

Resource reviews

- ★★★★★ very highly recommended / absolutely outstanding
- ★★★★☆ highly recommended / extremely good
- ★★★☆☆ recommended / good
- ★★★☆☆ recommended with minor reservations / mediocre
- ★★☆☆☆ recommended with major reservations / weak
- ✗☆☆☆☆ not recommended / extremely weak

Eyewitness Assemblies

Gaynor Cobb, 2007
Barnabas (BRF)
paperback, 128pp, £7.99
illustrations: none
ISBN: 978-1-84101-496-8
use: primary assemblies, RE, PSHE and Citizenship



In *Eyewitness Assemblies*, Gaynor Cobb 'recognises the power of first hand experience.' Events from Palm Sunday to Pentecost are written in a believable way, and in language that is easily accessible. I felt a great sense of satisfaction when I read this book as it helped me understand what it must have been like for the key people in Jesus' life at that time. Each 'eyewitness' account is full of emotion.

The assemblies are ideal for busy teachers as they come with notes and suggestions for bringing them alive for children. There are very good ideas for follow up as well as suggestions for prayers, songs to sing in assemblies and music – which is always helpful. Other ideas include points for discussions and reflective poems. The book makes useful curricular links to RE, PSHE and Citizenship.

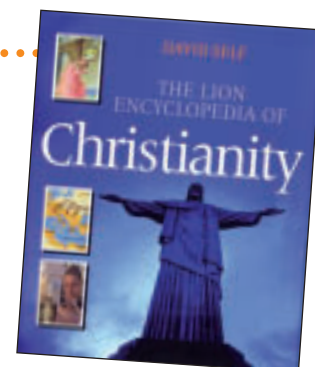
I particularly appreciate the way *Eyewitness Assemblies* includes questions to help teachers and children focus and reflect on each 'eyewitness' account. All assemblies come with suggestions about how to introduce and follow up the story.

This book is an excellent tool for the hard-pressed teacher and would be a welcome addition to any classroom.

REVIEWER Angela Hedges, Class Teacher and ICT Subject Leader, Charlton Manor Primary School, London.

The Lion Encyclopedia of Christianity

David Self, 2007
Lion Hudson
hardback, 127pp, £14.99
illustrations: colour
ISBN: 978-0-7459-4949-9
use: school library, RE resource, church group, gift



This excellent book is well-written and appropriately illustrated. The thematic format covers such areas as 'Origins', 'Teachings', 'Worship', 'Living the Faith', 'A World Religion', 'The Church in the World Today' and 'Issues for the Church'. Each section contains accurate information. The timeline at the back of the book is very useful for putting everything in historical context, and the index is clear and easy-to-use.

It is so attractively put together that junior (KS2) children will want to pick it up. The print is clear and a sensible size for reading. This will not overwhelm the younger children and those with minor reading problems in this group. The boxed sections of key information have relevant key quotes, and a 'Look It Up' box with cross-references to other relevant chapters in the book. The photos, pie-charts and artwork have excellent colour reproduction and are easy to follow and within the capabilities of this age group.

I particularly liked the spread devoted to the diversity of belief within the Church. The last section on 'Questions for Christians' covers issues such as the environment, evolution, fundamentalism, women in the church, unity in the church, population control, abortion and medical ethics.

Buy this brilliant book and use it in school, church youth group and church library. I will certainly be putting a copy on my library shelves. *The Lion Encyclopedia of Christianity* makes an ideal companion to *The Jesus Encyclopedia* (Lois Rock, 2005, Lion Hudson).

REVIEWER Moira Kleissner, School Librarian and Supply Teacher, Hillside Community Primary School, Ipswich, Suffolk.

Deluded by Darwinism? Intelligent Design, Evolution and God

Martin Down, 2007

Kingsway Communication Ltd (David C Cook)

paperback, 176pp, £7.99

illustrations: black and white

ISBN: 978-1-842913-65-9

use: material for Y12–Y13 debate and general knowledge, for the daring



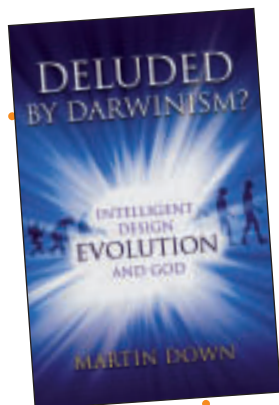
Martin Down's well-written book will annoy some people; others may throw it in the bin. But for the curious it introduces an issue which is a storm-centre in the USA and whose outer turbulence is beginning to be felt this side of the pond.

With great clarity the author compares evolution and creation as explanations of life, the universe and everything. Included in the evidence he discusses are the unique features of planet earth, including the four basic laws of physics and the unique properties of water which make life on earth possible. He explains the irreducible complexity of the single cell in the body of a living creature, and information processing in DNA.

After a surprisingly positive account of peppered moths and the Galapagos finches, the author turns to the weaknesses of evolution as a hypothesis. Variations within a species (microevolution) do not account for the generation of new species (what he calls 'mega-evolution'). Intermediate forms are very scarce among the living and fossils. Selection means a loss not a gain of information. Mutations produce weaker not stronger offspring. Similarities between the limbs of some different species (homologies) are now known to be based on different genes and to develop from different parts of the embryo by different pathways. Down then shows why he prefers catastrophe as an explanation of the evidence of sedimentary rocks, and offers plausible arguments for a universal flood and a young earth, concluding with God and a straightforward reading of Genesis.

Deluded by Darwinism? Intelligent Design, Evolution and God is highly recommended as a resource for teachers wishing to stimulate Y12–Y13 debate and general knowledge.

REVIEWER Arthur Rowe, Lecturer in New Testament and World Religions, now retired.



William Wilberforce: a biography

Stephen Tomkins, 2007

Lion Hudson

paperback, 238pp, £8.99

illustrations: none

ISBN: 978-0-7459-5232-1

use: tertiary and school libraries, teachers' study book



The year 2007 will be remembered for a number of major events and anniversaries, not least the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade. Tomkins' biography of William Wilberforce is a useful reminder of the key personalities involved in the campaign to abolish the infamous trade in enslaved Africans. The book is a straightforward biography of Wilberforce; carefully researched, but an easy read.

Wilberforce's childhood and period at Cambridge University was spent in an atmosphere of ease, taken up with 'playing cards, billiards and dances' (p20). Later, Wilberforce bewailed his lack of disciplined study, but still managed to be elected MP for Hull in 1780 at the age of 21.

Early in his parliamentary career, two documents made a lasting impression on his later thinking and actions: James Ramsay's essay on the treatment and conversion of African slaves, and Philip Doddridge's *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*. Doddridge's book challenged Wilberforce's shallow and meaningless understanding of Christianity, and started him on a journey of personal soul searching. He engaged in long deep conversations with godly men, one of whom was John Newton, formerly master of a slave ship, but now a vicar.

This is an honest biography. In addition to the usual references to Wilberforce's strict code of Christian morality and his work to abolish slavery and promote animal welfare, the author notes his support for the notorious Peterloo Massacre and Sidmouth's repressive Six Acts. This book is well worth reading. It is not too academic and, as such, is ideal for thoughtful Y12–Y13 students.

REVIEWER David Edgington, Retired Head of RE, Watford Grammar School for Boys, Hertfordshire.

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