

lar, conservative Christian viewpoint that is too narrow for adequate scholarship. Libraries serving those constituencies may prefer the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Doubleday, 1992) or *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Abingdon, 2009). For this reason, the *Zondervan Encyclopedia* is recommended for Christian seminaries, church libraries, and public libraries that serve a mainly conservative Christian patron base.—*Amanda K. Sprochi, Health Sciences Cataloger, University of Missouri-Columbia*

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary. Ed. by John H. Walton. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009. 5 vols. \$249.99 (ISBN 978-0-310-25572-7).

Walton and Zondervan have taken a rather courageous step with the publication of the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*. By providing a work focused on the cultural contexts of Biblical texts to a lay, evangelical audience, they risk being incorrectly identified with critical traditions both within and outside of Christianity that use the cultural contexts of scriptures to argue against an evangelical doctrine of inspiration.

Walton makes his case for the work in his introduction. He invites his readers and, implicitly, his critics to adopt a more sophisticated understanding of intertextuality. He argues that an intertextual relationship between ancient texts need not imply that a religious text represents “derivative mythology,” and therefore does not disqualify a Biblical text from the possibility of use as a sacred text in a religious tradition that insists on the historical accuracy of its sacred texts. Even so, the commentary’s scholarly, comparative approach to Biblical literature is likely to produce at least some discomfort for many among the work’s target audience.

The work is clearly intended to be an aid to Biblical exegesis. Walton writes, “successful (Bible) interpreters must try to understand the cultural background of the ancient Near East just as successful missionaries must learn the culture, language, and worldview of the people they are trying to reach” (xii).

The commentary achieves this purpose by placing Biblical texts in direct comparison with other historical, archaeological, and literary evidence from the ancient Near East. Virtually every page includes a color photograph of ancient art, a map, or a comparative table that greatly enhances the commentary. The work also contains occasional topical essays related to ancient Near Eastern history that is relevant to the commentary. Some examples of such essays are “Altar on Mount Ebal” (2:39), “Dreams and Temple Building in the Ancient Near East” (3:292), and “Development of the Term ‘Satan’” (5:210).

Although the title of the work says “Bible” rather than specifying Hebrew or Christian scriptures, the scope of the work is limited to the Hebrew Bible or the “Old Testament.” Walton provides no reason for this decision, and one is left to wonder whether New Testament volumes are forthcoming. On the other hand, one might speculate that Walton and

Zondervan decided that placing the explicitly Christian scriptures side-by-side with pagan Graeco-Roman sources could be too uncomfortable for their audience. Perhaps they are testing the waters with this Hebrew Bible source.

Even though the primary audience is Christian, the commentary does not “Christianize” the Hebrew Bible by reading the New Testament onto the Hebrew texts. In fact, the work debunks some Christianization and harmonization in subtle ways. One could imagine a Jewish reader finding the work inoffensive, interesting, and informative. It remains clear that the questions being answered are questions of interest to Christian interpreters, such as “what is a redeemer?” However, the work often provides evidence that differs with evangelical doctrine.

The commentary has an instructional tone that is delightfully readable. It is neither too erudite nor too pedestrian. The work is not as accessible as it is readable, however. The only index in the work is a picture index for each volume, and even this index lists the images by book and chapter rather than page number. This is a drawback of the set. A simple topical index, or even just a names-and-places index, could have greatly enhanced accessibility.

This work is clearly useful for Biblical interpretation that is sensitive to historical context and as an introduction to comparative approaches to the Bible. It can also provide interesting browsing material. The work is most appropriate for public libraries and for academic libraries that support coursework introducing a historical, contextual approach to studying the Bible.—*Steven R. Edscorn, Library Director, Memphis (Tenn.) Theological Seminary*

Professional Materials

Karen Antell

Editor

Bite-Sized Marketing: Realistic Solutions for the Overworked Librarian. By Nancy Dowd, Mary Evangeliste, and Jonathan Silberman. Chicago: ALA, 2010. 140p. \$48 (ISBN 0-838-91000-9).

Bite-Sized Marketing is the latest in an avalanche of publications devoted to helping the library world cope and compete in the marketplace for the hearts, minds, and tax dollars of patrons, customers, users, and clients. ALA offers several similar titles in 2009, such as *Creating Your Library Brand* by Elizabeth Doucett, *Marketing Today's Academic Library* by Brian Mathews, and Barber and Wallace's *Building a Buzz: Libraries and Word-of-Mouth Marketing* (ALA, 2010). Other titles on the topic out this year are Elenora Dubicki's *Marketing and*

SOURCES

Promoting Electronic Resources: Creating the E-Buzz (Routledge, 2009) and *The Customer-Focused Library: Re-Inventing the Library from the Outside-In* by Joseph R. Matthews (Libraries Unlimited, 2009).

This particular book is most similar in tone to *The Accidental Marketer* (Information Today, 2009) because all three award-winning authors are sensitive to some librarians' aversion to corporate strategizing for hooking hapless customers. Their take on it is "The way to get people in our doors is not to convince them that we have the materials they need but to help them feel that by using our materials they are becoming the person they want to be" (5).

Bite-Sized Marketing, a slim 140-page volume with rich, smooth, thick paper and eye-catching design, covers topics such as employing Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM); using "story" to bring one's library to life; and marketing electronic resources. The pleasingly designed book provides short but well synthesized solutions for library survival: public relations, outreach, advocacy, marketing with Web 2.0 technologies, and branding. Most appreciated are the librarian quotes interspersed throughout the book, the handy checklists and questionnaires, and pointers to several external websites.

The table of contents and indexes make these contemporary and insightful strategies as accessible as the truffle-sized bites so deliciously drawn on the cover. Highly recommended for public libraries.—Katharine Phenix, *Adult Services, Rangview Library District, Northglenn, Colorado*

Conducting the Reference Interview, Second Edition. By Catherine Sheldrick Ross, Kirsti Nilsen, and Marie L. Radford. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2009. 290 p. \$75 (ISBN: 978-1-555-70655-5).

An outgrowth of the collective research of Ross, Nilsen, and Radford, *Conducting the Reference Interview* examines in detail the importance of understanding patron questions and providing patrons with answers to fulfill their needs. Actual transcripts of in-person, telephone, and virtual reference transactions are provided to illustrate "what to do" and "what not to do" to answer patron queries successfully.

Focused on promoting effective communication skills rather than teaching reference tools, *Conducting the Reference Interview* provides methods that librarians can use to evaluate their performance. Some examples are a self-evaluation exercise on approachability and acronyms to assist with being thorough in answering queries, such as PACT: "Place is Right, Available and Listening, Contact Made and Topic (in general) understood" (48). Numerous case studies analyzing reference transactions are cited. The need to address the ambiguity of words without context is addressed. For example, when a patron asks for information about "grease," a librarian needs to clarify, asking for further information: "Grease, the musical?" (57).

In addition to a thorough review of reference interview skills, techniques, and applications, a chapter is devoted to the readers' advisory (RA) interview. As many librarians are charged with performing both reference and RA, often from

a single service point, and library school curricula as a whole do not emphasize RA, this section is particularly valuable. RA expert Joyce Sarricks is quoted: "It's not like a reference question where there may be only one correct answer to the question. There are fifty thousand correct answers to the [RA] request" (237).

Conducting the Reference Interview provides extensive source notes at the end of each chapter, promoting further study, and is thoroughly indexed. This comprehensive manual will serve as a complement to *Crash Course in Reference* (Libraries Unlimited, 2008), which focuses more on reference resources.

Conducting the Reference Interview is essential reading for newcomers to the reference desk, as well as librarians who have served our profession for years. Supervisors will find it an effective tool for evaluating staff performance, librarians will find it helpful for day-to-day reference transaction analysis, and students will find it to be a pragmatic guide for assessing and enhancing their reference communication skills. Ideally, all libraries would purchase this seminal work. However, given the \$75 price tag for this book, it is recommended for academic libraries, particularly those with library school programs, as well as larger public libraries.—Lisa Powell Williams, *Adult Services Coordinator, Moline (Ill.) Public Library*

Guiding Students into Information Literacy: Strategies for Teachers and Teacher-Librarians. By Chris Carlson and Ellen Brosnahan. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2009. 101p. \$35 (ISBN 978-0-810-85974-6).

Using familiar refrains from students as chapter headers, such as "There's No Stuff in this Library" and "Not Another Boring Report," Carlson and Brosnahan provide planning strategies for maximizing the research experience of students in the middle school environment. Written for teachers and teacher-librarians, the authors discuss practical examples of how a research topic assignment can be broken into manageable parts for the students using an inquiry-based "I-search" method.

Drawing on the I-search premise that students learn best when they are interested in the topic, the authors outline a step-by-step process for asking questions such as "what do I want to know?", "how will I find the answers?", and "how will I record the information that I find?" The authors suggest that teachers and teacher-librarians collaborate to make the research assignment productive for the students and provide the information literacy skills that can result in lifelong learning skills for the student.

Readers who are seeking resources and ideas for planning research assignments will find helpful the specific examples, such as the project proposals, the collaborative planning worksheet, the calendar form for an I-search assignment, and the further readings listed in each chapter. The authors provide classroom assignments with techniques in presentation and specific examples that can help students become better users of information and critical thinkers.