

## Library Treasures

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You know it's good when it's a customer who wants to sing its praises. Check it out.

### Library treasures

Shelves so full of gems, there's no telling what you'll find

### First-hand history

Some years ago I spent a year living in Quito, Ecuador where I taught English in a mission-sponsor school. During that time I had the opportunity to travel a bit around the country, visiting the famous Otavalo Indian markets, the coastal city of Guayaquil and the Wycliffe Bible Translation centre deep in the Ecuadorian jungle along the Napo River, which flows into the Amazon.

Some of the linguists and missionaries knew first-hand of the history of five missionaries killed by the 'Auca' Indians in the 1950s. The wives of these missionaries later went to forgive and live among the Indians, leading them to Christianity. The story was told by one of the wives, Elizabeth Elliot, in a book entitled *Through Gates of Splendor* and I had heard that a feature film [*The End of the Spear*] had been made for the 50th anniversary of the event.

So I was very excited one Sunday when I walked into the St Paul's Library and saw both the feature film and a documentary on the bookshelves! In fact I had only been telling our home group about my experiences in Ecuador the week before.

### Christian histories

Once drawn into the library I also discovered an excellent series of Christian histories&thinsp;&mdash;&thinsp;individual editions featuring various people or times in the history of the church. There is one called *Faith in the Byzantine World* which I recognised because I have my own copy. Some of the others that I've now read include *Luther and His World*, *Francis of Assisi and His World*, *St Augustine and His World* and another about Celtic Christianity. Each of these books contains beautiful illustrations that accompany very readable, yet scholarly text. I have found them to be very balanced and not preachy. (Regrettably I think some writings on the subject veer towards forms of propaganda rather than letting readers draw their own inspiration from the history told.)

The library also has another, beautiful folio-sized book called *Christianity: The Illustrated History* by Hans J Hillerbrand. It's the kind of volume that you want for your own collection or to give as a nice gift. Amazingly, I have been the first to borrow all of these books! But I'm telling you now they are highly recommended, so do take advantage. Thanks also to the St Paul's Library and library staff for finding and providing quality reading.

Laurie David

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