THIS ISSUE FEATURES:

- Star of Wonder
- Growing a Storyteller: Teaching Children to Write Fiction
- Awakening the Giant
- Triple Your Pleasure, Triple Your Joy: Christmas Books
- 'Twas the Night Before Christmas: Book Nook
- Cooking with Kids: Using Your Public Library
- Feeding Little Lambs the Seed of Faith: Helen Haidle
- Crafts and Handmade Fun: Using Your Public Library
A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

This has been a month of gratitude for us here at CLJ. Your reader surveys have blessed our hearts again and again, and we thank you for taking time to communicate with us. Our subscription list continues to grow.

Another source of joy has been the addition of Mary Jarvis to our editing staff. Mary formerly edited all reviews and articles during our first year of publication. Then she took a year off, with health problems and then a move to Oklahoma. In this issue she begins the editing all children’s book reviews: picture books, children’s fiction, and children’s nonfiction. She will also continue to do her Book Nook column.

Change seems to be part and parcel of our existence here at the Hesch household. We have sold our home in Grants Pass, and will be moving in about a month to the central Oregon coast. Check for the new address and phone number in the next issue.

You will find our purchasing cooperative order form in the center of the magazine. Spring Arbor is in a state of transition, since being purchased by Ingram Books, and are presently discussing whether or not they will serve the small library. We will fill the gap, with some changes from our past program. The new structure will include:

- **Faster Service**,  
- **Single Shipments Per Order (No Back Orders)**,  
- **Cataloging @ 25¢ per Card Set**, and  
- **No MARC Records on Disk Until We Get the New Version of Our Computer Software.** Simplified MARC Record Printouts for 10¢ each.

We thank you for your continued support of the journal, and for sharing it with others.

In Christ’s love,

Nancy L. Hesch
Editor and Publisher

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EDITOR’S CHOICE

As part of CLJ’s desire to recommend the best in Christian literature, we will, from time to time, be offering our Editor’s Choice selections. These are books which our section editors believe possess particular merit and wide application. What follows are brief recommendations; fuller reviews can be found in the respective sections. We hope you read and enjoy our Editor’s Choice selections.

Andrew M. Seddon

* Sylvia Stopforth’s Young Adult selection is *The Neverending Story*, by Michael Ende. Fantasy literature, with its bumbling apprentices and fire-breathing dragons, can often seem trite and overworked. But Michael Ende, in *The Neverending Story*, somehow manages an original approach to this genre. Bastion Balthazar Bux is not some long-lost princeling masquerading as a lowly kitchen boy. On the contrary, he is just what he appears to be: an unremarkable, lonely boy who has recently been held back a grade in school. When he bursts into a secondhand bookstore one afternoon, his only thought is to escape his schoolyard tormenters.

But he finds himself strangely drawn to one particular book, and is soon immersed in a story in which he, himself, must play a crucial role. In the end, Bastion’s world hasn’t changed, but he has, for he now knows that the point is not to escape life, but to embrace it, to live it fully. Therein lies true courage.

* Ray Legg’s Adult Nonfiction choice is Richard Foster’s *The Celebration of Discipline* (HarperSan Francisco). This book presents an in-depth look at different aspects of the Christian life which, if perfected, will draw believers into a deeper relationship with God. Solidly evangelical and very thought provoking.

* My own selection is *Following Jesus* by N.T. Wright (Eerdman’s). This is, quite simply, one of the best books on discipleship I have ever read. Wright has a way of presenting old concepts in refreshing new ways. For example, Wright weaves together the message of Revelation with the hope of Easter. “We have become like a garden paved over with stone slabs. Many people live like that; God help us, many of us even choose it, rather than face the terror and joy of our own hearts, let alone of Calvary and Easter. But Easter is all about the garden in which stone slabs are made to look silly…”

For a refreshing look at what it means being a disciple of Christ means, I recommend *Following Jesus*. 

Andrew M. Seddon

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The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide readers with reviews of both Christian and secular library materials from a Christian point of view. About 250 books, cassette tapes, and videos from both Christian and secular publishers are reviewed each issue. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Christian Library Journal.

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“It is with books as with men,” wrote Voltaire, "a very small number play a great part, the rest are lost in the multitude."

There are indeed, multitudes of books. Whenever I walk into a bookstore - or even my bedroom or office, and see the stacks of volumes waiting for my perusal—I wish I had more time to read.

Some books will be worth the reading, others will disappoint. A few will demand to be read again.

Being a member of a liturgical denomination, I like to follow the calendar of the church year. Coming soon are Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. I'll take a Saturday or my day off and browse through our church library and Christian book store to find some appropriate reading for the season. Hopefully, among the multitudes of books, I will find those one or two which stand out.

Last year, for a variety of reasons, I left my browsing and shopping too late, and so didn't complete my selections before the end of Epiphany. So I'll begin this Advent with those two: Winter Song, Christmas Readings by Madeleine L'Engle and Luci Shaw (Shaw); and Jack Hayford's Come...And Behold Him (Multnomah).

The previous year, I also read two books: Herbert O'Driscoll's Emmanuel, Encountering Jesus as Lord (Cowley); and Making All Things New, An Invitation to the Spiritual Life, by Henri Nouwen (HarperSanFrancisco). The year before that, I only read one book for Advent: The Glory of Christ, by R. C. Sproul (Tyndale).

It is all too easy, among the trappings and hype of the season, to lose focus; for me, choosing an appropriate book to study can help avert the clamor of our secular age, and concentrate my mind on the true reality of Christmas.

Whether it be at home, or in the library, I hope you will find recommendations in these pages to suit every taste.

May God be with you all this holy season,
“Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse...”

Those memorable words come to mind when I recall childhood celebrations of Christmas. I was six years old and my older sister had helped me memorize the words to that childhood favorite. I was posed in front of my grandparent’s fireplace reciting with great drama and gusto to the assembled family. Wearing a red plaid jumper and long red socks, matching bow atop golden curls, I made my debut onto the world of the stage. My audience was quite appreciative as I ended the recitation with elaborate curtsies and bows.

Christmas is such a beautiful and exciting season for children and adults alike. It is a time to remember and build new memories, to love and be loved, to share and worship the newborn King. Teachers and parents of children and teens have such a wonderful opportunity to create experiences and traditions that will be treasured for a lifetime. It is our responsibility to instill in children the knowledge of who Christ is and that the season is about him more than just about gifts and good food or jingle bells. There is much that we can do that is fun and draws the family together, but most important is the birth that we celebrate.

Jill and Stuart Briscoe’s book for adults, Meet Him at the Manger, points to Christ as the real meaning of Christmas and how God desires our celebration to focus on worship and simplicity. Stuart develops scripture, giving lists of ideas to relate the scripture to family life. Jill’s personal testimony and poetry catches the essence of the season. This book makes an excellent springboard for thought and action as parents guide their family through the season.
Down through the years literature has aided in drawing young and old to the stable in Bethlehem. A classic book that I was entranced with as a youngster is *The Littlest Angel* by Charles Tazwell. It continues to be reprinted because of its universal appeal. Small children identify with the clumsy little cherub and delight in the Savior’s love.

A favorite activity in my own classrooms was to read the Christmas story to the children using a large picture book. Then we would talk about the different people and animals. I would assign youngsters in groups of two or three to draw large figures on butcher paper and then paint and cut them out. There would be a flurry of activity as kids worked on the floor in classroom and hall to complete their creations. When the paint had dried and figures of animals, people, and even stars, were cut out and pinned to the largest bulletin board in the room, we would all stand back to enjoy our efforts. I never ceased to be amazed at how the children had captured the spirit and essence of that first Christmas. Each year was different, whether it was first or fifth grade. The expressions of their Mary and Joseph were always delightful. Bright yellow stars shone down on cockeyed lambs and happy cows worshiping the Babe. Students from past years would trickle through the door to see what the current class had created. This was art that could not be surpassed in any book or museum.

Find some good books that will stimulate the mind and the spirit in youngsters. Recent titles that might be useful for little ones include: *Merry Birthday Nora Noel* by Ann Dixon, which portrays a family awaiting the birth of a new baby while celebrating the Advent of Christ’s birth.

*Ruth Bell Graham’s book, One Wintry Night,* wonderfully illustrated by Richard Jesse Watson, will fascinate children with the tale of a boy on a snowy night searching for a house his grandpa had built many years before in the mountains. He stumbles on the house and makes new friends and learns of the first Christmas and what it resulted in. This book is a superb introduction of God’s work among the Hebrews and his ultimate plan for all people.

The *Candymaker’s Gift : Legend of the Candy Cane* by Helen Haidle is about a candymaker who wants to create a special Christmas gift for his granddaughter, Katie, and share it with all the village children. As he shapes the candy sticks, the candymaker thinks of the staff shepherds used when they went to see the baby Jesus. As he paints on the red stripes, he thinks of the blood Jesus shed on the cross. The children are delighted with the new candy treat and the candy cane is born.

These are just a sampling of a few favorite books that aid in building traditions and memories for children and adults alike as we enter this wonderful season of the year. Seize the opportunity to celebrate this Christmas with activities, fellowship, and sharing in ways that will create wonderful memories for yourself and the children around you. Let those memories point to the Christ Child and be a foundation for life.
Most children, no matter what their age, love to listen to and tell stories. Making up those wild tales and surprising Mom and Dad with the outrageous happenings comes naturally to most kids. Taking the step from telling to writing stories is easy with the right encouragement and guidance.

The beginning step must, of course, be listening to a child's storytelling. If you are not prepared to listen, a child's natural desire to make up stories will soon disappear. You can encourage storytelling from an early age by asking a child to "read" a wordless picture book to you. Later on, ask the child to make up a story about his or her favorite literary or cartoon character. Make opening up the imagination an everyday part of your family routine. Your child will reap the rewards when he or she begins to record these stories on paper.

The next step involves getting a child's spoken or mental words down on paper. If you yourself aren't much of a writer, this can present a mental block for you, the teacher. Many adults fear writing above almost anything else, some to the point of phobia. But writing, like other disciplines, consists of two things: talent and practice. Without practice, even the most talented writer will not grow. But with practice, even the most mediocre writer can express herself. The main thing a parent and/or teacher must avoid is passing on negative feelings about writing itself.

When a child begins to put stories down on paper, don't worry about structure, grammar or spelling. These are side issues in the beginning. What a teacher or parent should encourage is the act of giving those mental thoughts physical life on a piece of paper. The more a child writes, the more fluid the act of putting words on paper becomes. That's why most professional writers write for a set amount of time every day. Because it is an inherently difficult task (even for those who love it), a beginner should have the chance just to enjoy the act of writing until it becomes an acquired skill.

Don't expect too much from beginning fiction writers, no matter what their age. Common mistakes include:

- lapses in plot logic;
- "pat" (and sometimes sudden and illogical) endings;
- convenient introduction of characters who "save the day";
- assumptions that the reader will fill in any plot gaps;
- flat or stereotyped characterizations; and
- obviously plagiarized characters, plots and ideas.

These are normal and natural mistakes. Instead of looking for perfection, focus on helping the child enjoy storytelling and opening up the child's imagination. These are both vital skills that take lots of practice, and they form the basis for good fiction writing.

Once the child feels comfortable with the act of writing, the time has come to teach him to fine-tune his stories. Simply writing the different parts of a story on a...
blackboard and giving a lecture on each won't help a child improve her storytelling ability. Help the child or children learn by doing.

Several years ago, I attended a children's writing seminar at which an author took charge of a large group of budding writers. Instead of just running down a list of story parts, the author walked the group through the writing process. She started by asking for suggestions about the main character. Was the main character a boy or girl? What did he or she look like? What was his/her family life like? What hobbies did he/she pursue? Who did the main character hang around with?

Then she moved on to plot development. Every main character needs a problem to solve, so what is this main character's problem? Why is it a problem? How does the character feel about it? How did the character get into the predicament? How is the predicament affecting the character's life, and the lives of those around him or her? How does he or she try to solve the problem?

This author taught by helping her group of writers ask the right questions. By the time her seminar had ended, the group had written a detailed outline of the main character and the plot of their "book." And it was a painless, even exciting, way to learn how to plan ahead and outline the complex realities of their invented world.

Take a cue from this author and teach through inquiry. Begin by asking your fiction writer questions that gently point out defects in the characterizations in his or her story. Inquire why the main character changed his or her mind, or why he or she decided to pursue a certain course of action. Making observations like, "Wow! I was surprised he did that after he told his best friend he wouldn't!" will make your author think about the actions his character takes and why.

The same approach works well for plot problems. Asking the how and why questions in a gentle way will help your writer discover weaknesses in plot logic and action. Then allow the child to correct the problems in his or her own way. It might mean introduction of a new character, excising a scene or simply explaining things more fully. But allowing the writer to correct the problem provides an invaluable lesson in writing fiction.

Storytelling on paper can be an exciting experience for a budding writer. But a teacher or parent must be careful first and foremost to encourage the storyteller in the child! Listen to the tales the child has to tell, then move on to the discipline of putting those words on paper. After the writer becomes comfortable with that, move on to gently asking the right (write?) questions. The result will be a child who loves to write!

Creative Outlines

I remember learning to write research papers in 5th grade. My old-fashioned teacher insisted we write an outline before she would allow us to begin on the project itself. How I hated that dry-as-dust approach to the exciting information I wanted to communicate!

Outlining a story is just as important as outlining a research paper. Planning ahead is a vital skill to impart to a child, and is one that doesn't always come easily. But an outline doesn't have to follow the old-fashioned point-by-point approach. Instead, why not teach your writer to use a storyboard to plan out her tale?

A storyboard is a graphic rendition of a visual or written story. In planning movies or animation, the storyboard gives a blow-by-blow account of what happens in each scene. It visually portrays action, plot changes, characters, and even camera angles. It is a detailed plan of the action—in other words, it's an outline!

Use the storyboard approach in helping young writers plan their stories. Ask them to visualize each event in the story, then draw each of those events in a series of comic-book type boxes. These boxes will then serve as a guideline for the author as he does the actual writing. Visualizing stories in this way helps writers avoid lapses in logic and assumptions about what the reader knows. It helps make the transition from head to paper go a little smoother and easier.

And, it's fun, too!
"Mom, when do I get to see a green pastor?" asked Helen Haidle's six-year-old son.

"There's no such thing."

"Yes, there is. It's in the Bible."

At first, Helen didn't know what her oldest child was talking about. Finally, she realized he meant green pastures from the Twenty-Third Psalm. So Helen and her husband, David, tried to teach their children, ages three, four, and six, the meaning of this psalm. However, the kids simply didn't understand many of the words. The parents searched for a children's book on the Twenty-Third Psalm, but they found none. Then they discovered Phillip Keller's book, A Shepherd Looks at the 23rd Psalm. By translating it to their children's level, the Haidles helped them understand this beloved psalm. Next, they taught it to their third through fifth grade Sunday-school classes. They kept saying during those years, "Somebody really ought to do a book for kids on the Twenty-Third Psalm."

In 1987, the Lord told them they were the ones to write and illustrate that book, which was a real struggle for us. Me to learn to write, and David to learn to illustrate," Helen said.

They spent a year struggling to create He Is My Shepherd, and the Lord confirmed in numerous ways that this was the work he called them to. "We were to feed his lambs," explained Helen. "Those were the words I had in my head."

When she got discouraged, she would remind herself that God called many people to do things they felt they couldn't do, such as Moses and Gideon.

Learning to write didn't come easily to Helen. She still finds it hard work and does numerous rewrites. Sing Me to Sleep was reworked three to four times, changing the tune and the angle of the story. She rewrote The Candymaker's Gift fifty or sixty times. Two months were spent writing ten lines for a Pocket book. She rewrites until she captures the essence of her message in the fewest words, while maintaining clarity and a vocabulary level a young child can understand.

Helen and David have now worked on several book projects as a team. This teamwork arrangement gives her a unique approach to writing that few authors enjoy. With an in-house illustrator, she can suggest illustration ideas and copyfit her text around the pictures. When other people illustrate her books, she misses this interaction and finds the process less enjoyable. David also offers ideas and critiques on her text.

Working together has its challenges, too. Criticism sometimes leads to hurt feelings, so they have had to learn to forgive each other regularly.

Their daughter, Elizabeth, has also teamed up with them. She illustrated all six Pocket books and did some of the artwork for Angels in Action, The Candymaker's Gift, and The First Christmas Tree.

All of the Haidles' book ideas originated from recognized needs. For example, they saw that children needed a book on the Twenty-Third Psalm and another on to help them understand...
and share the gospel with others. The Candymaker’s Gift fulfilled this latter need.

In 1993, the Haidles began to hand out candy canes to their Sunday-school students. Helen found the story of the candy cane on the box—how the candy represents Christ’s birth, life, death, and resurrection. She thought, “This is a wonderful way for children to remember something because it is so visual.”

The next year, they taught the candy-cane story to the Sunday-school children, then handed each child two candy canes, one to eat, and one to share with a friend. Many of the children shared the candy-cane story with others.

Helen told her husband the following January, “The most wonderful thing I have ever done in my whole life has been to teach children the meaning of the candy cane and to encourage them to share it.”

David agreed, then added, “Somebody should write a book about it.”

They looked at each other. “Lord, are you giving us this idea? Are we supposed to do this?”

They wrote and illustrated the book without a contract, though three publishers looked at it. During the nine months they worked on it, they lived solely on savings and royalty checks that came every four months. (Because their books are their only source of income, the Haidles have learned to live simply: growing and canning their food, shopping at the Goodwill and garage sales, and cutting their own hair.)

They completely relied on the Lord to provide for the family’s needs and on his guidance that he wanted them to produce the book. Finally, Honor Books published it in October 1996.

Having this book selected from 550 children’s books in the CBA market to be one of five 1997 Gold Medallion finalists has thrilled the Haidles. Yet, it isn’t sales or recognition that motivates them to create books; they seek to touch hearts.

Writing God’s assignment

“God has put a strong desire in our hearts to write things that will bless children and parents.” Helen views this as her assignment from the Lord. When she approaches a new project, she asks him, “You show us what to do, because I don’t want to do anything unless you’re telling me to do it. Then I want to do it out of faith even though it looks impossible.”

Many of their projects, such as The Candymaker’s Gift, have looked impossible, because they often didn’t know where the money to live was going to come from. Yet, they happened. “We feel our books give testimony to God’s faithfulness as he showed us to do something, and we stepped out in faith to do it,” explained Helen.

The Haidles call themselves Inside-Out Publications, using Romans 12:2 as their theme verse: “Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Considering their books as seeds, they pray that the Lord will use them to plant, grow, and encourage the faith of children.

A woman once told Helen that she and her daughters have been reading He Is My Shepherd for years at bedtime because the girls don’t want to get nightmares when they sleep.

Through the Haidles’ willingness to obey the Lord’s call, these girls and many others have found peace in green pastures.

Books by Helen Haidle

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<td>The First Christmas Tree</td>
<td>David Haidle and Elizabeth Haidle</td>
<td>July 1997</td>
<td>Hardcover</td>
<td>PS-Gr 5</td>
<td>ISBN 1562921509</td>
<td>CBA Bestseller Jan 1997 (#2) and July 1997 (#6)</td>
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<td>A Candy Cane Christmas</td>
<td>Rick Incrocci</td>
<td>July 1997</td>
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<td>What Would Jesus Do?</td>
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YOUNG WRITERS GET PUBLISHED

*Child Life* magazine, for ages 9-11, wants articles that encourage imagination, positive health, and life choices. Fiction is not wanted in 1997 as they are recycling past stories during their 75th anniversary year. Send short poetry, jokes, riddles and drawings. Holiday material is especially needed, with eight months lead-time. Students receive a contributor’s copy and a byline, no cash. Response in three months. Send to editor Lise Hoffman, PO Box 567, Indianapolis, IN 46206-0567.

TEENS GET PUBLISHED

Students in grades 8-12 can send quality work to *The Claremont Review*, 4980 Wesley Rd., Victoria, B.C. V8Y 1Y9. They want first class poetry, plays, short stories for this twice-a-year journal. Payment is one copy plus cash, if grants are available. Simultaneous submissions OK, if stated in cover letter. Response in six weeks. Send typed work only, on any topic, for any age. Be sure to send IRCs with SAE. Payment is $5 per magazine page for accepted nonfiction, fiction, or poetry. Editors Bill Stenson or Terrence Young prefer writing that reveals the human condition. No horror, sci-fi, romance, TV clones, or non-literary work. Read back issues at your library or send $5.

STUDENT CONTESTS

For grades K-12, the "National PTA Reflections Program" theme for Fall 1997 is "Wouldn’t It Be Great If…” This program extends beyond the local school level to regional, state, and national competition, and big rewards. Under 1,000 words of fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, or lyrics must be neatly hand-written or typed. Attach signature of authenticity from parent or teacher. Elementary school entries are not penalized for spelling, punctuation, or grammar. At state level, first, second, and third place winners in each category receive $300, $200, $100 respectively, in four grade divisions. Winning writing is published in an anthology, with byline. National winners also get a trip to receive awards, more cash, and books. About 12,000 entries are received nationally, so submit polished projects. Check with your PTA or write to the address below.

Seniors in high school may enter the "Reflections Scholarship Program.” They must request an application packet by November 30. Up to two entries in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, or lyrics of any length, on any theme can be sent typed or neatly hand-written. Do not send book reports. The deadline is late January. One winner receives a $750 scholarship. No entry fee. Previously published work is accepted. The winner will be published in an anthology with other category winners, with byline. Reprint rights are requested. The student must participate in this year’s school reflections program first, then complete a specific essay. A letter of recommendation, is required. See packet rules. Request one from 330 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-3604, or phone 312-787-0977, fax 312-951-6783.

WRITER’S WORDS TO KNOW:

Byline: The author’s name next to their work, "by Susie Smith"

Contributor’s Copy: One or more copies with the writer’s project in it

IRC: International Reply Coupons. Get them from the post office, for Canadian return.

Lead Time: How far ahead of schedule an editor needs work submitted

Literary: Well read, well written, of quality, interesting, versus casual, common

Response Time: How long until you hear if your work is accepted

SAE: Self addressed envelope, no postage on it, with IRCs for Canada

SASE: A self addressed, stamped envelope. Always send one for a reply.

Simultaneous Submission: Sending the same manuscript to more than one editor

by Penny Lent

Penny Lent lives in Puyallup, Washington, with her husband, two sons, two orange cats, and assorted northwest slugs. Lent is a frequent conference and school speaker and has freelanced over six hundred articles for radio, magazines, and her newspaper columns. She is editor and designer of two national newsletters and has authored seven books, including *Young Writer’s Market Manual*, *Young Writer’s Contest Manual* and *Young Writer’s Manuscript Manual* from Kaleidoscope Press.
Returning to the classroom following Thanksgiving is like diving into a swiftly moving river. Holding my breath, I leap, all the while praying that the current won’t carry me so quickly into Christmas that I miss the chance to enjoy the ride.

In my classroom, I try to keep from becoming involved in majestic art projects which tend to overwhelm the joy of Christmas. Instead, I opt for simple projects and share with the children the traditions and customs surrounding Christmas and the bountiful supply of books by authors who share my joy in this holy season. I say ‘season’ because Christmas is a collection of three international gift giving days, all of them centered on the birth and life of our Savior.

The first international gift giving day is St. Nicholas Day on Dec. 6. Nicholas of Myra, who died Dec. 6, AD 343, is one of the most popular saints honored by Christians. I recommend reading about St. Nicholas in any good encyclopedia and telling his story to your children. When St. Nicholas is presented in this way any question about whether he is real or not evaporates.

After learning about St. Nicholas, read the famous poem by Clement C. Moore, “The Night Before Christmas,” which has been published in several forms. My favorite is The Random House version, illustrated by Grandma Moses, which presents the opportunity to teach some art history along with the poem. A second rendition popular with children is the signed English version published by Galludet/Kendall Green.

The second gift-giving day, of course, is Christmas on Dec. 25. In America, Santa Claus brings gifts to little boys and girls, good and bad alike. The word ‘Christmas’ comes from the Old English term ‘Cristes maesse’ (Christ’s mass), the festival service of worship held on December 25 to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ.

For several centuries the Christian church paid little attention to the celebration of Jesus’ birth. The major Christian festival was Easter, the day of his resurrection. Only gradually as the church developed a calendar to commemorate the major events of the life of Christ did it celebrate his birth. Several authors have written excellent children’s books presenting Christmas traditions and stories. The most prolific must be Tomie dePaola.

In The Christmas Pageant, dePaola retells the Christmas story from the Bible. The children in my classroom make the creche figures which come in pull-out form in the center of the book. The figures are for coloring, cutting and setting up to perform your own pageant of the Christmas story, or for use as a manger scene for display.

An Early American Christmas introduces children to the ways of a German family settling in Pennsylvania in the early 1700’s before Christmas began to be widely celebrated. DePaola has also extended his series of flower legends by telling the Legend of the Poinsettia, a story set in Mexico of a young girl who fails in her attempt to uphold the family honor by making a new blanket for the Christmas creche at church on Christmas, but whose faith allows her to bring a miracle to her church family.

A third Christmas book by dePaola (who seems to enjoy Christmas as much as I do) is The Family Christmas Tree Book which introduces the history of using evergreens and ornaments in homes during the holidays. And just in case you want to round out your dePaola Christmas collection, be sure to find Tomie Depaola’s Book Of Christmas Carols, a collection of favorite carols presented.
with music, words, and illustrations, for a singingly beautiful Christmas.

For the sheer beauty of her illustrations, don’t miss Susan Jeffers’ Silent Night, a quietly awe-filled illustration of the famous Christmas carol. Each year when I turn the page and the children see the heavens filled with angels, a gasp fills the room. The pictures themselves are very relaxing, a wonderful way to slow down on a tiring afternoon. The children delight in watching the pet cat wend its way through the streets of Bethlehem to the manger.

An excellent sampler of Christmas traditions and traditional stories of Christmas is Hark! edited by Jane Yolen, Tomie dePaola, and Adam Stemple. Here is a tasty collection of poems, stories, history, and hymns to tempt your holiday appetite.

Anyone who has ever gone through the rigors of presenting a Christmas pageant will identify with the illustrations in Jacqueline Rogers’ The Christmas Pageant. My children especially enjoy the antics of the young baby Jesus and chuckle with delight when he is finally silenced with a modern day binky.

A Christmas pageant never to be forgotten is also the center of the now traditional The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. If you have never read Barbara Robinson’s poignant story of the Herdman family at Christmas, make a point to read it aloud to your class this year. Children and adults of all ages love it and can identify with at least one character in its down to earth cast.

Finally, the third international gift giving day is Epiphany, Jan. 6, celebrated in the church as the day the Wise Men found the Christ child in Bethlehem, and the coming of the Light into the world. In the Philippine Islands, Italy, and Spain, gifts are exchanged on this day rather than Christmas as a symbol of the gifts the Wise Men brought to the Christ child. In France, an Epiphany gateau is baked with small gifts hidden inside, a tradition I have kept in my classroom.

The night before Epiphany is known as Twelfth Night (Jan. 5), and in England the villagers brought their dry Christmas greens to the village square for a community bonfire. In my classroom, this is the day we take down the Christmas decorations and creche, signaling the end of the Christmas season and the last day to sing Christmas carols (the Twelve days of Christmas is a favorite). Two books of The Twelve Days of Christmas are Epiphany favorites. The first, for its silly depiction of a young girl receiving all the gifts offered during the twelve days, is by Jack Kent. The second, because of the detail of the pictures and the traditions of the many countries depicted in its illustrations, is by Jan Brett. As with other books by this popular author, watch the borders of the pictures for additional holiday treats.

In my home and classroom, the season is not complete until we have watched two classic video tapes: A Charlie Brown Christmas, with Linus’ beautiful rendition of the Christmas story from Luke, still brings a tear to my eye; How the Grinch Stole Christmas is a story that, in the midst of its silly language and pictures, drives home the point of the spirit of Christmas.

AAA---DOOOO--DOR-AY to you and yours this wonderful season!

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**Judy’s Christmas Selections**


Awakening The Giant: Mobilizing and Equipping Christians to Reclaim Our Nation In This Generation.

A review of Jim Russell's book by Raymond Legg


Not long after I became a Christian, a dear friend approached me in the fellowship hall of our church. He proceeded to tell me of another recent convert whom he felt needed some one-on-one discipleship to help get his Christian life off to a proper start. He then told me he wanted to include me and told me where and when to meet him. "I am going to disciple you," he said, and while he didn't say it, he implied that I would thank him for his work at some later point. I sensed a ring of truth in what he said and I sincerely appreciated his desire to see me grow in the faith. But I also recognized something mechanical and rigid in his approach from which I recoiled. We never did meet and he never brought it up again though we remained close friends.

About the same time, my wife and I were developing a relationship with a wonderful Christian family who attended the same Church. We were invited to their house often and saw the Christian faith lived out before our eyes. The husband and I talked, often late into the night, about the ways the Christian faith impacts daily living, and we discussed Christianity through the ages (my friend was a history major).

Slowly, I began to appreciate the fact that my conversion had made me part of something larger than I had expected. As a result of my friend's faith, I also got to see the power of God displayed first-hand in miraculous ways. Because of this one family, my wife and I were changed forever with regard to our walk with Christ. Because of this one family we learned not only the personal implications of living for the Lord, but also the practical implications which that kind of life can have on everyone and everything it touches. It seems to me that Awakening The Giant by Jim Russell, businessman and founder of the Amy Writing Awards, shares a similar focus. But what makes Awakening The Giant different from other books on discipleship? Why is it different from the books which appear with a certain regularity every two to three years?

What makes this particular book compelling?

I think these questions can be answered with one word - perspective. Rather than creating another once-a-week for x weeks = spiritual growth formula, Russell takes the focus away from evangelism, with which he says American Christians have had relatively good success, and turns it on change through discipleship. Russell says that discipleship should begin with the individual in a Christian family where s/he learns "disciplined study and prayerful sensitivity in a mentoring, tutoring environment." It is his contention that developing this type of environment is crucial to moral reclamation of the nation.

According to Russell, individual believers rekindle within themselves a true desire to develop their walk with Christ. They accomplish this through traditional methods such as prayer, Bible study, fellowship with other believers, and regular evangelistic activity. As individual family members are drawn closer to Christ, the family unit itself will be strengthened immeasurably. As the family is strengthened, so is the church. Combine with this new strength a rekindled vision of the ministry and mission of the church in local pastors and the result is a rejuvenated body both equipped and desirous to effect change on the world.

One key element in Russell's argument is his desire to get the church out of the pattern of following the lead of the world rather than assuming a leadership posture. The problem he sees is the tendency of Christians to allow themselves to be changed by the world rather than changing it. It is this tendency, Russell contends, which has resulted in the lack of real discipleship taking place in the body of Christ. According to Russell, strong individuals, families, churches, and church leaders combine to create the environment necessary for change to come about in America.

Another key element in the book is Russell's description of why the church is not more actively involved in discipleship. He says it is because Christians are "skeptical, insensitive, and Biblically illiterate." These rather harsh charges can be substantiated with a look at the world around us. How could the world be in such a shape if the church was doing its job?

Russell offers help for the Christian who understands this challenge and wants to move the church faith out of obscurity. He calls it "A SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) which allows believers to understand fully the position and condition of the church, and then use this understanding to impact the world.

Among the strengths of the Christian faith noted by Russell are "The Word of God, Prayer, The Holy Spirit, the Authority of Jesus, a National Presence, and gifted pastors." The weaknesses the church needs to overcome are "Biblical illiteracy, Absence of Vision, Unrighteousness, Discouragement, and Lack of Pastoral Vision." (This last one is interesting in that Russell also sees gifted pastors as a strength of the American church.)

The opportunities to be apprehended can be summarized under the headings of positive thinking and fresh vision, and the threats to the church as it moves out of obscurity can all be tied to Satan and his desire to keep it at rest.

The book ends with a relatively simple plan for implementation. First, if Christians want to see their nation changed, they have to become personal disciplers at home, in individual prayer life, and by public example. Second, they must develop the understanding that discipleship in the church involves becoming one with Christ and sharing His vision of the world. The final element Russell admits may be the most difficult: committing to see the project through to the end. If his plan for discipleship of the nation has any chance of success, it will depend upon the staying power of the body of Christ.

Awakening The Giant is a unique book. It has taken a subject familiar to nearly every Christian and addressed it in a new and fresh way. But the greatest contribution of the book may be the way it provides Christians with a new set of marching orders which it can use for fulfilling the Great Commission. For Christians serious about making a difference in their world, Awakening the Giant is a must read.

Dr. Raymond Legg is an assistant professor of English at Bryan College, Tennessee.
Star of Wonder

by Andrew M. Seddon

Love was born at Christmas: star and angel gave the sign.

Christina Rosetti

To choose one wonder from all the myriad phenomena discovered by modern astronomy would seem an impossible task. Almost daily, it seems, the Hubble space telescope detects another heavenly jewel. Galaxies, nebulae, supernovas, neutron stars are hidden from our naked eyes by the sheer immensity of space, yet are found by Hubble's mirror eye.

But perhaps choosing is possible, because one star holds a fascination for Christians. From the tops of thousands of Christmas trees, millions of Christmas cards, and unnumbered nativities, the Star of Bethlehem still shines. No Christmas scene is complete without its complement of shepherds, magi, angels, and holy family gathered together by starlight.

And yet what was this star that only Matthew's gospel mentions, but which has inspired poets, painters, and writers?

The Hebrews weren't known for their astronomical skills. The esoteric lore of the night skies belonged to the Babylonians and later the Persians. Until fairly modern times, astronomy was closely allied to astrology. Astronomer E.C. Krupp has written about the astronomy of lost civilizations in Echoes of the Ancient Skies. He passes quickly over the Star of Bethlehem, but notes, "...real or not, the Christmas Star has impact. It means new life and new order." Though not specifically Christian, book presents an informative and well-written account of how our ancestors viewed the heavens.

A different approach is taken by astronomer David Hughes in The Star of Bethlehem: An Astronomer's Confirmation. He studies the various etiologies suggested for the Star - a supernova, a comet, a conjunction of Jupiter and Venus, a fireball or some other ill-defined phenomenon, a legend, or a miracle. His book is well researched and detailed. His conclusion is that the Star was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn occurring in 7 BC.

Christian authors Kenneth Boa and William Proctor reach a different conclusion. Their book The Return of the Star of Bethlehem, was published in 1980, and is less rigorous and detailed than Hughes' work. Boa and Proctor believe that the Star was a manifestation of God's Shekinah Glory. The last quarter of the book seeks to connect the Star with UFO's and End Times events.

Hungarian priest and scientist Stanley Jaki has an interesting discussion of the magnalia Dei (momentous works of God) in his new book Bible and Science. He believes the Star was a combination of a natural nova plus a miracle - a miraculously produced visual image for the magi and those who beheld Christ's birth. "God's supernatural entry into human and physical reality... was resplenent in miracles, spiritual as well as physical."

Nuclear scientist Robert Faid, author of several books on science and Christianity, votes for a nova in the constellation Aquila in A Scientific Approach to Biblical Mysteries, while Paul Seidt casts his ballot for a miracle (The Earth, the Stars, and the Bible). Respected and prolific astronomer Patrick Moore concludes, "We have to admit there is no plausible scientific explanation for the star of Bethlehem, and it is most unlikely we will ever find one."

Books by Christians on general astronomy are not common, but one is Starwatch, by David Block. This beautifully illustrated volume explores the glory of the heavens in an understandable manner. The awesome majesty of the universe leads Block to conclude, "I sincerely believe one star holds a fascination for Christians. From the tops of thousands of Christmas trees, millions of Christmas cards, and unnumbered nativities, the Star of Bethlehem still shines. No Christmas scene is complete without its complement of shepherds, magi, angels, and holy family gathered together by starlight.

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E. Pilgrims (New Plymouth Colony)—Fiction, Massachusetts—History—New Plymouth, 1620-1691—Fiction. unp.
Gr. 1—5.

Across the Wide Dark Sea chronicles the adventures of Love Brewster, a nine-year-old boy, as his family crossed the sea on the Mayflower. The story is imaginary, but based upon real events. Love and his family say goodbye to their home. Along the way, storms come and friends get sick. Some people even die. But the terrible journey is worth it to gain the freedom to worship God in their own way. After landing on Plymouth Rock, the Pilgrims make their home and watch winter take more lives. But as the weather warms, so do the hopes of the people. With the help of their Indian friends, the Pilgrims begin stocking for the next winter.

Beautifully illustrated, Across the Wide Dark Sea will certainly entertain children. The simple language also lends itself to young readers.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—4

Janyre Stockinger
Student, Taylor University
Grand Rapids, Michigan


E. Angels—Fiction, Christmas—Fiction. unp.
Gr. K-3

Does the innocence of a child die as we grow older, or just fade into our memories? We may get some insight through Alabaster's Song. Max Lucado has written a tale of a young boy and the magic of Christmas. As this boy watches the tree glistening he notices the angel and begins to talk to him as if he was real. “Do angels go to bed early? Do your wings keep you warm? What was it like in Bethlehem?” Suddenly the angel, Alabaster, was standing there. He knew this was the “right” question as Alabaster began to sing. Now as this boy grows older the sound of Alabaster’s singing becomes very dim and almost lost, until one day another small boy begins to watch the angel. His son.

This is an enchanting story of Christmas through the eyes of an angel. A new perspective to many of us. Max Lucado has taken innocence in a child and expanded it to a sense of wonder. Alabaster was always there, but until beckoned with the right question, wasn’t really there. Michael Garland adds to the warmth and charm of this book with colorful illustrations that jump off the page. The colors and expressions truly radiate a sense of warmth and glow. The fact that Alabaster talks with a bit of a lisp, because he is missing his front teeth, adds a special character to this book.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—4

Marcia Snyder, Librarian
Valley Christian School
Missoula, Montana


E. Butterflies—Fiction, Mexico—Fiction. unp.
K—Gr. 2.

RATING SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality (Literary)</th>
<th>Acceptability (Ethical/Moral Concerns)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Excellent - among the very best of this type</td>
<td>5 No questionable elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Good - well written; strong recommendation</td>
<td>4 Slight concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Average - readers will enjoy</td>
<td>3 Moderate concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Fair - can recommend, but not as well written</td>
<td>2 Barely acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Poor - cannot recommend</td>
<td>1 Too questionable to recommend</td>
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★ Outstanding Book of its Genre

* Acceptability does not refer to doctrinal position, unless the doctrine is anti-Christian.
In *Butterfly Boy* by Virginia Kroll, Emilio’s grandfather has suffered a stroke or an illness which has left him unable to speak and physically handicapped. Emilio knows that though his Abuelo cannot communicate verbally, his mind is still alive and active. It is Abuelo who first notices and struggles to point out the red, brown, and white butterflies fluttering around the white wall of their garage. Observing these butterflies becomes a special activity for Emilio and his grandfather. After the butterflies have disappeared for the winter, Emilio learns that they are red admiral butterflies which are especially attracted to bright white surfaces such as their garage wall.

Emilio and Abuelo eagerly anticipate the return of spring so they can see their butterflies again. One warm day, Emilio notices that the red admirals have returned and rushes home to tell his grandfather. As they prepare to go outside, Abuelo motions for Emilio to look towards the garage. Instead of the bright white wall which will attract the red admirals, father is painting the garage blue. Disappointment shows in Emilio’s eyes and Abuelo’s slumped shoulders. Suddenly Emilio has an idea. He grabs a white shirt from the clothesline and puts it on. Red admirals flutter near and land on him. Papa is convinced to repaint the garage white so that the whole family can enjoy the beauty of the red admirals.

Gerardo Suzan’s colorful watercolor illustrations not only bring the story of Butterfly Boy to life but the thoughts and feelings of the characters as well. Though Abuelo is limited by his wheelchair, his mind is full of the flowers, birds, and butterflies that he loves to observe outside. As Abuelo and Emilio watch the red admirals flutter by, they too are portrayed as flying with butterfly wings. Emilio’s clothing is filled with stars, clouds, and the sun which reflect his love and enthusiasm for nature.

*Butterfly Boy* is a beautiful story which will involve the readers and teach them new lessons about life. Virginia Kroll lovingly communicates the need for children and adults to understand that though a handicapped person or stroke victim may seem lifeless, their mind can still be full of important ideas and feelings. In this story, Emilio does a wonderful job of reading to his grandfather and sharing his world with him. *Butterfly Boy* will also inspire discussions about how illustrators can bring an author’s words to life as children closely examine the watercolor paintings to better understand why Gerardo Suzan portrayed the characters in such a unique way. *Butterfly Boy* will be a story which children will want to listen to over and over again.

◆ Quality—5    ❤ Acceptability—5

**Susan Robinson**  
Librarian  
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

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PS—Gr. 2.

Young bear Teddy was born a smiling and happy bear, but as he becomes older he loses his smile and becomes a grumpy bear. Seeking various ways to regain his smile Teddy becomes disheartened when he finds nothing can make him smile anymore. It is not until Teddy fully understands the wise words of Grandpa bear that he is restored to his happy former self.

Author Carl Sommer develops the theme of happiness comes from helping others in a charming, approachable way for young readers in *Can You Help Me Find My Smile?* Greg Budwine’s simple, full page illustrations are bright and engaging.

◆ Quality—4    ❤ Acceptability—5

**Pam Webb**  
Freelance Writer, Homeschool Parent  
Sandpoint, Idaho

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E. Christmas, Candy canes. 32 p.

K—Gr. 3.

A *Candy Cane Christmas* explains the meaning of the candy cane, how it represents Jesus Christ. The hard candy reminds us that Jesus is our solid rock. The white candy represents Jesus’ holiness. The shape stands for Jesus, and the staff shape reminds us he is the Good Shepherd. The red stripes represent Jesus’ suffering and death.

In the first part of the book, the story is told in paired rhymes from the candymaker’s viewpoint. The second part describes the meaning of the different elements of the candy cane in prose. This book can serve as a companion book to Helen Haidle’s *Candymaker’s Gift* (Honor Books), which is written for an older audience. A *Candy Cane Christmas* will help young children understand and learn the meaning of the candy cane so they can share God’s Christmas gift, Jesus, with others.

Using the same style as he did in *God Made Me*, Rich Incrocci filled this book with many scenes from the life of Jesus and of children learning about and enjoying candy canes.

◆ Quality—3    ❤ Acceptability—5

**Lovinda K. F. Newton**  
Freelance Writer  
Kirkland, Washington

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E. Cats—Fiction.  unp.

K—Gr. 3.

Cat’s Kittens will soon need to fend for themselves. As each kitten in turn ventures forth, Cat warns about roads, limbs, dust bins, and dogs. However, the time has not come, not until their tails are fluffier and their ears are farther apart.

In a loving, caring atmosphere Paul and Emma Rogers share growing up and independence as Cat’s family of six kittens share life together, the only life a cat who has always had to fend for herself has ever known.

In soft shades and shadowy sketches the family moves from one activity to another. Even in the unlikely circumstances warmth and caring are felt.

◆ Quality—4    ❤ Acceptability—5

**Marie Knupp**  
Retired Librarian  
Monmouth, Oregon

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E. Counting, Animals.  unp.

Toddler—PS.

*Count!* by Denise Fleming, is a small handful of delight. Its well-made board pages turn easily and will obviously stand up to the frequent, hard use to which a toddler may subject it. Fleming’s use of amusing animals to represent the numbers from one to ten, and the strong, bright colors and clean outlines produced by her special technique of painting with cotton pulp are eye-pleasing, while the antic poses of the animals will catch the attention of even the most restless toddler.

The story in *Count!* is short and to the point, with only a few words (ones probably already in a toddler’s vocabulary) and one numeral on each page: “1… one gnu… hello, gnu! 2… two zebras… jump, zebras! 3… three crocodiles… no, no, crocodiles!” This is important when a book may become a favored treasure, lugged everywhere and reread hundreds of times, at times even “read” by the small owner herself.

◆ Quality—5    ❤ Acceptability—5

**Betty Winslow**  
Free-lance Writer/Librarian  
Bowling Green Christian Academy  
Bowling Green, Ohio

K—Gr. 3.

“Tonight the wind is blowing hard against my house. I lie in bed listening to the walls creak and the windows shake. ‘I’m afraid,’ I call to my father. He picks me up and holds me in his arms... Did you know,” he asks, ‘that long ago you could see the wind?’” So the tale is passed, father to daughter, of the wind who long ago was a beautiful woman laughing and dancing through the forests, herding clouds like sheep and teasing apples. Without the wind there is no life. Without the wind the trees wither, lakes dry up and there is no life. Without the wind the animals grow hungry and fearful. Without the wind the forests and mountains would be a deadly place.

In the preface, Susan Bivin Aller explains that Emma and the Night Dogs is a sequel to her earlier book, Emma and the Search Dogs. After the search dogs went on to other adventures, Emma and her parents decided to keep one of the dogs as a pet. The dogs went on to have a family of their own, and now they are raised to help people.

A small boy is separated from his parents and lost in the woods. After several days, Emma’s Aunt Alice, who was with Juno, her search dog, comes to Emma’s house, where several other dogs and handlers rest after searching all day for the lost boy. In the middle of the night the dogs wake, so Emma takes them out to search. They find the boy not far from the house, and take him home.


Gr. 1—4.

A moving story of successful rescue is effective without being graphic about the dangers the boy might face. The story does not just entertain, but also educates the reader about working dogs and compassion for others.


E—Animals—Pictorial works. unp.
K—All.

Emma’s Elephant and Other Favorite Animals is a collection of beautiful, full-page, black and white photographs of children with their favorite animals. Each picture captures the expression of wonder in eyes and smiles even as the animal poses. Animals include a butterfly, cock-a-too, dog, rabbit, snail, and turkey; yet there is no dispute that “nothing is a big as Emma’s elephant.”

Children of all ages will enjoy the animals and adults will appreciate the excellent photography. This book will make a valuable addition to the animal collection in the library.


E—Gifts—Italy—Fiction. unp.
Gr. 1—4.

The Count is searching for the most beautiful gift for his wife, the Contessa. Because of her kindness to an old woman, Maybellinda is certain she will win the prized bag of gold with her gift.

Maybellinda starts her trip to Poggibonisi alone, but it is a joyful company that finally arrives to make the grand presentation. However, the ascent to the mountain-top grand villa ends in deep disappointment. As the crowd scatters, Maybellinda is chained to the wall. But when morning comes all is changed and Maybellinda’s whole family comes to live in the grand villa overlooking Poggibonisi.

All of the places named actually exist and some of the characters are based on people Michael Mele met on a trip through Italy.

Children will enjoy the addition of each traveler, and the surprise turn of events as A Gift for the Contessa is received. Beautiful illustrations enhance the events as a poor flower-seller is rewarded for her kindness.

This is a simple tale well told that will be read over and over.


Gr. 1—4.

A small boy is separated from his parents and lost in the woods. Night comes and he laies down and falls asleep. Emma’s Aunt Alice, who with Juno, her search dog, comes to Emma’s house, where several other dogs and handlers, to rest after searching all day for the lost boy. In the middle of the night the dogs wake, so Emma takes them out to search. They find the boy not far from the house, and take him home.

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In the preface, Susan Bivin Aller explains that this story is inspired by the Connecticut Canine Search and Rescue, Inc. and gives an explanation of how search dogs and their handlers do their work. Oil paintings by Marni Backer are soft and somewhat impressionistic. Night scenes showing the lost boy are cold and dark. Scenes inside Emma’s home are warm and glowing, providing an interesting contrast. This moving story of successful rescue is effective without being graphic about the dangers the young boy might face. The story does not just entertain, but also educates the reader about working dogs and compassion for others.


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paired rhymes work well with the tune. The upbeat, but simple language is similar to her Pockets books (Questar).

Rich Incrocci’s bright, cartoon watercolor illustrations augment the text well. Each page is filled with happy children involved in fun activities. Also, children from different racial backgrounds are depicted in this book.

God Made Me will encourage children to thank God for their different body parts. The song will help them to remember the message and put praise into their hearts.

Jessica’s grandfather remembered her stamp collection. That night he told Jessica about a valuable stamp that he had given her grandmother years before.

The next day when they looked in the stamp collection, the valuable stamp was gone. Jessica could hardly sleep that night. Where would they get some money? Would they have to sell the house? If only Jessica could talk to her grandmother.

Then Jessica fell asleep and began to dream. In her dream she saw her grandmother. Her grandmother looked young. She followed her to the bus station where Jessica saw her grandmother say good-bye to her grandfather. Before he left, Jessica’s grandfather gave her grandmother his stamp collection. Jessica watched her grandmother sadly go back home. Then her grandmother did a strange thing. She put a stamp that looked like her grandfather in her silver locket.

When Jessica woke up she knew where the valuable stamp was. The locket was opened and Jessica saw the hidden stamp. The valuable stamp was sold and Jessica’s family had the money they needed.

Jessica Moffat’s Silver Locket is a heartwarming story of a seven-year-old little girl who misses her grandmother. The author skillfully uses Jessica’s love for her grandmother’s locket to bring the story to a satisfying ending. Jessica Moffat’s Silver Locket is told in the third person interspersed with colorful pictures that clearly illustrate the story. The hard back cover will insure durability of use for any child’s collection of books.


E. Grandparents—Fiction. 32 p.

PS—Gr. 3.

In The Great Royal Race, Carl Sommers masterfully displays timeless virtues in the ageless setting of the choosing of a husband for the king’s daughter. Through surprises during the great race, the three fine suitors, Simon, Thomas, and John, unwittingly display their true feelings for princess Elizabeth. The one choosing love rather than money or fame also becomes a wise and great king.

Bright, action-filled illustrations on each page enhance the story as the race progresses and suspense builds to the finish line. Part of the Sommer-Time Story Series, this adventure filled story also communicates the virtues of perseverance, love, self-acceptance, wisdom of God, and living a life of purpose.

A Little Salmon for Witness: A Story from Island and the Glow of Caring, Family Relationships. This is a good book to encourage traditional family values.


E. Seashore—Fiction. unp.

K.—Gr. 3.

Young April has a moonsnail shell that sings to her of the nearby sea. As she sits at her school desk, as she skips to school and home again, at dinner and in her bath, April daydreams of the sandy shores where her moonsnail once made its home.

The author, Sheryl McFarlane, has created April’s daydream exploration of the seashore near April’s home. April is preoccupied throughout the day with this daydream. Children will identify with April’s daydreams, but the story would be more appealing had April actually visited the shore experienced the textures, smells and sights of the ocean.

Dreamy watercolors enhance the daydreams of the text. Sheena Lott uses color and double page spreads with smaller insets of the details of each part of April’s daydream. This is an effective interaction of visual and verbal stories. Young children will probably enjoy the dreamy quality of the text and pictures though they may have some difficulty independently reading the text.

A Little Salmon for Witness shares Caribbean memories and tradition.

Homely conversation combined with warm, rich pastels projects the atmosphere of a Caribbean Island and the glow of caring, family relationships. This is a good book to encourage traditional family values.

❤❤❤❤❤
Little folks often ask the significant people in their lives how much they love them. As much as a hug? As much as outstretched arms? Now, there is another response possible. A counting book that touches the heart, My Love for You by Susan L. Roth combines simple text and collage illustrations to hold the attention of the youngest child, the oldest adult.

Two mice explore the boundaries of their love in this colorful book, along with the help of their animal friends. The refrain “my love for you” repeats throughout the pages, affirming devotion to the heights, depths, and widths imaginable. The illustrations enliven the text. In her own words, Roth explains “to make these collages, I used many thin papers, some thicker papers, glue, scissors, tweezers, and a little paint for the mice.” The prereader and early reader alike will enjoy the simplicity of the text, the repetition of “my love for you.” It is also a suitable read for the young-at-heart.


In an adaptation of the fable of the ants and the grasshoppers, Carl Sommer, with the help of illustrator Kennon James, creates the tale of two families of ants, Family Work Play and Family Dilly Dally. Both families decide to leave the crowded city and search for a quiet home in the country. Family Work Play, as their name denotes, locates just the right spot to build, gather food, and prepare for the long winter. Family Dilly Dally also lives up to their name, finding their dream spot and deciding to vacation a little before building their home. When winter sets in, Family Work Play is enjoying all the comforts of a well prepared home while Family Dilly Dally is nursing frostbitten fingers and gathering what little food they can manage to find. As spring arrives, father Dilly Dally gathers his family around and announces that he is no longer a Dilly Dally, from now on the family will be known as Family Work First.


In the graphically illustrated story of a disappointing, neglected gift box, Liz Curtis Higgs illustrates in a new way the mystery of new life and resurrection. The Parable of the Lily combines scripture verses, picturing the life of Jesus, with the story of a farmer and the surprise gift to his daughter on a winter day. Younger readers will enjoy the bright, crisp illustrations while the story progresses. Each picture has its Bible verse that could be used as a devotional thought for the older reader.

The story is a valuable resource to explain new life in the spring, to use with the account of the resurrection, or to explain life after death. The book is not bound for heavy usage, but is a wonderful story to share.

Felix the King is both greedy and a great lover of pancakes. Not just any pancake but a perfect pancake, which he sends his royal task force out to find. The man who can make a stack of perfect pancakes which satisfy his greedy palate will receive his only daughter, Princess Elizabeth, as a bride. As “Lizzy” flees in horror to her mother Queen Ursula, the queen assures her that no one can make a perfect pancake except perhaps Maximilian, the Evil Inventor who hasn’t been seen for twenty years. Of course, we all know that near the end of the contest Maximilian is going to rear his ugly head and invent the perfect pancake. However, we may not be prepared for the strange little man with a black box who appears before the king promising a perfect pancake every time the button is pressed. True to his word, Maximilian’s box performs as promised, but due to the Princess’ refusal to be given to the Evil Inventor, King Felix is unable to keep his word. Maximilian stumps away leaving the box with the warning that it will be the ruin of the king.

Left to its own devices the black box begins churning out pancakes with such vigor that the kingdom is soon overrun with perfect pancakes. Enter handsome and clever Roderick, the young scientist who has just invented a flying machine.


E. Parables, Lilies—Fiction, Easter—Fiction. 32 p.
K—Adult.

In the graphically illustrated story of a disappointing, neglected gift box, Liz Curtis Higgs illustrates in a new way the mystery of new life and resurrection. The Parable of the Lily combines scripture verses, picturing the life of Jesus, with the story of a farmer and the surprise gift to his daughter on a winter day.

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With a little trickery, Roderick is able to trap Maximilian and his black box in the flying machine, jettisoning them off into outer space. Of course, every fantasy needs a happy ending and William Wise furnishes his by matching the strong willed Princess Elizabeth with the handsome and clever Roderick in a perfect ending. Watercolor illustrations by Richard Egielski enhance the sense of humor evident in the story.

◆ Quality—3 ❤ Acceptability—4

Judy Driscoll
Teacher, Christ the King Academy
Poulsbo, Washington


E. Reading—Fiction. Literacy—Fiction. unp.
Gr. 1-5

_Read for Me, Mama_ by Vashanti Rahaman, tackles adult illiteracy, a subject seldom covered in picture books. When Joseph’s class goes to the library each week, he chooses two books to take home, an easy one to read to himself and a harder one to have read to him. His mama is a wonderful storyteller, but she never reads to him, allowing a neighbor to do so while doing their laundry at the laundromat.

When Joseph asks Mama to read to him, she tells him that she doesn’t have time or that he needs to go to bed. When she comes home late from work unexpectedly one day and he is worried, she apologizes at length, telling him that she didn’t see the sign at work that explained her changed hours.

Finally, one Sunday in church, when the pastor asks if anyone needs prayer, she says yes and admits that she never learned how to read and she wants to. Mama signs up for reading classes and by the end of the book, she is reading to her son. Joseph’s love for his mother and hers for him shines through the entire book, and the lavish oil paintings that McElrath-Eslick uses to illustrate it are large and colorful and add to the warm feeling of the story. _Read for Me, Mama_ would be an excellent way to introduce the ideas of praying for even practical needs and the importance of learning to read, whatever a child’s future plans may be.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—5

Betty Winslow
Freelance Writer
Librarian, Bowling Green Christian Academy
Bowling Green, Ohio


E. Christmas—Fiction. Rocking horses—Fiction. unp.
K—Gr. 3

The boy finds a rocking horse under the Christmas tree. “I’ll call you Shadow,” he said. Mounting his steed, they ride away to wonderful adventures. Daily they encounter outlaws, the jungles of Africa, or knight of old. The years pass and the rocking horse is relegated to the attic. Dust and cobwebs cover him and the rocking horse longs for the imagination of a child to bring him to life again.

Mary Pope Osborne identifies with the young who create their own rich world in their imagination. She offers hope that dreams come true. Artist Ned Bittinger portrays the world of a child’s fantasy with colorful tenderness. Children will identify with and return to this book again and again. The cover art of the horse being carved by Santa and his helpers is the only illusion to Santa Claus.

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—4

Mary Jarvis
Freelance Writer
Pawhuska, Oklahoma


PS—Gr. 3

Through graphically detailed pictures coupled with flowing rhythm and rhyme Mary Ann Hoberman expertly depicts _The Seven Silly Eaters_ as their mother lovingly provides for the wants of the growing appetites of her family.

This is a book for reading out loud over and over again. Many times of sharing will not exhaust the fascinating details of the activities of a growing family that are depicted on each page.

Peter, Lucy, Jack and Mac, Flo and Fran, and Mary Lou surprisingly make a cake when Mrs. Peters goes to bed with exhaustion. Then all is well that ends well as the whole family celebrates Mrs. Peter’s birthday. After this, cooking becomes a family activity.

Mothers and children will appreciate the whimsical portrayal of hard-to-please appetites and the utter chaos resulting in a homey feeling of serenity. The exaggerated reality will bring many chuckles to old and young alike. This book is too good to miss.

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Marie Knupp
Retired librarian
Monmouth, Oregon


E. Snowmen—Fiction. 24 p.
PS—Gr. 3

Sam is a lonely boy in a big city. His brother, Marc, and sister, Nicole, are busy with school and their own activities. Emilie, their cat, plays with Sam occasionally. Marc and Nicole decide to build Sam a snow playmate. Sam wants a snowcat, and he names him SnowPaws. Sam and SnowPaws travel to many places in the big city at night. As spring approaches and Sam starts baseball and recorder lessons, Sam only visits SnowPaws some afternoons. When SnowPaws melts, Sam cries. Then Emilie brings home a kitten, and Sam names him SnowPaws.

Mary Alice Downie’s whimsical story of a boy riding his imaginary snowcat among the stars is a fun story. Is Sam asleep or is it magic when they fly in the city? It is left up to the reader until the story is almost at an end. Then the reader discovers that on evenings when it is too cold for dreaming, Sam stays home. Despite this incongruity, children will enjoy _SnowPaws_.

Kathryn Naylor’s bright and colorful ink and pigment style illustrations tie in with the story beautifully. Children will love having the story read aloud and reading it themselves. They will think it is fun to have an imaginary snow friend that flies.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—5

Dianne Woodman
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Parent
Milpitas, California


◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Marie Knupp
Retired librarian
Monmouth, Oregon


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◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—5

Dianne Woodman
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Parent
Milpitas, California

Part of the Sommer-Time Story Series, *Tied Up in Knots* effectively illustrates the happiness sharing brings by using two stubborn mules who are forced to work together.

Carl Sommer, a devoted educator and businessman has created this fun and easy-to-read collection of fascinating virtue communicating tales. Even as Benny and Sally will not share, their mules Bossy and Stiffy will not eat together, that is until Dad has a plan.

Action packed illustrations help to communicate the message with feelings registered in the “eyes” of animals and people portrayed. This book is a valuable resource for communicating the value of sharing in an easy to understand way.

**Quality**—5  **Acceptability**—5

Marie Knupp  
Retired Librarian  
Monmouth, Oregon

◆ **Quality**—5  ♥ **Acceptability**—5

Virginia Schnabel  
Freelance Writer  
Shelton, Washington

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Children will be inspired by the characters of Tiger and Jessica, and will easily relate to the excitement Tiger feels about his boots, as well as his initial disappointment in himself and the self-determination which results from it.

The illustrations, by Georgia Graham, are stunning. They alone would be worth the price of the book. Story and pictures make this book a big winner, especially for little boys and girls who have their own cowboy dreams.

E. Bayous—Fiction, Animals—Fiction, Louisiana—Fiction, Stories in rhyme. unp.
Gr. 2—5.

Bayou Town welcomes all who come for a visit or to go shopping. It is a very special place because the houses and businesses are built on piers over the muddy back waters of the Mississippi River. We follow a young Acadian girl as she poles her way through the swamp, going on an errand for her mama. On her trip she encounters some unusual and beautiful creatures like a great pelican, a raccoon, and a possum family.

She is heading for the Seafood Shack that is owned by Mr. Boudreaux, the mayor of Bayou Town. He is a jolly man and he, his wife, and son, Toby, have a wonderful time keeping up with their pet alligator, Alfons. Today Alfons is taking a roll in Mrs. Boudreaux’s onion patch. She has a beautiful garden full of vegetables, but a certain alligator can make a big mess if he isn’t chased away.

Everyone joins in the fun of chasing Alfons. Can they catch the rascal before it’s too late? Laughter and fun fill the air as they play a game of Alligator-keepaway. But at last it is time for the young girl to return to her mama, holding the crab boil her mama will put into the big cooking pot for dinner.

This simple story, Welcome to Bayou Town, introduces some of the characters who live in and around Bayou Town. This book has been produced from the successful puppet theater that Cherie D. Schadler and her husband have brought to many throughout the South. Done in rhyme, the story gives the reader a good feel for the kind of broken English/French accents found around the New Orleans area. The illustrations by Ann Biedenharn Jones portray the beauty of the back country and the variety of wildlife found in this interesting geographical area. This story can be useful for children learning about a different culture within the United States.

◆ Quality—3❤ Acceptability—5

Mary McKinney
Freelance Writer
Port Orchard, Washington
**BOOK REVIEWS**

**CHILDREN’S FICTION**


Gr. 3—5.

Ned Bittinger’s oil on primed linen pictures weave together two time periods in *The Blue and the Gray* by Eve Bunting. Activities of today contrast vividly with 1862 battlefield scenes between the Union Blue and the Confederate Gray forces in this intermediate picture book.

The disjointed text jumps abruptly between a housing construction site on the edge of a Civil War battleground and a description of a battle between the Yankees and Rebels. Two friends, one white, one black, listen to the story told by the former’s father. The children are encouraged to “remember and revere...so many battlegrounds have disappeared without a name.”

Text description concerns include phrases such as “soaked the grass with blood,” “field of bones,” “cries.”

Battle illustrations of swords drawn, rifles aimed, flags burning, cannons firing, and wounded soldiers may also concern some readers. If used as a read-aloud book to accompany a study of the Civil War, be prepared to identify flags, to know who the Northern general and Southern captain were, and to explain the meaning of words like “hillocky,” “hummocky,” and “shinnies.”

The suggestions for further reading listed include picture books, nonfiction materials, and poetry which are useful. One title listed is *Pink and Say* by Patrica Polacco which is a nice complement to the above title.

◆ Quality—2 ❤ Acceptability—3

Carolyn Jo Ballard Librarian Z. J. Loussac Public Library Anchorage, Alaska


Gr. 4—6.

The story is about another young English boy, Bertie, growing up isolated and sheltered on the African savanna. One day, he spies a mother lion and her white cub. The mother is killed by Bertie’s father. Bertie breaks the rule about staying within the compound and saves the white cub from hyenas. He raises the cub until his father tells him that he will be sent to boarding school and the lion is to be sold to a circus. Bertie defies his father and sets the cub free. Ultimately the young cub is bought by the circus owner. The young eight-year-old vows to someday find the lion again.

The woman tells of the secret friendship she shared with Bertie which spanned the years through separation and war ending in marriage. It is a sweet story of love and devotion. There is a curse of “merry hell to pay,” and there is no remorse for having defied his father. The children in the story are abandoned by the adults around them and the neglect filters through to the lack of emotion the children show of the death of their respective parents.

The story is simple yet poignant in its message of love. The ending has a ghost-like element that is surprising yet not objectionable. It is not a long story, and would make a good read aloud story for all school age children. The emotions that rise to the surface could then be discussed.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—4

Joanne M. Haffly Freelance Writer and Homeschool Mother Gig Harbor, Washington


Gr. 3—5.

Elizabeth gets to know more about the world of baseball cards in *The Disappearing Card Trick.* Her father’s collection contains one particularly valuable card. When she is invited to go to a baseball card show, she takes the card, against her mother’s wishes, to see what it is worth. She forgets her purse, and when it is recovered, she realizes that the card has been replaced by a fake. She ends up is some danger, but uncovers the counterfeiter’s plan and is saved just in time.


F. Christian life—Fiction, Mystery and detective stories, Cats—Fiction.

Gr. 4—6.

Elizabeth happens upon an old used bookstore and its owner, Teresa, who has lost a very valuable cat that lives in the store. Elizabeth gets a job delivering books for the bookstore clients and tries to figure out what happened to Teresa’s brother, Gregory, and the cats that are disappearing. She discovers where the ransom money will be delivered and rescues the cats in time for one of them to give birth.

This series has very definite flavors of the Nancy Drew books by Carolyn Keene, only with a twelve-year-old heroine. The plots are pretty simplistic and the characterizations stereotypical. She does pray and ask God for help in various difficulties and dangers, but she seems to have no trouble disobeying and lying to her mother...
adventures are dangerous involvement for one so young.

❤ Quality—3  ❤ Acceptability—4

Judy Belcher
Sylvan Way Christian School
Bremerton, Washington


Gr. 1—Adult.

Throughout his life Ernest has heard the prophecy of the great stone face that overlooks the valley where he lives. Ernest waits and waits for the great man whose face is like the one carved in the mountain. In the end, it is Ernest, through his gentle, pure, and virtuous life who is the great stone face.

Matching perfectly with the story are illustrations by Greg Dearth. Each detailed drawing seems to be carved onto the page, enhancing the story. The Great Stone Face by Nathaniel Hawthorne, adapted by Penelope J. Stokes, would work very well for family devotions. Although a bit lengthy and mature for preschool age children, some of the more difficult vocabulary words and ideas would prove to be a nice challenge for older elementary. A pleasant moral tale that adults and children will both enjoy.

❤ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Elizabeth Coleman
Freelance Writer
Tumwater, Washington


Gr. 4—8.

Twelve-year-old Hattie starts to worry when her newly-married sister comes back home to live in Hattie Marshall and the Dangerous Fire. Is Rosalie going to force her way back into Hattie’s room and take over? Hattie enlists the help of her two best friends, Eric and Miriam, in her plan to reunite the newlyweds.

First, she must follow Lester, Rosalie’s husband, to find out where he’s going at night. This pursuit exposes Hattie and her friends to a dangerous situation when a forest fire threatens them and their families.

Texas celebrates the Fourth of July in a big way, but in the midst of the celebration Hattie’s mother receives an urgent telegram.

Hattie Marshall and the Mysterious Strangers opens with a call for help from Hattie’s uncle. His wife and children are sick with the chicken pox. Hattie, along with her mother and grandmother, sets out to help. Hattie’s friend, Eric, goes with them for extra help and protection.

Upon her arrival, Hattie faces some hard work and difficult emotions. She and Eric, the best of friends, suddenly can’t stop arguing. Things become more complicated when Hattie discovers a family living near her aunt and uncle’s farm.

Hattie is drawn to the family and wants to become friends but the grandmother is very suspicious of strangers. Finally earning their trust, Hattie discovers that the grandmother has been keeping a secret.

Debra Smith writes an exciting and involving tale of a girl growing up in Texas during its frontier days. Her characters and plot are exciting and believable. The reader can empathize with Hattie and with the struggles and emotions she experiences as she grows into young adulthood. The Christian emphasis flows naturally into the storyline. One of Hattie’s particular concerns is that her friend, Miriam, a Jewish girl, should have the chance to trust Christ as her Messiah.


❤ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Donna Brown
Church Librarian
Portland, Oregon


Gr. 1—6

Pete’s family has moved to a new town. Leaves are changing colors and Pete still has no friends at his new school. In fact, he never seems to be able to think of anything to say to any of the kids he meets. It just isn’t the same in this new place without his best friend. One day Pete tries a new road home and discovers a wonderful place, Hawk Hill, where he can lay back and watch the birds swoop and dive. One day, while walking home, Pete discovers a barn and farmhouse where an older woman named Mary has an animal hospital for birds injured in man’s environment. Thus begins Pete’s new life.

There are two stories in this intelligent and attractive picture book. The first is the story of a lonely boy who discovers a special friend and the joy of caring for animals. The second story is about our environment and the effect it has on wild birds. Although this is a picture book format, the appeal of the two intertwined stories spans all age groups. As Pete helps to treat wounded birds, he learns to love his new home.

Sylvia Long illustrates Hawk Hill in vivid watercolors. Pages of large framed pictures
alternate with small detailed paintings. Two double page spreads emphasize pivotal points in the story. Each watercolor is detailed and accurate helping the reader to visualize and understand the beauty of America’s raptors, or birds of prey. Included at the end of the book is a glossary of all the birds named in the text with information about habitats and prey. Children of all ages will empathize with Pete and enjoy the environmental story. Young children will have difficulty reading this book independently.

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Barbara Wall
School Library System Director
Osage County BOCES
Mexico, New York


F. Arctic regions—Fiction. 40 p.
GS—Gr. 4.

Brian Heinz tells the story of Aknik, an Inupiat boy, who struggles to prove himself to be a successful hunter. He snares ptarmigan, but the birds disappear from his trap before he arrives to claim his catch. Older boys tease Aknik and he is not included in the whale hunt because he must prove himself first. The Shaman advises Aknik that he must bring home evidence of the thief that is robbing his traps. Aknik sets out to catch the thief red-handed. He discovers that a grey fox is the culprit. Because she is a mother, with cubs to feed, Aknik does not kill her for the evidence, but finds an alternative way to prove the truth.

Paintings by Jon Van Zyle vividly convey the harshness and beauty of Aknik’s world. A glossary provides pronunciation and definition for native (Inupiat) words used in the text. The idea that Aknik faces a mother fox and her kits within close range and she does not show any aggressive or protective behavior is unlikely. Also, the community’s satisfaction with Aknik’s proof that he caught birds, even though he had nothing to show for it, does not ring true. Success would be measured by the actual catch, not the ones that got away.

◆ Quality—3 ❤ Acceptability—5

Karla J. Kessell
Librarian, Mount Vernon Nazarene College
Mount Vernon, Ohio


Gr. 3—6.

The Lost Prince by Peggy Downing. Segra and Brill, two young children, set off on a new adventure. After the revolution that has finally freed their homeland of the evil Emperor Immene, Segra longs to find her parents, and Brill wants to search for Exton’s lost prince. Along the way, they encounter dangers from robbers, stormy weather on the sea, and much more. Aid comes to them on several occasions in the unlikely form of a beautiful large meladora bird named Stargull.

This exciting adventure story is a wholesome book for young readers. The print is large. The dialogue and storyline are simple and easy to understand, and sprinkled throughout are pen and ink drawings of the action.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—5

Judy Belcher
Teacher, Salem Way Christian School
Bremerton, Washington

Peggy Downing has written several other books and stories for children, including Brill of Extorn, to which this book is a sequel. Children may want to read them in order to get the complete flow of action.

◆ Quality—3 ❤ Acceptability—5

Gayle Chesman Haberman
Teacher
West Hills Christian School
Portland, Oregon


Gr. 4—6.

Twelve-year-old Melanie Lin is the newest member of The Twelve Candles Club. Her Chinese- American aunt has a friend in the travel business who got stuck at the last minute trying to provide child care for a cruise in the Caribbean. Melanie enlists the help of her friends in the club, and they end up taking care of and entertaining many kids on the cruise boat. Each of the girls has special talents that help with her responsibilities. Coincidentally, a man they had met previously appears on the trip with his grandchildren. He and a couple of members of the crew attempt to smuggle drugs into the United States. The Twelve Candles Club girls are attuned to the possible difficulties and lead in the capture of the drugs and the smugglers.

While the idea of twelve-year-olds being responsible for children on a cruise and the coincidence that the very same man they had interacted with in California is on the cruise are highly improbable, these ideas are developed in a enjoyable way and do draw the reader into the story. The girls pray together and depend on God for wisdom and peace in the midst of their difficulties and fears. This series would have appeal to those interested in Babysitter Club type books.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—5


The Mystery of the Haunted Lighthouse.
Ten-year-old cousins, Sarah-Jane Cooper, Timothy Dawson and Titus McKay form their own club for the purpose of solving mysteries. The Mystery of the Haunted Lighthouse. The three cousins take an “educational vacation” at a dolphin study center is about to come true. But before he gets his chance he slips and sprains an ankle, Thus all three are on their way to the zoo and a mystery involving a missing snake and a diamond ring! The Mystery of the Goldfish Pond. After singing at a retirement dinner for his father’s boss, Timothy and his cousins go outside to explore the formal gardens. While there, they overhear snatches of a mysterious conversation and go to work trying to figure out what it means. This series is designed for seven to ten-year-olds reading their first chapter books. Large print and short chapters with black and white illustrations will appeal to younger readers. Each of the books contain an independent story, illustrating a Christian value or Bible verse. Background information on the previous adventures of the three cousins is included in each book, bringing new readers up to date.

◆ Quality—4  ♥ Acceptability—5

Donna Brown
Church Librarian
Portland, Oregon


The first video, Sing and Play, is set on board The Big Red Boat amid Caribbean and Florida scenery. Short praise songs are sung and set in motion by a crew of enthusiastic kids. The bright joyful singing make up for the repetitious choreography. The praise songs are short enough to learn easily and keep even young audience member’s attention. A lyric sheet with activities is included. Also in audiocassette

◆ Quality—3  ♥ Acceptability—5


Newbery Medal winner, Elizabeth Yates brings the Swiss Alps to life through her book, Swiss Holiday. Brother and sister, Michael and Merry, learn to respect and cherish the challenging peak of the Wildhorn in the Bernese Oberland of Switzerland. Michael and Merry are invited on a mountain climbing adventure by their mountainneering uncle. Novices to mountainneering, Michael and Merry learn the arduous skill of mountain climbing as they move from scaling steep slopes to more challenging heights. Their summer’s ambition is to climb the 10,100-foot peak of the Wildhorn.

Readers of Swiss Holiday will learn the tools and techniques of mountain climbing from the author who herself is an adept mountainneer and has climbed the Wildhorn. There is a realistic pace at which the children learn to climb and tackle higher heights. Michael and Merry learn to use
their mind as well as their feet and hands as they carefully confront each new challenge. The danger of mountaineering is portrayed through an accident that befalls even their skilled uncle. Younger readers will appreciate Merry’s effort to prove to her parents and brother that she is capable of mountain climbing despite her young age. In the end, Merry turns out to be a better mountaineer than her older brother.

Bob Jones University Press has reprinted Swiss Holiday which was originally published in 1938. The large print and realistic black-and-white pencil drawings make this book appealing to young readers. Challenging vocabulary sprinkled throughout the story will motivate readers to learn new words. Elizabeth Yate’s Swiss Holiday will thrill children who enjoy reading outdoor adventures.

◆ Quality—3 ❤ Acceptability—5

Susan Robinson
Librarian
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania


F. Canada—History—Fiction. 143 p.

Gr. 3—8.

Oliver Tate is a young boy growing up in Northern Canada during the 1879. Newly immigrated from England, the family struggles to survive in the mining town. A family feud threatens to break apart Oliver’s father and Uncle Will, and soon Oliver finds himself at odds with his cousin Bert. In an act of courage, Oliver is able to sound the alarm regarding a town crisis. Oliver swallows his pride and finally mends his disagreement with his cousin.

Thunder Ice is set in a mining town. The language scattered throughout the book reflects this with an occasional curse. Oliver curses and feels immediate remorse for his actions. He struggles to accept his father’s decisions and at times chooses to disobey. The disobedience carries a price and Oliver learns the price of pride. The author, Alison Acheson, captures the spirit of a young boy struggling with his conscience.

There is an occasional reference to the church and his uncle’s habit of walking out during the sermon—“usually when the weather was warm and fishing in the lake just too inviting.” Oliver and his cousin Bert are also caught in an attempt to peek into the window of the town saloon dancer. The author has given a human face to the various individuals that make up a mining town. Oliver is aware of his father’s disapproval of the gambling and drinking that occurs in the town. Yet in the end, his father takes a job that moves the family to town.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—3

Joanne M. Haffly
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Mother
Gig Harbor, Washington

Orca 1/2 page ad
000's — General Information


Adult.

Books Children Love is an annotated guide to quality children’s books for parents who want their children to experience life through wholesome literature. Elizabeth Wilson developed this guide based on the need for families to share and discuss literature which portrays the world around them but will not undermine Christian values.

The children’s literature included in Books Children Love were selected based on three criteria. First, these books are enjoyable to read and will hold a child’s interest. Secondly, the books are well written. Third, though the authors may be Christian or non-Christian, the books themselves do not hold viewpoints deviant from basic Judeo-Christian morals and ethics.

Books Children Love is organized by genre and topic from animals to science and technology. The annotations under each category are arranged alphabetically by author (except biographies which are arranged by the person the book is about). Reading levels are clearly marked, but one must look through all the annotations in each category to find the appropriate books on your child’s level. This guide is not meant to be exhaustive or up-to-date, but it is a good place to start for families seeking quality children’s literature.

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Susan Robinson
Librarian
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

200’s — Religion


New titles; see series reviews in CLJ, Nov. 95 (1-2), Jan.96 (3-4).


222. Creation. unp.

All ages.

In Genesis, the Spirit of God hovers over the face of the deep, bringing life and light out of emptiness. Similarly, Ed Young’s illustrations of creation draw meaning and purpose out of brooding shades. Birds and fish emerge from a dusky palette brushed by a fiery dawn. A herd of wispy beasts gallop from the hand of God.

The images invite the imagination to explore the truth sketched in the first few verses of the Bible. The simplicity of text combined with the sophistication of the artwork create a picture book that spans the ages.

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Melinda Torgerson
Freelance Writer
Newport, Washington


Gr. 2—5.

Caught in a sudden mountain snowstorm, young Zeb finds refuge in a cabin his grandfather built years before. The kind woman living in the cabin with dogs and a cat gives him a warm welcome. She makes him comfortable for his stay while snow continues to fall. It is the Christmas season and she has a present for him, a beautiful walking stick that had belonged to his grandfather. She tells him a wonderful Christmas story that starts with creation and concludes with the resurrection of Jesus.

Ruth Bell Graham, wife of evangelist Billy Graham, has done a masterful job blending contemporary life with the history of God’s love in the biblical record. She immediately captures the imagination with the tale of young Zeb’s plight and continues to hold it with her artful telling of the story of God’s redemption. The exquisite color illustrations by award winning artist Richard Jesse Watson elevate this book to a classic that will be read again and again. The artist spent four years rendering the illustrations and they are truly outstanding.

A cassette tape of the story, narrated by Mrs. Graham’s daughter Gigi Graham Tchividjian, offers a captivating reading/listening experience. This is a marvelous book for a youngster unfamiliar with the gospel or those who have known it from the cradle. Both text and art will captivate young minds.

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Mary Jarvis
Freelance Writer
Pawhuska, Oklahoma

232.92. Jesus Christ—Nativity, Christmas. 47 p. All ages.

The Way to Bethlehem helps both young and old remember and focus on the real reason for Christmas. Author Inos Biffi simply but tastefully tells the Christmas story using what the Bible says to continually draw us to Jesus. Inos Biffi walks us through the announcement of the angel Gabriel, the birth of Jesus, the flight into Egypt, and finally the return from Egypt into Nazareth.

Near the end of the book, Inos Biffi tells us about the saints of the Christmas season—Mary, Joseph, Saint Stephen, Saint John, Saint Thomas Becker, and others—to help us remember their example and that we too can become a powerful tool in the hands of God.

Illustrations by Franco Vignazia have a classical, medieval aura to aid in the telling of the unforgettable Christmas story. The illustrations themselves express in their unique way the awesomeness of the birth of Christ.

This book will help remind us of the birth of Christ and why he came.

◆ Quality—4  ◆ Acceptability—5

Elizabeth Hesch
High School Student
Grants Pass, Oregon


Adult.

This book is for any parent who wants to “Train up a child in the way they should go.” The group of six authors of 103 Questions Children Ask about Right From Wrong, have gathered a superb collection of the “Big” questions children ask. These are real questions answered logically with scriptural verses verifying the answers. The book also has related questions and helpful hints for parents as they answer the questions. The questions are divided into ten practical categories.

A forward by Josh McDowell helps provide parents with a way to assess choices that children have. Relevant black and white cartoons accompany each question. This is a book that can be studied with children, and its format allows parents to cover a few ideas each day if they desire. It is relevant in helping prepare students with solid answers for they questions they will encounter in the contemporary world.

◆ Quality—4  ◆ Acceptability—5

Paula Stewart Marks
Principal, Morning Star Christian School
Bend, Oregon

300’s—Social Sciences


363.12. Shelley, Kate, Railroads—Accidents. unp.

K—Gr. 7.

Kate Shelley : Bound for Legend is a retelling of the story of a young girl’s heroic efforts to stop a west bound train after a railroad bridge goes out in a storm. She also leads rescuers to men who had fallen in the river when the east bound train crashed. A map at the beginning of the work helps the reader place the events of the story in a physical context. Historical sources used for research and additional information are mentioned in the author’s note at the end of the book.

Paintings illustrate the work; the texture and color add to the mood and are realistic and effective. The use of light and shadow on the cover, as well as the subtitle, give a sense of intrigue and invite the reader into the story. Picturesque language in the narrative holds reader interest. In places information is conveyed in snippets of dialogue used as a flashback. While the details given are an addition to the story, they could have been incorporated more effectively, as the dialogue slows the pace and detracts from the strong descriptive narrative.

Children ages five to ten will enjoy this book read aloud; older students can read it on their own. Readers of all ages will appreciate the drama conveyed by the artwork.

◆ Quality—4  ◆ Acceptability—5

Mary Jarvis
Freelance Writer
Pawhuska, Oklahoma


394.2. Christmas—Fiction, Christmas trees. unp.

PS—Gr. 3

All the woodland creatures scurry about to collect gifts for the coming of the King’s Son. The littlest fir frets that he has nothing to offer, but helps those animals forgotten during the bustling preparations. When God’s Son arrives, all go to the stable to present their gifts. The little tree carries only those animals he helped. God blesses him for his serving heart by making him glow with the stars of heaven.

Helen Haidle draws on an old legend found in a monastery in Sicily to create The First Christmas Tree: A Legend from Long Ago. Weaving together the traditional storybook theme of the underdog gaining recognition at the end and the Christian virtue of humble servanthood, the author creates an enduring story. Children will enjoy the blend of realistic animals and fairy tale memories of Christmas in America. Take a nostalgic journey back to earlier days. Ideas and stories abound. Have your own Christmas pageant. Enjoy beautiful art and poetry. Explore Christmas fifty years ago and share your own memories. Make beautiful handcrafted Christmas gifts and cook delicious recipes. There are activities and stories that will intrigue children as well as adults.

Colorful artwork and photographs enhance the text. In addition to titles, the table of contents outlines the nature of the material listed. At the conclusion of the book is a page to include your own personal Christmas memories. This is a beautiful and useful book to use for many Christmases.

◆ Quality—5  ◆ Acceptability—5

Mary Jarvis
Freelance Writer
Pawhuska, Oklahoma


394.2. Christmas. 64 p.

K—Adult.

If you are looking for a resource with ideas and stories for a meaningful Christmas, this anthology will be quite helpful. Published annually since 1931, this volume brings together the sacred Christmas story, customs, and traditions of the season. This year’s edition offers

trees with faces in the watercolor illustrations, which augment the story well.

As in The CANDYMAKER'S GIFT, Haiddle provides an “Ideas for Parents” section in the back that lists activities for families to do to help them focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—5

Lorinda K. F. Newton
Freelance Writer
Kirkland, Washington


398.2. Easter stories, Easter poetry. 191 p.
Gr. 6—Adult.

Pat Alexander does a masterful job leading young readers along the path of Christ’s great work on the Cross via stories, poems, and Bible excerpts. This book is filled with nine sections of selected readings. Each section concentrates on a specific point of Christ’s journey to resurrection. Alexander has taken great literary works from masters of storytelling such as C.S. Lewis, Arthur Sholely, Angela Elwell Hunt, Charles Dickens, Emily Dickinson and Corrie ten Boom, among many others.

This author/editor also compiles these heartrending tales in such a way as to build to a crescendo the hope of the resurrection. Her stories often have an English flavor as some of the writers are from across the seas and lend their own native colors and traditions to their writing. A few of the selected themes in this book include: How Things Began, The Rescue Plan, The Saddest Day, The Greatest Love and A New Beginning. Readers of all ages will sit enthralled with tale after tale of stories as they come to life. Each one brings us a bit nearer to understanding the great sacrifice Christ made for us all.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Michele Howe
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Mother
LuSalle, Michigan


398.2. Folklore—Korea. 32 p.
PS—Gr. 2.

Mr. Pak is the servant of a wealthy couple, Mr. and Mrs. Kim, who get bored living out in the countryside. They decide to send Mr. Pak into town to buy an entertaining story. Mr. Pak meets a thief along the way who tricks him into paying for a story which he spontaneously makes up as he watches a stork. The unimaginative thief desribes the storks actions with simple statements, “He stands up,” “He walks forward,” “He flies,” etc. There is no introduction or narration, only a string of statements. In this way, Mr. Pak memorizes the story and takes it back to his master. Mr. Pak tells the story to the couple and they marvel at its meaning. Although it seems odd, they ask to hear it again and again until they have it memorized and tell it over and over themselves. One night the same thief comes to rob Mr. Kim’s house. He is spoiled by the story that he has forgotten which describes his actions now. “He stands up,” “He walks forward,” “He flies.” Thinking someone is watching him, he runs away without harming the Kims or Mr. Pak.

Benrei Huang’s vibrant illustrations will hold the physical eye of readers while the story woven by Farley draws pictures in their mind’s eye. Farley describes how she gleaned the story from her time spent in Seoul, Korea.

This is an old folktale retold in a masterful way. Farley and Huang have created an enchanting story which will hold the attention of readers of all ages.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—4

Carol M. Jones
Children’s Librarian
Champaign, Illinois


398.2. Folklore—Africa, East. unp.
Gr. 1—3.

Taki the monkey lives near the coast of Kenya, high up in a mango tree. All day long he watches the river below him, and enjoys the delicious fruit of his tree. One day, Baku the crocodile swims by and decides to ask Taki for a piece of his fruit. Thus begins a friendship between the unlikely pair.

Every day, Baku swims by and the two companions eat fruit and talk, and their friendship continues to grow. Until Baku plays an evil trick on Taki. Now Taki must turn his back on their friendship, and find a way to save his own life.

This East African folktale, retold by H. J. Arrington, and illustrated by JoAnn E. Kitchell, is a simple moral tale which portrays the importance of loyalty in friendship. While the theme itself has potential, the language chosen is lacking in richness and depth, and phrases such as “yum, yum, yum”, “chomp, chomp, chomp”, seem to be directed toward preschoolers.

However, the complexity of the theme would make the book unsuitable for preschoolers. Also portrayed in the story is the idea that two wrongs make a right, which might prove confusing to children who have been taught from a biblical perspective.

Kitchell’s illustrations are colorful, fun, and simplistic, which makes them appealing to the younger set, although they lack the details that older picture book readers often look for. The enjoyment of the images is lessened by the choice of the soft, glossy paper which the book is printed on. This lower quality paper is easily bent.

◆ Quality—2  ❤ Acceptability—3

Virginia Schmabel
Freelance Writer
Shelton, Washington


K—Gr. 6.

Old Chinese mythology about the sun and a farmer with ten sons is combined by Julie Lawson in her picture book, Too Many Suns. Although all ten sons work faithfully each day on the farm, only the younger brother loves the sun and plans someday to paint all the colors he sees. Because of this, he spends as much time as possible in the sunshine.

The ten Sun Brothers, however, take turns each day lighting the world. Then one day they decide to all shine together. Only the smallest sun realizes this is going against the “way of things,” so he begs his brothers to stop as the farm of Ten Brothers becomes hot and dry.

Finally the action of the Immortal Archer is able to return the fields and streams to “the way of things” as only the youngest sun is left to light the world. Then true to his dream, one day the youngest brother leaves the farm to paint the sun.

Dragons, bold circles, and lines combine to portray the sons and suns in their contrasting activities. This book is a good resource for use in exploring Chinese mythology or just to read for pleasure.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—4

Marie Knaupp
Retired Librarian
Monmouth, Oregon


398.21. Fairy tales, Folklore—France. unp.
PS—Gr. 5.

Smoky Mountain Rose is a new twist on a familiar fairy tale. The Appalachian slant introduces readers to a small area of America’s
cultural diversity. At the same time, this retelling of Cinderella is timeless, not tied to a specific time. An author’s note at the beginning of the work gives some background of American versions of the fairy tale.

Research is evident, especially in the use of colorful dialect. Some readers may have trouble with the vocabulary, but the dialogue is natural and easy to read. This version is true to the original tale, with fun twists on the details. The author keeps the reader guessing, with interesting surprises. The unusual elements stay true to the setting, and the story flows smoothly, plausible from beginning to end.

The watercolor illustrations stand alongside the story, enhancing the mood with soft lines and muted colors. There is one picture with an awkward perspective that is slightly disruptive to the story. The “happily-ever-after” ending is satisfying, although readers may not accept the step-sisters being nice to Rose “from then on.”

This vibrant picture book may be read aloud to children ages four to eight; school age readers will be able to read it on their own. Smoky Mountain Rose is a welcome addition to the retelling of fairy tales, and cultural studies as well.


Jill Frankel Hauser has developed science mixtures and presents them in an intriguing manner. Each concoction has a list of items needed to perform the experiment. In addition, she furnishes technical follow-up on many of the topics for inquisitive young scientists. The illustrations complement the text and clarify procedures or instructions. Hauser begins Super Science Concoctions with safety guidelines and practical suggestions on techniques and obtaining the needed supplies.

Super Science Concoctions will be a springboard for the scientific inquiry process of children. The added notes in several recurring sections will satisfy the eager learner as well as make the concepts applicable by a teacher or parent. Each mixture is accompanied by information of some type explaining the scientific principle(s) at work. The instructions are easy to follow and the concoctions I tried, Blobber and Puffy Protein Meringue, worked beautifully. The safety guidelines and consistent illustrations to indicate “Okay to Eat” and “Hot! Get Help” provide realistic advice, and are likely to be heeded since they are not overused. Most of the instructions could readily be followed by any child who can read them.


PS—Gr. 5.

Along the beach of Año Nuevo Island near the coast of California, the elephant seal is making a comeback from near extinction. Elephant Seals were hunted like the whales for their blubber during the 1800’s. Federal laws have been passed to protect the seals and slowly the number of elephant seals have reached over one hundred thousand. The book handles the issue of seal slaughter informatively, leaving the reader untainted by environmental emotionalism.

The author of Elephant Seals, Sylvia A. Johnson, has taken the delicate task of describing the life cycle of the Northern Elephant Seal with grace and discretion. Filled with unusual words such as “proboscis,” “pinnipeds,” and “weaners,” Elephant Seals covers the different stages of growth including battling for colony hierarchy, mating, gestation, weaning, and general daily life for the Elephant Seals along the beaches of Año Nuevo Island.

Elephant Seals has won the Children’s Science Book Award from The New York Academy of Sciences. Directed at fourth grade readers and higher, it is a good read aloud book for younger children with an enthusiasm for animal life. The color photographs are good and relate well to the text of the book. Throughout the book, bold words are seen. Definitions are found for these words in the glossary at the end of the book. A one page index follows the glossary.


621.48. Nuclear power plants. 48 p.

PS—Gr. 5.

Charlotte Wilcox presents a clear and thorough explanation of nuclear power generation. The text progresses logically from a basic description of nuclear energy through the structure and process of turning nuclear radiation into electricity and disposition of nuclear waste. Excellent photos of the Prairie Island nuclear power plant by Jerry Boucher and diagrams of atomic level processes contribute to the clarity of this text. A glossary and an index are included. Vocabulary which may be new to the reader appears in bold type the first time it is used in the text and is listed in the glossary and indexed. Nuclear power is presented in an objective manner, including the concerns regarding safety and nuclear waste. However, the ecological

736. Origami, Côtés (nativity scenes), Jesus Christ—Nativity. 72 p.
Gr. 3—7.

A beautiful narration of the Christmas story by Geneva Cob Iijima faithfully offers a fresh look at the birth of the Savior plus teaching adults and children how to create a nativity scene in origami, the art of paper folding. Ideal for home or classroom, each of the ten chapters offers an intimate view into the events and feelings of this historic moment. A comment or question ends each chapter linking the centuries old story to the present. A simple, stylized drawing at the beginning of each chapter sets the stage for the narration. Following the chapters are complete illustrated directions for creating the related figure in origami. A nativity scene will be completed at the culmination of reading the book.

Instructions are clear and will guide you step-by-step through the process of origami. Needed materials and terms are listed at the beginning of the book. A color photograph of the nativity scene is on the cover of the book.

Geneva Iijima and her husband were part of the US Embassy in Tokyo during the 1970’s when she learned the art of origami. She has taught this ancient art to her own children and numerous classes. Children and adults will cherish the story and activities in a new way through this excellent book.

◆ Quality—5  ♦ Acceptability—5

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Gr. 1—5.

Debra Page gives a fascinating, true account, using her own son as the storyteller in Orcas Around Me. This is the story of Taiga, a boy born in Alaska, whose parents are Salmon fishermen. Although he goes to school in Fairbanks, during the summer, he helps his parents troll for salmon in the North Pacific Ocean. What is it like having parents with fishing boats? How would you spend your day? What animals and wildlife are part of your normal environment? And what is it like when one day you are surrounded by a whole pod of Orcas?

This book is entertaining as well as enlightening. The watercolor illustrations by Leslie Bowman are realistic. The glossary at the end of the book gives helpful definitions of Alaskan wildlife. Two maps give pertinent details of the area.

◆ Quality—5  ♦ Acceptability—5

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782.28. Gruber, Franz Xaver, 1787-1863. Silent night, holy night, Mohr, Joseph, 1702-1848. Silent night, holy night, Carol—History and criticism. unp.

PS—Adult.

The year is 1818. In the town of Oberndorf, Austria, at the church of St. Nicola, preparations are underway for the celebration of our Savior’s birth. Fresh pine boughs are brought into the church to scent the air, the creche is lovingly restored, and candles are lit. Only the hushed whispers of curious children disturb the silence.

But where is the music? Could it be that hungry mice have eaten holes in the organ’s bellows, or that rust has silenced the glorious pipes? Whatever the reason, the organ has lost its voice, just as Father Mohr has finished writing some new verses in honor of the Christ-child.

He asks Franz Gruber, the organist, to compose a song for voice and guitar, to accompany his words. This inspired song, known to us as "Silent Night," is sung by Christians around the world today.

Lisa Granfield’s writing style is quiet, yet rich, perfectly evoking the wonder of Christmas Eve.

Her book, Silent Night: The Song From Heaven, ends with additional background material about this beloved hymn, including a touching story involving a brief respite for enemy troops who put aside their guns in order to celebrate Christmas Eve, 1914.
This lovely book is illustrated with cut-paper images known as scherenschnitt, a form of folk art that was popular in Father Mohr's day. These striking images are presented in black and gold, and are breathtakingly beautiful in their intricate detail.

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Sylvia Stopforth
Librarian, Trinity Western University
Langley, British Columbia


782.28. Gruber, Franz Xaver, 1787-1863. Silent night, holy night; Mohr, Joseph, 1702-1848. Silent night, holy night, Christmas service, Music, Christmas, Music, Germany. 

K—Gr. 2.

It is Christmas Eve in the Austrian village of Oberndorf and the air is tingling with excitement, for tonight will be the Christmas service. All the boys and girls of the village choir gather enthusiastically to rehearse their music with the organist Herr Gruber. But to everyone's dismay, the organ moans and sighs and won't make music. Sadly, Franz Gruber sends the disappointed children home, for there will be no music for Christmas Mass.

Later that afternoon, Father Mohr sits pondering what he can do with the sudden turn of events. That night, Joseph Mohr picks up his quill and writes the beloved words of one of the world’s best-loved Christmas songs, “Silent Night.” Franz Gruber composes a sweet, pure tune that enhances and lifts the words.

Author Margaret Hodges warmly tells the story of how “Silent Night” came to be; how it spread with the aid of the Strasser family, the Rainers, and John Freeman Young; and how it wrapped people together and overcame even the barrier of war.

With soft, glowing illustrations by Tim Ladwig, Silent Night beautifully creates a deep appreciation for the power of the song.

A wonderful book to read during Christmas to bring a song alive and to help children become aware of its origin.

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Elizabeth Hesch
High School Student
Grants Pass, Oregon


790.1. Creative activities and seatwork, Amusements.

144 p. PS—Gr. 2.

Nancy Fusco Castaldo suggests activities for creativity and intellectual stimulation. She outlines activities that appeal to varied learning styles and interests. There are imagination games, reading themes, word plays, crafts, writing suggestions, physical activities, and other fascinating spin-offs of old favorites (like painting with a toothbrush). The instructions provided are easy to follow and most include extensions of the activity (like comparing the toothbrush pattern to that of a feather) for further application. Fusco’s initial note to grownups is realistic and inspires grownups to provide educational and fun, yet simple situations to prevent boredom on rainy days.

Rainy Day Play! includes a balanced variety of activities for indoor days. The variety of learning styles represented will provide endless fun for children doing the activities. The illustrations are black and white line drawings. The span of activities means that some require additional supplies, but others require only people and active imaginations!

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Carol M. Jones
Children’s Librarian
Champaign, Illinois

**800’s—Literature**


All ages.

Author and artist Lauren Mills has done a masterful job in her collection, The Book of Little Folk, Fairy Stories and Poems from Around the World. The reader is transported around the world from the United States to Swaziland and on to Naidu, Sarojini, on the wings of fairies, from the familiar Tom Thumb and Thumbelina to the not so familiar but fascinating Laka and the Menehunes of Hawaii and Vasilisa the Beautiful of Russia.

In an afterward, Lauren Mills has explained how and why she decided to preserve the language intact in some stories and to preserve the story but focus on a different slant in other stories. These notes make the volume not only quiet, bedtime reading for children, but a study in fairy tales for adults. The quiet, yet entrancing, pastel drawings entice the reader into the world of fantasy. Be aware that in any exploration of little folk there is the inevitable tussle between good and evil and the drawings true to form depict both in believable yet fanciful tones.

Quality—5  Acceptability—4

Judy Driscoll
Teacher, Christ the King Academy
Poulsho, Washington


811. Schools—Poetry, American poetry. 74 p.

Gr. 3—6.

Kalli Dakos creates a bridge of understanding between teacher and student in her collection of poetry, The Goof Who Invented Homework and Other School Poems. Through rhyme and free verse, Dakos offers the funny side of school, plus school fears and foibles.

Dakos uses humor to capture the middle grade reader’s attention. She then writes weighty matter into the funny midst. Denise Brunkus’ illustrations accompany the poetry and reinforce the humor. Some poems are short, other run many pages. A few link and refer back to others. The reader listens to Jack’s confession. Jack forgot to feed the class goldfish and killed it. “No matter what anyone says, I’m responsible.” Most moving is the poem, “Back Away! Back Away!” Carol is sick and dying and still does her homework. No one befriends her to her death except the narrator. Readers may be moved to tears, but the poet tells in another poem that’s okay because,

“Sometimes good books Are very sad,
Because life is often sad.”

Middle grade readers will love poetry if introduced to Kalli Dakos’ work. Buyers should be aware there is an inclusion of two ghost poems introduced to Kalli Dakos’ work. Buyers should be aware there is an inclusion of two ghost poems

Quality—5  Acceptability—4

Lorie Ann Grover
Freelance Writer
Kent, Washington
Sweet Dreams of the Wild : Poems for Bedtime.


813. Christmas stories, American; Christmas stories, English. 143 p.

All ages.

“All who enter here must bring a gift...Your gift must be the essence of yourself. It must be something precious to your soul,” says the angel Gabriel.

Gaspar confidently says, “I have brought bars of the purest gold.” He then enters the manger and kneels to give the child the gold, but to his dismay, the gold had turned into a hammer.

“What you hold in your hands is the hammer of greed,” says the angel.

Gaspar turns away in shame and wants to leave, for he knows the angel is right—he is greedy.

“...you have not offered your gift,” says the angel.

Gaspar slowly gives the ugly hammer to Jesus and leaves, feeling free at last.

“The Secret of the Gifts” by Paul Flucke beautifully tells the “complete story of the three wise men Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar who brought gifts to Jesus. But instead of leaving gold, frankincense, and myrrh, they left behind their greed, bitterness, and fears.

This story is one of many in The Miracles of Christmas, a collection of heart touching stories by Patricia St. James, Katherine Paterson, Agatha Christie, and more. Each story is about everyday people who felt a miracle in their lives during Christmas. Miracles of healing in a family, changed hearts, chance encounters, and love.

The Miracles of Christmas reveals God’s love and presence in our lives and helps us to remember Jesus during Christmas.

◆ Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Elizabeth Hesch

High School Student

 Grants Pass, Oregon


PS—Gr. 1.

Melody Rosales has retold Clement Clark Moore’s familiar poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" with an African American slant. Her black characters live on a small dairy farm in North Carolina near the turn of the century. Words are changed to capture the essence and flavor of this setting. Her richly detailed oil paintings convey the warmth and joy of the holiday. This is an excellent example of a classic piece of literature being adapted to fit another race and culture.

◆ Quality—5 Acceptability—4

Mary Jarvis

Freelance Writer

Pawhuska, Oklahoma

900’s—History, Geography, and Biography


921 (598). Women—Biography, Nice, Margaret Morse. 64 p.


921 (623.8). Fulton, Robert, 1765-1815, Inventors, Steamboats—History. 64 p.


921 (786.2). Schumann, Clara, 1819-1896, Pianists, Composers, Women—Biography. 64 p.

Gr. 2—5.

Titles included in the Creative Minds Series are musician/pianist Clara Schuman in Her Piano Song; the inventor of “the Clermont,” Robert Fulton, in A Head Full of Notions; ornithologist/biologist Margaret Morse Nice, in Birds in the Bushes; and suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton in The Road to Seneca Falls.

These biographies are full of readable, short paragraphs and chapters that move the story along. Biographies are told as stories and are popular with middle grade readers. Enough variety of subject matter and titles, about three dozen, are included that a class could use just these when reading biographies.

Illustrations for the books are pencil drawings and, while not outstanding, are adequate though lacking in color. Bindings are reinforced so the books will last through several years of use. Covers and dust jackets have attractive, colored, eye-catching illustrations. Paperback editions are also available. These will be useful additions to school libraries.

◆ Quality—4 Acceptability—4

CHRISTIAN LIBRARY JOURNAL 33 NOVEMBER, 1997
Clyde Tombaugh and the Search for Planet X

Gr. 2—5.

Persistence, perseverance, and dedication describe the discovery of Pluto, Clyde Tombaugh, who recently died. In this “On My Own Biography,” Margaret K. Wetterer, the author of Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express, introduces Tombaugh to young readers. Tombaugh’s uncle shared his love of astronomy with Clyde and his family when they lived in Illinois. After the family moved to Kansas, the uncle encouraged Clyde to keep on studying the stars. The final episode describes his meticulous work, while at the Lowell Observatory in Arizona studying photographs and is short enough that teachers could use it to introduce biographies, scientists, or astronomy to students in lower or middle grades. A brief timeline of events in Tombaugh’s life is included. This will be a good addition to school libraries.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—4

Leslie Groves Radloff
Teacher/Librarian
Emanuel Lutheran School (WELS)
W. St. Paul, Minnesota


921 (520). Tombaugh, Clyde William, 1906—

“From the beginning the baby was a disappointment to her mother.” So begins Barbara Cooney in her book, Eleanor. Researched for three years, Cooney captures the poignant moments in our former first lady’s childhood. Cooney gives bare truths that move the reader to have compassion for Eleanor. Her mother called her “Granny, because she is so funny and old fashioned looking.” “How beautiful her mother was! But Eleanor was not.” Her father leaves her outside a pub with their three dogs and forgets Eleanor.

Cooney shows children that fears often grow from a personal experience. Eleanor feared water due to her escape from a sinking steamer. Other experiences can shape or focus a person’s pursuits later in life. Eleanor visited the poorest levels of New York City as a child and then devoted her life to helping the disadvantaged. Most importantly, Cooney illustrates the power of a loving nurturer to effect growth and change in another person.

Barbara Cooney’s paintings are in keeping with her previous Caldecott Award winning picture books. Through her text and emotionally evoking illustrations, we see Eleanor’s life. Cooney has done justice to the memory of Eleanor Roosevelt.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Lorrie Ann Groover
Freelance Writer
Kent, Washington


947. Ukraine. 64 p.


947. Korea. 64 p.


955. Iran. 64 p.


968. South Africa. 64 p.


983. Chile. 64 p.

Rebecca Clay has brought the Ukraine to life in this book by interspersing text with beautiful color pictures and maps. A brief history of the Ukraine and its place in the former Soviet Union helps readers understand the present political situation while explaining the life and customs of Ukrainian-Americans. New and unfamiliar words have pronunciations in parenthesis within the text and in a glossary. There is a colored reproduction of the flag, some statistics, and an index with boldface type for pages with illustrations. A short reading list is included. There is a clear brief explanation of the Cyrillic alphabet. Phonetic spellings help with pronunciation.

Readers will find this volume and others in the series useful for research for social studies projects. Middle grade readers will like the short paragraphs which get the needed information across. Chapters focus on Geography and History; The People; Family Life, Festivals, and Food (recipes are included); School and Recreation; and The Arts (examples also included). Maps, while not detailed, are clear. Each volume ends with Country Facts which will be handy for those needing information for reports. Bindings are sturdy. These are worthwhile volumes for school libraries.

Each title is by a different author and several have lived in the countries they write about.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—4
YOUNG ADULT FICTION

F. Humorous stories. 284 p.
Gr. 4—Adult.
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain is, of course, a classic. The popular story is made even more appealing with the inclusion of clever full color illustrations by Claude Lapointe. The illuminating side notes about the era give readers the opportunity of learning about life prior to the Civil War.
Tom Sawyer. His adventures include ordinary mischief (faking illness to skip school); cunning deceit (trading scripture tickets to win a Bible); bravado (witnessing a murder at midnight in the town’s graveyard); absolute excitement (discovering a hidden treasure); along with the soulful adventure of love, meaning Tom’s serious attempts to court Becky Thatcher.

Twain has found himself on the banned list from time to time. His writing has been considered racist (slaves are “niggers”), and the colorful language and customs used by the book’s characters (a curse now and then, along with other singular expressions and beliefs) might offend some. And yet it is hard to ignore Twain’s contribution to American literature. Readers of today would be missing out if they were to leave Tom Sawyer off the shelves, especially when he comes in such an attractive edition.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—4

A Word from the Editor: Sylvia Stopforth

Bane or blessing, the Internet is here to stay, and as a source of information, it is unparalleled.

So, we click and double-click; we scroll and scan; we wrestle with search engines and we mutter to ourselves. In the end, what do we find? A small line of print cheerfully informing us that our request has resulted in 93,112 hits. A bit daunting, but surely the desired information is in there, somewhere. So, like Horton the elephant, we sigh resignedly and set ourselves to sifting through the endless piles of dust specks in search of the Whos.

And sometimes, we find them . . .

But there is an easier way. Certain dedicated individuals have taken the time and trouble to locate, evaluate, and link Websites on many different subjects.

The sites listed below, for example, will prove useful starting points for those working with, nurturing, and trying to relate to Young Adults. Each site has been examined with the following criteria in mind: content, organization, currency, and reliability in terms of affiliation or sponsorship.

I hope that these Web Sites prove useful.

Please note that the urls were correct as of August 30, 1997.

Happy surfing!
1. YALSA
http://www.ala.org/yalsa/
This site for the Young Adult Library Services Association, a branch of the American Library Association, includes resources and contact information, as well as booklists, awards, and links to sites for young adults.
2. Booklist
http://www.ala.org/booklist/index.html
Published by the ALA, Booklist is a respected journal providing articles and reviews of books and electronic media.
3. Young Adult Librarian’s Help/Homepage
http://www.kcpt.lib.mo.us/ya/
This site presents a plethora of links to Web pages of interest to young adults, author interviews, articles on everything from basketball to Shakespeare, and resources for educators.
4. Web Sites for Librarians Working with Children and Young Adults
http://skyways.lib.ms.us/kansas/nekls/children/librarian.htm
Links on this page are subdivided into categories titles “Public Librarians,” “School Librarians,” and “Homeschooling Resources.”
5. Virtual YA
http://members.aol.com/naughyde/publibhya.htm
Here one can find frequently updated links to public libraries in North America with YA Web pages.
6. The Children’s Literature Web Guide
http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/
One of the most comprehensive collections of links to Web sites related to children and literature, this guide includes resources for parents, teachers, writers, illustrators, storytellers, and, of course, children.
7. The ALAN Review
http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/winter97/w97toc.html
Published by the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents, National Council of Teachers of English, this electronic journal provides articles on various issues related to YA literature and its use in the classroom.
8. How Novel!
http://www.lights.com/
This site includes annotations, reviews, and publisher information for YA Canadian literature, as well as biographical information for 150 authors. Access by genre, subject, author, and title is provided.
9. Christian Kid’s Links
http://netministries.org/kids.htmls
According to the composer of this site, its links are “appropriate for kids and are devotional, educational, or just plain fun.”
Osborne, has this same dream for Annie, knowing full well her great capabilities, and hopes to assist in making this dream come to pass.

Of course, there is an obstacle. Annie, being the oldest daughter still at home with her family on the farm, is needed to help with the farm work and care for the younger children. That obstacle becomes even greater when Annie realizes that another baby is on the way. Permission is finally given by her parents, but a dilemma arises. Annie’s mother is so weak from the difficult birth of the child that it will, in all probability, be a full year before she will be strong enough to tackle her entire responsibility in their home. Annie must make a decision, based not only on her own desires but on the good of her family. She chooses to stay at home.

Interwoven with the main plot is another which revolves around the issue of censorship in the one room schoolhouse that Annie attends. The local pastor is appalled that Miss Osborne allows the children to read Treasure Island with its “Yo, ho, ho and a bottle of rum.” He is determined to use this as a reason for ousting Miss Osborne from her job. Annie proves herself to be determined and able to stand up for her convictions, but the conclusion may not be one that pleases all Christian readers.

Annie’s Choice is well written for ten to twelve-year-olds, has strong moral themes, and will have a great appeal to the age group for which it is written. Because of the slant on the alcohol issue, teachers, librarians and parents may wish to preview this title.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—4

Ccil Carey
Middle School Librarian
Plano, Illinois


Gr. 6—9

Breaking up is not only hard to do, it’s devastating. Just ask Olivia Diamond; everything about her world seems to be changing, falling apart, and disappearing. It almost seems like a bad soap opera. First, her mother moves out on Olivia and her father. Then, Grandpa Diamond dies and Grandma retreats into a world of her own. Olivia’s father does his own retreating into a world of computers where you only have to point and click to solve your problems. Is it any wonder Olivia’s grades are falling? In the face of mass betrayal by the adults in her family, Olivia tries to salvage something by getting some tutoring from a fellow student, cute Ron Kramer. For all her efforts, life goes from bad to worse for Olivia, until a misunderstanding makes her the owner of the one animal she is deathly afraid of, a dog. As Olivia focuses on the needs of her new pet, she learns to deal with her pain and that of the adults around her.

Marilyn Sachs is a prolific and popular writer of children’s books. Her books usually fall into the category of modern realism and Another Day is certainly one of them, containing the prerequisite teenager with multiple, crushing problems with not a competent adult to be found. Olivia is presented as a very angry young lady and the reader is strongly encouraged to sympathize with her as she tells off the various adults who have so grievously failed her. Disturbing as this behavior is, even more so is the lack of a real solution to her problems. Yes, a few of the adults develop some backbone and begin to pay attention, but Olivia’s primary solution is to escape her problems by lavishing attention on her newly acquired pet. Even the author seems to indicate that this approach is not a real solution, ending the story with a distinct absence of closure. As a result, the reader can not be faulted for being confused about what the author is trying to say about life and the family.

For the Christian, an interesting facet of this book is the glimpse it gives of modern Jewish family life. The weekly cycle of Shabbat and the consciously Jewish identity of the characters are not often encountered in children’s fiction. Recommended as a book to discuss with students.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—3

Pamela A. Todd
Chalcedon Christian School
Atlanta, Georgia


Gr. 5—9

Rutherford Beauregard is an awkward name even for a graduating sixth grader. Arby, as he is known at Greenhaven Christian Elementary, dreads the day the truth will be discovered. Worse yet is the Spring Ball. Humiliation over his name and athletic inability teaches Arby the difference between what must be accepted and what can be changed. By accepting himself, he learns to value the differences in others. The challenge of change reveals his hidden strengths.

Sharon Hambrick’s strength in Arby Jenkins is her ability to capture the awkward moments of preadolescent life in a sympathetic and realistic style. She does lean on the stereotypical mother who stays home and bakes cookies, but the characters all develop depth through the insight and wisdom that is faced through the tension. The reader will come away with a sense of encouragement and hope.

◆ Quality—3  ❤ Acceptability—5
At the beginning of the summer, Lynette Sanderson leaves her home in Chicago to work at Camp Sierra in California. Her mother had died three months before and her father is very distant and non-communicative towards her. He arranges this trip after a mysterious phone call, and insists that she leave, allowing her no opportunity for input. When she arrives in California, she meets “Aunt Pearl,” who takes her under her wing and seems very excited about Lynette helping in the dining hall for the summer. Lynette works very hard and learns about (this life and place that are very foreign to her). She is obviously struggling with some bitterness toward God because of her situation, and she finds great love, patience, and support from the camp staff and from her friend, Vonda, at home. Because of a letter addressed to Aunt Pearl that she intercepts, and a picture of her and her mother that she brought with her, Lynette discovers her mother’s relationship to these people and uncovers the Camp Sierra Secret, included. The reader leaves the book with a storyline. A brief factual description is also contained in The Courtship.

Gr. 7—10.

“It’s a God-thing,” Sierra is often quoted as saying. Like many sixteen-year-olds, Sierra Jensen thinks she’s got her life all figured out. Amy is her tried and true pal. Randy, her faithful study-buddy, is just a friend. Paul, whom she met in London in a previous book, well, he’s going to be something more. Tre, newly arrived from Cambodia and a poor speaker of English, is just someone to help complete the required assignment of volunteering at the shelter, and Tawni, her older, adopted sister, she’ll never understand.

But soon, things don’t seem so cut and dried. Amy starts telling Sierra’s secrets, and people begin calling Sierra and Randy a couple. Paul surprises her by turning up at the shelter, and Tre decides to accept Christ after listening to Sierra’s rendition of the Prodigal Son. Finally, Tawni decides to take up modeling and move away. Sierra must realize that her “God-things” may not really be what she thinks they are, and that he has a much better plan for her than even she herself can imagine.

Close Your Eyes, by Robin Gunn, is a good alternative to many of the romances for teens today. Sierra is firmly grounded in her faith, and her family is a model of loving Christianity. Written in an easy, realistic tone, the book moves along quickly. It’s point—let God take control of your life—is made clearly, but not in an overly preachy way. Its conclusion introduces the contemporary Christian group, Sierra, to the storyline. A brief factual description is also included. The reader leaves the book with a feeling of completion, but there is room for the story to continue.

Conservative Christians may feel the emphasis should be placed more on the work of the Spirit than on a person’s acceptance of Christ by his or her own power.
◆ Quality—3     Acceptability—4

F. Short stories. 151 p.
Gr. 8—Adult.

Nine quirky, quiet yet engaging stories make up Budge Wilson’s latest collection of short stories. Ms. Wilson writes smoothly and well, drawing the reader into her protagonists’ worlds, feelings and experiences. She creates empathy and insight into her characters, and the reader leaves each story with a slightly changed viewpoint. Ms. Wilson invites her readers to look below the calm surface of everyday life and experience both the wondrous and the devastating.

Her stories focus on love and relationships within the family and its environs. The reader meets Mrs. Garibaldi, an elderly lady, more-or-less deserted by her son, who finds a new and unexpected way to cope with her loneliness and need for affection. Ms. Wilson introduces Charles, a father intent on avoiding the obvious mistakes of his own father, only to fall prey to them in a slightly different way. She goes on to reveal the private desolation of a young girl’s ruined birthday party in “The Dress.”

Ms. Wilson is a careful observer of everyday life, with all its joys and desolations. The stories are mature, simple enough for middle-schoolers, yet full of depth and insight. This collection would be a great read for a book club, readers group or literature discussion. There’s a lot to talk about and discover in each of the nine stories contained in The Courtship.
◆ Quality—5     Acceptability—5

Gr. 6—Adult.

Daughter of the Covenants, by Anna Marie Dahlquist, is set in the turbulent times of the Civil War. A minister’s daughter, Mary Henderson, finds herself defending her father’s stand on slavery. Will he be ousted from his pulpit for airing his views? Will his church be taken from him because he openly prays for the Northern occupying troops and their leaders? These questions and more abound in this nineteen-year-old’s mind.

From one day to the next, profound changes occur in Mary’s secure world. Disgruntled church board members whisper untold secrets about her mother’s heritage and emotional
stability. Mary begins to wonder what secrets her mother hides.

Her dreams of becoming a concert pianist are slowly dashed as hard times descend upon the entire Henderson family. Only Mary seems strong enough, both in mind and body, to hold the family together. If there is not enough for Mary to concern herself with, a young man of a different religion comes calling and Mary’s heart struggles to be true to Christ as she develops an affection for this newcomer.

Day by day, Mary learns to turn her fears into triumphs as she leans on God and His Word. Her life’s calling becomes more clear as she obeys Him one day at a time. Her family’s secrets too, come to light in due time. In the end, Mary has learned valuable lessons which will carry her through life’s inevitable struggles.

*Quality—4    Acceptability—5

Michele Howe
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Mother
LaSalle, Michigan


F. Mystery and detective stories. 154 p.

—*Abducted.* (Amber Ainslie Detective Series; 2.) Out of print.


F. Mystery and detective stories. 172 p.


F. Mystery and detective stories. 174 p.

Gr. 7—12.

*Deadline,* the first book of the Amber Ainslie Detective Series, is a thriller by anyone’s standards. Amber Ainslie is a red-haired private investigator whose first mystery has a fast-paced beginning and draws the reader through to a great and satisfying conclusion.

The mystery begins when Carla Reidel, editor of a popular women’s magazine, receives a short story, as a contest entry, that threatens her life and dredges up the past she would like to forget. Two years before, her fiancé was killed in a car crash when the brakes of the car he was driving failed. The contest entry not only alludes to the crash, but also raises the question of whether or not it was murder. Amber is hired to investigate the case and discover the true cause and reason for Mark’s death. Hilda Stahl spins an exciting tale, skillfully weaving in a salvation message and concluding her story with a fulfilling ending.

Book 3, *Undercover,* is a fun and enjoyable book to read. What it lacks in terms of the intensity of the previous two books, it makes up for with its intricacies of plot.

In this volume, Molly Lynn Dupree, a newspaper reporter, accepts a position with Quinn Mathis. Molly is hired as a nanny for Quinn’s two nieces, whose parents have just been killed in an automobile accident. The only problem is that Molly has accepted the position under false pretenses. She wants to scoop the story on the real reason for the accident, and Quinn has no idea that she is really a reporter. The plot thickens on the day she begins, only to discover that Amber Ainslie is also working undercover in Quinn’s household.

This book is filled with action, suspense, a great plot, and more than a little romance. Some of the dialogue between Molly and Quinn is a little questionable in that he comes across as the strong-willed male, and she, the weaker sex.

*Blackmail* opens with Amber praying for wisdom in what turns out to be the most stunning mystery of this series. This book is a spellbinding account of a national tragedy: child pornography.

The drama begins when Sara Palmer, a Christian woman who had an out-of-wedlock baby when she was fourteen, discovers her seedy brother George has resurfaced in her life and may not only know where her child is, but may also be connected in some way to child pornography. Her worst fears come true when he demands money to tell her of the safety and location of the child she hasn’t seen since birth. During Sara’s height of desperation, Amber and Sara meet in church and, as she attempts to help Sara, Amber stumbles into the deadly world of child pornography. Her only goal is to save the children involved and bring those responsible to justice.

Stahl tackles the controversial subjects of teen pregnancy, the sale of children, and child pornography in this captivating novel. She handles the topics well by instructing her readers through the actions of the characters, rather than preaching. This book would definitely be for mature readers at the junior high level.

Hilda Stahl will captivate her readers with the launch of this new series.

*Quality—5    Acceptability—4

Karen Orfuselli
Freelance Writer
Manchester, Connecticut


Gr. 8—12.

Joseph, a teenager who is part Eskimo and part white, is forced to confront the cultural conflicts that surface within himself and in his remote village on the tundra when the lifestyle and values taught by his Eskimo family and community clash with federal government regulations.

In *A Distant Enemy,* Vanasse provides a seemingly neat, tidy plot but leaves some issues unresolved. Mr. Townsend, the newly-arrived white English teacher, observes a rebellious Joseph slashing plane tires. The teacher develops a payment plan for the damage, and Joseph reacts by spreading false rumors about him. The rumors are publicly dispelled when Mr. Townsend stands up for himself in the classroom. Joseph must then get a job to pay back the damages. While he is working, money goes missing from the cash drawer and Joseph loses his job. Each incident increases Joseph’s inner anger and turmoil.

In addition to dealing with cultural changes, Joseph is forced to examine the many sources of his anger, which include: anger about his father’s abandonment of his family, anger about the federal regulations, anger at being caught in an act of vandalism in retaliation for the regulations, anger at all whites in general despite being half white himself, anger when positions are reversed and he is falsely accused, and finally, the fit of anger which causes him to run away.

A near brush with death and caring family and friends in both cultures help Joseph along the road to recovery and provide new perceptions for growth and understanding. Right and wrong, truth, honesty, loyalty, strong family nurturing, and friendship are major elements of this excellent coming-of-age novel.

*Quality—5    Acceptability—5

Patricia Braun
Library Media Specialist
Wilmette Junior High
Wilmette, Illinois


Gr. 7-12.

*The Drummer Boy of Vicksburg,* G. Clifton Wisler’s first person account of twelve-year-old Orion Howe, is the fictionalized narrative of a
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Playwise. Weston, Denise Chapman. Putnam, G. P. Putnam’s Sons. 0874778085, PAP @ $15.95
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Zambia. Holmes, Timothy. Marshall Cavendish. 0761406948, HBB @ $23.95
real-life story. Orion sees his father and ten-year-old brother leave for the army as life player and drummer boy while he is sent to live with his grandmother so he can continue going to school. After watching classmates and teachers leave one after another, he travels hundreds of miles to find his father and brother in Memphis and join the Union forces. From his position as a drummer boy, Orion shows the reality of life in an army camp, facing the fear of marching into battle, and the endless periods of waiting.

The book concludes with the battle that made a hero of Orion and caused General Sherman to write to Secretary of War Stanton asking that “something be done for... Orion P. Howe of Waukegan, Illinois.”

Wisler does a masterful job of researching and descriptively writing about the Civil War including the details of battles and names of people and places that are familiar. He then weaves the facts in with the fictionalized story to give a realistic and inspiring account of a real hero.

Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Esther Knaupp, Librarian
Santiam Christian School
Corvallis, Oregon


F. Pace, J. T., 1923—Fiction, Afro-Americans—Fiction, Literacy—Fiction. 197 p.

Gr. 6—8.

Dust of the Earth is a work of biographical fiction based on the life of J.T. Pace, a black sharecropper’s son from the South. He makes an amazing journey from a small boy, whose stunting kept him from school and literacy, to a successful adult, speaking in front of large groups and meeting the likes of First Lady, Barbara Bush. But his greatest accomplishment lies in knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and being able to read God’s Word.

This book, then, is the story of his life experiences and of the people who contributed to that life and the man he became, including his parents and sister, his best friends, Dover and Jake, and, of course, his wife and her parents. Although fictionalized, JT’s story conveys accurately his life’s struggle and victory.

Much of the dialogue reflects region and culture by the use of dialect. This is used as an indicator of illiteracy and ignorance and is in no way a reflection of racial issues. Told in the third person, through almost continuous dialogue, this book is a fast and engaging read.

Filled with many references to salvation, Dust of the Earth, by Donna Lynn Hess, will appeal to young people as a biography that will uplift and give encouragement.

Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Santiam Christian School
Corvallis, Oregon


Gr. 5—8.

In one horrible night in 1948, six-year-old Stephen’s secure life was shattered. The ancient nation of Hungary was being brought to heel by the Soviet Union with the help of the AVO, the hated Hungarian secret police. That night, the AVO came for his father and Stephen’s future was forever changed.

It is now 1956 and the grip of the Soviets seems impossibly tight; even gatherings such as the Boy Scouts are outlawed. Now fourteen, Stephen and his friends dream of freedom as they quietly rebel in little ways against the status quo. Then, one day, his friend Pauli comes late to school with a bundle of flyers demanding freedom from Soviet oppression and carrying news of demonstrations forming in the public squares of Budapest. When the AVO fires into the demonstrators, Stephen finds himself fighting for his life and his country, as much a soldier as any grown man. The horrors of war and the hope for freedom combine to drive Stephen forward through the chaos as all he has known disintegrates around him with the Fall of the Red Star.

Most Americans know nothing of the valiant stand of the Hungarian people against Soviet tyranny in the 1950’s. Helen M. Szablya lived through that brave and terrible time. Now, forty years later, she gives young readers a taste of it by telling the story of Hungarian teens. Szablya and Anderson weave a tense, dialog-driven story with a pace that echoes the intensity of that brief period of freedom in 1956. Stephen, the protagonist, is transformed quickly from school-boy into a freedom fighter who is shocked by the blood on his hands and the deeds he finds himself capable of. The rest of his family and friends are well-drawn, as is their strong faith in God’s care during the short-lived revolution and their subsequent escape from Hungary.

The Fall of the Red Star has great potential as a discussion starter as it raises questions concerning politics, theology, and ethics through the decisions of its characters and the rapidity of events. Highly recommended for all early to middle teens.

Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Gr. 5—8.

Pamela Todd
Chalcedon Christian School
Atlanta, Georgia

YOUNG ADULT FICTION


F. Fantasy. 182 p.


F. Fantasy. 150 p.


F. Fantasy. 172 p.


F. Fantasy. 144 p.


F. Fantasy. 135 p.


F. Fantasy. 153 p.


F. Fantasy. 160 p.


F. Fantasy. 165 p.

F. Fantasy. 166 p.


F. Fantasy. 166 p.

Gr. 6—11.

Prolific author Gilbert Morris departs from his usual style of writing realistic novels and writes about the future in his young adult fiction series The Seven Sleepers. Although the books are thin in plot the series should appeal to reluctant readers. The main characters are teenagers ranging in ages and temperaments. They are portrayed as real and likable in their faults and strengths. Allegorical in its telling this series will draw in readers who enjoyed the Narnia series but have grown beyond it. Each book centers around a given mission, and although the books can be read separately they are best read in order as there is progressive character growth.

In Flight of the Eagles, the first of the series, readers learn the earth has been forever changed by nuclear war. Foreseeing this event seven teenagers have been placed in sleep capsules to awaken fifty years later. Together the Seven Sleepers must fight against the dark forces of Nuworld while learning to trust in themselves and their mysterious guide Goel (which in the Old Testament is a name given to God meaning Redeemer).

The Gates of Neptune find the Sleepers in an undersea kingdom where they must battle against the dark forces which were set in motion by betrayal. Trust, believing in something when no one else does, is an important truth shown in this story.

The Sword of Camelot is a King Arthur revisited adventure full of action. Reb the southern cowboy, revels in this element of horses and adventure full of action. The idea of what happens when women take total control of a society is explored. The ultimate point being made men and women were intended to work together, combining one another’s strengths to overcome given weaknesses. Morris also illustrates how perceived gender stereotypes don’t always hold up in actuality.

The struggle with recreational addiction is addressed in Escape with the Dream Maker when the Sleepers meet up with an inventor who shows them how to plug into a dream manipulation machine. Escaping from painful, unpleasant situations with recreational pleasures and pursuits can have grievous consequences, as the Sleepers individually discover.

The Final Kingdom ends the series as Goel calls together all his followers to do battle against the Dark Lord. However, Goel needs more support for this final battle and sends forth the Sleepers to bring reinforcements from the Land of Ice, the Caverns of Doom, and the Land of Magicians. This is by far the most challenging and dangerous of all their assignments since it appears one of their guides is an informer for the Dark Lord. Once again the Sleepers use the power of love to hold evil in check.

Overall series rating:

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Pam Webb  Librarian
Sandpoint Community Christian School
Sandpoint, Idaho

F. Abandoned children—Fiction, Apprentices—Fiction, Mothers and sons—Fiction, Gr. 10—Adult.

Life in England in 1644 was uncertain at best, even for those comfortably situated in life. War, disease, financial disaster or debt could change one’s life in an instant. For those without the protection of family or wealth, life was precarious, often mean. Survival depended on a fortuitous combination of a strong constitution, native wit and the mercy of those with means. The Foundling, by Linda Hayner, takes the reader into that era and into the life of Willy, abandoned by his mother on the steps of St. Pancras parish church, and those whose lives he touches. Through his eyes we see the daily lives of the middle and lower classes of seventeenth century England as Willy grows from a waif of four to a young apprentice of sixteen during one of the most exciting yet chaotic times in the country’s history.

The Foundling is an extremely well conceived and written book. The conditions of the time are subtly, yet masterfully conveyed in growing detail as the main character matures. The main and supporting characters are complex and varied, having a vitality that attracts the reader’s curiosity. The most admirable aspect of the book is its fidelity to the portrayal of the sovereign, yet invisible, hand of God in the events of the time and the lives of the characters. Rarely is this achieved with such artistry. Highly recommended.

◆ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Pamela A. Todd Chalcedon Christian School
Atlanta, Georgia


F. Pioneers—Fiction. 164 p.


Gr. 5—Adult.

When William, son of the Lord of Stivers’ Castle, falls in love with Hannah Duffy, an orphaned servant girl, they realize that their future lies in America. They steal away by night to travel from Germany to Amsterdam, where they plan to sail for America as indentured slaves. As they board, Germany to Amsterdam, where they plan to sail for America as indentured slaves. As they board,
she has knitted for him, and tells him to remember the girl who loves him and waits to become his wife.

When they arrive in Virginia, Hannah is indentured to a loving family she has befriended on the ship, but Will is purchased to work in the cotton fields by a very cruel man. As they separate, they agree to meet by the church in four years. At their reunion, it is only the white mittens that cause Hannah to recognize her Will after his cruel treatment.

Raelene Phillips has researched the time period between 1752 and 1820 very well and has been able to keep the facts of the story quite accurate. She uses her two main characters in Freedom in White Mittens to contrast the treatment of indentured servants. The reader is drawn along through the story, wondering how the two young people will be reunited.

Freedom’s Destiny Fulfilled continues the story of Hannah and Will several years later. Norfolk has grown so much that the family decides to move West to Ohio. The white mittens continue to play a part in this story as they are made into a baby’s sweater and later used to mark the grave of a son who died fighting for freedom.

Phillips’ third book, Freedom’s Tremendous Cost, portrays the risks and blessings of the Underground Railroad in Ohio at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Amber, a young slave girl fleeing from a southern plantation, is helped along the way as the Stivers family risk their lives for the freedom of others.

These three books could stand alone but the reader will wish to know the whole story of this family who longed for freedom.

At last Sheela admits her interest in Aaron. Following an unpleasant scene at his family’s Thanksgiving dinner, he hears the truth from Sheela. She opens her heart to Aaron and also to Christ, who lifts the burden of her past. A kidnapping and plans to help Addie and her mother out of their abusive cycle, brings the conflicts to a predictable close.

Because the story unfolds quickly, and Stahl resolves everything within 200 pages, she tells much that readers might instead like to see. This reduces the book’s literary quality.

Throughout Gently Touch Sheela Jenkins, Stahl handles the child-abuse theme carefully and honestly. She has developed real-life characters. Sheela, Addie, and Aaron create empathy in readers’ minds, while other characters evoke sympathy and disgust. Minor characters add a lighter note, which provides some relief from the conflict.

With occasional glimpses into Sheela’s childhood, Stahl shows the traumatic effects of the cycle which often travels from generation to generation. The power of prayer and forgiveness from God, who in turn gives freedom from the past, offers a positive note to a difficult subject.

This short poem seems to sum up the attitudes and purposes of the Amish community. Taking delight in the smallest blessing of a robin’s song, yet striving to be pure and Christ-like in even the most traumatic events life can bring, these simple folk inspire the reader to pursue a good, healthy, and productive life.

Miriam recalls her daily routines and even includes some recipes that are especially yummy. The encouragement and strength she exhibits in trusting God through difficult circumstances is balanced with her “humaness” as she chooses to set aside her worrying and wondering, and let the Lord work out the details. We find a thoughtful, homey portrayal of life that is both peaceful and comforting to the soul to read about. Even during the stressful times, such as missing loved ones who have moved far away, or coping with mysterious happenings on the farm, Miriam encourages everyone to rest in him. Through lessons that are often difficult, the reader will discover that God truly honors the heart that is pure and works in everything for God.

Being true to form, Carrie Bender has produced another quality book of simplicity and honor. A Golden Sunbeam will surely not only allow the reader to find “a quiet place of rest” in its reading, but will also warm the heart towards family and friends, and encourage the reader to do all for the glory of God.


Gr. 11—Adult.

When Sheela Jenkins, weighed down with hatred and inability to forgive, unwillingly feels attracted to her employer, Aaron Brooks, she adopts a stand-offish mode because of past hurts that remain like a brick wall before her. Addie, a little girl from a nearby apartment, makes Sheela’s childhood memories even more vivid.

Wade, a friend of Sheela’s mother, Bobby, finds Sheela and demands she see her mother, who is a patient in the hospital. Sheela refuses. Later she relents and goes to the hospital, but she cannot bring herself to speak to Bobby after all. While there, Sheela unexpectedly meets her grandmother, another sad link to previous years.
Temple describes the corruption of the military, which forcibly takes boys as young as twelve to be soldiers, and she speaks of the guerrillas or muchachos, who defend the peasants from the landowners and the military. Mention is made of the fact that the United States supplies El Salvador with the guns used to kill its citizens, but the author also points out that many Americans are trying to change such policies.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—5

Sherri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon


Gr. 9—12.

Hartford, by Angela Elwell Hunt, describes David and Taregan as identical twins whose personalities are as different as fire and water. The twins are half Indian and half English, and unlike Taregan, Daniel is restless and dissatisfied with being a Christian and living an Indian lifestyle. When Garvin Black gives Daniel the opportunity to serve as a scout for Englishmen seeking revenge on the Pequot Indians, Daniel jumps at the opportunity to leave his home and family. Unfortunately, this decision leads Daniel to unwittingly send his father into slavery, and causes the death of many Indians who were considered family friends.

Realizing what Daniel has done, Taregan and his mother, Gilda, run to the tribe of Taregan’s betrothed, Dena, to warn them of the attack that is sure to come. Many of their Indian friends escape, but Taregan, Gilda, and Dena are among those captured and sold into slavery.

Taregan serves nine years as a slave in Barbados before earning his freedom and returning to Hartford to marry Dena. Upon his arrival, Taregan finds that he has been framed for a murder committed by Daniel, and Taregan is condemned to hang. The Lord works in Taregan’s heart to remove all bitterness and hate for Daniel’s past betrayal of his family, and for this second betrayal.

Daniel, hating the wicked man he has become, attempts to atone for his past offenses by drugging Taregan and secretly taking his place at the hanging. Taregan makes his peace with his dead brother by assuming Daniel’s name, and he and Dena live a fulfilled life together.

Rehoboth, Book IV in the Keepers of the Ring series, picks up the story with Taregan and Dena’s half-breed children, Mojag and Aiyana. As the English push more and more into Indian territory, conflict becomes inevitable. Mojag feels the Lord’s calling to live with Metacomet, or “King Phillip,” and to share the gospel with the Wampanoeg Indians. He takes an Indian wife and lives to see the complete destruction of the Wampanoeg people through war with the English.

Aiyana, a servant in the home of Matthew Glazier, falls in love with his son Forest. Their love endures many trials, including Aiyana’s exile on Deer Island with the other Christian Indians during the war, and Forest’s capture by the Wampanoeg Indians. Aiyana escapes to search for him, and they are eventually reunited, with Mojag’s help.

Although Hartford and Rehoboth both exhibit stereotypically gorgeous heroes and heroines who fall in love at first sight, both books are well written from a historical perspective. Hunt often includes actual excerpts of manuscripts from the 1600’s, and famous historical personages appear frequently throughout both novels. The rigidity of the Puritan faith and its condemnation of other races and lifestyles is strongly contrasted with that of Christians who freely recognized that the Indians were as much in need of a Savior as anyone, and were deserving of the chance to accept the gospel without changing their entire way of life.

Hunt clearly demonstrates the conflict and hatred that results when people don’t make the effort to understand and truly listen to those who might seem “different.” Hunt reminds us that we must not isolate ourselves and our faith, as many Puritans did. Instead, we should be willing, like Mojag, to go beyond our “comfort zone” and share our faith with the world around us.

The books in the Keepers of the Ring Series are best enjoyed read in order, although each book easily stands on its own.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Sherri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon
How could Hannah's father even consider destroying the new puppies born to their hound dog, Missy? True, they couldn't afford to feed all four of them, but wasn't it downright murder to kill the innocent pups? Hannah began to pray and, much to her relief, found that her father was as concerned as she was about their welfare. After claiming one of the pups, Hunter, for her own, Hannah is able to find good homes for the other three puppies as well.

The Parmenter family owns a small hotel that caters to those interested in hunting and fishing in the wilderness area of Beaver Island, Maine. Even though there is no electricity, and the lake remains frozen until after the Easter holidays, they learn many skills of survival that citified children miss. They learn to thrive in the wilderness, and to listen to the seasons. "Beaver Island again offers adventure and unexpected peril."

The second book in the Hannah's Island series, The Mystery of the Sunken Steamboat, brings to light the excitement and danger of attempting to explore and retrieve treasures hidden in the frigid waters of Moosehead Lake. Not only does Hannah's and Walt's discovery bring to light the importance of trusting the Lord into his stories very naturally, allowing the circumstances themselves to produce the need to include God and his provision in each situation. This series offers good, wholesome reading for preteens.

When Mr. Parmenter is laid up with a broken leg. At last the Sampson family is well on its way to becoming a functional, committed part of the Beaver Island community.

Eric Wiggin produces an interesting series that not only offers exciting adventures but gives the reader a good feel for the lifestyle of those on the small Maine island. He weaves the importance of trusting the Lord into his stories very naturally, allowing the circumstances themselves to produce the need to include God and his provision in each situation. This series offers good, wholesome reading for preteens.


Gr. 4—8.


Gr. 8—12.

"Of course I'm nervous. I've never been a counselor before," says China Jasmine Tate, who doesn't much like ten-year-olds, wishes she had never agreed to this week of counseling at Camp Crazy Bear. Her best friend, Deedee Kiersey, tries to console her. But China still wonders, "what if I mess up? What if I'm the world's worst counselor?" Nevertheless, as she settles into her assigned tent, China asks God to help her make a difference in at least one girl's life during camp.

China agonizes when she discovers that Heather, who already considers China a "slum child," will head up the tent next to hers. The ten-year-olds arrive, and China's misgivings escalate. She decides, though, that God obviously plans to change Irene, the smelly, untidy, unresponsive girl, with her "presence as a counselor." Constantly flirting with the male counselors, Heather complicates camp life for China, Deedee, and their campers. They struggle with her behavior, especially when she runs away and then later gets media attention because she lies about what really happened. China and Deedee make a crucial decision the day Heather does not return from a hike.

God answers China's prayers, and one girl's life begins to change, though everything happens much differently than China had expected.

In The Ice Queen, Johnson has created interesting characters who act appropriately for their age groups. Out-of-the-ordinary situations and good writing keep the reader's interest throughout. This true-to-life, exciting camp story, the sixth in the China Tate Series, presents the ideal backdrop for Christian teaching, and will appeal to young teens concerned with boys, clothes, appearance, and doing something worthwhile for God.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Betty M. Hockett
Freelance Writer, Writing Teacher, Speaker
Newberg, Oregon


F. Fantasy. 283 p.
Gr. 6—12.

Like a fine jeweler, master storyteller Lloyd Alexander crafts a lovely necklace of a novel in The Iron Ring. Drawing on the cultural traditions of India, Alexander tells the story of Tamar, a young king and warrior who seeks to keep his dhrama (code of conduct/honor) intact when he loses a game of chance to a mysterious visiting king. Having staked his life on the game, Tamar sets out on a quest to offer it back to Jaya, his one-time guest.

Tamar collects friends and helpers—and their stories—on his journey. The novel is constructed like a beautiful necklace of stories. Each chapter presents a character's story like a unique jewel, and the cumulative effect is wonderful. Alexander examines many different philosophies, codes of conduct, and loyalties in The Iron Ring. The resulting book glows as the reader reflects on its many viewpoints.

This would make an excellent read-aloud book for a class or family time. The only objection a reader might have is the Eastern philosophical basis, but that is a natural and very necessary part of the story.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Georgia Beaverson
Freelance Writer
Madison, Wisconsin


Gr. 5—12.

With clear prose and an accessible style, Paul Jacobs tells the bittersweet story of James Printer, a Nipmuck Indian. James becomes apprenticed to Samuel Green, an important Cambridge, Massachusetts, printer of the mid-1600s. Although he takes his name, God, language, craft, and allegiance from the English, James discovers during a local war between the English and the Indians that wartime allegiance has a different meaning—and cost—from peacetime loyalty.

The story is told by Samuel Green’s “printer’s devil,” his eleven-year-old son Bartholomew. A step below apprentice, Bartholomew and his lively cousin Annie learn the printing trade from James Printer. James’ natural way with type and
patient teaching endear him to the two children. Through Bartholomew’s eyes, the reader sees James and the other Indians in the book as people, not stereotyped savages.

The real James Printer actually lived in Cambridge and was apprenticed to Samuel Green. Mr. Jacobs has constructed a sensitive, multi-faceted story around the scant historical facts available. Scholastic Press did a wonderful job giving the book’s print, art, paper, and binding a 17th century feel. The book is a joy to hold, and an excellent read.

❤ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Georgia Beaverson
Freelance Writer
Madison, Wisconsin


F. Knights and knighthood—Fiction. 201 p.
Gr. 5—8.

Knights of Evermore can be read at two levels: first, as series of adventures similar to the stories of the knights of Arthur’s round table and, secondly, as an allegory. Either way it makes good reading and provides a base for excellent discussions about values.

Each chapter is a self-contained adventure episode centering on the battle of good versus evil and emphasizing a value like truth, honesty, or loyalty. Depending on the behavior of our hero, Gulliver, the battle progresses or slides back a little. His faithfulness and his ideal of serving the High King are plot elements which tie the tales together.

Gulliver begins as a foot soldier serving the High King of Evermore, and dreaming of achieving knighthood someday. Along the way he encounters many adventures. In one episode, for example, all the other soldiers are retreating and Gulliver tries to hold off the job when no one can see them. But Gulliver works to serve, and not because he can get good rewards for his heroism; instead of using a sword, he reads what is written, and expertly uses onomatopoetic technique. He is adept with vivid descriptions, not only of flavor of reality to an immigrant’s struggle. German terms sprinkled throughout add the German culture to the lives of the children. Johnston devotes much time to moral values, particularly emphasizing the concepts of personal worth and sharing with others. Lotta is uncomfortable with the Alcott’s ability to express feelings, and with the idea of women supporting men.

German terms sprinkled throughout add the flavor of reality to an immigrant’s struggle. Norma Johnston defines terms through context and expertly uses onomatopoetic technique. She is adept with vivid descriptions, not only of characters, but of living conditions and dialogue.

❤ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—5

Carolyn Hearing
Freelance Writer
Virginia, Minnesota


Gr. 6—9.

In Lotta’s Progress, twelve-year-old Lotta, a German immigrant, must deal with many disappointments in her new home. She questions her parents’ wisdom in bringing the family to Boston. Ridiculed because of her accent and dress, Lotta resents school. Her father, frustrated at his low-paying job, abandons the family, and Karl, her older brother, is thrown in jail.

In the midst of this turmoil, and struggling to survive, Lotta meets the Alcott family. Accepting help from others is new to her, but with the aid of the Alcotts, she’s challenged to rise above her circumstances and set personal goals.

A fire in Lotta’s one-room home engulfs her in remorse. Through the Alcott’s counseling she realizes she’s innocent of causing the fire. Peace comes when the demons of fear and guilt leave.

Guided by clues in Louisa’s stories, as well as her mother’s unpublished journals and social work reports, Johnston creates a book that is more history than fiction; she includes actual events from Louisa Alcott’s family life. We learn of their religious background and Mr. Alcott’s lifetime struggle with rejection because of his philosophies. We learn of failed attempts at starting schools, and see his fun-loving side when he teaches his daughters the alphabet by contorting his body to form the letters!

Johnston devotes much time to moral values, particularly emphasizing the concepts of personal worth and sharing with others. Lotta is uncomfortable with the Alcott’s ability to express feelings, and with the idea of women supporting the family.

❤ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Patricia Braun
Library Media Specialist
Wilmette Junior High School
Wilmette, Illinois


Gr. 4—8.

More adventures abound for the Twelve Candles Club. Newcomer Lily Vanessa introduces herself and Cat to the girls during one of their Saturday morning Clubbers meetings for neighborhood children. It doesn’t take long for Lily Vanessa to sense how different she is from the other girls. In some small, insignificant ways and in one obvious way. Lily Vanessa is Afro-American and her Aunt and Uncle are the only black family living in the neighborhood.

As Lily Vanessa attempts to find a home for Cat, she likewise tries to discover a place that fits for her within this group of girls. “Lily Vanessa and the Pet Panic” does indeed begin a panic within the girls’ hearts as they learn a lesson in acceptance while simultaneously doing a good deed for an elderly neighbor.

Author Elaine Schulte does a fine job weaving into her imaginative stories a deeper, take-away lesson for readers to apply in their own lives. This book has a colorful picture on its binding and its 125 pages are easy reading. Schulte’s use of dialogue is age appropriate and brings to life each character’s personality. With each succeeding Twelve Candles Club book, readers get to know their favorite girls in a more in-depth way.

See also: Melanie and the Modeling Mess; 5, Bridesmaid Blues for Becky; 6, Double Trouble for Jess McCall; 7 in the November, 1996 CLJ.

❤ Quality—5 ❤ Acceptability—5

Michele Howe
Freelance Writer/Homeschool Mother
LaSalle, Michigan

Christy, a young school teacher, continually encounters the old wives’ tales and superstitions of her beloved mountain people. In *Mountain Madness*, by Marshall and Archer, Christy must face her own fears as well as downplay those of the children under her care. When some children find a dead, bloody animal on their school nature walk, talk of the Boggin abounds. This mysterious creature who eats children, scares adults, and warns off trespassers must be making a reappearance.

As Christy makes her way up the mountain on a solitary trek, rain and steep slopes cause an accident. A tree has fallen and trapped the young teacher alone and afraid near the top of the mountain? Admitting to some trepidation to herself alone, Christy decides to prove the fallacy of the Boggin by facing her fear head on.

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How many immigrants actually do risk their very lives coming to America? This book, by Donn Kushner, explores this question from a boy’s perspective. Manuel sees his own father disappear. He hears threats to his family. His mother escapes in the night with his older brother and himself. They head for the Mexican-American border and, to their surprise, find an entire underground network in place to assist them.

Manuel, who has stopped speaking, sees his father at each new stop they make along their journey. He also sees two young friends who tag along and make imaginary conversation with him. As the boy and his family travel into the United States, a riot in which his brother is injured, and the family must leave their beloved land and nearly all of their earthly possessions. Nelly and her family are Jewish.

The story is told through the eyes of thirteen-year-old Nelly and is bound to captivate any young reader. The adventures the family endures during their escape and on board the vessel that eventually brings them to freedom, are interesting and well written.

This book would provide curriculum enrichment for any English or history class. Wiseman weaves solid lessons of the Communists and the Hungarian Revolution throughout this fast-paced book.

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### A Place Not Home

Eva Wiseman’s *A Place Not Home* is an exciting account of a family’s pilgrimage from Hungary to their new home in Canada. A post World War II wave of anti-Semitism has infiltrated Hungary and the family must leave their beloved land and nearly all of their earthly possessions. Nelly and her family are Jewish.

The story is told through the eyes of thirteen-year-old Nelly and is bound to captivate any young reader. The adventures the family endures during their escape and on board the vessel that will eventually bring them to freedom, are interesting and well written.

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### Promise Me the Moon

Linda Holeman’s *Promise Me the Moon* is a well done and true-to-life sequel to *The Baby Grand, The Moon in July, and Me*. Annie Armstrong is now thirteen and suffering the growing pains that can be found in eighth grade. She is known as an “egghead,” and is enrolled in an advanced science seminar where she finds herself the only girl. Her boyfriend, Claude, is now in high school where he discovers other girls besides Annie; this causes predictable problems in their relationship.

The story is told in the first person and reveals the misconceptions of life as perceived by a teen. For example, there is solid family support as Annie’s parents work for the betterment of their child. Her misconception is they are preoccupied with their work and do not care what happens in her life.

There is a focus on normal daily girl-talk, including frankness, without crudeness or vulgarity, about the physical changes accompanying puberty. The book is positive and predictable, and Annie grows and matures while continuing work toward her dream of becoming a black female NASA astronaut.

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### The Baby Grand

Linda Holeman, who has great dreams of finishing her education and becoming a teacher, but she lives in a very difficult situation, and must work very hard. She eventually befriends her boss’s young wife, and through the intervention of a loving neighbor is released to go find her sister.

Even those unfamiliar with the historical context of the story will find themselves drawn deeply into the fears and heartaches of the main character. Life on the plains was arduous and lonely. The young heroine is portrayed as a gutsy and intelligent girl. In the course of the story, she helps in the delivery of a baby, and is nearly raped by a hired man. While both events are written about in a straightforward manner that definitely adds to the story, and neither is described in a sensationalized or explicit manner, these elements make this book more acceptable for the slightly older reader.

Linda Holeman is a skillful storyteller who keeps the reader absorbed and emotionally involved. She describes the actions and interactions of the characters masterfully. The courage and persistence of the main character are a worthy model for young people today.

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### The Moon in July

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F. Indiana—Fiction. 182 p.
Gr. 6—12.
Separated by the seemingly endless prairies from her father, by death from her mother, and by economic hardship from her sister, Calista is left to manage the Indiana farm with her ailing grandfather. She longs for her father to return to set things right, but has he betrayed her trust? He arrives with the storm, and right away she knows something has changed.

Red Sky at Morning is Andrea Wyman’s first novel. Her sharp, uncluttered style vividly portrays the sparseness of rural life in 1909. The dialogue is peppered with German phrases which are translated in the glossary. The emotional current sweeps the reader to the stormy climax, and leaves the reader anticipating a second novel which will hopefully continue the drama.

◆ Quality—5  ♥ Acceptability—5
Melinda Torgerson
Freelance Writer
Newport, Washington

Gr. 6—10.
Church politics! At fifteen, Rebekah is not too young to know how it is played. Her father is an assistant pastor at a church that has experienced more than its share of difficulties. Now, they are awaiting the arrival of a new pastor and his family. A new pastor meant a new beginning, didn’t it? At first, all seems well, but after a few months under Pastor Ewen’s leadership, the church board is locked in a power struggle that threatens to tear the church apart. Ugly rumors and small rebellions, sixteen-year-old Sara Faulkner discovers that her twin not only had some deadly secret, the psychologically haunted new kid in town, the distant fathers and absent mothers.

As the situation swirls out of control, Rebekah struggles with her growing love for Judah and her faith in the promises of a sovereign God. Finally, in the face of multiple tragedies, Rebekah, Judah, and the entire congregation come to see that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Caroline Farnes’s experiences as a mother and as the wife of a youth pastor are very evident in this honestly written book. She succeeds in creating believable teens who are serious about their relationship with God and about living their faith. The dialog is tight and realistic. The emotional and spiritual struggles her characters experience are the tough, within-the-church ones that most Christian fiction ignores.

The Rivers of Judah would be a great book for a youth group to read together and discuss. Each chapter deals with topics that are directly in touch with teen concerns about how they should deal faithfully with the trials of life. As Rebekah says in frustration one day, “It’s not supposed to be like this!” But it is and, as Rebekah discovers, sovereignly so.

◆ Quality—4  ♥ Acceptability—5
Pamela Todd
Chalcedon Christian School
Atlanta, Georgia

F. Australia—Fiction. 168 p.
Gr. 6—9.
Brendan is an outsider, a “Pom” in the local slang of a dry and dying Australian town. He and his father had moved to Australia to get a fresh start, but to Brendan, it seems more like a dead-end. His only relief from the turmoil at school is the patch of peaceful green forest outside town on the edge of a reservoir. During one retreat there, Brendan notices a strange bird standing in the deep water. He discovers that it is not a bird at all, but a weathervane atop a hotel in an old gold-mining town flooded half a century before, when the reservoir was built.

Curious about the town, yet unwilling to share his discovery, Brendan investigates the tales about Walden as it slowly emerges from the water, due to a severe drought. He soon finds that, far from being romantic, Walden’s rising is bringing its dark past into the present.

Allan Baillie’s Secrets of Walden Rising is a coming-of-age novel typical of the last twenty years. It is well crafted in that all the pieces of the plot come together nicely and a strong sense of time and place are delivered. Unfortunately, the characters lack originality and are almost stereotypical; the cast includes the misunderstood bully, the town crazy with a deadly secret, the psychologically haunted new kid in town, the distant fathers and absent mothers.

As with most novels of this type, God does not enter the picture and godly spiritual currents are non-existent. On the other hand, the evil in men’s hearts is clearly portrayed as the main character uncovers layer upon layer of deceit, greed and murder that go back over a century to Walden’s founding.

The book’s conclusion is especially disturbing. Forced to kill a gold-hungry murderer to save their own lives, Brendan and Bago, Brendan’s former enemy and current compatriot, deal with their deeds in a detached manner quite divorced from its horrible reality. The author ends with no sense of redemption and the reader is left to wonder if the cycle of sin has been broken or whether Walden has claimed more sons.

◆ Quality—3  ♥ Acceptability—3
Pamela Todd
Chalcedon Christian School
Atlanta, Georgia

Elizabeth Coleman
Freelance Writer
Tumwater, Washington

Gr. 6—12.
Secrets of Walden Rising is a coming-of-age novel typical of the last twenty years. It is well crafted in that all the pieces of the plot come together nicely and a strong sense of time and place are delivered. Unfortunately, the characters lack originality and are almost stereotypical; the cast includes the misunderstood bully, the town crazy with a deadly secret, the psychologically haunted new kid in town, the distant fathers and absent mothers.

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Pamela Todd
Chalcedon Christian School
Atlanta, Georgia

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◆ Quality—3  ♥ Acceptability—3
Pamela Todd
Chalcedon Christian School
Atlanta, Georgia
Cooking With Kids


Crafts and Handmade Fun


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Using Your Public Library: Books You Can Use

by Michele Howe

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F. Western fiction. 182 p. Gr. 7—12.

Marilyn Halvorson’s third book about Steve Garret, *Stranger on the Line*, is set in western Canada. Steve has two problems that keep him on the run; a drug dealer named Romero who is out to kill him, and the law. The main action centers around the Calgary Stampeders, where Steve races a chuckwagon team of horses.

Told in the first person, the language is colorful, but never profane. The tough cowboy drawl, with its sarcastic undertone, is well done. One action scene is mildly violent, but ends with Steve making a decision not to kill his enemy. It is a historical novel, however, it could be used to open parent/child discussions regarding the difficulties of puberty and social awkwardness. Female puberty is discussed in some detail, and the main character equates having survived puberty with womanhood.

*Carnegie Medals*

Quality—4

Acceptability—4

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Cathleen Sovold Johnson
Freelance Writer
Des Moines, Washington


In *The Woman in the Wall*, fourteen-year-old Anna tells the story of her life. Anna lives with her mother and two sisters, one older and one younger. Her father simply disappeared one day and was never heard from again. Anna is so small and shy that she, too, is in danger of simply disappearing. The thought of going out of the house to enter first grade is so traumatizing that she does indeed disappear—into the woodwork of the house.

For years Anna exists as a hidden presence in the house, building secret passageways and hidden rooms in which she can live separated and safe from the threatening world. Her family, not having seen Anna in years, begins to forget that she even exists. The discovery that her mother is about to remarry and move to a new home forces Anna to come out of her exile and take her place in the family once again.

This work of fantasy will require a substantial suspension of belief initially, but once one accepts the fact that Anna can fall into a visiting social worker’s purse unnoticed, the rest will be simple. Patrice Kindl presents an interesting setting in which issues of shyness, vulnerability, and coming of age are considered.

As pure entertainment, this book lacks substance; however, it could be used to open parent/child discussions regarding the difficulties of puberty and social awkwardness. Female puberty is discussed in some detail, and the main character equates having survived puberty with womanhood.

*Carnegie Medals*

Quality—3

Acceptability—4

Karla J. Kessell
Librarian, Mount Vernon Nazarene College
Mount Vernon, Ohio
**200’s — Religion**


The quest for love lingers as a challenging course for all to navigate. Taking our cues from secular influences (TV and movies), we wrestle, in many cases, without the once dependable context of home and family in which to learn about love. Furthermore, feminist doctrine, scorned tradition and moral blindness blur our picture of defining love.

In spite of this negative scenario, Elisabeth Elliot finds “in every generation there are those who not only hunger for the truth, but also search desperately for a high, even ‘impossibly’ high standard.”

She shares personal accounts of those whose search for love give us reason to praise God. Christians who were obedient to God’s principles such as: Hudson and Maria Taylor and John and Betty Stam, missionaries whose lives still impact us. Mrs. Elliot draws from her own story of “waiting on God” and others who write to her.

Readers identify easily with the struggles of waiting on God for the right person. The biblical principles of allowing men to initiate relationships, remaining pure, and keeping our emotions and behavior in check are illustrated.

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Because Osborne believes that myths belong to us, her aim in *Favorite Norse Myths* is to give a scholarly, interesting presentation of a few stories from the Eddas. The introduction presents a brief history of Viking Iceland, the Eddas, and the myths. The epilogue ties the myths to the Vikings, the Eddas further, and gives a useful glossary. These two chapters briefly mention that in 1000 A.D. all of Iceland adopted Christianity and replaced their myths with the Bible. A relevant quotation from one of the Eddas begins the imaginative and ear-pleasing retelling of each myth. Reading them brings to mind some modern science fiction and fantasy stories, notably those written by Tolkien. The eye-catching acrylic and oil wash illustrations are unique. For each of the myths, artist Troy Howell scratched a primitive Viking line drawing onto tag board, painting over this modern representation of the story.

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**300’s — Social Sciences**


Industry and Business by Linda Leuzzi gives a good thumbnail sketch of the personalities and forces at work, both together and against each other, at the end of the last century. The use of the interplay of the lives of the inventors, the industrialists, members of the work force and the union leaders to tell the story of the industrialization of America successfully draws the reader into the drama of the era.


The place and influence of religion is completely ignored.

Chelsea House Publishers are well known for publishing original and highly informative series on a wide variety of topics. Life in America 100 Years Ago exhibits several strengths common to this publisher’s other offerings: a bibliography for further reading into the subject, indexing of subjects and people covered and illustrations that put other reference books to shame. The style and approach taken to its subject are, in all but Manners and Customs, fresh and full of human interest stories that make the time period come alive. This is not your musty, old history text.

All that being said, the books do have some glaring faults. Government and Politics contains some inaccuracies, the most obvious being the attribution of the playing of the “Bloody Shirt” card to southern congressmen after the Civil War (p.18). Another doubtful technique is the use of a portion of Sinclair’s novel The Jungle to verify accusations against the meat-packing industry (p.83). Industry and Business goes into some detail about the unsavory practices of businessmen and industry but neglects to mention the socialist origins and philosophies of most union leaders and organizers and their endorsement of violence to attain their ends. Most disappointing was the book Manners and Customs which exhibited no feeling for its accessible resource for students and an interest for the middle school years. It provides an easily great gap in the presentation of American history in the time. Life in America 100 Years Ago fills a place and influence of religion is completely ignored.

The death penalty in the United States today is a state right and is not uniform throughout the country as is in other nations. The opening chapters deal with the history of capital punishment laws rather than with convicted criminals. Case studies are given only to illuminate the law discussed and not to highlight the crime. They break the monotony of facts but are not vital to the comments being discussed. In the end, the issue remains unresolved with a personal note to the reader regarding the rising crime rate and statistics for the reader to note.

The quality and acceptability of this title is not as high as other titles in the series because some pictures are placed near but not always next to the pertinent related data. For example, Ben Franklin’s portrait is opposite the biography page for Benjamin Rush whose photo is on the following page. Charts appear to be thrown into the text to break lengthy explanations of legal facts. They would have more merit collected in an appendix. Yet for all the faults, the information could be beneficial to readers doing research on the capital punishment issue.

◆ Quality—3  ❤ Acceptability—5

Pamela Todd
Chuleston Christian School
Dunwoody, Georgia


345.73. Capital punishment. 128 p.
Gr. 6—8.

The death penalty in the United States today is a state right and is not uniform throughout the country as it is in other nations. The opening chapters deal with the history of capital punishment laws rather than with convicted criminals. Case studies are given only to illuminate the law discussed and not to highlight the crime. They break the monotony of facts but are not vital to the comments being discussed. In the end, the issue remains unresolved with a personal note to the reader regarding the rising crime rate and statistics for the reader to note.
600’s — Technology


Gr. 5—8.

This fascinating history of the medical profession in the United States begins with a chapter summarizing Native American medicine rituals and taboos. Exposure of the Indians to European diseases including smallpox often had a deadly effect as reviewed in the history of white man’s settlement in colonial America beginning at Jamestown. The distance to European medical schools from the new world created a need for new health related professions such as the midwife and apprentice doctor. In the 1700’s as medical knowledge advanced so did recognition of the need to cleanliness and the effect of environment on healing.

While gaps exist in the chronology, each chapter addresses a major aspect of medical growth providing a sound base for beginning research work. Depth is not present but this is a good providing a sound base for beginning research work. Depth is not present but this is a good

Did you know that Yankee Doodle was originally written by the British to mock the colonists? Or that a single cow was worth $40-50 dollars out East after the Civil War? Did you realize that one in three Confederate brothers, fathers, husbands, uncles, and friends died in that conflict? That a gooey duck is an ugly ten-pound long neck clam; or that Laura Ingalls Wilder’s daughter was named after the prairie rose?

What better way to bring history alive than through songs and the stories behind them? In this series, this creative idea is delightfully carried out. Each book is divided into two sections: short essays on each song sharing the stories of history in a simple and interesting way and the Sheet Music Section which gives complete lyrics, the notated melody line and guitar chords. A few of the numbers included in Musical Memories require a high soprano singer. The tapes offer a wide variety of musical styles and singers and different instrumental accompaniments. Listening and joining in on one more chorus of “She’ll Be Coming Around the Mountain” or “Strawberry Roan” is fun and educational. Whether you’re five or forty-nine, in the car or the classroom, this music really does bring history to life.

700’s — The Arts and Recreation


780.9. Music, History—United States, Folk songs. 1 booklet, 76 p.; 1 audiocassette.


800’s — Literature


Gr. 6—Adult.

Robb Dunfield is an inspiring motivational speaker and accomplished artist. He has also been a ventilator-dependent quadriplegic since he was nineteen. His reflective paintings illustrate If Sarah Will Take Me, a poem written for him by Dave Bouchard. Anticipation and wistfulness balance gracefully as Dave describes Robb’s desire to share the joy of living that circumstances have taught him. The paintings portray the richness that his disability has enabled him to perceive.


822.3. English drama. Historical drama. 1 videocassette, VHS, color, 120 minutes
Gr. 9—Adult.

Bob Jones University Press took on a difficult assignment in bringing King Lear to the stage. Dr. Bob Jones himself takes on the lead role of King Lear, the tyrant father to three daughters. King Lear gives away his kingdom to his two sly, self-serving daughters and their husbands. He casts away Cordelia, the only true hearted child
he has. As times goes on, King Lear begins to see the seeds of treachery bud and blossom within his two eldest daughters’ acts.

Appealing to their sense of love and loyalty has an opposite effect and King Lear is cast out. His mind becomes crazed as he searches for solace. Others who stand against Lear’s daughters are likewise brought into judgment. When the evildoers last for power and greed reach itspeak, a long unavenged knight turns the tables on the evil sisters and their husbands. Finally, Cordelia is able to bring comfort to her father, but only for a short time. One of the last evil plots spawned by her sisters will in the end take even Cordelia’s life and that of King Lear.

This two hour, color production is fascinating. Bob Jones University Press has done a terrific job in presenting all the pomp and ceremony one would expect in a Shakespearean production. The customs and scenery captured the imagination. Dr. Bob Jones plays a convincing King Lear and his family and subjects are also talented Shakespearean actors. The dialogue flows naturally and the comic effects Shakespeare interspersed within his writing are a welcome change of pace to the dark side of this tragic tale.

The customs and scenery captured the imagination.


Gr. 8—Adult.

Paul Burgess was born in the United States in 1886, grew up in the west, and developed a love for the Indian people. As an adult he wanted to be a missionary, taking the Word to the Indians of Guatemala.

This book is a record of Paul Burgess’ life from birth to death. It shows clearly how much one man (and his wife) can accomplish in a lifetime. It shows how even nagging physical weakness, lack of funds, and misunderstandings can all be used by God. Paul and his wife, Dora, set out to be educators in Guatemala—and many years later could see how God has allowed them this dream, even though he takes away their original positions as educators.

The Burgess’ work with people across denominational lines, social lines and economic lines. They live in the part of town where their “flock” is located, even though strongly advised against it. Paul is a life-long learner. He grows from a socialistic view as a young man to a strong opponent of socialism. He is a preacher, publisher, and prisoner at various times throughout his busy lifetime. His wife, Dora, finds her love in translation work and caring for the people around her.

While this book doesn’t have a lot of action by today’s standards, it is inspiring to see the dedication of this couple and their love for the Guatemalan people.
wrapped around you. Life in the Amazon region was very interesting and challenging to the Dulka family as they moved there to take the gospel to the Carapana Indian tribe.

*Colombian Jungle Escape* is the true story of Ed and Doreen Dulka and their children as they lived deep in the Amazon as missionaries. It is also the story of how their family had to escape from armed communist guerrillas who wanted to drive them out of Colombia.

This book clearly shows the everyday life, struggles and triumphs of missionary service. It gives an inside look at living in the Amazon River Valley. It also shows just what truly dedicated people will do to serve their God.

◆ Quality—3   ♥ Acceptability—5

Barbara Beyer
ACSI Missions Project Coordinator
Colorado Springs, Colorado

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Amy Carmichael is a legend among missionaries. Her life and ministry in India are the story of God’s miraculous working through a dedicated servant. *Gold Cord* is Amy Carmichael’s story of the Dohnavur Fellowship—a group of Indian men and women who work together in the South of India to provide a home for needy children. Amy Carmichael wrote the story in the early 20th century, as the Fellowship was being shaped by God. The Fellowship still exists and is actively serving God today.

These Christian missionaries didn’t go to India in order to accomplish all that they did. They went to be used by God. And when he called them to save the young girls from the pagan temples, they did. When he directed them to begin medical work, they did. When he placed Indian Christians alongside them, they worked together. *Gold Cord* tells the story of how God moved in India in the early 1900’s, and of his faithful servants who followed his direction.

Anyone interested in missions work would benefit from reading *Gold Cord*. While not the main story being told, every missionary candidate should read of these people who sought God’s direction in everything. The only difficulty with this book is that it seems to be part of a larger story Miss Carmichael has told throughout her other books, as she refers to them in *Gold Cord*. The reader would do well to have at least a working knowledge of Amy Carmichael before reading *Gold Cord*. Also, the reader needs to be willing to read closely because, while the style of writing is “older” than the modern reader is probably prepared for, the content is well worth seeking out.

◆ Quality—5   ♥ Acceptability—5

Barbara Beyer
ACSI Missions Project Coordinator
Colorado Springs, Colorado

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Mary Beth Lagerborg knows how to tell a good story. And Larry and Shirley Rascher’s life is a great story to tell. The Raschers lived as missionaries for over two decades among tribal people on the island of what is now Irian Jaya. Perhaps not the stereotypical church-planting missionary, Larry had a gift for building. And both Larry and Shirley had a gift for living among the tribal people, accepting them and being accepted by them. The Rascher’s also raised several children who loved the freedom and adventure of life among the natives.

*Incessant Drumbeat* tells the day-to-day love and laughter of a family living for Christ. It also walks the reader through the devastating hardships the Rascher family endured. Sixteen pages of black and white photos are tucked in the middle of this book, giving faces to the sometimes unusual names.

With a you-are-there clarity, see Shirley raising kids, doctoring, and later managing a book store. See Larry also helping raise kids, as well as building, boat building, and evangelizing. *Incessant Drumbeat* gives a clear look into MK schools such as Sentani and Faith Academy where the Rascher children attended. While showing the pain of a family separated, it shows how positive the Christian schooling was. This book also shows how good ties back home can be the lifeline for missionaries abroad.

If you’re looking for a peek into jungle life among former cannibals, this is a great choice. Where some missionary biographies just tell the facts (and a lot about moving from here to there), *Incessant Drumbeat* tells the story of the life of an American family among primitive people. Though their mission did move them around in the area some, the Rascher’s tried hard to stay in touch with the people they had lived among. And the results are touching.

◆ Quality—4   ♥ Acceptability—5

Barbara Beyer
ACSI Missions Project Coordinator
Colorado Springs, Colorado

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If you have ever heard of Patricia St. John or the well-known book, *Treasures of the Snow*, reading *An Ordinary Woman’s Extraordinary Faith*, will inspire you to know more about both.

The book is written by St. John herself as a reflection of the unusual life she lived. At first glance it appears mis-titled. Patricia St. John is not an ordinary woman. But in following along with the retelling of her life, we find that she is no more extraordinary than anyone else, other than the area of her faith. In humility, thinking herself only ordinary, God finds room to move and to accomplish great things.

She lives by many words of wisdom and one of her favorites is, “While one cannot do everything, we mustn’t do nothing.” With a compassionate heart she reaches out to people from all races and countries, forever finding grace to care, to act, to love, to do something. Patricia St. John makes her life available for the Lord to use, and use her he does. Not only as a worker herself, but her passion for writing and others’ achievements gives us many other publications which are referred to throughout the book.

St. John begins with an overview of her childhood, skimming over events that are covered in *Treasures of the Snow* and others. Interspersing her narration with sometimes comical, sometimes touching moments they give us a feel for the varied life she led. Photos are found in the center of the book; maps at the back guide us through the numerous countries she visited.
Patricia’s sister Hazel finishes the book, a tribute to the life that ended August 1992. A poem closes recognizing Miss St. John’s example in the Christian race. “She never rushed ahead, but constantly—with a steady pace—remained the setter of the pace.”

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Jannet Hoefnighn
Freelance Writer
Prairie City, Oregon


156 p.
Gr. 6—Adult.

William Carey is perhaps the most famous of the pioneer missionaries to India, with many books written about his life. This 156-page book, William Carey: Missionary Pioneer, is an excellent choice! Kellsye Finnie does an excellent job of capsulizing William Carey’s life story.

This book clearly shows how the Lord developed a love for the Indian people in William Carey’s life, long before he went there. After publishing Enquiry to convince the civilized world of the need to evangelize heathens, Carey helped establish a missionary society to send out missionaries, of which he was the first.

India wasn’t open to missionaries when he went, so Carey established a tent-making ministry not requiring a long-term investment by the missionary society, and establishing himself as a businessman in the eyes of the government. Carey ran an indigo factory, lectured at a college and helped establish a school and Christian college, too. In his “spare time” William Carey translated the Bible into several oriental languages, taught the gospel, and was a dedicated husband and father. After leaving England for India early in his life, Carey never again returned to England but was totally dedicated to his life and ministry in India.

William Carey’s life, perhaps more than any other, shows what God can do when one is totally committed to God’s call and expects great things from God. Whether it’s for a book report, international study or just looking for a good book to read, William Carey: Missionary Pioneer is a book worth choosing.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—5

Barbara Beyer
ACSI Missions Project Coordinator
Colorado Springs, Colorado


Gr. 5—Adult.

The works of C.S. Lewis reveal the true power of the imagination: it is not to create talking animals, or enchanted woods, but to make accessible the most inaccessible of truths. In The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, for example, Lewis’s allegory of the crucifixion allows even young readers to begin to grasp the magnitude of Christ’s sacrifice, and the glory of his triumph.

Having fallen in love with the Narnia series, young readers often wish to know more about the man behind the stories. Unfortunately, most biographies are written for an adult audience, and so are of little use to Lewis’ younger admirers.

Michael Coren’s biography, on the other hand, can be enjoyed by children as well as adults. His style of writing is matter-of-fact and highly readable. There is no pretense to scholarly debate, but rather a simple account of the life of this extraordinary man. Coren treats his subject with great respect, yet refuses to make a saint out of a man who enjoyed lively debate and the odd pint of beer.

The book opens with a look at Lewis’s childhood and education, and his early rejection of Christianity. The reader is then acquainted with Lewis’s wartime experiences, his career as an educator, lecturer, and writer, and his reluctant but decisive return to Christianity. Coren concludes with a brief look at Lewis’s unexpected and belated romance with Joy Davidman, and with his grief at her death.

A synopsis of the Narnia series is worked into the text, as is a chronology of Narnian versus “real” time. Coren also provides a chronology of Lewis’s life, a list of books by and about him, and a useful index.

The Man Who Created Narnia is beautifully laid out. Each chapter begins with a page that is blank but for a brief quotation from Lewis’s writings. Large, well-selected black-and-white photographs break up the text, and are so well-labelled that the casual reader can follow the narrative simply by browsing through the photographs and reading their captions.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Sylvia Stopforth
Librarian, Trinity Western University
Langley, British Columbia


Roanoke, Chesapeake Bay, and Jamestown. This volume is indexed, contains an extensive bibliography, and includes a list by state and tribe. Chapters are devoted to styles and changes in explorer’s ships, various ages and cultures of native American tribes, the Grand Bank Fisheries, settlements at Roanoke, Chesapeake Bay, and Jamestown. This text, while filled with interesting information, is difficult to read due to the choice of print which resembles hand printing with stylized serifs. The volume is indexed, contains an extensive bibliography, and includes a list by state and province of historic sites to visit.

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

Quality—3 Acceptability—4

Milestones in Black American History is a 16 volume set with each volume exploring a different period in the history of African Americans. The books are amply illustrated with black and white line drawings, paintings, and photographs. These volumes are appropriate for upper elementary through middle school, and provide information that would be useful to high school researchers. Each volume has a timeline of milestones in the front, is indexed, and provides a “further reading” list as well.

These three volumes reviewed contain a detailed history of the black experience in post colonial United States. Early efforts to stop the slave trade by whites and free blacks began even before the Constitutional Convention. There were ministers, newspapermen and independent merchants among the free blacks, all of who used different methods to work for freedom of slaves and an end to the slave trade.

Most of us are familiar with the expression “black pride” today, but few realize that black pride became a rallying cry in the 1920’s especially in Harlem where black culture flourished, a kind of Renaissance. In the years since 1970, there have been different struggles: to achieve economic empowerment, to establish a unified leadership in the Black community; to create true equality of life between the black and white communities. The chronological format and clear writing style makes the volumes easier to read than most histories.

Each of the reviewed volumes takes care to present a balanced view of a history that has been largely ignored. One way to foster understanding and acceptance of the differences in the Black American culture is to present the history of that culture in a straightforward and non-judgmental manner. The reader will be invited to explore the accomplishments of slaves, former slaves, and their present day descendents. Students will learn that black Americans have made substantial contributions to our culture.

This objective approach to black history helps us to understand the issues facing our society today. The challenge with history is not to judge and place blame. The challenge is to provide accurate information in an unbiased fashion, which I believe, has been achieved in these volumes. My only reservation is that of separate histories. Even with a balanced history such as this, creating separate histories for different aspects of the total American history seems to defeat the equality we are trying to create.

Don’t forget to get your readers involved in the Children’s Crown and Lamplighter Awards.

See your September issue of CLJ for details.
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**A Note from the Editor:**  by Mary McKinney

Good night, sweet Prince.  May flights of angels wing thee on thy way.

Having just viewed Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, I came away enamored by the richness of the language used.  Words that not only portrayed action and thoughts, but somehow painted lush pictures of the culture, mood and philosophy of sixteenth century England.

I realize that Shakespearean language is a bit heavy for the norm today, but it does remind me of one reason why I began to write—admiration for the power of the written word.  Nothing thrills me more than to be able to communicate some poignant lesson that will enable others to savor all that life has to offer.  Reading such prose can bring delight to the soul.  What a wonderful avenue of lecture and reason is a good book!

Although fiction can be conceived as unreality—the avid reader appreciates the story line that allows for a key element of surprise, and when it’s discovered finds worth in every moment of its delicious musing.  Some call us escapists—and if an intricately woven tale seems bigger than life, allows for a key element of surprise, and when it’s discovered finds worth in every moment of its delicious musing.  Some call us escapists—and if an intricately woven tale seems bigger than life, then what fun to challenge life itself in the possibilities.

Granted that not all books deserve great applause, and I believe that writer and reader alike must strive to discover those special few that stand above the rest.  But that does not nullify the reading of other books, for I believe that each has its place, even if it teaches us not to pick up another of similar design.

Francis Bacon in his *Essays* states this succinctly:  “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

I spent three years teaching literature in a private high school in Izmir, Turkey.  These Turkish students not only learned to appreciate great authors and their work, but became adept at communicating their hopes and dreams in English, a second language!  I was duly impressed and realized that good literature crosses all barriers as does the desire to convey worth to others.  We’re not so different, we humans, and if we can find a way to enrich the souls of fellow beings, then we’re allowing ourselves to be a blessing even as we are blessed.

Books are an avenue of expression that allows both the writer and the reader to share like experiences, emotions and goals.  Lofty ideals can come within one’s grasp as the spirit behind the composition lifts, encourages and inspires the reader.  Charles W. Eliot has this to say of books:  “They are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.”

Of course, on should never speak of inspiration and wisdom without giving acknowledgment to the greatest of all books, the holy Bible.  To me, to launch from the solid foundational truths of God and discover that sweet communion of ideas linked with integrity and truth is a most enriching experience indeed!
Micah’s life is further complicated by Keturah Burns whose mother, a camp follower, dies leaving her defenseless. Feeling responsible for her, he finally takes her to live with his family where she feels loved and accepted for the first time in her life.

The action in the story is split between the progress of the Revolutionary War and Micah’s involvement with the two young ladies for whom he cares.

The story, which refers to numerous events and people from the history of the beginning of our nation, shows the miraculous hand of God at work in the battles and Godly leaders. The need for the wisdom of God in everyday life is also emphasized in the fictionalized life of Micah Bradford and his family. Gilbert Morris shows our need for God in the everyday events and decisions of life.

◆ Quality—4  ❤  Acceptability—5

Esther Knapp, Librarian
Santiam Christian School
Corvallis, Oregon


Gr. 11—Adult.

Things were going great for Dynah Carey. She had loving and supportive Christian parents, she had an enjoyable job at a retirement home, she attended a Christian college, and she was engaged to be married to the best-looking, most spiritual guy on campus. Things were going great for Dynah Carey—until the night she got raped.

Reeling with physical, emotional, and spiritual pain, Dynah keeps the rape a secret from her parents, even when she becomes pregnant from it. As she struggles with how to respond to her pregnancy, Dynah is torn between what she has always believed—that abortion is wrong—and her friends’ encouragement to have an abortion. After all, she doesn’t want to bear the child of a rapist.

Dynah is quietly dismissed from her college and her return home and admission of the rape and pregnancy stirs up old memories for her mother, who had an abortion when she was a young woman. This issue renews old conflicts between Dynah’s mom and dad. They argue bitterly, and find themselves considering divorce. Dynah cannot endure the increasing tension in her home. She leaves town and finds a job, ultimately renewing her trust in God’s word, which allows her to bring the message of redemption and healing to an abortionist and his wife, to her parents and grandmother, and to Joe, a faithful college friend who stands by Dynah through all the trauma. Dynah gives birth to a beautiful girl, and finds in Joe a godly man who truly loves her and her child.

The Atonement Child, by Francine Rivers, is a powerful story that speaks straight to the heart of the abortion issue, describing it from a myriad of perspectives, and detailing the multitude of people abortion affects. Sensitive, written, the acts of rape and abortion are mentioned, but are not detailed. The conflict and confusion that Dynah endures, the irrational guilt she feels, the spiritual struggle she undergoes, and the abandonment she feels from those who should support her are heartbreakingly real. But the overwhelming message speaks of God’s redemption, forgiveness, and healing.

Rivers includes a letter to readers who may have had personal experience with abortion, and she presents the biblical message of salvation and healing that the Lord can provide. Rivers also includes a table of postabortion counseling and support groups. Mild use of slang occurs four or five times in the book, and drinking alcohol in moderation is evident once.

◆ Quality—5  ❤  Acceptability—5

Sherri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon


F. Romance stories. 303 p.
Adult.

Irene Lorenzo has one major regret—that she married Greg Mitchell too quickly. Blind Faith actually opens eleven years later, one year after Greg divorced Irene. She now leads a new life, supporting herself and her two young sons working at a graphic design firm. Then Greg is mysteriously murdered, and Irene meets Joel Costain—a successful attorney who happens to be Irene’s spiritual malaise to persist allowing Irene’s spiritual malaise to persist who has drifted away from the Lord. By

◆ Quality—3  ❤  Acceptability—3

Kinn Svenson Gollnick
Writer, Speaker
Marysville, Washington


Adult.

The End of Days, by David Dolan, envisions the final days of the earth as we now know it telling the story of Eli Ben-David, a completed Jew. We see him as one of the “sealed” Jews, a disciple of the Two Witnesses, Yochanan and Natan-el. Eli’s mission is “to warn humanity about the judgment to come and to assist Yeshua’s earthly body in the difficult days just before he returns” (p. 121). Eli’s evil, decadent counterpart, the anti-Christ in the story, is simply known as Andre.

Fulfilled prophecy bursts from the pages, sometimes referenced with Biblical chapter and verse, and Dolan uses contemporary events such as the capture of the Golan Heights in 1967, as a fulcrum for future events. His background as a journalist shows its influence on his style which reads like series of newspaper articles that could stand alone, but lacks a sufficiently developed story-line to hold the interest of one not a devotee of the apocalyptic fiction. His situations are well-founded in prophecy, but the narrative style lacks the quality of, say, Frank Peretti, whom readers might find more entertaining.

The reader should be aware of references to homosexuality (p. 250) and some description of violence (p.227).

◆ Quality—3  ❤  Acceptability—5


Gr. 10—Adult.

Cara Kessler, a young widow, is bullied into running for Lieutenant Governor for the state of Kansas. She is still living as if her late husband were alive, but the events of the election and the development of a relationship propel her to move on with her life. Entangled, by Traicie Peterson, also provides intrigue as Cara discovers the horrifying truth about her running mate.

In Gentle Touch, by Angela Hunt, oncology nurse Jacqueline Wilkes discovers she has breast cancer. Only twenty-eight, Jacqueline has no one to turn to. Her own mother died not long ago of breast cancer. Her father is remarried and distant. Jacqueline has been so focused on her career that killing his wife, Philip is forced by his father the throne, thus being sentenced to burn at the stake.

In Honor Bound by DeAnna Julie Dodson is a story that is full of feeling, lively, and very romantic. The characters are faced with choices between good and evil and the consequences of those choices are reaped in full. There are a number of intimate scenes and though they are tastefully done this is a book for mature readers.

Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Debbie Lindsay
Home school Parent
Eatonville, Washington


F. Marriage—Fiction, Poland—History—Fiction. 1 videocassette, 88 min., color

Gr. 10—Adult.

The Jeweller’s Shop has been translated into twenty-two languages and sold millions of copies in book form. As a video, it seems to have lost some of the heart warming focus that the story originally had. The main story follows two couples, one with a depth of love and commitment, the other more shallow and self-seeking. The husband of the committed couple is killed during the war, and his wife raises their son while overcoming hardship. The shallow couple flee the war, are financially successful, but never achieve a real loving commitment. Their daughter, after meeting the first couple’s son, searches for what real love means. Her search brings her back to the old country where a mystical Jeweler helps her understand what real commitment is all about.

As a video, it seems to have lost some of the heart warming focus that the story originally had. The main story follows two couples, one with a depth of love and commitment, the other more shallow and self-seeking. The husband of the committed couple is killed during the war, and his wife raises their son while overcoming hardship. The shallow couple flee the war, are financially successful, but never achieve a real loving commitment. Their daughter, after meeting the first couple’s son, searches for what real love means. Her search brings her back to the old country where a mystical Jeweler helps her understand what real commitment is all about.

Quality—3  Acceptability—4

Paula Stewart Marks
Principal, Morning Star Christian School
Bend, Oregon


Gr. 9—Adult.

Caught in a fight out between rival gangs, the innocent citizens of L.A. constantly find themselves in danger. As a television anchor, Paul Thomas is used to reporting on the violence that defines L.A. until one day the story changes. Thomas’ station reports that the annual “Light the Night” had lowered crime. To fill time, Thomas challenges the citizens to have Light the Night every night.

With an off-hand remark Thomas starts a revolution to take back L.A. But the gangs won’t go down quietly. The gangs retaliate taking the lives of leaders all over the city. Then they kidnap Thomas’ wife. In the end, Thomas’ Christian influence flushes the evil out of L.A. Though Light the Night does contain some violence, it is a fabulous story of good conquering evil.

Light the Night is John Culea’s first book but he writes from experience. As a co-anchor in San Diego, Culea gives amazingly accurate insights into the television world. The pace is sometimes slow but the read is worth the wait. With writing strikingly similar in style and content to Frank Peretti’s more recent publications, Culea is an author to watch for in the future.

Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Janyre Stockinger
Student, Taylor University
Grand Rapids, Michigan


F. Romance stories. 222 p.

Adult.

In Masquerade, B.J. Hoff allows a major flaw in a potentially enjoyable story. Most of the book is written from the heroine’s point of view, but the author keeps us in the dark about her heroine’s “secret mission” until late in the story— as if to compensate for a thin plot, Hoff essentially “creates” a mystery by withholding information.

The story revolves around journalist Danni St. John’s employment at (and her plan to investigate) the Colony. This communal cult group, although completely fictional, eerily foreshadows the Heaven’s Gate cult that made national news this year (making for interesting and timely reading in this regard). St. John is hired by the cult’s leader, Reverend Ra, to manage the compound’s community newspaper. St. John accepts the job under the pretense that she’s interested in the cult. Thus the title, Masquerade.
On her first night in town, St. John runs into the handsome, brooding Sheriff Logan McGarey, who questions her involvement with the Colony. Further contact allows them to get to know each other better, except for St. John’s investigation of the cult. Logan becomes frustrated that she won’t let him in on her secret. (What is she looking for? What does she hope to accomplish? What does she know about the Colony that drove her to investigate in the first place?) Logan, beginning to care about her, warns St. John to be careful. Eventually, a major scene occurs, her motives are revealed, and her life is endangered.

Hoff succeeds in creating tantalizing characters using an interesting and timely backdrop, the inherent dangers of a cult. However, it seems unrealistic for a large, organized cult such as Hoff’s “Colony” to hire someone from the outside to manage their newspaper, or that in their background check they would fail to uncover St. John’s identity as a hard-hitting investigative journalist, or any of her Christian ties.

Another faux pas appears later in the book when Hoff describes how St. John gains critical information while accessing one of the cult’s main computers. The system requires a password, so, “On a whim,” Hoff writes, “[St. John] tried the numerical code for Reverend Ra’s legal name, and she was in!” Numerical code! Hoff doesn’t explain. We are not even aware of Reverend Ra’s legal name until now, nor how St. John knew it.

It’s too bad some of these technical problems weren’t caught before the book went into production. The best thing about Masquerade is Danni St. John’s consistent faith, even while working at the Colony. In fact, there’s a scene in which St. John explains the Gospel to her assistant, a young cult member; it’s excellent.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5
Paula Stewart Marks
Principal, Morning Star Christian School
Bend, Oregon


F. California—Fiction, Marriage—Fiction. 231 p.
Gr. 9—Adult.

The life of Corrie Holliester Braxton continues in this second of the Corrie and Christopher series. All of the well-loved characters return—Corrie’s family and members of the town of Miracle Springs.

This particular story focuses on Christopher Braxton, Corrie’s husband of two years, and his relationship to the persons of Miracle Springs. Christopher is faced with a major decision—whether to return with Corrie to the East or to stay in Miracle Springs. As Christopher makes plans, circumstances occur that show him and Corrie that God is in control and has a purpose for each of their lives. Christopher is given the opportunity to share the story of his painful childhood, and demonstrates to others how to allow God to heal past hurts in their lives. Corrie reflects the trust in God and in her husband, even in difficult and changing times.

In A New Beginning, the author, Michael Phillips, shows a clear path of how to leave the past behind and develop a “father—son” relationship with God. This is very relevant to the lives of readers today. As in his past writings, God’s love and life-changing power in the lives of his characters is shown. In comparison to the others in this series, this work has a great deal less action and life-changing happenings. Rather, a large portion of the story is devoted to sermon-type narration. For example, there are entire chapters devoted to topics such as “Who God Is”, “What comprises Faith”, etc. Because of this, although the spiritual truths are beneficial, the story does not easily capture the reader’s attention and is somewhat dry.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—5
Tammy Williams
Social Worker/Homemaker
Port Orchard, Washington


F. Appalachian Mountains—Fiction, Frontier and pioneer life—Fiction. 346 p.
Gr. 10—Adult.

Lashing out in anger against God for allowing his wife to die after the birth of their first born son, Josh Spencer tries to flee the painful memories. Leaving the care of his infant son to his parents, Josh heads west to the wilds of the Appalachia Mountains. Befriending an Indian who saves his life and gives him the nickname of Hawk, he tries to lose himself in the rigors of wilderness survival. Coerced into leading a wagon train west, Hawk returns home for a visit and is confronted by the frank and bitter questions of his now teenage son. Hawk insists that this was the best situation and leaves for the wagon train unsettled by the visit.

During the trip Hawk once again must face death; that of a good friend who leaves behind a wife and two children. The bold faith of the widow during her hardship slowly begins to crack the tough shell that Hawk has placed around himself against God.

Over the Misty Mountains is the first book in the new Spirit of Appalachia Series by Gilbert Morris in team work with Aaron McCarver. The authors recapture the spirit of the early days of America when life was fragile and survival was rough.

Those familiar with Gilbert Morris’s style will find this story full of action, history, faith, and romance.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—5
Debbie Lindsay
Home school Parent
Eatonville, Washington


Helen Bradley, travel writer and former police officer, tells her husband good-bye and heads north to Washington State. Writing a guidebook for the Long Beach Peninsula appeals to her, but she determines to discover the truth about the death of Isabelle Dupont, the guidebook’s original author.

Soon she makes friends with Peninsula residents, and as the plot takes hold full-force, Helen realizes Isabelle died because she had stumbled onto a secret. Helen feels certain the same end could come to her, also.

Following a fatal boat explosion, a hit-over-the-head for Helen, loss of her writing project notes, and as the questions multiply. One night, to satisfy her head for Helen, loss of her writing project notes, and as the plot takes hold full-force, Helen

reads Charles Rushford’s novel, The Secrets of Barneveld Calvary. The novel, with a title that claims to be “a work of fiction,” is a story of a pastor, James Schaap, who is the pastor of a small church in a country setting in heartland America, and he gives us brief glimpses into the “baby steps” of some of his parishioners as they journey in their personal relationship with their God. I have no doubt that each of the eight stories is very real.

Readers may find themselves frustrated and troubled as they may tend to be judgemental towards some of the characters whose faith is too shallow and weak. In other places they may feel an unsettled and disturbing sense of, “there but for the grace of God go I,” as they identify personally with other aspects of these people’s lives. And some of the stories touch a chord of warmth and goodness. This is definitely a book to evoke emotions, sometimes with tenderness, sometimes with great depth of conviction and passion.

The Secrets of Barneveld Calvary is a book for a mature reading audience. Because the characters are real, they deal with real temptations, real failures, real sin. A gay son, date rape, and infidelity are just a few of the issues addressed. On the other hand, interwoven in all of the stories is the character’s approach to reconciliation, forgiveness, mercy, and a personal encounter with God. I say “approach” because in some instances the reader may yearn for the fictional aspects of the book to grab hold and carry the characters higher into spiritual victory and triumph. But these are real stories, and “baby steps” are just that—baby steps of faith, frustratingly short of where we’d like to see them sometimes.

Almost anyone can identify with at least some aspects of Barneveld Calvary. We know stories like these from our own lives and the lives of those around us. That is what gives the book its charm. It’s a very real and unvarnished approach to writing about the human frailty that we all face.


F. Christian fiction, American, Barneveld Calvary. 190 p.

Adult.

This interesting, and slightly haunting little volume, The Secrets of Barneveld Calvary, claims in its title to be “a work of fiction.” This short collection of stories has basically changed the names to protect the innocent. The Secrets of Barneveld Calvary, by James Calvin Schaap, takes ordinary small-town church people, in particular facets of their lives, and brings to life with somewhat extraordinary detail and skill, a colorful tapestry of their personal joys, sorrows, struggles, and triumphs. James Schaap is the pastor of a small church in a country setting in heartland America, and he gives us brief glimpses into the “baby steps” of some of his parishioners as they journey in their personal relationship with their God. I have no doubt that each of the eight stories is very real.

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The first in The Heritage of Lancaster County series, so readers may expect more books about Katie to follow.

Quality—4    Acceptability—5
Sherri Beeler
Teacher, Cascade Christian High School
Medford, Oregon

The Shunning

Such things were not for the Amish. Theirs were simple traditions—the Old Ways, passed down from generation to generation, accepted and followed unquestioningly as to what was good and right for the Plain people. But Katie had always struggled with these things. She truly wanted to be a good Amish wife and mother for her soon-to-be husband, a widower with five children. She had publically submitted to the Amish faith by accepting the kneeling baptism at church, but this did not relieve the inner battle she endured daily with her secret desires.

When Katie finds a pink satin baby dress in the attic shortly before her wedding, she uncovers a secret that her parents have kept from her for twenty-two years—she is not truly Amish. Through an unusual set of circumstances, Katie is present with unanswered questions about one of the prisoners to whom he continues to allude. Other characters in the book include Jewish refugees fleeing for their lives from the Nazis and the French secret police.

The Shunning

In having its setting in war-torn Europe in the year 1943, David Horton’s The Sign of the Cross continues the story begun in A Legion of Honor. The reader is plunged into the depths of the prison cell of French resistance worker Marcel Boussant.

Horton causes the reader to feel the raw fear of the prisoners as they await interrogation by the infamous Klaus Barbie. The element of mystery is present with unanswered questions about one of the problems by which she continues to allude. Other characters in the book include Jewish refugees fleeing for their lives from the Nazis and the French secret police.

This gripping story of life and death, hope and hopelessness, shows the real heroes who were willing to stand up for what is right even though it means sacrificing their lives. The struggle of the young Jewess widow Isabelle Karmazin who has escaped into Switzerland continues. In this second book, Isabelle is forced to choose between staying in Europe with Marcel, who has escaped from prison, and going to America which has become her dreamland and the ideal, problem-free world.

Marcel, in turn, struggles with the guilt of having betrayed his brothers in the resistance while he was being tortured. He also must accept Isabelle’s decision to go to America even though it means he will never see her again.

Through his excellent development of characters and vivid descriptions of prejudice and suffering, Horton allows the reader to feel the devastation faced by the Jews during the days of Nazi Germany. Through the conversations and thoughts of the characters, issues of faith and dependence on God are examined and resolved.

Quality—5    Acceptability—5
Esther Knaupp
Librarian
Santiam Christian School
Corvallis, Oregon

The Silver Star

The Silver Star is the latest installment in the House of Winslow series by Gilbert Morris. As with his other series Morris is able to weave together several stories within a book. Considering this is book twenty, readers unfamiliar with the House of Winslow series will be relieved to know Morris sketches in enough background information on other characters so the book can stand alone in its reading.

Set in the early 1900’s, the story centers on a beautiful, talented Priscilla Winslow who trades the stages of New York for the fledgling California movie industry. Priscilla tries to escape her past as she struggles with trying to follow her dreams of being a successful actress while trying to live out Godly principles.

The other main character is Andrew Winslow who leaves the mission field to pastor the impressive Faith Temple. His family, especially his wife, suffers neglect in his rise as pastor of a large and successful church.

Morris covers a couple of important issues. One being of how living a full Christian life means making choices, some being sacrificial. Another issue covered with sensitivity is the affects of an extra-marital affair, especially in a Christian marriage.

Quality—3    Acceptability—5
Pam Webb
Freelance Writer, Homeschool Parent
Sandpoint, Idaho

Stillpoint


F. Hollywood (Calif.)—Fiction, Motion pictures—Romance stories. 254 p.

The author uses her background as the daughter of missionary parents to give exotic color to the story, set in Hong Kong. The story’s heroine, Kylie Austin, manages the Hong Kong branch of a large import/export firm dealing in fine arts, specifically porcelain reproductions. This provides fascinating additional interest.

When an employee turns up missing, the company’s vice president Jack Sullivan flies out from the States to meet with Kylie. Later, while they inspect a shipment in the warehouse together, they discover something odd. Kylie decides to take two of the suspicious porcelain pieces for analysis, and in spite of Jack’s warning, she doggedly follows procedure by signing a form at the office for the items.
This doesn’t ring true to Kylie’s smart and perceptive nature. Kylie knew it was dangerous (a warehouse employee was missing and feared a victim of foul play), and she had enough suspicion and authority to just take the pieces without signing for them.

As she and Jack try to uncover what, if anything, is going on at the warehouse, and to find out the whereabouts of the missing employee, their feelings for each grow. The attraction between the two allows just enough tension to make their final admission of love satisfying.

One passage may trouble some readers regarding various translations of the Bible. Jack ends up unconscious in the hospital and Kylie finds a Bible in the bedside table, “an old version,” and she “frowned,” requesting a “newer version” and a nurse gets her a New International Version. This seems an unfounded “point” about Bible versions.

Jack recovers, they continue their covert investigation and even weather out a Hong Kong typhoon together. Stillpoint successfully blends glamour and danger with an exciting setting, a developing romance, and two people’s love for God. We learn that when everything else swirls around us in confusion and turmoil, Jesus Christ is our stillpoint in the storm.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—4

Kim Swenson Gollnick  Writer, Speaker  Marysville, Washington


F. City and town life—Fiction, Episcopal church—History—To 1172—Fiction, Ireland—History—To 1172—Fiction. 333 p.

Gr. 7—Adult.

Written in the style of Miss Reed, Jan Karon’s These High Green Hills is a book the reader will not want to see come to an end. This third book in The Mitford Years series begins shortly after Father Tim’s marriage at “age sixysomething” to his next-door-neighbor Cynthia.

The people who come to life through Jan Karon’s pen are taken from her own childhood days in North Carolina. The story is woven around the life of the parish priest and his new wife and includes much about his “adopted son” Dooley who is now in a boys school facing struggles of his own. Other beloved characters include the newspaper editor, the doctor, the hairdresser, and Miss Sadie, the wealthy church patron.

Just as in real life the story is filled with everyday routine along with some surprises and absolutely hilarious situations. The themes found in Karon’s writing relate to those on the edge of retirement, people in the middle of active careers, and young people, especially those who struggle with feeling unloved and unwanted.

The homey wisdom given throughout the pages gives the reader much to think about long after the book has been closed.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Esther Knupp  Librarian  Santiam Christian School  Corvallis, Oregon


F. Columba, Saint, 521-597—Fiction, Ireland—Historically-based story of Ireland’s Columba of Iona. Set in the sixth century, Columba (Columcille to his Irish contemporaries) was born to be a warrior, Crimthann the Wolf. But his Christian mother prays that he will bring an end to the wars that tear his country apart and become Columcille, the Dove, who brings the gospel of peace.

Desjarlais is a marvelous writer. His prose, born out of years as an associate producer for InterVarsity’s Twentyonehundred Productions, is polished, liquid and glowing. He has a sure hand when it comes to historical detail; his research is obvious but never comes across as an intrusion into the story. Instead, historical facts buttress the story of Columcille, making a powerful and believable adventure come alive for the reader.

The book should appeal to anyone, since it combines a variety of genre styles, such as historical romance, mystery, adventure and just plain good story-telling. It’s exciting to read about a saint who was also a sinner and who might have chosen a different path. Instead, the world was changed as the Wolf turned from war to promote the peace of Christ in the war-torn sixth-century world of Columcille, the Dove of Ireland.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Georgia Beaverson  Freelance Writer  Madison, Wisconsin


In Where the Fire Burns, Anne DeGraff presents a well-written, exciting portrayal of occupied Poland, covering the years from 1952-1976. She relates the story of three different people and eventually weaves the narrative together. Men pounding at the door, father arrested for keeping a contraband Bible; thus begins Jasiu’s story, the story of a young boy whose family follows Christ while under Soviet rule. In Boston, Amy celebrates her birthday ostracised by her friends because of her family’s activities. Then there is Jacek Duch a spy who works with the communists who control Poland.

This book contains well-researched historical background, finely drawn characters, and an interesting love triangle. Even though this book is the second of the series it backtracks well and can be read alone.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—5

Paula Stewart Marks  Principal, Morning Star Christian School  Bend, Oregon
BOOK REVIEWS  ADULT NONFICTION

000’s — General Information

★
Christian Cyberspace Companion: A Guide to the Internet and Christian Online Resources,
004.6. Internet computer network. 250 p.
Adult.

Potential Internet users will find a wealth of information in Jason Baker’s Christian Cyberspace Companion: A Guide to the Internet and Christian Online Resources. Experienced users will also glean useful tidbits in his descriptive analogies and comparisons. In this book, Baker relates the history of ARPAnet and how it led to today’s private sector Internet. Concise definitions will enlighten users about service providers, publishing individual web pages, differences between the World Wide Web and other Internet utilities. Baker realistically relates facts about privacy, pornography, and perspective. He notes that privacy is not generally lost on the Internet, but rather easily maintained almost to a fault. Pornography is present on the web, but also can be filtered with software which he describes. Baker acknowledges that some persons are obviously using the Internet for evil, but Christians must be the salt and light in this arena as we are commanded.

This comprehensive guide is superbly written and is easy to read and understand. Baker uses analogies which will illustrate what the Internet is and what is does. Another feature of this publication is the directory of Christian related sites in Appendix C. Baker also gives the web address where the updated version can be viewed should changes be made after publication (which they will in the ever-changing world of the web).

One warning he gives which must be heeded is that heavy Internet use can rack up quite a bill to unsuspecting new users. Check out what you are paying for before you log long hours learning. Many providers now offer unlimited use for a set fee—this may definitely be the way to go.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Carol M. Jones, MLIS
Librarian
Austin, Texas

A Note from the Editor: by Ray Legg

To Read or Not to Read, That is the Question.

I started traveling when I was in the military. Thanks to the Navy, I was able to circumnavigate the globe and visit faraway, exotic places. Since our marriage in 1972, my wife and I have moved several times and we have even had the dubious honor of taking driver’s tests in five different states. With each move came struggles and being uprooted, but there also came new opportunities to explore further the land we call home.

I will never forget my wife’s reaction to Kansas as she looked across the flat expanse of the landscape and remarked, “I didn’t know there was this much sky in the whole world!” Nor will I forget the beauty of the hills in West Virginia, or the lights of downtown Chicago as they seemed to warm even the coldest nights, or the Northern Lights above the horizon in North Dakota. And who could forget the tranquil sound of the surf off Cape Hatteras in early June or the stifling July heat in Savannah? Or spring in Providence? Or the desert outside Yuma? Or the icebergs north of the Antarctic Circle and 35 foot swells off Cape Horn? Or any of the other wonderful things God has given man to enjoy?

I am the first to admit that I have been fortunate, and in answer to those who ask, “what of the people who are not able to get about as you have?” and “Is it possible for them to venture out as you have been able to do?” my response is a resounding yes! At least according to Emily Dickinson it is. From the pen of one who spent most of her life in Amherst, Massachusetts, come the words,

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers
like a page of prancing poetry.”

What Dickinson is saying is that all people have the opportunity to move outside their spheres of existence—and the vehicle for that move is reading: reading books, reading prose and poetry. Combined with even the most underdeveloped imagination, books have the power to transform the dullest routine into an adventure, a quest, or a chance to experience things never before accessible to most of us. Books allow us to learn of people we will never meet. They teach us how to deal with situations we may never encounter, and they help us learn that there is so much more to the world than what we see within the confines of our individual bailiwicks. Books enrich our lives give us a sense of community with readers everywhere.

But, unfortunately, there is much we cannot or should not read as well. That is where I, and the Christian Library Journal, come in. Because it is not possible for the reading public to keep up with all the new books being produced, we take it upon ourselves to read as much as we can for you and make recommendations about what we think you will like and what we think will be helpful to you. And by helpful I mean everything from “stimulating you to love and good works” as you progress in your walk with the Lord, to making you laugh or cry, or causing you to think seriously about things you have not considered before—to see the world from a new perspective. We may even acquaint you with tools which will help make life a bit easier along the way.
Quite a few books have been written about surviving cancer, including Surrender or Fight: One Woman’s Victory Over Cancer, by Beatrice Hofman Hoek. Cancer Lives at Our House, Hoek’s second book, goes beyond the survivor’s experiences to address those of the survivor’s family.

As the foreword says, “The impact of this disease on the patient’s family is often considered quite secondary, but it is more than a footnote to the unfolding experience of the cancer sufferer...A family member’s cancer is often as traumatic a personal experience as it is for the patient...This book is not about cancer. It is about life—a life to be celebrated, enjoyed, and someday left for an even better life.”

Hoek covers many aspects of being part of a cancer survivor’s family in such chapters as “The Invisible Victims,” “Dealing With Denial,” “Facing Fear,” and Let’s Talk About It.” She stresses the importance of dealing with the cancer as a family and of leaning on God throughout the ordeal. One important chapter is “Help From the Classroom,” in which Hoek explains to teachers of children from cancer survivors’ families how to support and help them during school.

Hoek has many good thoughts and ideas on how, as a family, to go beyond simply surviving cancer to growing stronger in the process. While not denying the real pain, grief, and anger such families may go through, she encourages the reader to keep her eyes on the ultimate source of victory: Jesus. Hoek puts it well in her epilogue: “Our lives have been touched and personally changed by the cancer experience. But it has been a joy to watch God take a devastating life-threatening experience and work it out for something positive and good.”


158. Forgiveness, Interpersonal relations. 240 p.

Adult.

“Psychological research on forgiveness is easily harmonized with traditional Christian theology,” assert the authors of this book. As one of few Christian references, they give the Hebrew vision of forgiveness as a covenant with God (He’d forgive them if they’d forgive others. Jesus went further to teach that our relationships would be defined by recognition of God’s forgiving love for us and the world, not limited to our own economic or religious class).

The book explores four basic themes to help expand the readers understanding of forgiveness. Those themes are (1) that it involves the entire person, (2) requires empathy, (3) that it is relational, and (4) that it requires commitment.

Part of the focus of To Forgive Is Human is on research that attempts to answer questions about the relationship between forgiveness and our relationships, mental and physical health. This book encourages the reader to look at benefits of forgiveness and how it relates to moral sense, thought, memory, motivation, guilt and shame. Illustrative stories are taken from authors personal or counseling experiences.

The book examines giving and receiving forgiveness from the viewpoint of our need to protect ourselves vs. our need for relationship. While the Christian forgiver motivated by a wish to please God is acknowledged, the role of prayer and a relationship with God is minimally treated. Some practical guidelines and exercises for thinking your way through barriers to asking for or giving forgiveness are given. Some of these pertain to rearing forgiving children. Readers are encouraged that learning skills and being persistent can eventually enable us to develop a more forgiving character.

To Forgive Is Human is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a textbook, it is far from a quick read.

Fifteen short chapters by a dozen authors (including Nigel Cameron, J.P. Moreland, and R.C. Sproul) address biomedical ethical issues including euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering, consumerism, biomedical technology, and legal issues, as well as the underlying ethical and moral concepts involved.

Playing God is written specifically for a Christian audience. Heavy reference is made to Scripture, and the sanctity of life. Another central idea is expressed by Ken Myers, “Science and technology are good gifts of God to sinful people, who are capable of discovering ways to misuse even the best gifts” (p.80).

Among the issues raised in the book are selling our souls to rebuild our bodies, commercializing the body, changing our viewpoint from the sacred to the secular, and the confusion over legal and moral rights. Writes Mike Malone, “The preoccupation with the material world, specifically the body and its preservation, or the malicious destruction of the body when it no longer serves our purposes, will lead to the atrophy and death of the inner world of the soul” (p.85).

In a book this size, extended discussion is impossible. But many of the ideas and concepts are not examined in the detail I would have preferred; a more extended treatment of these areas would have been helpful. The book also contains a number of generalizations, and not all readers will agree with all the author’s conclusions. Playing God is a book of starters, designed to stimulate interest, discussion, and in-depth reading. The authors avoid detailed technical language and keep the book accessible to lay readers. For a general audience, perhaps in a church study group, Playing God should serve its purpose well.

Quality—4        Acceptability—5

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician, Author
Billings, Montana


Adult.

Playing God, edited by R.C. Sproul jr, is subtitled, “Dissecting Biomedical Ethics and Manipulating the Body,” combining titles of the book’s two sections. The slender size of the book (96 pages including study questions), made me expect a similarly slender content. While
those personally involved, Precious In His Sight discusses these deep needs of children and the ones who work with them. Engrossing chapters focusing on innumerable Bible texts give relevant, workable solutions to these needs.

Though not strictly a self-help book, each chapter in Precious In His Sight uses the Bible to thoroughly study subject areas such as childbirth, growth stages, role of children in the family, obedience and disobedience, and parental responsibility. Formatted for either individual, home, or classroom applications, it is useful to both parents and professionals, secular or religious.

Senior Professor Emeritus Roy Zuck capably uses history to help the reader understand the Bible era. Succinctly presented, the information contained in Precious In His Sight is understandable, thought-provoking, and contemporary. Zuck is a family man. His writing displays understanding and love for people of all ages, yet speaks truth with no apology. There are many footnotes, usable if you want them, unobtrusive if you don't. There are also four useful indices conclude this book: subjects, names, biblical names, scripture references. Six tables scattered throughout the text aid study by summarizing large groups of related information.

◆ Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Donna Eggert
Crisis Pregnancy Center Counselor/Administrative Assistant
Maiden, North Carolina


Gr. 8—Adult.

Do miracles still happen today? Van Diest, a book publisher for over 25 years, shares amazing stories of miracles that will change the way you think.

◆ Quality—4  ❤ Acceptability—5

Anita Goldman Horning
Literary Analyst
Lawrenceville, Georgia


Adult.

Just as Song of Solomon 2:15 states, little Israelite foxes really do eat the grapes and spoil the vines. Extrapolating from this reality, Miller takes a strong look at the little foxy sins that spoil the fruit, vines and tendrils of our lives. He takes us on a remedial fox hunt with King Jesus as we consider small, joy clogging sins such as hurtful words, anger, depression, envy. "Get rid of the little fox, and you will have no trouble with it growing larger." (p.22)

This book can be read on several levels. It is a book of biblical, secular, and classical quotations. Taking a look at sins of the emotions, it uses many emotionally appealing word allegories, colors, songs, verse, changes in type and spacing. Each chapter introduces a particular foxy sin through color and scripture. presents the fox's burrows and attacks within the reader's life then guides him or her into soul searching meditation.
This book beckons one to brew a pot of tea and find a quiet moment to enjoy precious bits of wisdom.

◆ Quality—4    ♥ Acceptability—5
Joanne M. Hully
Freelance Writer and Homeschool Mother
Gig Harbor, Washington


Adult.

Based on 1 Corinthians 13, author Kay Kuzma, Ed.D., shares her experiences and truths on how to implement Christ’s teachings. Dr. Kuzma gives us a visual image of a love cup. How it can be filled and emptied and even cracked. The visual image is tangible even to my young children. We were able to list out our own observations on how to fill or empty someone’s cup. The children as young as three understand this principle.

Like any book based on human experience and interpretation, Creating Love offers opinions and solutions to problems that others may disagree with. I found some of the psychological statements such as “You feel” and “I feel” and the term “warm fuzzies” to be mildly irritating, yet the author was able to give honest and heartwarming testimony based on her years of experience with hurting individuals and their families.

The overall theme of See the Wind, Mommy is that our circumstances—including children underfoot—are not obstacles to intimacy with God, but rather stepping stones to Him. Crockett provides an excellent model as she turns her stories about her little girls into modern-day parables.

This book beckons one to brew a pot of tea and find a quiet moment to enjoy precious bits of wisdom.

◆ Quality—4    ♥ Acceptability—5
Donna Eggert
Crisis Pregnancy Center Counselor/Administrative Assistant
Maiden, North Carolina


248.3. Prayer—Christianity. 263 p.
Adult.

When David Jeremiah, pastor and radio host, learns he has cancer, prayer takes on greater urgency in his life. He shares personal discoveries and biblical truths in an effective teaching style, inviting readers to join the adventure.

Written in three parts, “The Adventure Begins” considers Jesus’ general teachings on prayer and answers commonly asked questions. The major portion, “Digging for Gold,” mines precious nuggets from The Lord’s Prayer. Finally, “See How It Glitters,” teaches prayer lessons from John chapter seventeen. This portion concludes with a map to buried treasure: the life-changing discipline of journaling. The fresh, candid snippets from Jeremiah’s prayer journal are a

One of the book’s strong points is its practical advice. Most chapters end with a section called “Putting Feet to Our Prayers.” Whether you have toddlers, teens, college students, or grandchildren, you’ll find helpful suggestions to motivate and equip you to pray for children at that stage. Mothers of prodigals will find special hope to persevere.

You’ll learn how to effectively pray scripture verses for your children and how to unleash God’s power through united prayer with others. There’s help to overcome hurdles as lack of time, discouragement, releasing your children, and persevering in prayer. As you grow in prayer, you are encouraged to enlarge your focus to include schools, neighborhoods, and worldwide revival.

Fuller writes, “When the love of a mother for her child is connected with God’s power through prayer, an irresistible force is released that changes people (including us!), situations, schools, and even communities.”

The final chapter reveals how those who pray are also changed: “We learn to let go with grace, our anxiety and heaviness are lifted, peace returns. We see God acting among us. We see His faithfulness.”

Although aimed at mothers, everyone with a heart for children and prayer may benefit from reading When Mothers Pray.

* To contact Moms In Touch: 1-800-949-MOMS.


Adult.

“Here we may like to ask permission, with respect, to enter the ancient and holy place of pilgrimage, opening ourselves to its mystery and magic.” (p. 14) The tone of wonder and seeking for inner knowledge through the pilgrimage to Glendalough (Ireland) and its surroundings is foremost in the writings of Michael Rodgers and Marcus Losack, *Glendalough.* St. Caoimhin (Kevin) founded a monastery there in the 7th Century, an inclusive community with a place for everyone to be useful. The author-priests guide us into that community leading us past the physical site to the lesson they are communicating. For example, St. Kevin’s Well, a place of stillness with the source undisturbed is likened to baptism. “It is the inner eye we depend on for clarity of vision and discernment, so we might see the real meaning of our lives.” (p. 119)

There is a profound richness in the imagery and factual writing of Rodgers and Losack that invites meditation long after the reading is ended. They are Psalms that pulse with life, having been given connection with the geographic location and the spiritual application. The authors include legend, poetry, both contemporary and ancient, and suppositions based on current architecture.

One may question the segue from St. Kevin to St. Laurence O’Toole, the final chapter telling of the change of the structure of the church from the medieval to diocesan system.

*Glendalough* is a spiritual meditation intended for the reader who is seeking a change. Therefore, it may serve a limited audience.


248.4. Christian life, Trust in God, Witness bearing

123 p. Ge. 9—Adult.

How do we respond when a friend betrays us? Or when a loved one dies? Or when the job we’ve counted on goes to someone else? Do we choose love or hate, hope or despair? Do we decide to celebrate the other’s gain, or let envy eat away at us?

In *A Heart Like His,* Rebecca Manley Pippert underscores the fact that the choices we make in adversity ultimately shape our character, and if we turn to God in trust and obedience, rather than follow our natural inclination, he will use the difficult times to make us into the person he intends us to be—a man or woman with a heart like his.

Pippert’s teaching centers on 1 Samuel in the Old Testament and the story of David before he became king. Readers follow David from his triumph over Goliath through his fourteen years of deprivation and exile in the wilderness with a jealous King Saul in murderous pursuit. Throughout the narrative, Pippert highlights the contrast between the two main characters in the story. Saul circumventing God and following a path to his own destruction. David acknowledging his dependency on God and growing in goodness and strength and trust.

While David and Saul occupy center stage in the study, Pippert also explores the characters of Jonathan, Saul’s son and David’s best friend, and Abigail, whose courage and humility save David from committing a murderous act of revenge.

Pippert, best-selling author of *Out of the Saltshaker,* combines educated insights with practical help for those who are seeking a change in life’s difficult way. By book’s end, the reader finds that he or she has a fuller understanding of how to deal with envy, anger, rebellion, fear, hatred, and despair because of the way Pippert uses the story to relate contemporary experiences to what is being read. Each chapter also contains a short list of questions and reflections for further consideration.

Pippert’s pointers are plentiful and memorable. For example, she tells us that submission to God requires a certain detached attitude that refuses to see people, jobs, or personal reputation as rights or possessions, but rather as gifts from God. She comments that meekness isn’t weakness but “harnessed strength.” And of sin she says it not only robs us of our dignity and power and “dehumanizes” us, it is also “downright boring” and has all been done before.

Praise for *A Heart Like His* must be tempered though by noting that the author fails at times to keep the reader centered on her main theme. Her audience tends to wander off on several compelling subthemes. In the main, though, the difficulties are worth dealing with. One compelling reason for putting and keeping this book on your bookshelf is that it is a handy compendium on sin and its remedies.


Adult.

Imagine sitting in a comfortable chair with scones and tea listening to your loving father share his thoughts on raising children. From controversial subjects like sex education and spanking to bed wetting and schooling, author Johann Christoph Arnold teaches parents the essence of loving God’s children.

He writes in the introduction, “In a world that has grown increasingly cold and unchildlike, it is no easy thing to raise even one child, to guide him or her through the early years and the turmoil of adolescence. Yet whenever we open our hearts to the little ones around us, and whenever we stop to listen to them, we will discover that the challenges and trials they bring with them are always outweighed by greater joys and blessings.”

Formatted in thirty-six brief chapters, *A Little Child Shall Lead Them* is a series of informal lectures directed at young parents. Arnold shares his philosophy of life and his love for children radiates throughout the book. He quotes often from his father and grandfather, men he respected and loved deeply.

Johann Christoph Arnold is an active member of Bruderhof. Bruderhof is a Christian communal living community based on Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, emphasizing simplicity, purity, brotherhood, mutual service, and nonviolence. He is the father of eight children and fourteen grandchildren.

I found myself wanting to hold my children longer and thank God for being given the privilege of caring for his children. This book would make an excellent gift for new parents.

**Child Shall Lead Them** is a series of informal lectures directed at young parents. Arnold shares his philosophy of life and his love for children radiates throughout the book. He quotes often from his father and grandfather, men he respected and loved deeply.

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I found myself wanting to hold my children longer and thank God for being given the privilege of caring for his children. This book would make an excellent gift for new parents.
“Setting the standard” seems to be the key phrase to successful parenting. In almost every situation that life can throw at us, there is a biblical, moral standard that can help us to make those right choices. Choices inevitably come our way in dozens of situations every day. What we choose will either encourage a lifestyle of integrity and honor, or fall into the world system of deception and gaining self fulfillment at someone else’s expense. This parental handbook will help parents help their children make those choices of right living!

David Veerman gives straight forward advice in how to deal with many of the common situations that arise within families. An obvious but not so easy-to-do solution is to set your standards, your rules, early in your children’s lives. If they grow up having to recognize and obey certain standards, it will be much easier to maintain a semblance of order when the turbulent teen years arrive. As rules relax and perhaps change with the age of the children, there must still be a quality of standard that does not change, especially when it comes to honoring the Lord, whether it be attending church regularly or just in daily lifestyle.

This handbook reflects on the days of early television and the ideal family, Ozzie and Harriet Nelson. But just realizing that times have drastically changed from those early TV days, is not enough. One must be aware that it is possible to still meet the challenge of parenting and succeed, with God’s help. Thus prayer is emphasized as an all-important foundation in raising children. Good sense, reliance on God, consistency in living the right lifestyle as parents, all work towards the success of having sons and daughters who also succeed in life and maintain proper standards that the parents so want to instill within their precious prodigy!

Veerman not only deals with difficult issues and shares how to avoid possible trouble, he steps into the realm of facing rebellious teens even after “all the right things” were done. He assures the reader that the word “normal” usually still applies and that there are some very constructive actions that parents can do to help draw the child back to acceptable behavior and choices. Hope looms large in this useful guidebook, and with the application of prayer to affirm that solid foundation in Christ, parents can look forward to raising children with joy and expectancy!

◆ Quality—4  ◆ Acceptability—5


The words “pilgrimage” and “journey” have become popular (and possibly overused) images for the Christian life. But relatively few people have the means, desire, or opportunity to take a physical pilgrimage of the sort common in the Middle Ages to one of Christianity’s holy sites. One who did, however, was Shirley du Boulay, a convert to Roman Catholicism from Anglicanism, who walked the Pilgrim’s Way from Winchester to Canterbury.

Du Boulay details her experiences in The Road to Canterbury, which contains insights into her own spiritual journey, as well as the changes wrought in her by following the pilgrims’ footsteps. The book also contains many fascinating, little known details of the Pilgrim’s Way. While I have visited both Winchester and Canterbury, I haven’t walked the Way; but I felt I could have in Du Boulay’s capable hands. Her easy style of writing makes for enjoyable reading.

That aside, I found myself disappointed that her spiritual reflections weren’t up to the same caliber. At times, Du Boulay ventures dangerously close to the notion that all roads—not necessarily Christian—lead to God.

Still, The Road to Canterbury might be especially enjoyable for those contemplating a pilgrimage.

◆ Quality—4  ◆ Acceptability—3

Andrew M. Seddon
Physician, Author
Billings, Montana


398.2. Legends, Mythology. 112 p. Adult.

There are certain myths and legends that are so much a part of our tradition that they permeate our language, literature, and art. Although we may not “agree” with some of these tales on a philosophical level, to be familiar with them greatly enriches our cultural experience. But when confronted with massive tomes and archaic language, cultural enrichment is often
The problem of medical futility confronts families, patients, and physicians, in multiple medical settings. When is enough, enough? Or when is enough too much? When do treatments cease to provide benefit and merely prolong the inevitable, often at great financial or human cost?

The question of futile treatment lies at the heart of Wrong Medicine by Lawrence J. Schneiderman M.D., and Nancy S. Jecker Ph.D. Using several examples, the first of which is the case of Nancy Cruzan, maintained in a persistent vegetative state for seven years. The authors discuss the goal of medicine, both historically and Hippocratically considered to be normative—restoring health and alleviating suffering. It was not until recent times did the notion of prolonging life take on an indefinite aspect regardless of physical, emotional, or financial cost.

After defining futility, the authors discuss the human and medical factors that make it difficult for physicians to refuse futile treatment, why patients and families want “everything done,” and why they recommend we say no to futile treatment. Schneiderman’s and Jecker’s overriding concern is for the patient, and they deplore cases of “medicine run amok” where patients are lost in technological or legal mazes where care is fragmented.

Wrong Medicine is not written from a specifically Christian perspective, but it is Hippocratically based. Its easily readable style is free from technical jargon, and should be accessible to lay readers as well as medical personnel. The book would be of particular values for medical students, interns, and residents at the beginning of their careers, who are often thrust into situations for which they have little training or preparation.

Whether or not all their conclusions are accepted, the authors make a case for examining attitudes towards medical treatments that are suspect, degrading, and which may cause more suffering than they prevent.


600’s — Technology


book range from the different physical needs girls require from fathers and different age level needs young ladies exhibit. Building on growth changes from infancy to adulthood makes the chronological topics easy to follow.

*Fathers and Daughters* takes on the characteristics of a workbook for dads, including helpful exercises and check lists sprinkled throughout. Practical hands-on examples and suggestions lead dads and daughters to become close friends. Of particular interest is the section on four common ways of communicating with daughters about sex and guiding principles to remember such as: telling the truth, not being afraid, over reacting and allowing daughters to make their own choices.

*Fathers and Daughters* also discusses difficult areas such as inappropriate affection between dads and daughters. Even though mistakes will occur in parenting roles, the authors leave us encouraged to start anew each day, forgive, have fun, and give daughters to God.


*Front Porch Parenting* is a collection of answers to questions a typical parent might ask. The author, Mary Manz Simon, a parenting columnist with a doctorate in early childhood studies, divides these questions into two categories: age related and topical. In Section One, Manz deals with developmental questions concerning infants and toddlers, early childhood, early school-age, “teenagers,” and teenagers. Section Two explores relationship, behavior, wellness, activity, school, and seasonal questions.

Although worthwhile to read from cover to cover, *Front Porch Parenting* is also entertaining just to browse through. Manz uses the language of real people, without psychological or educational jargon. The question/answer format also makes *Front Porch Parenting* a user-friendly reference guide for busy parents who want a quick answer to a concern without having to plow through an entire parenting philosophy. A topical index enables the reader to find just the information he or she needs.

While it is entertaining, it should be noted that *Front Porch Parenting* is not a complete parenting book. Although the questions cover a wide range of ages and themes, they are by no means comprehensive.


Many of us have happy memories of visiting grandparents. Today’s grandchildren not only visit their grandparents; millions are raised by them because their parents are not available for numerous reasons. This new role leaves grandparents with searching questions. Recognizing their need, Irene Endicott steps forward, offering expert answers to questions grandparents ask most in her 1997 release, *Grandparenting : It’s Not What It Used To Be*. Written in conversational Question/Answer format and organized by subject, Endicott’s book is easy to read for quick reference. It provides practical, biblical answers to specific real-life questions to help grandparents “meet the challenges and enjoy the rewards of their job.” Her expertise comes from years of speaking, writing, research, and personal experience with fifteen grandchildren.

The author combines helpful advice on grandparenting basics (roles, rules, teaching) with sage wisdom on family relationships. Challenges like divorce, remarriage, custody, and step-grandparenting are discussed sensitively. Also included are worthwhile tips on loving your grandchildren, praying for and with grandchildren, preserving family history in the world of fragmented families, developing close bonds if you live far apart, and more. Her answers validate grandparents while encouraging them to support their children’s parenting instead of usurping authority. Prayer is emphasized as the solution to many problems.

In her foreword, Gloria Gaither speaks of grandparents as “a vital link between the wisdom of the past and the uncharted territory of the future.” “Grandparenting” encourages and equips grandparents to provide this needed continuity. Endicott writes, “Studies have shown that multigenerational contact between children and grandparents, even great-grandparents, provides a special unconditional love and nurturing that is healthy for children.” Whether grandchildren live with you or far away, this book offers reassuring answers to make you a “great” grandparent.

Large print makes *Grandparenting* readable for aging grandparents. Additional resources (support groups and books) and a topical index are a bonus.


*Playwise : 365 Fun-Filled Activities for Building Character, Conscience, and Emotional Intelligence in Children* is a useful end practical volume. Authors Denise Chapman Weston and Mark S. Weston’s purpose for writing this book is because “we are raising our children in a moral and ambiguous world and we have to do more than just discipline them and hope for the best. There is a huge misconception that discipline is the way to make your child a moral and successful being. The fact is, discipline may make your child behave well, but surface good behavior goes only so far. It has to be rooted inside, held in place by a range of skills and character strengths. That’s what this book is: a manual for raising children who are emotionally and intellectually capable and confident”

This book is carefully categorized and easily referenced for parents who don’t want to read through from page one. A parent can choose from chapters such as Happiness, Sensibilities, Self Awareness, Social Harmony, or Unconditional Love and Acceptance.

The chapter on humanity is a neglected part of parenting for many homes today. Authors encourage parents to “commit kind acts in front of your children and they’ll start spreading their own random acts of kindness.”

Where do all these ideas come from? As play consultants, the Westons have received hundreds of ideas from their clients. When sharing these ideas they credit the founder, young or old; i.e. eight-year-old Teddy Andrews who started SAY YAY! (Save American Youth. Youth Advocates for Youth) in Berkeley, California. Readers will find several of these shaded boxes featuring resourceful kids from all over America.

Another neat feature found smack in the middle of the book is the guidelines for character skills. Here parents discover what to expect and not to expect from their children at certain ages. Included are questions to ask yourself to evaluate if your child needs to develop communication and social skills, along with helpful hints on how to do this. *Playwise* is a book worth reading and can be taken along for fun and entertainment when traveling. One fun travel idea is the telephone game. One whispers a sentence into another’s ear and it goes through the car; the last person to finish being able to read the last sentence is the winner.
Together free numbers. A reader will gain a wealth of ideas, including many lists from Ordinary and exercise. The chapters on activities are these ways aren’t easy.

Way they recommend; and radical in that some of both practical and radical. Practical in that it’s life-long healthful habits. The Partows maintain

every library should possess. It is a source of abundant information on the lives of men and women of letters during what many believe to be one of the richest periods in the history of the modern world. The Tudor era (1485-1603) gave us Frances Bacon and John Calvin, Copernicus and Thomas Cramner, John Donne and Erasmus, as well as John Knox and Machiavelli to name a few. Including material on just these historic figures would be enough, but Major Tudor Authors goes further by including many, many others whose names and writings have made their way into popular culture and others who should have.

Encyclopedic in format, each Tudor author is treated by a different scholar which allows for some diversity of style and opinion. Included in each article is a brief but thorough biography, a summary of major works and themes, and a section devoted to critical appreciation of the writer and his or her work. Included also is a bibliography of works by each Tudor author. Though not exhaustive in its treatment of these men and women, Major Tudor Authors provides sufficient information to make it a valuable resource for school libraries or desk reference tool for educators, especially teachers of English and literature. Also included in the book a very helpful preface which draws heavily on C.S. Lewis’ work with the literature of the same period.

One of the strengths of Major Tudor Authors is the way it includes a balance of Christian and nonchristian writers. This makes comparative literary study much easier for novice and scholar alike. Quite often, books of this type lack that kind of balance.

800’s —Literature


808. Authors—British. 528 p.

Adult.

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Since I am a teacher, I am in the position of selecting texts to use in my classes from time to time. Among the criteria I use to decide on the selection of a book, is to what extent it will facilitate broad study of the course material. I want my students to get as much as possible from a book that I require them to read. I also want them to get as clear an understanding of matters surrounding the topic under discussion as possible. For these reasons, I am always pleased to see publishers issuing books like Greenwood’s “Literature in Context” series. This particular volume on John Steinbeck’s novellas in the “Understanding” series is one of the most useful ancillaries a teacher could hope to have for classroom use in teaching about the life and times of this influential American writer.

Contained in the book are numerous helps aimed at assisting readers who wish to better understand the people and the period covered by these three short works of fiction. Durst has done another fine job of providing enough material to satisfy any reader while at the same time withholding enough to encourage further study of Steinbeck’s work.

The book begins with literary analysis of the texts which is sufficient for readers familiar with the author and his work. Though it is not exhaustive, it is thorough and stimulating. This format allows the reader to get an overview of the story without completely giving it away. Following the analysis, Durst has provided a good number of readings from older documents which illustrate the underlying themes in Steinbeck’s stories—themes like achieving the American dream, the role of land ownership in American culture, and a heavy does of commentary from those who people the pages of these works who have been left behind in America’s rush to develop. Thought of as the salt of the earth, these people are often left in the dust of the earth to try and scratch out a living on a subsistence level. It is interesting for students and teachers alike to hear what Steinbeck writes in his fiction from the people who had to live it.

Among the most useful resources Durst includes in the “Understanding” texts are the entries in the bibliographies for further reading, several photographs of people and places during the “dustbowl” years, and the very helpful lists of “Topics for Written and Oral Exploration.” These topics provide a wealth of material for written work as well as stimulating class discussion.

While this book is geared to use in the college classroom, any reader interested in Steinbeck will profit from its information. This will prove to be a very useful text.

Calvin Miller’s reading audience will welcome his collection of poems and short devotional stories in An Owner’s Manual for the Unfinished Soul. Miller takes the reader on a pilgrimage through life as he relates his reactions to both the bumps and joys of life. Most of the poems begin with an explanation of the event that brought the lines into being, which gives us a personal look at the writer. As usual, Miller challenges our mediocrity. For example, after saying “Most Western Christians are trapped between Christ’s call to sacrifice and their own indulgent lifestyles,” the reader is presented with the poem “The Discipline of a Servant” which reenforces his point.

The book is divided into six sections each of which relates the lessons Miller has learned along life’s journey and he invites the reader to share in those experiences. The design of the book lends itself to short devotional readings which allows for time to meditate and react, to relax and pray, to take comfort knowing someone else has felt the same as you have. The graphics also help to set the mood for melancholy reflection. This is a devotional book that will be reread in part and in total many, many times.

Eyes of Tenderness is an enjoyable and inspirational collection of poems by Helen Steiner Rice, illustrated by John A. Ruthven with beautiful color pictures of woodland animals. The poems are carefully chosen and put together in sections with specific themes: Compassion, Confidence, Encouragement, and more. Each section is prefaced with short quotes and comments by other well known authors or famous people such as William Faulkner, Ulysses S. Grant, and John Burroughs. The poems are short and profound, one to a page, and each has its own wildlife illustration.

John Ruthven’s gentle paintings are an obvious extension of his passion for animals. He is the master of wildlife art, having won numerous awards for his work.

Most people are familiar with Helen Steiner Rice’s work through other books she has compiled, or perhaps through a greeting card they’ve received. These samples are some of her best work, enhanced greatly by the beauty and quality of the book itself. This book is a sequel to a previous work, Wings of Encouragement.

This is a book to savor and enjoy over and over, a treasure for anyone who loves inspirational poetry.


Gr. 10—Adult.

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Though some of the discussion concerning literary sources gets a bit dry, on the whole, Courson seems to have taken great care to keep the text accessible for the widest possible audience.

What literature teachers and other students of The Bard will find interesting in this text is the section which applies different schools of literary critical thought to the text of the play. That makes this treatment of the play a good source of material for either a general English course or a course on literary criticism. It is refreshing to see this type of book emerging because there have been relatively few of them up to the last five or six years. Included in this book also is a helpful index and very thorough bibliography for further reading.

As with so many of the other books on dramatic productions published by Greenwood Press, there is also a useful section on the production of the play. This feature make the appeal of the book even broader.

- Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Raymond Legg
Asst. Prof. of English, Bryan College
Dayton, Tennessee

900’s — History, Geography, and Biography


Adult.

The Drummonds have selected twelve notable women who have contributed historically to revival movements. Beginning with Deborah in the Old Testament and continuing through Ruth Bell Graham, Billy’s beloved helpmate, the authors explore these women’s places in spiritual awakenings throughout the ages.

The importance of revivals deft description. When people fall away from God’s presence through neglect and sin, when repentance and redemption are desperately needed, the inspiration usually starts with one or two dedicated people.

Deborah was such a person that God raised up to awaken Israel from depths of spiritual decline. Deborah not only was an instrument to bring about a great military victory, but she also became the first judge to accomplish a solid coalition of most of the scattered tribes of Israel.

What is so significant about Deborah is that she is the only woman in the Old testament to be elevated to a position of political and spiritual power by the common consent of the people. Not only was Deborah a judge, but she was a prophet and a preacher. She was obviously a woman totally committed to the will of God.

Priscilla, and her husband Aquila, of the New Testament, were workers with the apostle Paul. The two established church homes where they lived, ministering and testifying to the growing Christian community.

Other women and their impact on Christianity include: Madame Guyon, active in the 1600s in France; Susanna Wesley, mother of John and Charles; Selina, Countess of Huntington, England in 1700s; Susanna Spurgeon, an influential pastor’s wife in Great Britain; Catherine Booth, who with her husband, William, founded the international Salvation Army; Amy Carmichael of the 1800s, ministering to the lepers in India, Edith Moults, in the early 1900s, evangelizing and serving in Africa; Bertha Smith, preaching in China; and Marie Monsen, serving the church in China.

This would be a good study book for women’s groups. Though there is a need for editing, as there is much duplication, the ways of God using individuals to perform fresh awakenings are wondrous indeed.

Authors Lewis and Betty Drummond have been associated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

- Quality—3  ❤ Acceptability—5

Barbara Gay Tuerkler
Freelance Writer and Book Reviewer
Glenwood, Iowa


Adult.

Two widely-published writers become good friends. Now, many years later, they combine their creativity to examine the fabric of friendship. Through their journal entries, poems, conversations, letters, and reflections, L’Engle and Shaw offer wisdom, insights, questions, and beliefs. They draw readers into their personal lives, the framework for their enduring friendship. These two friends speak of commitment to friendship and the need to maintain it. They recognize the importance of shared interests as well as mutual solitude. Food also has a definite place. Shaw includes a recipe from her second daughter. L’Engle adds a scrumptious-sounding idea from a godson, prophesying that the cook will have few leftovers. They do not, however, claim a perfect friendship, noting the important role God plays. L’Engle emphasizes the need to pray with one another, joining their lives together in a profound way.

The chapters move smoothly from one to the other with each writer identifying herself at the head of every section. They announce their delight at writing such a book, and that feeling splashes onto readers.

L’Engle and Shaw celebrate friendship and encourage its renewal in today’s society that includes a variety of relationships, not all of which amount to true friendship. Friends for the Journey gives hope and sound principles for young adults still finding their way into lasting friendships. On the other end of the age scale, these two friends’ time-proven prospective holds reinforcement to those who may already have become adept at forming and maintaining friendships.

Nicely formatted, well-written, and well-edited, Friends for the Journey also appeals to the senses: sight and touch. Soft-toned colors on the outside relax the eyes, while the shiny, smooth cover makes holding the book a pleasant part of the reading process.

- Quality—5  ❤ Acceptability—5

Betty M. Hockett
Freelance Writer, Writing Teacher, Speaker
Newberg, Oregon


Adult.

Roger Steer’s J. Hudson Taylor: A Man In Christ is the story of the physical and spiritual journey of a remarkable missionary to China. The book opens a window on the history of missionary work in China, a remarkable history with which we should all be familiar considering the continuing persecution of Chinese Christians today.

J. Hudson Taylor, an Englishman trained as a medical doctor, devoted over fifty years of his life to spreading the Gospel in China. He also built up and administered an international missionary organization, evangelized and lectured in many countries, and was a writer and editor. He started virtually alone in 1854; by the time of his death, in 1905, his China Inland Mission numbered over 800 missionaries.

Taylor’s approach was somewhat controversial at the time. He shunned the trappings of the
western Europeans and “went native,” speaking Chinese, wearing Chinese clothing, studying Chinese literature, wearing his hair in the Chinese fashion, and eating Chinese food: in sum, trying to present Christianity with a Chinese rather than a western face. He was criticized by other missionaries who felt this would lead to loss of respect, or who were perhaps scandalized by this less orthodox approach.

At that time, also, the missionaries tended to be clustered along the coast and in the so-called “treaty ports.” Taylor’s goal was to head for the interior. He had a burden for China’s millions who had never heard the Gospel. This “forward movement” was also controversial, and obviously heading into the hinterland and away from the protection of the western gunboats was much more dangerous.

Mr. Steer, a journalist, has drawn upon both primary and secondary sources to write this account. The story of J. Hudson Taylor is told with verve including dramatic anecdotes, some humorous episodes, as well as providing insight into Taylor’s spiritual growth. The reader is given small doses of Chinese history and Christianity’s impact on China, receiving enough background to understand the significance of the Manchu Dynasty, the Taiping Revolution, and the Boxer Rebellion.

The missionaries faced famine, flood, disease, heat, and riot among other trials. One in four missionaries died, and J. Hudson Taylor himself lost his first wife and three children. Several times in his many trips to China, Taylor was nearly shipwrecked. Mr. Steer writes evocatively of these hardships and of the missionaries responses to them.

Pinyin transliteration is used throughout the book. In a very few cases the older transliteration is selectively used parenthetically: for example, Beijing (Peking). Included in the book are a forward by Billy Graham and an epilogue by James Hudson Taylor III recounting the evolution of the China Inland Mission into Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Since Taylor’s death, in 1905, China’s missionaries had to suffer through world war II and the communists. The communists expelled the missionaries and have persecuted Chinese Christians ever since their takeover. The Overseas Missionary Fellowship now works in nearly shipwrecked. Mr. Steer writes evocatively of these hardships and of the missionaries responses to them.

This is a simply written, intensely personal volume, completed less than two weeks before Bernardin died of pancreatic cancer. In it, the cardinal invites the reader to “walk with me the final miles of my life’s journey.” And what the reader encounters is a gentle spirituality from a man who received God’s gracious gift of peace.

The false accusation led to new experiences of God’s grace and eventual reconciliation with his accuser—a lost sheep to be sought and restored. The diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, followed by treatment and relapse, led to a new ministry to cancer sufferers.

“Throughout my ministry,” Bernardin writes, “I have focused on Jesus—his message, the events of his life, his relationship to the world. Now more than ever I focus on his cross, his suffering, which was not only real but also redemptive and life-giving” (45).

The Gift of Peace is a series of reflections, not an autobiography. Bernardin faces suffering; but he rejects self-pity for a new closeness to Christ. Between chapters of these final days of life he intersperses meditations which readers will find helpful in various ways.

This is a book to be read and meditated on by cancer sufferers. While Frontier Physician is a book that would be a wonderful help to someone who wants to write a report on early medicine in Alaska or on Dr. C. Earl Albrecht, many would not find it entertaining.


Romulo Saune, a descendant of the Incas, meets Christ and becomes a translator of the Bible into his native tongue and pastor to his nation, the Quechus. Adventure seems to be the everyday norm, overcoming the ignorance and poverty of the Indians, doing battle with the fierce Shining Path organization, the Communists who are trying to infiltrate South America. The authors supply a tantalizing background for the Saune
biography, a vignette about the Inca people. They then fast-forward to the youth of Saune and the importance of family. Romulo is never without at least some member of his family assisting him. That fact weaves through the storyline, and becomes an important clue to the last events. At times, the flashbacks are not readily separated from the current thread of the story. Scenes of violence, while part of the fact, are blatant and jolting. This is not a run-of-the-mill missionary story; it is a powerful testimony of the triumph of God over His enemies.

The general content of One Bright Shining Path is apropos to teenagers and young adults with the understanding that there are graphic descriptions of the terrorist activity.

◆ Quality—4 ❤ Acceptability—5
Su Hagerty
Freelance Writer
Issaquah, Washington

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