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CHRISTIAN FICTION FOR TEEN-AGERS

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..	1
A. Problem.	1
B. Delimitations	1
C. Definitions	2
1. Teenagers.	2
2. Fiction	2
3. Christian fiction	2
D. Procedure	4
1. Basis of selection.	4
a. Letter to publishers	4
b. Responses from publishers.	5
2. Establishment of evaluative criteria	5
3. Application of criteria	5
I. SELECTION OF BOOKS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF EVALUATIVE CRITERIA.	6
Introduction	6
A. Basis of selection	6
1. Publishers written.	7
2. Information requested	7
3. Findings	8
a. Publishers who did not respond	8
b. Publishers who had nothing in the category stated.	8
c. Nothing for boys	10
d. Books selected	10
B. Establishment of Evaluative criteria.	12
1. Literary criteria	13

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I. B. 2. Needs of the age group.	17
3. Theological criteria	20
a. Reason for such criteria	20
b. Nature of God	21
c. Nature of man and sin	22
d. The Christian life.	23
e. Christ in the Christian life	26
f. The Holy Spirit in the Christian life. .	27
Summary	29
II. EVALUATION OF BOOKS SELECTED	31
A. Introduction.	31
B. Mine to Follow.	31
1. Synopsis	31
2. Literary criteria	33
3. Age group needs	36
4. Theological criteria	40
C. As Love Knows How	44
1. Synopsis	45
2. Literary criteria	46
3. Age group needs	48
4. Theological criteria	51
D. The Crown Tree	56
1. Synopsis	56
2. Literary criteria	56
3. Age group needs	58
4. Theological criteria	59
E. Summary.	61
III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.	63
APPENDIX	71
A. Reviews of books from Westminster Press . . .	71

A. 1. The Horsecatcher by Mari Sandoz.	71
2. First Love, True Love by Anne Emery. . .	76
B. Copy of letter sent to publishers.	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	83

CHAPTER I

SELECTION OF BOOKS AND ESTABLISHMENT
OF EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CHRISTIAN FICTION FOR TEEN-AGERS

INTRODUCTION

A. Problem

In the author's brief tenure as librarian in junior high school, she frequently faced the request by students for fiction that concerned the specific problems of a Christian young person who is beginning to face the process of growing up. It is the difficulty which she found in trying to meet this need, that has led to the present attempt to discover existing conditions in this field. This research will be concerned with discovering what books are being published by major denominations for teenagers and how these books meet basic critical standards of literature, teenage needs and theology.

B. Delimitations

In order to keep pace with the rapidity with which both young people and the fiction produced for them change, the books to be considered will be chosen from among those published by major denominational publishers during the years 1950-1959.

It is felt that most young people after the age of sixteen begin to explore into the world of adult fiction; therefore the age group considered basically in this thesis will be the earlier teens from twelve or thirteen to sixteen.

C. Definitions

1. Teen-agers

Although the designation teen-ager includes all those between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, the emphasis here will be on the earlier teens, in the category and for the reasons stated above.

2. Fiction

Fiction has been defined as "the species of literature which is concerned with the narration of imaginary events and the ¹portraiture of imaginary characters."

3. Christian fiction

It is with the addition of the qualifying adjective, "Christian", that a disagreement on definition arises among many, including those in the publishing field themselves. There is disagreement as to whether there is such a thing as "Christian" fiction, or whether there ought to be. Charles Colman III of

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1. Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. 4, p. 187.

Westminster Press writes as follows:

You speak for example of "Christian fiction", and I do not know whether by this you mean to restrict the field to those dealing specifically with religious subjects, or whether the term as used by you is so broad as to include any fiction title for teen-agers which is not obviously either immoral or anti-religious. The truth of the matter is that very few of the fiction titles published by us for teen-agers have a particular religious background.¹

For this thesis Christian fiction will be considered as being fiction whose characters, story and purpose are distinctively Christian in philosophy, as against being merely religious, neutral, or apart from all religion or Christianity. This would include, for example; the Biblical concept of the nature of God, the Biblical idea of the nature of man and sin, the Christian life - what it is and the place of Christ in the life (presupposing a view with regard to the person of Christ without which, by definition, it cannot be Christian). It is not intended to include views on specific moral issues.

Christian concepts are not likely to be accidentally or incidentally conveyed by non-Christian or neutral or indifferent vehicles. If there is to be identification by the reader with these characters as Christian, then they must be Christian. If Christian

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1. Charles Colman III, Sales Manager Westminster Press, personal letter, July 28, 1960.

truth and values are to be presented and opportunity for Christian growth provided, then there must be Christian truth and values there and not a vague, nebulous atmosphere which conveys vague, nebulous ideas.

It is not the contention of this thesis that Christians should read no other fiction. It is the thought, rather, that there is a field for fiction that has a basically Christian philosophy of life, just as there is fiction with every other philosophy of life and with no philosophy of life. This is especially so for teen-agers who worship and emulate fiction heroes.

D. Procedure

1. Basis of selection

Fourteen publishers will be contacted. These will be representative of five major United States church traditions (or nine if related denominations are counted separately) and five non-denominational. Books from the denominational publishers only will be considered for evaluation since it is these groups with which this thesis is primarily concerned. The other publishers will be contacted for comparison.

a. Letter to publishers

Each publisher will be asked for the titles and authors of Christian books published by them for teenagers during the years

1950-1959 and which had the highest average yearly sales.

b. Responses from publishers

Selection of books for evaluation will be made from responses received from the above inquiry.

2. Establishment of criteria

Criteria will be established in the following three areas: literary, needs of the age group, and theological. The last will be derived from various theologies written specifically for teenagers.

3. Application of criteria

The criteria thus established will be applied in an evaluation of the books selected from the group gleaned by the above process of selection.

CHRISTIAN FICTION FOR TEEN-AGERS

CHAPTER I

SELECTION OF BOOKS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Introduction

This chapter will define the basis of the selection of books for evaluation and will establish those criteria on the basis of which the books will be evaluated. In defining the basis of selection, mention will be made of the publishers contacted, the information requested, the response gained, and the titles selected from these results. In establishing criteria, the problem of a distinctive Christian fiction will be considered, and criteria will be delineated in three areas: literary, needs of the age group, and theological.

A. Basis of Selection

Books for study in this thesis have been selected from among those published in the last ten years by publishers of the major denominations in the United States. It was felt that these

are likely to be the ones reaching the greatest number of young people. Selection has been based on replies received in correspondence with these publishers.

1. Publishers written

The following nine publishers representing major denominations were contacted: Seabury Press (Protestant Episcopal), Concordia (Lutheran - Missouri Synod), Muhlenberg (Lutheran - United), Augsburg (Lutheran - Evangelical), Abingdon (Methodist), Westminster (United Presbyterian, U.S.A.), John Knox (Presbyterian Church U.S.), Broadman Press (Southern Baptist), and Judson Press (American Baptist). These were chosen because they represent nine of the major denominations and because in each case their catalogs gave some promise of information to be secured. In addition the following non-denominational publishers were contacted for purposes of the author's own comparison of available material: Wm. B. Eerdmans, Fleming Revell, Moody Press, Zondervan Publishing House, and Friendship Press.

2. Information requested

Each of these was asked for "titles and authors of your books (i.e. fiction books for teen-agers) with outstanding sales during this period (1950-1959)...on an average yearly basis or some other valid criterion convenient to you."

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1. cf. Appendix B₂

3. Findings

Results of this inquiry were many and varied. Many of them were dishearteningly negative.

a. Publishers who did not respond

Of the nine denominational publishers contacted, three did not respond at all. These were Augsburg and Concordia, both Lutheran publishers, and Seabury Press, the Episcopalian publisher. All but one of the non-denominational publishers responded, that one being Friendship Press.

b. Publishers who had nothing in the category stated

Half of the denominational publishers who responded replied that they publish no fiction for teen-agers. These included¹ Abingdon, Judson, and Muhlenberg. The lack of material from Muhlenberg coupled with the failure of Augsburg and Concordia to reply eliminated the Lutheran church from the possibility of² consideration. Abingdon being the only publisher of the Methodists, Methodist materials were also eliminated. It may be

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1. It was learned in an interview in New York on October 2, 1960 with Jean Carl, children's book editor of Abingdon Press, that Abingdon had, at that time its first fiction book for teen-agers in galley, preparatory to publishing in the spring.
2. No other Lutheran publishers were contacted since their catalogues indicated very definitely the lack of any such material.

mentioned that some of these publishers make available the fiction of other publishers although they do not publish any of their own. The availability of these works was indicated in their catalogs.

Among the non-denominational publishers who replied, Revell stated that they publish nothing in this field. Erdmans stated, "We do not feel that we do a great deal in this field, comparatively speaking...."¹ and, consistent with this statement, they sent no further information. Although Zondervan sent a list of outstanding books, only one or possibly two would fall within the specified category. Moody replied as follows:

Moody Press publishes very little fiction, mostly because of poor sales... It has been our sad experience to find that the higher the level of fiction, the lower the sales, and yet we have been unwilling to put out the Grace Livingstone Hill type of material...until recently: and at present we have one of this type on the way through our production department and we will soon know whether it sells better than some of the good ones....²

Since interest in this thesis is primarily with the publications of the denominations, results from this point will be confined to those publishers.

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1. William B. Erdmans Jr., personal letter, June 27, 1960.
2. Kenneth N. Taylor, Director Moody Press, personal letter, October 5, 1960.

c. Nothing for boys

One of the striking results which emerged from this correspondence is the lack of such fiction written for boys. Of all the titles given, only two might be of interest for boys. The Horsecatcher by Mari Sandoz published by Westminster and The Crown Tree by LaGette Blythe published by John Knox both have boys as their main characters. As both of these publishers are Presbyterian, one might conceivably ask what the remaining denominations expect their boys to read.

d. Books selected

The eliminative process has thus brought the results listed in the bibliography as primary sources. Westminster Press virtually eliminated itself by its statement:

The truth of the matter is that very few of the fiction titles published by us for teen-agers have a particular religious background.¹

John Knox's selection, A Woman Wants God by Mary Lou Lacy fails to meet the defined requirement being neither fiction nor primarily for a teen-age audience. It is a devotional book for adults. Remaining are The Crown Tree of John Knox and two novels of Broadman.

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1. Charles Colman III, Sales Manager Westminster Press, personal letter, July 28, 1960.

The two novels submitted by Broadman, Mine To Follow by Beulah Powell Anderson published in 1955, and As Love Knows How by Alice and David Cheavans published in 1952, are both essentially romances. These two books will be reviewed in the following chapter according to the criteria to be established immediately following this selection. One of the books for boys, The Crown Tree by LaGette Blyte and published by John Knox, will also be reviewed in that chapter and according to those criteria.

Westminster Press is the most prolific of the publishers and has very likely the greatest audience. Books by Miss Cavanna and Miss Emery as well as those of other authors published by Westminster are to be found in nearly every public school and public library. They have been highly recommended as fiction for teen-agers in library courses taken by the writer and have been found in her experience to be favorite authors of teen-age girls. It is felt that an examination of one of their books would be profitable. However, since these books do not meet the standard established, the evaluation of the book will be included in the Appendix instead of in the main body of the thesis. The book that has been chosen for this examination is First Love True Love by Anne Emery. Published in 1956, it is the most recent of the titles submitted by Westminster press. The other selection for boys, The Horsecatcher by Mari Sandoz, is also a Westminster publication. Because it is one of the seeming few for boys, it will also be reviewed. This, too, will be considered in the appendix since it does not meet the specified requirements.

B. Establishment of Evaluative Criteria

The question has been raised, previously in this paper,¹ as well as generally, as to whether there is "Christian" fiction, "Christian" literature, "Christian" vocation, "Christian" culture. Some of the outstanding men in the religious world today feel not only that there has been historically a distinctive Christian culture, but that it is imperative that we return to such a culture. First stating their belief in its existence,

However barbarous a society may be, however backward in the modern humanitarian sense, if its members possess a genuine Christian faith they will possess a Christian culture - the more genuine the faith, the more Christian the culture.²

they emphasize repeatedly the necessity for this culture. Without such a unifying spiritual vision the civilization decays. This they substantiate by quoting "Where there is no vision, the people³ perish."

Emphasis is laid on individual responsibility:

...what we are asserting is simply that individual acts of spiritual decision ultimately bear social fruit. We admit this in the case of the Church ...it is equally true in the case of culture and history.⁴

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1. Ante, p. 2.
2. Christopher Dawson, The Historic Reality of Christian Culture. Religious Perspectives, Vol. 1, p. 14, New York: Harper, 1960. Board members for this publication include such men as Auden, Barth, D'Arcy, Maritain, Suzuki, Tillich, et al.
3. Ibid., p. 93.
4. Ibid., p. 18.

The present trend is projected in the following words:

...if one century has destroyed the unity of Christendom by religious division and a second century has confined the Christian way of life to the sphere of individual conduct and allowed the outer world of society and politics to go its own way, then a third century will find that the average man will accept the external social world as the objective standard of reality and regard the inner world of faith and religion as subjective, unreal and illusory.¹

The difficulty has been summarized in the following way:

Our civilization has become secularized largely because the Christian element has adopted a passive attitude and allowed the leadership of culture to pass to the non-Christian minority.²

Application of these observations is made particularly in the area of education, both in public school and in higher education. If the schools are to perpetuate a Christian culture, their tools must be adequate and that part of literature known as fiction or the novel cannot be excluded from consideration of its importance as a major element in this Christian culture.

1. Literary criteria

If the Christian culture is important in the schools, it is important in the reading of the students. If teen-agers are to learn to appreciate good literature and style, the books written for them must possess good literary quality. If anyone is obligated to write in the best of style, the Christian novelist who writes to guide and inspire youth in Christian living and ideals certainly

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1. Ibid., p. 19.

2. Ibid., p. 46.

is under heavy obligation. As Browne has stated it so picturesquely, "...the apples of gold deserve the brightest and best of the pictures of silver."¹ Another author has said that "What makes a work of fiction live is...the degree to which its view of the world is represented in aesthetically satisfying terms"², and "the values that underlie literature are the values that underlie life itself, translated into terms of imaginative persuasion."³

Helen Haines has presented the following criteria for good fiction:

Two ~~the~~ great requirements of a novel are truth and art. Truth implies vitality in the rendering of human beings, valid psychology, consistency in the relationship of cause and effect and of motive and action, verisimilitude of background. Art implies skill in workmanship, sound structure and good style.⁴

In evaluating a novel for these qualities, Haines suggests these questions:

Is it true to life? Sensational? Exaggerated? Distorted?
Has it vitality and consistency in character depiction?
Valid psychology? Insight into human nature?
Is the plot original? Hackneyed? Probable? Simple? Involved?
Is dramatic interest sustained?
Does it stimulate? Provoke thought? Satisfy? Inspire? Amuse?

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1. Benjamin P. Browne, comp. and ed., Techniques of Christian Writing, Phila., Judson, c.1960, p. 368.
2. Charles I. Glicksberg, Literature and Religion, Dallas, S.M.U. 1960, p. 179.
3. Nathan Comfort Starr, The Dynamics of Literature, New York, Columbia University, 1945, p. 2.
4. Helen E. Haines, Living With Books, New York, Columbia University, 1935, p. 432.
5. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

In testing her second criterion, art, she asks the following questions:

Does the work show any degree of creative power?
Is the form appropriate to the thought?
Has it originality of conception? of expressions?
Has it a clear graphic style? Charm? Profundity?
Imaginative power?¹

It has been said, "Literature gives us the sense of
enrichment."² It ought to be said—literature, to be good,
must give us the sense of enrichment. There is power in the
written word. Edward Schramm says that "as Christian writers
we are called upon to magnify our distinctive ministry." Then,
quoting Lord Byron,

'A small drop of ink, falling like dew
upon a thought, produces that which makes
thousands...to think'. If that ink is
evangelical ink and the thought...of one
who practices the presence of God then how
vast is the potential influence of that
ink.'³

In contrast:

If we thinly elaborate on that which is
obvious, play up to that which is merely
sensational, or fail to touch the real
issues of heart and life, the audience will
immediately detect the weakness and dismiss
our work.⁴

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1. Ibid., p. 433.
2. Starr, op. cit., p. 21.
3. Browne, op. cit., p. 364.
4. Ibid., p. 362.

Perhaps it is felt that the Christian writer need not be so concerned about these technicalities. Roland E. Wolseley feels, on the contrary, that:

The religious writer has to be even more concerned about craftsmanship and effective ways to reach his audience than the secular writer [because]

1. Religious writing is likely to be propagandistic and therefore artistically suspect...It takes a skillful craftsman to deal with this problem without losing or alienating his readers.
2. Religious writing, because it often has a higher purpose than other kinds, is less likely to be artistic. Therefore, more ability is required to make it artistic....

One of the best means of doing this, he feels, is to employ the language of imagery rather than of logic or science. His appeal is for the imagery, not necessarily the language, of the scriptures.²

In the same book, Warren Mild makes an appeal for adequate characters.³ There is need for realization that "vital causes produce heroic personalities whose acts symbolize the spirit of the entire movement".⁴ People must once more be convinced that "an act of Christian faith is the exploit of a hero," and that the church of Christ is "something significant to the rest of history".⁵ They must "become captivated by great lives effected

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1. Ibid., p. 355-356.
2. Ibid., p. 349.
3. Ibid., p. 341.
4. Ibid., p. 345.
5. Ibid., p. 346.

¹
by a great gospel".

It is fairly apparent that everybody is not capable of writing Christian fiction. James Wesley Ingles suggests the following necessary qualifications among others:

They must be people of deep conviction and genuine experience; they must be able to convey the theme indirectly; they must write what they genuinely feel; the story must grow out of a life situation naturally, and have both current import and

²
significance in the future. Glicksberg amplifies these suggestions somewhat:

Let the characters speak their own thoughts in their own language, while the novelist confines himself to selecting what is significant and important. He may raise questions but it is not his task to provide answers...For there is a profound distinction between stating a problem correctly in fiction and attempting to solve it.³

The feeling of many critics has been summed up in the following excerpts from a quotation of John Strietelmeyer, professor at Valparaiso University, from an address given before a mission council of his church:

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., pp. 51-55.
3. Glicksberg, op. cit., p. 172.

I would never recommend that our people read Peyton Place, but if it came down to a matter of choice I would rather they read such an obviously meretricious literary emetic as that than poison their minds and their consciences with the marijuana of saccharine religious fluff or personality marshmallow... Satan is most dangerous when he transforms himself into an angel of light. And it is no credit to the church that even secular critics are dismayed by the stream of shoddy, intellectually dishonest, carelessly written, sentimental and moralistic books and magazines which pour out of the denominational publishing houses of our country.¹

T. S. Eliot has declared in a different tone of voice:

To judge a work of art by artistic or religious standards, to judge a religion by religious or artistic standards should come in the end to the same thing.²

2. Needs of the age group

In literature more than in any other art the power of aesthetic expression becomes apparent only when it is welcomed as an ally by strong forces all ready to act. These forces must move toward a re-creation of literature in terms of the reader's own capacities and needs.³

It will scarcely be denied that the above statement is true.

Nor will it be denied that teen-agers have a variety of needs, many of them peculiar to the age group. Much has been written,

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1. Browne, op. cit., p. 367.
2. Glicksberg, op. cit., p. 58.
3. Starr, op. cit., p. 1.

particularly in recent years, isolating and analyzing these needs for the purposes of helping all who work with ~~teen~~-agers to better understand and assist them. A listing of the needs of the age group under consideration as found in Havinghurst's Developmental Tasks and Education should provide a challenge worthy of the best author.

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with agemates of both sexes.
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.
5. Achieving assurance of economic independence.
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation.
7. Preparing for marriage and family life.
8. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.
9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.
10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior:
 - Through satisfaction of physical drives
 - Through satisfaction of emotional experiences
 - Through concrete reward and punishment
 - Through association of something with the love or approval of persons whose love and approval are desired.
 - Through inculcation by someone in authority. 1
 - Through identification with and imitation of persons.

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1. Robert J. Havinghurst, Developmental Tasks and Education, Longmans, Green & Co., 1952, pp.33-71

About all of these areas Christianity has something, or should have something, to say. Many of them can be well communicated through the medium of fiction. The last task mentioned "Acquiring a set of values" and particularly the last means connected with that task, "Through identification and imitation" are areas in which fiction can make an outstanding contribution.

3. Theological criteria

a. Reason for such criteria

Why do fiction books need any theological standard? Of course if, in a Christian culture there is going to be Christian fiction, there must then be a basic Christian theology underlying it. But further, as Gray has said, "Belief influences action,"¹ and the converse may be considered also. Every person, fictional or real, acts in accordance with his beliefs. "...our theology is not what we say we believe...our real theology is what we act on."² In writing "we cannot give easy answers because there are no easy questions."³ This is evident to nearly everyone in our present society. It is no longer the concern of the few, the leaders in various fields, but has become a part of the thinking and being of nearly every citizen in today's world, as illustrated by the

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1. Henry David Gray, A Theology for Christian Youth, Nashville, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1941, p. 16.
2. Rachel Henderlite, A Call to Faith, Richmond, John Knox, 1955, p. 14.
3. Browne, op. cit., p. 353.

following:

....middle twentieth-century man, not only the nuclear scientist and not only the reflecting churchman, but the truck driver and even the teen-ager who hears radio, sees television, and reads comics...sense(s) that we live in ¹ the midst of gigantic forces yet unloosed....

In writing it must be remembered that "it is important to estimate literature not only in terms of craftsmanship but also in terms of ideas."²

b. Nature of God

Since one's belief concerning God is foundational to beliefs in all other areas of life, it would seem this is the place to begin. In his discussion concerning the nature of God, Hammond cites the following attributes: infinite (i.e. limitless), transcendent and immanent, free personal Spirit - possessing ³ personality, immutable and eternal. In more practical terms:

God speaks to us as individual persons...
Only as we have heard and answered the voice of the living God do we come to the place where argument is surmounted by experience - by our feeling of reverence, our aspirations, our sense of satisfaction when we have done the right thing, and by the inspiration which comes to us when we turn from evil.⁴

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1. Ibid., p. 348.
2. Starr, op. cit., p. vii.
3. T. C. Hammond, In Understanding Be Men, Chicago, IVCF, pp.50-53.
4. Gray, op. cit., p. 38. ; cf. Henderlite, op. cit., pp.38-44.

This experience in turn involves the necessity of a sense of God's holiness, God's righteousness, God's love and our sin.¹ Many books fail to meet Christian standards right here. They do not deny God. They simply ignore Him. By their silence they imply that, if He exists, He is of little or no consequence to the individual in this story. The hero believes in himself, in his fellow men; himself and his fellow men win the day. Contrarily George F. Hall has said that there should be at least unanimity in belief in God's grace.²

C. Nature of Man and Sin

The last of the concomitants cited in connection with the consideration of the nature of God, leads to consideration of the question of man and sin. Christians view man as being a created being, consisting of body, soul and spirit. They believe he is created in God's image, at least insofar as he has personality, dominion over creation, morality, immortality and freedom.³ As to the nature of sin, it has been well said that:

in relation to His moral government, it is
direct disobedience to the Divine law...
in relation₄ to God's nature, it is
unholiness.

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1. Ibid., pp. 44-45.; cf. Hammond, op. cit., pp. 58-59.
2. Browne, op. cit., p.362.
3. Hammond, op. cit., pp. 85-90.; cf. Henderlite, op. cit., pp.63-68.
4. Ibid., p.102 ; Henderlite, op. cit., pp.69-71; Gray, op. cit., pp. 77-78

Its, result, Hammond adds, is loss of fellowship and communion with God. As to man's responsibility with regard to sin, Gray says, "Sin always implies responsibility."¹ The solution to sin on man's part, he records thus:

Confession of sin to God in earnest repentance brings release.² We are set free for creative tasks.

It has been said that, "No description of man which views our lives as purely mechanical can satisfy Christian theology."³ Nor can it satisfy Christian fiction, for, once again, it is not really Christian. It denies man's freedom, a purpose in God's sight, or any chance of fellowship or communion with God. The writing must be such that we "begin to understand what men live by and what they die for."⁴

d. The Christian life

In the consideration of creativeness in the Christian life and the freedom of men, Gray says:

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1. Gray, op. cit., p. 79. ;cf. Henderlite,op. cit.,p.70
2. Ibid., p. 84. ;cf. Hammond,op. cit.,p.104; Henderlite,op.cit.,p.71
3. Ibid., p. 75. ;cf. Hammond,op. cit.,p.113; Henderlite,op.cit.,p.70
4. Starr, op. cit., p. 23.

Christian liberty is neither license nor blind obedience to law. It is a creative relationship with God in which we are enabled more and more to achieve our fullest possible personal selves, to overcome every hindrance, and to live noble, love-filled lives. This is true freedom.¹

It is generally agreed that these achievements of fullness of life cannot be attained on one's own merit.

The ethical standards of the Christian life include the ten commandments - plus. These standards are too high to be achieved without help beyond ourselves.²

Any Christian novel which does not take this into account simply lacks verisimilitude. It is not really Christian for it attempts to picture man as living God's life for him without God. Contrast with the self-sufficiency of contemporary lives held up for emulation, this picture:

We find Him (Jesus) turning simply and naturally to God on occasions of all kinds - for wisdom, for physical strength, for guidance, for comfort...What we see in Jesus is the "new life" Paul talks about...In Jesus we see what a man is like who knows himself as son of God.³

Perhaps this concept of the need and availability of God does not penetrate the everyday lives of everyday characters. Perhaps their lives are too deep or too profound. Gray does not

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1. Gray, op. cit., p. 87.; Henderlite, op. cit., pp. 93-96, 150.
2. Ibid., p. 95.; cf. Henderlite, op. cit., p. 109; Hammond, op. cit., p. 190.
3. Henderlite, op. cit., p. 77.; cf. Gray, op. cit., p. 53.

think so: "No field of activity is beyond the concern of
Christianity".¹ Henderlite adds:

He is here in every situation in which
we find ourselves. There is no situation
where He is not.²

It is the very lack of this concept that causes the
following situation to be so:

Sin in society today is often impersonal
and indirect. An executive can pick a
thousand pockets or imperil a thousand
lives by a mere stroke of his pen. We
often fail to see this as sin. Most of
all, we have developed a false code which
recognizes accomplishments of breeding,
education, philanthropy, or apparent
piety as a set-off to sin.³

Here is the kind of area where fiction of this kind (i.e.
Christian) has a tremendous opportunity and can fail by being
indefinite. "Elevation...comes when the author shows an ethical
idea thrusting forward against pressure".⁴ The Christian life has
a job to do:

For the moment we have an assignment:
it is to do the king's work here on
earth.⁵

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1. Gray, op. cit., p. 103.
2. Henderlite, op. cit., p. 41.
3. Gray, op. cit., p. 106.
4. Starr, op. cit., p. 24.
5. Browne, op. cit., p. 351.

While it should bring composure and a "divine sense of humor", it is not only "a nice little rendezvous, a tete-a-tete on a vertical scale" but it has become also a "powerful, ethical, horizontal relationship".¹

It must be reiterated that this Christian life cannot be produced wholly on human merit. It can be acknowledged that "There is truth in every religion", but there is more:

Religion is man's response to God's revelation of Himself. But we are Christians because we have known the love of God in Christ.²

e. Christ in the Christian Life

In Christ there is the fullness of God incarnate.

Christ is the expression of God whenever God expresses Himself toward man. He is the creativity of God. He is God's communication of Himself to man.³

He is fully divine and fully human, was tempted in all points as we are, is the object of our worship, is able to forgive sin, and is the source of life and access to God. He, the Son, is our mediator⁴ and our power.

That son is the source of our confidence that we can live as children of God. As we live in Christ, sharing his attitudes, motives, and missions, we become new persons after the pattern of Jesus.⁵

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1. Ibid., p. 352. ;cf.Henderlite, op.cit.,ch.13; Gray, op.cit.,ch.9.
2. Gray, op. cit., p. 25. ;cf. Henderlite, op. cit., p.86.
3. Henderlite, op. cit., p. 55.;cf.Gray,op.cit.,p.55
4. Hammond, op. cit., pp. 121-132.;cf.Henderlite, op.cit.,pp.74-78.
5. Gray, op. cit., p. 55.;cf. Henderlite, op. cit., p.73.

"New creatures in Christ" are not brought about without Christ; nor do they grow without him; nor are they Christians without him. A novel which is devoid of him or whose presentation of him is not according to his being and purpose is wanting in its presentation of Christianity.

Although the ethical teachings of Christianity are always pertinent, any failure to communicate the grace which is found in Jesus Christ is a failure to communicate the gospel. Christian writers can....bring the message of the gospel in a stimulating way to contemporary man, who is disillusioned about his own goodness and ability to redeem himself.¹

The Christ who redeems, however, must be neither Santa Claus nor Simon Legree. His Christianity is neither wholly sentiment nor wholly law. It is the gospel of the Christ of the Bible which must be communicated.

f. The Holy Spirit in the Christian Life

Much of what has been said can be brought together in the following statement concerning the third person of the Godhead:

The Holy Spirit in Christian history and Christian experience is God as Spirit dealing with us as spirits, God as Person dealing with us as persons.²

Where the Holy Spirit has free reign in a life, there results that state known as sanctification:

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1. Browne, op. cit., p. 363.

2. Gray, op. cit., p.61.; Henderlite, op. cit., p.101; Hammond, op. cit., pp.171,172.

Sanctification is the sense of so living
in fellowship with God that His divine
life is reflected in our human lives so
that we become radiant living epistles...
this experience of victorious living...¹
will always characterize Christlike souls.

This is accomplished only by the Holy Spirit as personality,
deity, life-giver and divine executor;² comforter, teacher, guide,
counselor (John 14-16).

There are lives that reflect this sanctification.
Scripture is filled with examples and missionary biography stands
out sharply in its portrayal of men of valor and spirit-filled
lives.

Are lives like this too commonplace, too monotonous, drab,
and uninspiring to make good material? Are they too embarrassing
to be treated honestly? Are they too unusual to have anything to
say to ordinary men and women, teen-age boys and girls?

Our message is more effectively proclaimed
than ever before...Do we really expect to
sustain this with niblets of literature, with
canned devotions, do-it-yourself psychiatry,
and fiction about mediocre people with trivial
problems? This is no balanced diet for the
church in a heroic age. Can't we conjure up
some heroic literature? It is time for us
to conceive some characters who, after
struggling victoriously for the Christian
faith, come out of the experience wearing
greatness.³

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1. Ibid., p. 66.; cf. Hammond, op. cit., p. 172; Henderlite, op. cit., p. 104
2. Hammond, op. cit., p. 164.; cf. Henderlite, op. cit., pp. 101-109.
3. Browne, op. cit., p. 341.

One of the most frequent criticisms of Christian novels is the poor characterization. Unbelievable people and contrived plots with moralizing liberally sprinkled throughout are the complaint of the literary world. The above quotation is one writer's opinion (and it is shared by many) as to the need in Christian fiction.

This study will seek to discover how available material from our major publishers of the church measure up to these standards.

SUMMARY

Letters were written to major denominational publishers as well as to some non-denominational publishers for the purpose of discovering what materials are currently available in this field. Selection was made from material available from the denominations according to responses received in this correspondence. Some publishers failed to respond, many had no material available; books were selected on an established basis from the remainder for evaluation in the next chapter. One of the outstanding discoveries from this effort was the lack of books for boys.

Criteria were then established for evaluation of the books selected. In the literary field, the importance of high literary standards was mentioned, the necessity of truth and art as essentials in good fiction was emphasized,

and the imperative of convincing characters as well as adequate plot was further mentioned. The necessity for authors who possess such basic qualifications as conviction, genuine feeling and literary ability also was stressed. In considering these areas of literary criteria, the writer discussed a distinctive Christian culture and Christian literature, not only the possibility of its existence, but the necessity of its existence.

In meeting the needs of the age group, the areas of establishment of ethical values through identification and imitation of others was stressed.

Finally, it has been suggested that basic theological considerations ought to be made of the nature of God, nature of man and sin, the Christian life - what it is and how it is achieved, the place of Christ in the Christian life and the person and work of the Holy Spirit. All of these were derived from an examination of the three theologies, in which it was found that the same doctrines were covered and there were many points of agreement on basic issues involved in each of these areas.

CHAPTER II

EVALUATION OF BOOKS SELECTED

CHAPTER II
EVALUATION OF BOOKS SELECTED

A. Introduction

Having selected books to be examined and having established criteria for their evaluation, in this chapter the writer will apply these criteria in an evaluation of three books: Mine to Follow, As Love Knows How and The Crown Tree.

B. Mine to Follow

D. Mine to Follow is one of the two books published by Broadman Press which will be reviewed in this chapter.

1. Synopsis

Mine to Follow by Beulah Anderson has as its setting, Texas in the early 1940's. Martha Page, the oldest of the seven children of Dr. and Mrs. Page, is planning to go to the mission field as a nurse, the perfect complement to handsome Paul McClure, whose destination is Africa as a missionary doctor. The unexpected and sudden death of her parents in an auto collision leaves Martha to face a difficult decision. After careful consideration and prayer she concludes that she should remain at home, at least until the younger children are all grown up. Paul, meanwhile, is called by his mission board to leave for Africa and Martha feels that, in the present circumstances it is wiser for them not to

become engaged.

The first major task is moving, with teenage Jimmy, the other three girls, Polly, Connie and Rhea, and the two small ones, to the family's country home where they settle quickly into the new routine, mutually agreed upon, for carrying on their lives. Some short time after the move, a man is found, unconscious, on their property. He has, apparently, fallen from the road above and, in falling, struck his head on the side of the well next to which he is found lying. He is taken to the house and capably nursed by Martha. Eventually he recovers, but realizes that he has lost his identity. He has quite a sum of money in one pocket and wonders if he is a criminal, if he stole it or got it in some other illegal way. For a time he lives at the Pages' country home and helps as hired man. As time goes on, his natural curiosity, increased by his attraction for Martha, drives him finally to the point of seeking to discover his identity and he leaves on this search with never a word to Martha but that he will one day return with his whole story.

"Dick", as he has been called by the Page family, is gone for some time. Meanwhile, World War II breaks out. Martha, working on a hospital ship, spends some time in Africa, runs into Paul and again refuses his proposal. Shortly after her return home she receives word that Paul is missing in action (he has disappeared with the underground). "Dick" has joined the army.

One of the other girls has gotten married and another has gone to New York to study art. Eventually "Dick" does return with his story and the news that he is really quite a respectable character. He feels free, therefore, to voice his love for Martha. At the end they plan to marry and to serve wherever God leads, for, as the title says, it is but "Mine to Follow".

2. Literary criteria

Beginning first with those criteria suggested by Haines¹ in the general area of truth, it must be said that the story is true to life. Martha may be a little too good but not so much as to be disgusting, only challenging. Death, frustration of hopes, youthful impatience, dreams deferred and dreams fulfilled are all present and neither positive nor negative aspects over balance.

Character depiction is consistent and insightful. The conflict of Martha's sense of duty and her suddenly destroyed dream, her love for Paul and the conviction that they ought not to marry, her confusion at the apparent leading of God in one direction in her life and then sudden stopping of this path² all contribute to a realistic portrayal of the maturing of this, the central character. Paul, Dick, Jimmy, Polly and Connie, each contributing his own part, are all excellent foils for Martha. Jimmy is headstrong and a trifle spoiled but has a lot of strong character which eventually brings him through the rough spots of adolescence. The importance of the family's influence shows very

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1. Ante, p. 14.

2. Beulah Anderson, Mine to Follow, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1955, pp.20-23.

strongly.

The plot is not unusual. It borders on the trite. However, it is saved from this fate by the unusual and realistic handling of some rather ordinary situations. The restraint of the romance, while not puritanical, is on a more profound level than is usual with teenage fiction;¹ and the fact of Martha's never getting to the mission field is revolutionary! Dramatic interest is certainly sustained, from the first page to the last. It is stimulating, inspiring and at times pleasantly amusing.

The author's style is clear and graphic; her charm and imaginative power are adequate and pleasant, although they might not be considered great. It is not a case of "thinly elaborating on the obvious". "The real issues of heart and life"² are touched, as may be seen from previous discussion here and from that which is to follow. What is said is not pretentious, nor are her style and expression trite. They are clear, suited to the story, technically good and quite adequate in imagination, variety and beauty to carry the story. There is not the impression given of puppets created to speak the author's sermons. The characters are themselves and their activities and conversations grow out of their setting, situation and nature. They reach a solution to their problems;- problems which are quite recognizable as being the usual problems of most people,

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1. cf. the other two books reviewed in this thesis.
2. Ante. p. 15.

but neither the author nor the characters intimate that this is the only proper solution. This is the reader's decision to make for himself.

One element in the book which is somewhat difficult to evaluate is the sprinkling of prayers, from time to time, in or just following a conversation, one of the characters will utter a brief prayer.¹ These are not sermons, they are not long, they are not frequent. They are consistent with the nature of the characters. It would, in fact, be a serious omission if there were none included. For example, in a story of a different kind, the use of rough or profane speech is necessary in portraying consistently a rough or profane character. In the same way, in this story, these short prayers, really inclusions of God in the conversation, are necessary in portraying consistently the Page family.

While the literary art of the author may not be the best, she is, nevertheless, sufficiently adept in her field so that she has presented a religious theme in such a way as to make it more convincing than objectionable. The one really disturbing flaw in the book is probably the coincidental appearance of characters related to the story: for example, the benefactress whom Connie meets in New York, turns out to be Dick's aunt. It is perhaps strange, too, that doctors and nurses are so numerous, but it is not so serious as to detract from the positive aspects of the book.

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1. Beulah Anderson, *Mine to Follow*, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1955, p.12,21.

3. Age Group Needs

In considering these needs, two or more may be grouped together for discussion.

(a) (1) Achieving new and more mature relations with agemates of both sexes.

This book, being basically a romance, has much to offer here. It made an immediate impression of being exceptionally good in this area. The mutual concern shown by Martha and Paul for each other and their looking ahead, beyond immediate desires, to ultimate goals sets a high tone. In refusing to become engaged before Paul leaves, Martha says:

I do love you, in a way. But Paul, marriage calls for a greater love than that...Real love must go on until it gives that (marriage and a home) too, and keeps giving as long as life lasts. Somehow I am not prepared to reach that height.¹

Paul's reply carries with it no demand: "Surely this love you have for me will grow into the kind I desire".²

This same mature concern and self-discipline are seen in "Dick" as he is about to leave in search of his identity:

Although he longed to take her in his arms, he dared not touch even her hand lest love break the bound which he had set for himself, lest he speak words which as yet he did not know whether he had a right to utter.³

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1. Beulah Anderson, *Mine to Follow*, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1955, p. 32.
2. Loc. Cit.
3. Ibid., p. 108.

(b) (2 - 5) Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.

Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.

Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.

Achieving assurance of economic independence.

All of these are included by the nature of the story. Obviously a story whose crucial point is the sudden death of the parents will give opportunity to observe adjustment to this emotional independence. Although their initial approach is to "pretend they're just away and remember the things they taught us"¹, they quickly decide, in family council, to "hang together" at the country house by Martha's nursing, Polly's teaching music and Jimmy's keeping a cow and garden.² This also is a real excursion into the world of economic independence, but their attitude is that, although they will miss some town-advantages by living in the country, they can live on less and stay together.³ In division of chores and roles in their new living setup, the masculine and feminine roles can be seen and these carry over into what social life there is, primarily seen in the two girls who later marry.

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1. Ibid., p. 15.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

3. Ibid., p. 19.

(c) (6) Selecting and preparing for an occupation

Nearly every character in the story is at this stage of life. More of the process of selecting is given in some instances than in others. Polly has her problem "solved" by getting married (a situation considered under the next heading); Connie, with both an ability and liking for art gives one of the clearest pictures of occupational selection and preparation as she carefully considers matters of practicality, happiness, remuneration, usefulness. Having chosen the field, her preparation takes her to New York where some financial help and some professional help offer indispensable assistance in the rough road to learning. One of the outstanding contributions of this book is the matter of the use to which occupational training is put. This is especially true in both Connie's and Martha's cases. Connie finds use for her talent in illustration of Bible stories for children as well as for painting pictures for showing. Martha, who planned to be a missionary nurse found her training to be very useful first in the Texas countryside and then, it may well be supposed, as "Dick's" wife in whatever place they settled. Jimmy too is approaching this stage and does some experimenting. As did every teenage boy in 1942, he wanted to quit school and join the army. Martha's wise counsel, his parent's training and his own thoughtful consideration turned the tide and he decided to remain in school.

(d) (7) Preparation for marriage and family life

Much of this has already been discussed under numbers one to six. There is little to add here except to say that their own household, run entirely by them (with very few exceptions) is excellent preparation for every one of them.

(e) (8) Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.

(9) Achieving socially responsible behavior

Little is said, either implicitly or explicitly, regarding development of intellectual skills (except for the incident in which Jimmy wants to quit school). However, there is a fairly high degree of social and civic consciousness and concern evidenced from time to time. Martha's nursing is occasion for much of this. The handling of the problem of "Dick's" staying as hired man in a house not properly chaperoned¹ is one of the examples of socially responsible behavior.

(f) (10) Acquiring a set of values

Certainly the values expressed in this story are high. They are unselfish, thoughtful of the other person, and ultimately concerned in every situation with God's plan and purpose. The characters themselves have been discussed further under literary criteria. Let it be said here, however, that they are characters with whom a teenage reader would readily and happily identify and would like very much to imitate. In addition to this motivation

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1. Ibid., p. 57.

in identification, there is opportunity also for some thoughtful reasoning through of various situations as they arise, for the reader feels himself to be a part of the group and therefore thinks with them. He supplies his own thought and enters creatively into the decision making.

4. Theological criteria

The author appears to have some very definite theological concepts, although she never sermonizes concerning them.

a. Nature of God

It has been said that God is from time to time included in conversation by the offering of brief and spontaneous prayers.¹

Two outstanding examples of this occur early in the book. One follows almost immediately on the news of the accident which killed Mr. and Mrs. Page. Martha has just realized that her dream of going to Africa must be, at least, postponed. Speaking to Paul she says, "If God called me to Africa, why did He let this happen?"

Their next words are addressed to God:

Oh Father! We can not always see the way
ahead for the shadows! But help us to
remember always that thou art good: that
tho' we are slain we must trust thee!
Take our broken hearts and do with us as
thou wilt!²

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1. Ante, p. 35.

2. Ibid., p. 12.

2. Ante, p. 35.

This does not solve all problems, however, and some time later, again fighting the whole situation, Martha prays "Forgive me, O my gracious Father, for being so rebellious! Teach me to wait patiently!"¹ Here is to be seen a God who certainly is immanent. He is so close as to be included momentarily in discussion. Yet in his immanence he is not just another man. He is God who has a plan and who has the transcendent power to carry out that plan. There is here a sense of His righteousness and of His holiness. God's love is very real to Martha as she entrusts herself blindly and totally to Him and as she comes to Him in her rebellion as "gracious Father". These two incidents are quite representative of the attitude expressed throughout the book.

b. Nature of man and sin

Martha's prayer for forgiveness indicates her concept that sin is, in part at least, rebellion, as Hammond said, "in relation to His moral government it is direct disobedience."² As Martha and the story develop, it becomes clear that "in confession of sin to God in earnest repentance (we are brought) release (and) we are set free for creative tasks."³ This is seen in days immediately following as the Pages, under Martha's leadership, begin their new life in their new home.

One of the essential elements that has been mentioned in the nature of man is his freedom and opportunity for communion with God. Communion with God has been seen here. As to freedom,

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1. Ibid., p. 21.
2. Ante., p. 22.
3. Ante., p. 23.

there is, in every situation, the confrontation of real choice: What to do about Martha's plans for Africa; what to do about Paul's proposal; what to do with the family; what to do with the injured stranger; what to do when Jimmy decides to quit school. There is never a suggestion that there is not an alternative. Always there are two or more possible choices and freedom to choose, in light of intelligent discussion, prayer and desire to follow God's leading. Man is not "a leaf blown about in the wind", but a child of God, free to obey and follow or to disobey and go his own way.

c. The Christian life

This whole novel is a story of the Christian life. It is made very clear that these people are Christian and that their desire is to live a life that will evidence that fact. Their standards are high and the results attractive. Dick, meeting them as a stranger, could not help being aware of and impressed by this. He expressed this to Martha in his note to her just before he left to seek the truth of his own identity:

...let me express my profound gratitude
to you and your wonderful family for your
amazing kindness to me.

"I was a stranger and ye took me in."¹

This was not a superhuman effort. It has been seen that prayer is a real part of their lives. It is not uncommon to find one or another of them, or a group collectively, asking for strength,

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1. Ibid., p. 209.

wisdom and guidance¹ for some task, small and everyday or large and critical as it may be. This family agrees that "no field of activity is beyond the concern of Christianity".² There are many positive Christian values presented - honesty, love, humility, courage and integrity.

d. Christ in the Christian life

Jesus Christ is nowhere mentioned in the book, yet he is there: He is the expression and communication of God to man.³ The communication between the Pages and God has been seen. There is, for them, a mediator; he is one who is empathetic in each situation; he is able to forgive sin; he is the power of life and access to God; he is the power for their living.⁴ There is no gulf between the Pages and God; there has been reconciliation; there is one who has effected this reconciliation. He is, according to scripture, ~~as they~~ understand it, Jesus Christ.

e. The Holy Spirit in the Christian life

There is, likewise, no mention of the Holy Spirit in the book. The communication of God with the Pages in their lives is personal. It is also spiritual. It is personal because God is Person; it is spiritual because God is Spirit.⁵ The Page family "so lives in fellowship with God that His divine life is reflected

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1. cf. footnote 3, ante., p. 24.
2. Ante., p. 25.
3. Ante., p. 26.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Ante., p. 27.

in (their) human lives so that (they) become radiant living epistles".¹ "Where the Holy Spirit has free reign in a life, there results that state known as sanctification".² Here is a family where, within human limitations, this would seem to be true.

Summary: While the book is lacking in some phases, it is nevertheless a story of great credibility and one that is well written. Although many of its characters are older than teenagers, there are portrayed many problems which confront this age group and help in seeking solutions is readily found. Moreover, the characters are, on the whole, such as inspire, evoke admiration and a desire to imitate and to strive with them for higher goals. The author presents nowhere a page of answers to becoming a Christian and the living of the Christian life. She has, however, skillfully painted a believable and desirable picture and suggested a direction in which to seek answers.

C. As Love Knows How

This novel by Alice and David Cheavens is the older of the Broadman Publication, having been published in 1952.

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1. Ante., p. 28.
2. Ante., p. 27.

1. Synopsis

Nancy Carver had an unexpected experience when she applied for a teaching job, her first, in a small Texas town. She found that it was extremely important that she was a Baptist. She was further dazed at the significance it seemed to have when she went looking for a room, and again in discussion among the faculty at the very beginning of the term. Morton Mills, Texas, she soon found, was a fiercely Protestant community, with equally loyal and vociferous members in each major denominational camp. It was also filled with racial hatred and discrimination, both open and hidden, and with professional jealousy on the high school faculty, the latter primarily embodied in the person of Miss Emma Allen, old maid teacher, feared and disliked by most students, even by some of her 'pets'. The town had the usual efficient grapevine and one atheist - another relatively new addition to its populace and the editor of the newspaper.

The student body reflected the townspeople. There were the members of the Baptist Youth Fellowship, the Methodist Youth Fellowship, the Westminster Fellowship, et al. And there was Manos Ochoa, son of a Mexican laborer, who lived in a made-over railroad car, who was outstanding in sports, and was liked by most students, though none associated too closely with him.

From these ingredients comes the following story. The students nearly all liked Nancy. Miss Allen did not like Nancy. Nancy liked Manos, and helped him in many ways. Nancy also liked

Hank Wortham, the atheistic newspaper editor and Hank liked Nancy. Hank's atheism was a barrier in their relationship and the pettiness and prejudice of most of the town's "Christians" were barriers to Hank's considering a change of mind or belief. Hank also helped Manos Ochoa by giving him work in the print shop. This working with Manos got both Nancy and Hank, especially Nancy, into difficulty on a number of occasions, but neither gave in. The climax came one night when a tornado hit the town. Emma Allen had gotten many into storm cellars and was, herself, about to enter one when she remembered that Manos slept, alone, in the print shop. She started there to warn him. She died in the attempt. Manos was rescued. Hank became a Christian, and he and Nancy planned to be married.

2. Literary criteria

Again applying, first, Haines' criteria for truth and art,¹ it is seen that this novel possesses some good qualities, as well as some poor, in each area. It is not sensational nor exaggerated. It does not appear, however, to be quite true to life. It occurs to the writer that the story may be autobiographical in nature. This is not impossible. If it is so, however, truth is indeed stranger than fiction; or perhaps it is more predictable than fiction, for this is certainly a predictable story. The situation and characters are sufficiently stereotyped that the reader feels little

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1. Ante., p. 14.

or no sense of uncertainty or suspense as to outcome. There are some saving graces, however. The characters are likeable and fairly easy to identify with. There are situations, conversations, feelings and emotions involved that are so unusual as to evoke real empathy occasionally and amusement rather frequently.

The romance between Nancy and Hank is probably one of the better aspects of the story. Her sticking to her convictions without being self-righteous, aloof or sermonizing in her relationship with Hank is very good, even somewhat inspiring. The one flaw is that one may well feel that it is resolved, not so much too quickly, but a little too easily or a little too patly. However, the most outstanding feature is the implicit plea for inter-racial understanding in a state and in a denomination where such a step would be particularly difficult. It is perhaps significant that Manos is one of the characters who is most ably presented and who is, therefore, very able to make the point. He is the least stereotyped of the characters, one of the most alive and real, an excellent vehicle for speaking to this issue.

As to art, it has been suggested that there is something to be desired. It is no doubt the lack of reality in the characters that causes a too-frequent use of steam-of-consciousness to be necessary.¹ These asides, in addition to an exchange of letters and a visit to a young people's meeting provide a few too many and too obvious sermonettes.² They are too pointed, too frequent and too lacking in art to be acceptable. Strangely

1. Alice and David Cheavens, *As Love Knows How*, Broadman Press, 1952, p. 29, 96.
2. Ibid., pp. 31-34.

enough Nancy's conversations with Hank and with some of her students are not nearly so trite, so lacking in art nor so pointed and objectionable. They are, rather, generally quite thoughtful (sometimes even thought-provoking), humble, realistic and natural. Doubtless it is this that makes Nancy herself quite likeable. It is the author's intrusions that are unappreciated. The Cheavens may or may not alienate their readers (they will alienate some); they will certainly fail to hold a great many. The divorce between religion and art is a little too often in evidence. This also weakens the religion. It is not quite the "saccharine religious fluff or personality marshmallow" spoken of by Streitelmeyer¹, but it is not entirely what one might desire it to be.

3. Age Group Needs

Again there are some that will be treated together in groups as before.

(a) (1) Achieving new and more mature relations with agemates of both sexes.

There is little said concerning inter-relationships among the high school students except concerning one girl who dares to be friendly to Manos. One incident does arise in which Manos, as football captain is to escort the cheer-leading captain, quite an active church member, to the football banquet.² Nancy handles this situation very nicely, but with greater emphasis on the race

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1. Ante., p. 18.

2. Cheavens, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

problem than on boy-girl relationships. The major part here is the Nancy-Hank romance, referred to earlier. There is some real help here in an area where much help is needed. As in Anderson's book, there is a respect and concern for each other which works to hold in check any rashness or giving in to emotion in a way that would possibly be harmful. There is restraint and will power that is admirable, not priggish, fearful, laughable or in any way unreal. It is quite desirable and attainable.

(b) (2) Achieving a masculine or feminine social role

There is little if anything said or done in reference to this area except that the characters have a moderately well-defined role which they consistently maintain.

(c) (3) Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively

Manos is the best example here. With his husky, muscular body and exceptionally large hands he finds both sports and the printing world to be wide open fields for him. The understanding and appreciative attitude of the other students is good here.

(d) (4-6) Achieving emotional independence of parents

Achieving assurance of economic independence

Selecting and preparing for an occupation

Again, there is practically nothing said in these areas except for Manos' job in the printing shop and the

economic and emotional difficulties of his family very briefly referred to. There is little here to encourage identification and about all that is done is to acknowledge the presence of such problems. They do not enter the middle class, white, Protestant sphere of living.

(e) (7) Preparing for marriage and family life

Although there is a courtship here, there is not much presented in the way of preparation for marriage and family life except their knowledge of each other and their becoming adjusted to an agreement in basic philosophy and view of life, which is, in itself an important contribution to a teenage concept of marriage and family life.

(f) (8-9) Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence

Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior

Nancy, being a high school teacher, does much here. Probably her greatest contribution along this line is her work against prejudice and her teaching the young people in practical situations to work together for the greatest good in a given situation. She teaches them, too, to plan ahead and to consider these things in their planning.

(g) (10) Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior

The ethics and values which the book primarily presents have been previously mentioned and must by now be obvious. They are not standards that are naturally appealing to all people. Because of some weaknesses in portrayal of characters and plot presentation, the standards may be rejected by some as unrealistic or unattractive. There are many, however, who will be inspired and challenged by the strength of the people and will find them to be desirable to imitate and identify with. The standards set will seem to be desirable to strive for and the imagined approval from Nancy or Hank for success would be worth seeking.

4. Theological criteria

Some areas of theology are much more fully developed than others. Some are quite weak. Nevertheless, all are there.

a. Nature of God

Although there are longer discourses here than in Mine to Follow, or perhaps because of them, the God of this story seems to be more doctrinal than personal. He most clearly is depicted through Jesus Christ. God the Father is nearly absent explicitly. He is there, however, in Nancy's experience. Like so many Christian young people she finds it difficult to verbalize what she knows of Him. He is just a little too transcendent, and

even in His immanence just a little too impersonal. There is a sense of God's holiness, righteousness and love as being intellectual concepts and convictions held.¹ They are becoming realities in their lives as they are lived. Probably it is His love that is most real, for it is His impartial love that is the basis for the struggle against prejudice, jealousy, superiority feelings and cynicism. It is good to have an example of a character of near-perfection presented. It is also good to have an example, as in this case, of obvious imperfection with a desire for improvement and some evidence of growth. This latter is far less discouraging to the novice. It can also of course be carried so far as to be too lacking in challenge to one who is more mature. The book is saved from this difficulty by its diversity of challenge at its particular depth of challenge. Nancy is certainly imperfect, but she is concerned for growth and is growing. A reader who feels she has gone further than Nancy in growth in any one area will find real challenge in the diversity of area's of life with which the book deals and to which it applies Christianity.

b. Nature of man and sin

Happily, there are no extended diatribes against the "sinner" in this book. Sin is probably most nearly described as "missing the mark" or in "falling short." It is more unholiness than a direct disobedience. Sin is an unfortunate and unpleasant situation, for it does result in loss of fellowship and communion

1. Ibid., pp.36-39, 73.

with God. It is not an accident of nature for which there is no solution, however. Nancy feels very keenly that the solution is to be found in Jesus Christ and that man is responsible to avail himself of this provision for forgiveness of and power over sin. One feels most certainly that Emma Allen has caught a glimpse of these truths and, committing herself to God in Christ, finds this to be worth dying for:

Maybe I misjudged. Maybe I was too
hasty. I'm really sorry for all that.¹

A few minutes later, as she runs to warn Manos, she says:

That boy, O God, thou knowest I
don't hate him. Help me find him.
Help me save him.²

c. The Christian Life

This is primarily a novel of the Christian life and most specifically of Nancy's Christian life. One of her strongest convictions is that she has "for the moment...an assignment...to do the King's work here on earth".³ She has a great awareness of Christ's mission to establish his church to carry on his work.⁴ There is frank recognition that much of the church is not doing this; that each individual must live his life according to the standards Jesus taught. There is no thought presented that this can be done apart from the power of Christ. Neither is it anywhere

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1. Alice and David Cheavens, *As Love Knows How*, Broadman Press, 1952, p. 174.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
3. *Ante.*, p. 25.
4. Cheavens, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-40.

stated that it cannot. It is illustrated in the lives of the characters. There are those of course who do not try to live this life. There are those who try in their own strength and fail. There are those who try in the power and wisdom of God. They too sometimes let go, and fail. They are, nevertheless, the only ones who with any consistency succeed and show progress.

There is, as has previously been noted, a very diverse application of the Christian life in many practical situations. There is a decided horizontal relationship here as well as a vertical one. This, again as in Mine to Follow, is a concern that extends, not only to areas which are "religious" and generally considered the province of Christianity, but to every area of life - marriage, vocation, church, interpersonal relations, business, and pleasure.

d. Christ in the Christian life

Most of the explicit expressions of Christianity in the book are in regard to Christ. There is great awareness of his work and the place of the church in carrying forward that work.² Wherever there is personal relationship between characters in the story and the Godhead, that relationship is primarily with Christ. He himself, as well as his teachings, is the basis for Nancy's life and her concerns for people, against prejudice and the empty "churchism" of much of the town. Christianity is seen as being a "seven day a week business"¹ lived in the power of Christ,

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1. Ibid., p. 17.
2. Ibid., 70-71.

governed by his principles and for the purpose of glorifying and pleasing him and "saving this old world".¹ This is not a case of a person, in great misery, trying to force herself to follow a set of rules. Those who are presented as being Christians and not merely church attenders share with Christ his desire for the world and he shares with them, or gives to them at their asking all that is needed to carry through in the work.

The Christ that is seen here is neither quite fully divine nor quite fully human. Each attribute infringes somewhat on the other. He is somewhat lacking in understanding of human beings, although he is not totally devoid of it. It has been said that he is here, primarily, as source of life and power and access to God. He is also the object of worship and the forgiver of sins.

e. The Holy Spirit in the Christian life

The implicit assumption seems to be that all that has been said thus far is experienced through the Holy Spirit. This is stated in connection with Christ and the church; "He lives in it by his Spirit".² Even so it is not very clear anywhere in the story. Since the theology is primarily Christ-centered, and since he has ascended, it may be assumed that all of this is carried on by and through the Holy Spirit, but it is not clearly thus presented.

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

This might well be one of the major areas for strengthening.

Summary: With strengthened character depiction and a little clearer theology to support better the excellent social emphasis, this book would have real merit. Although these areas are somewhat weak, it is quite a worthwhile book, and of sufficient artistic quality to appeal to a fair percentage of its designated audience and to present a challenge of large scope and great importance.

D. The Crown Tree

The Crown Tree, published by John Knox Press, is the only book for boys which will be examined in this chapter.

1. Synopsis

Longinus is the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Christ. There is thus in this novel by LaGette Blythe a conflict somewhat reminiscent of Lloyd Douglas' The Robe. Is it really the Son of God whom he has killed? How can he know and what does it mean? Woven in with this are a few romances, the story of Saul's conversion, and of the days of the early Christians generally, climaxing in their clash with Caligula. Some of the main characters are sentenced to death in the arena and there is tense excitement as their friends successfully plot their escape.

2. Literary criteria

There are portions of narration and characterization done in beautiful style. There are other parts where situations

seem contrived, conversations stilted and characters lifeless. Longinus, the hero¹, unfortunately is one of the least convincing characters. The story might very well stand without him. It might even, in fact, be improved. On the other hand, those characters who are already familiar from the Biblical narrative - Saul, Luke, Joseph, Cornelius, Peter, Barnabus, and the women - nearly all seem to gain added reality under the author's touch. Some of the conversations recalled from the days of Jesus' life are excellent. They are clear, vivid and well paraphrased. This is also true of conversations occurring within the time span of the story. Many of them are also familiar from the Bible. At times these are so clear and alive that one might wish Blythe would do a translation of scripture.

The plot also moves with varying speed, sometimes becoming very slow and at other times being very intense and gripping. It is too ordinary a plot to stand up well under this. Overall it does not make much impact. It seems, in fact, to be so unlikely to hold any sizeable audience as to make some questionable theological assumptions to be of little concern, for it is doubtful that they will be conveyed very adequately.

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1. It is because there is a hero rather than a heroine in this story that it has been considered as one of two books of possible interest to boys.

3. Age Group Needs

In this instance the first nine of the needs will be considered together for there is little if any thing to be said concerning any of them.

(a) (1-9) As previously listed¹

Some of these one might reasonably expect to find considered in such a book. This is particularly true of parts of the story where there is some romantic interest, or where home life is depicted. Unfortunately it is not so. It is perhaps because of the stereotyped and lifeless characters or the unimaginative treatment of them and their lives. There never seems to be any conflict which comes eventually to resolution in a way that is helpful to another who is confronting similar difficulty. Luke, for example, has a terrible time finding Aspasia, but he finally does, and that is all there is to that.

(b) (10) Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior

In this area alone one might derive some benefit from the story. It is very obvious that, in terms of values, there is a group for whom God as seen in Jesus Christ is primary, and there is a group for whom man generally or self specifically is first. The presentation of this dichotomy (out of which the plot grows) is one of the best features of the book. One is favorably impressed

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1. Ante., p. 19.

with what he observes as to the contrasting characters, actions and destinies of those involved. A good case is presented for making Christ pre-eminent. This may be, in itself, sufficient justification for the book.

4. Theological criteria

A book with this setting must have some theology, at least in its reaction to Jesus. There is some theological basis here, although in some areas it is scant.

a. Nature of God

God is very shadowy. He seems to be a powerful force, inspiring men to commitment of life and loyalty unto death. Just why He should be thus inspiring is not clear. There appears to be no communication between Him and His loyal subjects. He seems to be good, not despotic; but He possesses little personality. He appears to be gracious and faithful as long as there is a response. Whether or not He would continue to be so in the face of no response must be conjectured from the cases of Saul and Longinus, both of whom came to Him gradually and found Him waiting. There is an impression that this is because of His love.

b. Nature of man and sin

Everything in these areas is quite black and white. This can be helpful as a guide for checking on the "grays". The contrast is not so sharp as to be offensive and is free, therefore, to be helpful. As suggested above, both Longinus and Saul demonstrate man apart from God, in freedom coming to God, and in repentance finding forgiveness and freedom to live and to die.

c. The Christian life

Beyond the general concept of "following Christ", there is little specification as to what may or may not be involved in the Christian life. After an initial clarifying of the issue, the black and white presentation becomes, at this point, more hindrance than help. This life is lived in dependence on God, but there is no clear identification of areas of life touched by this allegiance. If these areas were as closely spelled out and demonstrated as is the initial giving of faith and allegiance, the total effect would be greatly improved. It is true that this initial decision will affect all other decisions, but there needs to be specific examples given.

d. Christ in the Christian life

Christ is the reason for the Christian life. Christ, to a very large extent, is the Christian life. One might legitimately ask "How"? Again it is evident in the initial commitment that the life is given to Christ, for Him, to be lived in His strength and because of Him - His life, death and resurrection. It is never shown how this works out in specific situations. It is obvious that the remainder of life depicted in the story rests on this act. Just what this means in individual situations is never shown; what happens in failures, discouragement, confusion, temptation, trial is never seen.¹

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1. The facing of death may be considered temptation, or more properly trial. It is, by either name, so large a situation with stakes so high one can readily imagine the outcome. But what happens in a small, everyday problem is never seen. These are the stones that build the structure.

f. The Holy Spirit in the Christian life

No one mentions the Holy Spirit. He is there at Saul's conversion, and at some of the conferences of the disciples, by implication. Beyond this His presence may be surmised or not at the whim of the reader for the author gives no clues. As in As Love Knows How, one may reason that, since Christ is ascended, any contact must be through the Holy Spirit. This is not as necessary in a mid-first century setting, however, since memory is still sufficiently strong to account adequately for nearly all actions apart from conversion and a few exceptional occurrences such as Peter and Cornelius.

Summary: Blythe makes some Bible characters, settings and stories (especially from the book of Acts) very alive. Some of the background thus provided illumines parts of The Acts. It is a pleasant, sometimes exciting, inoffensive book that leaves little lasting impression.

E. Summary

In this chapter the three books which were selected according to the procedure previously described were evaluated. This evaluation was in the areas of literary standards, needs of the age group and theology. Critical standards applied were those established in chapter one. It was seen that there is great

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1. LaGette Blythe, The Crown Tree, Richmond, John Knox Press, 1957, p.113.

variance. Some show greater literary skill, some show greater insight into teenagers' needs, some had clearer theological implications. All have some contribution to make and some area where improvement might be made.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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This research was undertaken to discover what books are being published by major denominations for teenagers and how these books meet basic critical standards of literature, teenage needs and theology. Christian fiction was defined as being fiction whose characters, story and purpose are distinctively Christian in philosophy. In discovering what is available in the field, fourteen publishers were contacted - nine from major United States denominations and five from non-denominational publishers. The latter were contacted only for purposes of comparison. Each publisher was asked for titles and authors of teenage fiction published by him during 1950-1959 which had highest average yearly sales. Results of this correspondence disclosed that, of the six denominational publishers who responded, only three published any books in this category. These were John Knox of The Presbyterian U. S., Westminster of The United Presbyterian in the U.S.A., and Broadman of The Southern Baptist. Further elimination of one - Westminster - came about as a result of its failing to meet established standards. This was seen in the response from the Sales Manager of Westminster Press, to the effect that "...The truth of the matter is that very few of the fiction titles published

by us have a particular religious background¹. Of the non-denominational publishers, Zondervan and Moody offered some material in the field. It was seen that, not only are there few books available, there are practically none at all for boys. This correspondence elicited two titles, one of them published by Westminster, and therefore not within the defined category.

Having by this process selected three books for evaluation, the writer established criteria for this evaluation in the following areas: literary, needs of the age group and theological. Consideration was given first to the possibility of the existence of Christian fiction. It was seen that there are those who feel that preservation of Christian culture in all its facets is essential. The importance of the work of the schools in this was noted as was the central part played by literature in the educative work of the schools. It was thus pointed out that books of good literary quality are necessary.

In evaluating in this area, standards for truth, and art were considered. Note was made of the danger of thinly elaborating on the obvious or lack of reality in coming to grips with life. It was recognized that the religious writer faces particular difficulty in that his writing is propagandistic, therefore suspect and requires greater ability to make it artistic.

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1. Ante., p. 10.

The excellent opportunity for literature in lives of teenagers was brought forcibly to attention in the consideration of the needs of the age group. These fell into areas of social roles and mature relations with agemates of both sexes; wise use of one's body, one's money and emotions; selection of occupation and marriage partner; acquiring intellectual skills and socially acceptable concepts and patterns of behavior; and acquiring a set of values and ethics. The latter is an area of particular challenge and opportunity for fiction.

In order to be Christian fiction, it was ~~found~~ that there are certain basic areas of theology which ought to be defined and considered in evaluation. These were discussed under the headings of the nature of God, the nature of man and sin, the Christian life, Christ in the Christian life and the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. It was ~~found~~ that a Biblical concept of God would include His transcendence and immanence, His personality, love, immutability, eternality and grace. As to man and sin, it was emphasized that man is reponsible for his own sin and that only in confession and forgiveness is he really free to live creatively, in communion and fellowship with God. The Christian life was seen to encompass every area of life and to demand living up to a standard beyond human ability to attain. It has a job to do - God's work among men on earth, here and now. For these reasons the necessity of Jesus Christ to the living of the Christian life

was stressed. It is he who is man's reconciliation, mediator, and source of power. This grace and power are available in the person of the Holy Spirit whose presence is thus essential to the Christian life. It is through him that lives can be made Christlike and reflect God.

Chapter two was devoted to application of these evaluative standards to the three books selected. Mine to Follow was found to have much literary quality, sound and vital theology, and to speak to some of the needs of teenagers; for example, preparation for married life, selecting an occupation and a marriage partner, and particularly acquiring a set of values and ethics. This latter was accomplished through identification with Martha, Paul and Dick, three of the main characters.

As Love Knows How, while its literary style was felt to be less polished, was nevertheless found to have basically sound theology and to speak on more needs and to probe them more deeply and vitally. Some of the areas covered here that were not evident in Mine to Follow were acceptance and use of one's body, acquiring intellectual skills and socially acceptable concepts and patterns of behavior. There was much helpful in the latter with regard to the problems of prejudices and intolerance.

The third book, The Crown Tree, was one of the two found which might be of interest to boys. Its first century setting was both helpful and disappointing. It was helpful in

illuminating the Biblical accounts in the book of Acts. It was disappointing in presenting its original characters and plot. These were felt to be unreal as to character and irrelevant as to both character and plot. The author had flashes of excellent writing but was not consistent and thus did much damage to the story and its effectiveness.

It is seen here that Mine to Follow has the best literary style overall, both its plot and characters being real and presented in good style. As Love Knows How is strong in characterization but weak in plot and The Crown Tree has some strength and some weaknesses in each. The religious teaching is handled most subtly in the first. It is fairly adequately done in the second and rather shallow in the third. There is room for improvement in literary style in all, but the first two, from Broadman Press, seem to have attained an acceptable standard.

As to age group needs, the first - achieving new and more mature relations with agemates of both sexes - is helpfully treated in both of Broadman Press's books. It is not included in The Crown Tree at all. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role is not much in evidence in any of them except as it may be seen in conjunction with the first need, mentioned above. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively is well done in As Love Knows How; it is given little or no attention in the other two. Achieving emotional independence of parents

and other adults is especially good in Mine to Follow; it has a lesser place in As Love Knows How and scarcely any in The Crown Tree. Achieving assurance of economic independence and selecting and preparing for an occupation are found in nearly the same proportion in the same books as achieving emotional independence. These three also seem to inter-relate in the stories. Preparing for marriage and family life is a major concern of both of the first two books; it scarcely enters the third. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence and desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior are concerns peculiar to As Love Knows How. The unique contribution of that book lies primarily in these areas. The last need, acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior, is ~~the only one which may be said to be found to any extent~~ in all three books. It too is stronger in the first two, Mine to Follow and As Love Knows How, than in The Crown Tree.

In the realm of theology, once more the first two books are similar and the third is different. The first two have a far more real and definite God than the third. Of the two, Mine to Follow has the more completely developed theology as to His nature. The nature of man and sin may be found in all three and with much agreement as to fact despite a difference in manner of presentation. The Christian life, too, is a concern of all three, although again the meaning varies with the differing treatment. The place

of Christ in the Christian life is a central place in each case. Yet results are different in each case according to the meaning attached to this centrality. The Holy Spirit in the Christian life is probably the area treated least adequately overall. In The Crown Tree it is particularly weak. In the other two, one must assume a great deal. The general tenor of these two allows such assumption of His presence much more easily than does The Crown Tree.

It would appear to be quite evident that the large denominational publishers of the United States are producing very little in this vital area.¹ At a time when there is great resurgence of interest in the inter-relation of literature and religion on the adult level, it would seem that there must also be a corresponding move in behalf of teenage literature, for, as has been so often said, these are tomorrow's adults. It has been seen that this is a concern of non-denominational publishers.² A study of material thus available, as well as a comparison of the two may well be helpful to all concerned. The paucity of material for boys continues to haunt the writer. Teenagers will read. They will be affected by what they read. They will read whatever is available. If they are given vital, well written, convincing and desirable novels whose philosophy is humanistic, communistic, atheistic, fatalistic, or other, and if, at the same time, they find little or no fiction whose philosophy is Christian,

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1. Ante, pp.8-10.
2. Ante, p.9.

or, having found it, it is seen to be unreal, irrelevant, poorly written, unconvincing, undesirable - any, or all of these - their choice, both of reading and of life, must be obvious.

It is a situation of such importance as to cause the writer to be tempted to take pen in hand and try. She sincerely hopes that many others will. And not only that writers will write, but that publishers will wisely evaluate and will publish.

APPENDIX A. 1

THE HORSECATCHER

APPENDIX A. 1

The Horsecatcher by Mari Sandoz

1. Synopsis:

This, the second book for boys found in this search, has an Indian cast of characters and setting. Young Elk, a young Cheyenne, does not wish to become a warrior even though that is the position of honor in the tribe. He does not want to kill. He has thought of becoming, instead, a horsecatcher. When, during a Kiowa attack on his tribe, Young Elk is forced to kill an enemy, he is sick with guilt. This killing coupled with an earnest seeking for guidance through fasting and dreams leads him to the determination to be a horsecatcher. He finds that there is great danger and responsibility entailed in this job also, but he perseveres, succeeds, and wins the approval and acceptance of his tribe, and of Red Sleeve, the Cheyenne maiden who interests him most.

2. Literary: criteria

It is a little difficult to know whether or not this story is true to life. It is true to the general picture of Indian life built by combination of history, movies and other books. It is true to the psychology of a particular kind of person. Geographically, it is accurate. Beyond this one cannot

easily go. There is sufficient sense of reality to make further verification unnecessary for this purpose. The character of Young Elk particularly is well drawn. He is a vital young man, pleasant to know for a few hundred pages of time. Neither the plot nor the person is unique. It is, however, a warmly human, exciting and insightful view of a philosophy of life which is fairly common among teenage boys. It is a treatment of a problem which confronts every boy, regardless of the side on which he stands, and, as such, it is to be appreciated. There is much well-sustained dramatic interest and it is therefore satisfying to the desire for adventure. As has been indicated, it is thought-provoking as well, particularly on the question of killing and pacifism.

The author's style is good. She does not give way to unnecessary roughness of speech or poor grammar in painting a picture of colorful, exciting life and people. The story is fast moving and well expressed and the descriptions of the people and country are vivid. It is sufficiently vigorous to appeal to boys. This is not an exceptional style, but it is quite pleasing and adequate. Since there is no attempt to convey a religious message, the book does not meet the difficulties which such efforts incur. Neither does the author intrude, for entertainment is the primary intent and requires no intrusion.

3. Needs of the Age group:

Here again, as in chapter two, some needs are grouped together for discussion.

(a) (1-2) Achieving new and more mature relations with agents of both sexes.

Achieving a masculine or feminine social role

Neither of these is given a mentionable amount of space. This is probably to the good, since the boys for whom it is intended do not yet feel this to be a need, and frequently react in decided opposition to such emphasis.

(b) (3) Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.

This is of course one of the central themes of the story where Young Elk is concerned. For boys with strong bodies it is doubtless an inspiration to use them well. For boys who are not so strong it may be good day-dreaming material, or it may be a very frustrating experience.

(c) (4-6) Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults

Achieving assurance of economic independence

Selecting and preparing for an occupation

Although the cultural situation is different from that of the average reader of the book, it is nevertheless most definitely a story of a boy engaged in just these things (except the economic factor). As an example of achieving

emotional independence it is excellent. As an example of selecting a vocation, it would probably be advisable to have a bit more thought than so much trial and error. The use of dreams and visions is also certainly questionable as to transference. If, however, the reader will remember that this is a different culture, and use the reading accordingly, it is very likely to be helpful.

(d) (7-8) Preparing for marriage and family life

Developing intellectual skills and concepts
necessary for civic competence

Neither of these has a real place in the story
and so will not be considered here.

(e) (9-10) Desiring and achieving socially responsible
behavior

Acquiring a set of values and an ethical
system as a guide to behavior

Again, by remembering that this is a different culture, there can be found some real values here. Young Elk's own ethics and those of his tribe are so admirable as to create a real desire for a similar standard. They are at the same time so virile that there is no danger of appearing to be weak and therefore something to be scorned. This is probably one of the strongest contributions of the books, on the above stated conditions, that the reader make the adjustment to his own situation.

4. Theological criteria

As Westminster Press itself has stated, their books are not specifically religious.¹ This book is a good example. There is no evidence of awareness of a Being, God. Even the boy's dream vision has more of an oriental mystical flavor than a Christian one. God, of course, created His world, but one has no idea whether or not Young Elk knows this. The persons of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise absent. There is, as has been said, an attempt at good moral living. This results from a man's own striving and nothing more. The implicit view of man here is that there is within himself, if he will only avail himself of it, all that is necessary for living as good a life as he desires. This is humanism, not Christianity.

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1. Ante., p. 3.

APPENDIX A. 2

FIRST LOVE, TRUE LOVE

APPENDIX A. 2

First Love, True Love

This is the most recent book by the popular author,
Anne Emery.

1. Synopsis

It is quite unusual to read of a teen-age girl's attempts to find a boy friend for another girl. This is just one of Pat's schemes to help people. Many of her ideas fail. For instance in this case, Mike, Pat's brother, just will not be interested in Connie, no matter how hard Pat tries. Pat also helpfully offers her mother's professional advice as an author, and gets into trouble. In the beginning of the story she is dating a fellow who has gone away to college. Then she meets Tim and faces the problem of loyalty to the absent Kenny or "going steady" with Tim. Tim wins and by the end of the story Pat and Tim are planning to be married when they finish school.

2. Literary criteria

The author's style is fresh, vigorous, easy to read and pleasant. Although the plot is primarily a very ordinary teen-age romance story, Emery has created a novel of keen interest. Much of this is because of the high measure of reality in the

characters. All are "good," none is perfect (Tim comes closest to being a little too nearly perfect), all have problems and areas of immaturity and imperfection. They are all near enough to reality to be believable, acceptable, people with whom the reader can easily identify himself. At the same time they hold to a standard that is high enough to be admirable and challenging. The normality of the plot situations adds to the air of realism and encourages the reader's involvement in the story. There is scarcely a girl in her early teens who would not immediately feel at home, enter into the plot and read avidly to its completion. Emery's style and insights are admirably suited to her field. She is very sympathetic to her characters and audience and is, therefore, able to be helpful without seeming to be condescending.

3. Age group needs

This is one of the most outstanding of the books in the extent to which it meets the needs of teenagers.

(a) (1) Achieving new and more mature relations with agemates of both sexes

The book is quite good in this area, particularly because it includes the fine relationship between Pat and Connie. Pat desires the best for her friend and will work for it even at great personal cost. Both of them are normal in their desire for

friends of the opposite sex. However, both maintain high standards and integrity toward the boys, regardless of the outcome and are quite mature in their acceptance of periods of time of varying length when they are without dates. Pat's problem involving Kenny and Tim and her whole relationship with Tim shows wisdom and growth toward maturity.

(b) (2) Achieving a masculine or feminine social role

The four chief teenage characters, Pat, Connie, Mike and Tim, are all very aware of their proper social roles. Pat keeps Mike reminded of his responsibilities and he responds very well. Tim, in turn, keeps Pat reminded of her own and the total picture of society as it affects them. The teaching here is subtle but clear and more adequate than is usual.

(c) (3) Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively

This is probably one of the areas where least help is given. Mike is a football player and has the physique for the game. There is some mention of his learning not to be reckless in his use of his body in sports. The girls, of course, have the usual "beauty" problems of teenage girls. They face them in good-humored despair and make a reasonable effort at correcting them.

(d) (4) Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults

Teenagers will appreciate especially the "going steady" problem as handled by Pat and her parents. Both Pat and her parents meet the family problems very well. There are many similar situations included. Both the impatient outbursts and the patient and thoughtful reasoning, each common to both sides, will strike a familiar chord. The many good and successful solutions will give help and encouragement.

(e) (5) Achieving assurance of economic independence

Pat's allowance problems are just the kind of small close-to-home situations that are so vital in developing attitudes that follow through in larger areas. It is good foundation for the gravity of the economic problem which Pat and Tim face as they consider marriage. This larger situation is not handled with as much depth as the smaller one. However, the reader could carry over the thoughts and principles from one to the other.

(f) (6) Selecting and preparing for an occupation

Tim is most involved in this, but very little time is spent on it. Here is another of the areas where less help is given.

(g) (7) Preparing for marriage and family life

Every teenager thinking of marrying soon should read this. These two, Pat and Tim, face their future as well as

teenagers can. They are very realistic and quite deeply thoughtful. They are also very idealistic, but this does not obscure their good sense.

(h) (8) Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence

It is doubtful that the young people are consciously seeking civic competence, but they are very conscientious in development of intellectual skills and concepts. There is a good school atmosphere here, one that is conducive to growth. This presupposes a need for and room for growth. This too is present. As has been previously indicated, these people are not perfect.

(i) (9) Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior

(j) (10) Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior

These guides to behavior and this behavior are here and are growing. One wonders what the motivation might be. The only possibility that presents itself is social pressure. This is becoming internalized, but in seeking its source one can find only family and social mores. These have been characters with whom one can easily identify. They have the same problems, the same feelings. The identification here becomes too complete. They are likewise without solutions on a deep level. There is no solid foundation or integrative force. There is only a growing

conformity to existing society. This will cause some readers to calm down and become more cooperative with existing forces. It will cause others to lose faith in Emery and her book and perhaps to rebel against these forces. The appeal to teenage idealism is excellent, but the ideal lacks foundation and motivation.

4. Theological criteria

Once the young people went to a youth fellowship meeting at the church. It is an isolated incident with no apparent meaning. God is not here - either as Father, Son or Holy Spirit. He has nothing to do with these troubles of teens. He has nothing to say in the selection of vocation or preparation for marriage. He has no help to give. If He has, these people do not know it. If He helps, He does so without their knowledge or awareness, consent or gratitude. There is a good life here according to society's standards. There is no Christian life; there are no Christian standards; there is no Christ. Mr. Colman is quite correct, at least in this instance. This book of Westminster Press does not have a particular religious background.¹

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1. Ante., p. 3.

APPENDIX B

The Biblical Seminary in New York
235 East 49th Street
New York 17, New York
June 22, 1960

Editor of Young People's Books
Broadman Press
127 Ninth Avenue North
Nashville, 3, Tennessee

Dear Sir:

In order to continue graduate research in preparation for the writing of a thesis concerning recent Christian fiction for teenagers, I will need to know which books published by you during the years 1950-1959 have had the highest sales. Perhaps it is your policy not to issue exact figures regarding sales. I am aware also that sales figures alone are not necessarily an accurate indication since some books will have been on the market much longer. I wonder whether you might supply me with titles and authors of your books with outstanding sales during this period (1950-1959). This might be on an average yearly basis or some other valid criterion convenient to you.

If such information is not within your province to provide, will you kindly redirect this inquiry to some person who is able to provide this help, or advise me as to where I might obtain such information?

If there is anything as a result of this research that would be of value to you, I would be happy to share it with you.

I am enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your prompt reply.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Sincerely,

Barbara Jane Eyer (Miss)

Copies to:

Westminster Press

John Knox Press

Judson Press

Seabury Press

Abingdon Press

Zondervan Publishing Company

Concordia Publishing House

Fleming Revell

William B. Eerdmans

Moody Press

Muhlenberg Press

Friendship Press

Augsburg Press

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*This book was read because Westminster Press stated that it had outsold all other fiction books published by them during the period stated.

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*Although not specifically for youth, its direction to laymen makes it useful in this field also.

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