

Yesterday's Reflections: A Repository of Memories

Albert F. Schmid

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Reflections on holidays, folksy morality tales highlight this celebration of days and seasons.

Albert F. Schmid, a Baptist minister and former navy and commercial aviator, has written an easily understood collection of short reflections to remind readers of the meaning and, sometimes, religious significance of various holidays.

He begins his calendar musings (each two to three pages in length) with New Year's Day, a "time for a fresh start after looking back at yesterday's reflections," and ends with Christmas, reminding readers to put Christ back into the celebration. The holidays described are varied, some as secular as daylight saving time and May Day, whose history is purely pagan. Jewish holidays such as Hanukkah are noted, as are quasi-religious commemorations like Columbus Day.

In the case of non-Christian days, Schmid often injects a Christian viewpoint. He recounts a parable of Jesus in the section on Ramadan, and he offers a wry Biblical proverb for Election Day in November: "When the righteous triumph, there is elation, but when the wicked rise in power, men go into hiding." The second half of the book includes sermonettes, poems, lessons for children ("What Is in the Backpack?"), and folksy morality tales such as this one: A man saves another boy instead of his own son in a raging storm because he knows his son is a Christian and will go to heaven when he dies, and "he could not bear the thought of his son's friend having to spend forever in damnation." The author uses simple, easily understood metaphors and images to make his points, and he often quotes from the Bible.

The reader may be a bit confused by the lack of organization in *Yesterday's Reflections*. The calendar is not strictly followed: There is a Christmas entry at the close of the holiday portion, followed by pages of devotional selections on a hodge-podge of topics; yet another piece on Christmas, one about May Day, and some seasonal offerings are curiously thrown into the latter section.

With his book as a bully pulpit, Schmid boldly expresses his sociopolitical agenda. For example, he believes that, "We must support pro-life legislation," and "we must continue to support our allies in Israel." These items could well be a turn-off to some readers, even some Christians.

The book's front cover, a swan reflected on a green-blue lake, is soothing and suitable. But the book's text suffers from misspellings and questionable grammatical constructions, for example: "No one would dare admit as to how impetus [sic] we had been."

Most of Schmid's readers will probably be parishioners and like-minded folks who will celebrate his accomplishment, much as he celebrates the days and seasons of the year.

BARBARA BAMBERGER SCOTT (July 10, 2013)

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