Ruined
by Ruth Everhart
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

RUTH HUIZENGA, BORN INTO A CHRISTIAN REFORMED FAMILY, had always seen herself as a good girl—dutiful, diligent, doing what was expected of her.

In Ruined, Ruth shares the traumatic story of what happened to her during the fall of 1978 when she was a senior at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., living off-campus in a house with several other young women. On the evening of November 5, two armed assailants broke into the women’s house while they were sleeping. They were robbed and raped at gunpoint.

The four-hour-long attack changed Ruth’s life forever. The theological worldview she had inherited from her family and church and her “good girl” perspective on herself seemed inadequate to house the explosive questions that became her daily bread: “God, what did I do that you would let this happen to me?” And later, when the courts meted out justice, “What about God? What about justice? Was God responsible for that justice? Be careful. Because if He was, then wasn’t He also responsible for the injustice—the crime that brought us to court?”

In the chaos, Ruth began to hear God’s call to study theology and to enter the ministry. She eventually became a Presbyterian pastor and has served that denomination for more than 20 years. Throughout her memoir, she writes about how she would have counseled her younger self to understand the debilitating feelings of shame and her perception of herself as damaged goods, though in God’s eyes there is no such designation.

In this emotionally compelling, achingly vulnerable, and spiritually astute memoir, Ruth Everhart invites readers not only into her pain and healing, but into a theological conversation about the intersection of the divine will and human will. (Tyndale)

Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World
by Miroslav Volf
reviewed by Kathy Vandergrift

Miroslav Volf, a leading ethicist, takes on the argument that religion creates more problems than it solves globally and should be privatized. Beyond freedom of religion for all, he provides evidence for a positive and wide-ranging role in shaping globalization. Nihilism, says Volf, is the genuine threat in the context of market-driven globalization, not other religions. Drawing on history, personal experience, and deep Christian convictions, Volf outlines a pluralistic path for religions to contribute to the flourishing of creation and reconciliation instead of violence. His is a hopeful, practical, and realistic voice in a time of growing questions about the role of religion in society. (Yale University Press)

Note: Kathy shared this with us by using our “Submit a Review” link at thebanner.org. Have you read, watched, or listened to something we should know about? You too can send in a review!
The Lowdown

Art Smarts: Pastors, worship leaders, artists, and others will find lots of wisdom for using the visual arts to deepen worship and faith in Lisa J. DeBoer’s book *Visual Arts in the Worshiping Church*. (Eerdmans)

Book Battle: Reality television about books? That’s right, March 27-30 will bring the 16th Canada Reads, a battle of the books competition on CBC. Only in Canada, eh?

It’s Back: *The Shack*, William P. Young’s best-selling novel about a father grieving the loss of his daughter, comes to the big screen this month. (Lionsgate)

Family Ties: On March 26, Brontë fans can learn more about their favorite trio of writers from the biopic *To Walk Invisible*, written and directed by *Happy Valley* writer/director Sally Wainwright. (PBS)

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**The Thing Itself**
*by Adam Roberts*
*reviewed by Phil Christman*

Scientists in Antarctica accidentally discover a creature that exists outside of human perceptual categories such as space, time, and causation. The knowledge turns one of them into an amoral superman and the other, the only man on earth who can stop him, into a basket case. This novel confronts some of the knottiest problems in philosophy and science without sacrificing pace or accessibility. For fans of C.S. Lewis’s Space Trilogy, or of John Carpenter’s *The Thing*, or of brilliant books, period. (Gollancz)

**Lamentations: Simple Songs of Lament and Hope, Vol. 1**
*by Bifrost Arts Music*
*reviewed by Robert N. Hosack*

Bifrost Arts Music is a group, ecumenical in focus, that mines the history of sacred music in search of lost treasures and seeks to introduce new hymnodies. In that role they produce music for church worship and make related recordings. Using co-founder Isaac Wardell’s home equipment, all of the songs on *Lamentations* were recorded in varied makeshift locations. It comes across as a group of intimate friends who have gathered together to help the church learn to lament like Jesus. Available at bifrostartsmusic.bandcamp.com, this digital album shows the beauty of independent, theologically informed, Christian worship music in a popular evangelical culture awash in contemporary Christian music. (Bifrost Arts Music)

**The Queen of Katwe**
*reviewed by Kristy Quist*

Phiona is an intelligent Ugandan girl with a natural sense for strategy, making her perfect for chess. The fact that she lives in a slum works against her, but her coach sees her potential and pushes her, along with her teammates, to compete and win against young people with many more advantages. Chess is a way out of the plight of being a single woman in the slums, a reality that is not ignored in the film but is dealt with in a sensitive rather than sensational way. Here is a family movie that is inspiring and heartwarming without being cloying. It’s full of strong, loving relationships even in the hardest of times. On disc now. (Disney)