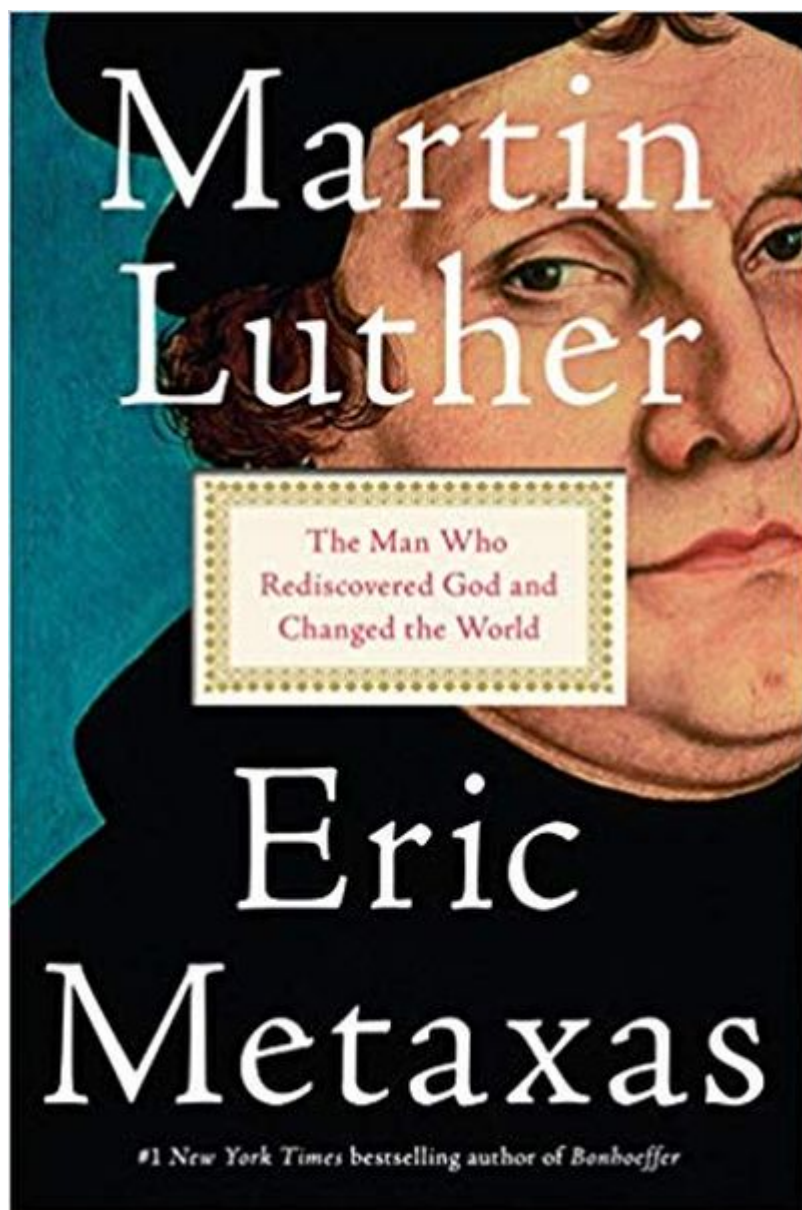


Eric Metaxas – Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World: Book review



October 2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the action that is considered to have sparked the enormous religious and social changes known as the Reformation.

That a humble monk by the name of Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of Wittenburg Castle Church in

October 1517, traditionally on the 31st, is well-known. This has become an iconic symbol of defiance against the Catholic Church.

This current anniversary period has seen a great deal of activity in publishing circles and a plethora of books aimed at bringing further understanding of this remarkable time in history have been produced.

In this particular biography, Eric Metaxas has sought to debunk many of the myths that have emerged over the centuries concerning Luther.

For example, he has much to say regarding the posting on the cathedral door that sheds a somewhat different light on the matter. The 95 Theses, (or criticisms) was only intended by Luther as an invitation to academic debate. In those days, church doors regularly served as notice boards. It is also likely that in fact the church custodian did the actual posting, which may well have involved paste rather than hammer and nails.

But such was the significance of the events triggered by this invitation to debate, as well as, and perhaps more importantly, by a letter Luther wrote at the time regarding the practice of indulgences, that history has assigned a great deal of drama to this supposed act of defiance.

However, at this early stage in his life, Luther was extremely respectful towards the Church and its leaders and sought only to bring to attention certain things that he felt needed to be changed for the good of the Church.

A large factor in propelling Luther's thoughts and ideas into the public arena, and one that he originally did not anticipate, was the emergence at that time of the printing press. Since in those early days of publishing, copyright was not even a concept, Luther was originally unaware of how his thoughts and ideas could and did spread.

The printing press of course also gave people the opportunity to read the Bible for themselves. Previous to this, not many leaders in the Church even read the Bible, so interpretation had strayed very far from that of the original New Testament Church.

I thoroughly enjoyed this insightful book, which is written in an entertaining, engaging and elegant style.

I was fascinated to discover how this reformation went so far beyond the Church and to understand how very different life was when the masses were told what to think and were totally accepting of this.

Also of interest was the fact that many who originally supported Luther became much more radical and revolutionary than he was himself, and he became very critical of these former friends.

A disturbing feature of Luther's life was a pamphlet he penned in which he vilified Jewish people, and which was later used by Hitler to justify the Holocaust. Apart from this aberration, Luther is portrayed as a man of deep godliness, integrity and courage. It remains a mystery as to why, during a certain period of his life he authored an anti-Semitic pamphlet, yet before and after this, he seems to have held a different, more compassionate view of Jews.

There is so much more I could say about what I learned regarding this formative time in Western culture and about this somewhat enigmatic man that was Martin Luther, one-time monk and later family man.

Suffice to say I considered this a very worthwhile read.

New book reveals why Jesus means everything to US Super Bowl winners



The Philadelphia Eagles praying after winning a game in November 2017.
(PHOTO: [Faith Wire](#))

Originally published in [CBN News](#)

Back in February, millions of football fans watched the Philadelphia Eagles win the Super Bowl for the first time in history, defeating the legendary New England Patriots.

But what also took centre stage was the Eagles players' bold faith and eagerness to give God the glory for their win.

Now, Christian author Joshua Cooley is taking fans deep inside the faith lives of quarterback Nick Foles and five other Eagles players in his new best-selling book titled *The Biggest Win*.

"Rarely, if ever, have I spoken to a group of professional athletes so committed to pursuing biblical truth together," Cooley said. "But I was immediately struck by their

unquenchable hunger for scripture and their commitment to genuine Christian discipleship, accountability, and obedience to Great Commission living.”

First time being Baptized! Corporate Worship is a beautiful thing!! Cleansed & Reborn in JESUS name!! ☺☺☺ [#WholeHeartedly](https://pic.twitter.com/Qt0j2FyRMu)
pic.twitter.com/Qt0j2FyRMu

– Marcus D. Johnson ☺ (@Mojomdj) [October 12, 2017](#)

Cooley told CBN News their faith “affects everything they do” in their personal lives and professional lives.

Fans got a peak early last year when a picture of the players praying while wide receiver Marcus Johnson was baptised in a North Carolina swimming pool before a game went viral.

Another video of linebackers Jordan Hicks, Mychal Kendricks, Kamu Grugier-Hill, and wide receivers Paul Turner and David Watford being baptised in the Philadelphia Eagles’ recovery pool late last year also got thousands of views.

The courageous faith of a few players has lead multiple people to Christ, Cooley shared.

“They told a story a couple of seasons ago of a rookie player who came to know the Lord in the hotel room that they were staying in one night just because of the witness of the players,” he said. “They play for a higher purpose than themselves and that just manifests itself every day.”

One way they minister to each other is by taking time to meet off the field.

“They make personal time with each other, personal time both as a team and as individuals,” Cooley explained. “That’s something I want readers to take away from this book, is that we can gather together in Christian community. We can use

sports to do that ... Sports creates community that you sometimes don't get anywhere else."

Cooley believes the Philadelphia Eagles can teach other NFL players something important about giving glory where glory is due. Foles and his teammates say it in their own words in the forward of *The Biggest Win*.

"We love football. We love what we do. But football is just a game. And one day we will retire from football. But becoming a follower of Jesus Christ means our identity doesn't have to be in our latest performance on the field – our identity is in Christ. Following Jesus means that our purpose is larger than being the best athlete. We have a whole new life of meaning, purpose, and service that will last longer than our football careers and have more impact in the world than anything we could accomplish on the field," they write.

It's a message Cooley hopes all his readers take away from the book.

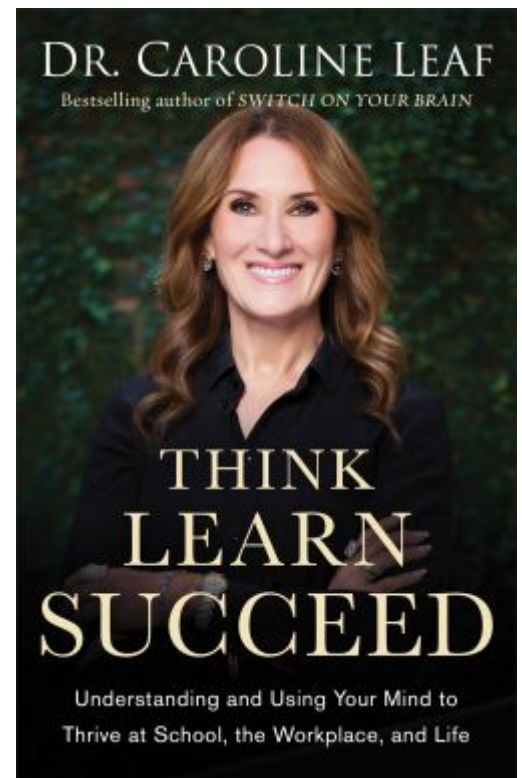
"It was so neat to see these six guys give glory to where it was really due which is to our Creator – the One who gave these guys their gifts. If we don't get that right then we have completely missed the boat," he told CBN News. "No matter what sport you play, no matter what level you play at, it's all about giving glory to the One who created you."

Watch CBN News' interview with Joshua Cooley below:

Dr Caroline Leaf in SA,

Namibia in August

Switch On Your Brain author Dr Caroline Leaf will be touring South Africa and Namibia in August to promote her new book *Think Learn Succeed* which is in stores now and to speak at church conferences and services around the country.



Leaf, who was born in South Africa, but lives in the US with her husband and four children, is a cognitive neuroscientist who has extensively researched the science of thought and the mind-brain connection as it relates to thinking, learning, renewing the mind, gifting, and potential.

She is also the author of *Think and Eat Yourself Smart*, and *The Perfect You*, amongst many other books and journal articles, is a sought-after international conference speaker and has her own television show.

Her latest book, which is also available in Afrikaans as *Dink Leer Floreer* explores how our thought lives have incredible power over our mental, emotional, and even physical well-being. Our thoughts can either limit us to what we believe we can do or release us to experience abilities well beyond our expectations.

She says: "Today, most people can access vast amounts of information, yet few people know how to process this

information, using it to be successful at school, work, and life. As a result, grades drop, dreams are crushed, and goals are never achieved.”

Here [itinerary in Southern Africa](#) is:

Pretoria – August 4 (Moreleta Park – Healing Summit)

Cape Town August 5 (Hillsong – Sunday services)

Cape Town August 9 (2pm book-signing at CUM Books, Canal Walk)

Cape Town – August 11 (CRC – Woman’s Conference)

Port Elizabeth – August 18 (The Father’s House – Woman’s Conference)

Windhoek – August 24/25 (Windhoek Country Club – Conference)

Durban – August 27/28 (New Covenant Fellowship – Conference)

New book on Mary Magdalene released in her hometown



Danielle Storey's illustration of Mary Magdalene.

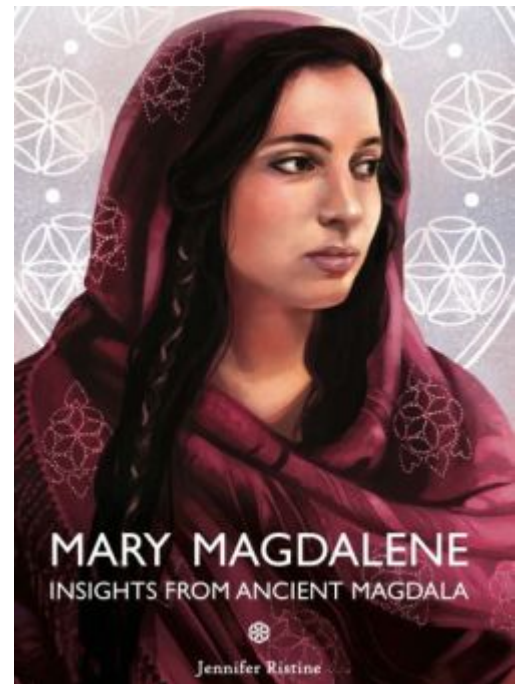
A new book about the life of Mary Magdalene was released this week in her hometown Magdala, Israel. The author, Jennifer Ristine, spent four years as a tour guide in the ancient Galilean town, which is the site of an ongoing archaeological project.

A press release from Magdala announced the release of *Mary Magdalene – Insights from Ancient Magdala* which contains research, dialogue and answers to questions from countless visitors to Magdala. Through archaeological discoveries, historical texts, scriptural sources, and a survey of traditions, Jennifer Ristine offers a representation of the figure and importance of Mary Magdalene.

The book unveils the mystery of Mary Magdalene's life. Jennifer Ristine said that "for the last four years, I have fielded questions about Mary Magdalene and Magdala's history

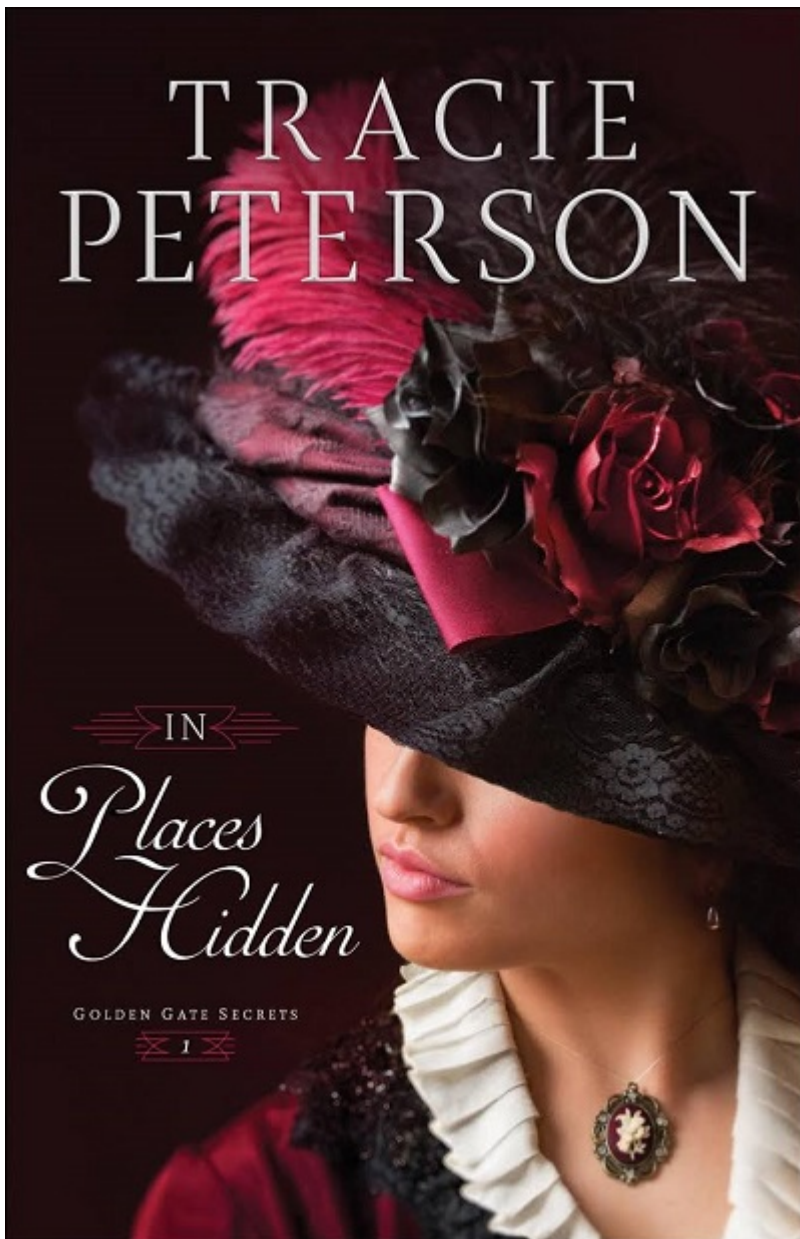
and archaeology as I served in ancient Magdala, giving tours to countless visitors and offering interviews to the media. Hearing tour guides and visitors share multiple theories about her and ask many questions I thought it was time to offer a general survey that clarified what is known and what is developed thought, reflecting on the theories also in the light of faith.”

Mary Magdalene – Insights from Ancient Magdala also features artwork that breaks with many traditional European imagery that portrays Mary Magdalene as blond and Caucasian. The illustrator, Danielle Storey, sought a more realistic look of Mary Magdalene, inspired by the people in the Middle East, with darker hair and complexion as well as Middle Eastern facial features.



The narrative and illustrations give a new inside-out-perspective of a first century Mary Magdalene. Jennifer Ristine also offers food for thought on the relevance of Mary Magdalene for the contemporary world. “Mary Magdalene speaks of the value of being accepted and unconditionally loved, of hope for a brighter future, and of the important role that women play in sharing the good news.”

Tracey Peterson – In Places Hidden: Book review



Book Review by Val Viljoen

Tracey Peterson is an award-winning author of over 100 books, many of which are historical novels.

In Places Hidden is set in the San Francisco of 1905. It is a city fraught with political corruption, as well as the social evils associated with dance halls and bigotry towards emigrants, in particular the Irish and Chinese, both of which

form sizeable but struggling communities.

Camri, Judith and Kenzie arrive in this city together, having met on the train. Each has a specific agenda which has brought her to San Francisco. Camri has come to search for her brother Caleb who has been missing for 3 months. She soon meets Patrick Murdoch, who Caleb defended on a murder charge. Camri goes through many transforming experiences and by the end of the book has mellowed somewhat in her opinions regarding the high value she placed on being an educated woman.

Of course there is the inevitable romance with a feel-good ending. This novel is the first in the Golden Gate Series. The other two books deal more specifically with Judith and Kenzie respectively, continuing with themes established in *In Places Hidden*.

**New book on the power of joy
and laughter – ADVERTORIAL**



The Joy Ride

in 31 Days

The Power of Joy and Laughter

with Sue Jameson
Joy Activist and Laughter Coach

It takes a mere glance at the news so see that Jesus wasn't kidding when He warned that *"in this world you will have trouble"* – John 16:33 AMP!

The good news is that He goes on and urges us to *"be courageous (be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy)"* because He has overcome the world! Other translations encourage use to *"take heart,"* – NIV, or *"be of good cheer,"* – NKJV, and even, *"cheer up!"* – GW. No matter what life looks like, victory is ours, in Jesus!

The challenge is, how do we live a joy-filled, abundant, victorious life when the world around us can sometimes seem so difficult? I have spent the last 21 years trying to figure that out, and have such an urgency to share, with the church,

the knowledge I have gained.

In a nutshell, there is life transforming power in joy and laughter, and in all seriousness, I have written an eBook, *The JoyRide in 31 Days*, in order to share my personal experiences and what I have learned. Part devotional, and part a how-to textbook, I believe that it truly will change lives.

This is what some others, who read a preview copy, have said about the book:

“Sue has compiled a volume of words that will encourage and strengthen you in your walk with God. In today’s world, where we are faced with so much pressure and our strength and hope is fast eroding, joy will become the backbone of our hope. Reading this publication will supernaturally stir you up and will bring an impartation from heaven as you follow its principles.” – Janet Brann-Hollis, Prophet, Teacher and Founder, Ruach Ministries

“Sue Jameson draws on extensive personal experience, nuggets of wisdom from inspirational Christians and Scripture, to provide practical tools to access a lifestyle of joy and laughter.” – Andre Viljoen, Editor and Founder, Gateway News

“*The JoyRide in 31 Days* is an amazing, transforming, and anointed guide for anyone seeking the joyful and abundant life that God has intended for His children. Sue Jameson has woven a tapestry of wonderful insights from brilliant thinkers and chosen exquisite scripture to support each step of the JoyRide, while making it all so accessible with her deeply personal stories and encouraging words. Whether you are just beginning your JoyRide or wanting to enrich your journey, your spirit will rejoice as you devour each day’s offering, ponder relevant questions and take steps that will surely enhance your experience of the power of laughter and the beauty of the joy of the Lord!” – Laura van Vuuren, Writer and Editor

John Crumpton, Pastor at Breakthru Life Church, Joyburg; and

Apostolic Leader of Foundation Ministries International, wrote: “They say that dynamite comes in small packages. This is true of Sue and this is true of this little book. Don’t say you weren’t warned, because there is a powerful anointing on Sue’s life to bring people into joy, even to people who at first resist the idea that they could experience joy again.. May you be blessed and transformed by this journey into a joy-filled follower of the One who was anointed with more joy than any of His companions.”

The book has just been launched on Amazon Kindle, but is also available on PDF at a special price of R 100 (for EFT payments in SA) until July 27 2018. For that price, you will have access to my eCourse, receive a free Laughter CD download, and have an extra copy of the eBook to give away (especially formatted for smartphones, and delivered via WhatsApp) – with a total value of R 600.

You can order The JoyRide online at www.joy-activist.com/joyride

The book is dedicated as my love letter to you! My prayer is that it will infuse you with hope and courage, and that you learn to “count it all joy”, no matter what you are facing in life.

**Zerubbabel Mengistu – Africa
Arise – Thoughts of a Way
Forward: Book review**



Pastor Zerubbabel Mengistu.

I recently thought of a book I had read a while ago called *Africa Arise – Thoughts for a way forward*.

The book is written by Pastor Zerubbabel Mengistu of Beza International, known as Pastor Zee. The church is based in Ethiopia and annually hosts the Africa Arise conference, at the same time as African Union Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa.

The book seeks to give background to the experiences that brought about the Africa Arise Movement and give thoughts of a way forward. These thoughts are not just for the Africa Arise Movement but rather for anyone in Africa seeking to see every space and sector they occupy in Africa transform.

Having participated at the Africa Arise conference I found that the book gave me a perspective which helped me appreciate that it was not just another conference or another gathering, but rather a prophetic action to lift up the name of the Lord at the same time and same city where heads of African states meet.

The hope is that as the name of the Lord is lifted up, His glory will come down. And in the same way God promised to save a city if He found the righteous, He would overlook all the iniquity of Africa's leaders and save the continent.

Pastor Zee recounts the experiences of his father, Dr Betta

Mengistu, who is the visionary of the Africa Arise Movement. His journey began when God healed him supernaturally from leukemia without anyone preaching to him, but just by reading the Bible. He experienced firsthand the power of the Word to heal and redeem and is a firm believer that the Word that can redeem and heal a person is able to redeem and heal nations.

The vision for Africa Arise is “Redeeming nations in righteousness” and in order to realise this vision, the three key areas are a focus for Africa Arise i.e. leadership, trade and youth.

One of the key things that Pastor Zee highlights regarding leadership is the fact that vision must be forged in the power and conviction of personal experience. When individuals are truly convicted by the vision they are pursuing, they will be able withstand any form of opposition and not compromise.

This is unfortunately not the case in our continent, where most African leaders are pursuing visions and ideas that they are not convicted of but instead have been convinced by. These are ideas agreed upon in boardrooms or ideas of interest groups that lobbied the most. As a result, we see resolutions passed each year and yet no implementation or change because our leaders’ hearts are not connected to them.

In addressing the subject of trade, Africa Arise seeks to confront the challenge of corruption in Africa. While policies and laws are helpful, they cannot fully address the challenge of corruption because it is more of a moral challenge than it is a legal one. This is an area that government is not able to address, but it is rather an area that requires the Church to lead.

The Africa Arise movement sought to contribute to this challenge by developing an “Ethical Charter” for business people and professionals. The charter is a personal pledge made by professionals and business people to conduct their

work and business with integrity and in the fear of the Lord. Since its launch, the Ethiopian government has used the charter as one of the tools to fight corruption within the civil service.

On youth, they recognise the need to deliberately invest in the next generation and to have systems and a process for succession planning. Pastor Zee refers to a succession planning model found in the Bible, that can help to ensure one generation is able to pass the baton to another.

The Levites were appointed between the ages of 20-30 to serve in the temple until they were 50. The older priests would play the role of mentors and bring needed wisdom to the younger ones. This, he explains as a strategic window for succession planning. He encourages leaders who are 50 and above to intentionally be developing young people (20-30) if the work is to continue.

Another strategic window for succession planning is between 4-14 years. Luis Bush founded the 4/14 Movement based on research showing that commitments made for Christ between these years tend to stick. As a result they are driving a movement to share the Gospel with as many children as possible in this age group.

The biggest lesson he brings is that that there shouldn't be competition between the older and younger generation. Older pastors (+50) must create room for the younger ones (20-30), who will be more likely to reach the children (4-14). In so doing we can ensure that every generation is prepared to carry the vision forward.

This book was written to help communicate the purpose of Africa Arise. This movement has grown over the years and it became necessary to give context for both new and old participants. Pastor Zee emphasises the power of ideas written-down – while they may never be realised in one's

lifetime, they will be found by a runner, the same way socialist ideas found expression in Ethiopia years after Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Friedrich Engels had died.

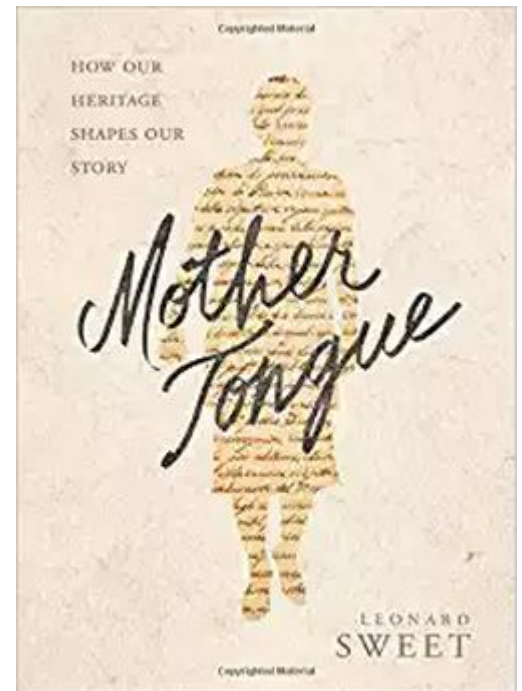
He also reminds the reader to never underestimate the power of one encounter with the Word. While there is a limit to the people that can be reached by the Africa Arise movement, for a nation to be transformed, all it may require is for one leader to have just an encounter with the Word. That is seen in how the Ethiopian eunuch met with Phillip on his way from Jerusalem, and through that encounter Ethiopia became the first Christian nation outside Israel.

As tensions in our nations increase over land expropriation, next elections, increases in petrol prices and instability of provincial governments we must never forget the power of the Word to heal and redeem, not just people but also nations.

The Africa Arise Conference takes place every January, around the AU Heads of States Summit in Addis Ababa. For more information www.africarise.org

**Leonard Sweet – Mother
Tongue: Book review**

Book Review by Val Viljoen



Leonard Sweet is the author of more than 60 books – this refreshing book is his most personal to date.

Sweet grew up as a PK (preacher's kid), but in his case the preacher was his mother.

Mabel Boggs Sweet was an extraordinary woman, who certainly knew how to stand up for what she believed.

Her personal relationship with the living God meant that she often came up against mere religiosity. She was removed from membership of two different denominations – worldliness is her view did not include accepting a ring at her marriage ceremony, nor the occasional watching of television.

She also lost her preaching license which was a huge loss for her in terms of how she had seen her life's mission.

She had three young sons at the time and turned her passions and energies into the raising of these boys to know and honour her Lord, and to know His ways.

Her methods were strict and uncompromising.

Leonard, eldest son and author of the book admits to his shame

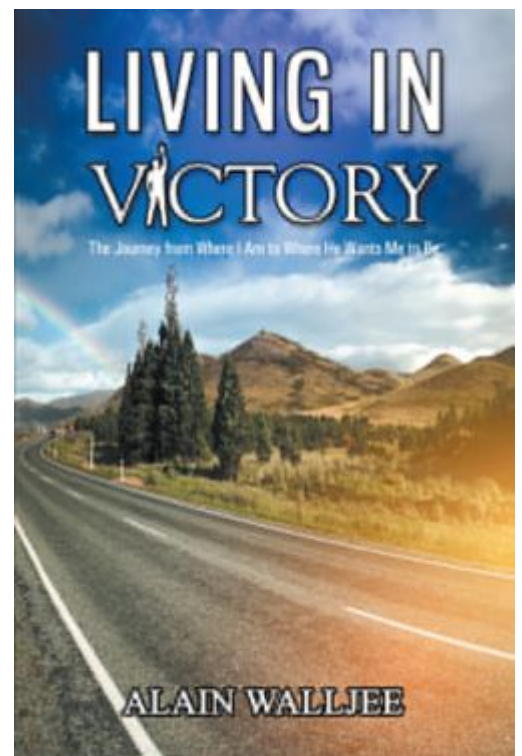
that he never appreciated her as he should have throughout her life.

It was only in retrospect and particularly in the writing of this book that he came to understand her for the faithful servant of God that she was.

This book is more than a biography – her legacy of wisdom has been captured well. The wisdom and understanding of truth of her son also shines forth as a tribute to her life.

New book: Alain Waljee – Living in Victory

Port Elizabeth pastor Alain Waljee strongly believes that by following biblical principles, Christians can live in victory – a theme he explores in his new book *Living in Victory*.



The book begins by looking at where many Christians currently stand – frustrated because their respective realities don't seem to be consistent with the promises of the Word of God –

and goes on to show them the way to victorious living, according to a press release by the publicists.

“It is my strong conviction that a Christian’s physical and material circumstances have to change as a result of the presence of God inside of us individually, and in our homes and families,” says Waljee.

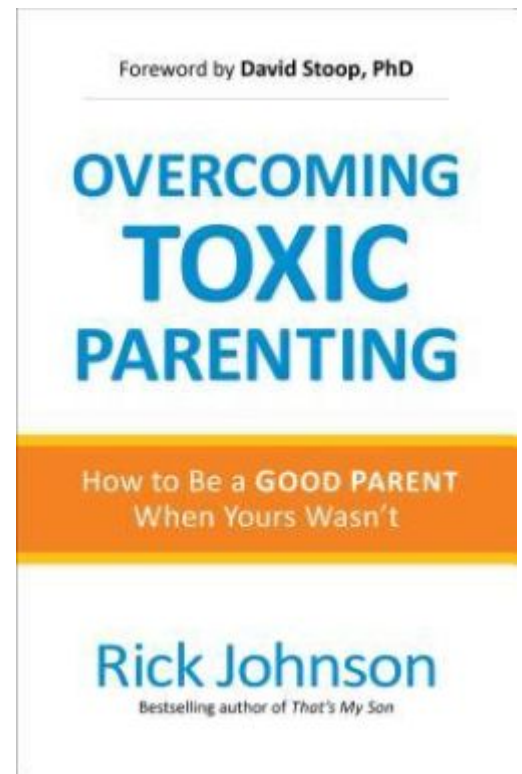
“Evidence of God’s presence will be seen in how attractive our lives begin to appear. This is the true test of the testimony of the Christian.”

Living in Victory: The Journey from Where I Am to Where He Wants Me to Be doesn’t promise a quick-fix solution, nor does it offer false expectation of instant change. It does present a biblical view of transformation in the life of the Christian from a place of frustration to living in victory, says the press release.

The book can be ordered at http://sbprabooks.com/Alain_Waljee

Rick Johnson – Overcoming Toxic Parenting: Book Review

Book Review by Debbie Hemmens



This is another book that I would love to rename, because while it deals very aptly with content relating to the title, there is so much more in it that it kind of needs a title plus a title. I get the privilege of passing on this exciting review of *Overcoming Toxic Parenting* so that maybe you will pick it up, read it and benefit like I did.

Johnson does a brilliant job of explaining how abuse perpetuates abuse as our brain pathways have been set in certain ways if we grew up in an abusive setting. He goes on to say how amazing our brains are that we can create new brain pathways and therefore, new life patterns and we get to be overcomers of abuse and live brilliant lives. We need to be made aware of all this and we get to choose the ending instead of just muddling along in life, feeling sorry for ourselves and doing nothing to change.

Chapters 1 through 5 give great insight into the world of someone who has suffered abuse, with great steps to healing and overcoming. The section on forgiveness is profound and powerful. Carrying around all that bitterness and pain is destructive to us on so many levels. Forgiveness is the choice

of strength, not weakness. Then in chapters 6 through 10 Johnson launches into some of the best and healthy parenting advice I have yet to come across. It is good and helpful guidance and this is the part of the book that is lost by the title – every parent should read this section. It is encouraging and inspiring.

When I first started reading this book, this is a Facebook post that I wrote thinking specifically about the South African context, but would apply anywhere in the world – I could rename this book ‘overcoming toxic governments – how to be a good, healthy, thriving citizen when your government has been toxic, oppressive and abusive.’ It’s all the same principles about taking ownership of your own life, no matter what the past dished out to you.

I love how it points to dealing with your past, action steps to healing and then new strategies for a better future going forward – all this can happen personally without changing the toxic parents/government. Then there will be strength to tackle what needs to change in systems and society. We need whole people, each and every citizen, who are dealing with their stuff. We need those action steps and new strategies for restoration to happen. I see this as a huge part of the process in looking to the future. I know that too many people are still living in toxic environments and that needs to change, but it is a both/and scenario because emotional and psychological healing is vital.

I gained so much from *Overcoming Toxic Parenting* and would wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who identifies with all I have mentioned above which pretty much puts it as a book for everyone. You will be blessed as you read and digest.