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## Resource Reviews

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**1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon. Holman New Testament Commentary**, by Knute Larson. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000. 422 pp. ISBN: 0-8054-0209-8.

*Reviewed by Francisco Arriola, Bolin Library for Pentecostal Research, Southeastern College, Lakeland, Florida.*

The Holman New Testament Commentary is designed for Bible study and teaching to enrich the local church and God's people. It would appear that the editors' intent has been met. Rather than discussions on the standard background issues concerning the epistle that one finds in other commentaries, there is a straightforward introduction that outlines the profile of the letter, author and destination to which the letter is addressed.

Each chapter begins with a quote from a famous church writer as an illustration leading to the "Nutshell" which summarizes the teaching and content of the chapter. This is followed by a brief introduction, which is devotional in nature and attempts to make a contemporary application of the text.

The verse-by-verse commentary based on the NIV avoids scholarly disputes and focuses on issues that affect the present day church. This section presents a main idea, which is usually developed by related supporting ideas. The focus of the commentary is always on contemporary application. The conclusion to each section is made up of a concluding summary followed by a section on life application and prayer. A section entitled "Deeper Discoveries" that takes the student into a more personal, deeper study of the words, phrases, and themes of God's word. Examples of these are explanations on the meaning of "the last days," "suffering," and "God's elect." Finally,

a teaching outline provides transitional statements and conclusions along with an outline to assist the teacher in Bible studies. There is a glossary of terms and a brief bibliography.

This commentary is highly recommended for all levels of readers, especially for those involved in teaching the New Testament. Sunday School teachers may find this book a useful tool.

**He Leads Me Beside Still Waters: A Forty-Day Journey Toward Rest for Your Soul**, by Jennifer Kennedy Dean. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001. 180 pp. \$12.99. ISBN 0-8054-2379-6.

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

This devotional book will be a resource for anyone who seeks comfort and reassurance in the midst of anxious and stressful times. With her engaging style, author Jennifer Kennedy Dean, guides the reader on a journey to discover the peace and rest offered by Christ. Through forty daily meditations, the reader will find assurances of rest and peace for the soul. In addition to rest, the reader will find strength, endurance and certainty in God's will.

Based on the Lord's Prayer, the devotional material is divided into seven-day segments with five days of reading per week, a sixth day of reflective exercises and questions, and a seventh day for discussion and reflection. The daily meditations are intended to lead the layperson to a greater awareness and understanding of God and the concept of Sabbath.

Each meditation includes references to scripture, particularly from the New Testament. The introductory section gives definitions of several terms used

throughout the text and notes Greek and Hebrew meanings of those terms. The author quotes from the works of Andrew Murray, James S. Stewart, and Oswald Chambers. The book concludes with a series of meditations for an extended time of solitude and retreat, a brief list of resources for further study and endnotes.

A distinctive feature of the book is the emphasis on the Sabbath and the Lord's Prayer to help believers fully experience the rest and peace promised by Christian Sabbath. Used as a companion to Bible study or as a guide to Christian living, *He Leads Me Beside Still Waters* offers fresh insights into one's own spiritual journey.

Jennifer Kennedy Dean is the founder and executive director of The Praying Life Foundation. She is active as a speaker and conference leader specializing in prayer and spiritual formation. She resides in Blue Springs, Mo. and has written ten books.

This book will be of interest to college and church libraries.

**The Over Committed Christian: Serving God without Wearing Out**, by Pamela Evans. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. 203pp. ISBN 0-8308-2328-X

*Reviewed by Robert Ellis, Director of Library Services, The King's College, New York, New York.*

Certainly, this is a useful topic. Burnout is something we all must guard against. The book's main scripture seems to be Matthew 11, verses 28 through 30.

The book is divided into nine chapters, covering such areas as appearances, happiness, worship, authority & leadership, compassion, and religion. Helpful features at the end

of each chapter are "Focus Points", which encourage reflection. The recommended reading list at the end of the book is a plus.

The book contains many in stories and anecdotes, but is somewhat short in practical steps. I would have enjoyed seeing some "Action Steps" at the end of each chapter. The book's practicality is diminished by the absence of a topical index. How would someone know that spiritual abuse is covered on pages 128-132?

Also, I was puzzled by the following figure of speech: "putting the cat among the pigeons" (p. 87). The author is from England, so that probably explains it. Overall, I would say this book is beneficial for those dealing with religious addictions.

**Charts of Cults, Sects, & Religious Movements**, by H. Wayne House. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000. 351 p. \$26.99. ISBN 0-310-38551-2

*Reviewed by Anne-Elizabeth Powell, Head of Technical Services/Systems, Ryan Library, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California.*

What library dealing with students of religion would not be excited by the arrival of a book such as *Charts of Cults*? Students are forever requesting a simple explanation of the tenets of Mormonism or the contrasts and comparisons between Islam and Christianity. At first glance this volume appears to be the answer to a reference librarian's prayer. Closer inspection reveals that it is indeed a useful, if flawed, resource.

Arranged by sections labeled "Facts and History," "Theology," and "Interesting and distinctive beliefs" each covered cult or sect is presented through summary statements about its organizational structure and its core beliefs. These statements are drawn directly from the literature of the covered cult or sect. Lacking is easy entry by name of the cult or sect. One cannot simply flip open to the section

on Mormonism, for instance, but must first look it up in the table of contents.

The book is also missing an index. This is a serious oversight as the book makes mention of many related cults and sects in the text of information about those whose titles are listed in the table of contents. The reader might be seeking information on skinhead or Aryan groups, but lacking an index, may never realize these are mentioned as part of the Identity movement.

Of note are the Appendixes, which give concise summaries of orthodox Christian doctrines and full text of creeds of the church. The bibliography is especially useful for those who wish to locate primary source material about listed cults or sects.

Despite some unfortunate flaws this would be a good addition to the reference section of any Bible college, or Christian academic library.

**Out of the Comfort Zone**, by George Verwer. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 2000. 144 p. \$8.99 ISBN 0764224786

*Reviewed by Deborah Michelle Powell, Cataloging Services Librarian, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia.*

The ability to launch a successful missions campaign in the twenty-first century demands a sense of unity, fortitude, and focus. Those who value global missions recognize that "missions are people" and that because of such the ability to extend grace to others (horizontal grace) is without question an essential ingredient to mission work.

George Verwer is a "respected missionary and Christian leader" who is best known as the founder and international coordinator of Operation Mobilization. He resides in Kent, England.

George Verwer encourages global missions by challenging individuals to step "out of the comfort zone" and tear down the walls of disunity by employing a "grace-awakened" approach. The

grace-awakened approach seeks to "find the balance between telling the truth openly and boldly, and acting with love." *Out of the Comfort Zone* is a persuasive discussion that provides practical, grace-driven, instruction for Christian leaders and mission focused individuals and servant leaders in the twenty-first century. *Out of the Comfort Zone* provides a remarkably positive grace-driven approach to global missions. *Out of the Comfort Zone* is a superb resource for anyone seeking a pragmatic technique to global missions.

**How to Recognize the Antichrist: What Bible Prophecy Says about the Great Deceiver**, by Arthur E. Bloomfield. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2000. 159 pp. ISBN 0-7642-2409-3.

*Reviewed by Robert Ellis, Director of Library Services, The King's College, New York, New York.*

The author died in 1980. He was a former pastor in the Methodist Church. Towards the end of his life, he devoted all of his time to studying and lecturing on Bible prophecy. What a waste. Does anyone really think Jesus wants us to spend our last days speculating about "the last days"?

It seems Mr. Bloomfield has a lot in common with many Christians today. How eager we are to study prophecy. But does Christianity really need another book on prophecy? With our marriages and families falling apart, is this the best way to spend our time? In his parting words, did Jesus say, "Go and study prophecy" or "Go and make disciples? The best feature is this book's eye-catching title. It is sure to capture attention. The worst feature is the absence of a topical or scriptural index.

Although I am not a theologian, I could not detect any obvious doctrinal errors. I have no problem with the author's speculations that the Antichrist would usher in an unprecedented time of wealth (p.61) and prosperity (p.44); that Hitler was a type of antichrist

(p. 149), or even that the United States would be the principal location of tribulation saints (p. 83). However well written the book may be, it still diverts our attention from focusing on being the people God wants us to be. For that reason, I do not recommend this book for most libraries. It belongs on the back shelf, not in the Ready Reference section.

**Christian Faith 101; the Basics and Beyond**, by Steven Tsoukalas. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000. 107 pp. \$13.00. ISBN 0-8170-1361-X.

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

*Christian Faith 101* will be a helpful primer for new believers who want an introduction to basic Christian beliefs and doctrine. The main purpose of the book is to help the layperson grow in the knowledge of God, and also to encourage those who want to renew their understanding of Christian doctrine and read more deeply into the meaning of the Bible message. Tsoukalas effectively lays the foundation for further study and exploration of the Christian faith.

Written from an orthodox Christian position, the book contains numerous references to scripture and is intended to be read with the Bible as a guide. *Christian Faith 101* covers concepts about God, the work of Christ, salvation, and Christian life and the Church. Tsoukalas explains difficult concepts, such as the trinity, atonement, sanctification, and resurrection, in a simple, yet thought-provoking manner. The book is organized around chapters with sections on the "Basics" and "Beyond the Basics" for those who want to pursue more advanced theological concepts, including transliterations of Greek and Hebrew words. Discussion questions follow each chapter, making the book particularly useful for group study. Concise definitions of terms such as eschatology, apologetics, and

exegesis appear in the glossary.

Tsoukalas begins with the premise that all theology starts with God. Throughout the book, he provides scriptural proof for his explanations of doctrine. He is careful to distinguish between accepted Christian doctrines and areas where Christians hold differing viewpoints (i.e. views on the millennium or methods of baptism).

By no means an exhaustive treatment, *Christian Faith 101* succeeds as a primer for the layperson. A careful reading will also benefit mature Christians who want to re-visit the basic tenets of their beliefs. A list of suggested readings, including scholarly works, is provided.

Steven Tsoukalas is executive director of Sound Doctrine Ministries in Exeter, New Hampshire. He has been associated with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary as a visiting lecturer and is the author of the *The Nation of Islam, Knowing Christ in the Challenge of Heresy,* and *Masonic Rights and Wrongs.*

*Christian Faith 101* lends itself well to Bible study groups, Sunday school classes, and classes for new Christians. It can be recommended for church and college libraries.

**Urban Disciples: A Beginner's Guide to Serving God in the City**, by Jenell Williams Paris and Margo Owen Eyring. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000. 99pp. ISBN 0-8170-1367-9.

*Reviewed by Robert Ellis, Director of Library Services, The King's College, New York, New York.*

*Urban Disciples* was written for urban ministry teams. All sorts of groups including seminary students, college ministry teams and church Bible study groups can use it. The authors have many years of practical experience.

This workbook is divided into twenty-four lessons. These lessons are flexible enough to fit a multiple week Bible study, a short-term missions project or a semester long class. Each lesson contains six parts: Starter ("break the

ice" group activity), Study, Application, Prayer, Digging Deeper (further exploration) and More Resources (recommended reading list).

The twenty-four lessons are group into five units, covering such topics as ministering in the city, growing in faith and building community. Of all the lessons, I felt the most helpful were lessons 15 (how God is shaping me for ministry) and lesson 18 (how we can partner with God's people in this city).

In the back of the workbook are seven appendices, containing forms (important contacts; learning adventures) and advice (journaling suggestions; visiting a new church; spiritual disciplines). Of all the appendices, I liked Appendix F the best, which lists forty-six personal and corporate spiritual disciplines.

Urban Disciples is the most practical urban missions resource I have ever encountered. I highly recommend this workbook for all sorts of libraries – college, seminary and church.

**Laughter, Tears, and In-Between: Soulful Stories for the Journey**, Paul S. Williams. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2001. 128 pp. \$8.50 ISBN 0-8170-1383-0

*Reviewed by John Jaeger, Reference Services Librarian, Union University, Jackson, Tennessee.*

Paul Williams provides an interesting collection of stories and reflections, drawn largely from his own life experience, in this recent book. Following in a similar pattern as the "Chicken Soup for the Soul" books, he uses brief stories to point out insights about life and these stories hold your attention very closely. In this book, the stories are very brief and the messages given more intuitively. The overall effect in the book is that of a series of glimpses into life from the perspective of a single, subtle, sensitive observer.

The forty-eight stories are divided into four sections: "rememberings," "at home," "just noticing," and "the journey." Williams has the gift for making the past come alive; he can

recount what it felt like to ride on a tractor with his grandfather when he was a five-year-old boy or to be a pastor's child in a small town. The author also shows perception into family life, relating experiences such as those surrounding family trips to ballgames and seeing children go off for college in the "at home" section. Beyond this, his "just noticing" section shows insight into the unique or special elements in ordinary life. One of his stories here reflects on the passing of Louis Saunders, a minister whose only claim to fame was to have conducted the graveside memorial service for Lee Harvey Oswald when no others were willing to do so. Stories from "the journey" indicate some of the author's more spiritual concerns and relate stories around themes such as calling, ministering, and aging. In a large sense, though, all the stories are spiritually oriented in that they end with a brief, italicized prayer.

Williams offers a good resource that patrons of all types will likely find interesting. The work fits into the general devotional area, but those looking for illustrations might find the stories useful for that purpose as well. It is recommended for all collections.

**How I Praise You! 150 Little Psalms in Song**, by Donna Moss. Arranged by Nancy Aasland and Donna Moss. Illustrated by Rebecca Moss. Apex, NC: Apex Publishing, 1998. 225 pp. \$15.95. ISBN 0-9663809-2-4.

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

Donna Moss has done a great service to parents, teachers, and church leaders everywhere. In her book *How I Praise You*, she has selected one or more verses from each of the psalms and set them to music. In selecting the passage from each psalm, Moss has chosen verses easily understood and remembered by children (and adults). She read each of the 150 psalms in a variety of

translations in order to select the one that was most "musical" and also reflected important Biblical truths, such as God being our help, God's faithfulness and the fruitlessness of His enemies, and of course our need to praise God.

For each song, there is a simple piano score as well as guitar chords, a suggested metronomic tempo, and at the end of the song, the complete verse(s) and citation (including translation used). There are frequent illustrations to make the book visually appealing to the juvenile audience. Moss provides a list of 29 possible uses of the songs in her book, as well as a subject index and a Table of Contents, which gives song title and Scripture reference.

This book is user-friendly, even for the novice piano player at home wanting to lead his children in family worship. It has been proven that singing Scripture is an excellent way to learn it and to praise God, and Moss gives us a wide variety of topical choices from the Jewish hymnal, the Book of Psalms. This is a worthy addition for any library serving a population of parents, Sunday school teachers or children's music leaders, or homeschoolers.

**Climbing Higher: Overcoming Spiritual Obstacles**, by Dorothy Davis. Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2001. 144 p. ISBN 0872272125

*Reviewed by Deborah Michelle Powell, Cataloging Services Librarian, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia.*

The ability to "climb higher" can be a daunting and relentless effort without biblical application and insight. Dorothy Davis does an outstanding job of using the Bible as a teaching tool and directional guide.

*Climbing Higher* is a twelve-lesson study complete with a leader's guide to make each discussion session interesting and thought provoking. Each lesson is divided into five sections: 1) Preparing to Climb, 2) Finding a Foothold, 3) Pressing Upward, 4) Reaching New Heights, and 5) View

from the Top.

Dorothy Davis is "an active worker in the educational and music ministries of her local church." She seeks to help women appropriate Biblical truths to every day problems, however, this resource can be used by anyone seeking to "overcome spiritual obstacles." *Climbing Higher* is an invaluable resource that enables the reader to the answers to life's problems by applying biblical solutions to day-to-day obstacles.

*Climbing Higher* is an excellent resource for any individual or study group interested in reaching and learning what the "view from the top" is like.

**Equality in Christ? Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute**, Richard Hove, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999. 160 pp. \$18.00. ISBN 1-58134-103-2.

*Reviewed by Kerry Waymon Douglas, Interim Director, Judson College, Marion, Alabama.*

Few can enter the controversy concerning the role of women in the Church without grasping at proof texts to justify one's position. Yet, Richard W. Hove, a minister for Campus Crusade for Christ at Duke University, manages to avoid that by justifying his findings from the proper place—the scriptures as a whole. He accomplishes this by examining the "lexical, syntactical, and contextual issues that are important for an accurate interpretation of Galatians 3:28." Hove hopes that following these methods would give one the clear meaning of the passage while steering clear of impassioned debate.

Hove wants to find the correct meaning of Galatians 3:28, before jumping to its significance. First, he looks beyond the single verse to the larger context of Galatians chapters 3-4, seeing it placed in the background of Paul's emphasis on salvation history from Abraham, rather than the issue of equality. Second, Hove focuses on the particular context of Galatians 3:26-29, exhaustively examining each Greek

phrase. He finds that Paul is correcting the Galatians' false notion that salvation, the heritage from Abraham, comes through relating to Abraham through the law, rather than by the works of Christ. Galatians 3:26-29, which verse 38 is part of the thought, simply states that salvation is open to all. The equality proposed here is the equal call to each individual regardless of origin, not equality of roles within the body of Christ.

Hove does a remarkable job of creating a scholarly work of exegesis, while yet making it accessible to nonprofessionals. The reader would be enriched by familiarity of Biblical Greek, yet Hove manages to convey the essence of his argument well, even without this prior knowledge. The reasoning is clear and the pace is smooth, leading one to a well-thought out conclusion.

This book is recommended for upper level undergraduates through professionals.

**Israel: The Land and Its People.** VHS. Color. 27 min. Danielle Kaminsky. Alden Films, P.O. Box 446, Clarksburg, NJ 08510; 732-462-3522; [www.aldenfilms.com](http://www.aldenfilms.com). 1995.

*Reviewed by Kerry Waymon Douglas, Interim Director, Judson College, Marion, Alabama.*

*Israel: The Land and Its People* explores the geography of Israel and its inhabitants through the theme of progress. The movie opens with a map of Israel surrounded by her oft-time enemies. The next scene shows the Negev Desert, where lies the grave of David Ben-Gurion, the founder of the modern nation. The scenes then shifts to a farmer, growing fruit and flowers in the desert, seeming to fulfill the prophecies of Isaiah. There is an unmistakable parallel between water/restoration and people/Israel—as the desert blooms with newfound life, so Israel prospers through the struggle of its people.

The narrative flows with the Jordan

River, journeying the length of Israel, emptying into the sea. The narrator often alludes to the land's biblical past, but the focus is on the future. As the nation waters the desert, it also cultivates its people, emphasizing prosperity from embracing high technology. The narrator represents the blessings from trade, culture and spiritual renewal through exploring the respective cities of Haifa, Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. In the final scenes, Israel looks forward to an era of peace with her neighbors, showing the reconciling efforts with Egypt, Jordan and the PLO. The movie concludes symbolically with the waters mingling in the sea, where children from Israel and Jordan meet together in friendship.

The cinematography is stunning and the video is well produced all around. The director/writer, Danielle Kaminsky, achieves her purpose of communicating that peace will reward with prosperity those who seek it. This is the theme that the desert flowers when watered.

The movie is somewhat dated, harking back to the heady days of the Oslo Accords and before Rabin's assassination. Occasionally, the movie almost slips into a tourist promotional, but it quickly regains its momentum. As such, this video is not a necessary purchase, but will find a home in collections emphasizing the current conflicts in the Middle East.

**Israel: The Promise of the Jewish People.** VHS. Color. 60 min. Alden Films, P.O. Box 446, Clarksburg, NJ 08510; 732-462-3522; [www.aldenfilms.com](http://www.aldenfilms.com). 1988.

*Reviewed by Kerry Waymon Douglas, Interim Director, Judson College, Marion, Alabama.*

Bob Grant, radio talk show host, responds to criticism of Israel by exploring the country first hand, interviewing several individuals along the way who represent what he considers best of the nation. He wants to show ordinary people making positive

contributions to society. Grant's counters media bias against Israel, showing a side that is rarely seen on the evening news.

First, Grant looks at Israel's struggle for independence and for survival. He visits two poignant sites: the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem and the Cemetery of Heroes on Mount Herschel. The first site shows the desperation that drove Jews to establish Israel and the second site shows the necessity for Israel's continuation.

Second, Grant interviews the different kinds of people that make up Israel—a Jewish settler outside of Jericho, a Palestinian convert to Judaism, a Vietnamese refugee who found asylum and others. He speaks with ordinary people who do extraordinary things like creating Girls Town for girls from broken homes and organizing over 3,000 volunteers to provide medical services for the handicapped.

Third, Grant shows that Israel tries to live in peace with her Arab neighbors and with its own Palestinian population. Israeli Arabs have the highest literacy and income levels of any in the Middle East and have representation in the nation's legislature. The government offered to build permanent housing in the refugee camps, but was prevented by the United Nations. No one can imagine similar situations for Jews in Arab countries. Israel has also offered to develop water resources with Jordan, but was refused out of hand.

This video does a good job of showing the parts of Israel that the media ignore in the pursuit of television ratings. Because it is so dated (1988), it should not be considered a necessary purchase unless one wants material of the first Intifada. The reviewer welcomes an expanded sequel of sorts, revealing how ordinary Israeli citizens are coping under the present crisis.

**Tracing Mount Sinai.** VHS. 60 min. Alden Films, P.O. Box 446, Clarksburg, NJ 08510; 732-462-3522; [www.aldenfilms.com](http://www.aldenfilms.com). 1993.

Reviewed by Robert Ellis, Library Director, The King's College, New York, New York.

This video explores possible locations where Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. The viewer follows an Israeli investigative team as they journey across the Sinai, examining and comparing Bedouin legends, Jewish traditions, rock carvings and quail migrations.

Viewers will be turned off by the age of the video (at least 30 years old) and the poor sound quality (muffled). I do not recommend this video at all. Libraries would be much better off purchasing a more recent, and far more accurate video call *Exodus Revealed*.

**And There Was Light.** VHS. 30 min. P.O. Box 446, Clarksburg, NJ 08510; 732-462-3522; www.alden films.com

Reviewed by Robert Ellis, Director of Library Services, The King's College, New York, New York.

The narrator explains the origin of the Bible, as well as the efforts of various translators over the centuries. *And There Was Light* describes the work done by Jerome, Wycliff, Gutteberg, Erasmus, Luther, Tyndale and Coverdale as they labored to produce such translations as the Vulgate, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible and the King James Bible.

Again, viewers will immediately sense this video is "old fashioned," but the constantly changing visuals of artistic paintings make it palatable. The out of date background music is slightly annoying. I would not pay full price for this video, but it could be useful addition to any library wishing to cover Bible translation efforts.

**The Art of Teaching the Bible: A Practical Guide for Adults**, by Christine Eaton Blair. Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2001. 138 p. \$ 12.95 ISBN 0664501486

Reviewed by Deborah Michelle Powell, Cataloging Services Librarian, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia.

Teachers, especially Bible teachers, are artists. Their ultimate goal is to guide "learners to become beginning artists, exploring and interpreting the texts of the Bible and their lives through the teaching-learning process." Christine Blair emphasizes that students are not "blank canvases" but are individuals who possess an internal artistry that takes shape as it is drawn out.

Blair does a marvelous job of connecting the role of a teacher to an artist. To understand, appreciate, and apply Scripture one must comprehend God's Word. "Learning can be simple acquisition of new information, or it can involve reintegration of new understandings." Her model for teaching consists of five R's: remembering, revisiting the text, reflecting critically, reinterpreting, and responding. By carefully applying this model learners are able "to listen carefully to the Bible and to connect it to their lives and community." Nevertheless, to adequately assist the student in the learning process the teacher must "value the adult" and help draw out what is within.

Christine Eaton Blair holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from the American Baptist Seminary. Currently she is Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program and Associate Professor of Practical Theology at Austin Presbyterian Seminary.

*The Art of Teaching the Bible* is an absolute must individuals and institutions alike. Blair's practical, innovative, and artistically unique method for teaching adults brings a refreshingly artistic approach to developing techniques in adult learning.

**The Gospel According to the Simpsons: Spiritual Life of the World's Most Animated Family**, by Mark J. Pinsky, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. 165 pp. \$12.95. ISBN 0-664-22419-9

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

In 1965 John Knox Press published Roberts Short's *The Gospel According to Peanuts*. How could one not be amused with the antics of Charlie Brown, Linus, and Lucy? The drawings feature children doing what children do: playing games, yelling "Good grief!" and going to school. Fast forward to the present. How could anyone not be amused with the antics of Bart, Lisa, and Maggie Simpson? The drawings feature children doing what children do: pulling pranks, yelling, "Don't have a cow, Man!" and being truant. Times change...

Granted, not everyone is amused with Fox Television Network's "The Simpsons." Early in their celluloid incarnation Bart and Company were criticized from pulpits. But for some Christians Sundays mean morning worship with fellow believers and evening vespers with the Simpsons. Pinsky, religion reporter for the "Orlando Sentinel," does for "The Simpsons" what Short did for the Peanuts gang. If you love the program you will nod in agreement with the author. Tony Campolo's foreword notes "If you have never watched 'The Simpsons', you will want to after reading this book, especially if you are religious." (p. ix). Here is a serious exploration of serious comedy.

Chapter titles bring a smile to Simpson devotees. "Does Lisa Speak for Jesus? and The Evangelical Next Door" examine the lives of specific characters. Pastor Lovejoy's character is examined in "The Church and the Preacher: 'We Don't have a Prayer'". Pinsky observes the Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Hindi neighbors impact Homer and Marge's lives. Beyond the animated characters the author tells of the writers and their religious backgrounds from atheist to Christian.

While admittedly not a scholarly work, Pinsky does include his methodology and endnotes. It belongs in library collections as well as Robert Short's volume. Both observe the impact of Christianity on popular culture and media. \*