



The Messengers: Discovered

Lisa M. Clark

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Everything about fifteen-year-old Simon's life is decided by his government: his curfew, his meals, even his fun. When Simon begins to notice nighttime visitors and hidden messages, he realizes that his nation is even dictating what he's allowed to know.

There's a truth out there to be discovered, a truth the government will stop at nothing to eliminate. Join the Messengers as they risk their lives to protect it.

<https://www.cph.org/messengers>

The Messengers: Discovered Details

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From Reader Review The Messengers: Discovered for online ebook

Sarah Baughman says

Fascinating look at the question “what if possessing or talking about God’s Word was outlawed?” Simon Clay is a sympathetic character whom Clark leads on a journey to discover what his country has been trying to hide.

Julianna Shults says

The Messengers: Discovered places us in a dystopian thriller where technology, creativity, and faith have been publicly eliminated. In a world where everything is standardized and curiosity is smothered, what would be worth the price of defying authority? Lisa Clark's compelling novel does a fantastic job of re-revealing to both young adult and adult readers the truth and value of God's Word. Clark builds anticipation and keeps us right alongside Simon on his compelling journey. Seeing faith through Simon's eyes allows us to see our faith anew as well. Clark's descriptions are vivid and the world she creates is one I look forward to exploring again.

Catherine says

I was given a copy of this book by the author in exchange for an honest review.

I'll be honest. I really loved this book. I've been burnt out on dystopian fiction for awhile now, but I very much liked the Christian themes in this book and it brought a new angle. A lot of dystopian fiction sort of ignores religion (for instance, the Hunger Games has literally no mention of any type of religion whatsoever) so it was interesting reading this book about a country where religion was eradicated. I also liked that New Morgan was portrayed as stagnating. Technological advances have regressed, students are indoctrinated in classes, and one always has to be careful about what questions they ask or even what they read.

I liked Simon as a main character. He was curious about his world, even if he didn't know what to look for until he discovers the Messengers. At first he's just got a random teenage rebellious attitude, and doesn't even know why. It's kind of reminiscent of my own teenage rebellious attitude. And he doesn't stay that way, he grows as a character and starts searching for more concrete answers. He becomes a part of something so much larger than himself, and his interest in Christianity and his desire to learn and believe make him a better person.

I will say this book has heavy Christian themes, with Bible verses and religious talk. I know some people don't enjoy reading about that, but it's not really the schmaltzy, "everything is will be ok if you just believe in Jesus!" brand of Christianity you often find in fiction. There's no holding back that these characters put their very lives on the line just for possessing pieces of paper with Bible Verses on them. It's reminiscent of the very early days of Christianity. I really enjoyed it, as it made me think about how easy we have it nowadays in this country.

I did find that the end of the climax went a bit quickly, with some unanswered questions that I'm not sure if

they'll be answered in the next book or if they were just overlooked. Regardless, I'm looking forward to the next installment to find out what happens with Simon, Charity, and the rest of the Messengers.

Colleen Oakes says

In a trend that will surely be replicated many times but never perfected in the same way, Lisa Clark has combined heady Christian theology and a dystopian YA thriller for middle-grade readers. Simon is the son of a secretive - but loving - father who discovers that the Darkness (the nameless fear that his community of rules and order pins everything on) is actually the message of the gospel. Doled out in small but potent doses, the Message is sweet like honey to all who hear it in this debut thriller that is appropriate for children probably as young as ten. Lisa Clark's writing is tightly effective, but the heart with which she deals with the theology is light and jubilant. Young readers will love the rebellion against the authorities, while parents will delight in handing their children a book that not only encourages sharing their faith - even in the worst circumstances - but also embraces the importance of family, love and friendship. The first of a series, I have no doubt that Clark's writing will quickly take this book to the top of the growing YA Inspirational genre.

Stephanie says

I very much enjoyed YA Christian novels when I was younger and now I love dystopian novels so when I heard about *The Messengers: Discovered* which combines both, I jumped at the chance to read an advanced reader copy!! This book had me sucked in from the start and I just couldn't stop reading. The first several chapters were centered around getting to know Simon and the world he lived in and felt rather lonely. I was beginning to wonder if/when we'd meet any other characters and thankfully we did! The book had a couple twists and turns I was not expecting which was great as I felt like I was always wondering what would come next. The epilogue left it open for another book(s) which I am very excited for. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Thank you so much to Lisa M. Clark for providing an advanced reader copy in exchange for my honest review!

Holli Rolfes says

An awesome dystopian fiction title!

Heidi Goehmann says

It is refreshing to find a dystopian novel that not only deals with the struggles of darkness and growth and personal versus cultural identity, well, but also leaves you with hope instead of the weight of burden. Simon's journey to understand himself, his family, his culture and what all of that means for his life is mirrored so easily in every one of us, that the reader will immediately engage with his story. I really loved the unexpected supporting characters, both good and evil, and found myself wanting to either sit down to dinner

with them or yell, "Run, run away, Simon!" I definitely think this book will speak to adolescent, teen, and adult readers universally, but serves in particular a much needed void in the teen YA Christian Fiction market.

Laura says

I really enjoyed this dystopian novel about a boy and his father who live in a post United States era where Bibles have been eradicated and people are trying to piece it back together using hidden and tucked away sources. Simon goes through an horrific experience which leaves him questioning his faith, and perhaps not remembering it. The book tells the story about how he discovers the truth about his family and about his faith.

The book is well written. It includes lots of references to Lutheran liturgy which was really nice. I thought the characters could have been a little deeper, but since it is the first book in a trilogy, I'm looking forward to learning more about the characters in later books.

Elisabeth says

Clark's outstanding first novel is both entertaining and convicting at the same time. She masterfully tells her story, adding countless rich details that enhance the narrative. It is at the same time connected to past and present. Readers will understand it as a modern day re-telling of the early Christian church, while also pondering if this is the coming reality for Christians. Clark's name choices for her characters is my favorite detail out of the whole book- meanings and references to Biblical figures adds immeasurable depth to the plot.

Suitable for YA and adults alike, *The Messengers: Discovered* opens doors to profound conversations about living out our faith and why it matters "even when steeples are falling." Seamlessly weaving theology and the historic liturgy together with suspense and intrigue, *Discovered* is a welcome addition to Christian fiction and the Lutheran church. Clark's gift of writing leaves readers completely satisfied while hungering for more of Simon Clay and the Messengers-- and ultimately, the Word.

Heather says

YA dystopia is a thriving genre in today's world, and I am glad that a Christian author jumped on the bandwagon to show another side of what bleak industrialism and oppressive government control could be. One of the things that so greatly bothered me about *The Hunger Games* and their ilk was the sheer and utter hopelessness they presented as the ultimate meaning of life. Christianity is never better than when it shines hope into a despairing world, and dystopia provides the perfect setting to present this.

The way Clark weaves Scripture, liturgy, creed, and prayer into her story awakens the complacent Christian reader to the power, depth, and truth of these ancient words. We might have to suspend disbelief a bit to accept how quickly characters internalize these long-forgotten words and how consistently they turn to them and experience ineffable peace, yet the danger and oppression around them help us to do so.

Another strong point of the book was its subtle echoes of Christian persecution under the Roman Empire. I

appreciated the arena and catacomb-like settings that were not overtly pointed out but rather quietly set as backdrops.

The book is most definitely aimed at the YA audience, and preteen readers will probably be enthralled with the story. Unfortunately, as an adult reader I have grown rather weary of the current YA conventions, and this resulted in many points of irritation for me.

First, sentence fragments. Like that. All over the place. I am no more irritated with the problem here than I was in *The Hunger Games*, but oh, the pain. Likewise, the casual tone of the dialogue often feels awkward and stilted to me.

Secondly, I hate the convention of the awkward young love attraction. Like the no-big-deal dialogue style, this seems an assumed necessity for YA fiction, but it consistently detracts from plot for me. What we find in *The Messengers: Discovered* is nowhere near as cringe-inducing as that in, say, *Divergent*, but it is still present.

Thirdly, I wish I could have been more convinced by the world that Clark created. Warnings about "the government" left me perpetually scratching my head as to what kind of actual government had taken control. Really, it seemed most of the time that the government did not involve actual people, but neither did it seem a mechanized "Big Brother" kind of arrangement. Also, I may have been a poor reader and missed something, but I was never quite clear why some Christians lived in the regular, above-ground world and others in the underground City. Perhaps, though, we are meant to feel a certain vagueness about the world of New Morgan that will be further clarified and expanded in future installments.

All-in-all, I could certainly recommend *The Messengers: Discovered* to its target audience of young Christian readers. There is a time in life to devour books with a less-discerning palate than one may develop later on, and this book contains enough of real, solid truth that it would be a delight to see young readers devouring it and the others in the series. For, in the end, perhaps the thing I liked best of all was the reminder that Christians are always hated by the world and that their faith only grows in times of persecution. This may be a timely lesson for today's young Christians.

Anna Mussmann says

The world needs more well-crafted stories written from a Christian perspective, so it is exciting to see CPH venture into the world of dystopian middle grade fiction.

Lisa M. Clark's *The Messengers: Discovered* follows Simon, a teenager growing up in a futuristic, repressive society where Bibles and other unauthorized reading material have long been banned. Restless and discontent, Simon flirts with danger by engaging in petty misdeeds. Then, one day, he realizes that his quiet father is deeply involved with something that does not officially exist: the Christian church.

Like the church of ancient times, believers have gone underground. Their messengers risk capture as they attempt to find, reassemble, and share the Scriptures from scraps and pages that have survived the government's purge. As Simon enters the messengers' world, he also learns the story of his mother's death and realizes that he, too, has a role to play in a society that is filled with darkness.

I love the ideas around which this novel is built. The concept feels fresh enough to be intriguing but also

echoes the real-world challenges faced by many Christians in actual times and places. The very best scenes were those in which Simon hears Scripture or the liturgy of the church. Genuinely moving and beautifully resonant, these passages demonstrate the power of God's Word. How many middle grade or young adult novels are likely to bring a reader to tears with the words of the Creed?

The writing is occasionally uneven. I would have liked a little more showing vs. telling. There were also a number of scenes that seemed to hint loudly at future complications that never happened--as, for instance, when our hero leaves dangerous evidence lying around but nobody ever finds it. In addition, I have to admit that I felt as though every time a new Christian character was introduced, they invariably smiled warmly, twinkled mischievously, or chuckled heartily, just so we would know they were nice. After a while, this became irritating; but perhaps that is because I'm an adult reader instead of the target audience.

Flaws aside, I was genuinely moved by this story, and I applaud Ms. Clark for tackling the challenge of writing it. I look forward to handing this book to the young readers I know and to hearing their response to Simon's story. May there be more like it!

Heidi says

A very promising opening salvo. Very much looking forward to seeing how the series plays out. There were some parts where the writing could have been tightened up, but I only noticed because the book was otherwise very well done.

Had a hard time putting it down, and then when I finally did, I had a hard time falling asleep. It is an exciting story! I would have no hesitation giving it as a gift.

Tyrel says

Clark tells an exciting and believable story centered on the Word of God. The setting, though a dystopian future, isn't hard to imagine. In light of the rise of ungodliness in America, it's easy to see the world Simon Clay lives in as one we may well inhabit in the not-too-distant future.

Discovers delivers God's life-forming truth, demonstrating its transformative power and the significance it has on those who believe. In fact, it does it with such precision and skill that it begs the question: why doesn't Concordia Publishing House publish fiction regularly?! With each turn of the page, readers, especially young readers (Clark's primary audience) are built up in the understanding that there is no darkness that can overcome the light of Christ. A much needed message for all believers today!

The way the author presents the strength of the family is awesome. Family is a central part of this novel, just as it is the center of society. Along those lines kudos to Clark for recasting dad back into his proper Biblical office, defying how the world would have us define him. His mother, too, in a brilliant and unique way, is a spot on depiction of a godly mother. The role of family goes deeper and farther than mom and dad in the life of their child, but I'll leave you to discover just how deep and far for yourself.

It's a fun and edifying read. Want to give your child a novel that will encourage him in the faith? Give him

Katie Schuermann says

In her first novel, Lisa Clark has achieved that which many authors strive for their entire careers: a distinct story-telling voice all her own. Bravo! She has masterfully constructed a story that shows how Christ and His Church are preserved, not through man's own machinations, but through His blessed Word.

Mary Moerbe says

I'm an adult who reads a lot of dystopian novels, but I'm generally hesitant about when to introduce that genre to my children. This book is an excellent opportunity, not only to introduce a genre of literature/reading but also to introduce to them the train of thought that sometimes what people think will be a utopia is really the exact opposite.

The Messengers: Discovered is a pleasant, quick, easy, enjoyable read. It's "negative elements" mostly consist in either a boy's aversion to robot violence or the tension of an oppressive regime. There's no sex. There's no graphic violence, although violence and torture are mentioned in past tense after the tyranny vs. Christian reality is revealed.

I wouldn't particularly classify this as YA. I think older audiences might think it starts a bit slow, but I can tell that it's building up to additional books, which I can now look forward to reading and sharing with my whole family. I wouldn't say this isn't for young adults, either. Maybe I wish children's literature were held more highly: this could accompany any number of fine books written for older children but with special meaning for adults.

I do wonder why the setting is vaguely "around our time." While I suspect that's supposed to make it feel relevant, it interrupted me as I was attempting to suspend my disbelief. I mean, if it were a society similar to ours but twisted, that would be one thing. Still, that's a pretty minor editing call to me.

I recommend it! Unless you haven't read children's literature for a while. ? Meanwhile, I'm grateful for it.

Thanks, CPH! One of your best novels—and series—yet! The theology builds in good directions. The Bible passages and references are interwoven neatly, and it's refreshing to see Christian fiction tackle, well, Christianity and some of its struggles head on. It doesn't replace the Bible or catechesis or anything, but I'm glad I paid money for it. I'm thankful to God to have it in my family library.

Good job, Lisa! Keep up the great work! I look forward to reading more from you!
