

Freely Given: A Four Corners Novel

Kathy Parish

CreateSpace (Jul 24, 2014)

Softcover \$12.95 (250pp)

978-1-4996-3018-3

A young woman finds herself at odds with a pastor after her one-million-dollar donation to his church in this smooth, entertaining Christian romance.

In *Freely Given*, a one-million-dollar donation in the Sunday offering plate creates a controversy that could cause a split in a small-town church's congregation, while also creating tension in the budding relationship between the pastor and the pretty donor who recently moved to town. Kathy Parish weaves together several topics and plot lines to deliver a smooth, entertaining Christian romance in her debut novel.

When Katie Moore begins attending Four Corners Community Church, Reverend Chad Carter is quickly attracted to the newcomer. But when Katie donates a cashier's check for one million dollars, Chad and his deacons have many questions: What is it to be used for? Does the donor want any recognition? Where did such a large amount come from? When Chad seeks answers from Katie, she tells him that her father gave her a two-dollar lottery ticket before he went to prison. The ticket was a winner for ten million, and the check is her tithe on the windfall. The church has long held the position that gambling is sinful, so the church leaders are faced with the moral dilemma of whether to accept or decline the money.

As Parish's story develops, she includes other intriguing topics in addition to gambling. For example, Katie provides elder care for her dying father, Chad's twin sister is being stalked by her ex-husband, and Katie's father experiences redemption and restoration with his daughter. Parish does not exploit any of the themes simply for emotional effect, but she skillfully includes appropriate story lines that blend seamlessly while helping to develop the characters and overall plot. Parish also effectively inserts Christian themes without being preachy or trying too hard to add religious details. By using a church and its members as the focal points of the narrative, the Christian references seem natural and supportive.

The relationship between Chad and Katie progresses steadily, and Parish's warm, engaging style helps the romance maintain a sense of strength and devotion despite all the ups and downs faced by the couple. The other characters and subplots are developed sufficiently without detracting from the main story featuring Chad and Katie. Parish keeps the novel at a comfortable length while still providing plenty of solid writing and an interesting narrative.

Freely Given is a well-paced, enjoyable novel that provides a delightful mix of drama, romance, and entertaining storytelling. Parish's debut proves it is possible to premiere with top-quality, impressive writing that is a credit to its genre.

JEFF FRIEND (September 3, 2014)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.