

BOOK REVIEWS



Summer Fades

Amanda Bews (2015). Warburton, Vic: Signs. 196pp.
ISBN: 978-1-925044-18-8

Adele Nash

Communication Coordinator for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern New South Wales

***Summer Fades* seems an apt name for a book review in March, the first month of autumn. It is also the second novel by Amanda Bews, a follow-up to *Heaven Sent*. As with *Heaven Sent*, Amanda is clearly not afraid to tackle some big issues—this time covering eating disorders.**

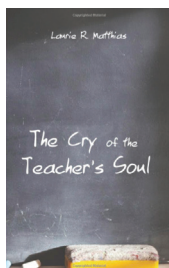
These are becoming more prevalent. Estimates are that one in 20 Australians suffer from some kind of eating disorder, with rates increasing in the past decade even as obesity is reported as reaching epidemic levels in most Western countries. So, if we think it's too confronting reading a story about eating disorders and other complex matters, we're kidding ourselves. Life is confronting and complex.

But *Summer Fades* doesn't smack the reader over the head. It doesn't make you feel guilty, it doesn't preach. Rather, it invites you to empathise with Summer, the main character, a perfectionist who tries to find control through food (well, specifically, not eating food).

The other characters—Summer's best friend Cameron, brother Bobby, love interest Ben and childhood friend Julie, whose return is the catalyst for chaos—are well developed and thoroughly thought out. And the novel's portrayal of the role faith can play is not that of a quick fix but of a real hope and gradual healing.

The story moves along quickly. There's enough emotional engagement to keep you interested but not so much that it seems affected. And while written for young adults, *Summer Fades* is also a good read for parents.

Having friends who've suffered from eating disorders, I know how complex an issue this is. But I also know there's hope, that change and healing can and does occur. [TEACH](#)



The Cry of the Teacher's Soul

Laurie R Matthias (2015). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock. 115pp.
ISBN: 13:878-1-4982-0804-8

Janet Rieger

Children's Ministries and Education Director (Retired), Bonnells Bay, NSW

There are many books for Christians about theology and many books for teachers about educational theory and practice, but this book is like neither of those. This is one for teachers that is not about teaching, one for Christians that is not about biblical exegesis. This is a perceptive and sympathetic 'letter' from a Christian teacher, to Christian teachers about their own spiritual and professional health and how these are intrinsically connected.

Each chapter starts with a true story: a case study of an authentic Christian teacher struggling with their chosen vocation, and seriously considering a change of direction. Why has it happened? What external and internal stresses have caused it? In what ways has their belief system and their Christian experience contributed to the situation?

The reader is then presented with an honest appraisal of some of the paradoxes of the Christian life as they apply to teachers: like the clash between idealism and reality, the tension between giving everything to our students and taking care of ourselves, and the contrasts of what we know in our head and what we feel in our heart.

This is not a self-help book. It doesn't prescribe quick solutions but it explores the close relationship between teachers' daily classroom experiences and their own spiritual development.

There are questions at the end of each chapter—a pause to consider not if, but how the discussion relates to individual teachers and their situations, as it surely will.

Because the book addresses experiences that are topical, and relevant to Christian teachers, it is easy to read. With only 115 pages, it is designed for busy teachers, student teachers and their mentors. I wish it had been available when I was a student teacher, a classroom teacher, a lecturer and student mentor. [TEACH](#)