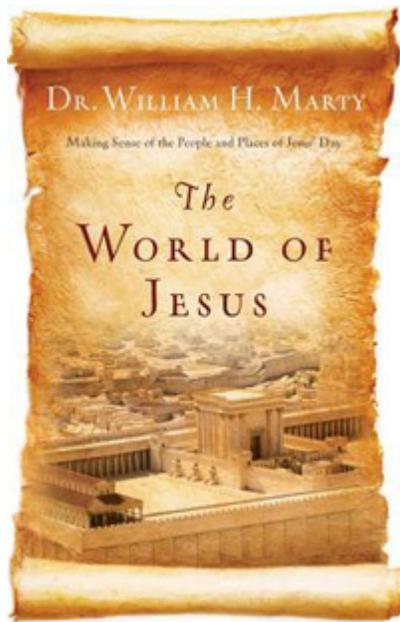


Book Reviews: The World of Jesus

August 9, 2013

[*The World of Jesus*](#) by William H. Marty (Bethany House Publishers)



What happened during the misnamed “400 silent years” between the Old Testament and New Testament that paved the way for the arrival of Jesus Christ on the earth? Why did most Jews dislike the Samaritans? What impact did Alexander the Great have on the biblical world? What are the origins of Hanukkah? What is the difference between a Pharisee, Sadducee and an Essene? Who were the Herodian kings, and what part did they play in the story of Jesus and the early church?

Marty’s brief volume is a less-than-200-page survey of the history between the Testaments that helps set the stage for the entrance of Jesus Christ and the New Testament era. If one can keep up with the real-life cast of characters—mostly rulers and rebels—this book is a gem for the beginning student of biblical history and for the Bible study teacher investigating the backdrop of Jesus’ life and teaching.

Greg Bowman, minister to students

First Baptist Church

Duncanville

[The White Umbrella](#) by Mary Frances Bowley (Moody Publishers)

Mary Frances Bowley understands most Americans remain unaware of sexual slave trade, or at most consider it a remote Third World problem. Twenty years ago, she similarly enjoyed a comfortable life sheltered from the reality of sexual exploitation in the United States. However, contact with one young woman in a desperate situation gave her a desire to shelter others in similar straits—offer a “white umbrella” to provide cover for sexually abused women and help them recover their purity and innocence.



That led her to found Wellspring Living, a temporary home for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and ministry to child survivors of forced prostitution and sex trafficking. Wellspring served as the inspiration and model for Refuge of Light, a ministry in East Texas that plans to provide a similar shelter.

The White Umbrella tells the heartbreaking stories of these women, whom Bowley typically refers to as “girls” regardless of their age, because they typically are emotionally stuck at the age when they were exploited sexually.

It also includes stories of volunteers who commit to making a difference in the lives of victimized young women like 16-year-old Jessica, whose nightmare of abuse began at age 10. But through the influence of loving volunteers at Wellspring, she made a discovery and a pledge: “I realized that even when I don’t know God, he knows me. ... I’m determined that my life is going to be different. The end is not going to be like the beginning.”

Bowley presents a compelling challenge to Christians to step outside the “comfortable bubble” of willful ignorance about sexual exploitation and respond with God’s love to hurting young women.

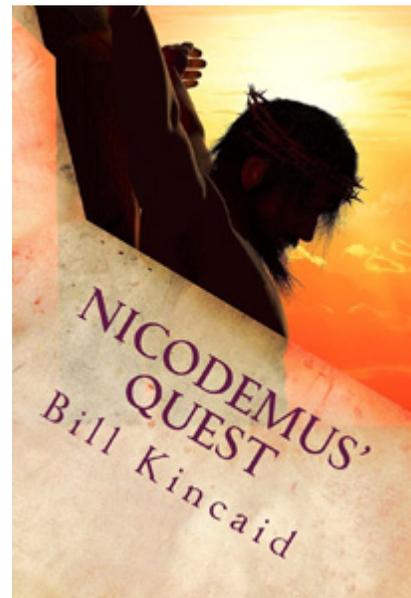
Ken Camp, managing editor

Baptist Standard

Plano

**[Nicodemus’ Quest: Is Jesus the Messiah?](#) by Bill Kincaid
(CreateSpace)**

Two leaders of the Jewish Sanhedrin defied both conventional wisdom and political expediency to remove Jesus’ body from the cross. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were prominent members of the high court that sentenced Jesus to death. Why would they risk their careers—and possibly their necks—to provide Jesus a decent burial, when even his closest followers scattered and hid? That question drives Bill Kincaid’s moving novel.



By the way, don’t get hung up on the word “novel.” Extensive biblical, historical, geographical, archaeological and linguistic research exudes from each page. Kincaid selected this novel approach—quite literally—as a creative-yet-solid mechanism for reporting key events in Jesus’ ministry, as well as his death/burial/resurrection and the launch of the church.

Kincaid has created a compelling and inventive apologetic for the Christ event. It provides a splendid opportunity to share the gospel with

unbelievers who love a great story but won't sit still for a Bible study.

Marv Knox, editor & publisher

Baptist Standard Publishing

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