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Volume 63 | Issue 2

Article 13

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12-1-2020

## Holmes' "Mother to son: Letters to a black boy on identity and hope" (book review)

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### Recommended Citation

DiRoberts, Kyle D. (2020) "Holmes' "Mother to son: Letters to a black boy on identity and hope" (book review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 63: Iss. 2, Article 13.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.2224>

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# Book Reviews

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Holmes, J. L. *Mother to son: Letters to a black boy on identity and hope*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press. 151 pp. \$18.00. ISBN 9780830832767

Jasmine L. Holmes is the author of, *Mother to Son: Letters to a Black Boy on Identity and Hope*. Holmes is a writer and humanities teacher in Jackson, Mississippi. The focus of her writing and speaking is upon identity, and specifically one's identity in Christ. The thesis of *Mother to Son* is twofold. First, she desires to give you "a glimpse into the heart of a black mother's love for her beautiful black son" (. 7). Holmes describes her son Wynn as "extroverted, inquisitive, fiercely affectionate, and staunchly opinionated" (p. 5). These conversations are similar to the one Holmes' parents had with her, which are "unique to our ethnicity" (p. 7). The second purpose "is an outward look at a sister's heart for her siblings" (p. 7). *Mother to Son* is her opportunity to dialogue with the church concerning ethnicity. Not to "flatten God-given ethnic and cultural identities" but instead, live "in the gloriously diverse reality of those identities for his glory" (p. 8). In the end, she hopes these letters might be "a helpful roadmap on the journey forward" (p. 148).

The content in the book is broken down into various letters, each beginning with "Dear son." Some chapters are broken up with interludes, which serve to break up the chapters with some formal grouping. However, for the most part, each letter to Wynn stands alone, while at the same time directing the reader toward her twofold agenda. In support of her thesis, Holmes asserts that seeing cultural differences can be difficult (p. 8). She hopes that a firm dependency on Christ and his redemptive work on the Cross will serve to balance this discussion (p. 146).

Throughout her book she accomplished this goal in pointing the reader back to Christ through story and personal experience. In *Mother to Son*, Holmes is hopeful to be heard with a specific tone, one of "patience, gentleness, and love" (p. 8). In the end, she achieved this goal (p. 147). *Mother to Son* is clearly written and will be a helpful resource for church small group material, Bible studies, and could potentially be a helpful resource in various ethic and ministry courses at the university or seminary level.

## Reviewer

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