



For The Strength of The Hills

Hiram Bertoch

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James is only ten years old when the Mormon missionaries enter his beloved mountain homeland. A place where his family has lived since perhaps before the days of Christ and his apostles. Here they have practiced their religion free from outside interference for centuries.

How will James and his family respond to American preachers who bring news of a restored gospel to their Alpine farm?

A coming of age story, that follows ten year old James as he wrestles between the beliefs that his people have cherished for generations, and the new ideas being preached in their valleys.

LDS Novel

Watch The Trailer

For The Strength of The Hills Details

Date : Published February 11th 2013 by The Piedmont Press (first published November 23rd 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Hiram Bertoch

Format : Paperback 338 pages

Genre : Lds, Lds Fiction, Christianity

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From Reader Review For The Strength of The Hills for online ebook

Beth says

I really enjoyed reading this book. I had never heard of the Waldensian people and their history. Having grandparents who came to America from Switzerland because of Mormon missionaries in the 1880's made this story more personal to me. I loved how you were drawn into the family's life and struggles to survive in the Italian Alps. I can't wait for the next book to learn how the family continued on their journey to Zion.

Nancy says

The people of this Mountain community, taught that they started with the life of Christ. They taught their people, that it was their responsibility to teach others their beliefs.

This is an LDS novel, based on a real group of people. The missionaries went to the Mountains in the Alps, and were warmly welcomed, as were other visitors. They were treated well, until the people saw the missionaries were trying to get them to be baptized. Information was researched from real missionaries, who served in this area.

The book takes us from the people of the Mountain, and their beliefs, to conversion of a few people, to their trek across Europe, to the start of their voyage across the ocean.

Teresa says

What a wonderful story! This author draws you in with the story of Jean and his 5 children who live as Waldensians high in the mountains. I had never heard of the Waldensian people before. I found myself drawn to the history this book provides about these people. I found myself getting drawn deeper and deeper into the story, and when I got to the last page, I couldn't believe it was over! I can't wait for the next book!

Debbie says

Delightful book and an easy read. It's always a bonus when I read a book to come away learning something new and this book definitely provided that. It was easy to put myself in the story alongside the main character, James, and to appreciate the challenging lifestyle he lived as a Waldensian. I came away strengthened by the faith and commitment demonstrated by James and his family as they boldly left the only lifestyle and religion they knew to join a new religion and embark on a life-changing journey. I am looking forward to the sequels to continue the journey alongside James and his family as they travel to the American Frontier.

Jon Berry says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. It was really interesting to learn about the Waldensian people. I also enjoyed following the story of James and his family and what they had to go through to live high up in those mountain valleys. Well worth the read. I definitely look forward to the next book in the series!

Kelley Green says

Thought provoking

Thought provoking read. Since I have ancestors from the Piedmont Valley (specifically the Cardon family) the book provided me with more insight to their life and sacrifices, as well as religious struggles in general.

Dan Jepson says

This was an interesting book. Well written, and well researched. I had no idea that the Waldensians even existed. Let alone the critical role that they played in the reformation.

It was interesting to read about the tight knit society that existed among them, and the sense of belonging to the group that they had.

Also interesting to read how the characters reacted to the Mormon missionaries who threatened to lead them away from that strong sense of community.

I would recommend this book. I look forward to the second book in the series.

Lisa says

I was just tickled to find this book! The story is about some Italian families that join the church in the mid-1800's. One of the families, the Cardons, are my ancestors! My entire life, I've heard about how Lorenzo Snow and 2 other missionaries came to the little mountain village that my ancestors lived in high in the French-Italian Alps and taught them the restored gospel. I vaguely remember hearing about them being part of the Waldensian "sect" and the persecution they endured from the Catholic church. So, I was more than happy to find a book that included a lot of their history! What an amazing group of people...to leave their homeland and the traditions and a completely different lifestyle than any of us can even imagine. To leave it all for the church and to immigrate to America. "Follow the Prophet" takes on a whole new meaning when you read this book! Inspirational and historical and an awesome read. For his first novel, Hiram Bertoch (also an ancestor of the Waldensians, btw) did an amazing job and I can't wait for the rest of the series to be finished. :)

Sireneh says

I was very pleasantly surprised when I read this book. I knew this was the author's first novel so I really didn't know what to expect. Also, I knew it was about Mormonism and being of no particular religion myself, I was curious to discover how the book would feel to me. Although religion was the focal point, it remained in the background for the story itself to shine, and I was perfectly comfortable with it.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and sometimes found it hard to put down, staying up too late to read "just one more chapter." I loved the way the author gave each character a life of his or her own, making it very easy to engage with them and the story. The effort he must have put into that was worthwhile in my opinion, because by spending time with each character, gaining insight into their private thoughts, I was able to care about each of them.

The environment that James and his family lived in was often brutal in the winter, and while it was splendid in the summer months, they were constantly working the land. I was able to not only forgive the landscape that made their lives so hard, but to love it. At one point James remembers eating the spring mulberries and I felt like I was right there with him.

There is something that is of utmost importance to me as a reader, and that this book pulled off successfully: I was not aware that I was reading someone's writing. Few things are more bothersome to me in a book than being jolted from the story by a sudden display of writing. An attempt at describing a picturesque sunset, for example, when the effort suddenly reminds you that this is the work of some person who is trying to impress you with their ability. "Look at me! I'm writing!" It seems to say. It's as jarring as a pothole on a highway, this razzmatazz kind of tap dance across the page. Reading this book was smooth and easy, and I was pulled into the story entirely. Yes, there were descriptions of picturesque sunsets, but they only further enhanced my reading experience and were not disruptive. The hallmark of a great writer.

I feel the same way as another reviewer: I was sad when the book was coming to an end. When I saw that this was the first in a series I was relieved as I wanted to read more and discover what happens to the family. Also, I wouldn't mind getting to know Margeurite better so I can better understand where she's coming from.

Oh, I should mention: the book contained several small errors, either punctuation or missing words, or the use of the wrong form of a word. I really thought about that before rating the book. I wondered if I should give it four stars instead of five for those errors. I saw that five stars meant "I love it" whereas four stars meant "I like it." The small errors in the book were not enough to affect my enjoyment of the story so I decided I should give my rating based on my overall impression rather than being a fuss-budget over technicalities.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to read and review this book. I am looking forward to the next book in the series.

Lucinda says

Fascinating and insightful, this enriching read is astonishingly affecting and beautifully written as to enchant!

As a Christian and avid reader I was delighted to find a most surprising book, which is illuminating on religious practices and ideals as well as being spiritually uplifting. By exploring other viewpoints and perspectives on faith, including Mormonism, it ultimately broadens your mind on how others live by their beliefs. Amid the religious connotations is a well-written story which is full of warmth and optimism and which is entirely satisfying and fulfilling. As a debut novel (the first in a series) I was so impressed by the author's way of expressing thoughts on paper with such effortless ease and dexterity. Highly readable and intensely engaging this character-driven tale was one that I had difficulty in putting down, for I completely lost myself within a profoundly meaningful and exquisitely evocative story.

The Mountain Christians: for the strength of the hills, follows the character James who has a challenging lifestyle in Waldensian. Embarking on a life-changing journey of self-discovery with his family, this powerful tale is one of enlightenment and change. Full of intricate detail, realism and thought-provoking narrative this is a book of cultural awareness and exploration (in all of its forms) for those readers of all religions. Younger readers will also be able to connect on a personal level with this story, for it is a coming of age book which observes a young lad as he not only grows in age but in wisdom too. One's religious beliefs are very personal and sensitive, and so as I read about James exploring his options (past religions and new ones) I felt a sense of nostalgia as I reflected on the time when I also was at a similar stage in my life.

This indisputably exceptional, quite remarkable debut novel is something that will touch you deeply. It is clear how much time, effort and thought Hiram J Bertoch has put into this literary masterpiece as it just oozes originality and a fresh perspective, which I find most exciting to behold! For those seeking spiritual revelation and assured prose containing much substance and vision, then I greatly urge you to discover the delights that lie waiting for you in this brilliant book.

"Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe"
- St. Augustine

I won a paperback review copy of "The Mountain Christians: for the strength of the hills by Hiram J Bertoch" through a Goodreads, first-read giveaway

Jennifer Brown says

This was a delightful, easy read with lots of interesting historical details I have loved learning about. I was led to it by a commercial on the radio I had been hearing for months. From the first hearing of the commercial I wondered if this was about the people my family came from in Piedmont, Italy. I have truly enjoyed it and look forward to the next book in the series.

Toni says

I received this book as a first reader.

This was a really quick read. I found it interesting to see how a sheltered community responded to the proselyting of mormon missionaries. I didn't think that the first chapter was necessary and perhaps could have been made a footnote of sorts to increase the ease of flow in the beginning.

It is a perfect title for the subject matter and leaves the reader waiting for a second installment to see how the

family will fare.

Alesha says

I learned about a part of history I never knew existed. It was very interesting to read about the traditions of the Waldensians in the 1800s. I'd never heard about them before now. This was a touching story about a family's love for one another and their struggle with a new religion. Very heart warming!

Sawyer Barker says

For The Strength Of The Hills
by Hiram Bertoch

As a teen I was amazed by the attention to detail and incredible storyline that made it hard to put the book down. I loved learning so much about the other cultures and religions and how much respect the author expressed towards each and the wide spectrum of different viewpoints and perspectives that were used to describe all events. It is obvious that the author did incredible research into every subject that makes up this incredible story.

Overall an amazing book, I would definitely recommend this book to anyone. I learned a lot and cannot wait for the sequels.

Anna says

This book follows a ten year old boy, as he and his family are introduced to the gospel. I have read several LDS historical novels. Most of which focus around Nauvoo, or the pioneer trail.

This particular novel has a completely different setting from any of these types of books that I have read before. It takes place in a community in the Italian Alps, among a people who are called the waldensians.

I was impressed by the testimony of the missionaries who left their families to travel around the world. It was interesting to read how they left wives and children behind, at the call of the Prophet. I was also impressed by the testimony and faith of the people that they taught.

This is a great book for anyone who enjoys uplifting stories. Well written, well researched, and unique.
