

Book Reviews

December 16, 2005

Posted: 12/16/05

Book Reviews

The 13 Apostles by Preston Alford Taylor (Tate Publishing)

Preston Taylor has several published books with wide distribution in English, but predominately in Spanish. I predict this newest work will surpass the others in both sales and stature.

This is a book every pastor should have on his shelf, every seminary student should be required to study and every Sunday school teacher should have close at hand. It is one of the few books I would recommend that everyone should buy and read right now!



What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to books@baptiststandard.com.

He has compiled an enormous amount of historical material and into it integrated the perspective that comes from experience, a lifetime of study and a mature understanding of the grace of God and the Christian life. In addition, he has an easy-to-read style that draws the reader from page to

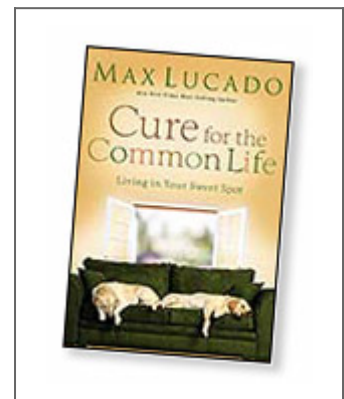
page, filled with inspiring stories about the original apostles. He ends with a powerful challenge for each of us to take our place as we work to expand the kingdom of Christ.

Jerry Barker, pastor

First Baptist Church

Falfurrias

Cure for the Common Life: Living in Your Sweet Spot by Max Lucado
(W. Publishing Group; available January 2006)



God designed us. He designed us according to his purpose. In that purpose, we discover the passion he has placed in our heart.

According to San Antonio pastor and best-selling author Max Lucado, we find our “sweet spot” when we live according to God's unique design, carry out his purpose for us, and fulfill that deep passion of our lives. Our sweet spot, a term from sports, is the “tailor-made task that honors God, helps others and thrills you.”

But if all this is true, how do we discover God's design in our lives? Lucado, using the work of Arthur F. Miller and Ralph T. Mattson of People Management Inc., advises us to “read your life backward” to discover your

story that tells how and for what God created you.

The second part of the book gives a well-presented “ba-sics of the Christian life.” In the third section, Lucado applies the idea of our sweet spot to daily life.

Over the years, I have found the concepts of Miller and Mattson insightful, practical and freeing. Lucado, a gifted communicator, takes those insights and shows step by step and Scripture by Scripture what it means to discover God's design of each of us.

Bill Blackburn, President

Partners in Ministry

Kerrville

Set Free by Forgiveness by Randall O'Brien (Baker Books)



Randall O'Brien, interim provost at Baylor University, explores the liberating, healing power of forgiveness in a highly readable book that combines scholarly insight, pastoral concern, storytelling skill and practical application.

From the book's first pages, O'Brien refuses to let readers off the hook. He begins by telling the story of Chris Carrier, a 10-year-old boy who was abducted, repeatedly stabbed with an ice pick, shot in the head and left for dead. Miraculously, the boy survived the ordeal and returned to his family, but the attack left him blind in one eye. Even more miraculously, years later, Carrier forgave his attacker, befriended him and led him to faith in Christ.

O'Brien unflinchingly challenges readers to recognize themselves as both sinned against and sinners. He calls on individuals to acknowledge their own capacity for evil and need for forgiveness, as well as recognize the practical and therapeutic benefits of offering forgiveness to others.

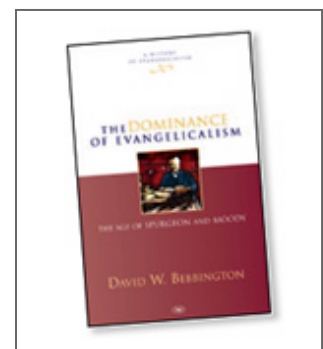
Perhaps O'Brien's greatest contribution lies in the way he draws helpful distinctions between unhealthy shame and healthy guilt and between unconditional, unilateral forgiveness and the difficult, reciprocal process of reconciliation.

Ken Camp, managing editor

Baptist Standard

Dallas

The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody
by David W. Bebbington (InterVarsity)



This volume is the second to be released in the projected five-volume History of Evangelicalism. David Bebbington sketches and evaluates the broad influences and impact of evangelicalism during the period 1850-1900. While not as readable as the first volume, I found his review of the impact of Dwight Moody-Ira Sanky on local-church worship interesting in light of the “worship wars” of our day.

Significant currents that move us to where we are today never happen in a vacuum. Bebbington helps to track how the Enlightenment and later Romanticism influenced the movement and the message. This volume also looks at the roots of the social gospel and the social impact within evangelicalism.

The author also highlights the variety of differences within the stream of evangelicalism during this period. This is a good primer for pastors and church members who are historically curious about some of the influences that make us what we are today.

Michael Chancellor, pastor

Crescent Heights Baptist Church

Abilene

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.