does not accept Jesus had better invest in a flame-retardant suit for the afterlife. The authors' attempt to describe what heaven is actually like seems arbitrary—there is music but no sex or marriage—and based on debatable exegetical premises. The most compelling passages are those that comment on how the living deal with the death of loved ones. These sections could give hope to readers suffering from personal loss. *(July)*

The Woman Who Named God: Abraham's Dilemma and the Birth of Three Faiths

Charlotte Gordon. Little, Brown, $27.99 (416p) ISBN 978-0-316-11474-5

The story of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah stands at the threshold of the three great Western religions—Christianity, Judaism, Islam—although each appropriates the story differently. Although God's command of Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, is an oft-told story, his expulsion of his concubine, Hagar, and the son he had by her, Ishmael, is often ignored. In this sometimes provocative, though often pedestrian, rereading of the Hagar story, Gordon (*Mistress Bradstreet*) gives new power to a woman often left in the shadows. Focusing on Hagar's vision of God in the desert (Genesis 16:13), Gordon argues that Hagar is a prophet and a mystic who names God El-Roi, or "the God of my seeing." Because of her experience of God, Gordon argues, Hagar's relationship with God is one that Abraham might envy, for God offered Hagar clear and direct guidance, while God offered Abraham no clarity or guidance about his future but simply expected Abraham to obey. Although her prose is often plodding, Gordon provides some glimpses of the power of Hagar's story for modern religions. *(July)*

The Jesus You Can't Ignore: What You Must Learn from the Bold Confrontations of Christ

John MacArthur. Thomas Nelson, $22.95 (256p) ISBN 978-1-4002-0206-5

In 1897, author Charles Monroe Sheldon penned a volume titled "In His Steps" that went on to become an international bestseller. It is from this book that the popular WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) movement emerged. MacArthur, bestselling author, pastor of Grace Community Church and president of the Master's College and Seminary, begins with this notion and expands it to ask the question, "What *did* Jesus do?" He acknowledges that knowing the mind of Christ can be a challenge, especially when confronting the widespread influence of secularism and irreligion. But he also notes that Jesus encountered the same kinds of challenges. By studying the gospels, a modern pilgrim can get a sense of how Jesus handled similar situations, and extrapolate from his example ways in which we, today, can live. "His [Jesus'] style of ministry ought to be the model for ours," the author writes. MacArthur insists that we can engage contemporary culture using the same techniques that Christ used to meet head-on the challenges of his day. *(July)*

Contemporary American Judaism: Transformation and Renewal

Dana Evan Kaplan. Columbia Univ., $34.50 (454p) ISBN 978-0-231-13728-7

A Reform rabbi in Albany, Ga., Kaplan has edited a collection of essays on American Judaism and written three books on Reform Judaism. His newest contribution focuses on American Judaism since the end of WWII, emphasizing recent innovations in the religion of the Jewish people. The first chapter provides a broad overview of both religious and historical developments, including the impact of the Holocaust and Israel. Changes in religious identity are sketched. The next seven chapters flesh out the fundamentals identified in the introductory chapter. Kaplan discusses spirituality, Jewish denominationalism, intermarriage, feminism, Jewish Renewal, mysticism and synagogue revitalization. He concludes by emphasizing the need to transform Judaism, implying that a more orderly structure is needed but not necessarily achievable. He fails to mention the value of ferment and debate as guarantors of survival, an odd omission given his insightful description of radical changes in American Judaism. *(July)*

The Rising of Bread for the World: An Outcry of Citizens Against Hunger

Arthur Simon. Paulist, $16.95 paper (176p) ISBN 978-0-8091-4600-0

In this autobiography, author and retired pastor Simon traces the path of his life to show how he began and developed Bread for the World, the influential religious lobby on hunger. Simon's past experience with the civil rights movement laid the groundwork for a life championing rights for the oppressed and underprivileged. While taking leave from pastoral duties to study hunger, Simon saw Christianity as the social force that could push government to change hunger policy, thereby aiding the impoverished. He forged a lobbying organization that gained congressional approval for two grain reserves; amassed more than 58,000 members; attracted leaders like Bono and Bob Dole; and obtained $15.5 billion in funding for poverty-stricken countries in 2008 alone. As he takes readers through a crash course on hunger policy and the workings of a Christian nonprofit, Simon applauds all those who helped leave their fingerprints on the struggle to overcome world hunger. If readers can have patience through the chapters on Simon's early years, they will find themselves cheering on a humble, mission-driven organization—and perhaps be persuaded to join the movement. *(July)*

Jacob's Wound: A Search for the Spirit of Wildness

Trevor Herriot. Fulcrum (Consortium, dist.), $16.95 paper (384p) ISBN 978-1-55591-616-9

In a series of meditations on nature and wildness, religion and spirituality, sojourning and home, Herriot (*River in a Dry Land*) demonstrates both the contemplative mysticism that returned him to his Catholic roots and the sharp eye of a naturalist distinctly aware of his physical surroundings. In the first half of the book, "Ascending Hakkarmel," Herriot describes the intimate practice of living occasionally in a tipi on "the Land," his family's retreat, in chapters alternating with meditations on the Bible, such as the conflict between Jacob and Esau, and religious or spiritual teachings and experiences, such as Teilhard de Chardin's. In the book's second half, titled "From Mount Carmel," the author continues, in writing that is lush and evocative, to toggle between personal anecdote and thoughts on scripture and religious tradition. The chapter titles of this half, such