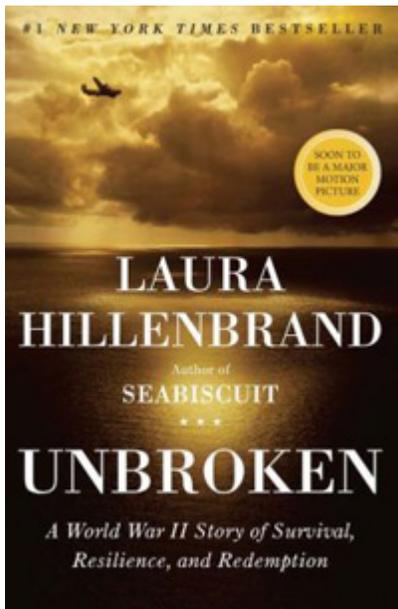


Book Reviews: Unbroken

September 26, 2014

[Unbroken](#) by Laura Hillenbrand (Random House)

The subtitle identifies this book as “a World War II story of survival, resilience and redemption.” That’s an understatement. It’s an honest depiction both of the depravity and dignity of humankind. It’s a testimony to God’s sustaining grace and the transforming power of forgiveness. On top of that, it’s a compelling tale about a remarkable man.



Louis Zamperini represented the United States as a distance runner in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. Two years later, he set a national collegiate mile record, and he planned to compete at the 1940 Olympics in Tokyo—cancelled due to war.

More than two months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Zamperini enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces, and he eventually was deployed to the Pacific as a bombardier on a B-24. His plane crashed into the South Pacific on May 27, 1943. He survived six and half weeks in a raft on the open seas, enduring shark attacks and subsisting on a few birds and fish he and his companions caught and rainwater they collected. One of his fellow crewmen died. Zamperini and the other airman eventually reached the Marshall Islands, but the Japanese Navy immediately captured them. As

a prisoner, Zamperini endured unspeakable horror—starved, beaten and held captive in unimaginably filthy conditions. When he and his fellow captives were liberated at the war's end, Zamperini returned to the United States to a hero's welcome.

However, memories of his imprisonment haunted him. He suffered from depression and struggled with alcoholism. In 1949, his longsuffering wife, Cynthia, compelled him to attend Billy Graham's Los Angeles Crusade. Zamperini felt crippled by the burden of hatred he felt toward the Japanese. He responded to the evangelist's invitation to give his heart and life to Jesus Christ. In the years that followed, he shared the message of God's transforming grace—even with some of the guards who had tormented him.

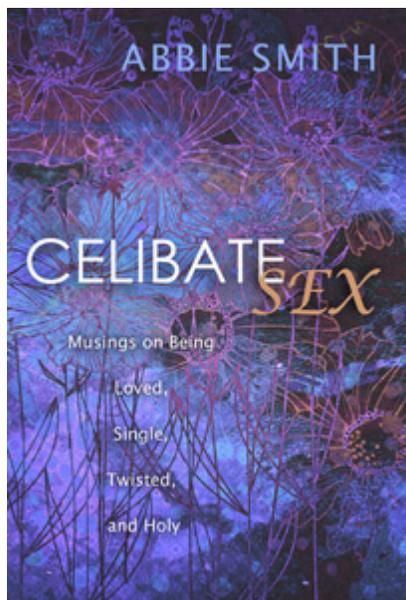
It ought to be a movie. In fact, it will be—scheduled for release Christmas Day. Perhaps the movie, produced and directed by Angelina Jolie, will faithfully present the full story. Maybe it will focus only on the resilience of the human spirit. Regardless, read this book first. You won't be disappointed.

Ken Camp, managing editor

Baptist Standard

[Raw Spirituality](#) by Tom Smith (InterVarsity Press)

Tom Smith joins Richard Foster, Dallas Willard and James Bryan Smith and others in writing an important resource for the Renovare spiritual-formation movement.



While growing up in South Africa during apartheid, Smith felt called to move to America. He served as pastor of a growing, vibrant church in South Africa. But when he arrived in the United States, he saw the church in the United States enthralled by consumerism and capitalism.

After three years in the States, Smith and his family returned to South Africa to begin a church named "Claypot." Smith wanted to get back to the basics of New Testament Christianity. He then co-founded "Rhythm of Life," a spiritual-formation consulting group.

The principles he espouses in this book are basic tenets of the Christian faith. He grabs readers' attention with chapter titles like "Jesus with a Six-Pack," and the questions at the end of each chapter all are titled "Training Naked."

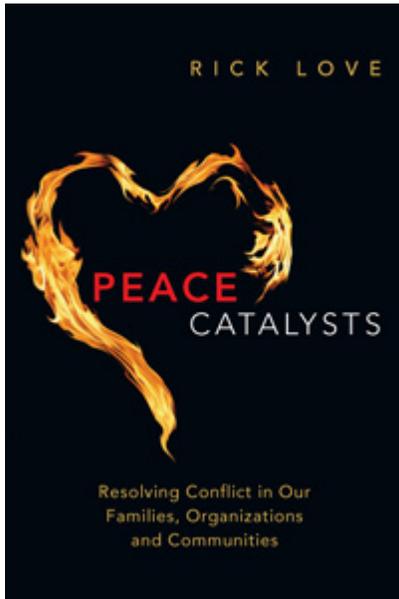
Smith does a wonderful job asking and imploring each reader to return to being a Jesus follower.

Skip Holman, minister of discipleship

Northeast Baptist Church

San Antonio

***Peace Catalysts: Resolving Conflict in our Families, Organizations & Communities* by Rick Love (Intervarsity Press)**



Rick Love, an internationally known expert in Christian-Muslim relations and founder of Peace Catalyst International, offers insights on peacemaking, forgiveness, justice and conflict resolution. He also provides guidance for learning to reprove and accept reproof lovingly. He addresses peace on every level, from personal to international.

The book is replete with Scripture references, appendices and endnotes as informative as the book itself. A great part of the book is a Paul versus Barnabas mediation.

If you desire to know the ramifications of peace—or the lack of it—this book will be a great resource for you.

Skip Holman, minister of discipleship

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