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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ BIOGRAPHY

The Dream Continues

Eden Tedla
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In the tradition of works like *The Tao of Pooh* and *The Gospel According to Peanuts*, Eden Tedla proposes to illustrate the spiritual values that frame creative work and that are a part of pop culture.

The Dream Continues examines the lyrics of Michael Jackson to show that the singer "is/was a messenger from God"—a messenger that was rejected, mistreated, and misunderstood.

The author gives indications that she was personally connected to Jackson, but the exact nature of their relationship is unclear. The book's back cover includes an anecdote about how "we would work on a track and then we'd meet at his house…" And in a "thank you" section at the end of the book, she thanks "Mama Katherine" (presumably Jackson's mother, Katherine Jackson) for taking time to read her daily scriptures.

This book lacks the type of structure and formatting that is common for texts of its kind. Nonfiction books that are intended to be used as a reference usually have a table of contents, an index, or some other way for readers to search for or quickly access information. It is, however, divided into chapters. Many, but not all, of the chapters place song lyrics after a scripture and commentary from the author. Again, a tighter structure and better formatting would be helpful to the reader because there is neither any space nor demarcation to separate the scripture from the commentary. The last section of the book outlines Michael Jackson's life in terms of Biblical symbolism.

With commentaries starting with the words "Today's scripture," for example, one wonders if this book is meant to be a devotional or a written record of the author's personal daily devotions. At the start of Chapter 5, the author references Matthew 25:42-45 ("For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink…") in connection with the lyrics for Jackson's song "Will You Be There?" ("In our darkest hour/In my deepest despair/Will you still care?/Will you be there?") and mentions the victims of the disaster in Haiti in her commentary.

We tend to associate singers with the songs they sing, giving them ownership even when they did not write or compose a song. The author does not give sources for the song lyrics and does not indicate if certain songs had co-writers. For example, it is known that Jackson did not get sole songwriting credit for "We Are the World." Some of the songs included are ones that Jackson performed but did not write, such as "Got to Be There." Tedla also includes the lyrics for songs that Jackson definitely did not write, such as Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water," which she attributed to Jackson.

It is clear that the book's author has the best of intentions. The book will be embraced by a certain audience, specifically Michael Jackson fans who share the author's beliefs. Unfortunately, the book falls short because it is not structured well, and this, plus the uncertainty of some of the author's assertions, will be a deterrent to others.
JADA BRADLEY (February 17, 2011)

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