

Book Reviews: The Merciful Scar

August 20, 2014

[*The Merciful Scar*](#) by **Rebecca St. James and Nancy Rue (Thomas Nelson)**



Dove and Grammy winner Rebecca St. James joins Christy Award author Nancy Rue in penning *The Merciful Scar*. In the novel, Kirsten only finds relief from a family tragedy through self-injury. The neat lines carved by sharp objects help her manage the pain like a throbbing boil that hurts when lanced but feels better afterward.

Cut by cut, she handles her life through high school, college and into graduate school. Then the night she thinks her boyfriend will propose, she catches him kissing her best friend. He barges in on her, causing the scissors to slip and dig into a vein. She almost dies in what he calls an attempted suicide. Although she doesn't think she needs the psych ward, she begins to understand she needs help.

When her pastor recommends an out-of-the-ordinary recovery program on a working ranch, Kirsten opts in, even though her divorced and dysfunctional parents think she should opt out. The ranch owners, fellow guests and animals all carry their own scars. And they all need mercy,

redemption, forgiveness and grace. Slowly, Kirsten allows herself to remember and begin healing.

In *The Merciful Scar*, St. James and Rue tackle a difficult topic with honesty and compassion. While the novel has intense scenes, the story of self-injury and self-forgiveness demonstrates the power of Christ's love flowing through his followers.

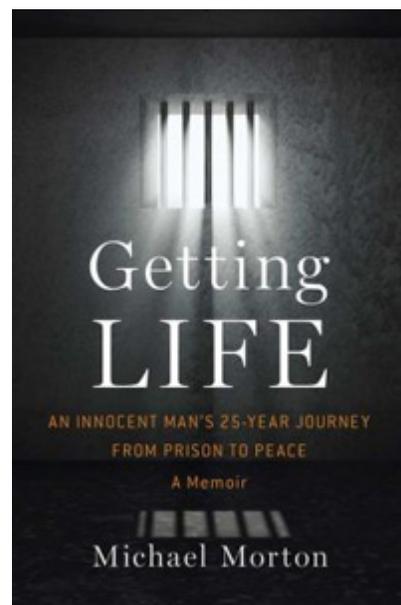
Kathy Hillman, first vice president

Baptist General Convention of Texas

Waco

[Getting Life: An Innocent Man's 25-year Journey from Prison to Peace](#) by Michael Morton (Simon and Schuster)

Michael Morton's autobiographical recollection of the years he spent in prison after being falsely accused and convicted is riveting. Morton wrote in journals throughout his time in prison. Those journals, together with court records and help from the Innocence Project and several attorneys along the way, gave him much to take to court when that time finally arrived. The book deals with just how long that took, as Morton wondered whether the judicial system would allow new evidence in his case.



This book has a happy ending with relationships restored and new relationships begun. Morton gives the grace of God and faith in the Lord due credit. He closes by thanking everyone he can remember who helped him through the 25-year ordeal. In his author's note at the book's end, he

states: "If I've erred anywhere, please forgive me. I did my best to be accurate, but I'm only human."

A DVD documentary is available separately.

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