Clarion Review

Religion

Bound to Be Free
Marta E. Greenman
CrossBooks
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Four Stars (out of Five)

An intensive Bible study guide designed to follow a two-month program, *Bound to Be Free* offers Christians eight steps to spiritual healing.

In 2001, Greenman founded Ruth Ministries International, a nonprofit that, according to its website, "is a non-denominational Christian-based global ministry that mobilizes American believers to help fulfill the Great Commission." Readers will find nothing in Greenman's writing to shake their confidence in the depth of theological knowledge she brings to the enterprise. Moreover, the content of *Bound To Be Free* does not appear to stray beyond a strict fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible. Greenman is an unabashed proponent of biblical inerrancy, and she espouses a firm belief that Satan, in the guise of "society," seeks death for those who stray from the ways of Christ.

Despite Greenman's theological credentials, *Bound To Be Free* is a study guide that is not going to appeal to any but the most devoted of students. Divided into an eight-week course offering five lessons per week, the guide begins simply enough with brief readings from a handful of Old Testament and New Testament passages, a list of eleven questions to be answered, and a couple of Bible verses to be written on index cards. But eventually, the amount of reading and writing required to complete each day's lesson becomes nothing less than daunting. The instructions for Week 4, Day 3, for example, are to read from Genesis, Colossians, Revelation, John, Hebrews, Isaiah, and Peter, and to write responses to twenty-five questions. Days 1 and 2 of Week 5 also require readings in seven different books of the Bible, but the author now presents students with a whopping forty-three questions. Little wonder, then, that Greenman frequently begins a new day's lesson with an exhortation such as "Continue persevering, my friend."

The breadth of the assigned reading is impressive, covering a wide range of verses that

reveal the great scope of human experience and Godly wisdom contained in the Bible. The questions Greenman asks are similarly diverse, demanding not only attention to specific details within the required reading but also a serious examination of one's own very personal experience of a loving God. It is abundantly clear that those who complete each of Greenman's assignments will come away from them with a deeper understanding both of biblical text and the workings of their own hearts. It is a significant defect in the book's design, however, that the assignments are not spread out over a longer period of time.

Bound To Be Free is a thorough and uncompromising Bible study for those who seek healing through Christ.

Diane Taylor