ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

Life: The Struggle Within
Egypt McKee
978-1-4343-2089-6
Three Stars (out of Five)

Heat cannot be separated from fire, or beauty from the Eternal. —Dante Alighieri

Pastor Egypt McKee lowers the boom on lustful pursuits and simultaneously offers friendly, insistently evangelistic encouragement to those who consider themselves unwelcome in the Christian church. The book is divided into sixty-seven topical lessons, each including a Bible passage and a "Just Think" question which spurs productive introspection. The lesson titles command attention: "Tastes Like Chicken," "Your Momma Wears Combat Boots," and "Porn Rocks." The prurient-sounding wordplay ingeniously reels in the fallen-away nightclub crowd from their bar stools, as confirmation of each individual's worth proves that the door to transformed living is wide open.

Pornography is singled out as both addictive and destructive. In fact, the addictive properties extend to discussion of the issue, which distantly outstrips all other sins, at over fifty mentions. McKee must have been smiling mischievously when writing loaded passages, such as: "…the latest threat on the battlefields of our minds: bare naked ladies." Other vices and traps faced down include infidelity, the culture-wide trend toward the sexualization of girls, arrogance and exploitation.

The brand of faith promoted is softly authoritative, in the sense that the Bible's guidance is billed as infinitely superior to the results that even well-meaning people can produce in their lives unaided. "Trusting in yourself, your abilities, your intellect, your limitations, will, at best, fail you." Unconditional surrender of the personal will is the aim, a newly cleansed conscience and a chance to be of real help to others are the rewards promised. McKee rightly decries the damage done to the public image of Christianity by high-profile con artists and charlatans. The repeated invitations to salvation don't exclude homosexuals, though the preference is treated as a pathology to cure, listed on par with bestiality. Those opposed to corporal punishment may be a bit dismayed by the suggestion that society could be improved by a corps of determined grandmothers dispensing drive-by beatings to young men with bad attitudes.

Life. The Struggle Within is an outreach tool of Out of Egypt Ministries, a nonprofit

based in Southern California and focusing on the needs of adults from ages eighteen to forty. Service projects include ministering to the homeless and assisting victims of HIV/AIDS. The author, who is Executive Director, was previously involved with the Jesus Film Project.

An entry per day is the recommended speed, but sections are short. Egypt McKee removes barriers. He knows well the selfish ideas minds entertain and bodies sometimes act on, the “covert struggle.” His familiarity with the embarrassing, self-created predicaments of regular flawed people mean readers will surely see their own weaknesses identified in one entry or another. A light, informal style and strategic redeployment of popular catch phrases make the huge metaphysical question of how to protect one’s soul less frightening. After all, the Pastor pledges, “…turning away from the guilt and shame only takes a moment.”