

Interview with Terri Blackstock
River's Edge (ISBN 0310235944)

Zondervan: *River's Edge* centers on the murder of a woman who's been struggling with infertility for years, and when a psychic leads police to her body, you get into the subject of psychic phenomena and what the Bible says about it. What were some of the sources of research you consulted on these subjects as you wrote the book?

Blackstock: My only source for the subject of psychics was the Bible. I felt that too many Christians consult psychics, and I wanted them to understand that the Bible is very clear in saying that God's children are never to dabble in that. I know how seductive it can be, because years ago, when I was going through a painful divorce, and I was steeped in grief and confused about what to do, I had a telephone consultation with a psychic. This person claimed she got her power from God--of course, she never mentioned Jesus---and she proceeded to tell me things that were no-brainers, things that anyone could have guessed if they had known my circumstances. But I allowed myself to get drawn into her predictions, and I actually made life-altering decisions based on that consultation. Those decisions turned out not to be right for me or my children. Had I known the Bible better, I would have realized how wrong I was to consult a psychic rather than God. I would have fled from the very thought of consulting a psychic.

Zondervan: *River's Edge* is book four in the Cape Refuge series. Tell us how your own work in prison ministry gave you the idea for this series?

Blackstock: From the very beginning, I wanted to write a series that centered around Hanover House, a halfway house that takes in life's refugees---people just out of prison, many of whom have addictions, people without hope who can't make it without help. I modeled Hanover House after the Buried Treasures Home in my area. I work with Buried Treasures ministry, doing weekly Bible studies at the local county jail, and the directors of that ministry have a home much like the house in the book. They take in women with addiction problems, most just out of prison, and allow them to live with them for a year or more while they get established in God's word. I thought this would provide a lot of interesting, colorful, and complex characters for the series, and would give me an opportunity to show Christ's redemption and His grace in changing lives.

Zondervan: You have quite a history writing in the secular market. What are the differences between writing secular novels compared to Christian novels?

Blackstock: I think Christian books have eternal value. My secular novels were on the shelves for a few weeks, and then disappeared. People read them and were entertained, but I'm sure after some time, they couldn't even remember what they were about. With my Christian books, I have the potential to teach Christian principles that can truly change lives, win souls, and even challenge Christians to bear more fruit for God's kingdom. Now, someone may read my books and forget the plots, but the changes the books make in their lives will linger into eternity.