

Journey by Miracles

Aubret H. White

BookSurge (January 2010)

Softcover \$10.00 (613pp)

978-1-4392-4800-3

Journey by Miracles was written by a man of deep faith. Every sentence of this three-part novel resonates with the love that Aubret H. White has for God and the people of His Church. "What Christ Jesus has done for me, I am not ashamed to confess," declares one of White's characters, a young preacher dedicated to serving Jesus Christ.

The first part of this trilogy, "Whippoorwill Valley," set in 1682, tells the story of the friendship between an unnamed Native American tribe and two European explorers, cousins Jim and Jack Fulmont. According to White, this relationship brings positive changes to the Indians' lifestyle. Teepees are replaced by sturdy cabins, and agriculture improves nutrition among the members of the tribe.

An interesting plot point is introduced when tribal leaders suggest that the younger Fulmont marry one of the Native American women. The reaction of both groups to this interracial marriage would have brought drama and tension to the novel, but White meanders off in a different direction, leaving readers to wonder how that storyline was resolved. The final pages of "Whippoorwill Valley" include a puzzling genealogy chart meant to transition readers into "Spring Hollow," part two of the book. Although the author writes apologetically, "It is hoped you will not become too confused," some readers certainly will.

"Spring Hollow" follows the Whippoorwill Valley descendants as a great revival is taking place at the town's Baptist Church. New Christians share their budding faith by preaching in schools, on front porches, and at kitchen tables. An invitation for dessert often leads to an opportunity for testimony. However, so many characters and events are mentioned that readers are bound to become lost in a maze of names, places, pound cakes, and coffee.

The citizens of Spring Hollow reach out to the residents of nearby Oakdale in "Millie's Children," the third part of the trilogy. Readers will be touched by the tale of Millie and Frank Stewart, who offer refuge to a young homeless couple. Once again, however, White drops this storyline and takes off on a much less interesting tangent. Testimonies, prayers, re-dedications, and conversions continue, each recorded by the author in painstaking detail. "Millie's Children" soon leads readers into another bewildering maze of names and places.

A lack of editing proves to be White's biggest downfall. Sentences ramble, verb tenses vary mid-sentence, and point of view changes from third-person to first-person, seemingly on a whim. The dialogue is stilted and prosaic. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors abound on every page, distracting from the author's message and spoiling his story.

White, a retired Navy chaplain and Baptist pastor, has endeavored to write a novel that resounds with the kind of life-changing decisions that only people of faith can truly understand. Journey by Miracles, though decidedly flawed, may still serve as an inspiration to those readers who share White's deep desire to proclaim to a suffering world the wonder of Christ's saving power and love.

HOLLY MOULDER (May 18, 2010)

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