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2004

Review of Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues: Exploring the Spiritual Themes of The Lord of the Rings

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Recommended Citation
Patterson, Rory, "Review of Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues: Exploring the Spiritual Themes of The Lord of the Rings" (2004). *Faculty Publications and Presentations.* Paper 56.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib_fac_pubs/56

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donned her best womanly attire to sign papers at the local bank for a loan to purchase more stock. Unwittingly, she walks into a robbery in progress and becomes a hostage. The robbers' leader has had dealings with Ben in the past, and uses Lee as bait to seek revenge. He succeeds partly, but Lee does not remain bait for long as she escapes and joins Ben, much to his relief and consternation, in the chase.

These books are well written and show a good grasp of horses and horsemanship; however, the plots are predictable and some of the dialogue seems almost too colloquial to the point that it distracts from the read. Also, while the visual description of the countryside is clear, mistakes like placing Saguaro cacti in Texas detract from the overall effect.

These books are a good fit for those wanting a quickly read, well written story featuring likeable, Christian characters. However, these are not for those who want accuracy in setting, detailed, realistic, Christian characters and a less predictable plot.

The Seven Churches of Revelation Rediscovered, directed and presented by David Nunn. Blue Skies Productions, distributed by Vision Video, Worcester, PA. VHS, 40 min. $19.99.

Reviewed by Suella H. Baird, Director of Library Services, Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ.

The purpose of this video is to not only give background information on the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2-3, but to really bring them alive to the Bible reader. David Nunn, the host, accomplishes this by taking the viewer on a beautifully produced, visual tour of Turkey (Asia Minor), showing the ruins of each of the seven churches set in their natural setting. This gives the viewer a mental picture to carry with them in their Bible study. But what really brings the Scripture alive is the host's description of the history and culture of the area during the writing of Revelation, relating these to the specific issues addressed in each of the letters, as well as to the specific names used for the Risen Christ in the letters.

It is obvious from the enthusiasm of the presentation and the sincerity of the words that Mr. Nunn loves the Lord and his Word. This video is recommended to all who are interested in more fully understanding Revelation 2-3. It would be a valuable asset to all Bible readers, church libraries, and academic libraries.

A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality, by Joseph Nicolosi and Linda Ames Nicolosi. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. 254 pp. $15.00. ISBN 0-8308-2379-4.

Reviewed by Tammy Brawn, Acquisitions Librarian, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Lubbock, Texas.

Dr. Nicolosi provides an incredible amount of convincing scientific evidence, including numerous studies and case histories, to the negative impact of this lifestyle. The goal of this book is well achieved: to present scientific information describing a clear and common road that leads to homosexuality, and ways to block that path. He illuminates warning signs to look for and environments that nurture gender confusion, as well as the current media bias and cultural acceptance of the homosexual agenda.

Little has been written on homosexual prevention. Previous generations avoided the discussion. Current writers dismiss talk of treatment or change as bigotry. Nicolosi's work fills a void in the literature. While he never addresses homosexuality from a Biblical perspective, only mentioning religious concerns of parents from a neutral stance, he presents logical rationale for a pro-heterosexual viewpoint. The absence of Biblical argument may invite non-Christians into the discussion more comfortably. However, Christians may find, as I did, the avoidance of Biblical references to be a crucial missing element. This is the only defect in an otherwise comprehensive topical review.

Joseph Nicolosi is well qualified to write on this topic. He is the president of NARTH, the National Association for Research & Treatment of Homosexuality. He has counseled many gender-confused people in his career as a clinical psychologist and written two other books in this subject area. Both parents and educators will find this book an enlightening read.

The Smart Step-Family: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family, by Ron L. Deal. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002. 272 pp. $16.99. ISBN 0-7642-2657-6.

Reviewed by Tammy Brawn, Acquisitions Librarian, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Lubbock, Texas.

The purpose of this book is twofold: describe the healthy Christian stepfamily and demonstrate how to apply Biblical principles to those relationships. Ron Deal fulfills this objective, presenting an excellent resource on a difficult subject. His experience as a church family life minister, licensed therapist / counselor, and seminar speaker gives credence to his discussion of this topic.

The unique environment of blended families is clearly explained, including the potential pitfalls and difficulties. Suggestions for solutions and coping techniques are based on solid Biblical wisdom. The author advocates each individual's need to be grounded in Christ before healing, forgiveness, and integration can successfully occur. One noteworthy passage distinguishes "God-esteem" from "self-esteem" as the proper perspective for handling these complex situations. A challenge is also given for churches/ministries to create programs designed specifically for the stepfamily, a severely underserved population.

Bookstore shelves are replete with books on divorce, remarriage, step parenting and blended families. Fewer resources are available that present the issue from a Christian perspective. Most religious authors are more interested in stopping the tide of divorce than helping those who have suffered from it cope. This book compassionately assists people through that reality while neither placing blame nor condoning marital dissolution. Within these pages, parents will find practical help while educators, ministers and counselors will gain needed insight and understanding. I recommend it for all readers and libraries.

Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues: Exploring the Spiritual Themes of *The Lord of the Rings*, by Mark Eddy Smith. Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2002. 141 pp. $11. ISBN 0-8308-2312-3.

Reviewed by Rory Patterson, User Education Librarian, Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio.

The Lord of the Rings (LOTR) movies have sparked a great interest in Tolkien's fictional writings. Trying to fill this fad with fare from a more explicitly Christian viewpoint is Smith's *Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues*. Smith is very familiar with the LOTR world, admitting to having read the books more than twelve times, and his examples demonstrate that familiarity. This book obviously comes from a deep love for the LOTR, and expresses Smith's desire to integrate the LOTR into his Christian walk. The very last page of the book – right inside the back cover – even has links to reading group discussion guides for the LOTR. This book does not lack enthusiasm or emotion.

Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues is useful for introducing a reader to the LOTR as it is broken into six sections, which correspond to the books, or sections, within each of the three volumes of the LOTR. It is also helpful in providing teaching or sermon illustrations. *Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues* falters, however, by trying to cover too much. There are thirty virtues covered (warning: not all are positive) in less than one hundred and twenty pages. This provides almost four pages to defining each virtue, demonstrating it in one of the LOTR books, and drawing a parallel from the Bible. The reader just starts to settle into a topic when that virtue ends and the book hurries on into the next virtue. With thirty chapters for discussion, it seems too long for group discussion by itself. *Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues* never gets deep into the depiction of the virtues in the Bible or Christian life, limiting its usefulness for a Sunday School or college class. This book is not recommended for academic libraries.

Profit at Any Cost? Why Business Ethics Makes Sense, by Jerry Fleming. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003. 190 pp. $17.99. ISBN 0-8010-12597.

Reviewed by Donald D. Smeeton, Ph.D., Director Squires Library, Lee University/Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, Tennessee.

The news media frequently reports a plethora of corporate scandals that destroy companies, depress markets, discourage investors, and devastate financial stability. Companies that were apparently solid and profitable are revealed to be a con game. Manipulated reporting and inflated earnings eventually burst and revealed the company to be little