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STORY TOOLS

Nonfiction Reviews: Week of 1/28/2008

-- Publishers Weekly, 1/28/2008

★ **Reflections of a Wine Merchant: On a Lifetime in the Vineyards and Cellars of France and Italy**

Neal I. Rosenthal. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$24 (256p) ISBN 978-0-374-24856-7

The 2008 vintage qualities remain undetermined, but with this title by New York City wine importer Rosenthal, the still-young year yields one of the outstanding wine books of recent memory. From long experience, the author writes that wine should be first understood as an expression of soil through fermented grape juice and begins his memoir of a tradesman's life with a short manifesto on that expressive quality called *terroir*. Then, Rosenthal takes us on an autobiography of his life as a wine merchant, starting with the opening of his Manhattan shop in 1978, from early misadventures and small-scale successes to the ferreting of significant discoveries far off the paths habitually beaten through France and Italy in particular. His and his wife, Kerry, had a knack for finding the hitherto unknown, and he narrates these discoveries with physical and social details that bring moments to vivid, sensory life. The period he chronicles was one of enormous developments in wine, from California through globalization, and he writes intelligently of the problems that came with progress. Yet neither the trade nor this title is romantic: Rosenthal makes clear the hard, often unpleasant work of winemaking and its trade and the setbacks that are part of the process. Through his business, he has had and been responsible for countless wine-related experiences of exceptional quality; he has now provided a literary one. B&w photos. (May)

★ **Leisureville: Adventures in America's Retirement Utopias**

Andrew D. Blechman. Atlantic, \$27.50 (288p) ISBN 978-0-87113-971-9

Blechman (*Pigeons*) journeyed to the age-segregated community of the Villages, in central Florida, to explore the reality of America's "geritopia" phenomenon. A sprawling, relentlessly cheerful development carved out of 33 square miles of pastureland, where 75,000 residents age 55 and older tool around in golf carts, the Villages is one of the most successful master-planned gated communities for retirees in the country, along with the older models of Sun City and Youngtown in Arizona. As part of his research for this engaging book, Blechman ensconced himself with the Villages' residents for a month, attending club meetings and exploring plentiful amenities, frequenting bars teeming with lecherous seniors, and patiently listening to residents' stories of jettisoning their pasts in colder climes for this "autocratic fantasyland." "Adult active" housing is the fastest growing sector of the market, and municipalities are eager to attract these safe, lucrative, childless retirement communities. However, the author confronts the troubling trend toward isolation and escapism, and ponders how different the aging boomers are from their parents—more diverse, more attached to cities and to their children, while resistant to the rules and regulations of a rigidly planned community. Ultimately, Blechman finds the residents blissful to be spared the furies and uncertainties of real life, yet as a

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community. Ultimately, Blechman finds the residents blissful to be spared the friction and uncertainty of real life, yet, as one widow admits, "There's a lot of sadness here." (May)

Golf Dads: Fathers, Sons, and the Greatest Game

Curt Sampson. Houghton Mifflin, \$22 (192p) ISBN 978-0-618-81248-6

In his 11th golf book, Sampson (*Hogan and the Masters*) tells the story of golfing fathers and sons, although a daughter or two, most notably Michelle Wie, appear in the magazine profile-like chapters that make up the book. These stories, including an introduction where Sampson recounts his relationship with his father and the game, explore both the happiness and pain of familial bonds shared on and off the links. Sampson mixes family stories of seven accomplished professionals—Wie, Ben Hogan, David Feherty, Peter Jacobsen, Lee Trevino and Jack Burke Jr. and Sr.—with those of lesser known golfers.

Touching stories include a family of three sons, one of whom is tapped to donate a kidney to his ailing father, and another about a son who spread his father's ashes on a Mexican golf course where his dad had taken him in his youthful summers. The stories of Wie and Trevino are incomplete because both Trevino and Wie's father, Byung Wook, refused interviews with Sampson, but the others are thoroughly researched and deftly told in compelling narratives. This book is sure to be a popular gift for golfing dads on Father's Day. (May)

Greetings from Bury Park

Sarfraz Manzoor. Vintage, \$13.95 paper (304p) ISBN 978-0-307-38802-5

In this uneven memoir, British TV and radio journalist Manzoor describes growing up in Britain in the '70s and '80s by way of his love affair with the music of Bruce Springsteen. Only two years old when he emigrated from Pakistan, Manzoor was torn between the demands of his traditional family and the seductions of mainstream culture. His discovery of Springsteen at age 16 gave Manzoor a personal muse who allowed him to bridge the gulf separating the two worlds. For Manzoor, Springsteen's lyrics about alienation, isolation and generational misunderstandings addressed perfectly his inchoate feelings of rebellion and guilt. In Springsteen Nation, Manzoor found a culture that transcended his own divided loyalties and accepted him as just another fan. It's an intriguing hook, but one Manzoor handles awkwardly. Springsteen barely appears in the first 90 pages or so, which cover the family leaving Pakistan, Manzoor's father's death and his siblings' marriages. The early material seems rushed and is standard immigrant memoir fare—tales of suffering in the old country and shame in the new; antipathy toward the stern, workaholic father and the too-late realization of all they had in common. Some of the later episodes such as Manzoor's first trip to America—where he sells encyclopedias door-to-door—show real energy, but they're a long time coming. The division of the book into semi-discrete essays also tends to rob the narrative of unity and impact, and the 9/11 coda feels tacked on. (Apr.)

★The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy Since 1796

Christopher Duggan. Houghton Mifflin, \$30 (688p) ISBN 978-0-618-35367-5

The Italian national project is a potent but erratic force, argues historian Duggan (*A Concise History of Italy*) in this thoughtful history of Italian politics from the Napoleonic Wars that jump-started the nationalist movement to the present-day rise of secessionist parties that want to bury it. The romantic patriots of the 19th-century risorgimento, Duggan contends, faced daunting challenges in unifying their homeland: a peninsula fractured into squabbling statelets speaking mutually incomprehensible dialects; citizens whose civic allegiance extended no further than the local church tower or mafia boss; Northern Italians' contempt for the corrupt and backward South; a militantly antinationalist Catholic Church. Making a virtue of necessity, he contends, patriots made nation building into a quasireligious moral reclamation that they hoped would infuse order, discipline and martial vigor into the allegedly degenerate Italian character, a vision that inspired liberal democrats but culminated in Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship (of which the author offers an especially insightful account). Duggan's lucid, wide-ranging but conceptually focused narrative examines the tension between exaggerated aspirations for a united Italy—in literature, art and opera, as well as political ideology—and the often disappointing, fractious reality. The result is an illuminating study not just of one nation but of nationalism itself. Photos. (Apr. 28)

★Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century

Tony Judt. Penguin Press, \$29.95 (464p) ISBN 978-1-59420-136-3

Historian and political commentator Judt warns against the temptation "to look back upon the twentieth century as an age of political extremes, of tragic mistakes and wrongheaded choices; an age of delusion from which we have now, thankfully, emerged." In this collection of 24 previously printed essays (nearly all from the *New York Review of Books* and the *New Republic*), Judt, whose recent book *Postwar* was a Pulitzer finalist, pleads with readers to remember that the past never completely disappears and that the coming century is as fraught with dangers as the last. Buttressing his argument, Judt draws upon an impressively broad array of subjects. He begins by describing the eclipse of intellectuals as a public force (for instance, the steep decline in Arthur Koestler's reputation) before reminding his audience of the immense power of ideas by discussing the now inexplicable attractions of Marxism in the 20th century. In the book's penultimate section, Judt examines the rise of the state in the politics and economics of Western nations before finally tackling the United States, its foreign policy and the fate of liberalism. As a fascinating exploration of the world we have recently lost—for good or bad, or both—this collection, despite its lack of new content, cannot be bested. (Apr. 21)

Courage: Portraits of Bravery in the Service of Great Causes

Gordon Brown. Weinstein (Hachette, dist.), \$24.95 (304p) ISBN 978-1-60286-022-3

British prime minister Brown profiles eight paragons in this warm, plainspoken volume of moral homiletics. Three of his subjects faced the 20th century's greatest test of courage, the Germans in the two world wars: Edith Cavell, an English nurse



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shot by the kaiser's troops for helping fugitive Allied soldiers escape occupied Belgium; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor who was hanged after speaking out against Hitler; and Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from annihilation. Latter-day martyrs include Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and imprisoned Burmese democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi. Rounding out the roster are Robert Kennedy, saluted in part for his early embrace of a New Laboresque "Third Way" politics, and Cicely Saunders, who fought a callous medical establishment to found the hospice movement. Brown touches on personal idiosyncrasies—Bonhoeffer's soul-searching, Wallenberg's bravado, Kennedy's rivalry with his older brothers—to illuminate his subjects' actions, but dwells on the blunt fact of their readiness to act on principle regardless of safety. There's not much deep psychological insight, but what makes Brown's accounts inspiring, and occasionally moving, is precisely that his heroes' actions speak for themselves. 8 pages of b&w photos. (Apr.)

Beautiful Minds: The Parallel Lives of Great Apes and Dolphins

Maddalena Bearzi and Craig Stanford. Harvard Univ., \$24.95 (352p) ISBN 978-0-674-02781-7

Endowed through evolution with large brains, the great apes (chimpanzees, bonobos gorillas and orangutans) and the cetaceans (dolphins and whales) are second only to humans in intelligence. In this delightful and intriguing book, dolphin specialist Bearzi and primatologist Stanford discuss the similarities between these groups. Both use tools, have sophisticated means of communication and cooperation, solve problems innovatively, transmit cultural traditions to the next generation and are able to imitate others. Like humans, apes and dolphins form complex social networks, and they are capable of deception and manipulation. The authors cite many examples: dolphins hoard objects in order to get treats or wear sponges as protective masks as they forage; apes use twigs to extract termites from termite mounds, chimpanzees cultivate alliances with group mates to dominate their communities. In the final section, Bearzi and Stanford survey the factors making dolphins and apes endangered species, and they make a plea for conserving the ecosystems in which they live, because the beautiful minds of these creatures are "a terrible thing to waste." (Apr.)

★ King Tutankhamun: The Treasures of the Tomb

Zahi Hawass, photos by Sandro Vannini. Thames & Hudson, \$80 (296p) ISBN 978-0-500-05151-1

How could a full-color illustrated book of the golden treasures of King Tut not be dazzling? But this spectacular volume has the added virtues of color on almost every page, numerous gatefolds (including several double gatefolds) and multiple views (front, back, side) of several of the most notable objects. Hawass (*The Royal Tombs of Egypt*), a famed Egyptologist and the man in charge of Egypt's antiquities, takes readers through Howard Carter's fabled 1922 discovery by presenting objects in the order in which they were found, recreating the unfolding splendor Carter saw during his decade-long excavation. Hawass offers up his interpretations and insights, which turn the book into a kind of guided tour of the collection, and he makes connections among the artifacts, their functions and their era, and constructs the unique identity of the boy pharaoh. Vanni's consistently clear and vibrant photographs of jewelry, shrines, statuettes, vessels, furniture, coffins, amulets and more provide detail that allows one to appreciate fully ancient Egyptian achievement in craftsmanship, while the narrative features Tut, Carter and Hawass himself as key players. (Apr.)

Road Map to Holland: How I Found My Way Through My Son's First Two Years with Down Syndrome

Jennifer Graf Groneberg. NAL, \$14 paper (288p) ISBN 978-0-451-22295-4

Montana wife and mother Groneberg traces in her tenderly moving account the life-changing realization after the premature birth of her twin boys that one of them, Avery, has Down syndrome. Utterly unprepared for the emergency C-section of the seven-week-early preemies, Groneberg and her writer husband, Tom, the parents of a four-year-old, are devastated by the news about Avery, and they must gradually alter their easygoing future plans about raising their kids. They reject the notion of adoption, suggested by a well-intentioned nurse at the hospital where the babies are ensconced in the neonatal intensive-care unit, and embark on an exhaustively trying, ultimately enlightening journey to care for the needy babies, especially Avery, and educate themselves about his condition. Rising from the shame of feeling that their family is "broken," and letting slide hurtful comments by a grocery-store clerk or neighbor, Groneberg devoured books and information from the Internet, and began to foster their son's development by seeking out physical therapists and specialists. Small gains in Avery's motor skills were causes for celebration, and the beginning of speech the greatest gift the parents could ask for. Groneberg affectingly delineates these gradual, hard-won stages during Avery's first year toward love and acceptance. (Apr.)

A Town Like Paris: Falling in Love in the City of Light

Bryce Corbett. Broadway, \$12.95 paper (283p) ISBN 978-0-7679-2817-5

Australian journalist Corbett offers a humorous and vivid account of his love affair with Paris. In an attempt to save his nine-year relationship with his high school sweetheart, Corbett follows her from Sydney to London. His efforts prove ineffectual and the two break up within weeks of his arrival. On a whim, 28-year-old Corbett applies for the position as head of public relations for a government organization based in Paris. Although he has little PR experience—or interest in the job itself—he is offered and accepts the position, living the French belief that people should work to live and not live to work. Corbett balances his boring formal office life with various exploits involving nightly debauchery. As an expatriate, his experiences with the French government, the French Plumber's Union and the various crazies who make up his Le Marais neighborhood are entertaining. As Corbett adjusts to the city—language barrier and cultural differences included—he makes friends, enjoys the food and eventually falls in love with a woman named Shay. Corbett's comically insightful observations of the French, along with his Aussie interpretations of joie de vivre, make for an amusing memoir. (Apr.)

Madness: A Bipolar Life

Marya Hornbacher. Houghton Mifflin, \$25 (320p) ISBN 978-0-618-75445-8

Hornbacher, who detailed her struggle with bulimia and anorexia in *Wasted*, now shares the story of her lifelong battle with mental illness, finally diagnosed as rapid cycling type 1 bipolar disorder. Even as a toddler, Hornbacher couldn't sleep at night and jabbered endlessly, trying to talk her parents into going outside to play in the dark. Other schoolchildren called her crazy. When she was just 10, she discovered alcohol was a good "mood stabilizer"; by age 14, she was trading sex for pills. In her late teens, her eating disorder landed her in the hospital, followed by another body obsession, cutting. An alcoholic by this point, she was alternating between mania and depression, with frequent hospitalizations. Her doctor explained that not only did the alcohol block her medications, it was up to her to control her mental illness, which would always be with her. This truth didn't sink in for a long, long time, but when it did, she had a chance for a life outside her local hospital's psychiatric unit. Hornbacher ends on a cautiously optimistic note—she knows she'll never lead a "normal life," but maybe she could live with the life she does have. Although painfully self-absorbed, Hornbacher will touch a nerve with readers struggling to cope with mental illness. (Apr.)

The Hot Topic: What We Can Do About Global Warming

Gabrielle Walker and Sir David King. Harvest, \$14 paper (288p) ISBN 978-0-15-603318-3

In this excellent primer on arguably the most serious problem facing the world today, Walker (*An Ocean of Air*) and King, the U.K.'s chief science adviser, present in concise layman's language "everything you wanted to know about global warming but were too depressed to ask." They explain how fossil fuels produce carbon dioxide, show how global warming is affecting individual species and changing entire ecosystems, predict how much more climate change we can afford before things become truly catastrophic, and consider economic and political solutions to the problem. They contend that we must rein in greenhouse gases in the next two decades if we want to leave a habitable planet for our grandchildren, and in order to do this, individuals must cut down on carbon emissions and at the same time pressure their governments to do the same by adopting low-carbon technologies such as geothermal, wind, solar and nuclear power. Entertaining as well as deadly serious, this lucid book, which includes an appendix that dispels many myths and misconceptions, explains in the clearest possible way why we should care about global warming and what we can do about it. (Apr.)

1858: Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant and the War They Failed to See

Bruce Chadwick. Sourcebooks, \$24.95 (384p) ISBN 978-1-4022-0941-3

Former journalist Chadwick (*The General and Mrs. Washington*) deals with much more than the previously underappreciated year of 1858 in this engagingly written book. By focusing on the men who drove crucial historical events, Chadwick provides plenty of pre-1858 background to make his case that the events of that year "changed the lives of dozens of important people" and "within a few short years, the history of the nation." Chadwick examines the lives of six who would become the biggest players in the Civil War: Lincoln, Davis, Sherman, Lee, Grant and William Seward, and two others—John Brown and Stephen Douglas—whose actions helped precipitate the conflict. He also offers an insightful look at the enigmatic, eccentric man who was in the White House in 1858, Democrat James Buchanan of Pennsylvania. Chadwick shows clearly how Buchanan dithered—on the slavery issue and in foolish foreign adventures in Paraguay, Mexico and Cuba, among other things—while Rome was about to burn. Buchanan, Chadwick correctly notes, "was certainly not the sole cause of the Civil War," just "one of many, but his ineffectiveness as chief executive dealt a crippling blow to the nation." (Apr.)

Great American Hypocrites: Toppling All of the Great Myths of the Republican Party

Glenn Greenwald. Crown, \$24.95 (320p) ISBN 978-0-307-40802-0

With this provocative book, Greenwald, a former constitutional lawyer and author of *A Tragic Legacy* and *How Would a Patriot Act*, purports to expose the "rank myth-making and exploitation of cultural, gender and psychological themes" by the Republican Party. The author begins his attack by targeting John Wayne, whom he sees as a template for right-wing notions of "American courage and conservative manliness." Wayne's avoidance of military service and his string of divorces, both at odds with his public image, are emblematic in this account of a fundamental hypocrisy implicit in conservative mythologies. Greenwald goes on to argue that prominent Republicans from Ronald Reagan to Mitt Romney display the same hypocrisy in their public ideologies and personal lives. Shouldering much of the blame are the press and the media, including Matt Drudge, Ann Coulter, Chris Matthews and even Maureen Dowd, all of whom propagate popular attitudes about virile Republicans and effeminate Democrats. Despite the antipathy the author feels for Coulter, his writing is much like hers. More a partisan screed than a reasoned argument meant to persuade undecided readers, this repetitive text frequently devolves into personal attacks and vast generalizations. (Apr.)

Disappearing Destinations: 37 Places in Peril and What Can Be Done to Help Save Them

Kimberley Lisagor and Heather Hansen. Vintage, \$15.95 paper (400p) ISBN 978-0-307-27736-7

The expression "tourist hot spot" takes on new meaning in this fact-packed survey of travel destinations endangered by global warming, environmental degradation, predatory logging, mining and fishing and the impact of too many tourists. In 37 essays, travel journalists Lisagor and Hansen vividly document places in peril, ranging from the ocean nations of Tuvalu and the Maldives, slowly submerging beneath rising waters, to the historic ski chalets of the Alps, where snow is falling less and melting faster. The catalogue of disasters is chilling: the glaciers are vanishing from America's Glacier National Park; the ancient city of Timbuktu in central Mali is succumbing to desertification; warming seas are bleaching Australia's Great Barrier Reef; dry winters and inept water management have drained life from the Rio Grande; and the relentless march of hundreds of thousands of enthralled tourists is causing irrevocable damage to the ancient Incan city of Machu Picchu. The authors' accounts of how the world's beauty is being despoiled, based on sharp on-site reporting, are a cautionary call to arms for tourists to fight environmental excesses and, when traveling, to tread lightly. (Apr.)

Train Wreck: The End of the Conservative Revolution (and Not a Moment Too Soon)

Bill Press. Wiley, \$24.95 (272p) ISBN 978-0-470-18240-6

In a domestic cooptation of the neocon “End of History” thesis, talk radio host Press (*Spin This!*) argues that conservatism's record of failure should condemn it to a subordinate place in American politics—it can survive to check “the excess of the majority,” argues Press, but must never again be allowed to govern. For Press (who unfurls a dishonor roll of scandals, policy failures, corporate toadying, double standards and outright criminality), this betrayal of public trust has meant the betrayal of conservatism's own purported principles. Thus, citing the conservative “canon” of the mid-century right-wing intellectual Russell Kirk, and even Barry Goldwater, Press lambastes Bush, Cheney and other Republicans for turning away from the ideals of small government and limited executive power. Likewise, on the environment, conservatism was formerly synonymous with conservation, notes Press, pointing to early Republican leadership on this score from Teddy Roosevelt to California state senator and “environmental pioneer” Peter Behr. These contradictions rarely come as revelations—indeed the bulk of this narrative will be familiar to anyone paying even passing attention to the news—but by presenting all this material together, Press creates a serviceable election-year handbook for voters, particularly the Democratic opposition. (*Apr.*)

An Incomplete & Inaccurate History of Sport

Kenny Mayne. Crown, \$24.95 (288p) ISBN 978-0-307-39615-0

Mayne, known for his sarcasm on ESPN's SportsCenter, submits in his debut a tongue-in-cheek sports encyclopedia, featuring such entries as rock throwing and Wiffle ball, along with facts mixed with dubious statements. For example, dodgeball ends “when the PE teacher gets back from hitting on one of the substitutes” and “tackle football is the greatest sport in the world and everyone knows it.” Stories from Mayne's life as a sports-loving kid in Washington State, a quarterback and father to two little girls round out the book. On TV, Mayne might be entertaining; as an author, he is overbearing, often trying to get more play out of a single joke than it can bear. Other comedic observations, such as security lines at airports and the perils of getting the right order at Starbucks, read like stale standup routines. The book's best parts feature Mayne straying from his funnyman persona to reflect on his personal life. Glimpses of the man behind the mockery are far too infrequent within Mayne's relentless, tiresome attempts at generating laughs. (*Apr.*)

Around the World in 80 Rounds: Chasing a Golf Ball from Tierra del Fuego to the Land of the Midnight Sun

David Wood. St. Martin's, \$24.95 (288p) ISBN 978-0-312-37577-5

Former standup comedian and humor columnist Wood sold his condo in Seattle and set out on a yearlong global golfing journey. He tells a highly entertaining tale of his trip through 22 countries far off the beaten path from the typical golf vacation. He played the first of his 80 rounds on the world's southernmost course at the tip of Argentina and finished in the northernmost climes of the upper reaches of Norway. In between he played a vast range of layouts: a grassless brown track in the Atacama Desert of Chile; spectacular courses in New Zealand and Australia; a course adjacent to the pyramids and sphinx in Egypt; and the only golf course in all of Russia. He suffered various setbacks, such as golf clubs temporarily lost on a South American bus line. He writes well about the terrain and local atmosphere, and provides a deft mix of golf and travel writing. His take on the people of the world is a 48-year-old bachelor's perspective, as he judges Argentina, Chile and Hungary to have the best-looking women and writes longingly of a beautiful foot masseuse in China. Wood's humor is sometimes forced, but like a few shanked shots in an otherwise well-played round of golf, it doesn't spoil the whole. (*Mar.*)

The Taste of Sweet: Our Complicated Love Affair with Our Favorite Treats

Joanne Chen. Crown, \$24.95 (304p) ISBN 978-0-307-35190-6

In her thoughtful first book, Chen, a longtime magazine editor and writer, examines the physical, psychological and historical relationship between sweet flavors and humans, especially Americans. She begins by looking at how we taste by examining the human tongue, and taste buds in particular, meeting up with a psychologist whose work strongly suggests that some of us simply taste things differently. But while the tongue just absorbs this information, the stomach and the brain communicate what we like, what we want more of, whether we've had enough or whether one or the other or both wants to override the system for a variety of reasons, including emotional ones, and permit overindulgence. The author follows a technician whose work includes finding and using flavor components such as the “1950s strawberry.” Turning her focus to stateside sweetness in the second half of the book, Chen argues that for a variety of historical and cultural reasons we Americans are uniquely vulnerable to sweetness because of external factors, thus, our uneasy relationship with it. The result is a large industry for and about sugar, another against, yet another for artificial sweeteners and connected others such as those for nutrition, exercise and diet. (*Mar.*)

Party Crashing: How the Hip-Hop Generation Declared Political Independence

Keli Goff. Basic, \$16.95 paper (244p) ISBN 978-0-465-00332-7

According to Goff, a former intern for Sen. Hillary Clinton and campaign manager for Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, “the black vote” is becoming more elusive and unpredictable in today's political landscape. Goff's first book explores the transformation of the African-American voting bloc in the U.S. The author argues that what was once a cohesive political unit is now a diffuse coalition divided across myriad social, political and economic lines. Unlike their parents, who have historically held fast to the Democratic Party, younger African-Americans are becoming increasingly independent voters. Examining this generational split in terms of proximity to the civil rights movement, Goff finds that the bond forged between the Democratic Party and the African-American community may have lost its relevance to many younger African-Americans today. The author fleshes out several reasons for this: the split over social issues like gay marriage and abortion, the loss of cohesive, unifying leadership in the African-American community, the “First Black President” Bill Clinton proving a tough Democratic act to follow and the waning Democratic commitment to black churches. Goff proves herself a savvy political analyst, an adept cultural critic and a talented journalist, culling from sources as diverse as political polls, Chris Rock's standup comedy and

interviews with politicians and ordinary citizens alike. She makes a persuasive argument that “the black vote” is becoming an imaginary concept: while Democrats take it for granted, Republicans don't bother to work for it. The result is disenfranchisement. (Mar.)

It's Our Day: America's Love Affair with the White Wedding, 1945–2005

Katherine Jellison. Univ. Press of Kansas, \$29.95 (312p) ISBN 978-0-7006-1559-9

Love may be the catalyst for the American white wedding, but hosting an elaborate celebration also demonstrates a family's prosperity and material success, argues Jellison in her compelling economic and social history of how this ritual survived despite the major cultural and political changes of the 1960s and beyond. Jellison, an associate professor of history at Ohio University, argues that while the white wedding of the 1940s may have celebrated youth, virginity and a patriarchal family structure, Americans have reinterpreted the symbolism of satin and lace: the 21st-century bride evokes the tradition of female-focused celebration and uses the elaborate and costly event as a display of her professional and social success as she marks a life transition. With chapters on celebrity nuptials, silver-screen I-dos and the latest batch of reality TV brides, Jellison demonstrates how advertisers, media and brides themselves slowly reshaped the white wedding into an act of organized feminism. This book is in the same genre as Rebecca Mead's 2006 *One Perfect Day* and will attract both academic and lay readers. The well-footnoted prose is accessible, and the 50 photographs and advertisements vividly demonstrate the changing trends Jellison outlines. (Mar.)

Kasztner's Train: The True Story of an Unknown Hero of the Holocaust

Anna Porter. Walker, \$26.95 (464p) ISBN 978-0-8027-1596-8

Porter (*The Storyteller*) seeks to rehabilitate the reputation of Rezso Kasztner. This Hungarian Jew was branded a Nazi collaborator by Academy Award-winning screenwriter Ben Hecht in his 1961 book, *Perfidy*. But more recently Kasztner has been exonerated by Israel's Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem. After 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz in 1944, Kasztner, a point man in a “goods-for-blood” deal with Nazi henchman Adolf Eichmann, arranged for a train to carry 1,684 Jews from Hungary to Switzerland, wealthy Jews paying \$1,500 per person while the poor paid nothing. For \$100 a head, Eichmann kept an additional 20,000 Jews alive in Austrian labor camps. After the war Kasztner relocated to Israel, where in 1952 he was accused of being a Nazi collaborator who saved a privileged few at the expense of thousands of others. Kasztner sued for malicious libel and lost on most counts; the trial made international headlines; and Kasztner was assassinated in 1957 by right-wing extremists. Although a well-researched counterbalance to Hecht's account, Porter's defense may swing too much in favor of Kasztner, given that most of the participants are deceased and much of the evidence is anecdotal. Readers, however, will welcome the opportunity to debate the ever-relevant moral issues of doing business with the enemy. Illus. 16 pages of b&w illus., 3 maps. (Mar.)

Multiplicity: The New Science of Personality, Identity, and the Self

Rita Carter. Little, Brown, \$24.99 (320p) ISBN 978-0-316-11538-4

In this interpretation of the many selves within the human mind, science and medical writer Carter (*Mapping the Mind*) offers a unique definition of multiple personalities in a functioning person, without the usual discussion of phobias or other psychological disorder. Carter sees personality as a cluster of related traits; for instance, ambition and related traits like drive and impatience could be one personality that would coexist with other personalities in one individual. She describes, for instance, a passive mother of two transforming into a powerful attorney in a high-powered firm; this “mental shape-shifting” leads the mother to display contradictory character traits at home, at work and at play. Contrasting what the author calls minor and major personality traits in thought and behavior, Carter explains: “Our inner landscape is constantly changing. Various personalities form, change, fade away, reform, merge, shrink and grow.” She adds intriguing diagrams of memory and recall patterns illustrating how people “behave differently in different situations.” Exercises provided in the second part of the book encourage the reader's family and work personalities to interact and communicate positively with each other. Carter is pushing the envelope on personality, and her book should spark debate on the flexibility of the human mind. (Mar.)

Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet

Jeffrey D. Sachs. Penguin, \$27.95 (400p) ISBN 978-1-59420-127-1

In this sobering but optimistic manifesto, development economist Sachs (*The End of Poverty*) argues that the crises facing humanity are daunting—but solutions to them are readily at hand. Sachs focuses on four challenges for the coming decades: heading off global warming and environmental destruction; stabilizing the world's population; ending extreme poverty; and breaking the political logjams that hinder global cooperation on these issues. The author analyses economic data, demographic trends and climate science to create a lucid, accessible and suitably grim exposition of looming problems, but his forte is elaborating concrete, pragmatic, low-cost remedies complete with benchmarks and budgets. Sachs's entire agenda would cost less than 3% of the world's annual income, and he notes that a mere two days' worth of Pentagon spending would fund a comprehensive antimalaria program for Africa, saving countless lives. Fortright government action is the key to avoiding catastrophe, the author contends, not the unilateral, militarized approach to international problems that he claims is pursued by the Bush administration. Combining trenchant analysis with a resounding call to arms, Sachs's book is an important contribution to the debate over the world's future. (Mar.)

True Enough: Learning to Live in a Post-Fact Society

Farhad Manjoo. Wiley, \$25.95 (272p) ISBN 978-0-470-05010-1

In 2005, Stephen Colbert catapulted the word “truthiness”—the quality of an idea “feeling” true without any backup evidence—into the public consciousness. Salon blogger Manjoo expands upon this concept in his perceptive analysis of the status of

truth in the digital age, critiquing a *Rashomon*-like world in which competing versions of truth vie for our attention. Driven by research and study, the book relies on abstract psychological and sociological concepts, such as “selective exposure” and “peripheral processing,” though these are fleshed out with examples from American history, politics and media. For example, Manjoo demonstrates how the Swift Boat Veterans' negative campaign derailed John Kerry's 2004 presidential run. He also points out that the sheer quantity of 9/11 imagery has engendered more conspiracy theories, not fewer—demonstrating, he says, the disjunction between truth and proof. Manjoo rounds out his analysis by examining the workings of “partisan news realities,” and he points out that the first casualty in these truth wars is a basic human and civic need: trust. Though several of the author's ideas are repetitiously threaded through his narrative, Manjoo has produced an engaging, illustrative look at the dangers of living in an oversaturated media world. (Mar.)

Big Ideas to Big Results: Remake and Recharge Your Company, Fast

Michael T Kanazawa and

Robert H. Miles. Pearson/FT Press, \$27.95 (256p) ISBN 978-0-13-234478-4

It takes more than a vision to launch a successful corporate strategy. It takes engagement on the part of employees at all levels. Establishing such engagement is at the heart of this punchy, dynamic book by Kanazawa and Miles—the CEO and chairman, respectively, of Dissero Partners, a strategic advisory firm. Fewer than half of employees, according to a quoted poll, understand their company's strategic goals and only 43% think there is ever any follow-through on planned strategy shifts. This is why, the authors assert, so many corporate initiatives fail. After seeing the process break down countless times, Kanazawa and Miles developed a step-by-step guide to harnessing the energy that companies usually waste when introducing initiatives. By creating more of a “buy-in” throughout the organization and ensuring execution through accountability, employees become committed to company goals, they claim. Their clear and hands-on approach is useful for anyone whose livelihood is tied to the successful execution of business initiatives. (Mar.)

The Echo from Dealey Plaza: The True Story of the First African American on the White House Secret Service Detail and His Quest for Justice After the Assassination of JFK

Abraham Bolden. Harmony, \$25.95 (320p) ISBN 978-0-307-38201-6

Conspiracy theories haunt the Kennedy assassination; Bolden offers a new one, concerning discrimination and evidence suppression. Becoming, in JFK's words, the “Jackie Robinson of the Secret Service,” Bolden joined the White House detail in 1961. Already beset by racism (he once found a noose suspended over his desk), his idealism is further shattered by “the drinking and carousing” of other agents. Soon after the assassination, he receives orders that hint at “an effort to withhold, or at least to the color, the truth.” He discovers that evidence is being kept from the Warren Commission and when he takes action, finds himself charged with “conspiracy to sell a secret government file” and sentenced to six years in prison, where both solitary confinement and the psychiatric ward await. That there was a conspiracy to silence him seems unarguable, but Bolden's prose is flat; so is his dialogue. This story is more enthralling than Bolden's telling of it, but the reader who sticks with it will enter a world of duplicitous charges and disappearing documents fit for a movie thriller. (Mar.)

Escape from Saddam: The Incredible True Story of One Man's Journey to Freedom

Lewis Alsamari. Crown, \$24.95 (320p) ISBN 978-0-307-39401-9

For Alsamari, an Iraqi-born first-time author best known for playing the lead 9/11 hijacker in the movie *United 93*, real life had already proved dramatic and terrifying, as this gripping memoir wastes no time in conveying. Raised for several years in Manchester, England, Alsamari was unexpectedly sent back to Baghdad by his father a few years before the first Gulf War and he spends the next 10 years dreaming of a way out. Induction in the army in 1994—a punishing experience that the author describes in characteristically straightforward and persuasive prose—leads to a lifelong sentence: recruitment into Saddam's military intelligence apparatus. With the help of his beloved uncle Saad, Alsamari begins the long and perilous journey to political asylum in England, where he eventually engineers the rescue of his family, now gravely endangered by his desertion. The increasingly breathless account—filled with the best and worst of human actions—comes across in vivid and telling scenes spanning Iraq, Jordan, Malaysia and the U.K. Alsamari's moving personal story is representative of a more general plight, which, as broached in an eloquent and thoughtful epilogue, has only grown more complex after 9/11. (Mar.)

★ **A La Cart: The Secret Lives of Grocery Shoppers**

Hillary Carlip. Virgin, \$17.95 (120p) ISBN 978-1-905-26417-9

Ever since she was a teenager, performance artist and author Carlip (*Queen of the Oddballs: And Other True Stories from a Life Unaccording to Plan*) has been collecting strangers' lost shopping lists and imaging the lives and people behind them. With the help of expertly applied makeup and outlandish costumes, Carlip has turned herself into the men and women that she imagined. From a wife-seeking, Fu Manchu—mustached redneck to an octogenarian stand-up comic, a washed-up lesbian rock star to a 20-something goth boy, Carlip takes inspiration from both the mundane—“potatoes”—and the disturbing—“mousetraps, cheese, mouse.” The 26 vivid photographic portraits and accompanying narratives display the author's humor, grace and a brilliantly creative eye. Carlip's alter egos are larger than life and twice as entertaining. Fans of Sloane Tanen's *Bitter with Baggage Seeks Same* should flock to this hilarious, delightful, unique achievement. (Mar.)

Willful Blindness: A Memoir of the Jihad

Andrew C. McCarthy. Encounter, \$25.95 (250p) ISBN 978-1-594032-13-4

In this annotated retrospective, the prosecutor responsible for leading the investigation of “Blind Sheikh” Omar Abdel Rahman and others involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing dissects the miscues between federal agencies that led to that event while laying bare the challenges facing the war on terror today. The pre-1993 comedy of errors begins with

the CIA's decision to funnel arms and money to Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan war and continues with inexplicable lapses of communication between the State Department and immigration officials (despite having been placed on a State Department terror "watchlist," the sheikh travels freely to the United States). The most enduring oversight, however, at least from McCarthy's perspective, is the refusal among academics and political leaders to confront fundamentalist Islamic tenets, the "800-pound gorilla that is somehow always in the middle of the room when terror strikes." The jihadist philosophy that guided the Blind Sheikh is traced through generations of Islamic thinkers to the Prophet Mohammed himself. Though McCarthy's language is at times cumbersome, his firsthand account of jihad's rise and the sheikh's "trial of the century" is an important contribution (and in some instances, counterpoint) to existing literature on the attack that foreshadowed disaster to come. (Mar.)

The Powers to Lead

Joseph S. Nye Jr. Oxford Univ., \$21.95 (176p) ISBN 978-0-19-533562-0

Leadership gurus since Machiavelli have argued over whether a leader should be loved or feared. In this evenhanded primer, Nye, a professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and "soft power" theorist, takes a resolute stand in between the two sides. Modern leadership, he contends, requires "smart power," a judicious situational balance of "hard power" (getting people to do what you want, with carrots, sticks and bullying) and "soft power" (getting people to want what you want, with inspiration, charisma and propaganda). Nye embeds his argument in a lucid, if somewhat dry, survey of leadership studies, touching on everything from bonobo behavior to Freudian psychology, and illustrates it with references to noted leaders like former General Electric CEO Jack Welch, Lincoln, Hitler and Subcomandante Marcos. (George Bush's presidency provides a recurring object lesson in bad leadership.) The author takes a skeptical, down-to-earth view of leadership fads and hype. But he can't quite break free of mystical notions like "vision" or vague buzz concepts like "contextual intelligence" (a head-scratcher that boils down to "judgment" and "wisdom"); his "smart power" formula is therefore more truism than concrete guide to action. Nye's is a useful introduction to the theory, but not the practice, of leadership. (Mar.)

Souled Out: Reclaiming Faith and Politics After the Religious Right

E.J. Dionne Jr. Princeton Univ., \$24.95 (252p) ISBN 978-0-691-13458-1

The latest from reporter and author Dionne (*Why Americans Hate Politics*) is a highly worthy alternative to polarizing arguments regarding religion, whether pro or con ("neo-atheist" tracts like Christopher Hitchens's *God Is Not Great*). It's also a smart rebuke of those who would divert the faithful with a narrow set of "values" rather than viewing religion in a broader political context. Declaring that "the era of the religious Right is over," Dionne looks to history, tradition, teachers and texts (including recent religious scholarship) to reassert both progressive and conservative views on how religion can play a legitimate role in matters of economics, social justice and morality. Dionne explodes the myth that George W. Bush was elected by evangelicals (he says gains among moderates were far more important); demonstrates the absurdity and unfortunate consequences of restricting religious political concerns to abortion and gay marriage (though he fully explores both); and examines the fate of governmental faith-based initiatives past and present. Along the way, Dionne considers the current crop of presidential candidates and provides a stinging analysis of the president and Congress's intervention in the Terri Schiavo case. Rousing and wry, Dionne's sensible voice makes a powerful case for broadening religious vision and visibility in the public square. (Feb. 27)

Religion

Gifts of Passage: What the Dying Tell Us with the Gifts They Leave Behind

Amy Hollingsworth. Thomas Nelson, \$19.99 (192p) ISBN 978-0-8499-1920-6

Few events in life leave us more vulnerable and potentially open to God's gifts than the death of a loved one. The death of Hollingsworth's father while she was writing her first book, *The Simple Faith of Mister Rogers*, gave her the opportunity and desire to discover what legacies the dying leave behind. While searching for the meaning of her father's final moments, Hollingsworth talked to or read about others who had experienced gifts in the midst of loss, and movingly recounts their stories. While some of the anecdotes are familiar, such as C.S. Lewis's loss of his wife, Joy, many of the most touching are of ordinary people whose gifts are occasionally physical—e.g., a locket that had not yet been given—but more often are ones of relationship. Hollingsworth concludes with the powerful story of her father's death and her discovery that his last moments offered her much needed healing of their difficult relationship. Those who question whether God orchestrates all that happens in our lives will struggle with that implied theology here, but those who find comfort in that perspective will experience Hollingsworth as a warm and gracious companion for the grieving process. (Apr. 29)

Heaven Without Her: A Desperate Daughter's Search for the Heart of Her Mother's Faith

Kitty Foth-Regner. Thomas Nelson, \$14.99 paper (294p) ISBN 978-0-7852-2744-1

As a feminist and a successful freelance copywriter, Foth-Regner had a full and enviable life. Until, that is, her mother's fatal illness stormed into her otherwise manageable existence, leaving Foth-Regner shaken and distracted. In this engaging spiritual memoir, she tells her story of coming to faith in Christ by first examining all the plausible reasons for not doing so. Each chapter of Foth-Regner's spiritual journey is filled with examinations of the Christian faith from a variety of vantage points as she dissects historical facts, other religions' claims, scientific discoveries, the assertion that the Bible is inerrant, and much more. Readers will appreciate Foth-Regner's razor-sharp wit and the clever mind that she displays throughout her narrative. Most importantly, she offers readers her brutally open heart, full of wrenching pain, as she prepares to watch her beloved mother exit Earth to heaven. Many will resonate with Foth-Regner's doubts and unanswered questions and similarly find themselves rejoicing on multiple levels as she discovers inner peace with God's promise of the eternal. Foth-Regner

includes an extensive section for further reading at the close of her memoir, which in itself is an invaluable resource for new seekers and veterans of the Christian faith. (Apr.)

★ **Founding Faith: Providence, Politics, and the Birth of Religious Freedom in America**

Steven Waldman. Random, \$25.95 (304p) ISBN 978-1-4000-6437-3

Various American evangelicals have claimed the founding fathers as believing and practicing Protestants who intended America to be a Christian nation. Secularists, on the other hand, see in the same historical record evidence that the founders were often Deists at best. Both views are grossly oversimplified, argues Waldman, cofounder and editor-in-chief of Beliefnet.com. In this engaging, well-researched study, Waldman focuses on the five founding fathers who had the most influence on religion's role in the state—Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Adams and Madison—and untangles their complex legacy. They were certainly diverse in religiosity, with Jefferson a self-diagnosed heretic, for instance, and Washington a churchgoing Anglican who was silent on points of doctrine and refrained from taking communion. All, however, were committed to the creation of religious freedom in the new nation. Waldman deserves kudos for systematically debunking popular myths: America was not primarily settled by people seeking religious freedom; the separation of church and state did not result from the activism of secularists, but, paradoxically, from the efforts of 18th-century evangelicals; and the American Revolution was as much a reaction against European theocracy as a struggle for economic or political freedom. Waldman produces a thoughtful and remarkably balanced account of religion in early America. (Mar. 18)

Conversations with American Writers: The Doubt, the Faith, the In-between

W. Dale Brown. Eerdmans, \$18 (318p) ISBN 978-0-8028-6228-0

For more than 20 years, W. Dale Brown has been interviewing authors about “wrestling with the sacred in their writing.” As a former English professor at Calvin College and director of its Festival of Faith and Writing, Brown has been in a unique position to listen to voices that, he insists, “are preaching up a tempest” in resistance to trends in postmodern fiction. He now follows up his first collection of these conversations (*Of Fiction and Faith*) with 10 more interviews. Among his “tale-tellers with a point” are Ron Hansen, Ernest Gaines, Sheri Reynolds, Jan Karon, Silas House and Lee Smith. In gentle discussions, Brown investigates the wellsprings of their writing: while not all of the authors identify themselves as Christians, they reflect at length on being storytellers and seekers of meaning through the lives of their characters. Of particular interest are those who write from a strong sense of place, particularly the South. Brown is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable interviewer. Although some of the discussions are so specific they may be hard to follow for readers unfamiliar with the writers' works in question, this warmhearted collection capably introduces readers to new authors and illuminates the inherent tensions serious writers face in tackling spiritual themes. (Mar.)

The Faith: What Christians Believe, Why They Believe It, and Why It Matters

Charles Colson and

Harold Fickett. Zondervan, \$18.99 (240p) ISBN 978-0-310-27603-6

Longtime collaborators Colson and Fickett address the very tenets of the Christian faith in order “to renew ourselves as Christians and the Church as God's people.” Generally they do this well, first offering an overview of challenges facing the church and then moving on to specific core issues. Chapter builds on chapter, from “God Is” to “He Has Spoken” to “Truth” and so on to “Last Things.” Especially thought-provoking is the question of why so many people accuse the Christian faith of being “dry and brittle.” One answer, the authors say, is the church's “failure to teach what the faith is.” Colson and Fickett call the church to rediscover the “joy of orthodoxy,” to renew the surrounding culture and to rethink how we live out faith. “If there's ever been a time in which renewal was essential, it is today,” they say. Those who know Colson's work will appreciate his pointed statements and bold words, while those looking for subtle shadings of doctrinal issues may be aghast at the lack thereof. The book's strength lies not in minutiae but in opening the discussion on orthodoxy and what living as a Christian means by going back to faith's beginnings. (Mar.)

★ **Jesus for President**

Shane Claiborne and

Chris Haw. Zondervan, \$16.99 paper (304p) ISBN 978-0-310-27842-9

Here is the must-read election-year book for Christian Americans. What should Christians do when allegiances to the state clash with personal faith? Haw and Claiborne (*The Irresistible Revolution*) slice through politics as usual and well past the superficial layers of the culture wars with their lucid exploration of how Christians can and should relate to presidents and kings, empire and government. Their entertaining yet provocative tour of the Bible's social and economic order makes even the most abstruse Levitical laws come alive for our era. They also provide a valuable political context for Christ's life, reminding readers that Jesus did not preach the need to put God back into government—he urged his followers to live by a different set of rules altogether, to hold themselves apart as peculiar people. The compelling writing is enhanced by a lavish, eye-popping layout. The pages are a riot of textured callouts, colors, photos and fonts—the perfect packaging for a message that must compete in a world of sound bites. With this second book, Claiborne emerges as an affable, intelligent, humorous prophet of his generation, calling people out of business-as-usual in a corrupt world and back to the radically different social order of the biblical God. (Mar.)

Religion in American Politics: A Short History

Frank Lambert. Princeton Univ., \$24.95 (304p) ISBN 978-0-691-12833-7

Of the writing of books about the rise and rumored fall of the religious right there is no end. But most of these tend toward the genre of the rant, which is why Lambert's new book is important. It gives a history of the intertwining of evangelical faith

and political engagement in America that displays no obvious agenda other than to illuminate. He lays religion alongside other competing influences in American politics and has an eye for fascinating (and quirky) fights over religion in early America: should the mail run on Sundays, as the religiously disinclined Thomas Jefferson preferred, or should the nation honor the fourth commandment? (Answer: the debate vanished once telegraphs could operate 24/7). Recent efforts to align Christianity and specific political positions are not without precedent in U.S. history, as Lambert makes clear. That early history is riveting, especially when it is counterintuitive: ironically, Massachusetts—the *bête noir* of evangelical voters now—was the last state to discontinue public funding for the Congregational Church in 1833. Lambert's treatment of more recent religious trends, from the Civil Rights movement to the rise of the religious right and left, feels a bit more boilerplate. Yet the whole book will be useful as a handy, clear and fair treatment of this most contentious subject. (Mar.)

★ **Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers**

Richard S. Newman. NYU, \$34.95 (342p) ISBN 978-0-8147-5826-7

In this elegant and insightful biography, historian Newman (*The Transformation of American Abolitionism*) offers a vivid portrait of Bishop Richard Allen (1760–1831), a tireless preacher committed to ending slavery and fostering equality for blacks in postrevolutionary America. Born a slave in Philadelphia, Allen converted to Methodism when he was 17 during a revival held at his master's house. After obtaining his freedom, Allen helped to establish two of the most important black-led organizations in early America: the Free African Society, a benevolent organization, and Bethel Church, the birthplace of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, one of the most powerful African-American denominations in the United States. Although Allen is best remembered for his religious leadership, his work moved far beyond these circles. According to Newman, his ability to create independent black organizations as well as initiate a published discourse among free blacks established him as one of the nation's founding leaders. Newman's beautifully written study is not only a first-rate social history of the early Republic and African-American culture and religion, it provides a detailed sketch of Allen that is sure to become the definitive biography of the leader. (Mar.)

★ **Young Jesus: Restoring the "Lost Years" of a Social Activist and Religious Dissident**

Jean-Pierre Isbouts. Sterling, \$24.95 (320p) ISBN 978-1-4027-5713-6

The Christian scriptures have virtually nothing to say about Jesus' life as a child. According to tradition, he, like his father, was a carpenter and is often pictured living a quiet life in a woodworker's shop. This, says Isbouts (*The Biblical World*), is a completely false image. Relying on ancient historians such as Josephus, archeological findings of the Ancient Near East, and scripture, Isbouts shows how, after living for centuries as subsistence farmers, families like Jesus' were pitched into poverty by the taxes levied by Herod and various Roman overlords. As a result, greedy oligarchs bought up foreclosed lands, turning former landholders into indentured servants. Isbouts believes that Jesus' ministry was a response to such injustices. The other key factor in Jesus' youth is his questionable paternity, as described in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The rumor of illegitimacy, says Isbouts, would have made him a pariah in his small village. Isbouts argues that like so many famous geniuses, Jesus' stressful childhood paradoxically gave him "greater freedom to observe, cope, and re-create the world "around" him. While some will quibble with the specific interpretations Isbouts puts forth, the result is a vividly moving portrait of one of the best-known but least understood people of all time. (Mar.)

★ **Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How Rival Christians Came Together to Rescue Their Holiest Shrine**

Raymond Cohen. Oxford, \$27.95 (320p) ISBN 978-0-19-518966-7

Probably few of the pilgrims and tourists who visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem are aware that for much of the 20th century the building, revered as the location of Christ's crucifixion and burial, was in danger of collapsing. In this meticulous, evenhanded account, Cohen (professor of international relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) describes step-by-step how the three major faith communities in the church (Armenian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic) finally worked together to preserve this shrine in spite of doctrinal differences, property disputes, brawls, lack of funds and the complicated politics of the Middle East. Their goal, according to Cohen, was not "interchurch reconciliation" or conflict resolution but conflict management; most astonishing is the perseverance of all parties involved over a span of decades. While his concluding analysis of the project's eventual success in terms of international relations principles seems too brief, Cohen's chronological approach and strong writing maintain suspense in spite of the outcome promised in the book's title. His tale offers hope that ancient sites can be preserved in spite of seemingly impossible odds. (Mar.)

★ **Bead One, Pray Too: A Guide to Making and Using Prayer Beads**

Kimberly Winston. Morehouse, \$28 (192p) ISBN 978-0-8192-2276-3

Part history, part missal and part crafting how-to, this is a treasure trove of faith and spiritual contemplation. Winston, an award-winning religion journalist, occasional *PW* contributor and avid beader, takes readers on a fascinating journey through the tradition of prayer beads. From the third century B.C. through the late 20th century, she touches on a variety of world religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, the Baha'i faith and others. A thorough introduction to both the Catholic and Anglican rosaries, complete with stunning photographs and instructional diagrams, rounds out the historical portion of the text. The second part, which is even more inviting, reveals myriad ways to use the tactile to reach the spiritual. From poems to psalms to saints, Winston offers bead-by-bead suggestions, all the time emphasizing that "prayer beads are a tool for prayer and not an object of devotion... they are not there to be the focus of your prayers, but to help you focus your prayers." Practically, the final section provides the nitty-gritty of tools, materials and techniques necessary for creating individual rosaries and chains, complete with resources for choosing and finding particular types of beads. The combination of Winston's personal anecdotes with her obvious knowledge of and love for the practice makes this a lovely addition to any praying person's repertoire. (Mar.)

Soul Fire: Accessing Your Creativity

Thomas Ryan. SkyLight Paths, \$16.99 paper (176p) ISBN 978-1-59473-243-0

Don't let the author's title of reverend scare you away from this soulful cheer for creativity. A Catholic priest and yoga instructor, Ryan artfully blends his personal journey with equal parts travelogue and biography, yet manages through engaging end-of-chapter exercises to bring the focus back to the reader seeking spiritually creative motivation. At times the combination of his poetry and guidance is a bit awkward and perhaps even indulgent, yet at the same time it is a seductively brave demonstration of his challenge to "Surrender to the Adventure." Friendly and even almost confidential in his manner ("Here's the thing about creativity: It's a live growing entity") he still maintains enough of an air of authority (think yoga master, not schoolmaster) that the questions for reflection and creativity exercises are less like homework and more like steep mountain climbs or complicated yoga positions, delicious in their challenge. Although Ryan is better at relating his own experiences than helping readers generate their own "soul fire," his exuberance is more than enough to inspire and encourage others—regardless of their professed or practiced faith—who seek an enlightened, emboldened path of spiritual creativity. (Mar.)

The Jewish Connection to Israel, the Promised Land: A Brief Introduction for Christians

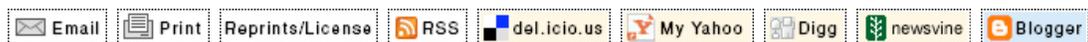
Rabbi Eugene Korn. Jewish Lights, \$14.99 paper (176p) ISBN 978-1-58023-318-X

Informative, factual and, sadly, as dry as the land it depicts, this newest installment of the Brief Introduction for Christians series has some fine qualities. It is filled with interesting tidbits and opinions of which even Jewish readers may not be aware —e.g., the Israeli view of "Hanukkah as a symbol of political independence and precedent for Jewish cultural and military self-defense." Chock-full of history, dates and statistics, the overview of Jews' relationship to Israel is thorough. However, it feels more like required collegiate reading than the engaging dialogue it could be, and the more contemporary commentary, particularly regarding American Jews, fails to illustrate the breadth of diversity within the community. Though by definition the Diaspora has produced Jews of every background and opinion, Korn, professor of Jewish thought in the Department of Christian-Jewish studies at Seton Hall, generalizes the place in which American Jews hold Israel as "a central focus of Jewish identity," as well as their connection to the "Ethiopian, Russian, Yemenite, and Iraqi Jews... as brothers and sisters." Certainly, Zionists abound in the United States, yet Korn fails to develop the idea that opinions on Israel vary as much among Jews as among their Gentile counterparts. (Mar.)

Johnny Cash and the Great American Contradiction: Christianity and the Battle for the Soul of a Nation

Rodney Clapp. Westminster John Knox, \$16.95 paper (192p) ISBN 978-0-664-23088-3

Johnny Cash was not an uncontroversial figure in American history and religion, which is why it is so daring to use him as a symbol for the contradictions inherent in U.S. popular and political culture. Clapp, an acclaimed author (*Border Crossings and Tortured Wonders*) and the editorial director at Brazos Press, attempts to call a truce on the polarizing "culture wars." His astute observations about U.S. politics and the longstanding influence of the American South neither demonize nor canonize the culture, but rather uncover religious and social implications that have a deep and profound history. Cash, asserts Clapp, contained all of the contradictions found in U.S. culture and history: holiness and hedonism, guilt and innocence, tradition and progress. Clapp utilizes a bevy of examples drawn from Catholic and Protestant literature, music and art to assemble a truly ecumenical book. We need more reflections on religion and American culture that are as cogent and insightful as Clapp's. He offers a bold and important foray into the murky intersection of religion and culture; he does not claim to provide all of the correct answers, but is aiming the dialogue in the right direction. (Mar.)



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