REVIEWS

Family entertainment • Documentaries • Resources for families • Books

Heaven and Earth

This two-disc DVD box set offers scientific evidence regarding the star that appeared at the birth of the Savior (**The Star of Bethlehem**) and historical evidence of the earthquake at the time of His crucifixion (**The Christ Quake**). Each is about one hour long, and both are packed with gripping, convincing insights. Available at **heavenandearthmovie.com**.

The Star of Bethlehem

Law professor Rick Larson was hanging an outside star among Christmas decorations with his young daughter, and the project escalated into a full-blown investigative adventure for Larson. As he dug into serious study of the stars – specifically the star spotlighting the birth of Christ – he was stunned by how astronomy and science affirm biblical records. His study resulted in **The Star of Bethlehem**, an intriguing one-hour documentary released in 2007.

"To my amazement," Larson later recalled, "I found – layer upon layer, time after time – historical, objective, scientific facts that correlate with Matthew's account."

Larson has presented his finding in live appearances for thousands scattered around the globe. His insights into the solar system and constellations are riveting.

Randall Murphree

The Christ Quake

Scripture records an earthshaking event that took place at the same time as the crucifixion of Christ – an earthquake so massive rocks were split and graves were opened. Could an event of that magnitude that happened 2,000 years ago be substantiated today? Can faith and science agree?

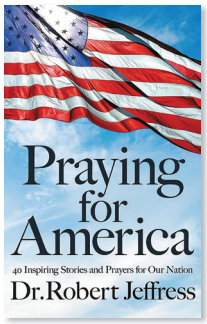
Larson believes they can: "Science and Christianity, I don't think of those things as opposed. I think there's an interplay between the scientific method and Christianity."

In **The Christ Quake**, released in November 2020, Larson and his team traveled to Israel to dig, literally, into the strata of the Dead Sea and confirmed that in A.D. 33 Earth was indeed marked by extreme seismic activity. This well-made and inspiring film documents geological findings that will serve well in bolstering one's faith.

Matthew White

Praying for America

In the heat of a tumultuous and consequential election year, Dr. Robert Jeffress recognizes a deeper problem that America is facing. It is a problem highlighted by an Abraham Lincoln quote that Jeffress includes in his new book, *Praying for America*: "Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!" In response to this problem, Jeffress compiled a list of 40 stories from American history and 40 prayers that apply to specific areas and issues. Each chapter contains an inspiring story that elicits faith and prayer in a time of need and a prayer that applies to family life, the church body, and the nation as a whole. Available at **christianbook.com**.

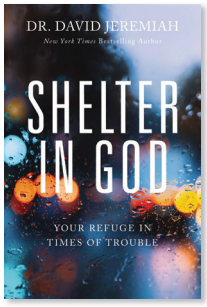


Mason Beasler

Shelter in God

The year 2020 brought unprecedented times upon our country and world. Because of COVID-19, a large portion of the population has been forced into seclusion, into a locked-down way of life. This incursion has shaken people's confidence and called into question the security they thought they had. However, according to Dr. David Jeremiah, God is still the answer.

In *Shelter in God*, Jeremiah takes



Counter Column
Church produces fast-paced, faith-filled movie

What started as a conversation among friends in Upper Room Christian Fellowship in West Lafayette, Indiana, led to an award-winning movie shown in select theaters last year.

In **Counter Column**, Anthony Mendoza joins the Army to escape life as a drug dealer. There, he meets Chris Wright, a Christian who unapologetically shares his faith. Annoyed, Mendoza makes life difficult for Wright and is surprised when Wright doesn't retaliate. Wright soon faces a tragedy to which Mendoza relates, and the two form a bond that softens Mendoza's heart to accept Christ.

Counter Column is a well-written, heartwarming movie directed by Gilbert Sorola, who had the idea. Producer Matthew Jordan thought it sounded like the makings of a great movie. He was right.

It won three awards at the 2020 Christian Worldview Film Festival including Best Gospel Presentation Award and Audience Choice Award. Jordan said they prayed a lot, and God brought it together in ways they never imagined.

"He has made it so big in our first run, and we were not expecting that at all," said Jordan. This film is rated PG-13 because it deals with drug and alcohol use, violence, and an accident scene that could be upsetting to children. However, all of those elements are handled carefully in a negative light and with no gratuitous intent or 'up-close' scenes." For information on how to view the film, visit **countercolumnthemovie.com**.

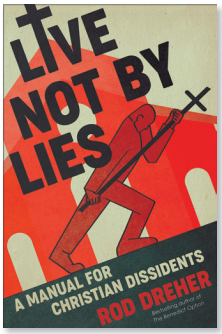
Carey Briggs, guest reviewer

valuable lessons from the book of Psalms and applies them to our pandemic-stricken world. Through biblical testimony of countless characters such as Moses, David, Naomi, and Jesus, God's Word has much to say about the act of sheltering. This book is an encouragement and invaluable guide to learning what God has done through His people during times of trial and seclusion. "You can count on the sheltering God to help you no matter where you've been or where you're headed," writes Jeremiah. Available at **christianbook.com**.

Mason Beasler

Live Not by Lies

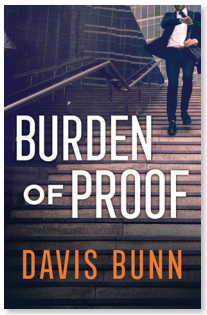
In this new book, Rod Dreher demystifies a concept that is likely foreign to many Americans, but should be at the forefront of their minds: totalitarianism. This ideology is nothing new, and its consequences are well-documented. Dreher explains what totalitarianism is and gives a historical context of where it has been enacted in the past.



Equipped with the testimonies of people who lived in European countries that adopted this ideology, Dreher provides crucial information regarding this threatening trend – characteristics of the movement, threats to the people and freedom, and the appropriate response from those who reject it. *Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents* is a call to reject the progressive shift of today's America. Available at online bookstores.

Mason Beasler

Burden of Proof



Time travel is always too fantastic to be true – because it is too fantastic. In *Burden of Proof*, Davis Bunn, a contemporary master of the art of Christian fiction, has crafted a storyline that boggles the imagination. Once the reader gets the twisted time straight in his mind, it's a no-brainer to root for protagonist Ethan, currently suffering from terminal cancer, when he is offered the opportunity to travel 35 years back in time.

Ethan has spent those 35 years regretting that he was not there to protect his brother Adrian when Adrian was gunned down on the courthouse steps in Jacksonville, Florida. Can Ethan correct his youthful failure and save his brother's life?

Bunn is the prolific author of premiere Christian novels, including four annual Christy Awards for excellence in Christian fiction. His books have sold more than 8 million copies in 20 languages.

Available at **christianbook.com**. Caution: Purchase with care; more than one book claims the same title.

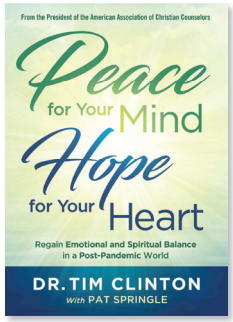
Randall Murphree

The Marvelous Maker

Author April Graney beautifully tells the story of creation to revelation in *The Marvelous Maker*, incorporating rhyme and imagery to tell the story of creation, the fall, and redemption. This children's book conveys the need for Jesus' forgiveness. The poetic piece is perfect for any young kiddo needing to see the cause and importance for redemption. Available for purchase at online retailers.

Hannah Harrison

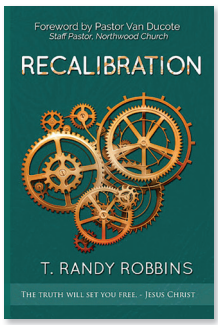
Peace for Your Mind, Hope for Your Heart



As COVID-19 swept around the globe, many faced fear, depression, and emotional distress. In *Peace for Your Mind, Hope for Your Heart*, the American Association of Christian Counselors president, Dr. Tim Clinton, shares helpful tips and tricks on how to handle anxiety and depression. As a counselor, Clinton understands the effects stress has on a person. Through this guide, he incorporates Scripture, spiritual advice, and other methods to help you stop fear in its tracks. Available at retail and online booksellers.

Hannah Harrison

Recalibration



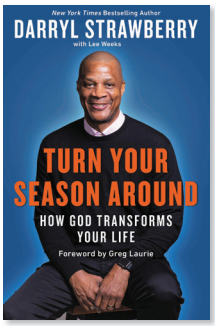
Opening T. Randy Robbins' *Recalibration*, a reader may be surprised to discover that after the introduction, it's a volume of poetry. But reading only a few lines can capture one's imagination. Like the Old Testament psalmists, Robbins explores a wide range of emotions, hopes, fears, and frustrations that make the Christian walk such a great adventure.

After more than three decades in the pastorate and hospice chaplaincy, Robbins has accumulated experiences and credentials that qualify him to craft psalms with which contemporary readers can easily identify.

"The most important thing is not what happens to you," he writes. "The most important thing is how you respond to what happens to you." His insights will help readers grasp and embrace that principle. Available at **trandyrobbins.com/books**.

Randall Murphree

Turn Your Season Around



Darryl Strawberry mixes personal stories, testimonies, and Scripture to make his point in this autobiography. His story is that of a Major League Baseball star who found fame that led to drugs, three marriages, burned bridges, and much more. But he didn't have God.

He points out early that his dad was absent in his life due to selfish choices. As a child, that was devastating to him and had much to do with many bad decisions. But through God's grace and his wife's patience, she led him to Jesus, and his life was forever radically changed.

Strawberry now spends his life as a full-time speaker and minister of the gospel. His book explains how to be saved in the first chapter and walks the reader through the progression of a Christian's growth and challenges after salvation.

Each chapter ends with a "Think About It" section in which Strawberry asks a few practical questions that further help teach biblical lessons he has learned. This feature makes the book perfect for a reading group or Bible study.

He strikes the ideal balance of theology and practicality. It is well-rounded in the sense that it uses the whole counsel of God. Available at **christianbook.com**.

Wesley Wildmon, AFA vice president