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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reclaiming A Heritage:

'I Am Hutterite' explores the hidden world of Hutterites and unveils an extraordinary story from a culture that has been dubbed 'the best kept secret in North America'

NASHVILLE, May 6, 2010 – With a raw openness, Mary-Ann Kirkby takes us on a journey of self discovery in her spirited book, "I Am Hutterite: The Fascinating True Story of a Young Woman's Journey to Reclaim Her Heritage" (May 2010, ISBN: 978-0-8499-4810-7, \$19.99 jacketed hardcover, Thomas Nelson Publishers) which releases this week in retailers nationwide.

"Until we fully embrace our heritage and really value the power it is meant to bring to our lives, we cannot realize our full potential." Kirkby writes.

The Hutterite people practice a communal way of life that is modeled after the biblical teachings of Christ and the Apostles. There are approximately 45,000 Hutterites on 460 colonies in North America. Because of their adherence to the biblical admonition "be ye in the world, but not of the world," few outsiders have ever been privy to the details of the Hutterite way of life... until now.

"I Am Hutterite" has captivated readers in Kirkby's homeland, opening a window on a way of life that most of us know nothing about. She reveals her secret past on a Hutterite colony in Canada where she had what she considers an unusual but privileged childhood. "I learned very quickly that my culture had no value in mainstream society," writes Kirkby. "Our clothing was ridiculed and our lifestyle treated with suspicion. No one understood that beneath the black hats and polka dots lay a beautiful language, a wonderful work ethic and the best cottage cheese pie in the world."

From the first page of "I Am Hutterite," Kirkby masterfully provides readers with poignant insights into the daily life of a much misunderstood culture sweeping them away in the beauty and richness of the Hutterite culture before plunging them into the despair of leaving.

"We didn't know how to swim or skate or ride a bicycle. We had never tasted pizza, macaroni and cheese, or a banana split – rites of passage in mainstream society," Kirkby writes. "Our knowledge of the English language was adequate, but we much preferred to speak our own language – adopted from the province of Carinthia, in Austria, where many of our forefathers originated – and which is spoken by all Hutterites in North America."

Kirkby embarks on a mission to reinvent herself and blends her gifted storytelling history into a career as an award-winning television reporter. She received notable acclaim in the first edition of "I Am Hutterite," published for the Canadian audience in 2007, with outstanding reviews and the Best Non-fiction award at the Saskatchewan Book Awards (SASK). Now, she has partnered with Thomas Nelson Publishers to bring her captivating story to the United States.

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[Publisher's Weekly](#) recent review of this memoir states, "Kirkby captures the complex cadences of Hutterite life—the bawdy humor and knack for storytelling that stands beside austere ritual, the poverty of personal possession and freedom that exists beside the security of community life—with pitch-perfect writing. She also manages to avoid either vilifying or romanticizing a culture that has been subjected to both. Readers will find themselves hoping that Kirkby follows the popular trend in memoir writing: producing a sequel."

"I Am Hutterite" will release on May 7, 2010 in retailers nationwide. For more information about Kirkby and her autobiographical book, visit www.iamhutterite.com.

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Note to Editors: For more information about "I Am Hutterite," please visit www.iamhutterite.com. To arrange an interview with Mary-Ann Kirkby, please contact Julie Shutley at 972.267.1111 or via e-mail at jshutley@alarryross.com.