So he undertook several pilgrimages to the "Holy Mountain," Mount Athos in Greece, to visit Orthodox monasteries and to find a "prayer father" to guide him on his way. That is the background for the well-written memoir *Short Trip to the Edge*. In this book Cairns aims to recount his observations, experiences, and the people he met at Mount Athos and at another monastery in Arizona, and to indicate what he learned in regards to his faith journey. In so doing he successfully accomplishes his aims.

But may the North American evangelical reader be forewarned. The Mount Athos terrain is unfamiliar in itself, but more strange, and even esoteric, are the Orthodox conventions that Cairns recounts, from the *trapeza* mealtimes, to the prayer rope, to the veneration of icons, to the middle of the night worship services that culminate in reception of the Holy Mysteries. With Cairns's sharp focus on the Orthodox Church, this reader felt that the Christian faith overall seemed to be expressed in a narrow and limited fashion. Also, while the Jesus Prayer is invoked frequently, Jesus Himself is not much discussed.

Nonetheless, *Short Trip to the Edge* admirably joins the classic literature of Christian pilgrimage, and provides a good account of Orthodox practice as experienced by a sincere and humble pilgrim. The book should be acquired by academic libraries to serve as a complement to and perhaps a commentary on Scott Cairns's fine volumes of poetry.

Translating Truth : The Case for Essentially Literal Bible Translation, by Wayne Grudem, Leland Ryken, C. John Collins, Vern S. Poythress, and Bruce Winter. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005. 157 pp. \$15.99 1581347553.

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

Translating Truth is a collection of essays regarding translation issues. The five authors; Wayne Grudem, Leland Ryken, C. John Collins, Vern S. Poythress, and Bruce Winter (each chapter is done by a different author) argue from different perspectives that scripture, in order to be properly understood, needs to be translated as "essentially literal."

The first chapter moves on to argue that if plenary inspiration is true, the view that every word, not just ideas or concepts, is meaningfully chosen under the superintendence of God, then an essentially literal translation is necessary. He then shows that there are few translations, if any, which follow the principles of an essentially literal translation.

The remaining chapters discuss some details regarding the essentially literal translation, providing test cases, debunking false allegations, and discussing semantic issues that have arisen over the last 300 years.

This book would be useful for any library that either has Bible as a major or has classes dealing with translation issues. It addresses several hermeneutical issues that are common questions in these kinds of classes. Such as: What are the differences between the NIV and the NASB? Which translation is closest to the original? Which version should a student read?

It is also a great resource for answering reference questions dealing with differences between common versions. Students will find it useful because it is relatively short (about 150 pages) and the chapters can be read individually as well, as they are short essays written by separate authors, to answer certain questions. While some of the terminology may be difficult for those unfamiliar with translation issues, the authors make an effort to make it readable, yet without “dumbing down” the content.

However, one weakness in this book is that all the contributors of this book are scholars involved with the recent publication of the English Standard Version (ESV). The ESV, which is used throughout the text, follows the translation methods which this book endorses. While to doubt the authenticity of these scholars is not warranted, this book can be seen as one-sided with potential ill motivation. While the ESV is a notable translation, it may have been helpful to have chapters written by scholars who were not involved with the ESV. This would have strengthened their case for an essentially literal bible translation.

Four Gospels; One Jesus; A Symbolic Reading, by Richard Burridge. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. ISBN 0-8028-2980-5

Reviewed by Dennis Ingolfsland, Director of Library Services, Bible Crown College, St. Bonifacius, MN

Burridge begins by describing four pictures of Winston Churchill, all different yet each one provoking its own response in the viewer. Burridge points out that traditionally, the gospels have been depicted in images borrowed from “Ezekiel’s vision of God” in Ezekiel. 1:10, with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John depicted in the faces of a human, a lion, an ox and an eagle in that order. Although Burridge admits this is a stretch, he insists on following Ezekiel’s order.

Overall the book is excellent, but unfortunately, the author’s insistence on forcing the Gospels into the order of Ezekiel’s vision of faces is somewhat misleading. Burridge admits that Matthew focuses on Jesus as king, yet rather than using the lion for Matthew, Burridge follows Ezekiel’s order and tries to impose the “human” picture of Jesus on Matthew.

Although Burridge admits that Luke stresses Jesus’ humanity as “one of us” Burridge doesn’t use the human face to illustrate Luke but, following Ezekiel’s order, portrays Luke as a sacrificial Ox. Although the Gospel of John presents Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God sent to take away the sin of the world, Burridge insists on following the order of Ezekiel’s vision and uses the face of an eagle for John rather than the sacrificial ox.

This may seem like nit-picking, but Burridge’s attempt to force the gospels into the order of faces in Ezekiel’s vision (which has nothing to do with the Gospels) actually tends to distract from the emphasis each Gospel writer is making.

The book is well written and Burridge does an excellent job of making scholarly topics understandable. He also does a good job emphasizing various themes in each gospel, but the next edition could be immeasurably improved by not filtering the Gospel’s through the order of faces in Ezekiel’s vision.

When Mother Was Eleven-Foot-Four: A Christmas Memory, by Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, with illustrations by Mark Elliott. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2007. 32 pp. ISBN 978-0-8007-1836-7.

Reviewed by Anne-Elizabeth Powell MLS, Head, Technical Services and Systems, Ryan Library, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA.

After reading this beautifully illustrated, moving story you too will feel eleven-foot-four! Jerry's mother is really four-foot-eleven, and Jerry cannot figure out just why his mother claims she can grow to stand as tall as a giraffe. Mother says she is tall *inside*, a fact that becomes very clear on the Christmas things change for Jerry and his family. It is in facing adversity and accepting the love and support of her children that mother grows, along with her boys, to the height of a giraffe and teaches what it means to be a true giver of gifts.

Camery-Hoggatt has written a charming story destined to stand next to such classics as *The Polar Express* and *Welcome Comfort*. Though this version (a shortened for children adaptation of a longer work included in Camery-Hoggatt's *Giver of Gifts*) is aimed at the younger members of the family, it is certain to be embraced by everyone. Elliot's evocative, nostalgic illustrations are full of 1960's detail that will fascinate younger readers and take others back on a trip to fondly remembered childhood. Appropriate for any library with a children's collection.

The Hitchhikers Guide to the Meaning of Everything, by William Badke. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005. 176 pp. \$12.00 ISBN 0-8254-2069-5

Reviewed by Darcy Gullacher, Head Librarian, Rocky Mountain College, Calgary, AB.

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Meaning of Everything* William Badke, librarian at Trinity Western University and author of the information literacy text *Research Strategies*, introduces non-believers to the Christian faith by leading them through the story of the Bible.

Badke uses a narrative approach, deliberately avoiding rationalistic attempts to prove the truth of the Bible, the existence of God, or the veracity of biblical events like the Flood or the Resurrection. Instead, in 37 very short chapters he engages readers in the story of the Bible, and how the Bible provides a cohesive answer to humanity's struggles with sin, forgiveness, redemption, and the need for belonging.

The book's strength is its approachable, almost casual tone. Badke avoids most theological jargon, and the terms he does use he explains thoroughly. The short chapters in an already very slim volume make for quick reading, ensuring that the text never gets bogged down in technical detail. Also, it is refreshing to read a book designed for non-believers that takes seriously the message of the Old Testament. For example, the story of Hosea and Gomer is used to illustrate God's faithfulness, and the account of David and Bathsheba is an example of sin and the need for repentance.

Unfortunately, there are also some serious weaknesses. The problem of perceived genocide during the conquest of Canaan is completely ignored. This is surprising, given that this is an argument that is often used to disprove the goodness and justice of God. Furthermore, there are no suggestions provided for further reading if a reader wishes to delve deeper into the Bible and Christianity. Instead, Badke provides his e-mail address and an invitation to visit his blog. Suggestions for further reading would improve the book's usefulness as a supplementary resource for Sunday school classes or small groups designed for non-Christians.

This volume is recommended for Bible colleges and seminaries as a sample of a narrative approach to apologetics.

The Master of Secrets, by D.S. Lliteras. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads, 2007. 268 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 1-57174-538-6.

Reviewed by Denise Nelson, Instructional Services Librarian, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California.

Addan, the young son of one of Jesus' followers, flees Golgotha in the darkness following Christ's

crucifixion. During his flight, circumstances tie him to Jeshua, a charlatan posing as a healer and entertainer and billing himself as the Master of Secrets. Addan is both charmed by the man's charisma and troubled by his irreverent dismissal of Christ's message. An apprentice in Jeshua's carefully orchestrated deceptions, the boy learns the excitement of temptation; he also experiences its consequences. As Addan and his makeshift master attempt to escape retribution for their crimes, both of their lives are in jeopardy.

Addan is a believable character, confused about his own life and drawn to Jeshua's aloof confidence. Throughout the book Lliteras' characters and settings are vibrantly depicted, as are the relationships and exchanges between the central personalities. The early chapters of *The Master of Secrets* lumber over awkward descriptive passages that bog down the narrative, but these interruptions become fewer and less ponderous as the story moves forward. As the action progresses, Lliteras creates an absorbing image of a boy adrift and uncertain about moral truth and the words he remembers from Christ's mouth.

The writing is accessible and the plot enjoyable, yet the novel feels like an episode from a much longer narrative, posing difficult questions about the identity and message of Christ that beg deeper exploration than the reader is given. While Addan's journey captures the reader's compassion, its conclusion seems both abrupt and premature. The boy's moment of spiritual revelation is simultaneously confusing in content and oversimplified in nature; however, *The Master of Secrets* provokes valuable introspection about the meaning of knowing Christ personally. While marketed to both young adults and older readers, the book is better suited to young adults.

The Elevator, by Angela Hunt. New York: Steeple Hill, 2007. 379 pp. \$13.95. ISBN 0-373-78578-x.

Reviewed by Denise Nelson, Instructional Services Librarian, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California.

The lives of three unacquainted women converge in a dim elevator during a vicious

Florida hurricane. Gina Rossman, wife of a philandering businessman, has concluded that murdering her unfaithful husband will secure her children's inheritance. With a handgun concealed in her oversized coat, she enters the elevator determined to confront the man who has broken her trust.

Gina is accompanied into the elevator by Michelle Tilson, owner of a mostly honest career placement service located on the thirty-sixth floor of Lark Tower. The same floor houses Rossman Life and Liability, founded with a bequest from Gina's father and run by her husband. Having decided the time has come to establish a family, Michelle enters the elevator ready to deliver an ultimatum to her doting, ostensibly widowed, boyfriend.

Gina and Michelle board the elevator and join Isabel, a young cleaning woman fleeing a confrontation in Mr. Rossman's office and hiding from a threat to her life. As the hurricane whirls toward Tampa and the weather worsens, a power outage traps the three women with their thoughts and stilted conversation. The answering service reached through the phone button eventually contacts Eddie Vaughn, a local elevator repair technician. He agrees to hazard the storm and attempt a potentially deadly rescue.

The Elevator recognizes the complicated interplay of disappointment and redemption. Broken trust has wounded each of the women in the elevator, yet the story's resolution underscores that trust also holds the promise of deliverance. The well-constructed narrative defies the close confines of the elevator, moving fluidly between past and present to broaden the characters and describe their connections to one another. While *The Elevator* falls short of true suspense writing, the riveting setting and engaging characters compel the reader to follow author Hunt eagerly to the story's conclusion.

The Gospel of Judas and Other Gnostic Secrets Revealed [DVD Cassette] Ensign Media, distributed by, Worcester, PA: Vision Video 2006 Five segments, 11-13 minutes each \$29.95 ISBN: 7-27985-01054-0

Reviewed by James L. Sauer, Director of Library, Eastern University, St Davids, Pennsylvania

Ever since the success of *The DaVinci Code* there has been a growth of popular interest in the heterodox legends of the Gnostic tradition. This DVD deals with the recent translation by the National Geographic Society of the *Gospel of Judas*, a 2nd Century alternative gospel. The Gnostic tradition of that heretical text held that Judas was a hero of the faith and that Judas aided Christ by helping him to die, thereby freeing Christ from his material body to become a spiritual god. (Other Gnostic traditions have Christ appearing to die, or by having a look-alike substituted for him on the cross – so that he could run away with Mary Magdalene, and live happily ever after, begetting children and establishing the royal families of Europe.)

The Scholars making commentary in this DVD are David Hoffeditz of Cedarville College, Ken Curtis of Christian History Institute, Terrance Callan from the Roman Catholic Athenaeum of Ohio, and Stephen Taylor from Westminster Theological Seminary. The structure of the video follows the standard documentary format: the panning of appropriate pictures, sculptures, and Greek texts; interspersed with serious and edifying analysis.

Nevertheless, the quality of this DVD leaves something to be desired. The type casting for the re-enactments was comical. The actors sport 21st Century haircuts; and some have nicely trimmed beards. Greeks are presented with blonde hair and blue eyes. The traditionally bald Paul is presented with a full head of hair. In fact, all the actors look like they were pulled from a Seminary class. But my favorite part of the re-enactment self-parody was having them dress in bathrobes; and attaching false beards – sometimes of the wrong color – to various actors; a kind of Marx Brothers go to Jerusalem!

Also, although the movie is divided into segments, there is no clear-cut outline or logical headings for each portion of the film. A strict documentary format, development of a rational outline, the elimination of all childish acting, and cutting the film down to thirty minutes, would have improved this work

immensely. Not recommended. Instead, a much better purchase would be the professional, though secular, *Gospel According to Judas* by the National Geographic Society.

Jesus “Who Do Men Say That I am?” [DVD Cassette] Horizons Television distributed by, Worchester, PA: Vision Video 2006 48 minutes \$19.95 ISBN: 7-27985-00891-2

Reviewed by James L. Sauer, Director of Library, Eastern University, St Davids, Pennsylvania

This is a highly untypical and commendable approach to evangelism. It is not your standard Christian video. It is not a work of Christian polemics per se; nor is it an apologetic work in the traditional sense – though it does present Christ. Instead of the univocal expression of Christianity, critics are allowed their place at the video table. The arguments for and against Christianity and Christ, are allowed to sit side by side without immediate refutation. Yet it is Jesus who is presented by the Christians; and it is Jesus who is rejected by the unbelievers. There is no card stacking, no straw men; just the variety of answers to the central question of our faith.

The video opens with real people offering a variety of orthodox, heterodox, and unbelieving statements about Christ. The narrative by Leesa Kelly is clear and professional. The structure is clean: A series of topics about Jesus are discussed from every different point of view. The topics covered are: Who is Jesus? What is the Gospel? Biblical prophecies concerning Jesus. Facts and Faith about Jesus, Jesus and his relationship to Religion; Jesus and Good and Evil. The kaleidoscope of opinions range from traditional liberal, to rationalist, liberation theology, Jewish, Evangelical Protestant, and Catholic. At one point a Rabbi gives an excellent summation of the Christian doctrines of the incarnation, the atonement and the ascension – and concludes, “but I don’t believe it.”

This is not for the average Sunday School, but could be profitably used in an adult class where the open argument framework of the film could be explained. College courses could use this easily as a discussion starter. The video would be a fair and reasonable ice-breaker for beginning a dialogue with unbelievers. This is

the kind of DVD that brings us out of our Christian world cocoon, and makes us listen to the reasonable doubts of the unbeliever. We are then forced, as Francis Schaeffer said, to give honest answers to honest questions. We must each answer for ourselves the question about Jesus: Who do you say that I am? This video makes us think. Thinking is good. Highly recommended.

Behold the Man [DVD Cassette] EO International distributed by, Worchester, PA: Vision Video 2006 43 minutes \$19.95 ISBN: 7-27985-01055-7

Reviewed by James L. Sauer, Director of Library, Eastern University, St Davids, Pennsylvania

Behold the Man presents Christ to modern humanity in a format very common in the Christian media environment. It is a documentary interspersed with pictures, archaeological sites, some primitive role-enactment, and scholarly commentary by three theologians: Englishman, Michael Green, Dutchman, Jacob Van Bruggen, and American, Steven Notley. The presentation moves along within a well structured framework.

The DVD asks a number of questions about Jesus and provides some straightforward answers: Did Jesus really exist? The answer: Yes. Beating the old liberal hobby horse of “the quest for the historical Jesus” to death with a logical hammer, the question of the historicity of Jesus is answered by the use of Josephus, Tacitus, archaeology and common sense. Was Jesus just a human being or more than a human being? The answer: More. He was both God and Man as his miracles, healings, and prophetic fulfillment of Judaism’s messianic prophecies indicate. And did Jesus really rise from the dead? Answer: He rose. Argument is presented based on Scripture – the Apostolic witness, the multiplicity of witnesses, the historical veracity of the New Testament, the non-collaborative and self-deprecating nature of the disciple’s testimony. The DVD ends with the hope of redemption and faith in Christ’s return.

The DVD presents a fair apologetic introduction to the Christian message; but it is neither extensive nor exhausting in its

presentation. An evangelism team could use this film – if followed by application – for a gospel program. Likewise, it would be good for a High School or freshman College Bible Class – but would still need more supplemental elaboration and argument for anyone who is even mildly skeptical of the faith. It asks the right questions, and gives the right answers.

Resting Place: A Personal Guide to Spiritual Retreats, by Jane Rubietta, Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2005. 204 pp. ISBN 10 0-8308-3336-6, ISBN 13 978-0-8308-3336-8

Reviewed by Jo Ann Rhodes, Library Director, Columbia International University, Columbia, SC

The idea of a personal spiritual retreat is an intimidating one for many people who are caught up the “rat race” of their everyday lives, intimidating because so many people do not know how to slow down and be quiet for any length of time, thus losing the opportunity for reflection and meditation that could revitalize one’s life if given the opportunity to do so.

Jane Rubietta draws on her personal experience to guide the reader through a series of meditation activities intended to enhance a personal, spiritual retreat. Her goal in writing is to assist the reader in unpacking “the baggage we haul around, using these issues as a starting point for our time with God...” (p.11). Each chapter includes everything needed to spend the retreat time to its full advantage: quotes to contemplate, Scripture upon which to meditate, guided journaling and prayer response, ideas for using creation as a tool for meditation, words to a hymn appropriate to the topic, and finally, a prayer of examen, inviting God to search his/her heart for areas that need His divine help.

The book includes twelve chapters, each dealing with an area of life that can cause unsettledness in one’s soul. Each chapter begins with an essay concerning the subject at hand followed by a “For Your Retreat” section containing the guided activities.

As the author explains, a personal retreat can be held anywhere and for any length of time. It is a time of concentration on God rather than the cares of this life and is intended for spiritual refreshment and renewal.

There are not many books written that so clearly explain how to conduct a spiritual retreat rather than emphasizing the necessity of doing so. This is a “must” for anyone seeking relief from everyday busy-ness.

Sabbath Keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest, by Lynne M. Baab. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005. 130pp. \$13.00 ISBN 0-8308-3258-0

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

“I didn’t know I was allowed to rest” states a mother with young children as Baab shares that the Sabbath is a gift to be enjoyed. Baab, who completed her PhD in communication at the University of Washington, June 2007, consulted with over 100 individuals from a variety of Christian traditions in writing this work.

A scriptural index, bibliography and endnotes make access to the text streamlined. The four Sabbath prayers in the appendix are helpful though few in number. Each of the eight chapters ends with questions for reflection, discussion and journaling and contains suggestions to the reader for praying about the Sabbath.

The purpose of the book is to “clear away the distractions of our lives (11).” Sabbath is defined as a weekday of rest and worship. Baab lived in Israel for a time and learned first-hand how life comes to a virtual standstill in this culture. The Hebrew word for Sabbath means “stop” (26) and is used in the Bible approximately 160 times (37). Sabbath is about God’s grace and is a gift from God. It is generally understood that Sabbath rest is about ceasing from work. Baab points out that each person defines this differently. Some may choose a Sabbath free from multitasking, technology, machines, shopping, media, competition, talking, or anxiety. Baab encourages the reader to find the right balance for themselves and experience God’s grace through observing the Sabbath.

A practical, easy-to-read book recommended for Bible study groups.

INTERESTED IN REVIEWING A TITLE?

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