

Sight & Sound

BOOKS

Ordinary Heroes Of the Bible

They Walked With the Savior

*By Scott Hagan, Charisma House,
223 pages, paperback, \$*

The first book in the Supporting Cast Trilogy by Michigan pastor Scott Hagan presents a collection of word paintings that provide a fresh perspective on 20 often-cited Gospel characters who encountered Jesus. Very visual, *They Walked With the Savior* reads like a beautifully illustrated Bible storybook for adults, sure to impress its images on the heart.

Hagan places the 20 Gospel characters in three categories according to the relationship ensuing from their encounter with Jesus. The first seven, including Zacharias and Martha, discovered their need for Him. Another six encountered Jesus' power and forgiveness, such as the hemorrhaging woman and the Samaritan woman. The final seven found their destiny in Him, among them Simeon and Anna.

Readers will readily discern life application of the Gospels through this study, especially because Hagan, pastor of Grand Rapids First Assembly of God, so often shares the life lessons he has learned for himself. Readers not only gain new insight into oft-repeated narratives, but they also develop a new appreciation for the humanity they share with the 20 biblical characters. Those who believed they knew these characters

before will certainly be delighted with these intimate portraits.

Hagan leads ordinary Christians to understand that they also may experience extraordinary encounters with the Savior in their daily walks with Him.

Pamela Robinson

God's Business

Anointed for Business

By Ed Silvoso, Regal, 160 pages,

paperback, \$.

When many people think of the term “anointed,” images of fivefold ministers often come to mind. But in his recent release, *Anointed for Business*, author Ed Silvoso encourages readers to broaden that definition to include those ministering in the workplace. He explains that all Christians are set aside for service—some in the church, others in the business world.

Silvoso, founder of Harvest Evangelism, scoffs at the notion that the pulpit is the more lofty pursuit when it comes to ministry; he believes Christians should bloom where they are planted—even if they are in a boardroom. He writes that believers should use their jobs and influence in the marketplace (whether in business, education, government or other field) to change the world for Christ. Citing numerous scriptural references throughout, he notes that all the disciples were businessmen before entering full-time ministry with Jesus. Even Jesus made a living as a carpenter before

entering ministry.

The book also challenges the perception that success in business (and its financial rewards) lies in contrast with Christian principles. Silvoso writes that as long as the motive for profit is pure and the means ethical, monetary compensation is a gift from God. He also speaks about the social gap between the haves and have-nots, and explains how Christians in the business environment can bring reconciliation.

Anointed for Business challenges all Christians to look at their occupations as their parishes, and their co-workers as their congregations. By doing so, they bring the message of Jesus to those who may never step into a church. Silvoso also encourages believers to allow God to use the marketplace to shape their destinies and to enlarge the body of Christ.

Andrea R. Williams

Humility's Heights

The Low Road to New Heights

*By Wellington Boone, Doubleday,
196 pages, hardcover, \$*

In his challenging and inspiring book *The Low Road to New Heights*, Wellington Boone identifies the source that often leads Christians to feel depressed and defeated in their lives, offering spiritual therapy to recover from the common curse of “self”-pride.

Humility, prayer and leading by serving remove pride, Boone

writes. The pastor of The Father's House in Atlanta and chief overseer of the Fellowship of International Churches, Boone identifies modern problems, common trends and dangerous temptations, showing how Christians can grow in grace, faith and maturity.

He writes that selfish demands—such as using prayer to get one's way or searching for a superstar's voice of God—make God's people shallow. He reminds readers, "No good father gives a child everything he wants."

Contending that many have lost the willingness to sacrifice, Boone argues against churches that have little more than an entertainment medium: "It's time for the Church to develop saints with substance who are willing to lay down their lives, who are committed to reaching people, regardless of the personal cost, and become spans in the bridge of reconciliation to God."

Written for those sidetracked or stuck in their journey toward Christ-likeness, Boone challenges Christians to truly die to self. Taking such a road, he believes, can lead servants to new heights.

Chris Maxwell

MUSIC

Singing Around the Christmas Tree

Christmas in Black and White

By Nicole C. Mullen, Word.

It is hard to argue about the appeal of Nicole C. Mullen. As the 2002 Dove Award recipient for female vocalist of the year, Mullen has established herself as a great musical artist whose talent goes far beyond just stellar vocals. In time for the Christmas season, Mullen has released *Christmas in Black and White*.

Sharing production responsibilities with her husband, David, Mullen has woven an album that seems to give a glimpse into what is important to the Mullen family at Christmastime. As a result, it is not only a remake of Christmas classics, but it is also a new work full of original material.

There are even some tracks that are of people telling Christmas stories in the foreground, and others where these stories make up the background sounds. The result is an album that plays like a visit to the Mullens' reverent and joyful house. The music and mood of the disc are quite laid-back and extremely comfortable.

For those looking for the vocal power of songs such as "Redeemer," this project may seem slim, but for those who love Mullen's trademark vocals and instrumentation, *Christmas in Black and White* deals up extra portions. Songs such as "Lamb of God" and "Merry Christmas, Baby," along with Mullen's rendition of "Angels We Have Heard on High" will delight listeners. But without a doubt the crown of this offering is a priceless collaboration with Phil Keaggy on "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." This song alone is easily worth the price of admission.

For those looking for a bit of a departure from traditional Christmas albums, *Christmas in Black and White* is a fresh prospect. For those who enjoy the classics, there are still

some great nuggets that will catch the listener's ear.

Doug Joseph

Holiday Harmony

Rose of Bethlehem

By Selah, Curb Records

Rose of Bethlehem is the first Christmas-themed project from Selah. Siblings Todd and Nicol Smith, and friend Alan Hall continue to establish themselves with yet another solid offering that should once again give them deserved recognition.

Rose of Bethlehem is full of choice selections. Nicol's vocals on the slightly modernized version of "What Child Is This?" are compelling and moving. The timely harmonies on songs such as "Silent Night" and the wonderfully upbeat song "Light of the Stable" add significantly to the overall quality of the album. The unexpected vocal support of Dolly Parton on the track "Once Upon a Christmas" is surprisingly refreshing.

The excellent production of Selah and Jason Kyle, who together have produced all three Selah releases, complements the musicianship of this exceptional project. The end result is a truly great Christmas offering from this young trio. Rose of Bethlehem successfully blends old and new to make a truly worthwhile experience.

Doug Joseph

VIDEOS

Capturing Worship Live on Video

Worship

*By Michael W. Smith, Reunion Records,
DVD/VHS, Dolby Digital 5.1*

My first impression that Michael W. Smith was delivering something very real in his new video, *Worship*, came when a person watching the DVD with me began to cry. Within minutes it became clear this person was being touched by God in some deeply personal way. What surprised me about this was the timing—Smith was only halfway through his first song.

Worship provides continuity to Smith's recent emergence as a "worshiper," and—being a visual work—it also provides a product bridge between Smith's CD released last year (also titled *Worship*) and his new October CD release, titled *Worship Again*. The DVD includes songs from both projects and was filmed at the Skyreach Centre, a hockey arena in Edmonton, Alberta, during a youth conference last April.

After leading off with a medley of "Step by Step" (Rich Mullins) and his own "Hallelujah," Smith continued with a finely played set list that included classics such as "Open the Eyes of My Heart" and "Awesome God," as well as a cover of U2's "40." The trilogy of "Breathe," "Let It Rain" and "Agnus Dei" climaxed with the audience of 15,000 singing the chorus without accompaniment for close to five minutes, in what appeared to be a spontaneous expression.

By this time the person with me had segued from tears into a quiet personal encounter with God. It offered visual evidence that *Worship* delivers on its theme. Let's hope Smith forges

deeper into this type of musical and spiritual expression.

Jimmy Stewart

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Discovering God's Purpose for Your Life

At one time or another we all have asked ourselves the universal question: What on earth am I here for? The good news is that pastor and author Rick Warren has written a book to help answer that question. It is titled *The Purpose Driven Life*, the sequel to Warren's blockbuster volume *The Purpose Driven Church*, which has sold more than a million copies since its release in 1995.

Organized into 40 short chapters, the book can be read as a daily devotional or used for small-group study. Compelling questions also are included for personal reflection and group discussion. "You were made by God and for God, and until you understand that, life will never make sense," Warren writes. "But if you'll make a great commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, you'll make a great Christian."

Warren suggests God created people for five purposes. He says we were planned for God's pleasure, formed for God's family, created to be like Christ, shaped for serving God and made for a mission. "Most books on purpose miss the point," he says. "Life is not about you finding yourself; it's about you fulfilling."

Other Purpose Driven-related products also are available, including a companion journal and a CD titled Songs for a Purpose Driven Life. Based on the content of the book, the album spans a variety of musical genres from pop to gospel to contemporary Christian.

G. Sean Fowlds

Charisma Recommends

Experiencing the Father's Embrace

By Jack Frost, Charisma House,
238 pages, paperback, \$.

Author Jack Frost introduces the love of Father God in a way that has changed the lives of thousands who have heard him minister on the subject. Frost helps readers untie themselves from religious duty and aggressively pursue the love of God—which can heal past hurts and rid them of unconscious pain.

Spiritual Secrets to Weight Loss

By Dr. Kara Davis, Siloam Press,
233 pages, paperback, \$.

For those struggling to lose weight, the real root of obesity may not be physical hunger, but spiritual hunger. So says Dr. Kara Davis, an assistant professor of clinical medicine and an internist at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. Many Christians are out of shape spiritually, she says, and their “silver bullet” is in understanding the power of the fruit of the Spirit to work miracles in their lives. Examining each fruit, Davis writes that a life in the Spirit could be a Christian’s secret weapon for losing weight.

Kissing the Face of God

By Sam Hinn, Charisma House,
224 pages, paperback, \$.

Author Sam Hinn feeds an insatiable hunger to develop a more intimate relationship with God as he urges readers to develop a lifestyle of worship. In this revealing message, Hinn weaves together the coming move of God with his personal encounters with the Holy Spirit. His unforgettable stories will help readers develop a practical lifestyle of worship—without a worship leader, vocalists, keyboard or music. Speaking to all generations, Hinn urges men and women to live every day in close proximity to God, where they will see more of His glory, His presence and His character, and then imitate Him.

When Heaven Is Silent

By Ed Montgomery, Creation House Press,
195 pages, paperback, \$.

Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? Author Ed Montgomery asks the tough questions Christians “have been told they must not ask.” Writing as a father who lost his 14-year-old daughter to cancer, Montgomery probes the issues of tragedy and triumph, pain and purpose to show how they are intimately connected. He says readers will discover how to pick up the broken pieces in their lives and shape them into steppingstones that lead to a place of restored faith, hope, peace and joy.

The Twelve Transgressions

By Sergio Scataglini, Charisma House,
228 pages, paperback, \$.

Christians with even the best intentions commit transgressions that can release poison in their marriages, families, careers and the body of Christ. Author Sergio Scataglini acknowledges this and shows readers how to avoid falling into these traps. Profiling 12 biblical characters who loved God yet made costly mistakes, Scataglini explains how readers can dodge such sins as using carnal means to reap divine benefits, fearing man more than God, using godly anger in ungodly ways, putting charisma over character and failing to set boundaries. These sins lurk in the shadows, he writes, to hinder holiness and block a believer's relationship with God.

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