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MARCH 2010

*THE AVATAR GOSPEL*

*by T. A. MCMAHON*

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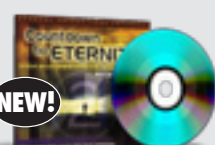
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# THE BEREAN CALL

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

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## The Avatar Gospel

T. A. McMahon

Movies are today's most popular means of influencing cultures on a worldwide scale. They have been effective in that way for the greater part of a century. They are, and always have been, teaching machines.

Although most people regard them as simply escapist fare or a mode of entertainment, they nevertheless always teach something. That fact became shockingly clear to me in my pre-Christian days when I was in Iran as a screenwriter on a Hollywood production. The time was just prior to the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. The revolution was literally ignited by Muslim clerics who had ordered their followers to set fire to movie theaters (packed with audiences). It was a protest against the teaching and influence of Western culture contained in the films, particularly the immorality and degenerate conduct displayed. With obviously less drastic reactions and consequences, no place seems to be out of the reach of the influence of movies no matter where one travels these days.

That is certainly true of one of the most expensive films to date, the quarter-of-a-billion-dollar production of *Avatar*, which has already grossed 2 billion dollars. No film thus far has matched its stunning production value in creating a fantastic world of computer-generated characters that seamlessly match and interact with the physical actors and the world we know. Believability is the "do or die" quality of every movie of any kind, and *Avatar* makes believers of all but the most critical film goers—few of whom could complain that this extraordinary production did not give them their money's worth.

My objective in writing this article is not to complain about the movie production (I paid the matinee, senior-citizen price, so I hardly felt cheated) but rather to give my view of the theology communicated in *Avatar*. We at TBC have received questions from concerned parents who aren't sure the film would be appropriate for their young teens to see and want to know how to discuss the movie's content with them. *Avatar*'s theology is my primary concern.

First of all, it shouldn't be surprising that the beliefs of most people are not derived from Sunday school or church teaching but rather religious ideas they pick up from a wide variety of sources as they go through life. Prior to being born again and

becoming a biblical Christian, for example, I had received a great deal of religious instruction, growing up Catholic, to which I added all kinds of contrary spiritual ideas, from reincarnation to the denial of hell to the universal salvation of everyone. I've had conversations with those who claim to hold the Bible as their only source of faith and practice yet who also hold ideas they have gleaned from Oprah Winfrey or some of her New Age guests. Humanity in general seems to be a magnet for all kinds of beliefs about God, and this would include not only the very religious but the agnostic and the atheist as well.

Movies often teach theology. Some have greatly influenced our last two generations about the character and qualities of God and perhaps none more than the *Star Wars* series, which began in the late 1970s. This series promoted the supreme deity as an impersonal, amoral energy "Force" that could be tapped into and used for one's own end through mental techniques. "May the Force be with you" was even interpreted by some sincere (but sincerely wrong!) Christians as Jesus being the true "Force." Such a promotion attributes characteristics to Jesus that both distort and demean His character as presented in the Scriptures—resulting in "another Jesus." *Star Wars* wrapped the beliefs and practices of Hinduism in a high-tech, science fiction saga. Obi Wan was a sorcerer; Yoda was a yogi by design and practice, and the incredibly successful film series propelled Eastern mysticism into the minds of Western youth. *Avatar* does the same for shamanism.

Shamanism is the religion of nature and spirits and is the most widespread of all the religions in the world. It's found among every indigenous people group throughout the earth, and its beliefs and techniques are the same wherever it is found. This is due to the fact that shamanism is a practice that comes from the spirit realm, with the spirits themselves not restricted by distant geographical locations. The term *shaman* comes from the Tungus people of Siberia and has been preferred by anthropologists over "witch doctor," "medicine man," "wizard," "sorcerer," etc. According to noted authority Michael Harner, an anthropologist and shaman, "a shaman enters an altered state of consciousness at will to acquire knowledge, power, and to help other persons. The shaman has at least one, and usually more, 'spirits' in his personal service. To perform

his work, the shaman depends on special, personal power, which is usually supplied by his guardian and helping spirits."

*Avatar* is a spectacular platform for preaching shamanism. The story line is neither unique nor complicated. A distant moon planet called Pandora is colonized by a corporation that is mining a metal of great value for the earth, which has been ravaged by the exploitation of its own natural resources. The enterprise, however, is hampered by a tribe of indigenous humanoids called Na'vi, whose village and land cover the main core of the precious metal. Diplomatic attempts to persuade the Na'vi to resettle elsewhere have ended in failure, primarily because of the Na'vi's religion of shamanism. They worship Eywa, a goddess akin to what the Greeks called Gaia, or Mother Earth. Eywa appears to be an impersonal, godlike force that is responsible for maintaining the balance of all life. Everything in Pandora is linked to Eywa mystically and biologically. The biological emphasis amplifies the critical nature of preserving the planet's physical ecological system for future survival. Demonstrating the connectedness of all life forms, the spirits of animals that are killed for food or in self-defense are addressed by the Na'vi either in thanksgiving or apologetically.

Nothing of the sort is found among the humans. The mining enterprise is protected by mercenary soldiers who are gearing up to remove the Na'vi should they ultimately refuse to vacate their land.

The hero of the movie is a paraplegic former marine (Jake Sully) who learns the way of the Na'vi by utilizing a Na'vi-human hybrid body, a creation of incredibly advanced bio-technology. It is called an *avatar*. Jake, in his avatar body, is accepted by the Na'vi because of initial signs that he is favored for some purpose by Eywa and the spirits.

Director and writer James Cameron makes his theological (and ecological) bent quite clear in nearly every frame of the film. The movie's title and image of the Na'vi are derived from the Hindu god Krishna, a blue-skinned incarnated avatar of the god Vishnu. Hinduism teaches that throughout history avatars have manifested in human and/or animal forms to restore the balance of good and evil. The emphasis on trees in the movie is consistent in all shamanism. The huge Hometree that housed the Na'vi clan and is destroyed in the attack by the humans is representative of Eywa providing

for the Na'vi through "Mother" nature. The luminescent Tree of Souls, which provides direct communication with Eywa, is also a power center that can transfer souls to other bodies. In traditional shamanism, the tree is a universal communication medium for such cultures to connect with deceased shamans, ancestors, and the spirits themselves.

Cameron has added his own twist to native shamanism by having the Na'vi communicate with the Eywa, spirits, and animals through fiber optics in their braided hair tails. The Na'vi plug the strands into similarly compatible devices found in animals and plants. Although at odds with the actual practice of shamanism, this does reflect the necessity of "experiencing" a god that cannot be "known" through reason, intellect, or science. It also solves a problem for Cameron the filmmaker. In what was no doubt a box office-related decision, he avoids the method commonly used by shamans to contact the spirits: inhaling or imbibing hallucinogenic drugs. Na'vi "doing drugs" would have forced *Avatar* out of a PG-13 rating, eliminating an age group that is prone to seeing such a movie many, many times, as well as being a top consumer of *Avatar*-related merchandise.

In true shamanism, there is no physical "plugging into" or direct biological connection to the spirits. The spirits are nonphysical entities. Other than the drugs that are taken to produce an altered state of consciousness, connecting with the spirits is a mental process. Yet Cameron's deviation from true shamanism ultimately leads to the belief in Eywa. Dr. Grace Augustine, the female scientist in the movie, declares that all of the so-called spiritual phenomena she has observed on Pandora can be explained biologically. In the end, however, Dr. Grace undergoes a conversion. As she lies dying beneath the Tree of Souls, her final words are those of a materialist who allows her "experience" to override her "science" as she declares her belief in the pantheist goddess of the Na'vi: "Eywa—I see her. She's real!" Grace became what C. S. Lewis described as the ideal work of Satan—a "materialist magician." She submitted to a "Force" god without acknowledging the reality of personal spirits behind such an entity, i.e., demons. Jake, on the other hand, although he initially disdained what he called the "tree-hugging" stuff of the Na'vi, fully commits himself to their "natural" way of life and their mother goddess Eywa.

After reading dozens and dozens of comments by young people enamored with the theology in *Avatar*, it is apparent that its false gospel is finding fertile soil worldwide as it introduces and attracts millions of moviegoers to shamanism.

James Cameron has presented what the Bible calls the "doctrine of devils" promoted by Satan, the father of lies, and taught directly by demons. Cameron's pagan beliefs are diametrically opposed to what the Bible teaches. Furthermore, his idealistic view of the natural purity of an indigenous tribe such as the Na'vi is pure propaganda (see my interview with a former Yanamamo shaman in *TBC* 11/03). The belief that naturalism produces a life of harmony, fruitfulness, and peace is a lie taught by many anthropologists yet contradicted by the experience of every shamanic society wherever they may be found. How can I be so sure? All indigenous groups are made up of people, who, like all people everywhere, are sinners. This innate evil, moreover, is compounded by seducing spirits bent on deceiving and destroying the humans who find themselves in bondage to them. No anthropologist has ever produced a tribe that was an exception to this destructive condition.

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NOW THE SPIRIT SPEAKETH EXPRESSLY,  
THAT IN THE LATTER TIMES SOME SHALL  
DEPART FROM THE FAITH, GIVING HEED  
TO SEDUCING SPIRITS, AND DOCTRINES  
OF DEVILS.

— 1 Timothy 4:1

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Cameron is certainly entitled to preach the shamanic gospel of *Avatar*. Christians, however, need to be aware of what they are being fed along with the overpriced popcorn. It is a general lack of discernment among them that is often maddening and spiritually treacherous for the upcoming generation of believers. The maddening part comes when professing believers attempt to read Christianity into popular movies that are thoroughly antichrist. It happened with *Star Wars*, the *Harry Potter* series, and too many others to list. It's a foregone conclusion that we will see much of the same for *Avatar*. *Christianity Today*, for example, often leads the way in anointing the world's popular delusions as Christian. In its supported blog site directed at women and titled *Her•meneutics* (ironically a play on the word that fosters accurate Bible interpretation), a female Princeton Seminary student writes the featured article, suggesting that the character of Grace (mentioned above) may have been "*Avatar*'s Christian character" and then adds a qualification, "Well, Christian-ish anyway."

Christian-ish?! James Cameron would be appalled at the suggestion; I am angered. The only insertion of any thing "Christian" in the entire movie is the name of a floating mountain range ("Hallelujah") and the mention of the Lord's name, which is used as a curse word. That's also a paradox for a story set

more than a thousand years from today, seemingly far removed from the religious content missionaries supposedly used to "spoil the purity" of the noble savages. Although Christianity has obviously died out in the movie's future setting, ironically its God remains in the psyche and on the foulmouthed lips of the characters in the movie.

*Christianity Today*, the Emerging Church Movement, Rick Warren's Global P.E.A.C.E. plan, and those among some mission and parachurch organizations (e.g., those that follow the leadership and teachings of C. Peter Wagner) have a penchant for trying to find buried nuggets of Christ in the culture, or accommodating Christianity to the culture, and vice versa. Many are about sanctifying and redeeming the paganism of a society, or at least trying to harmonize and work with all religions. This is all fodder for syncretism and ecumenism. They are contributing to the religion of the Antichrist. A. W. Tozer took such an endeavor to task by noting that Moses did not enter into a panel discussion with the Israelites for finding some spiritual merits of the golden calf, nor did Elijah trade edifying insights with the prophets of Baal, and neither did Jesus seek a meeting of the minds with the Pharisees. Furthermore, promoting a "group hug" among contradictory religions with the intention of solving the world's problems is a grand delusion at best. Isaiah, speaking for Jehovah God, makes His view absolutely clear: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this [God's] word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is 8:20).

Warnings are also clear in the Word of God that a great spiritual battle is being waged all around us, that we are in the days of rampant apostasy in the church, and that we are being subjected to an increasing antichristianity in the world. What then must a believer do? We must diligently follow the Lord's prevention and protection program, the heart of which is found in Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." But certainly there's more: prayer and fellowship, for example. We need to circle the wagons at times—for spiritual protection, counsel, encouragement, and ministry to one another. If such things become our disciplined practice of life, though the Apostasy dries up the spiritual environment around us, we and our families nevertheless shall be fruitful in the Lord.

TBC



## Quotable .....

Worship is far more than prayer, or the enjoyment of the most helpful ministry. It is the Spirit's adoring occupation with God Himself, not merely in gratitude for His gifts, but because of Who He is. It is this that the Father seeks. Worship is lowered as we become occupied with the externals, even of Christianity. It reaches its highest points as our spirits are absorbed in contemplation of the matchless perfections of the eternal God, in light of the Cross and the empty tomb.

H. A. Ironside

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION:** I recently received my first print newsletter in the mail, and one of the letters raised my eyebrows a bit. First of all, I appreciate your transparency in publishing letters that dispute or oppose you. However, in this case, my mother found it interesting and pointed out that the specific topics of dissension were edited out. I assume this was done for space constraints....The gentleman in question stated that he is a retired pastor with a Master's Degree in Pastoral Theology and has studied the Bible for 60 years, 24 of which he has spent reading the Bible cover to cover annually. His contention is that many people have taken mere theories as Biblical truth, and apparently he is including your ministry in perpetuating these false doctrines. Considering both the fruit of your ministry here at TBC and his background, I don't want to jump to conclusions either way right off the bat. What I'm very curious about is exactly what teachings of yours he is claiming to contest as falsehoods or misinterpretations. The fact that they were left out of the printed letter, and that he wishes to distance himself from you, makes me slightly uneasy. If he is the one who is mistaken, though, I can understand you not wanting to take up extra space in the newsletter detailing a pointless argument. Scores of credentials and a lifetime of study don't necessarily mean a person is infallible.

**RESPONSE:** We appreciate the admonition for greater clarity. As you also point out, our space is limited, in view of the large number of questions and requests we receive—we try to fit as much as we can in the space available. Because we were presenting the letter on the Letters page and not in the Q&A section, it was decided to omit all of the “objectionable doctrines,” since we were not going to offer a response at that time and hoped to avoid confusion.

The letter writer listed the following as objectionable doctrines: “The Gap Theory,” “the origin of Satan,” the “Pre-Tribulation Rapture theory,” the “acceptance of Christ by the Jews,” the “earthly reign of Christ, and the millennium.” In the next paragraph, the writer noted that he found “no scripture anywhere in the Bible to support any of these teachings, except the millennium.”

We are a bit puzzled by these statements, as we have never promoted “the Gap Theory” and clearly have noted its unbiblical nature. Further, it is difficult to respond concerning “the origin of Satan.” There are no details given to show where we might err concerning this topic.

Concerning the Pre-Trib Rapture, we stand guilty of teaching the same, and numerous Q&As and articles attest to why we consider it biblical (see 2/88, 7/90, 12/90, 9/91, 9/98, 9/01, 4/08, 3/09, and others). Our online radio archives also contain a number of programs in which we discuss the biblical reasons for this position.

Regarding the “acceptance of Christ by the Jews,” we also are handicapped by lack of specific details. We recognize that some falsely teach that the Lord has nothing more to do with Israel. The Scriptures clearly prophesy the rejection of Christ at His first appearance (Is 53:3), and His acceptance by Israel at His triumphant return. Zechariah 12:10 tells us, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” Further, Paul affirms, “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom 11:26).

Finally, we have discussed the biblical teachings on the Millennium, most recently in the February 2010 issue of the newsletter. May the Lord encourage us with the certainty of His Word.

**Question:** I have been challenged by a Catholic regarding the supposed miracle of “Our Lady of Guadalupe” and the image of the Virgin Mary that appeared on the cape of the peasant Juan Diego. They said that the endurance of this account and Diego's canonization by John Paul II (July 31, 2002) is evidence enough of the truth of this story. What do you say?

**RESPONSE:** Even those described as devout Catholics have long questioned “Our Lady of Guadalupe.” The head of the Spanish Colony's Franciscans, Francisco de Bustamante, read a sermon in 1556 before the Spanish

Viceroy and the Royal Audience. Bustamante disparaged the origins of the image and contradicted Archbishop Alonso de Montúfar's previous sermon of two days earlier. Bustamante stated: “The devotion that has been growing in a chapel dedicated to Our Lady, called of Guadalupe, in this city is greatly harmful for the natives, because it makes them believe that the image painted by Marcos the Indian is in any way miraculous” (Stafford Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol*, 1531-1797. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997). The name “Marcos” may have meant Marcos Cipac de Aquino, an Aztec painter active in Mexico when the icon first appeared.

The fourth viceroy of Mexico, Martín de León, a Dominican, condemned the “cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe” in 1611 as a syncretized worship of the Aztec goddess Tonantzin (Ibid.). Catholic missionary and anthropologist Bernardino de Sahagún agreed with de León's judgment, writing that the Tepeyac shrine, although popular, remained a concern because shrine visitors called the Virgin of Guadalupe, “Tonantzin.” Sahagún recognized that some worshipers believed “Tonantzin” meant “Mother of God” in the native Nahuatl language, but he pointed out this was simply not true ([http://hispanic.cc/la\\_reina\\_de\\_mexico.htm](http://hispanic.cc/la_reina_de_mexico.htm)).

The existence of Juan Diego (the Spanish equivalent of “John Doe”) is also suspect. During the 1800s, Mexico City Bishop Labastida appointed historian Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta, another devout Catholic, to investigate. Icazbalceta's confidential bishop's report clearly doubted the existence of Juan Diego (Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta, “Juan Diego y las Apariciones del Tepeyac,” Mexico City: Publicaciones para el Estudio Científico de las Religiones, 2002, pages 3-8). David Brading of Cambridge University (among others) points out that the image of the virgin was supposed to have been miraculously imprinted on Juan Diego's cape in 1531 (Steinfels, “Beliefs: As sainthood approaches for Juan Diego, some scholars call his story a ‘pious fiction,’” *New York Times*, 7/20/02). Nevertheless, the first recorded mention of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe doesn't appear until 1555 or 1556.

Further, Stafford Poole of Los Angeles, another Catholic historian/priest, points out that Juan Diego himself doesn't appear in any account until 1648 (Stevenson, “Canonization Of First Indian Saint Draws Questions In Mexico,” Associated Press, 7/1/02), the date when Miguel Sanchez, a Spanish theological writer in Mexico, mentions Diego in his book *The Apparitions of the Virgin Mary*.

Father Poole stated in *Commonweal*, a Catholic biweekly, “More than forty documents are said to attest to the reality

of Juan Diego, yet not one of them can withstand serious historical criticism" (Vol. 129, 6/14/02).

**QUESTION: How can you say that Adam wasn't with Eve (TBC Extra, 1/09) during the temptation? The English text of the Bible clearly says "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her..." (Genesis 3:6). Why also do you appeal to the Hebrew as if the English translation isn't sufficient?**

**RESPONSE:** We "appealed" to the Hebrew because John Eldredge supported his premise by referencing the same. We believe he is in error. As we noted, the literal rendering of the Hebrew means "took away, carried away, or removed." This is contrary to what is argued in *Wild at Heart*. We do not need the Hebrew, however, to point out the falsity of the idea that Adam idly stood by during Eve's temptation.

To begin, the English "with" is not limited by geography. One might say I was "with" my wife all day when most of the time she may be in a very different part of the home or the yard. Adam was "with Eve" in the garden but not necessarily at her side. Biblically, the adversary is at his best picking off those whom he would devour when they are alone. Indeed, chapter 3 begins with the serpent asking Eve a question, and she answers as if she is the only one present, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Gn 3:2-3). Yet, in Genesis 2:16-17, we read "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

During the dialogue between Eve and the serpent, there is no indication from Scripture that Adam is present.

One last clear statement of Scripture must also be considered. The Lord pronounced Adam's punishment because, "thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and has eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Gn 3:17). In contrast to Eve, Adam hadn't "hearkened unto the voice of the serpent." The inspired writer Paul tells us "Adam was not deceived..." (1 Tm 2:14). With eyes wide open, he joined his wife in sin.

**QUESTION: Pat Robertson has stated that the earthquake that devastated Haiti is a result of Haitians making a pact with**

**the devil in order to obtain Satan's help in overthrowing the French. Is there any basis to this story?**

**RESPONSE:** Robertson's statement jumbled up several facts of history. He noted that the Haitians were under the heel of the French, "Napoleon the Third and whatever." He probably meant Napoleon Bonaparte, but since this alleged pact was supposedly enacted in 1791, the first Napoleon didn't come into power until several years later. Napoleon III didn't assume power until 1848, years after Haiti had won their freedom.

There is a basis for considering some kind of a "pact" when reading the prayer of Dutty Boukman (a Haitian slave leader), which was uttered during the "Bois Caiman Ceremony," a Vodou rite. Boukman addresses a "god" who is different from that of the Catholic French. He prays, "The white man's god asks him to commit crimes. But the god within us wants to do good. Our god, who is so good, so just, He orders us to revenge our wrongs. It's He who will direct our arms and bring us the victory. It's He who will assist us. We all should throw away the image of the white men's god who is so pitiless. Listen to the voice for liberty that speaks in all our hearts" (<http://thelouvertureproject.org/index.php?title=Boukman>).

The "god" to which Boukman prays orders "revenge," an attribute quite different from the God of the Bible, who states, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom 12:19).

The religion of Voudon acknowledges one main deity and several demi-gods called "loas." These loas have a function in Voudon similar to the Saints in Catholicism. Some historians estimate that by the 1750s, 30,000 slaves a year were bringing the religion of Voudon into Haiti. Among the Dahomey tribal groups, "Voodoo" (Voudon) means "gods or Spirits." Practitioners believed that these spirits had the ability to enter the worshippers. Boukman prays to a god who is "within us," a god who is within them as a result of a Voudoun ceremony.

That's enough to warrant judgment, but then the "whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 Jn 5:19). Consequently, Haiti certainly isn't the only nation to qualify for judgment.

## News Alert.....

**Her\*meneutics (n.) The Christianity Today blog for women, 1/18/2010 [EXCERPTS]:** Dr. Grace Augustine: *Avatar's* Christian Character? Well, Christian-ish, anyway. Grace, played by Sigourney Weaver, is the lead scientific researcher on Pandora. Her name

suggests connections to the Christian faith, and yet the film doesn't make them clearly.

As a scientist, Grace believes that the spiritual beliefs of the Na'vi have a biological basis. Every living thing on Pandora really is connected, biologically speaking, and pulses with an energy that fuels the planet. She is not dismissive of the Na'vi's spirituality, yet she does equate it with biological fact.

But then Grace gets wounded by gunshot, and Sully asks the Na'vi to use the power of Eywa to heal Grace. Surrounded by chanting Na'vi, Grace lies before the "throne" of Eywa (the center of a huge tree). The tendrils of Eywa encircle Grace in both her human and avatar [bodies]. Apparently, the hope is that Grace's consciousness can move from her dying human body to her healthy avatar body. The transition, however, fails. As Grace is dying, she says, with joy, "Eywa. I see her."

These final words become Grace's statement of faith. She uses the language of the Na'vi to acknowledge Eywa as more than a biological reality. For this tribe (as for followers of Jesus), seeing involves more than the physical use of eyesight. It involves understanding, knowing, giving and receiving from one to another. So when Grace says that she "sees" Eywa, she is acknowledging the spiritual reality behind the biological truth. She is acknowledging a personal deity. And perhaps, in her death, there is grace at work.

[TBC: We're thankful that a few recognize the utter foolishness of this Christianity Today-supported article, including this forthright comment: "Why all these efforts to make silk out of the spiritual sow's ear that is Avatar? Dr. Augustine didn't 'come to Jesus,' she merged into a tree (any Old Testament groves come to mind?) and the supposed life force of Pandora."]

**Christian Newswire, 2/24/2010:** Left Behind Games Inc., a leading publisher of Christian video games, and Digital Praise, the world's largest privately held company producing Christian video games, today announced they have entered into a merger agreement.

Digital Praise realized its first big hit in 2005 with Dance Praise, a game integrating a dance mat and music from top Christian artists. Its biggest hit, Guitar Praise, was released in late 2008. The game utilizes a unique wireless guitar that lets players jam with popular Christian musicians.

CEO Troy Lyndon adds, "We believe every child and gamers of all ages should have the opportunity to play Christian games. We are grateful to our investors who believe in our mission and purpose; and who have made this merger possible."

[TBC: See TBC notes for another "mission and purpose."]



## Speaking Schedule

<b>Apr 16-17</b> (TA)	<b>Calvary Chapel of Lima</b> Lima, OH (419) 222-6100
<b>Jun 6</b> (TA)	<b>Candlelight Fellowship</b> Coeur d'Alene, ID (208) 772-7755
<b>Jul 9-11</b>	<b>TBC Conference</b> Bend, OR (800) 937-6638
<b>Aug 28-31</b> (TA)	<b>Truth 4 Youth Teaching Conference</b> Devon, United Kingdom 44 1494 764913

## Letters .....

### Dear Dave,

I just want to sincerely thank you for all the wonderful DVDs and CDs that are available through *The Berean Call*. Thank you for contending for the faith and for being loyal to God's precious word. Thank you for alerting us to all the dangers out there, the false gospels, the seducing spirits, the unbiblical movies and books, etc., and for reminding us to search the Scriptures for ourselves to find the truth. Jesus said "sanctify them with thy truth, thy word is truth." When we seek Him we will find Him when we search for Him with our whole heart.... MD (South Africa)

### Dear Dave, T. A. & staff

We pray that you will continue to be used by the LORD for His glory and for the edification of the saints (believers) in Christ Jesus. You have been discipling us since around 1985 before *The Seduction of Christianity* came out. The steadfast adherence to the LORD and His Word has never wavered in the midst of many ministries falling away from the faith or compromising the faith. PS (CO)

### Dear TBC,

Thank you so much for your strong stance in this day and age when most do not endure sound doctrine. There is a lot of religious activity here, but most of it is a show of the flesh. We do have one very small and intimate assembly where Christ is central and the undiluted Word is preached and taught. There are never any more than ten brothers there on Wednesday evening, with usually 5 or less on Thursday, with the same brother, who is a pastor of an assembly in a town about 30 minutes away. MD (prisoner, LA)

### Dear Dave,

I have followed your ministry for many years. My grandma started me reading your newsletters. What a blessing it has been for

me all these years. You really keep us from getting into false doctrine. When all this started with the yoga I knew in my heart it was wrong, and then the Lord confirmed it when you wrote an article on it. So I just wanted to say "thanks" and I will continue to keep you in my prayers and your staff. You all do such a great job. BS (NV)

### Dear Brethren,

Thank you so much for sending again your newsletter, which I read eagerly....I do still attend [fellowship] on a regular basis... as long as I see God's will in doing so.... Here the leaven of Antichrist has penetrated almost all congregations, so I believe we just have to practice where it says: "Where are two or three congregated in my name..." and do away with denominations, organizations, institutions, etc. WU (Bolivia)

### Dear Dave and Staff,

This is to thank you for providing those beautiful and effective cards [*God of Wonders* DVD]. I have had many calls and notes to thank us for sending them. They have gone all over the world (two to Israel).... Our youth director has shown it to our youth group, etc. Your design department worked so hard and we thank them as well. T&VB (VA)

### Mr. Hunt,

I read *Seduction of Christianity* and *Beyond Seduction* when they first came out over 20 years ago. In my collection of books...I came across them again and decided to re-read them. Where it was hard to see some of what you were saying back then, in part because I was a younger Christian, and in part because the changes you were describing really hadn't manifested themselves to me to the extent you asserted, I now see them as clear as day. With morals and values in this country at an all-time low and, even worse, with the church so compromised by secular values and the influence of psychology, the warnings in these books are even more insightful in retrospect. I am sorry the church has not heeded your warnings....It must be disappointing to you as you reflect on your attempt to warn the church yet see your warnings seemingly go unheeded. If so, please don't be. Even if the church at large failed to recognize the insidious forces infiltrating it, there are individuals within it who appreciated what you had to say. In the end, remember the warnings to the churches in Revelation, which ended up being directed to the overcomers. With them in mind, the current state of the church makes the Lord's return seem especially close.... Please take some encouragement from knowing that you did your part in helping

those of us of the same faith to be more discerning during the church's decline. You reminded many that reliance on the Lord and His Word is what we all need. We just need to interpret it as intended and not through the prism of the world's influences (psychology, compromised morals, and relative values). I doubt we'll ever meet in this life, but it will be nice to catch up with you in the one to come. JG (email)

### Dave and all at TBC,

It is a joy and blessing to be able to participate in your faithful work—spreading the gospel of Christ and sharing the truth. Our prayer is for your continued health and strength to go on until the Lord returns. MF (NV)

### Dear Ones in Christ,

I am so very grateful to you all for your sound, fundamental, scriptural, uncompromising stand so true to the doctrines and teachings of God's word. I am 89 years old and was taught in my teens these sound teachings and also about how in the last days so many would be led astray. We need your teaching to enlighten God's people. EI (PA)

## TBC Notes

### Are You Equipping/ Protecting Your Kids?

God's instruction for the Israelite parents who were surrounded by idolaters needs to be heeded all the more by Christian families in today's increasingly antichristian society: "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them [to] your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children..." (Deuteronomy 11:18-21).

T. A. McMAHON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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# THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

From *An Urgent Call to a Serious Faith* — by Dave Hunt

**W**E SEE FROM GOD'S WORD that lost sinners are offered forgiveness of all sins (past, present, and future) and eternal life as a free gift of God's grace by virtue of Christ's fully accomplished redemptive work upon the cross and His bodily resurrection. To receive these priceless gifts, one need only believe the gospel: that one is a sinner deserving God's judgment and unable by self-effort, religious ritual, or any other means to earn or merit salvation even in part; and that Christ paid the full debt that God's justice demands for man's sin. Of course, one must believe the gospel not merely as historic fact but to the extent of placing one's faith completely in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior for eternity.

Christ directed His disciples to preach the good news of the gospel to everyone everywhere. This command to His original followers has become known as the "Great Commission." It is stated in two ways: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15); and "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19–20 NASB). Those who preach the gospel are to disciple those who believe it. Born again by God's Spirit into His family (John 3:3–5; 1 John 3:2), converts begin a new life as Christ's followers, eager to learn of Him and to obey the One to whom they now owe an infinite debt of gratitude.

Christ warned that some would seem to receive the gospel with great enthusiasm only to become entangled in the world, discouraged, and disillusioned. They would eventually turn back from following Him. Many maintain a façade of Christianity without inward reality, deceiving perhaps even themselves. Never fully convinced in their hearts, they are unwilling nevertheless to admit their unbelief. "Examine yourselves," Paul warned, "whether ye be in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Of those who are genuine, all too few are able to give a reason for the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15). How many Christians are able to convincingly persuade an atheist, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, or New Ager, with overwhelming evidence and sound reason from Scripture? God's Word is the sword of the Spirit, but few know it well enough to quell their own doubts, much less to convert others.

One of today's greatest needs is for solid Bible teaching that produces disciples who are able to "earnestly contend for

the faith once [for all] delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). That faith for which we must contend was delivered by Christ to the original twelve disciples, who were then to teach those whom they evangelized "to observe all things" that Christ had commanded them.

Through succeeding generations (beginning with the original disciples and those whom they brought to faith in Christ and disciplined) of those who have been won to Him and who have in turn, in obedience to their Lord, disciplined others, this unbroken chain of command comes down to us in our time. Not some special priest or clergy class, but each Christian today, like those who have passed before, is a successor to the apostles. Think of what that means!

At the heart of Christ's call to discipleship is the daily application of His cross in the believer's life. Yet one seldom hears in evangelical circles Christ's definitive declaration: "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me...[and] forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27–33). The call to discipleship must be honestly faced. Through the cross we die to self and begin to live to our Lord in resurrection power (Galatians 2:20). Indeed, Christ's death on the cross would have been a hollow act if it did not bring forth new life, for now and for eternity.

Resurrection life reckons the old life dead and makes no provision for the flesh (Romans 6:4, 11; 13:14). Instead of the popular self-esteem, God calls us to deny self, to love truth and hate folly, to please God instead of others or ourselves—no matter what the cost in this life. Never mind social pressures from what others think, say, or do. We must be fully persuaded that what God thinks and what He will say when we appear before Him one day is all that matters.

As Jim Elliot, one of the five martyrs killed in Ecuador in 1956, said when as a young man he chose the mission field over more popular careers, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." That choice is only logical if one believes that time is short and eternity is endless. Such commitment brings heavenly joy, peace, and a fulfillment that nothing earth offers can rival. ☹

## AN URGENT CALL TO A SERIOUS FAITH — by Dave Hunt

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### Exposing the Quantum Lie (4-DVD set)

**DeWaa/Smith**—The church and the world are being offered a new Christianity, and millions of people are buying into it. But when the outer layers of this New Spirituality are stripped away, what lies beneath is the Quantum Lie that started in the Garden of Eden. This deception will play out as the Bible predicts until the return of Jesus Christ to a world that has become completely deceived into believing that God is in everything. DVD topics: **DVD 1-Bob DeWaa:** How Eastern mysticism has been repackaged and presented as a new way to know God. **DVD 2-Warren B. Smith:** The Big Picture, *A Wonderful Deception*. **DVD 3-Warren B. Smith:**

New Age implications of *The Shack*, *The Message*, and the Purpose Driven movement and the entrance of the Quantum Lie into the church. **DVD 4-Bob DeWaa:** Emergence Theory: How pantheism and panentheism have entered the church, convincing millions that this New Spirituality is exactly what the world needs to save itself. 4 hours.

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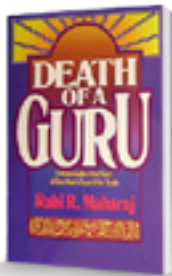
### The Light That Was Dark

**Smith**—Recommended for sharing the gospel with those attracted to New Spirituality! Warren Smith's fascinating journey begins with a dramatic reading by a traveling psychic. Following the psychic's explicit

instructions, Smith prays to spirits on "the other side" and asks for their spiritual help in his life. Follow the trail as a bewildered Smith and the woman who is soon to become his wife are compelled to come to terms with the nature of good and evil. After surfacing from a series of tumultuous and harrowing incidents, he shares his journey's startling and inescapable conclusion. Mountain Stream Press, 168 pp.

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## A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO NEW SPIRITUALITY & EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE



### Death of a Guru

**Maharaj**—Rabi R. Maharaj was descended from a long line of Brahmin priests and gurus and trained as a Yogi. He describes vividly and honestly Hindu life and customs, tracing his difficult

search for meaning and his struggle to choose between Hinduism and Christ. At a time when eastern mysticism, religion, and philosophy fascinate many in the West, Maharaj offers fresh and important insights. Harvest House Publishers, 208 pp.

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### A Time of Departing

**Yungen**—A revealing account of a universal spirituality that has infiltrated much of the church today. This book exposes subtle strategies to compromise the Gospel message with Eastern mystical concepts cloaked under

the wrappings of contemplative prayer and "the silence." The author's calm presentation is honest and forthright, fair and balanced—and his conclusions are inescapably founded in truth. Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 240 pp.

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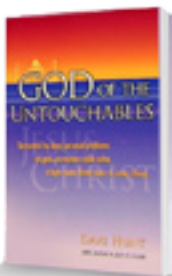


### The UFO Conspiracy

**New Liberty Videos**—Unidentified Flying Objects have been recorded in various forms since the creation of man: crudely drawn on Stone Age

mural...chiseled in Egyptian stone...noted in the journals of ancients like Alexander the Great...even described in the ship's log of Christopher Columbus. More than a stunning catalog of UFO photography, video, and eyewitness recordings, hear startling scriptural evidence from noted scholars like Dave Hunt and I.D.E. Thomas which reveals the hidden truth about UFOs and the beings who operate them. 70 min. (2 or more just \$16.00 each!)

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### God of the Untouchables

**Hunt**—Dave Hunt tells the poignantly human, true story of Paul Gupta, a young Hindu, raised in the heart of India, who found the salvation that all men seek! Everyone who has been tempted to

turn to the East for enlightenment, who has been intrigued by Eastern mysticism, who is thinking of trying Eastern meditation, should read *God of the Untouchables*—proof that Jesus Christ is still the only answer to the world's problems. Straight Street Publishing, 140 pp.

**B01279** wt .7 **\$9.00**



### Yoga and the Body of Christ

**Hunt**—What position should Christians "hold"? Promising to bring peace, healing, and wholeness (even prosperity!) to its practitioners, readers will be shocked to discover that yoga is based on the

worship of (and prepares participants for supernatural connection with) unholy spirits that manifest in extraordinary and dangerous ways through yoga's Kundalini energy—the "Serpent Power." TBC, 176 pp.

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### Messages from Heaven

**Eternal Productions**—Reports of paranormal and supernatural activity are on the rise worldwide. For instance, tens of millions visit apparition sites hoping

to encounter the Virgin Mary. Many believe that these increasing manifestations signal the advent of a new era on earth. Thousands of messages from the apparition of Mary indicate that we are entering a critical moment in world history—cataclysmic changes may soon occur. 79 min. (2 or more just \$16.00 each!)

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MARCH 2010

## JUNGLE MISSIONARIES — Inspiring and exciting testimonies!



### Forty Years in the Amazon Jungle

*The publisher is donating all profits from this book to support the printing of Portuguese Bibles for distribution throughout the remote regions of Brazil. TBC donated editorial, typesetting, and design services for this valuable work, spearheaded by Dick York and Shield of Faith Mission Intl.*

**Sung Joon Kim**—Here is the story of the first missionary from South Korea to the unreached tribesmen of the vast Amazon Jungle. Trudging the dark, sometimes flooded trails of malaria-infested forests of western Brazil, he faced the terrifying prospect of becoming disoriented and lost in the darkness, falling prey to wild animals and savage Indians, or succumbing to malaria or dengue fever transmitted by ever-present blood-sucking insects. Motivated by a clear calling from God and directed by Divine guidance, he over-

came obstacles of nature and of men who opposed his mission. Loved by the Indians he reached, and hated by the anthropologists who opposed his efforts, he and his wife Jae Sun have invested forty years of their lives in obscurity. Sung Joon Kim would say that being in the center of God's will is of itself a great reward. SOF Publications, 256 pp.

**B75070**

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[NOTE: Due to the sensitive nature of some content, parents are advised to preview this book before giving it to their children.]

### The Taliabo Story & (the sequel) Delivered from Darkness



**NTM**—THE TALIABO STORY: Hidden on a remote island of Indonesia, the Taliabo people lived in constant fear. For generations they searched

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