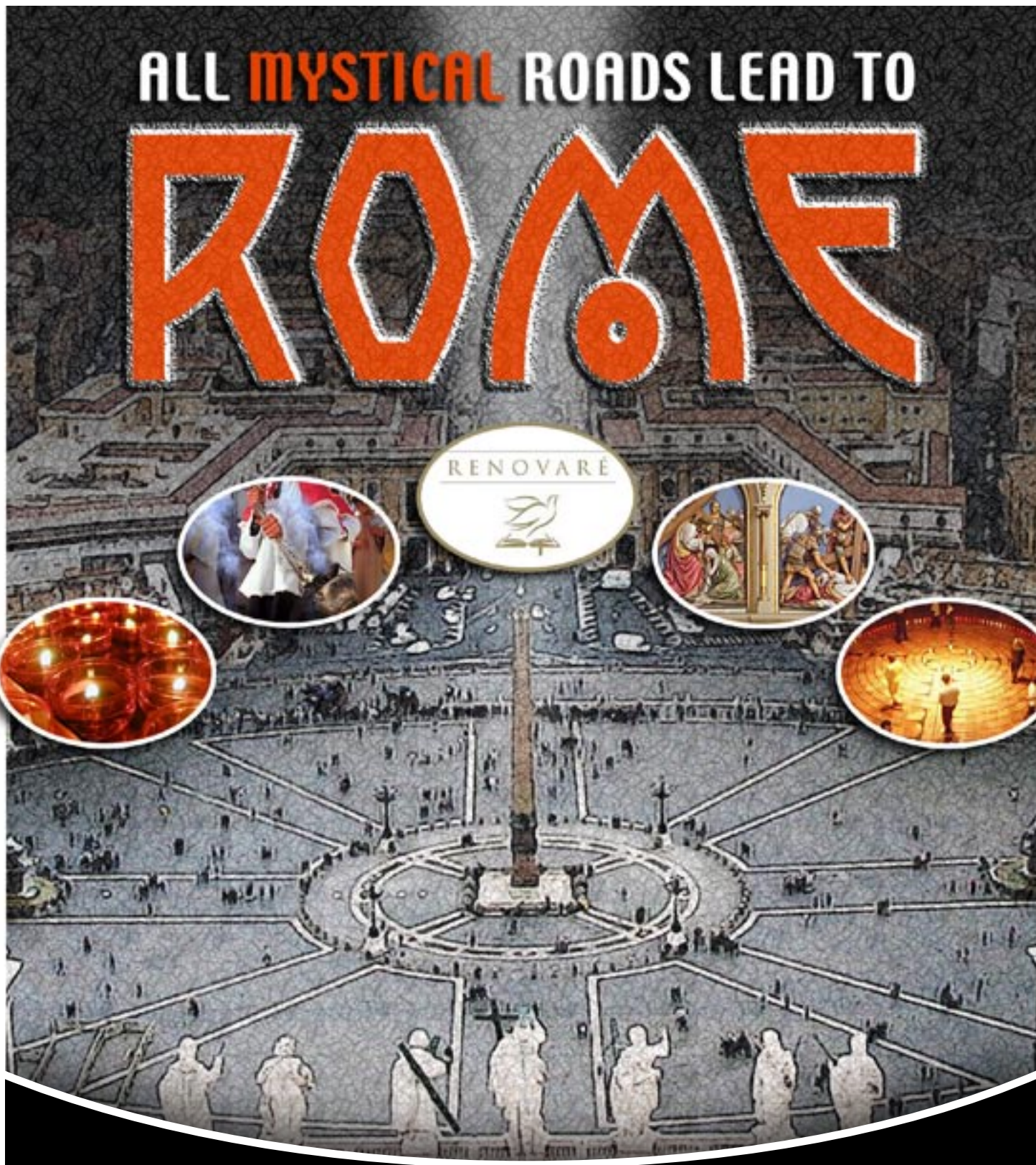


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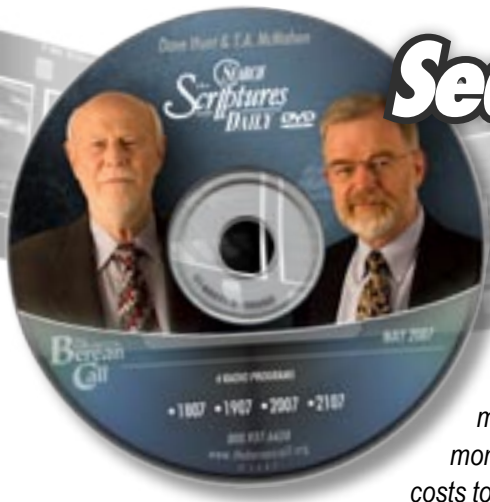


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EVANGELICAL MYSTICISM??

by T.A. McMAHON



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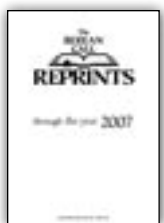
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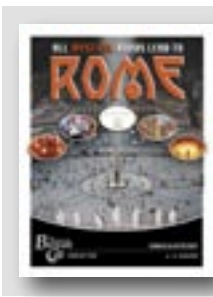
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Just as Rome once served as a geopolitical hub from which roads radiated like the spokes of a wheel, the ancient Babylonish city now draws mystics from all "faith traditions." Candles, incense, Stations of the Cross, and prayer labyrinths are all mystical means by which the Pied Pipers of Pop Christianity are leading the Lord's sheep astray to the "center" of ancient enlightenment. The pagan sunwheel (solar cross) and Egyptian obelisk in St. Peter's Square clearly point to the worship of a solar deity (fallen Star), as represented by these and other occult symbols adopted and assimilated by Roman Catholicism.

THE BEREAN CALL

"[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so."—Acts 17:11

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FEBRUARY 2008

Evangelical Mysticism?

T. A. McMahon

I find myself increasingly grieved these days by what I see taking place among those who profess to be evangelicals. I know the term "evangelical" has undergone radical changes regarding its meaning and practice. Yet when I use the term, I'm going by a very simple definition: I'm referring to those who claim to accept the Bible alone as their authority for knowing and receiving God's way of salvation and for living their lives in a way that is pleasing to Him.

Thirty years ago, it was young adult evangelicals who were used wonderfully by the Lord to help open my eyes to the fact that I was eternally separated from God and that the religious system I was depending on to get me to heaven was a false hope. That wasn't easy for me to accept at the time. Although my commitment to the Roman Catholic Church had weakened during my late twenties, the attitude "I was born a Catholic, I'll die a Catholic" was woven into the fabric of my mind.

As I think back on those days, I recognize that I was a young man in bondage. Certainly, I was in bondage to sin, as is everyone who is not born again. But there was another bondage that also gripped me: the bondage of Roman Catholic tradition, with its sacraments, liturgies, rituals, and sacramentals. Not only were such things unbiblical—they were works of the flesh and devices of demons. In my own life, as well as throughout the history of the Church of Rome, they were soul-gripping superstitions advanced under the guise of spirituality.

I trusted in relics of dead so-called Saints; holy water; making the sign of the cross; votive candles; baptism for salvation (infant or otherwise); a "transubstantiated" piece of bread alleged to be Christ; apparitions of Mary; a scapular; a "miraculous medal"; statues and images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints; endless Rosaries, Novenas, the Stations of the Cross; abstaining from meat on Friday; Lenten abstinences; the Last Rites to get me into Purgatory and indulgences to get me out of Purgatory; Mass cards; graces dispensed from Mary; the confessional, with absolution of my sins by a priest; penance and personal suffering to purify me of my sin; worshiping a piece of bread at the Eucharistic Holy Hour; the Holy Father as the Vicar of Christ on earth, etc., etc. Therein lies a bondage

that few evangelicals understand.

Many brush these things aside as non-essentials of the Christian faith or minor theological aberrations unique to Catholicism. Not true. They are essential to the gospel that Rome declares—a gospel of meritorious works that the Bible condemns (see Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, et al.) as a rejection of the completed substitutionary atonement of Christ our Savior. Catholicism's Tradition, which is declared to be equal in authority to Scripture, is made up of those things (such as cited above) that are necessary for, or supportive of, a Catholic's entrance into heaven.

According to the Word of God, anything that is added to Christ's finished work on the cross is a denial of the gospel: that Christ paid the *full penalty* for the sins of humanity.

The Roman Catholic Church, which claims infallibility in its Councils and theological teachings, clearly and emphatically denies the biblical gospel. The Council of Trent declares:

6th Session, Canon 9: If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification...let him be anathema.

6th Session, Canon 12: If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone by which we are justified: let him be anathema.

6th Session, Canon 30: If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema.

7th Session, Canon 4: If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law [canons and decrees of the Church] are not necessary for salvation but...without them...men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification...let him be anathema.

"Anathema," in these decrees (which are still in force), damns to hell anyone who rejects the Roman Catholic Church's false gospel of works.

Starting with the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, where only superficial changes were made (because infallible dogmas cannot be changed!), Rome launched an ecumenical program aimed at seducing Protestants worldwide and, specifically, evangelicals in the United States. The goal was and is to bring all of Christendom under the rule of the Roman Catholic Church with the pope as its spiritual head. Predictable progress has been made in Europe and the U.S. among liberal denominations that have long abandoned the Scriptures. Astonishing, however, is the success the scheme has had among American evangelicals.

Billy Graham was the first and most notable evangelical to support Catholicism's ecumenical efforts. Others followed, including Bill Bright, Pat Robertson, J. I. Packer, Timothy George, Robert Schuller, Hank Hanegraaff, Benny Hinn, and Jack Van Impe. Evangelicals and Catholics Together, under the leadership of Chuck Colson and Catholic priest Richard John Neuhaus, declared Catholics and evangelicals to be "brothers and sisters in Christ" and exhorted them to work together in spreading the gospel. Obviously, and conveniently, that gospel was never defined.

Although the acceptance of things Roman Catholic among evangelicals grew steadily over the years after Vatican II, it increased exponentially with the popularity of ultra-conservative Catholic Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. His dramatization of one of Catholicism's most sacred rituals, The Stations of the Cross, so captured the hearts of evangelicals that their eagerness to purchase mass quantities of tickets accounted for the movie's great financial success. Following that achievement, *Inside the Vatican* made this insightful observation: "For evangelicals, the film has given them a glimpse inside the Catholic soul, even the traditional Catholic soul. Many evangelicals, reflecting on what they saw in the movie, say they are beginning to 'get' the whole Catholic thing: Lent...the ashes on the forehead...no meat on Friday...the sorrowful mysteries...the Stations of the Cross...the emphasis on the Eucharist...the devotion to Mary...the enormous crucifix hanging above every Catholic altar. They may not be rushing out to buy rosaries, necessarily, but some of the things no longer seem so strange, so alien."¹

What evangelicals also "got," which their leaders enthusiastically endorsed as "biblically accurate," were numerous

scenes based upon the imagination of an 18th-century Catholic mystic, the portrayal of Mary as co-redemptrix in the salvation of mankind, and a very Catholic gospel that has Christ atoning for sin by suffering the unrelenting physical tortures of the Roman soldiers.²

The Passion of the Christ had a stunning effect on evangelical youth and youth pastors. Not only did “[Catholic] things no longer seem so strange, so alien,” but they were showing up in the youth ministries of evangelical churches. The Stations of the Cross ritual became popular, although it needed to be downsized from 14 stations to 11, eliminating some stations that were too foreign to Scripture (such as Saint Veronica capturing the image of Christ’s bloodied face on her veil). Prayer altars were erected, featuring icons illuminated by candles and fragrances by burning incense, and prayer labyrinths were painted on large tarps placed in church basements or cut into church lawns. For young evangelicals too often raised on empty, repetitive worship choruses little different from secular music, and religious instruction leaning heavily upon entertainment to keep them interested, the Catholic and Orthodox liturgies seemed far more spiritual.

This all became “spiritual” fodder for the Emerging Church Movement (ECM), much of it a reaction against the consumer-oriented marketing approach to church growth popularized by Robert Schuller, Bill Hybels, and Rick Warren. Many ECM leaders, most of whom have evangelical backgrounds, saw Catholic ritual and mysticism as a necessary spiritual ingredient that was lost for evangelicals at the Reformation. *Sola Scriptura* was a major rallying cry of the Reformers against the abuses stemming from Roman Catholic tradition; the Bible as one’s only authority practically shut down the influence of the Catholic mystics known as the Desert Fathers.

Yet Catholic mysticism has returned with a vengeance. Its occult techniques can be found nearly everywhere, from Youth Specialities to Richard Foster’s Renovaré organization to Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life*. “Many Christian leaders started searching for a new approach under the banner of ‘spiritual formation.’ This new search has led many of them back to Catholic contemplative practices and medieval monastic disciplines,” Brian McLaren writes approvingly.

Tony Jones, co-editor of *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope* has written a manifesto of mysticism for emerging churches titled *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life*. Jones’s acknowledgement of those who supported his effort reads as

a *Who’s Who* of emergent leaders, not to mention the Catholic priests he thanks and the ancient Orthodox and Catholic mystics he quotes. What then is this mysticism they are promoting?

Catholic mysticism is thoroughly subjective and experiential. Like its parent, Eastern mysticism, it claims that God can neither be known nor understood through human reason but only *experienced* subjectively through various techniques. It is the antithesis of what the Bible teaches: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 1:18); “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7); “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him” (2 Peter 1:3). Furthermore, the goal of mysticism is union with God, i.e., the merging of one’s soul into God. This is an impossibility that reveals mysticism’s pantheistic and *panentheistic* roots, that God is everything and is in everything. No. God is infinite and transcendent, absolutely separate from His finite creation.

The Sacred Way endorses numerous mystical techniques that are gaining acceptance among evangelicals today. An awareness and understanding of them is therefore critical for discernment. *Centering Prayer* utilizes a single word (e.g., “love” or “God”) upon which one focuses to clear the mind of all other thoughts. The belief is that the so-called pray-er will hear directly from God in his silence before Him. Tony Campolo declares, “In my case intimacy with Christ has developed gradually over the years, primarily through what Catholic mystics call ‘centering prayer.’ Each morning, as soon as I wake up, I take time—sometimes as much as a half hour—to center myself on Jesus. I say his name over and over again to drive back the 101 things that begin to clutter up my mind the minute I open my eyes. Jesus is my mantra, as some would say.”³

The Jesus Prayer has the pray-er repeat a sentence such as “Lord Jesus, have mercy on me” continuously, hundreds—even thousands—of times. The repetition supposedly fixates one’s mind upon Jesus. Yet it blatantly rejects His command not to use vain repetition in prayer as the heathen do (Matthew 6:7). Moreover, its constant repetitions turn prayer as a form of communication with Jesus into an act of nonsense.

Lectio Divina, meaning “sacred reading,” is a technique that is far removed from normal reading and studying of the Bible. Its methodology aims at going beyond the objective meaning of the words and the straightforward instructions to that which transcends normal awareness. Jones writes,

“As you attend to those deeper meanings, begin to meditate on the feelings and emotions conjured up in your inner self.”⁴ He then summarizes this mystical contemplative technique: “True contemplation moves beyond words and intellect and into that ‘thin space’ where time and eternity almost touch. It’s in moments like these that some of the greatest [Catholic] saints in the history of the [Catholic] church have had a ‘mystical union’ with Christ.”⁵ It’s clear from God’s Word that the spirit with which they had a “mystical union” in their contemplative altered state of consciousness was not Jesus.

Ignatian Examen is an occult visualization technique taught by Ignatius Loyola, who founded the Jesuits in the 16th century. His exercise teaches one to visualize oneself in the presence of Jesus and then interact with Him during his earthly events, e.g., “at the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the cross, and laying Jesus’ body in the tomb.”⁶ This has one adding content to Scripture from his imagination and opens a person to demonic manipulation (2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:8).

Prayer Labyrinths are concentric paths created by the Catholic Church in the 13th century to experience in one’s imagination Christ’s *Via Dolorosa*, or “walk of sorrows,” when He carried His cross to Calvary’s hill. Rather than subject themselves to the dangers of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during Holy Week, Roman Catholics in Europe could gain the same indulgences (to shorten their time in Purgatory) by walking labyrinths at certain cathedrals while prayerfully meditating upon Christ’s crucifixion. Likewise, observing the “sacred” ritual of the Stations of the Cross became a substitute for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

As a former Catholic, it’s hard for me to fathom the evangelical church buying into the religious occultism of Roman Catholicism. It makes no sense. Visit any country where that religion is taken seriously. What becomes obvious is a people who are in the bondage of superstition. On the other hand, I shouldn’t be surprised. Apostasy is growing rapidly, the religion of the Antichrist is taking shape, and mysticism, whether it’s the Catholic variety, the Sufism of Islam, yoga and the gurus of Eastern mysticism, the Shamanism of native religions, or otherwise, is a common yet powerful magnet that draws all religions together.

We need to be watchmen on the wall as we see this evil invading the church, warning especially—should our Lord delay His return—our next generation of believers. They are the clear targets of this mystical seduction.

TBC

Quotable

Correction from January 2008 "Quotable": Hugh Latimer, most fruitful evangelist in England at the time, preaching to more than 1,000 sitting on the grass at Whitehall, residence of King Edward VI, the "British Josiah." Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer were among several hundred protestants burned at the stake by Edward's half-sister, "Bloody Mary," awarded the throne in the place of Lady Jane Grey, the previous queen. Mary had Lady Jane Grey beheaded. She then sought to turn England back to Catholicism.

Follow-up Quote:

The last words of Lady Jane Grey, age 16, at her beheading, February 12, 1554, having refused freedom if she embraced Catholicism. From the scaffold she spoke earnestly to the spectators: "Good people, touching the procurement of the crown on my behalf, I do wash my hands thereof before God. I did not desire it...Bear me witness...I do look to be saved by no other means, but by the mercy of God in the blood of His only Son Jesus Christ...and I confess when I did know the word of God, I neglected the same, loved myself and the world, and thereby this...punishment is worthily happened to me, and yet I thank God that in His goodness He hath thus given me time to repent."

Kneeling down, she asked permission and quoted all of Psalm 57. It begins, "Be merciful unto me, O God...for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge...."

Laying her head on the block, she said, "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

The British Josiah, N. A. Woychuk, Gen. Ed., 120-22

Q&A

QUESTION: I believe we are born into sin and with a sin nature but are not sinners from birth. Although David said he was conceived in sin, he did not say he was born a sinner. I can tell a group of adults and teenagers that we are all sinners but not a group of small children.

RESPONSE: That depends upon what you mean by "small children." Put a plate of cookies on a table in front of a group of children, no matter how small, and watch each of them grab what small hands will hold and push others out of the way to get them! But that innate selfishness (which is a major sign of a sin nature) does not send

them to hell when they are still toddlers.

When his baby son born to Bathsheba died, David knew he was with the Lord, not in hell: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sm 12:22,23). Though a baby's sin nature manifests itself almost from birth, the baby lacks the understanding to make it morally responsible and it will not be punished for what it commits in innocence.

QUESTION: I admire what you've done to silence the awful teachings of Calvin. But in your latest Berean Call you again just cite 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 as the gospel as though one verse will suffice. Paul said that those items were "amongst things of first importance." But what has happened to the gospel as defined and preached by Jesus? Why don't you start by defining the gospel as Jesus did in Mark 1:14-15? Luke 4:43 ought to be our mission statement, since it was Jesus'. For Paul, that same "Kingdom of God" gospel is still the heart of everything (Acts 28:23, 31). Hebrews 2:3 makes Jesus the model preacher of the gospel, but evangelicals have forgotten this.

RESPONSE: We've corresponded about this before and we both remain firm in our beliefs. Nevertheless, I'll try once again. I cite 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 because there Paul more clearly and fully spells out the gospel in detail than is done anywhere else in the Bible: "...which I preached unto you...ye received...wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures... was buried...rose again the third day according to the scriptures...was seen...."

In Mark 1:14-15 Christ offers Himself as king to Israel, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God...the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." He certainly does not, however, define or explain the "gospel of the kingdom." Nor does He do so in Luke 4:43.

So we need to define the "gospel of the kingdom," and that is where we differ. Paul says the gospel he preached and declares so clearly in 1 Corinthians 15 is what he "received." From those who were apostles before him? No, but from the Lord himself. The fact that Paul knew what he knew of the gospel, and following Christ by extensive direct contact with the risen Lord, is very clear from Galatians 1:7-9, 11-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

The "gospel of the kingdom" that Jesus and the disciples preached at that time and the miracles that He did to confirm it were specifically for Israel. During His time on earth, Christ said, "I am not sent but unto

the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15:24); "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities [obviously in Israel] also: for therefore am I sent" (Lk 4:43). John chapter 4 indicates that Samaritans were apparently included.

Something changed at the Cross: not the gospel but those to whom it was to be preached. Christ sent His disciples where He had avoided going: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). This is our commission today. With Paul and the other apostles, "we preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:23) to Jew and Gentile.

Christ is the king not only of Israel but also of the universe. We are calling the lost from "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rv 5:9) to enter the kingdom under the lordship of Christ—a kingdom not headquartered in Jerusalem and pertaining only to Israel but headquartered in heaven and preached worldwide. We preach what Paul preached: "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) to everyone who will heed the call.

QUESTION: Does God have a distinct role for Gentile and for Jewish believers during the Millennium?

RESPONSE: Jewish believers who are not part of the church (i.e., did not believe in Christ until they saw Him in the glory of His Second Coming) will inhabit the complete land of Israel (Gn 15:18-21; 17:7,8; 1 Chr 16:15-18, etc.), where Christ will rule over them and the world from the restored throne of David in Jerusalem.

Gentiles who have become believers will live in the rest of the earth as part of what will still be known even in the eternal "new heaven and...new earth" (Rv 21:1) as "the nations of them which are saved" (21:24).

QUESTION: You have criticized Islam's sponsorship of terrorism and have asked the question, "What kind of God gives entrance into paradise and rewards for killing innocent women and children?"

Unbelievers also could say that the God of the Bible commands murder: Deuteronomy 2:34, 13:12-16; Joshua 8:25; 1 Samuel 27:8; Numbers 31. God commanded destruction of entire populations, cultures, and people. How can you condemn Allah and not Yahweh?

RESPONSE: Israel was not commanded to take over the entire world and to kill all who resisted (as Allah commanded Muhammad) but was given a specific land because of the extreme evil and

demonization of its people. Israel was not commanded to “convert” them, much less with the sword, but to kill them all because God deemed that necessary and just.

All but one of the scriptures you cite involve the land of Canaan, which God promised to Israel but delayed giving to them because the people were not evil enough to justify their destruction: “The iniquity of the Amorites [i.e. Canaanites] is not yet full” (Gn 15:16). Deuteronomy 2:34 pertains to the destruction of the Amorites. God did not arbitrarily wipe out the Canaanites. The nations who occupied Canaan followed gods, goddesses, serpent worship, lewd fertility cults with prostitute priestesses, and nature religions. The evil of all of these religions is unmentionable. God held back their judgment for many centuries and only released Israel from slavery specifically to wipe them out when he could no longer delay their just punishment.

Deuteronomy 13:15 orders the execution of those who had led Israelites into the worship of false gods, all of whom represented demons. Israel could not be allowed to be seduced into the very thing for which the Canaanites were being destroyed. Joshua 8:25 tells of the destruction of Ai, a Canaanite city, as commanded. In 1 Samuel 27:8, David is slaughtering more Canaanites, all of whom were to be killed by Israel, thus executing God’s judgment upon them for their wickedness.

The destruction of the Midianites in Numbers 31 is a different case. They were descendants of Abraham by Keturah, whom he married after Sarah’s death. They were not Canaanites, nor were the children of Israel given their land. They had sent their young women to seduce Israel’s young men, whom they enticed into immorality and the worship of their gods. God executed this severe punishment to teach His people the seriousness of turning from Him to demonic deities.

QUESTION: I’ve heard that Awana is drifting toward mysticism in the way they are ministering to children. What do you know about that?

RESPONSE: *Perspectives on Children’s Spiritual Formation* is offered by the Rorheim Institute, Awana’s leader and parent development network. The book presents four different models on “how faith is cultivated in children,” with each author critiquing the three other models. Awana’s participation in this “debate” is through Greg Carlson and John Crupper, executives at the Rorheim Institute. They present the “Instructional-Analytical Model,” which is basically how Awana goes about teaching

children: encouraging them to read, study, and memorize the Scriptures.

Concerns that Awana is “drifting” toward mysticism stem not from what Carlson and Crupper present regarding their organization’s approach; that approach is solid and biblical. However, their critique of the “Contemplative-Reflective Model” is far too conciliatory, especially in a book that showcases Catholic mysticism.

In the explanation of the Contemplative-Reflective Model (C-RM), we’re told, “This school [of thought] is dominated by contemplative prayer. Centering prayers are typical. Their purpose is to occupy and free the mind so that one can dwell with God” (p. 37). Wheaton professor Dr. Scottie May, the author of the C-RM, is commended by the editor for “an excellent book [that she co-authored, teaching the] use of contemplation...and guided imagery in programming children’s ministry” (p. 38). In *Perspectives* she writes, “The model seeks to assist them in finding the quiet place within themselves—a place that all children have—where they can sense the presence of God and hear his voice” (p. 46). May recommends “purposefully altering traditional religious education by introducing connatural knowing [i.e., through feelings and intuition] to young children so that they may encounter [emphasis in original] God rather than initially being taught about him” (p. 59).

Although Carlson and Crupper rightly object to some key points in May’s mystical model, they naïvely give the impression that the Contemplative-Reflective model has something to offer, even quoting favorably Richard Foster, arguably the foremost advocate of Catholic mysticism in the church. Compounding the confusion, they commend “the Contemplative-Reflective Model [as an] important tool in helping provide a balanced development of the Christian spiritual life” (p. 87). Here they are showing their ignorance of the occultism rooted in mysticism.

Since the Rorheim Institute offers the book to prospective Awana leaders and parents, there’s also a grave concern that these leaders and parents will select some of the unbiblical content of the models (including the child-development psychobabble) as helpful to their local programs.

Yet in spite of all of the miscues of Awana’s involvement in *Perspectives on Children’s Spiritual Formation*, based upon our correspondence with the organization, we’re encouraged that the ministry wants no part of mysticism, other than to be better informed so that it can better defend against it. Hopefully, it will stay true to the Scriptures, which it has done admirably on behalf of our children for six decades.

News Alert.....

The Capital Times 11/08/2007: *KID CONTEMPLATIVES [EXCERPTS]*—If gym class helps children tone the body, what helps them exercise the mind? [R]esearchers suggest the ability to be still and contemplate is what can make a positive difference.

In 2008, local middle school students will be among those who participate in a national pilot project that studies the effects of contemplation in the classroom, says Richard Davidson, a University of Wisconsin researcher/neuroscientist (*Time* magazine selected him as one of the world’s 100 Most Influential People of 2006).

“We’re still trying to understand how these practices work” scientifically, in a grade K-12 setting, John Dunne of Atlanta’s Emory University says. “It seems likely that there are things that can be done to regulate emotions effectively.”

Centering prayer, meditation, breath work, chanting, sitting in silence, extended concentration on an object and focusing on positive thoughts and images are examples of contemplative exercises that can be taught. The level of controversy associated with bringing the concept into classrooms in part depends upon the presence of religious overtones.

“In my view, it’s not a religious issue,” says [Catholic priest and practicing mystic Thomas] Keating, because of the many forms that contemplation can take. “Silence is not denominational, and it can be practiced in a methodical way.”

Sitting in silence for 20 minutes, twice a day, “...introduces us to our deeper self,” but the academic world “allows no time or place to pursue this” in an organized manner. That includes seminaries, he says.

Like Buddhist meditation, centering prayer for Christians is an age-old religious practice that has experienced a revival.... Keating says both practices “transcend the rational mind.”

Some of these exercises, although deeply rooted in Eastern and other religions, can be effective and inoffensive in a secular setting, Dunne says. The effort is about using “mental technologies” that have religious origins, not pushing theology.

Endnotes

1. *Inside the Vatican*, March/April 2004, 24.
2. See T. A. McMahon, *Showtime for the Sheep?* (The Berean Call, 2004).
3. Tony Campolo, *Letters to a Young Evangelical* (New York, NY: Perseus Books Group, 2006), 20.
4. Tony Jones, *The Sacred Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 53.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, 92.

Speaking Schedule

Feb 3 (Dave)	The Home Church Lodi CA (209) 339-7333
Feb 22-23 (Dave)	Debate Series Whitby ON (905) 922-2589
May 4 (Dave)	Bayside Community Church Tampa FL (813) 837-6007
Jun 8 (Dave)	Coastline Christian Fellowship Astoria OR (503) 325-1051
Jun 21-28 (Dave)	Word of Life Schroon Lake NY (518) 532-7114
Sep 5-7 (Dave/TA)	Great Lakes Prophecy Conf Appleton WI (920) 735-1242
Sep 17-19 (Dave)	Winnipeg Prophecy Conf Winnipeg MB (204) 853-7786
Oct 11-12 (Dave)	Calvary Chapel Auburn Auburn CA (530) 885-6332

Letters

Dave,

Thanks for your letter. In these days you and your staff are a necessary voice for the gospel. Your *Berean Call* articles are better than going to college. I have several years' worth and I can talk to anyone with the information therein. If the trumpet blows before you get this note, I'll tell you in person. WS (FL)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

I just finished reading your book *A Woman Rides the Beast*. I thought it was extremely well researched and written—the best book I've read on Catholicism. This is coming from an ex-Catholic who is still in some state of shock over these revelations about the Church that I once thought was the only way to God.... We never owned or read the Bible.... I never really understood why Christ died for our sins.... The saddest part... is that there are millions of people who have inherited their "faith" from their parents, grandparents..., etc., who have never questioned what they believe.... JD (email)

Hello,

For about 10 years I have been listening and reading your materials and I could not overestimate what it was and is for me. We in Poland are facing Catholicism more than anybody, but it is not the biggest hardship we have to deal with. A flood of humanism and psychology are coming to the church and evangelicals swallow that incredibly easily. Nobody is warning, nobody is shouting that we are losing the essence of the

Gospel—Christ-centered life of the cross! The recent flow is to eliminate the concept of the rapture as a non-biblical and naïve idea! RR (Poland)

Dear Spiritual Family,

I'm just writing this brief letter to express my gratitude to you for sharing "the Word" through *TBC*. I have been receiving your monthly newsletter and it has been an eye opener to me. Thank you again and again for the free subscription. DM (prisoner, IL)

Dear Dave and Tom,

Thank you so much for your wonderful, God ordained ministry. [It] reminds me so much of the work of John the Baptizer—a lone voice crying in the wilderness.... My husband and I are both converted Catholics (Roman), and are appalled at the lack of discernment within the so-called "fundamental Christian" circles when it comes to analyzing the former pope, John Paul, or Mother Teresa and her writings, and even graven images set up as aids to worship—so contrary to Scripture. MA (GA)

Dear Br. Dave,

The article you wrote titled, "According to the Scriptures" [12/07] was great and one that has needed to be written and brought to the public's attention. You just don't find things like that on Fox News, CNN, or local papers. I know in writing something like that you put your life on the line and I respect you very much for doing so. I have passed on copies of what you wrote.... The pressure Bush and Rice have been placing on Israel to give up land on a promise of peace at the Annapolis Summit and the handling of the border situation has been just too much.... Thank you for printing such a clear and uncompromising article. It is just too bad more preachers are not bringing these truths to their congregations. Keep up the good work. JL (OR)

CORRECTION FROM THE JANUARY 2008 ARTICLE:

In [the Bible's] more than 1,000 pages, the phrase "religious faith" is not found once, the word "religion" appears only five times, and the word "religious" twice.

DAVE'S CORRESPONDENCE:

Although Dave enjoys responding to the personal mail he receives (when he can), that's become an impossibility of late. His recent hip surgery, recovery, pending surgery, along with his articles, book deadlines, travel commitments, and upcoming debates, have put him far behind in his schedule. Until further notice, Dave regrets that he cannot personally respond to your letters.

TBC Notes

Our M.O.

Many people assume that TBC agrees with everything the author of any book we offer believes or teaches, or with every teaching of any conference speaker we invite or radio guest we interview, or even with every speaker where we've been invited to speak. When it's obvious that's not the case, some have chided us for the confusion they think we are fostering. A few have accused us of hypocrisy.

Well, our *modus operandi* in this is thoughtful and prayerful yet not without its struggles. Here is the way we approach these matters:

1) We don't necessarily agree with everything the author of a book that we offer believes; we offer it because we consider its content valuable for *TBC* readers. Some such books may be written by atheists, psychiatrists, psychologists, Catholics, Calvinists, and others with whom we have disagreements, but their specific materials that we offer rarely would include content with which we disagree. When that is the case, we include a disclaimer noting our disagreement.

2) The same applies to speakers at our conferences or guests on our radio program or in our video productions. At times we have featured a non-Christian because of his or her research or valuable insights. When that's the case we have the guest stay focused on the subject of his/her expertise. When necessary, we will alert our audience to the differences we have with our speaker.

3) When we think individuals have become so identified with issues with which we disagree that our involvement with them (books, speaking, etc.) appears to support such issues, we may supply a disclaimer or withdraw the person's materials. Again, that is a value judgment on our part, which we consider carefully and prayerfully.

4) Dave and I are invited to speak at a wide variety of conferences featuring speakers with a diversity of views. A presumption that our presence is a support for their views is erroneous. Our decision to participate is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

We desire above all to be a helpful, credible, and God-honoring resource for those who seek the truth.

T.A. MCMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Berean Call is a nonprofit 501 [c] [3], tax-exempt corporation registered in the State of Oregon. It is overseen by an independent board which has full and final authority over all corporate assets, personnel, and affairs. (2/08)

From William MacDonald's Devotional Book

One Day at a Time

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. — MATTHEW 11:26

In almost everyone's life there are things which he never would have chosen, which he would like to be rid of, but which can never be changed. There is the matter of physical impairments or abnormalities. Or it may be a chronic, low-grade illness that will not leave us alone. Again it may be a nervous or emotional disorder that lingers as a most unwelcome guest.

So many defeated lives, dreaming of what might have been, if only.... If only they were taller. If only they were better looking. If only they had been born in a different family, race, or even sex. If only they were built to excel in athletics. If only they could know perfect health.

The lesson that these people should learn is that there is peace in accepting what cannot be changed. What we are, we are by the grace of God. He has planned our lives with infinite love and infinite wisdom. If we could see as well as He, we would have arranged things exactly as He has done. Therefore we should be able to say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

But there is a step further. We don't have to accept these things in a spirit of meek resignation. Knowing that they

were permitted by a God of love, we can make them the cause of praise and rejoice. Paul prayed three times that his thorn in the flesh might be removed. When the Lord promised grace to bear the thorn, the Apostle exclaimed, "Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 CORINTHIANS 12:9).

It is one of the signs of spiritual maturity when we can rejoice in the seemingly adverse circumstances in life and use them as means of glorifying God. Fanny Crosby learned the lesson early in life. When she was only eight, the blind poetess wrote:

*Oh, what a happy child I am!
 Although I cannot see,
 I am resolved that in this world
 Contented I will be.
 How many blessings I enjoy
 That other people don't;
 So weep or sigh because I'm blind
 I cannot, and I won't!*

We pray you will continue to be encouraged and exhorted by the inspiring and convicting messages that were written and recorded by our beloved brother, the late William MacDonald (see resource pages).

WILLIAM MacDONALD – THE LATE, BELOVED BIBLE MINISTER

Our beloved brother William MacDonald went to be with the Lord at 9:20 PM December 25, 2007. He was 90. Bill was Dave's close personal friend for more than 40 years. It was our privilege to have him serve on the board of TBC for many years. The Lord gave Bill a long and fruitful life. He was the author of more than 85 books translated into about 100 languages. They have been for many years (and will continue to be) a source of correction, comfort, edification, inspiration, and encouragement to multitudes. To the very end, until he was taken to the hospital, Bill was still writing. Sorely missed down here by those who knew and loved him, we are certain he has received a royal welcome from our Lord, the saints, and angels above.



NEW!

LIVING ABOVE THE AVERAGE

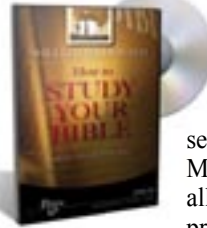
HEROIC DISPLAYS OF CHRISTLIKENESS

MacDonald—Must we live ho-hum, humdrum lives, talking and singing Christianity on Sunday but living the rest of the week in a spiritual desert? Is it possible to live above the average? This collection of true-life stories will not only thrill you as you read but can provoke you—in a good way—“to love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24). These are the accounts of ordinary

people who want God to do extraordinary things through them. And He will! Paul knew the secret when he wrote about such a God who “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). Gospel Folio Press, 152 pp.

B01763

wt .5 **\$11.00**



HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

MacDonald—This TBC exclusive packs three powerful presentations by William MacDonald onto two DVDs to create a truly remarkable set. A proven Bible expositor and prolific author, MacDonald takes viewers through the Scriptures, all the time pointing them toward Jesus, as is the practice in his many books. These three Scripture-

packed teachings were recorded at Calvary Chapel Modesto, presented in the humble fashion those familiar with MacDonald have come to expect. With more than two hours of Bible teaching on two DVDs, this value-priced collection is an important addition to any home or church library for personal, family, or small group viewing. (Remastered from VHS; quality will vary). DVD includes: “How to Study Your Bible” (46 min.), “The Song of Solomon” (46 min.), and “Heaven’s Cure for a Troubled Heart” (50 min.).

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B01453	Here's the Difference	200 pp	.6	12.99	12.00
B19728	Believer's Bible Commentary -HB	2469 pp	5.0	39.99	29.00
B00445	My Heart, My Life, My All	184 pp	.5	12.99	12.00
B00437	Once in Christ, in Christ Forever	201 pp	.6	12.99	12.00
B00490	One Day at a Time	384 pp	1.3	15.99	15.00
B00607	Our God Is Wonderful	154 pp	.5	11.99	11.00
CD093	Revolutionary Teachings - CD	57 min.	.1	5.00	5.00
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B01763	Living Above the Average	152 pp	.5	10.99	11.00
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B00585	Enjoy Your Bible	124 pp	.4	9.99	10.00
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NEW!

The Knowledge of the Holy

Tozer—Tozer's *The Knowledge of the Holy* is a thorough but easy-to-understand examination of the attributes of God. Each chapter, although

brief, contains much to ponder as we consider the Love of God, the Immutability of God, and other attributes that together make up the very nature of God. Tozer's simple but well-thought-out style is biblical and written with clarity. According to Tozer, he wrote the book on his knees in prayer. It certainly shows. HarperCollins, 120 pp.

B84129 wt.3 \$12.00



NEW!

Miracle Lives of China

Goforth—The Goforths record first-hand how God miraculously changes lives. No matter how great the sinner, Jesus Christ is a great

(and the only) Savior and is able to save, as one brother put it, "from the guttermost to the uttermost." All readers will be blessed and give glory to God for the marvelous works He has done in the lives of these Chinese people. Conjurske Publications, 157 pp.

B00775 Hardback wt.7 \$9.00



NEW!

How I Know God Answers Prayer

Goforth—Rosalind and her husband Jonathan were missionaries to China in the early 1900s. She wrote this

book to describe how prayer enabled her to meet the challenges of each day on the foreign mission field. *How I Know God Answers Prayer* brings hope to Christian men and women everywhere. Everyone can identify with Mrs. Goforth's admission that she was often fearful in the face of the tasks God gave her. Yet she found help in prayer. Conjurske Publications, 142 pp.

B00751 Hardback wt.7 \$9.00

WORDS OF TRUTH *for* CATHOLIC WITNESS



The Church of Rome at the Bar of History

Webster—In all the confusion of the contemporary religious scene, one church claims to abide changeless in her message and authority. But is this really true? William

Webster answers the question not by debating texts of Scripture but by a straight appeal to the very area where the Church of Rome believes her case is strongest: the facts of history. Banner of Truth, 256 pp.

B07102 wt.8 \$15.00

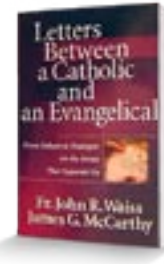


Another Jesus?

Oakland—To Catholics, the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christianity. How might this peculiar belief lead to the evangelization of the world into Catholicism? By chronicling

the growing cult of Eucharistic adoration and increasing ecumenical developments, the authors point readers back to a "more sure word of prophecy" and to the true Jesus of the Bible. Understand The Times, 210 pp.

B60971 wt.7 \$11.00

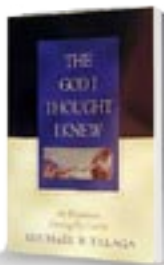


Letters Between a Catholic and an Evangelical

Waiss/McCarthy—What exactly do Catholics and evangelicals disagree on? A collection of correspondence between two

friends who have spent hours discussing their faiths. Insightful! Harvest House, 432 pp.

B97540 wt.1.1 \$13.00

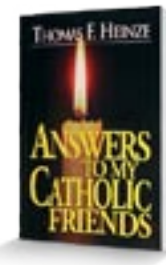


The God I Thought I Knew

Talaga—This book shows the perspective of a person whose life has undergone a dramatic change. The author was raised in the Catholic Church and experi-

enced school, family, and community in that context. Moody Publishers, 135 pp.

B03822 wt.4 \$8.00

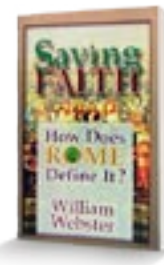


Answers to My Catholic Friends

Heinze—As an evangelical missionary in Italy for over thirty years, the author has found that there are certain things Roman Catholics would

like to know about the faith of the Protestants and about the Bible. Chick Publications, 62 pp.

B08522 wt.2 \$3.00



Saving Faith: How Does Rome Define It?

Webster—The ECT Accord (Evangelicals and Catholics Together) of 1994 called for the setting aside of doctrinal differences between

Roman Catholic and evangelical churches. But to what extent do evangelicals and Roman Catholics share a common faith? Christian Resources, 100 pp.

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highly recommended that these be used in personal quiet time alone with God, in family devotions, Bible studies, church meetings, and evangelistic outreaches. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. O come, let us sing unto the LORD” (Colossians 3:16, Psalm 95:1b). *Hymns of Truth and Praise* contains 682 beloved hymns. There are scriptural hymns for every purpose, including such great favorites as “How Great Thou Art,” “Amazing Grace,” and “Coming Again.” Hymns are arranged in over 40 easy-to-use categories such as Worship, Prayer, Missions, and Christian Warfare. There are correlated and indexed Scripture readings on more than 60 subjects for introduction and commentary. 576 pp.

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