

Vibes

The Lost Apostle...Searching for the Truth About Junia

By Rena Pederson, Jossey-Bass

Publishers, hardcover, 288 pages, \$.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul closes with greetings to several people, two of whom he hails as outstanding apostles. In spite of the church's position on women in leadership today, one of the names of these two persons, in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts, is the feminine name "Junia." Award-winning journalist Rena Pederson was astounded to find a woman referred to as an apostle in Scripture and decided to investigate Junia thoroughly. Pederson tracks down this obscure woman by sifting through written commentaries of the early church and traveling to the places Junia ministered. She also takes a look at Junia's contemporaries, Phoebe, Priscilla and other women of note. This book makes for enlightening and thought-provoking reading. One of the top women in the news business, Pederson served as an editor for the Dallas Morning News for 16 years and is currently a speech writer in Washington, D.C.

Deborah L. Delk

It's ironic that David Foster dedicates his book *A Renegade's Guide to God: Finding Life Outside Conventional Christianity* to pastors, since they are likely to be the group most upset by his pointed critique of the church in America. Still, the Nashville, Tenn., emergent church leader writes passionately about the need to reject lifeless legalism and religious tradition to embrace an inspiring walk with Christ. Foster is at his best when he talks about the need for living in the freedom God gives, rejecting mind-numbing conformity and adherence to man-made rules. One burning example concerns a

sermon he preached at his alma mater's chapel service. He later learned his lukewarm seminary reception stemmed from not preaching from a leather-bound Bible and failing to wear a suit. Yet, Foster is guilty of oversimplification. For example, he never fully explains why he rejected an overture to join an anti-lottery campaign in Tennessee or the identity of the "morality police." Still, his call for a more vibrant, invigorating form of faith is a valuable contribution to the ongoing conversation about Christianity in the 21st century.

Ken Walker

The Way of the Wild Heart

By John Eldredge, Nelson Books,
hardcover, 256 pages, \$.

It would be easy to assume that John Eldredge's *The Way of the Wild Heart: A Map for the Masculine Journey* is a book for men. Actually, it is a book about men. Eldredge leads his reader through the six stages of becoming a man (Boyhood, Cowboy, Warrior, Lover, King and Sage), and describes the consequences when the path is not followed or stages are not fully developed. As a good guide should, Eldredge points out the markers along the way and provides valuable information so the travelers can gain useful insights as they follow. Eldredge offers plenty of encouragement and suggestions to help men raise their sons through each stage, even if they didn't get that guidance from their own fathers and have missed a stage or two themselves. Mothers and wives would also benefit from Eldredge's teachings. A companion workbook is available.

Jeff Friend

Praying the Book of Job

By Elmer L. Towns, Destiny Image,
softcover, 190 pages, \$.

Vice President of Liberty University and author Elmer L. Towns presents his latest book, *Praying the Book of Job*. Chapter by chapter, Towns provides an easy-to-understand explanation of each stage of the trials Job endured. He gives further insight and background about the attitudes of Job's three advisers and the condition of their own hearts, allowing readers to gain perspective into how they themselves respond to trials, or how they respond to others around them when suffering befalls them. Ending each chapter with a prayer, Towns encourages the reader to take the prayer as their own to God in order to prepare their hearts for a time when they are in need of comfort and encouragement, and when they are in a season of being a comforter and encourager for someone else. This book is ideal for anyone who wants to move beyond seeing things on the surface and who has a desire to see everything around him with fresh eyes and a humble spirit.

Heidi Ippolito

Journey to the Mountain of God

By David D. Ireland, Ph.D.; FaithWords;
hardcover; 320 pages; \$.

Author of *Perfecting Your Purpose* David Ireland writes *Journey to the Mountain of God: Pursuing Intimacy with Your Creator* to teach on the blessing of intimacy with the Lord. With Moses and the Israelites on their journey to Mount Sinai as an example, Ireland breaks down this journey into three steps and takes the reader through a 40-day journey to greater spiritual intimacy. Ireland teaches on the preparation of our hearts, learning to trust, refocusing our minds and determining where our treasures lie. He also touches on how Christians should respond to the conviction of the Lord, throwing off everything that weighs us down and teaching us a healthy fear of the Lord. This book is great for anyone who is seeking to be

challenged in his walk with God and ready for deeper, fuller intimacy with Christ.

Heidi Ippolito

MUSIC

Hiding Place

By Don Moen, Integrity Music.

Don Moen has been an influential leader in worship music for the last 20 years. His latest project, Hiding Place, produced by David Hamilton (Michael W. Smith, Twila Paris), is a new collection of tracks for use in personal or corporate worship events. Highlights include the piano praise of "He Never Sleeps," the upbeat pop of "Fresh Fire," the mellow prayer of "Break Through" and of "Revelation Song," which blends in world music along with spoken Scriptures and spontaneous sounds of worship. On the tender title track, Moen sings about a place of dependence and comfort. With an atmosphere that is often low-key and fitting for personal reflection, Hiding Place is a worthwhile worship release from a gifted singer-songwriter.

Dewayne Hamby

Life Changing

By Smokie Norful, EMI Gospel.

Grammy Award-winner Smokie Norful is regarded as a distinctive voice in gospel music. Since he released his last CD, Nothing Without You, he has become pastor of Victory Cathedral Worship Center in Chicago. Shortly after the church's first anniversary, Norful released his third album, Life Changing.

This 45-minute, 10-track CD is a bit brief in length, but it is not short on quality, and even offers a few surprises. Life Changing features Norful's signature vocals on such soulful ballads as "Um Good" and "Run Til I Finish." Norful also gets his dance groove on with such tracks as "Put Your Hands Together" and "Great and Mighty." He includes a nice surprise with the soulful remake of Whitney Houston's "Run to You" to refer to God always being there to run to. This release is a sign of his consistency in the music industry as well as in ministry.

Twanna Powell

You alone

By Echoing Angels, INO Records.

Echoing Angels, a five-piece band from Atlanta, makes its national debut on INO Records with You Alone. The band delivers inspirational messages through a collection of pop-rock tracks. Highlights include the power ballad "Coming Back to Life," the catchy rock of "Let Go," the celebration of "Free" and the acoustic-led praise of "You Alone." The tunes are generally praise-oriented, which isn't surprising considering the band's years of leading worship for churches around the country. You Alone does a valiant job of showcasing the formerly independent band and its rock influences (Lifhouse, Matchbox 20) while also introducing it to a broader audience.

Dewayne Hamby

A Fresh Wind

By Micah Stampley, Levitical Records.

In 2005 Micah Stampley emerged as one of gospel's breakout

artists. His last album, Songbook of Micah, was the second highest debut on Billboard's Gospel Chart for a male gospel artist in history. His sophomore release, A Fresh Wind: The Second Sound, features 14 tracks filled with exuberance and passion about God's love. A Fresh Wind is the first project released on Levitical Records, an entrepreneurial venture Stampley has launched with his wife and songwriting partner, Heidi. It features such high-spirited tracks as "We Lift You Up," "No Compromise" and "Holy Visitation." Stampley also ministers soulfully on such tracks as "You Are Lord" and "Unfailing Love." A Fresh Wind is a unique offering of music for the heart and soul.

Twanna Powell

Where to begin

By Jared Anderson, Integrity Music.

Lead singer for Desperation Band, Jared Anderson releases his solo debut, Where to Begin, which seamlessly integrates his passion for worship with a modern pop-rock edge. Using electronic elements and soaring guitars, the large, corporate worship leanings of the songs seem to disappear as they become personal and intimate. As a vocalist, Anderson ably captures the mood of each moment. Highlights include the reworking of Anderson's tunes "Rescue" and "Hear Us From Heaven." Other features include the acoustic light country sound of "Every Time," the melodic piano-pop of "Lost in Heaven" and the tender piano ballad "Amazed." Although it's not always an impressive task to re-record songs, Anderson and producer Pete Kipley take the popular tunes on Where to Begin to a whole new realm, creating a fresh, captivating sound.

Dewayne Hamby

Fiction

Thriller

Head Game

By Tim Downs, WestBow Press,
hardcover, 368 pages, \$22.

Cale, Kirby and Pug were all part of a psychological operations team during Desert Storm. Their job was to create propaganda material to convince Iraqi troops to surrender. They accomplished their mission. But one enemy commander has never forgotten what they did and he is determined to pay them back with mind games of his own.

Contemporary

Ever After

By Karen Kingsbury, Zondervan,
softcover, 370 pages, \$.

In the sequel to Even Now, Emily Anderson is at college and getting to know Army reservist Justin Baker. Their relationship inspires those around them, including Emily's reunited birth parents, Shane and Lauren. But can they overcome their differences and welcome this second chance?

Suspense

Grave Risk

By Hannah Alexander, Steeple Hill,
softcover, 368 pages, \$.

For nurse Jill Cooper, the death of beloved high school principal Edith Potts was a shock. When two former sweethearts return to town, Jill has more emotions to handle. Then there's another death in town. Was it an accident or murder?

New On DVD

Lost: A Sheep Story
Integrity Publishers
\$

Sam the Ram is at the beach—all alone. Farmer Bob realizes Sam is lost, and he will not stop searching until he finds the ram. Children will understand God loves His children very much. He'll do what He needs to do to make sure they are safe. This DVD runs for 60 minutes with bonus features, including a read-along storybook and a letter-song music video.

Thank You God for ... Adventures in Imagination

Exclaim Entertainment
\$

Boz, Drew and Gracie are back for more lessons and fun. This 45-minute DVD will show children that the world of imagination is a gift from God. Kids will also learn how to think of creative ways to help others. This DVD includes 11 songs and bonus features such as a video scrapbook, a Boz dress-up game and a read-along book.

Love's Abiding Joy

Fox Home Entertainment
\$

The Love Comes Softly series by author Janette Oke continues to come alive on screen. Love's Abiding Joy was first released in theaters in October and is now available on DVD. Willie and Missie LaHaye have made the arduous journey West and are now settled and raising a family. With the railroad now connecting East and West, Missie's father, Clark, can come for a visit. But the reunion is overshadowed by sorrow as the family faces tragedy. Love's Abiding Joy is rated PG for mild thematic content.