

<<< [Back](#) | [Print](#)

Who's on First

by Daisy Maryles -- *Publishers Weekly*, 2/18/2002

We seem to get at least three calls per week wanting to know which books will top *PW's* annual bestseller list. While our extended feature analyzing last year's bestsellers will appear in *PW's* March 18 Facts and Figures coverage (along with articles on the bestselling paperbacks and children's titles of 2001), here's the answer to the BIG question. For the first time since 1994, John Grisham will not command the top fiction spot on the annual chart. Outselling him last year was book #9 in the Left Behind apocalypse series, *Desecration* by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins; Tyndale reports sales of more than 2.9 million. Grisham's numbers for *Skipping Christmas* are closer to two million; for *A Painted House*, more than 1.7 million. In past years, these sales levels assured Grisham the top spot. A Christian book will also take the top spot on the 2001 nonfiction chart. Multnomah's *The Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson sold more than eight million copies last year. A second Wilkinson 2001 title, *Secrets of the Vine*, sold three million copies. This is the first time that two Christian titles have headed our annual charts. (*PW* began compiling these end-of-the-year lists back in 1895, beginning with fiction bestsellers *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* by Ian Maclaren was the #1 novel. The first annual nonfiction list was published in 1912, when *The Promised Land* by Mary Antin took the lead spot.)

With reporting by Dick Donahue

<<< [Back](#) | [Print](#)

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