

FamilyFiction

November 2017

A close-up portrait of author Jan Karon. She has short, curly, light brown hair and is smiling slightly. She is wearing a light blue turtleneck sweater under a grey and white striped cardigan. Her earrings are gold with turquoise teardrop pendants.

Contemporary Author **JAN KARON**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Randy Singer | Melanie Dobson | Robin Jones Gunn
Animated film *The Star* | 30+ New Releases

PLUS: 2017 Christmas Gift Guide

She's determined to give her baby a better life.
Could a Christmas miracle
make it possible?



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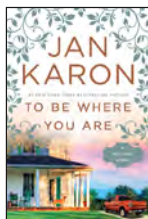
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Features



Contemporary author **JAN KARON** answers questions about her midlife career transition, her bucket list, and her beloved Mitford friends.

Suspense author **RANDY SINGER** shares what inspired *Rule of Law*, the challenges of writing a political thriller in today's political climate, and how his faith impacts his storytelling.



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New Releases & Bestsellers

Amish

Contemporary

Historical

Romance

Speculative

Suspense

Children's

YA/Teens

Comics/Animation

Movies/DVDs

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Publisher/GM

Ross Cluver
Ross@FamilyFiction.com

Managing Editor

Deb Patterson
Deb@FamilyFiction.com

Editor-at-Large

Chris Well
Chris@FamilyFiction.com

Design & Digital Production

Ross Cluver

National Account Executive Salem Media Group

DeDe Donatelli-Tarrant
805.987.5072
dede@salempublishing.com

Web Ad Traffic Coordinator Web & Social Media Support

Brandon Woolum
BWoolum@salempublishing.com

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VeggieTales

New VeggieTales in the City episodes on Netflix (Animation)

Stories will revolve around Bible-centered values like telling the truth, trusting God, and the value of friendship.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/new-veggietales-city-episodes-netflix>

Krista Phillips

The Engagement Plot will sweep fans of “The Bachelor” off their feet! (Romance)

When all seems lost, it’s only with help from above that Hanna and Will may find their happily-ever-after.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/fall-in-love-with-the-engagement-plot-from-krista-phillips>

Irene Hannon

Three-time RITA Winner Irene Hannon launches explosive Code of Honor series (Suspense)

Mind-bending story will have readers doubling back to retrace their steps to figure out what they missed!

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/three-time-rita-winner-irene-hannon-launches-explosive-code-honor-series>

Paul, Apostle of Christ

Affirm Films starts production on feature Paul, Apostle of Christ (Movies)

Biblical drama starring Jim Caviezel explores the last days of Paul’s life under Emperor Nero in Rome.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/affirm-films-starts-production-feature-paul-apostle-christ>

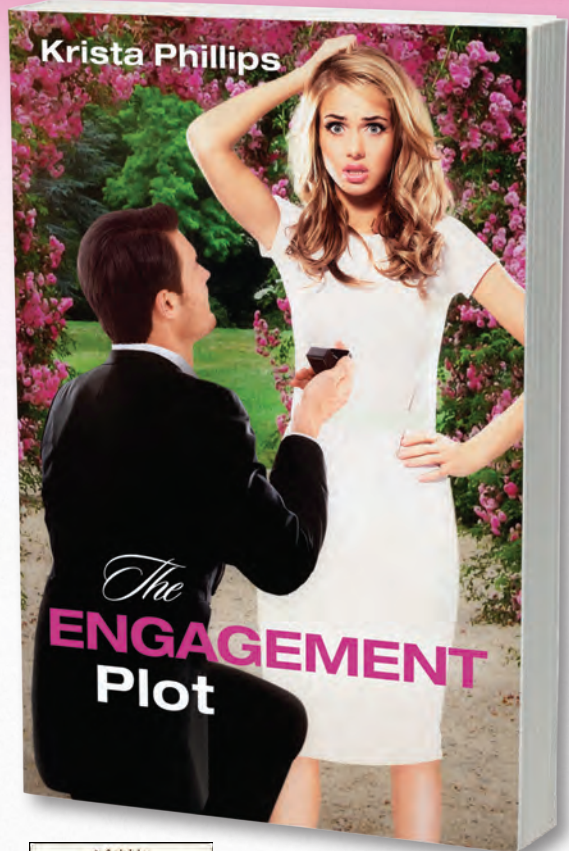


Can Hanna & Will Find *True Love* amid the Bright Lights of Reality TV?

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CONTEMPORARY: Jan Karon

Savoring the Journey

Raised on a North Carolina farm, **Jan Karon** had a lifelong dream to be an author, penning her first novel as a young girl. However, she didn't pursue that dream until she turned 50, when she left her career in advertising to begin the hard work of learning to write fiction. After struggling for ideas, Jan awoke one night with an image of an Episcopal priest firmly fixed in her mind. That inspired the character of Father Tim Kavanagh, the central figure in a series of stories set in the fictional town of **Mitford**. Jan has now released the 14th title in the bestselling Mitford series, ***To Be Where You Are*** (G.P. Putnam's Sons). Here, Jan answers our questions about her midlife career transition, her bucket list, and her beloved Mitford friends.

You wrote your first novel at age 10. What was it about, and what inspired you to take on such an ambitious project?

It was about a young woman named Emmaline, based solidly upon Scarlett O'Hara. I had just seen the movie and read the book, which is a lot of fodder for a young mind. I had been given the heartfelt understanding at age 10 that I would be an author.

Before becoming an author, you had an accomplished career in advertising. The transition from your success in that field to becoming a published novelist wasn't the easiest. What kept you going during the lean times?

What kept me going was prayer and the sense that I wasn't to "look back." My faith became a truer relationship during that time. I had difficulty writing my first novel and had to abandon

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it; that's when the Mitford story began to come to me. I spent a couple of years in the valley, which is the place of fertility, and I began to learn the wisdom of "giving thanks in everything."

What advice would you give to a young, aspiring novelist?

Sit down. Begin. Goethe said, "Whatever you would do, begin it. Boldness has a courage, genius and magic in it." Once you have found courage to begin, I recommend following Nietzsche's "long obedience in the same direction." Without perseverance, we are sunk.

For our readers who may not know, will you tell again how the Mitford series began? I'm talking about the catalyst that made you want to create these wholesome stories, and then also the story of Father Tim introducing himself to you.

I seldom read a contemporary bestseller, and decided I needed to lighten up and read contemporary authors. I chose a book from the shelves of my small-town library. Holy smoke! Obviously, there was no balm in Gilead.

I decided to write a book I would like to read, and I had an odd inspiration from a mental image of a priest walking down a village street. Not much to go on, but I got up and went ... to my computer, at 2 a.m.

Two chapters later, I took the manuscript to my local newspaper editor. "What do you think I have here?" I asked, because I really didn't know. He said, "I don't know either, but let's run it." For two years, "At Home in Mitford" was published weekly in a newspaper then costing a dime. People liked it.

As Margaret Mitchell famously said, “In a weak moment, I have written a novel.” Okay, so it took two years to write, but there it was. A book! And it took two years to sell it.

Dear reader, this is a long story. The short story is, people like having a book that provided laughter and refuge. No cussin’, no graphic sex, no mayhem. Just ordinary people living ordinary lives. Revolutionary!

Why do you think readers have been so drawn to these stories about ordinary, small-town life?

They can relax in a Mitford book because they feel safe. And they get to see this universal small town through the same pair of eyes, almost all the time, through fourteen novels. So they build a relationship with Father Tim, and he is nice enough to be with. Has a sense of humor, a genuine ardor for giving of himself, and knows how to be pretty honest with himself and others. There are worse ways to spend reading hours!

For you, what has been the most fulfilling part of writing this series? What has been the hardest part?

The fulfillment is there all the time because my stories are essentially character-driven. I like nothing better than going “inside the skin” of a character, seeing them interact with other characters. They are pretty darned real to me and live in my head as if in the upstairs room of a house.

Maybe the hardest part of writing for me is separating my writing life from my actual life. These two lives wage an intense competition for my time and energies. I will spare you the details.



Which character has surprised you the most?

Ah. I find nearly all of them surprising. Which is a good thing, as I like to be surprised. Maybe young Grace Murphy has been the most delightful surprise. She is mentioned in *Somewhere Safe with Somebody Good*, and is “going on seven” in the new novel. I have loved finding her out.

Can you give our readers a teaser of what to expect from *To Be Where You Are*? And is Father Tim coming to terms with retirement, after several years of struggle?

Well, yes, he thought he was through with all that agonizing and having nothing “major” to do. And then, of course....

With all of your achievements, what remains on your bucket list? What dreams is God enlivening in your heart now?

I would like to explore art, my first love. Would enjoy living in France for two months. Maybe the same in Italy.

I wish to explore the possibility of writing a historical novel or a collection of short stories. Definitely not an autobiography, although I have designed the cover.

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What are you looking forward to doing this year?

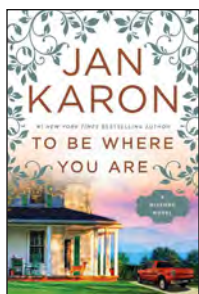
Letting my soul catch up with my body. Savoring this life God has so generously given me.

Thank you for your time with us, and is there anything I didn't ask that you would like our readers to know?

Allow me to repeat what Goethe said, "Whatever you would do, begin it. Boldness has courage, genius and magic in it." Thank you so much for inviting me into your lovely magazine. What a brilliant idea to give us your curated guide to worthy reading. **FF**

Visit Jan Karon's author page here:

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To Be Where You Are

A Mitford Novel

Jan Karon

G.P. Putnam's Sons



Jan Karon is the author of the bestselling series of Mitford novels featuring Father Timothy Kavanaugh, an Episcopal priest, and the fictional village of Mitford. There are over 40 million Mitford and Father Tim novels, children's books, and CDs in print.

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SUSPENSE: Randy Singer

Above the Law?

In a world of political accusations and threats of war, what does the public need to know, and what is better left unsaid for our own protection? In his latest legal thriller, ***Rule of Law*** (Tyndale House), award-winning author and attorney **Randy Singer** weaves a gripping page-turner that explores the inner workings of the White House, the CIA and the State Department in dealings with foreign governments. Drawing from one of his own recent cases, Singer gives readers a glimpse of what is really going on behind the headlines of today's international events. In this interview, the author shares what inspired *Rule of Law*, the challenges of writing a political thriller in today's political climate, and how his faith impacts his storytelling.

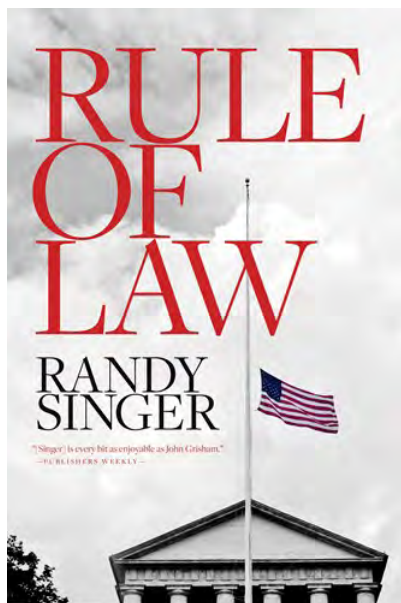
***Rule of Law* is a political thriller where the defendant is the president of the United States. what inspired you to go in this direction?**

Two remarkable people inspired me to write *Rule of Law*. They are both clients of my law practice.

Rule of Law begins with a SEAL Team raid of a prison camp in Yemen where the Houthi rebels are housing two important political prisoners.

Mark McAlister was working for the United Nations on October 20, 2015, in Yemen when he was captured by the Houthi rebels (who believed he was working for the CIA). For the next six months Mark was confined to a small, windowless cell where he was abused and interrogated. Through it all, he never re-

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nounced his faith. On the contrary, he boldly told his captors that he was a follower of Jesus. After they took his Bible, Mark would pace his small cell, praying and reminding himself of the miracles of Jesus.

“Lord, if you can walk on water, you can get me out of this cell. Lord, if you can heal the blind, you can get me out of this cell. Lord, if you can come back from the dead after three days, you can get me out of this cell.”

Six months into his captivity, Mark was miraculously released by his Houthi captors. By then, he had won their respect and developed a relationship with them. I had Mark share his testimony with my church, which can be accessed along with the message I preached that day.

The second person who inspired this book was Dana Wise. She is the widow of a former Navy SEAL who attended the church I pastor and who was killed by a terrorist in Afghanistan. Dana's grace and class in the midst of tragedy have been an incredible testimony to so many people. The main character in this book is a young female lawyer who is on a mission to avenge the death of her boyfriend, a Navy SEAL killed in the line of duty. The strength and class of Dana served as a great model for my protagonist. Dana shared her story on Memorial Day at our church, which can be seen, along with my message.

In *Rule of Law*, I want readers to experience triumph in the midst of tragedy, and justice rising out of pain.

What are the pros and cons of publishing a political thriller during a time when political discourse has become so vicious?

The cons are easy to identify. First, people have political fatigue from being bombarded with polarizing political messages every day. I've even seen a few reviews of *Rule of Law* by readers who were reluctant to pick up the book because they were so tired of politics, and who could blame them?

Second, there is the potential for people's political biases to distort the story. If the story is realistic (and I hope it is), people will be looking for real-life parallels. Who does the president represent? Which fictional justices on the Supreme Court represent which real-world justices? The danger here is that people will react strongly against the book if they perceive that my "message" is not consistent with where they stand. After all, Hollywood has become so political, authors must be as well—right?

Third, because the events are so close to real life, there is a danger that what happens in the real world might make the book's plot outdated or, on the other hand, track so close to the book that it looks like I intentionally exploited current events to sell my novel. In fact, after the story was written, a SEAL team raid in Yemen did result in loss of life and people wondered if the mission had been compromised (which is exactly what happens in the opening chapters of *Rule of Law*). I addressed that in my author's note:

I did not know when I wrote this story that its premise would soon unfold in real life. In January 2017, a SEAL team raid in

SOMEBODY HAD TOLD HER THAT
GRIEF WAS A COMPANION ON A
JOURNEY, NOT JUST A MOMENT
IN TIME, AND TONIGHT IT
WALKED HEAVY BESIDE
HER, REMINDING HER
OF EVERYTHING
SHE HAD LOST.



Yemen resulted in a tragic loss of life. There were reports that the raid may have been compromised.

Though this is a work of fiction, the issues in this book are real. We owe it to our brothers and sisters in the military to think deeply about these topics.

Well, with all those cons, it would make one wonder why I would venture into such politically charged waters. One of my

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main reasons is this—I believe that stories can allow us to think about important issues in a context where our normal biases do not automatically kick in and spit out the “right” answer. I’ve heard it said that while works of fiction are by definition not literally true, they help us address and process “true truth.”

By creating an entirely fictional world inhabited by characters who bear no real resemblance to our current politicians, I want to help readers think about some big issues we face as a nation. How much power should the president have? What limits are there on the president’s ability to order military action or drone strikes under the auspices of the CIA? Is he (or she) subject to the law like everyone else? What happens when we use the CIA to fight shadow wars with drones and special forces? What about the civilian casualties? And most importantly, are we slowly allowing the war on terror to reshape our values as a nation? We must be careful that in destroying the devil, we don’t become one of his demons.

What do you want readers to take away after reading *Rule of Law*?

Appreciation for what our SEAL teams do. Inspiration to fight for justice. And information—sometimes disturbing information—about the way our foreign policy and shadow wars are actually conducted.

On the spiritual side, I want to remind them that God will give us the courage and strength even in our darkest days to do what He has called us to do. The same power that brought Jesus back from the dead is alive in us (Eph. 1:19-20).

As a suspense writer who's a Christian, in what ways does your faith impact how you write stories with crime?

The Bible is full of stories of crime and contains lots of “legal thriller” themes as well. We live in a fallen world and God’s great grace and redemption are displayed most powerfully in these tragic circumstances. “Where sin abounds, grace abounds more” (Rom. 5:20).

Jesus is our advocate and one of our callings is to seek justice and advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves. That is part of what my protagonist is doing in this story.

In a broader sense, great sacrifice demonstrates great love. My commitment as a Christian who writes about crime and some of the darker sides of the human nature is not to glamorize this sinfulness but to instead use it to demonstrate God’s power to redeem even hopeless situations.

You're a pastor, lawyer, and novelist—of those three facets of your life. Do your three lives cross over much—that is, do your constituents just think of you one way or another?

I agree that writing Christian legal thrillers is the ideal intersection of my “lives” as pastor, lawyer, and author. I believe I can write more realistic legal thrillers because I am still in the arena—trying cases in court and experiencing the kinds of emotions, victories, and defeats that my characters experience.

I would also say that my three lives collide a fair amount. My writing is inspired by cases I’ve handled. My wife reads my initial manuscripts and gives me feedback. My daughter and I practice law together. My law partner is an elder in my church. My sermons are influenced by the storytelling tools I’ve learned as

an author and the persuasive skills I've developed as a lawyer. Everything bleeds together and feeds off everything else.

As for my constituents, they probably just think of me according to the role I play in their lives. To my church members, I'm a pastor; to my clients, a lawyer; and to my readers, an author. In today's specialized society, it seems like it should be hard to juggle all three. But if you look at it historically, it was not at all unusual for one person to fulfill numerous roles. I think it helps me to be better at each one. As a pastor, I know what my church members go through in the "secular" world each week. As a lawyer, I can help bring a spiritual perspective to bear on my client's biggest challenges. And as a writer, I can draw from both of those other wells for inspiration, experience, and ideas. **FF**

Visit Randy Singer's author profile here:
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Randy Singer is a critically acclaimed, award-winning author and veteran trial attorney. He runs his own law practice and also serves as teaching pastor for Trinity Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Randy teaches classes in advocacy and civil litigation at Regent Law School and is also involved with ministry opportunities in India. He and his wife, Rhonda, live in Virginia Beach.



HISTORICAL: Melanie Dobson

Finding Beauty In Unexpected Places

Melanie Dobson's latest novel is the historical mystery ***Enchanted Isle*** (Waterfall Press). In the spring of 1958, Jenny Winter visits England's beautiful Lake District and discovers an abandoned amusement park that holds many dark secrets—including an unsolved murder.

In this interview, Melanie Dobson explains what compels her to write historical fiction, why she chose to set *Enchanted Isle* in an amusement park, and how her faith informs how she writes.

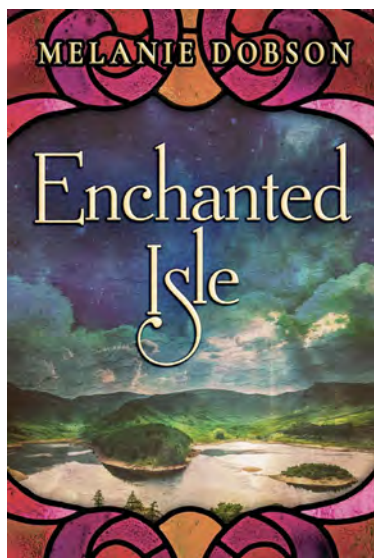
You have written a number of award-winning historical novels. What draws you to this genre?

I love to learn about history! I tend to lose track of time when I'm researching for a new novel so I have to set a personal deadline to stop my research and start writing. I enjoy reading historical fiction as well as writing it because I like being transported back in time via story and learning something new about the past.

Why did you choose to set the story of *Enchanted Isle* in the late 1950s?

This novel begins with a mystery—one of the owners of the amusement park called Enchanted Isle is killed before World War II and then his body disappears. Because of this mystery and the love story, I needed one of my characters to return to England about 20 years after the park closes. Also, I liked the nostalgia from the 1950s and writing a story about a young woman on a journey during this era to embrace the unique gifts that God has given her.

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How did you come to choose the setting of an amusement park? Is your park inspired by a particular place?

When I was a child, my family often visited a magical amusement park in Ohio called Geauga Lake. Sadly, this park is abandoned now, but the memories of it, a gallery of pictures, are forever etched in my mind. When I started working on *Enchanted Isle*, I wanted to write a story about a park once filled with beauty and wonder as well, an

amusement park that had seemingly lost its way. And I wanted to set this story in a mysterious place.

A friend introduced me to the labyrinth of lakes and rich history hidden in England's Lake District. The mystical lakes and rugged fells, home of Beatrix Potter and William Wordsworth, have inspired the writers, artists, and tourists who've flocked there for more than a hundred years, and as I explored this district, my idea about an enchanted park began to grow. I decided to build *Enchanted Isle* on an island in these lakes and create rides inspired by local legends and the nearby Irish Sea.

Would you tell our readers a little more about what they can expect from *Enchanted Isle*? What kind of story is it, and what are its central themes?

Enchanted Isle is a historical mystery and inspirational romance about embracing God's unique gifts, finding beauty in unexpected places, and restoring relationships broken in the past.

The story begins in the spring of 1958 as Jenny Winter embarks on a two-month adventure to photograph the beautiful scenery in England's Lake District. When a local named Adrian Kemp tells her why he's drawn to an abandoned amusement park on Windermere, she glimpses a kindred spirit in this reckless, haunted young man. As she opens her heart to Adrian, the two stumble into a labyrinth of mystery leading back a generation to an unforgettable romance and an unsolved murder that still casts a shadow over the lakes. As long-held secrets come to light, Jenny and Adrian work together to reconcile the past and restore a lost dream.

Which of this book's characters surprised you the most?

That would probably be Cora Banks. She is a quirky, resilient glass artist with a secret that she's harbored for about 20 years. She started out as a minor character, but while I was writing this book, I realized that the complexity of her story was significant to the plot. She becomes an antagonist in a way for Jenny, but unlike the main antagonist in the book, her opposition is motivated by concern and authentic fear.

You mentioned that Jenny's adventure began with the intent to photograph scenery. Do you also enjoy exploring the world through a camera lens, or is there another reason you gave her that hobby?

I wanted Jenny to think in pictures, often seeing what other people miss in the beauty around them. She's an art student who grew up in a sheltered society home, but as she begins this new journey in England, I wanted her to branch out and begin to use her grand imagination and the latest technology at the time—a Fujica Automagic with color film—to capture what she sees. I do love exploring the world through a camera lens as well. During

college I used a darkroom like Adrian and Jenny do in the story, but I never quite got the hang of developing film.

What is your mission as a writer?

And how does your faith inform what you write?

The power of a good story is that it can inspire and even change a reader wherever they are on their journey. I believe this is why Jesus often told parables. The same parable can communicate something very different but equally important to members of the same audience.

As a follower of Christ, my desire is to stir both hearts and souls through story. Some of my novels, I hope, inspire readers to action while others, like *Enchanted Isle*, are more like a parable to describe one of the many characteristics of God. This book is a reflection of God as creator of beauty, wonder, imagination and, ultimately, redemption.

Can you give us a hint about what you may be working on next?

Definitely! Fifteen years ago my husband and I backpacked across Europe, and our favorite place to explore was Hallstatt in Austria with its medieval village, alpine lake and castle. I'm now writing a time-slip story about Jewish heirlooms hidden near Hallstatt during World War II. The historical plot is about a young man and woman who determine to help their Jewish friends hide what the Nazis were trying to steal away. In the contemporary story, my main character discovers a list in an old book that connects her with the Austrian woman who was hiding this treasure for her friends—a woman who is guarding a secret of her own.

Is there anything I have not asked that you would like to share with *FamilyFiction* readers?

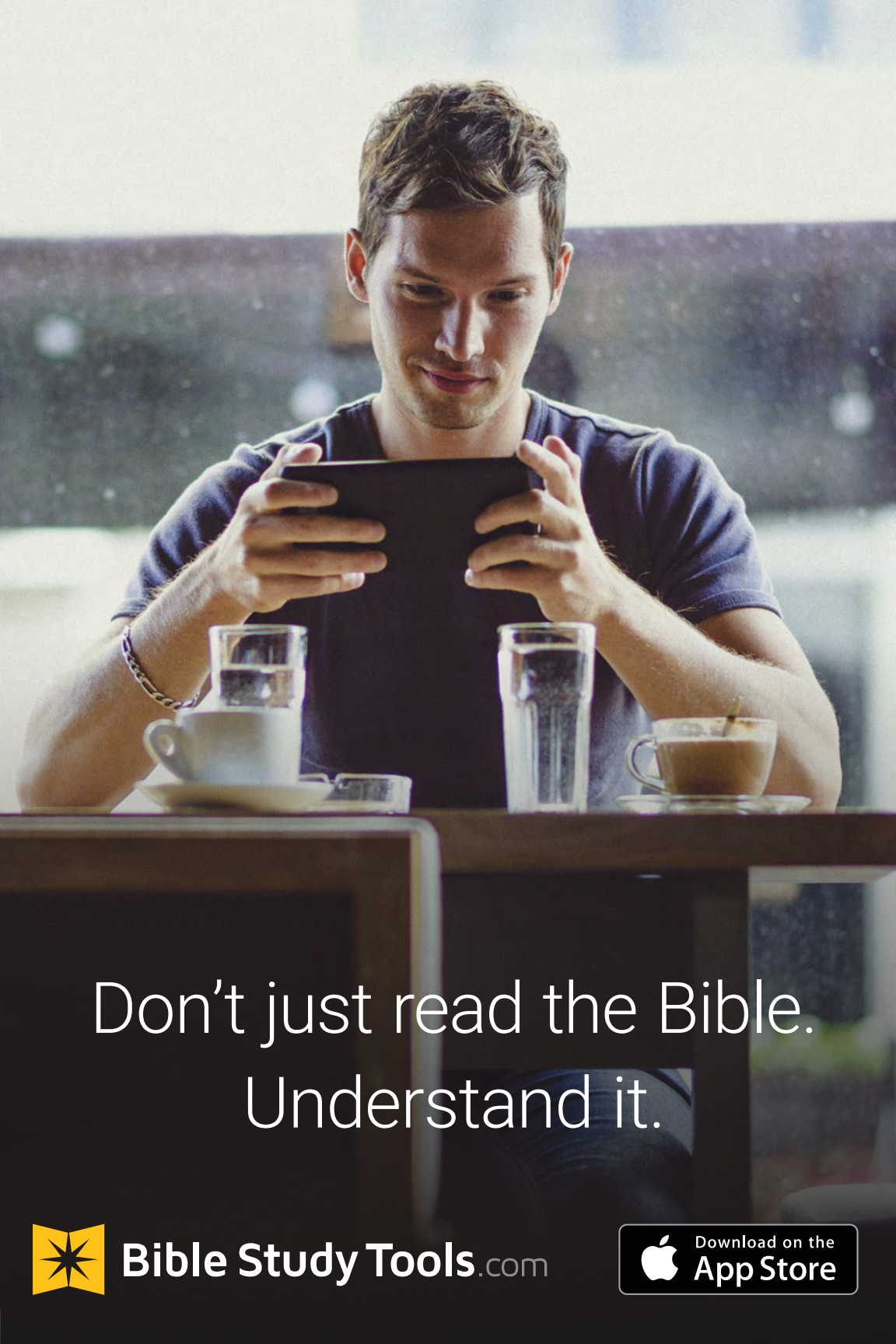
Thank you for all of these great questions! I am inspired by many things as a writer, but most of all by abandoned spaces. I want to know the stories of these old houses, towns, and parks, but I also think of them in terms of restoration, symbols of hope that God can rebuild the brokenness in all of our stories. I hope readers will be inspired by the wonder of *Enchanted Isle* along with the mystery of its treasure and the hope of restoration and redemption in our world today. **FF**

Visit Melanie Dobson's author profile:

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Melanie Dobson has written 17 historical, romance, and suspense novels—and three of her novels have won Carol Awards. Her Underground Railroad novel, *Love Finds You in Liberty, Indiana*, won Best Novel of Indiana, and *The Black Cloister* was named Foreword INDIES' Religious Fiction Book of the Year.



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CHARACTERISTIC	EXPLANATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Jesus is the Son of God.	Through His actions, His identity, His promises, and His sacrifice, Jesus is the Son of God.	16:16-17	1:1	3:22
Jesus is God who became human.	Jesus is both fully God and fully man. The divine and human natures of Jesus are united through the agency of the Holy Spirit.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus is the Messiah, the promised King of Israel.	Jesus is the Messiah, the promised King of Israel, who will rule over all of Israel.	16:16-17	1:1	1:1
Jesus came to save sinners.	Jesus came to save sinners by taking on the sin of the world.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus has power to forgive sins.	Because He is God, Jesus has the authority to forgive sins.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus has authority over death.	Jesus has power to raise the dead, as seen in the resurrection of Jesus.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus has power to give eternal life.	God has given Jesus authority to give eternal life to all who believe in Him.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus healed the sick.	Jesus has power over all of physical illness, which is why He healed many people, from the blind to the lame.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus taught with authority.	As the Son of God, Jesus has authority over nature and earth.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus is compassionate.	Jesus showed compassion for all people—those who were lost and those who followed Him.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus experienced sorrow.	Jesus experienced sorrow and many other emotions.	1:1	1:1	1:1
Jesus never disobeyed God.	Jesus lived a perfect life without sin. Even though He was tempted, He refused to sin.	1:1	1:1	1:1

READ AND UNDERSTAND LUKE

The Bible is a complete work in which every verse contains a full story. As you read the Gospel of Luke, consider reading the additional passages to discover how the whole of Scripture works together.

- Read 1:1-4
- Read 1:5-17
- Read 1:18-25
- Read 1:26-38
- Read 1:39-45
- Read 1:46-55
- Read 1:56-66
- Read 1:67-79
- Read 1:80-88
- Read 1:89-96
- Read 1:97-111
- Read 1:112-128
- Read 1:129-138
- Read 1:139-145
- Read 1:146-155
- Read 1:156-164
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- Read 1:174-182
- Read 1:183-191
- Read 1:192-199
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- Read 1:577-584
- Read 1:585-592
- Read 1:593-600
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- Read 1:617-624
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- Read 1:769-776
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- Read 1:785-792
- Read 1:793-800
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- Read 1:809-816
- Read 1:817-824
- Read 1:825-832
- Read 1:833-840
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- Read 1:897-904
- Read 1:905-912
- Read 1:913-920
- Read 1:921-928
- Read 1:929-936
- Read 1:937-944
- Read 1:945-952
- Read 1:953-960
- Read 1:961-968
- Read 1:969-976
- Read 1:977-984
- Read 1:985-992
- Read 1:993-1000



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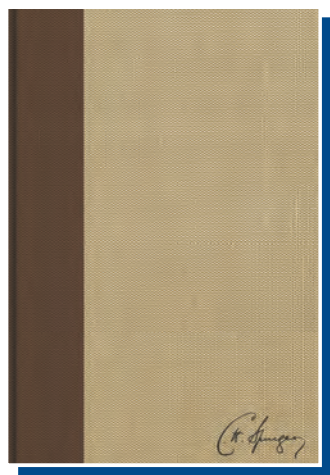
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My Christmas Prayer

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One Christmas Bear

By: Anne Vittur Kennedy

9780718090142 – **\$8.99**

Count the joys of Christmas with Christmas Bear and his arctic friends in *One Christmas Bear*, the new holiday-shaped board book for toddlers and preschoolers by Anne Vittur Kennedy.

Really Woolly Christmas Blessing

By: Bonnie Rickner Jensen

9780718097417 – **\$9.99**

Christmastime is full of God's wonder and blessings! Celebrate all the excitement of the season with our favorite lamb, Really Woolly. Sweet rhyming text, prayers, and Scripture about the greatest gift of all, the birth of Jesus, make this the perfect Christmas gift for your favorite little one.

Jesus Always: 365 Devotions for Kids

By: Sarah Young

9780718096885 – **\$15.99**

From the bestselling author of *Jesus Calling*®

Embrace the true meaning of Joy with the young believers in your life in Sarah Young's newest 365-day devotional, *Jesus Always: 365 Devotions for Kids*.

I'm Not a Scaredy-Cat (Picture Book)

By: Max Lucado

9780718074913 – **\$16.99**

Number one *New York Times* bestselling author Max Lucado will delight you and your family with the silly new picture book *I'm Not a Scaredy-Cat*. Laugh-out-loud funny, yet filled with an important message that God is near so there's no need to fear, kids will learn to put into perspective those things that frighten or worry them.

Indescribable

By: Louie Giglio

9780718086107 – **\$16.99**

Indescribable: 100 Devotions for Kids About God and Science will engage curious minds and help them discover that God's design truly is awe-inspiring. In 100 devotions on topics such as creation, the universe, our amazing bodies, and weather, kids will understand what millions of adults have gleaned from Louie Giglio's beloved message *Indescribable*.

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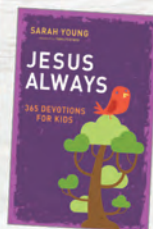
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A LIFE BEYOND AMAZING Dr. David Jeremiah

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A Life Beyond Amazing uncovers God's strategy for change and challenges you to make nine important decisions that will transform your heart, your life, and your world.

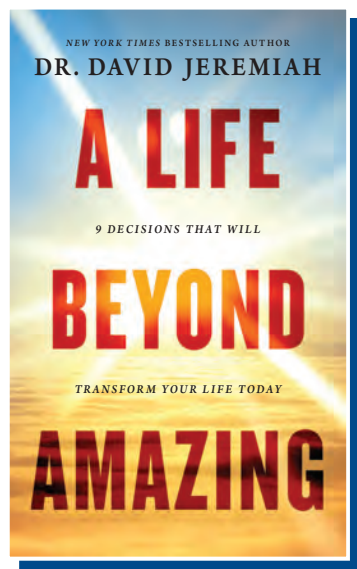
Bestselling author Dr. David Jeremiah presents the case that God calls us to a life of love and joy and peace. God's definition of a life beyond amazing also includes a life of endurance, compassion, generosity, integrity, humility, and self-discipline.

If you read the New Testament, it becomes very evident that God's intention for His Children is that they not only live a good and godly life, but a life full of meaning.

Dr. David Jeremiah is greatly burdened for people who live below the joy and fulfillment God intends. He believes an unfulfilled life is no way to exist. It was this concern that led him to write *A Life Beyond Amazing: 9 Decisions That Will Transform Your Life Today*.

In his book, study guide, and subsequent teaching series, he points us to Scripture promising us a life of blessings beyond our comprehension—a life beyond what we think might be possible.

He says, "A life beyond amazing doesn't have to start when we step into heaven. A life beyond amazing can be lived right here on earth!"



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NEW FROM DR. DAVID JEREMIAH

LIVE LIFE BEYOND WHAT YOU THINK IS POSSIBLE

Each of us has just one life to live. Our lives should count. They should matter, have purpose, and, frankly, they should be amazing. But as we look around, we see people living in defeat, in disarray, and deeply disheartened.

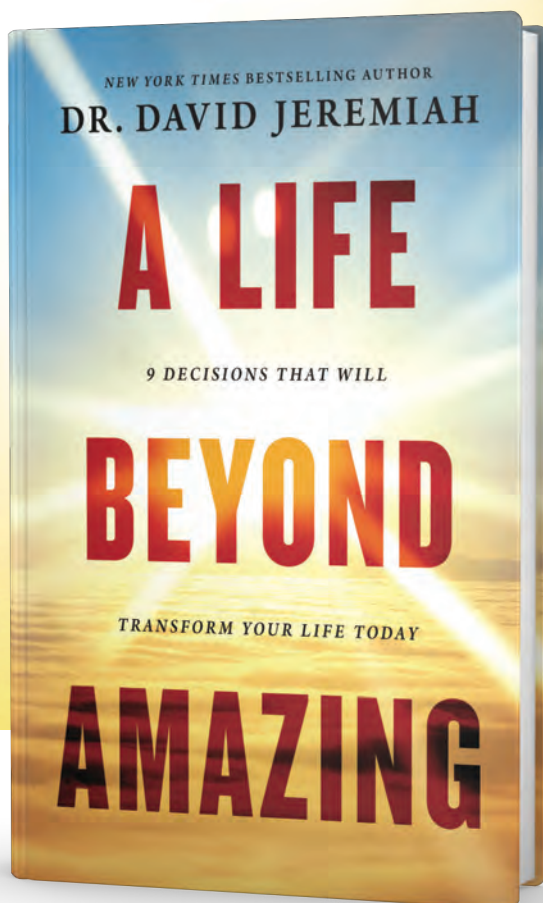
In *A Life Beyond Amazing*, Dr. David Jeremiah focuses on nine qualities that compose a life-beyond-amazing. He unpacks what it means to become the people God wants us to be and explores how the Holy Spirit helps us to develop these qualities in our lives.

"A life beyond amazing doesn't have to start when we step into heaven,"
says Dr. Jeremiah. *"A life beyond amazing can be lived right here on earth."*

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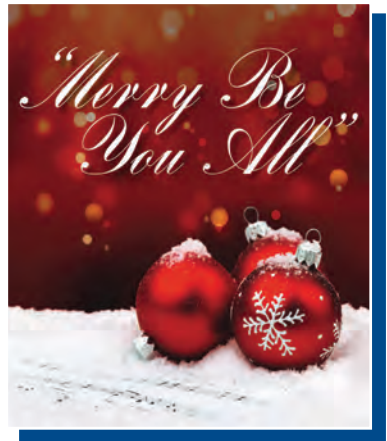
“MERRY BE YOU ALL”

Jon Seccombe

“Merry Be You All’ is a delightful new Christmas Carol from Jon Seccombe, one of Australia’s leading composers of worship music. Superbly performed by Kim Chandler (from U.K.’s ‘The Voice’ and backing vocalist for Bee Gees and Michael Bolton), ‘Merry Be You All’, is produced by Peter Stevenson of Turnaround Music Australia, (‘People/ Children of All Nations’) and is available at jonseccombemusic.com together with a wide range of carols and worship music.

Christmas is a time of celebration and ‘Merry Be You All’ hails the birth of Jesus with strong, contemporary lyrics and a powerful melody. The carol initially reaches out to all in our communities, inviting them to come and feel the joy that marks this most special time of year. We then discover that this special place is real and not just for one day of the year. It is a revolutionary day that can change us and changes all our days. The one Christmas day in which everyone is encouraged to speak kindness is transformed to become each and every day as we become ‘rich in Jesus’ love’ and sacrifice.

We encourage you to take up this bold new carol and share it with your friends; your colleagues; your family. In our modern world, Carols have the power to reach into hearts although ears may be shut to every other message of our gospel. You are invited to listen and download this carol. Fully orchestrated scores and simple piano reductions of the carol can be found at jonseccombemusic.com (made freely available to CCI users).



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Christian author **Leslie Gould** offers a new Amish series set in idyllic Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. ***A Plain Leaving*** (Bethany House) blends a heartwarming contemporary Amish romance with a slice of family history. In this interview Leslie discusses why she focuses on these three sisters, why the book is set in two different time periods, and how shunning is different from one community to the next.



***A Plain Leaving* is your first in the Sisters of Lancaster County three-book series. All of the novels are time-slip stories. What exactly are time-slip stories, and what made you decide to write a series of them?**

Time-slip stories, sometimes called dual-plot or parallel-plot stories, have both a contemporary and a historical thread. A few include time travel but most do not, including mine. I decided to write time-slip stories for two reasons. The first is that I love reading them! (Two of my favorite authors of time-slip stories are Melanie Dobson and Kate Morton.)

The second reason is that I believe our ancestors often have a bigger impact on our own lives than we realize. That said, the characters in the historical plots in this series are the ancestors of the characters in the contemporary plots. And each of my main characters has something she needs to learn from one of her ancestors.



The series follows the three Bachmann sisters—Jessica, Marie, and Leisel—in the contemporary thread. What made you decide to focus on a set of sisters?

I'm the youngest of three sisters, although I need to add that we are very different than the three sisters in the contemporary thread of this series! But I find the relationships, dynamics, and birth order of sisters fascinating. And I believe a set of sisters is a pretty powerful force in both fiction and in real life!

The historical thread in the first book takes place during the Revolutionary War. Why did you choose that time period?

William Penn promised religious freedom to the first waves of Amish who came to America in the early to mid-1700s. But once the Revolutionary War started, that religious freedom was threatened when the Patriots began expecting Amish men to serve as soldiers. Some fled to Canada while others paid a war tax. It was a trying time for Anabaptists, including Amish and Mennonites, who were nonresistant and against fighting or supporting war in any way.



Even though Jessica, the main character in the contemporary thread in *A Plain Leaving*, knows she's been shunned since she left her Amish community, she is still hurt by the actual act of it. What exactly is shunning, and why do the Amish do it?

Shunning plays out differently depending on the Amish group and district, but the reason for it is to bring the church member back into the “fold” and into fellowship. Generally, church members and family may not sit at the same table as those

who are shunned, ride in their cars, or do any type of business with them. However, shunning doesn't prohibit all social interaction—shunned members can visit their Amish families, attend weddings and funerals, and celebrate holidays together.

What do we have to look forward to in the second book in the series?

A Simple Singing is the second book in the series, and it follows the story of Marie Bachmann, the second oldest sister, in the contemporary thread. Marie has lived the most sheltered life of the three sisters, but a January vacation to the Amish settlement of Pinecraft, Florida, opens her eyes to the hurts of others. In the historical thread, Annie Bachmann finds herself nursing wounded soldiers during the Civil War and realizing that God's calling can surprise us all. **FF**

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DOES GOD QUIT?

RD QUESTIONS, DARK ROOMS

Over several books, readers have followed Christy Miller and Todd Spencer through their teens to college through marriage. Now, author **Robin Jones Gunn** is showing their adventures in parenting in the series “**Christy & Todd: The Baby Years.**” In this interview, Robin explains why she’s continued sharing the adventures of Christy and Todd as they begin a family, the challenges of writing this new chapter in their life together, and what the future holds for Christy.



Over the years, readers have followed Christy as she grew up, went to college, got married, and is now a young parent. What inspired you to continue writing about Christy and Todd?

The inspiration came from three sources. The most vocal inspiration came from the millions of Beautiful Readers who grew up with Christy and Todd. They were relentless in their requests to see the character continue because they, too, were navigating marriage and parenthood and wanted to see how Christy was doing in this next season.

Many of them sent me photos of their babies and handwritten letters sharing how they’d surrendered their lives to Christ while reading a Christy Miller book in high school. When the first Christy & Todd: The Married Years book came out, the comments poured in on social media from elated readers who felt as if an old friend had stepped back into their lives and they didn’t want to say good-bye again so could I please keep writing!

The most encouraging source of inspiration was my husband. The two of us were on a camping trip a few years ago and I was telling him all my ideas for future writing projects. He said, "If you knew you could only write one more book in your lifetime what would you write?" Without hesitation I said, "Christy and Todd in their married years." Then I told him all the reasons why there wasn't really a market for such novels and how some of my other ideas might be better.

He said, "Only do what only you can do. Your ideas for other books are fine. But only you can write about Christy and Todd." So I started writing and one story turned into six books in The Married Years and The Baby Years series.

The third source of inspiration was from the Lord. This is the most important because I always spend time praying and journaling before I start a new project. I write out a prayer of dedication to the Lord for each book and ask for His wisdom and guidance as I write. I've written over 90 books and it's amazing to look back and see God's hand all along the way.

What are the challenges of writing about Christy and Todd as young adults who are now parents?

You'd be surprised at how naturally the storylines fell into place in each book. Our two children are now grown and married and have children of their own. I watched them navigate this next season and listened to their real-life stories. We have great kids and they married wonderful spouses.

Even so, I could see that couples struggle with the same issues in each generation. For the Christy and Todd books I focused on communication, finances, and expectations. In each story they



work through these challenges and always come out closer to each other and closer to the Lord. Isn't that the challenge of every married couple? Especially during the early years?

Do you find that The Baby Years series is connecting more with longtime readers or newcomers to the characters?

I thought the books would appeal mostly to the longtime Beautiful Readers who subscribe to my newsletter and keep up with me on social me-

dia. But I've heard from many brand-new readers who told me they could relate to the characters so well in the Married Years or Baby Years books that they went back and also read the Christy Miller High School series and Christy & Todd: The College Years.

Altogether, that's 21 books about Christy. If you add the spin-off series about her Forever Friends, Sierra Jensen and Katie Weldon, that's another 19 books. For women who love binge reading, these 40 stories are ready and waiting, and brand-new readers are devouring them. I have an excellent editor who has worked with me on every book over the years. She and I have tried to make each book a standalone so that new readers will not be lost. That extra effort worked. New readers feel welcomed into the world of Christy regardless of which book they pick up first.

The many longtime readers who have enthusiastically supported the continuation of the story of Christy and Todd tell me that every new book feels like a reunion with good friends. I love hearing from Christy Miller readers who now have teen daughters and they are reading the series together and discussing the issues in each book. The themes of the stories are still relevant in this generation.

I recently met a second-generation Christy reader who was 13. She told me she was exactly like Christy and if I ever have the books made into movies, she wants to play the role of Christy. Her mom grinned and said, "I felt the same way when I read them as a teen." Then she thanked me for continuing to write stories in this series of "modern classics."

I never guessed when I wrote the first book for the girls in our church youth group that there would ever be more than one book or that they'd be called "modern classics." As Christy's best friend Katie would say, "It's a God-thing."

What do you hope readers will get out of the series?

I can tell you what they have been getting out of the series because they tell me all the time. They have found Christy and Todd to be role models as well as fictional friends. They tell me that as they read, they discover they aren't the only ones going through whatever issue is in the storyline. The camaraderie brings them comfort, hope, and sometimes direction on what they should do next in their own life.

I always pray that readers will feel their heart growing closer to God by the end of each book. I have seen that prayer answered many times over. As a matter of fact, the verse I wrote in my

journal along with the prayer of dedication for the very first novel was Psalm 102:18. “Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD.”

Do you have current plans to continue following Christy and Todd as their kids grow up?

Christy is one of the main characters in the new Gather series I’m currently writing for WaterBrook/Multnomah. I’ve taken a little turn in storytelling. The new novel, *Becoming Us*, will focus on a small group of Christy’s friends and how they gather regularly as young moms to encourage and support each other during the child-raising years. Close friendship has been a continuing theme throughout the Christy Miller stories and I knew it was time to explore how those relationships ebb and flow.

So, yes. There are more stories yet to come about Christy and Todd and their Forever Friends. Randy Alcorn once teased me that I’d be writing about Christy and Todd through the “Retirement Years” and after that, “The Millennium Years.” He might be onto something.

What are the best things that readers can do to support their favorite authors?

Aside from buying their favorite authors’ new books, it’s amazing what readers can do when they share on their social media. I have a series of Christmas novellas that have been made into Hallmark movies. When the first movie aired in November 2016, I was overwhelmed by the support of all my readers who spread the word.



Finding Father Christmas broke the network record by being the most watched and highest rated Christmas movie of 2016! I soon received an email from the President of the Hallmark Channel saying that my readers certainly “showed their support.” I agree. They did! As a result a sequel movie went into production, and *Engaging Father Christmas* will air on November 12, 2017.

I’ve seen how the power of reader support is being heard in Hollywood. When readers buy books with clear Christian values and tune in to the programs created from those books, it nudges the market to continue to provide more books and movies with the same wholesome content.

I’m so grateful to all you Beautiful Readers that have asked me to keep writing more stories for you over the years. I take your requests seriously and I hold you in my heart. **FF**

Historical Tracie Peterson

Tracie Peterson concludes her Heart of the Frontier series with ***Cherished Mercy*** (Bethany House), a tale that features danger, authentic spiritual challenges, and heartwarming romance. In 1850s Oregon Territory, tensions have reached the boiling point, and Mercy Flanagan is pushed to the limit of her strength. She and Adam must rely on their firm faith in God to make it out alive. In this interview, Tracie shares the spiritual themes of the story, what she hopes readers get out of it, and what she's writing next.



Photo: Lissa Barber Photography

What is *Cherished Mercy* about?

This book is the conclusion to the Heart of the Frontier series—a story about three sisters who came west on the Oregon Trail to start a new life. *Cherished Mercy* picks up a few years after book two, *Beloved Hope*, and focuses on the third sister, Mercy Flanagan. Mercy is trying to figure out what God wants her to do with her life. She loves teaching, and when the opportunity comes to go to the Rogue River area of the Oregon Territory to help some friends at their mission for the local Native Americans, she believes this is God's job for her.

When she gets there, however, she finds her past experiences with Indians and her new experiences are quite different. Then there's also the complication of the young pastor who is helping at the mission. Conflict arises in a twist of history that puts the white settlers as the aggressors, and somehow through it all, Mercy finds a way to deepen her walk with God and fall in love.



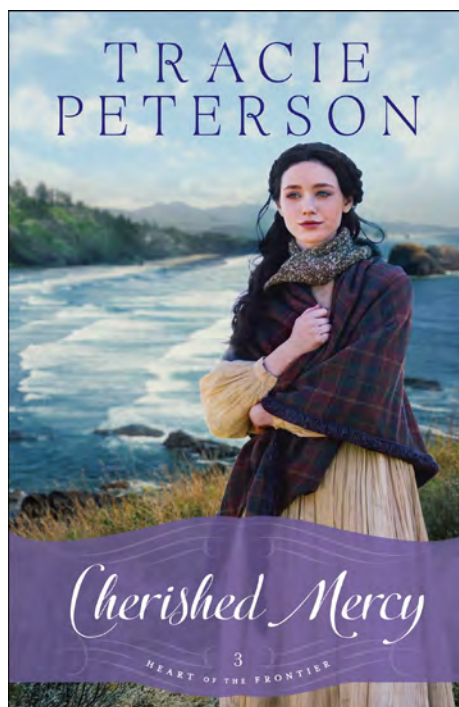
Why did you want to tell this story?

Throughout this series, I was determined to show the history of the Oregon Territory's early years and the conflict of settlers and natives. In the 1840s and '50s the government's attitude toward the Native Americans shifts from an occasional conflict to all-out war. The government sends the army west to establish forts, and an attitude of Native American "Indian" annihilation is sanctioned.

Book one, *Treasured Grace*, dealt with an attack at the Whitman Mission on the white population there. *Cherished Mercy* comes full circle to show whites attacking in unprovoked manners the various tribes along the Rogue River. But beyond the history of the day, I wanted to show Mercy Flanagan's romance, as well as some conclusions for other members of the family.

Did you do any special research for this story?

Yes. I had a great deal of fun, in fact. I got to take a jet boat ride up the Rogue River to the area where my story takes place. It's still very isolated and not overly populated, and the area I went to was quite unspoiled, so it really took me back to the time of



my story. I was able to talk to various people about life on the river, research museums and a great many books, and connect with the history of Oregon. I think it served to make the story stronger and more vivid.

What kind of spiritual theme did you use for this story?

This entire series had a strong theme of the need for forgiveness and how anger, revenge, and hatred only serve to bind the one holding those feelings. There are many situ-

ations where falsely judging others is also a strong theme. The world often bases a person's value on their appearance, and my story shows that attitude was no different back then. It's also a story about being cautious in jumping to conclusions. God is always in the mix, and sometimes things don't look like we think they should. We need to learn to trust Him with each circumstance and seek to learn what it is He's trying to teach us.

In keeping with the spiritual theme, what do you hope the reader takes away from this story?

I'd like them to see the truth about our history, for one thing. So often people are quick to blame one side or the other when it comes to fights and wars, but the history of this Territory clearly shows there were issues and problems on both sides. I'd like to think the story would make the reader think about how conflicts are usually born out of fear and escalate in misunderstanding and misconception. I'd also like the reader to find value in the biblical application woven throughout the story.

Since this is the end of the series, is there anything you'd like to say about the next project to come?

A new series will debut in March 2018 that deals with the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco and three young women who meet by chance to become inseparable friends. There will be romance and intrigue, as always, with a turn-of-the-century flair. It's a big jump from the 1850s to the 1905-1907 time period, but I think readers will enjoy the contrast. **FF**

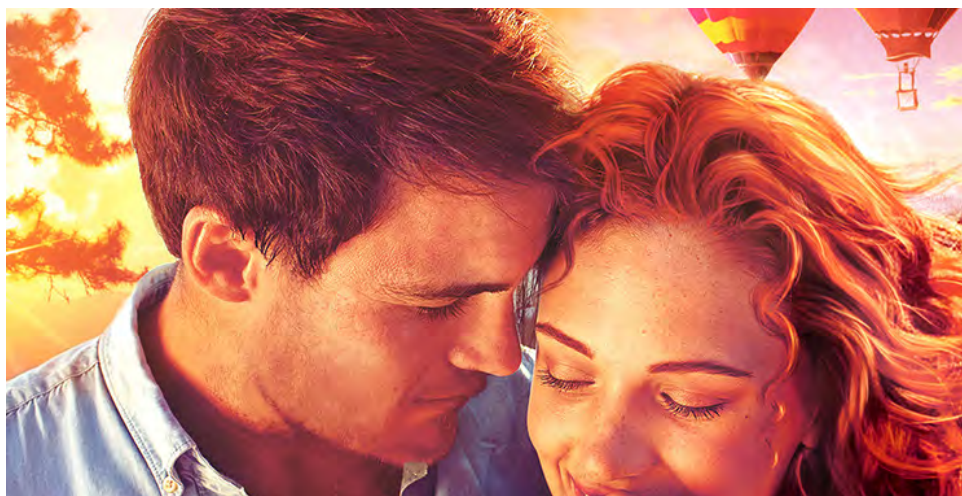
Nicole Deese is a full-time lover of humorous, heartfelt, and hope-filled fiction. Her latest **Love in Lenox** novel is ***A New Shade of Summer*** (Waterfall Press). Artist Callie Quinn is eager to draw out the untapped artistic talents of her nephew's friend— but it's the boy's straitlaced single father who can use a little color in his life. In this interview, she shares the theme of the **Love in Lenox** series, which character surprised her most, and what readers can do to support their favorite authors.



What inspired the story in *A New Shade of Summer*?

A large part of this story was actually inspired by a dear friend of mine who has been in my life since my church youth group days in the late '90s. (Throwback to the original JanSport backpack, crimped hair, and the best romantic movie of its time, *Ever After*.) I “borrowed” many of my friend's unique and free-spirited attributes as I wrote my heroine's storyline in *A New Shade of Summer*.

Her creative and joyous personality became the perfect match to the stoic (and sometimes stormy) nature of my hero, Davis Carter, who was a secondary character in *A Season to Love*, book two in the series. As an avid reader, I adore opposites-attract romances. There's something ultra-special about two people with opposing strengths and weaknesses gaining a new life-balance through the journey of love. The romantic chemistry and connection between Callie Quinn and Davis Carter quickly became one of my favorite love stories to write.



What's the overarching theme of the Love in Lenox series?

If I had to narrow it down to just one theme: hope. Our world is full of uncertainty and brokenness—broken dreams, promises, and pasts—yet hope awaits on the other side of any heartache. I strive to write honest characters who are willing to cross that bridge, no matter how wide the divide. For Callie and Davis that hope looks like the belief in a second chance at a new beginning—in life and in love.

As you were writing the series, which character surprised you the most?

I'm pretty sure all my Lenox characters have surprised me at one point or another while writing, but Willa Hart from *A Season to Love* is probably the most memorable of them all. Willa's struggle with fear and anxiety waged war on every decision she made in her life. At one point while writing my first draft, I was deeply concerned that my readers would find her too fragile to root for. But that changed during one pivotal scene near the middle of her story. In one inspired moment, the key to unlocking her courage was right there at my fingertips. I cried while writing



that particular hiking scene. Willa proved once and for all that strength has nothing to do with stature or personality ... and everything to do with the tenacity of a heart.

What are the challenges of writing romances as a Christian author?

I believe authenticity is the key to characters coming to life on the page. And, in my opinion, it's also the key to writing a faith-based storyline that reads both heartfelt and pure. At times, it's crucial for me to take

a step back from my manuscript to ensure my *author voice* isn't clouding the natural flow of dialogue between my characters. My goal is not to write a book full of inspirational wall quotes, it's to write honest words that connect to the heart of my reader.

What can readers do to support their favorite authors?

Leaving a review for an author you enjoy reading is equivalent to handing them a surprise bouquet of their favorite flower. Your words and feedback are so important to the launch of a new novel and/or to the continued success of an older novel. We seek advice on what we read from many places—friends, social media, book clubs—but online book retailers remain a huge place of influence for undecided readers. **FF**

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SHARE THIS GREAT OFFER
WITH A FRIEND!

Fantasy writer **Joan Campbell** continues her **Poison Tree Path Chronicles** with ***Heirs of Tirragyl*** (Enclave). As Nyla fights for her life, she realizes she's the sole hope for the kingdom's survival. In this interview, Joan shares how she built this world, why this book follows new characters, and the challenges of writing fantastical stories from a Christian worldview.

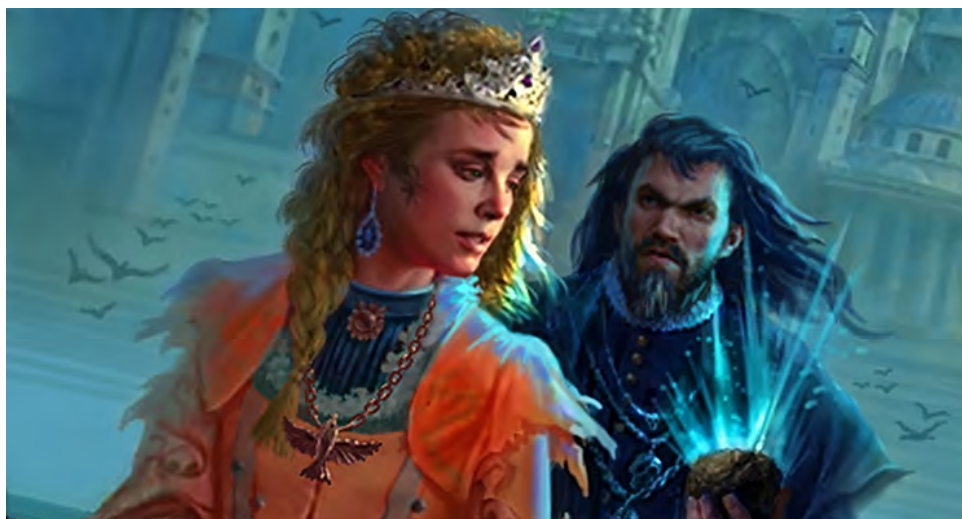


Tell us about the world of *Heirs of Tirragyl*...

Tirragyl is a divided and dangerous world, particularly for the lowborn Parashi, who keep the ominous Rif'twine forest from encroaching on the land. The world is dominated by the Brethren of Taus, a religious sect which uses magical abilities against anyone opposing them. There are also rare power rocks with different—often harmful—capabilities. Yet one of the greatest dangers that emerges in this book is the actions flowing from false beliefs, in this case the belief that Queen Nyla and her twin brother Alexor share a soul.

How did you go about building this world?

I live in South Africa, which is still a pretty divided society and that found its way into the creation of Tirragyl. Many of my ideas for making the Rif'twine dangerous came from brainstorming with my two teenage daughters. Together we thought of very creative ways a plant might kill you! The power rocks were a lot of fun to write because I just asked myself the question, 'what



would be a remarkable power to have?’ and then crafted rocks such as the Verity Gem (knowing when someone is lying) and the Mind Rock (the ability to read another’s thoughts).

The belief of Nyla and Alexor sharing a soul was inspired by a conversation I had with a Zulu girl, whose twin brother had recently died. Her family members with traditional beliefs wanted her to lie on top of her brother’s coffin and ‘fool’ the ancestors into thinking she was dead, so they wouldn’t claim her in death too. She was a Christian and refused.

Does this book follow different characters than the first one? What led you to make that choice for a series?

It still follows the storyline of the main characters from *Chains of Gwyndorr*, but adds in the storyline of Nyla and Alexor. Following the events of Book 1, the antagonist seeks to gain control of Tirragyl’s ruler and so the story naturally follows him into the palace. There, Nyla took me by surprise and just



emerged, weaving her way into the centre of the story. Some of my best characters have been ones that have forced themselves onto the page like that.

What are the challenges of writing fantastical stories with a Christian worldview?

One of my greatest challenges was simply learning to trust that my Christian worldview would emerge without my having to force it. In fantasy one is creating completely different worlds with different rules and when I first began to write I

struggled to see how I could infuse my beliefs into such a different context. Then I realised that my relationship with God is so integral to who I am that it will naturally find its way into the story. This is exactly what happened.

What are the best things that readers can do to support their favorite authors?

Engage with them—easy on social media—and spread the word about their books. This can be done by word of mouth, writing a review or sharing their social media posts. I value the smallest engagements with my readers. **FF**

**It's not enough to
publish a book.**

**You still need to
tell people about it.**



Helping You Build Your Author Platform.

BuildYourBrandAcademy.com

Fans of riveting legal suspense should check out the latest thriller from lawyer-turned-novelist **Todd M. Johnson**, ***Fatal Trust*** (Bethany House). A decades-old theft case leaves a lawyer scrambling for his very life. In this interview, Todd shares the real-life events that inspired the novel, the secret origins of his character names, and the spiritual themes woven throughout the novel.



Photo: Emily Stephenson

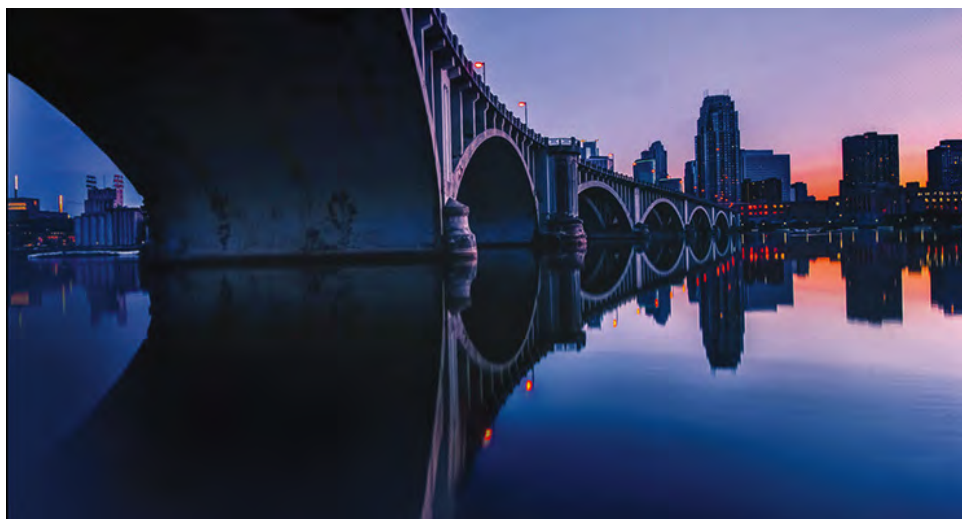
What was your inspiration for *Fatal Trust*?

While *Fatal Trust* is my third novel, it's my first book not based on a case that I or a partner handled in my real-life practice. The story was inspired by a combination of elements: my attending a Norman Rockwell art exhibition back when I was in law school, which was robbed months later—a robbery that has never been solved; an interest in the history of organized crime in the Twin Cities through the 1960s; and an interest in exploring how actions have consequences, for ourselves and for the people around us.

I believe this is part of the spiritual fabric of our world, although sometimes we don't appreciate the origin of the consequences we face or the loving care of God in helping us to overcome them.

What Christian themes did you explore in *Fatal Trust*?

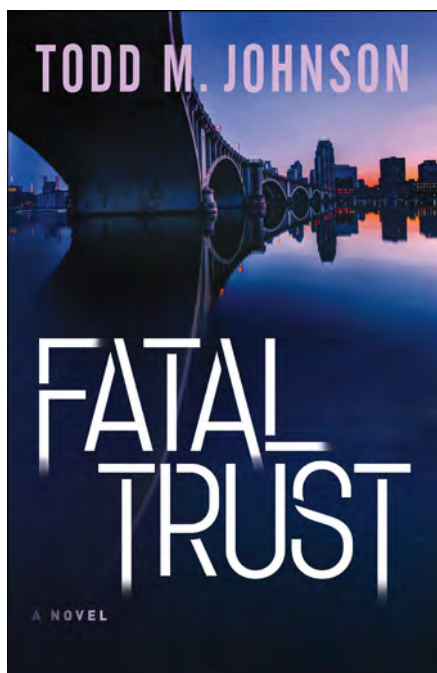
A central theme is that our actions really do have consequences. The events and characters' choices in the novel speak toward the idea that, whether intended or not, consequences come as a result of our choices and they carry a ripple effect that touches



those around us. I believe this is foundational to the world God created, particularly in its fallen state. I also believe that even if we don't plan for or foresee the consequences ourselves, part of God's genius is the way He plants the seeds to bring about the solutions to those consequences, and usually before we even realize it.

A significant part of the story involves landmarks in and around the Twin Cities. How did you select the landmarks?

I moved to Minnesota when I was 10 years old and have, with a few stints elsewhere, lived in the Twin Cities ever since. Most of the places I selected were either those I thought had significance or places that have been important in my life. These include the State Fairgrounds where I've attended dozens of fairs with friends and family; the protagonist Ian Wells' apartment, located where my wife and I first resided after getting married; Hennepin Avenue with its storied past and still a focal point for Minneapolis; the Mississippi and Stone Arch Bridge and



the Guthrie Theater overlooking the river.

Other landmarks include Summit Avenue in St. Paul, the childhood neighborhood of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald holds a special place in my heart because, like Fitzgerald, I also attended Princeton University and actually belonged to the club (Cottage Club) where he wrote *This Side of Paradise*—and from which he was ultimately expelled!

I have posted a “tour map” on my website, where quotes from the story are placed alongside photographs of these landmarks. For the State Fair and Guthrie pictures, my daughter and I visited some of the locations, and she took the photos.

The end of the story links to your first novel, *The Deposit Slip*. What’s the significance of this?

Fatal Trust ends with a linkup between its characters and the main characters from *The Deposit Slip*. It’s my intention to write a third novel that brings these two together to form a loose trilogy. Each of the books ends with matters unresolved. *The Deposit Slip* concludes with an assassin still at large, the family of a deceased lawyer unaware of the true circumstances of his death, and the lawyers who could seek revenge winding up destroyed by the story’s events.

Without giving away the plot of *Fatal Trust*, this too ends with matters unresolved—including favors owed by the characters who could exact a price from them. It's my intent that the surviving characters from both novels will face the intersection of these unresolved issues and with serious consequences.

How do you go about selecting the characters' names for your novels?

Many of the names are chosen simply because I find them interesting. I keep a list of names I think are evocative for future books. I have also reached out to friends and family to ask if they'd like me to name characters after them, with the understanding that those characters carry no intentional resemblance to them. It is purely to have fun with people I know, and the answer has always been a wholehearted "yes"—with one great exception. My wife has forbidden me to name any characters after her in my books to date, though I'm still working on her. But one of the characters in *The Deposit Slip* bears my daughter's middle name, Erin, and the protagonist in *Fatal Trust*, Ian, bears my son's name. **FF**

Movies The Star

Faith-based family film ***The Star*** tells the story of the first Christmas from the perspective of the animals who witnessed it.

“The Star brilliantly tells the story of the first Christmas from the perspective of the adventurous animals who contributed to the journey and bore witness to the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ,” said executive producer DeVon Franklin, who also produced *Miracles From Heaven*. “The entire family will laugh and be inspired as they experience the power of faith, friends, and courage through the eyes of these brave, heroic animals.”

The Star is directed by Academy Award® nominated writer/director Timothy Reckart (*Head Over Heels*); executive-produced by DeVon Franklin (*Miracles from Heaven*), Lisa Henson, and Brian Henson (The Jim Henson Company); produced by Jennifer Magee-Cook; with a story by Simon Moore and Carlos Kotkin; and screenplay by Carlos Kotkin. Digital animation by Cinesite Studios. Columbia Pictures and AFFIRM Films present in association with Walden Media, Franklin Entertainment and The Jim Henson Company, a Sony Pictures Animation Film.





SYNOPSIS

In Sony Pictures Animation's ***The Star***, a small but brave donkey named Bo yearns for a life beyond his daily grind at the village mill. One day he finds the courage to break free, and finally goes on the adventure of his dreams. On his journey, he teams up with Ruth, a lovable sheep who has lost her flock, and Dave, a dove with lofty aspirations. Along with three wisecracking camels and some eccentric stable animals, Bo and his new friends follow the Star and become unlikely heroes in the greatest story ever told—the first Christmas. **FF**

The **VeggieTales** gang returns for a second season of ***VeggieTales in the City***, which debuted September 15 exclusively on Netflix. The Veggies take off to explore the city in all-new cartoon stories that revolve around Bible-centered values like telling the truth, trusting God, and the value of friendship. Each episode will include a brand-new original song.

“We developed *VeggieTales in the City* with our current fans in mind and we hope the new series will also excite and endear a new group of VeggieTales enthusiasts,” says Leslie Ferrell, General Manager of Big Idea Entertainment. “We hope everyone joins Bob, Larry, Petunia Rhubarb, Junior, and the rest of the Veggie bunch in their new *VeggieTales in the City* episodes!”

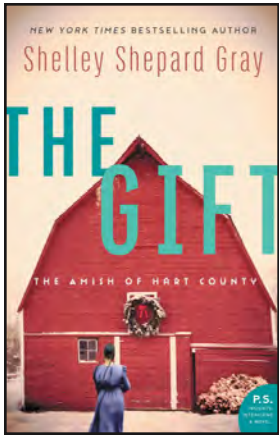
Ferrell also told *Christian Today*: “Very important to our success is that we stay consistent in delivering what parents have come to love and expect from VeggieTales—faith-based stories that help kids learn and apply what the Bible teaches about God, ourselves, and how we can live by trusting and loving God.”

Teaching children faith-based lessons through entertaining animation has made VeggieTales one of the most successful children’s brands in the world. Big Idea Inc. was launched in 1993 and since then, VeggieTales has sold over 75 million videos, 13



million books and more than seven million CDs. VeggieTales and Big Idea's property *3-2-1 Penguins* enjoyed four seasons as a top-rated series on NBC Saturday mornings. There have also been two successful theatrical releases: 2002's *Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie* and 2008's *The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie*. Big Idea also maintains a wide presence in publishing and licensing. **FF**

New Releases: November 2017



THE GIFT

THE AMISH OF HART COUNTY #3

Shelley Shepard Gray

William Morrow

Amish



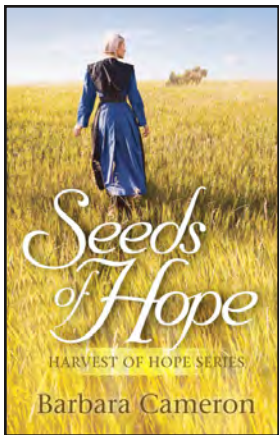
A PLACE AT OUR TABLE

AN AMISH HOMESTEAD NOVEL

Amy Clipston

Zondervan

Amish



SEEDS OF HOPE

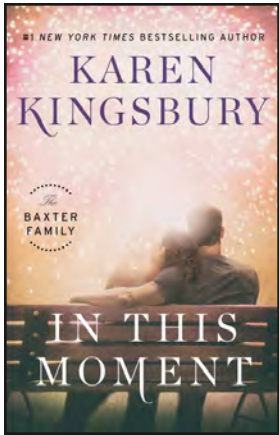
HARVEST OF HOPE SERIES #1

Barbara Cameron

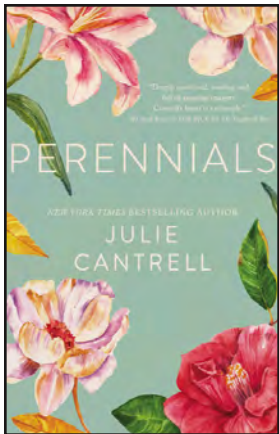
Gilead Publishing

Amish

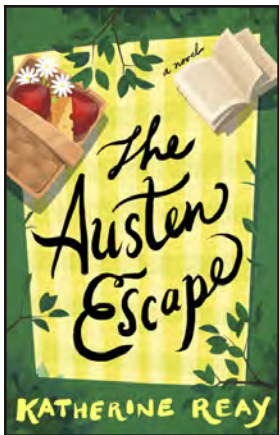




IN THIS MOMENT
BAXTER FAMILY #2
Karen Kingsbury
Howard Books
Contemporary

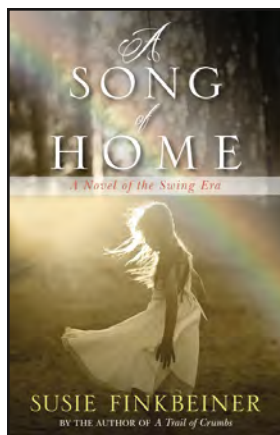


PERENNIALS
Julie Cantrell
Thomas Nelson
Contemporary



THE AUSTEN ESCAPE
Katherine Reay
Thomas Nelson
Contemporary (with Romance)





***A SONG OF HOME:
A NOVEL OF THE SWING ERA***

PEARL SPENCE SERIES #3

Susie Finkbeiner

Kregel Publications

Historical

Buy Now 



OUT OF THE ORDINARY

APART FROM THE CROWD SERIES #2

Jen Turano

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Historical Romance

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THE SOUND OF RAIN

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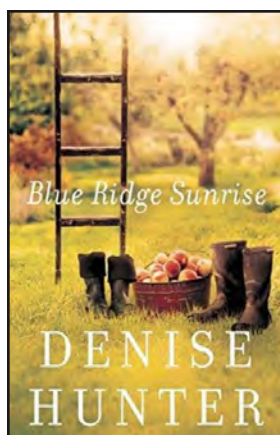
THE CROOKED PATH

Irma Joubert

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Historical Romance

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BLUE RIDGE SUNRISE

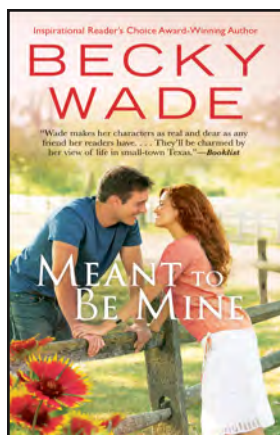
BLUE RIDGE ROMANCE SERIES #1

Denise Hunter

Thomas Nelson

Romance

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MEANT TO BE MINE

PORTER FAMILY SERIES #2

Becky Wade

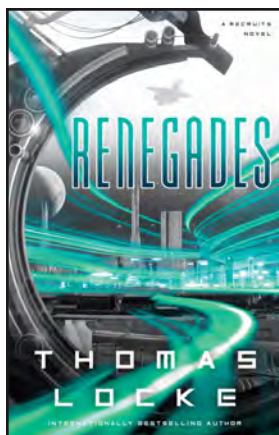
Bethany House

Romance

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New Releases: November 2017



RENEGADES

RECRUITS SERIES #2

Thomas Locke

Revell

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AWAKENED

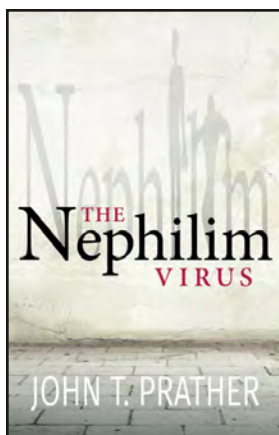
SOUL CHRONICLES SERIES #2

Morgan L. Busse

Enclave

Speculative

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THE NEPHILIM VIRUS

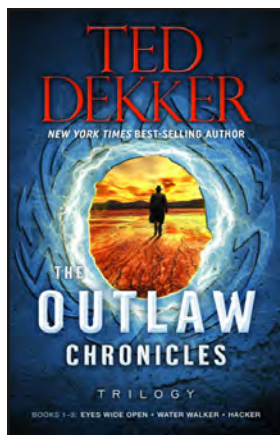
John T. Prather

Deep River Books

Speculative

Buy Now





THE OUTLAW CHRONICLES TRILOGY

Ted Dekker

Worthy Publishing

Suspense

Buy Now 



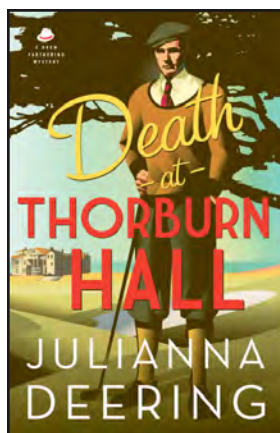
THE HOUSE ON FOSTER HILL

Jaime Jo Wright

Bethany House

Suspense

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DEATH AT THORBURN HALL

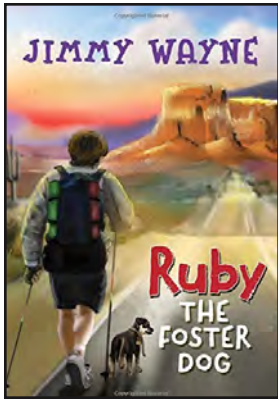
DREW FARTHERING MYSTERY #6

Julianna Deering

Bethany House

Suspense

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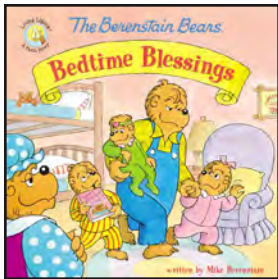


RUBY THE FOSTER DOG

Jimmy Wayne

Broadstreet Publishing Group

Children's



***THE BERENSTAIN BEARS'
BEDTIME BLESSINGS***

BERENSTAIN BEARS/LIVING LIGHTS

Mike Berenstain

Zonderkidz

Children's



ANDI TO THE RESCUE

CIRCLE C STEPPING STONES #4

Susan K. Marlow

Kregel Publications

Children's



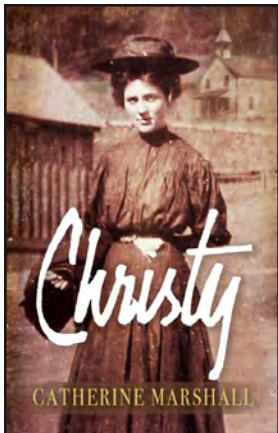


THE THING WITH FEATHERS

McCall Hoyle

Blink

YA/Teens



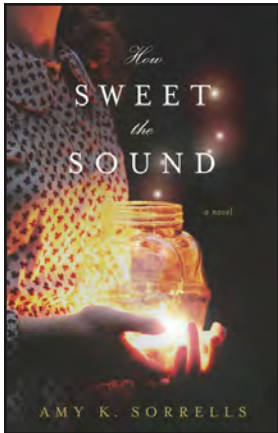
CHRISTY

50th Anniversary Edition

Catherine Marshall

Evergreen Farm

YA/Teens



HOW SWEET THE SOUND

Amy K. Sorrells

Tyndale House

YA/Teens



New Releases: November 2017

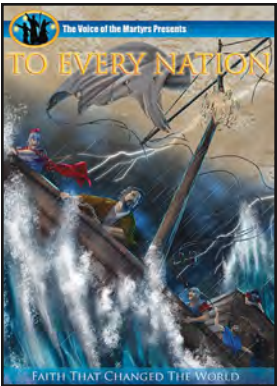


THE STAR

Sony Pictures Animation

Affirm Films

[Comics/Animation](#)

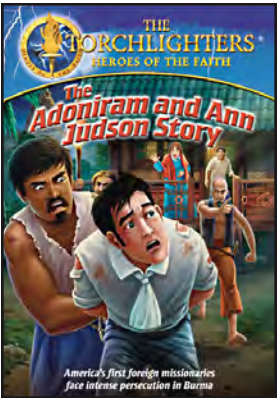


TO EVERY NATION

THE WITNESSES TRILOGY #3

Vision Video

[Comics/Animation](#)



THE ADONIRAM AND ANN JUDSON STORY

TORCHLIGHTERS SERIES

Vision Video

[Comics/Animation](#)



New Releases: November 2017



OWLEGORIES VOL. 1-6

OWLEGORIES SERIES

Capitol Christian Music Group

Comics/Animation



MY FIRST MIRACLE

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Movies

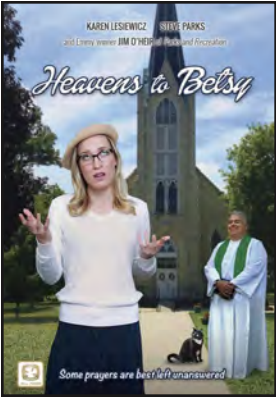


TWO STEPS FROM HOPE

Bridgestone Multimedia Group

Movies





HEAVENS TO BETSY

Vision Video

Movies



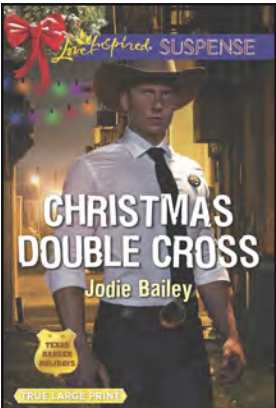
WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

VEGGIETALES

Pamela Kennedy, Lisa Reed

WorthyKids/Ideals

Christmas



CHRISTMAS DOUBLE CROSS

TEXAS RANGER HOLIDAYS #2

Jodie Bailey

Love Inspired Suspense

Christmas

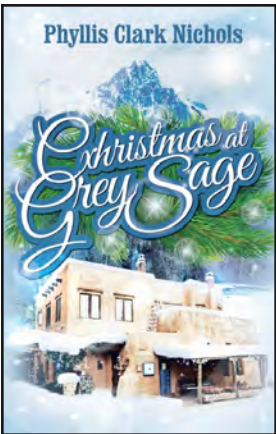




THE CHRISTMAS NOTE

Hallmark

Christmas



CHRISTMAS AT GREY SAGE

Phyllis Clark Nichols

Gilead Publishing

Christmas



THE STAR DELUXE JUNIOR NOVELIZATION

THE STAR MOVIE

Tracey West

Simon Spotlight

Christmas



A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE BESTSELLING TITLES FOR SEPTEMBER 2017

HISTORICAL FICTION

- 1** ***Cherished Mercy***
Tracie Peterson
Baker Publishing Group
- 2** ***The Promise of Dawn***
Lauraine Snelling
Baker Publishing Group
- 3** ***A Trail of Crumbs***
Susie Finkbeiner
Kregel Publications
- 4** ***A Cup of Dust***
Susie Finkbeiner
Kregel Publications
- 5** ***Waves of Mercy***
Lynn Austin
Baker Publishing Group



To see the entire list of bestselling books go to:
<http://cbaonline.org/september-2017-best-sellers>

CONTEMPORARY

- 1** ***Bringing Maggie Home***
Kim Vogel Sawyer
WaterBrook Press
- 2** ***To Be Where You Are***
Jan Karon
Penguin/Putnam
- 3** ***The Shack***
William P. Young
Hachette Book Group
- 4** ***A Time to Stand***
Robert Whitlow
Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 5** ***The Undoing of Saint Silvanus***
Beth Moore
Tyndale House Publishers



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ROMANCE

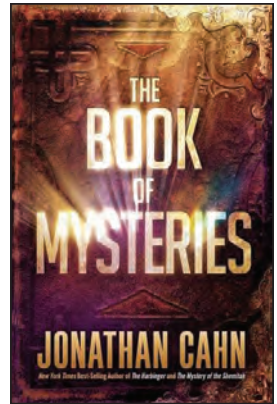
- 1** ***The Proving***
Beverly Lewis
Baker Publishing Group
- 2** ***The Beloved Christmas Quilt***
Wanda E. Brunstetter
Barbour Publishing
- 3** ***The Blessing***
Wanda E. Brunstetter
Barbour Publishing
- 4** ***Love Story***
Karen Kingsbury
Howard Books/Simon & Schuster
- 5** ***Gathering the Threads***
Cindy Woodsmall
WaterBrook Press



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SUSPENSE/MYSTERY

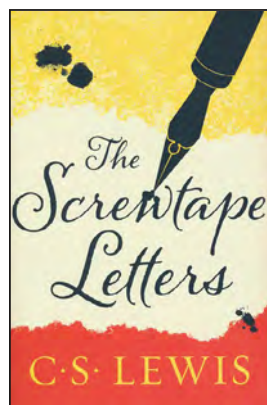
- 1** *The Book of Mysteries*
Jonathan Cahn
Charisma
- 2** *If I'm Found*
Terri Blackstock
Zondervan
- 3** *If I Run*
Terri Blackstock
Zondervan
- 4** *The Harbinger*
Jonathan Cahn
Charisma
- 5** *Deadly Proof*
Rachel Dylan
Baker Publishing Group



To see the entire list of bestselling books go to:
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SPECULATIVE/FANTASY/SCI-FI

- 1** *The Screwtape Letters*
C. S. Lewis
Zondervan
- 2** *Hinds' Feet on High Places*
Hannah Hurnard
Tyndale House
- 3** *The Pilgrim's Regress*
C. S. Lewis
Eerdmans Publishing
- 4** *The Great Divorce*
C. S. Lewis
Zondervan
- 5** *The Returning*
Rachelle Dekker
Tyndale House



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