

SPECIAL EDITION

CHARISMA[®]

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SPIRIT-LED LIVING

Easter



**THE CRUX OF
CHRISTIANITY**
BEN GODWIN

**WHY THE CROSS
SHOULD GIVE US**
COURAGE
BOB SORGE

**HOLLYWOOD, JESUS
& THE HOLY SPIRIT**
**TROY ANDERSON
AND ANNE MOUNT**

**THE SHROUD
AND THE SAVIOR**
**KENNETH
STEVENSON**

- ✦ 21 CITIES
- ✦ 167 COUNTRIES
- ✦ A MILLION PRAYER WARRIORS
- ✦ WILL YOU JOIN AND PRAY FOR AMERICA'S REVIVAL



AMERICA BELONGS TO JESUS

**BRO. MOHAN
C. LAZARUS**



**21 CITY
PRAYER
TOUR
2024**

Apr 3 to 23



**JOIN TO PRAY
& PROCLAIM
AMERICA BELONGS TO JESUS
CITY NEAR YOU.**

APR 03 JAMESTOWN, VA	08 ATLANTA, GA	13 DALLAS, TX	18 SALT LAKE CITY, UT	23 LOS ANGELES, CA
04 BOSTON, MA	09 TAMPA, FL	14 AUSTIN, TX	19 SACRAMENTO, CA	
05 NEW YORK, NY	10 CHICAGO, IL	15 BENTONVILLE, AR	20 SAN JOSE, CA	
06 NEW JERSEY, NJ	11 COLUMBUS, OH	16 DETROIT, MI	21 SEATTLE, WA	
07 WASHINGTON, DC	12 HOUSTON, TX	17 DENVER, CO	22 LAS VEGAS, NV	

(New Jersey, Dallas, San Jose 12 hr fasting prayer Other Cities : 7 pm - 10 pm)

**21 CITIES
& DATES**

www.americabelongstojesus.net | Email: jrusa@jesusredeems.org

Tel +1 408 329 6899

Hear the stories that will
transform your life through
the power of the Holy Spirit!



Listen to content that will edify your spirit
and grow you closer to Jesus.

www.charismapodcastnetwork.com

FEATURES

SPECIAL EDITION

6 COVER STORY

The Crux of Christianity

This Easter, take time to remember what separates Christianity from every other religion

By Ben Godwin

SPECIAL EDITION

8

Why the Cross Should Give Us Courage

What other religion brags about the death of its leader? Such a notion is so scandalous that no earthly mind conceived it

By Bob Sorge

14

Jesus Goes to Hollywood

Tinseltown is releasing a flood of faith-based films and TV shows, creating an unparalleled opportunity to spread the Good News. Could Hollywood help Christianity make a comeback?

By Troy Anderson and Anne Mount

34

The Shroud and the Savior

New findings from a study of the Shroud of Turin may reinforce the faith of many who are not quite sure about Christ's Resurrection

By Kenneth E. Stevenson

42

Resurrected

History is full of false messiahs. What separates Jesus Christ is the miracle of the Resurrection

By Dr. Michael Brown





Lift Your Spiritual Style

with **“Wanna Catch These Prayer Hands”!**

The playful twist of “Wanna Catch These Hands” phrase shares the timeless Bible message “I’m praying for you.”

Wear your faith with Christ’s love and joy. Make a daring statement that sparks connections and opportunities to share your faith.

SHOP NOW



MyCharismaShop.com

CHARISMA 

THE CRUX OF CHRISTIANITY

Why the Resurrection is the linchpin of our faith

BY BEN GODWIN

Christianity stands alone as the only religion whose founder came back from the dead. This month, millions of believers will celebrate the greatest event in history—the Resurrection of Christ. How ironic that the world’s best news came from a graveyard. The Easter story is the linchpin that holds Christianity together. Without the cross and the Resurrection, the gospel crumbles like a house of cards.

What is unique about Christianity is Jesus. He alone can claim a virgin birth, a virtuous life, a vicarious death and a victorious Resurrection. By defeating death, Christ validated His claim to divinity, activated His atoning work on Calvary, separated Christianity from all other religions and indicated the future resurrection of the saints (1 Cor. 15:12-23).

Religion is man’s effort to reach God, but Christianity is God’s effort to reach man. When man reaches up, that’s ordinary religion. When God reaches down, that’s what makes Christianity special.

To that end, the most crucial element of Christianity is undoubtedly the cross. The old saying is true: “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

First Corinthians 1:18 reminds us, “For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” To believers worldwide, the cross is still the main thing.

The cross is more than a mere historical event, more than a fashion accessory for jewelry. It is the centerpiece of the gospel, the focal point of human history and God’s masterpiece. The cross is a bridge that connects a loving God to a lost humanity. The Romans used crosses to torture, humiliate and eliminate their political enemies. God used the cross to conquer our spiritual enemies—sin, Satan and death. God took a sadistic instrument of torture and turned it into a universal icon of hope and salvation.

D. L. Moody explained the necessity of the cross: “I must die or get someone else to die for me. If the Bible doesn’t teach that, it doesn’t teach anything. And that is where the atonement of Christ comes in.”

This principle is at work even in the natural food chain—something must die in order for something else to live. I’ll

never forget driving behind a truck headed to a local chicken processing plant. My son, who was 5 or 6 at the time, asked me where they were taking the cages full of chickens. I delicately tried to tell him that those live chickens would be turned into chicken fingers and nuggets. His response was priceless. He said, “Dad, let’s join hands and pray together that all those chickens escape.”

Jesus could have escaped (Matt. 26:53). Instead, He became our scapegoat on the cross. In Old Testament times, the sins of Israel were confessed over a scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The Hebrew word for scapegoat is Azazel, meaning “the goat of departure.” Once the sins of Israel were transferred to the goat, it was released to wander in the wilderness, never to be seen again. Symbolically, their sins were removed from them (Ps. 103:12). Notice a double transfer transpired—their sins were transferred to the scapegoat; the innocence of the animal was transferred to them.

Something similar took place on the cross. Jesus became our substitute and paid our penalty of sin—death. Isaiah 53:5 explains, “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.”

Imagine a young woman was caught speeding in California and ordered to appear in court. The judge enforced the law and fined her \$100. Then he stepped down from behind the bench, removed his judicial robe and opened his own wallet. He took out a \$100 bill and paid the woman’s fine because she was his daughter. Likewise, our heavenly Father sentenced us for our sin, but then He paid our penalty by sending His Son to die on the cross as our substitute.

Charles Spurgeon, the great British preacher, summarized his entire theology with four simple words: “He died for me.” Paul penned his agreement in Romans 5:8, writing, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

But I may prefer the lyrics to the Oak Ridge Boys’ classic song “I Should Have Been Crucified” best of all: “I should have been crucified/ I should have suffered and died/ I should have hung on the cross in disgrace/ But Jesus, God’s Son, took my place.”

Jesus was crucified at a place called by the Hebrew term *Golgotha* and the Latin term *Calvary*. They both mean “the place of the skull.” It was called this either because the hill resembled a human skull or because skulls littered that place of execution. Only God could take such a cursed place and turn it into the greatest blessing for all mankind.

The geographical center of London is a place known as Charing Cross. There is a train station there, and you can find your way anywhere in the city from that location. Once a little boy got separated from his parents in London and was lost. A policeman found him crying and tried to comfort him. When he got the boy settled, he asked, “Can I take you home, son?” The boy replied, “Oh no, sir, take me to the cross, and I’ll find my way home.”

This Easter season, take time to revisit the cross. If you get to the cross, you’ll find your way home. Minus the cross, there is no Easter, no Christianity, no salvation, no reason to have church, and we are hopelessly lost in our sins. I enjoy egg hunts and chocolate bunnies as much as anybody, but nothing can replace the cross—it’s the crux of Christianity. ◀

BEN GODWIN is the pastor of Goodsprings Full Gospel Church in Goodsprings, Alabama. He is an author and host of a weekly telecast, The Word Workshop. To learn more, visit bengodwin.org.

mycharisma.com

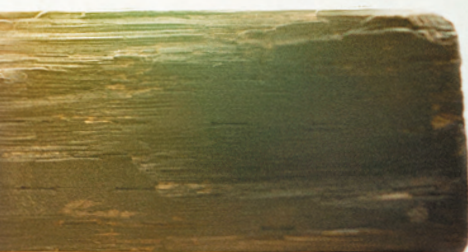


A person with long blonde hair, wearing a white robe, is holding a dark wooden cross. The person's face is partially visible at the top, looking down. The background is a bright, warm light. The text "WHY THE CROSS SHOULD GIVE US COURAGE" is overlaid in large white serif font.

WHY THE CROSS SHOULD GIVE US COURAGE

BY BOB SORGE

What other religion brags on the death of its leader? What do you do with a crucified God?



The cross is the emblem of our faith. Someone might argue that the empty tomb should be the emblem.

I disagree because the compelling distinctive of Christianity is not that God is alive; many other world religions believe that. The compelling distinctive of our faith is that God died.

What other religion brags on the death of its leader? Such a notion is so scandalous that no earthly mind conceived it. This came from heaven. The cross is the balance beam of Christianity. Every excessive doctrine has strayed from its centrality. You're never safer than when clinging to the cross. If you can't get something through the cross, don't take it with you.

Some tend to avoid mentioning the cross. Their concern is that it might repel seekers. But Jesus seemed to see it differently: "And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32). The cross has a gravity all its own. You don't have to defend the cross; just exalt the cross, and it will draw people to Jesus.

When you truly see the cross, it fills your screen. It is the elephant in the room. It's gripping, arresting, unavoidable and inescapable. When you see the cross, how can you just go on with your day? How do you get past the contorted nakedness, the wheezing, gasping lungs, the fire in His eyes or the flame in His heart? What do you do with a crucified God? Make your boast in the crucified Christ. The blood is our banner and the shame is

our glory. Make much of the cross! Speak much of what Thomas Dubay called "consummate splendor in monstrous horror."

We had a pretty nice religion there for a while, until the cross came along. The cross changed everything. It ripped the innards out. It came through like a tsunami and swept the place clean of propriety, dignity and modesty. You can't even have your clothes.

Now, nothing is safe. The cross demands everything. Love came along like a torrential river, caught up Christ in its mighty currents and carried Him to His death. If that same current grabs your legs, it'll sweep you to your death too. But losing your life, you'll find it.

What's Inside Will Come Out

If you want to see what's inside a man, nail him to a tree, and what's inside will come out. Jesus is known for saying seven things during the crucifixion. When they pierced Him, here's what came out:

1) Forgiveness: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Jesus spoke these words while they drove nails in His hands.

2) Promise: "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Jesus spoke these words to the crucified thief who called on Him.

3) Compassion: "When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time, this disciple took her to his own home" (John 19:26-27). Jesus appointed His mother's care.

4) Loyalty: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). In His darkest hour,

He still called His Father “My God.”

5) Longing: “I thirst” (John 19:28). Jesus longed for His Father.

6) Confidence: “It is finished” (John 19:30). The work of the cross had been accomplished.

7) Surrender: “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Luke 23:46).

The presiding executioner was so stunned at what came out of this crucified Nazarene that he exclaimed,



don't understand my pain.” You can't get lower than the cross. In sufferings, Jesus sank lower than the most contemptible human being. But herein lies the glory of the cross. Like a giant dipper, it reaches below the lowest human specimen and lifts us up into the glorious inheritance of the children of God.

David's Greatest Honor

The greatest honor of David's life was not that he wrote some of the greatest psalms of the Bible. The greatest honor in David's life was not that he was crowned king of Israel or that he was an ancestor to the Messiah. The greatest honor in David's life was being quoted three times on the cross: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”; “I thirst!”; and “Into Your hands I commit My spirit.”

When Jesus was in the throes of ultimate suffering and seeking vocabulary to express the anguish of His soul, He reached back to David, implying, “David wrote it the way I feel it right now!” Let me ask, what kind of journey would you have to walk in order to write the kind of thing Jesus would want to quote on His cross?

“Whenever I hear that ancient accusation, “He’s withholding from you,” I just go back to the cross.”

“Truly, this Man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39). Forgiveness, promise, compassion, loyalty, longing, confidence, surrender. These are the things I want coming out of me when I’m being crucified!

Jesus created the human body for crucifixion. At creation, while Jesus was fashioning a human body for Himself, I can imagine the Father saying, “Son, are You sure You want to put all those nerve endings in the hands like that? That’s where they’re going to put the nails. Son, are You sure You want to put all those nerves in the feet like that? That’s where they’re going to put the nail.”

And I imagine the Son replying, “Yes, Abba, I know. I want to feel their sorrows in the very depths of My being.”

No one has suffered like God. No one can look at God and say, “But You

This makes sense of the extremity of David's bitter cup. His sufferings brought him into a unique identification with the crucified Savior. What seemed at the time to be abandonment by God was in actuality unparalleled union with God. No angel gets a cross. It's too high an honor for angels. No angel gets a cross, and no angel gets a resurrection. You get both. It's your highest dignity.

Satan's Ancient Accusation

Whenever I'm hurting, I make my way back to the cross. When I can't see my way forward, I go back to the cross. Whenever I hear that ancient accusation, “He's withholding from you,” I just go back to the cross. I call it “ancient” because it goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden when Satan essentially said to Eve, “God is withholding from

you the fruit that would make you everything you were meant to be.” Perhaps you've heard some of these accusations:

» “God is withholding from you the job that would maximize your giftings and potential.”

» “God is withholding from you the healing that would release you into fruitful service.”

» “God is withholding from you the spouse you long for.”

» “God is withholding from you the ministry opportunities that would make you flourish.”

» “God is withholding from you the blessing He could easily give you.”

Whenever I hear these accusations, I just go back to the cross—because the cross nails that accusation. When I come to the cross, I don't see a God who's withholding from me. Rather, I see a God with nails in His hands and feet who spreads His arms and says to me, “I give you My mind. I give you My soul. I give you My heart. I give you My flesh. I give you My strength. I give you My last breath. I give you My last drop of blood.”

When I come to the cross, I don't see a stingy God but a God who's giving me His best, His everything. That's why I declare that my God withholds nothing from me. And if He hasn't healed me yet, it's because He knows how to write the story better than I do.

His cross now gives me the courage to stand on my nail, spread my arms and say to my Beloved: “I love You with all my heart, all my mind, all my soul and all my strength. I am Yours, and You are mine.”

They Didn't Know What They Were Doing

When Jesus stood before Him, Pilate didn't know what he was doing. As Jesus said, “They know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Pilate didn't know he would one day stand before the Man standing before him now. None of Jesus' enemies knew what they were doing at the cross. But neither did His friends.

Simon of Cyrene, for example, didn't know what he was doing. He didn't know he was carrying on his back a beam that we would be singing about today (Matt. 27:32). He didn't know the post across his shoulders was the lightning rod of God's wrath. He didn't know that as he

What you *believe* determines who you will *be* and how you will *live*

Friends, there is nothing more important than what you believe in your heart about God! No matter what circumstances may look like today, you can boldly declare like the Apostle Paul, "I believe God! It will be just as He said!"

Learn:

- Insights to align your life with God's plan
- Guidance to prepare for the battles ahead
- Harnessing the power of your words
- Strengthening your mind
- Recognizing God's protection over you
- Overcoming the enemy



Get your copy of "I Believe God" today!
pastorjoramsay.com/ibelievegod



f i G+ @PASTORJOANNERAMSAY

PASTORJORAMSAY.COM

FOR PRAYER CALL: (855) 505-2297 (TOLL FREE)

PO BOX 9175, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23450

came under the burden of that beam—producing perspiration on his brow—the Man walking next to him was carrying a much heavier burden up that hill—the sins of the whole world.

Mary of Bethany was another friend who didn't know what she was doing, either. When she poured fragrant oil on Jesus' feet (John 12:3), she didn't know that Jesus' burial would be so rushed there wouldn't be enough time for the standard Jewish treatment of spices. She didn't know she was anointing His body for burial (John 12:7).

Nor did Joseph of Arimathea know what he was doing when he asked Pilate for permission to bury Christ's body (John 19:38). He didn't know that as he lowered the corpse from the cross, his neck was being soiled with the blood that was taking away the sins of the world. He didn't know his garments were being stained with the most powerful detergent in the universe.

And when you come to the cross, you probably don't know what you do,

to stop. The same verse says that to God, "a thousand years [is] as one day." So that an event which we look back upon and say, "That happened 2,000 years ago," was for God merely a couple days ago.

God has not forgotten even a modicum of the terror and horror of Calvary. It's as fresh in His mind today as the moment it happened—which is what makes the blood of Christ so powerful. When you place your faith in the work of Christ's cross, Abba Father opens the storehouses of His heart and lavishes upon you the riches of His grace, the abundance of His acceptance and the fullness of His mercy. You probably don't know it, but your simple prayer turns heaven inside out. And it's all because you place your faith in the cross of Christ.

The cross opens the most preposterous possibility imaginable: God now justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5). I denied Him, betrayed Him, tried Him, delivered Him to Pilate, scourged Him, beat Him, spat on Him, crowned Him with thorns, pounded nails into His body, mocked

the cross; you must judge the cross. Either it's the greatest hoax of history or it's something altogether worth dying for. You be the judge. Behold this spectacle today and once again affirm your loyalty to the cross of Jesus Christ. Pastors, put the cross at the center of your preaching. Worship leaders, make the cross the center of your worship. I call on every believer to put the cross back at the center of our affections.

In Jesus' time, Joseph of Arimathea was prominent in the 70-member Sanhedrin (the ruling council of the Jews in Jerusalem). The Sanhedrin would automatically disfellowship from their synagogues anyone who professed allegiance to Jesus. For that reason, Joseph told no one of his personal faith in Christ. He knew if he went public, he would lose his membership, his status, his income stream, his favor, his influence—everything he had labored all his years to achieve. He had faith, but he just kept it to himself.

Then the cross happened. When Joseph watched Jesus agonizing on the cross, something changed inside. He decided to go public with his faith. Here's what the Scripture says about it: "Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable member of the Council, who also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus" (Mark 15:43).

The cross gave Joseph the courage to publicly confess his faith. By asking for Jesus' corpse, he was revealing his solidarity with this crucified carpenter. When you truly see the cross, it will have the same effect on you. The extravagance of His sacrifice infuses you with courage to risk everything and give your all for Him.

Look at the cross. Then gather your courage and let everyone know, "I swear my head, my heart and my soul to the cross of Jesus Christ." I dare you to stand at the foot of the cross today and tell the world, "I'm with Him." ♦

BOB SORGE *is an author, itinerant speaker and author of many books, including The Chastening of the Lord: The Forgotten Doctrine. You can find him online at bobsorge.com.*



"When I come to the cross, I don't see a stingy God but a God who's giving me His best, His everything."

either. When you take the cross on your lips and ask for the blood of Jesus to wash your sins, you probably don't realize how deeply you touch God at the center of His being. Just mention the blood, and God relives everything that happened on that cross. There's a verse that says, "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3:8). The day Christ's flayed flesh hung on that cross seemed, to God, to last a thousand years. It just never seemed

Him and thrust a spear in His side. In return, He put a ring on my finger, a robe on my back, sandals on my feet and gave me the family fortune. What kind of love is this?

The Cross Gives Courage

"Here is the Man!" Pilate cried (John 19:5). That invitation continues to rumble through the centuries. Look again upon the cross. You can't dismiss

THERE IS A GLOBAL CRISIS IN PASTORAL TRAINING

This Easter millions of people will flock to churches around the world. Millions will hear their pastors preach about the most significant event in human history.

**95% OF THOSE PASTORS HAVE
NO FORMAL TRAINING**

DOWNLOAD

Download your copy of "The Global Crisis in Pastoral Training" now, and we'll include a free sample of our pastor training resource.

21C 
INTERNATIONAL

ENCOURAGING, EQUIPPING, AND EMPOWERING PASTORS AROUND THE WORLD.
21CINTERNATIONAL.ORG



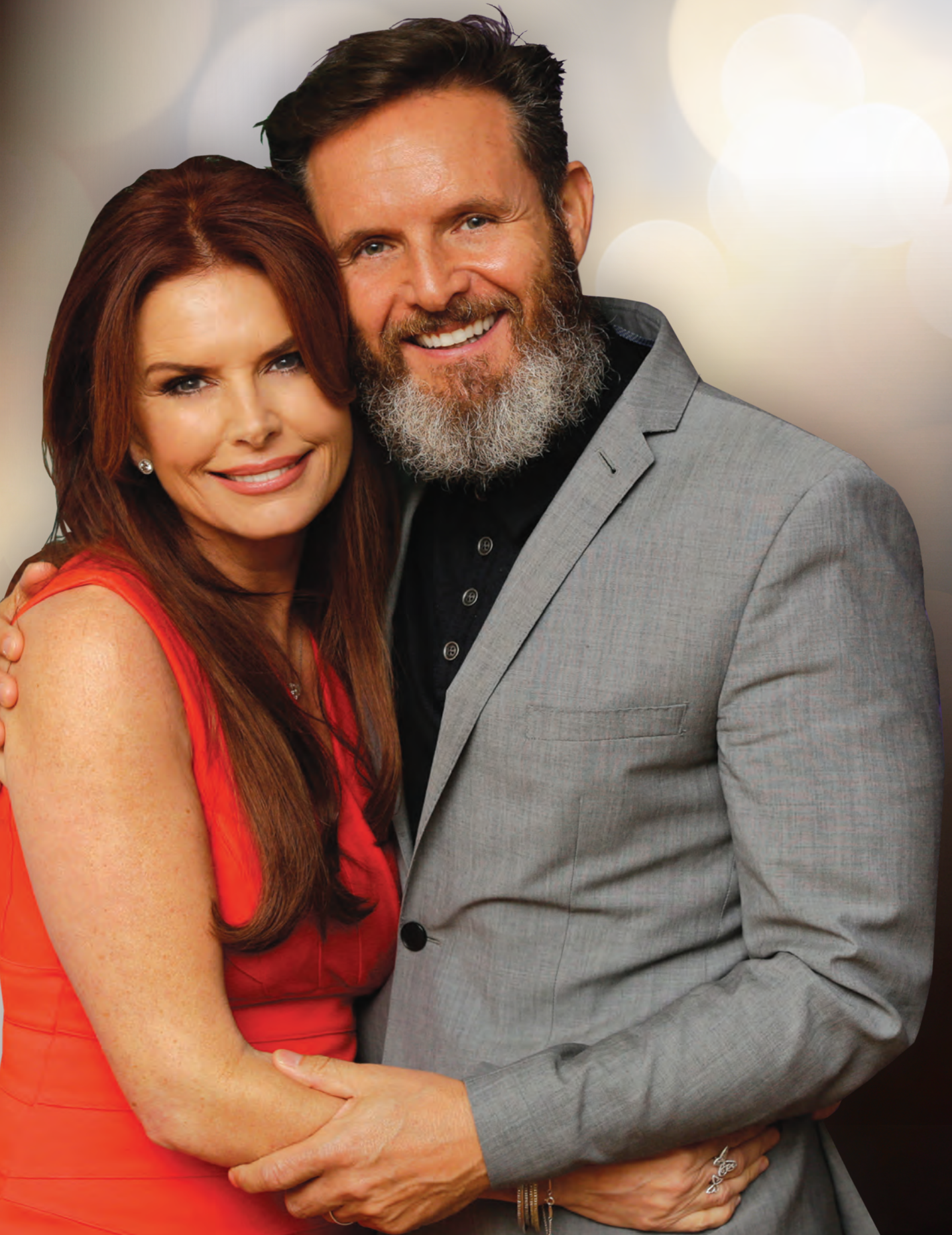
HOLLYWOOD
REPORT

HOLLYWOOD, JESUS & THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY TROY ANDERSON AND ANNE MOUNT

This Easter, the *A.D. The Bible Continues* television series by **ROMA DOWNEY & MARK BURNETT** will bring to life on screen the resurrection of Jesus, the Day of Pentecost and the birth of the church. With the flood of faith films hitting theaters, many say believers have an unprecedented opportunity to spread the Good News. Will Hollywood help Christianity make a comeback, regain its influence in culture and inspire another spiritual awakening?

continued »



It's the Day of Pentecost—not long after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven.

Suddenly, a cacophony of voices begins to build.

A sound, like a "rushing mighty wind," fills the house in Jerusalem.

As the disciples and others pray in Aramaic, Greek, Hebrew, Parthian, Latin, Egyptian and in Mesopotamian tongues, flames grow brighter and brighter around them.

A light in the room intensifies, whitening out the disciples, and others in the room cower and cover their heads. The flames gather and swirl around the disciples—now ecstatic—as they recite The Lord's Prayer.

The wind, noise and flames reach a climax and then stop as suddenly as they arrived.

Now there is silence, darkness and stillness as the disciples stand in a circle—shaken by the encounter. They slowly open their eyes. All are out of breath as if they've just run for miles.

Peter then breaks the circle and goes to the shutters, flinging them open as the dark room is bathed in the dawn's light—the light of a dazzling, new Jerusalem. He glows with a supernatural energy as he turns to the room full of disciples and others.

"Now we can leave this place," Peter says. "Now we spread His Word."

For this Easter, the Day of Pentecost comes alive as producers Mark Burnett and Roma Downey's 12-part *A.D. The Bible Continues* television series starts on NBC—featuring an unexpected new star.

"The Holy Spirit is the star of *A.D.*," Downey, best known for her role in *Touched by an Angel*, told *Charisma* during a recent interview at her Malibu, California home overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

"The Holy Spirit is mentioned (nearly 60 times) in the book of Acts and when He arrives in our show it's in a beautiful, incredible Pentecostal scene. You are going to love it when you see it."

As millions of people throughout the world watch this powerful scene this Easter, many are asking whether the

A.D. series and a flood of Bible films and TV shows could help Christianity not only make a comeback and regain its lost influence in the culture, but take the gospel message to a lost and deceived generation.

In recent years, it's seemed as though the world's largest faith has been on the rocks. Overall church attendance is plateaued or declining—though the Pentecostal/charismatic movement is growing rapidly. The percentage of the "nones," the religiously unaffiliated, has soared from 8 percent in 1990 to 20 percent. Meanwhile, the "New Atheists" are declaring the pending death of Christianity, many believe the "Great Falling Away" is underway, and most agree morality is in a free fall.

Amid these disturbing trends, something completely unexpected has occurred—Hollywood has inexplicably stepped up and is releasing a flurry of faith films and TV shows.

"In 2015, Christianity may be making a comeback," says Phil Cooke, a filmmaker, media consultant and an internationally-known writer. "Hollywood apparently saw it coming."

Is Jesus Making a Comeback?

Kate Linder, a longtime actress on *The Young and the Restless* who starred in the recent film *Miss Meadows*, says it seems Hollywood is trying to figure out how it can "get back on track."

"I think what's happening is the world has just gotten a little crazy and people are searching for things to hang onto," Linder told *Charisma* while attending Movieguide's 23rd Annual Faith & Values Awards Gala in Universal City, California. "For me, it's always important to go back to the basics and remember where we have come from."

The *A.D.* television series is just one of many Bible-based TV shows and films coming out over the next few years. Arriving on the heels of last year's record-breaking box office hits *Son of God*, *God's Not Dead* and *Heaven is for Real*, Hollywood is releasing a deluge of faith entertainment. In fact, these films and TV shows were so plentiful—and profitable—that commentators dubbed 2014 "The Year of the Christian Film."

continued »



Roman soliders watch as a supernatural light shines out of Jesus' tomb



A.D. Producer Roma Downey oversees filming in Morocco



A.D. Producer Roma Downey with Vincent Regan, who played Pilate, on the set in Morocco



Peter, played by Adam Levy, in A.D.

Largely driven by the runaway success of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (\$630 million) a decade ago, *The Chronicles of Narnia* series (\$1.6 billion) and more recently Burnett and Downey's *The Bible* series, which has been seen by more than 100 million people, numerous faith films and TV shows are now on their way to theaters and people's living rooms.

This includes a new film from the producers of *God's Not Dead* entitled *Do You Believe?* (March), Pastor John Hagee's *Four Blood Moons* (March), *Hillsong: Let Hope Rise* (April), *David and Goliath* (April), *Mary* with Ben Kingsley and Julia Ormond (April), Alex and Stephen Kendrick's *War Room* (August), *Captive* (September), *90 Minutes in Heaven* (October), Bill O'Reilly's *Killing Jesus* (2015), *Polycarp* (2015), Anne Rice's *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* (March 2016) and *Ben-Hur* (2016).

Meanwhile, Brad Pitt has mulled playing *Pontius Pilate*, director Ridley Scott is considering a *King David* film and there are plans for a remake of *The Ten Commandments*.

"I think God is definitely working in this," says Korie Robertson, a star

years. It's just unbelievable. It's definitely God at work."

Robertson says Christians "better take" advantage of this opportunity to spread the gospel via the world's most influential medium.

"Don't let it pass us by," Robertson says. "I think it's time for us to jump in there with both feet and do what we are called to do—spread His Word."

Will Jesus 'Change the World' via Hollywood?

In an especially inspirational scene in

with fish, Peter asks Jesus, "How did this happen?"

Jesus tells him, "Come with me." "What are we going to do?" Peter asks. "Change the world," Jesus says.

Since Christ walked the earth 2,000 years ago, He and his followers have certainly done that. Now, many are asking whether Hollywood could be the vehicle through which Jesus radically changes the world once again.

"Are we changing the world?" Morgado asked rhetorically as he fielded questions from *Charisma* on the red



Diogo Morgado, who played Jesus in *Son of God*, and Darwin Shaw, who played Peter, field questions at the 23rd Annual Movieguide Awards



Duck Dynasty star Korie Robertson, left, and her family, pose for a picture with Movieguide founder Dr. Ted Baehr at the Movieguide Awards

on the A&E show *Duck Dynasty* who accepted The Epiphany Prize at the Movieguide gala. "I've been talking to people in the industry who are telling us how their attitudes have changed toward Christianity over the last few

the *Son of God* film produced by Burnett and Downey, Jesus (played by actor Diogo Morgado) tells Peter (Darwin Shaw) to drop his nets again even though there are "no fish out there."

After pulling in a net bursting

carpet. "We're always trying to change the world and for me all that matters is that we keep pushing for good things and for love because the message of Jesus Christ was that—it was being kind to each other and loving each other."

Morgado says the world is in desperate need of Jesus' love and the massive popularity of *The Bible* series, the box office success of *Son of God* and the *A.D.* series are "just a reflection of that sense of craving."

"I think the younger generation is a little bit lost sometimes with no sense of direction and so I'm saying there is definitely a new wave of opportunities (with faith-based films and TV shows) that can inspire and touch people—and that's tremendous," Morgado says.

Shaw, who accompanied Morgado on the red carpet, says the doors of Hollywood are open for "re-examining

Simply Christ

Gospel Insight

with Keith Surface

Pornography is Adultery

Religious surveys from several years ago told us that 68% of men in evangelical churches along with 53% of the pastors regularly view pornography. You would think that exposing such numbers would cause shock and repentance, but actually the opposite is true. When people see that such a large percentage of church people are involved in such a thing, they feel consoled that they are not the only one partaking of the uncleanness. It's as though they think if so many are doing it then it must be normal or even acceptable. This is what the Apostle Paul called "strong delusion." II Thessalonians 2:11.

The use of pornography is adultery! The use of pornography is an act of fornication. There is no statement that is more supported by the word of God than this. Jesus himself told us, "*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" Matthew 5:28. What is the use of pornography but the act of looking upon an unclothed woman to stimulate and fulfill your lusts?

According to Jesus' words, a married man that uses pornography is an adulterer before God. An unmarried man that uses pornography is what the Bible calls a "*fornicator*" or "*whoremonger*." The same is true for women who use pornography. If both a man and a wife use pornography together, they have what is called an open marriage. They have perverted the sanctity of marriage by bringing the uncleanness of others into their own bed.

What is equally if not more shocking, is the percentage of pastors who confess to using pornography. If these survey percentages are true, then over half the pastors in evangelical churches are adulterers and they are ministering their adulterous spirit to those who hear them. Some of these pastors think because they openly admit it, they are somehow demonstrating their humility. No! These are those the Apostle Paul spoke of whose "*glory is in their shame.*" Philippians 3:9.

Those who tell you that adulterous lusts are normal for a child of God are lying to you. They may believe it, but it is still a lie. The Apostle Peter told us the redeemed have "*...escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*" II Peter 1:4. The very essence of salvation is the cleansing of our hearts from sin by the work of the blood of Christ. I do not present myself as your example, but I can honestly tell you that Jesus washed the filth out of my unclean heart over forty years ago, and has kept it clean from lusts all these years.

Those involved in pornography are in danger of eternal damnation and most do not even know it. They are dangling over the Lake of Fire, hanging only by a thread which could break at any time. Their pastors and teachers tell them they are alright, but it is not the truth. The word of God is clear, "*...but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*" Hebrews 13:4. Paul also told us "*Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, ... shall inherit the kingdom of God.*" I Corinthians 6:9-10. Those who tell you differently are the ones deceiving you.

I speak these things to those involved in this perversion because I care for your soul more than I care for your admiration. Jesus Christ shed his blood to take away your sin and purify your heart. You can continue ignoring God's word, and join those of whom the Bible says, "*... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*" II Thessalonians 2:11-12, or you can be one who lays hold of Jesus Christ in repentance and faith until he washes the uncleanness from your heart. Your eternity hangs in the balance.

If we cannot be
free why did
Jesus say we
would be?

Free
Paperback
Order Now

Behold the Lamb
Publications

What is
Freedom
from Sin?

"...how sayest thou, Ye shall
be made free?"
John 8:33

by Leroy Surface

Behold the Lamb PO Box 750 Porter, TX 77365

Is Christianity Making a Comeback? It is in Hollywood

The “New Atheists” say God is dead, but surveys suggest Hollywood and the public aren’t buying it. This year it will be obvious that Christianity is back.

Everywhere we turn today the “New Atheists” are proclaiming that religious belief is dead. After all (as they say), *no one in their right mind could actually believe in God anymore*. But while nonbelieving cultural elites in media, academia and entertainment may be the *loudest* voices in the room, a new Pew Research Study indicates they’re becoming the smallest group in the room. Among its findings:

- » Of all U.S. adults, 73 percent believes Jesus was born to a virgin.
- » Up to 81 percent believes the baby Jesus was actually laid in a manger.
- » And 74 percent believes an angel announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds nearby.

And just when you thought these numbers reflected the Bible Belt, it turns out that 54 percent of liberals believes in the virgin birth, and for adults with postgraduate degrees, 53 percent affirms the virgin birth of Jesus.

So the question is: In what seems to be a secular culture, where has Christianity been?

Early in the 20th century, the church embraced motion pictures and radio, then television and now the Internet and social media. But in the vast majority of cases today, we’re not using those platforms to engage the greater culture, but instead living inside a bubble. From the web, to publishing, to record labels, TV networks, universities and more, the last 50 years have seen a remarkable withdrawal from mainstream culture and a move back to a cloistered, protective bubble.

In all honesty, the church hasn’t been losing its voice, we’ve been giving it away. As a result, we’ve lost remarkable influence in the culture. So while the majority of the population still professes religious belief, will Christianity ever regain its influence in the culture? I believe it can, and there are plenty of signposts:

» Vibrant churches are growing in major urban centers around the United States. Young pastors who have a passion for their cities find it difficult to locate facilities large enough for the crowds.

» A new generation of talented writers, filmmakers, musicians, and other artists are unapologetic about their faith. They’re breaking out of traditional Christian-branded record labels, film distributors and publishers, and finding success with mainstream audiences.

» Episodic television programs like Mark Burnett and Roma Downey’s *The Bible* series broke audience records in the United States. Their new series, *A.D. The Bible Continues*, based on the New Testament book of Acts, debuts this Spring.

» In 2017, the **Museum of the Bible** opens in Washington, D.C. The magnificent, state-of-the-art museum is under construction and will showcase the history, story and impact of the Bible in the world.

» I’m an executive producer of the movie *Let Hope Rise*, a concert feature film on the world’s most popular worship band, Hillsong United. A major Hollywood studio—Warner Brothers—is releasing the film nationwide in April.

Honestly, it shouldn’t be a surprise. When the Iron Curtain fell, we discovered that communism couldn’t silence the church, and despite horrific torture and executions by ISIS militants, Christians refuse to recant. So it shouldn’t be shocking that here in the West, for all the criticism and clatter from unbelievers or advertising campaigns from atheists, Christianity is actually growing.

In 2015, it will be obvious that Christianity is back. But truthfully, it never left.

PHIL COOKE, Ph.D., is a filmmaker, media consultant, and author of *Unique: Telling Your Story in the Age of Brands and Social Media*.



Phil Cooke, Ph.D.

these amazing stories which have shaped the foundations of Western society for the last 2,000 years.”

“I think a lot of people have sort of forgotten these stories and they have been sort of lost to the younger generation,” says Shaw, who played Adam in the remake of the 1979 *Jesus* film that has been seen by billions of people and resulted in more than 200 million decisions to follow Jesus. “So anything that actually helps people ... in this complicated world that we are living in is a wonderful thing.”

Will Billions See *The Bible* and *A.D.*?

Just as the *Jesus* film is considered “one of the greatest evangelistic tools of all time,” Burnett—producer of *Survivor* and *The Apprentice*—believes *Son of God*, *The Bible* and the *A.D.* series will also be viewed by an innumerable multitude. In an interview in early 2014, Burnett said *The Bible* series will be “seen in every country of the world. More people will see this series than everything we ever made together—combined. Billions of people will see this series.”

“What we have here, because we are on network television, is the potential to reach an even bigger audience (than *The Bible* miniseries),” Downey says.

The 12-part *A.D.* series begins on April 5, picking up where *The Bible* series left off, and follows the first 10 chapters of the book of Acts exploring the aftermath of Christ’s death and its impact on the disciples and political and religious leaders of the era—“an impact that would completely change the world.”

At a time when films about the Bible are “often gross distortions of what actually happened,” Saddleback Church Pastor Rick Warren says, “you can always count on Mark Burnett and Roma Downey to stay true to the Scriptures, treating miracles as actual miracles.”

“With a stellar track record of both *The Bible* television series and the *Son of God* movie, Mark and Roma are now bringing *A.D.*, the exciting story of ... Acts, to the screen as a gift to the entire

SHARE GOD'S LOVE THIS EASTER

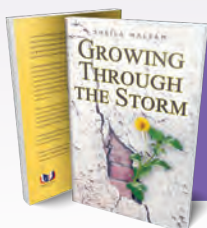
Pray It Forward

Memories in our lifetime include joy, struggles, and challenges. Along life's journey, unexpected blessings from God often grace us as unforeseen answers to prayer. This is God's tangible way of showing His love for us.

The Prayer Capsule is a timeless gift that allows you to personalize God's expression of love for others.

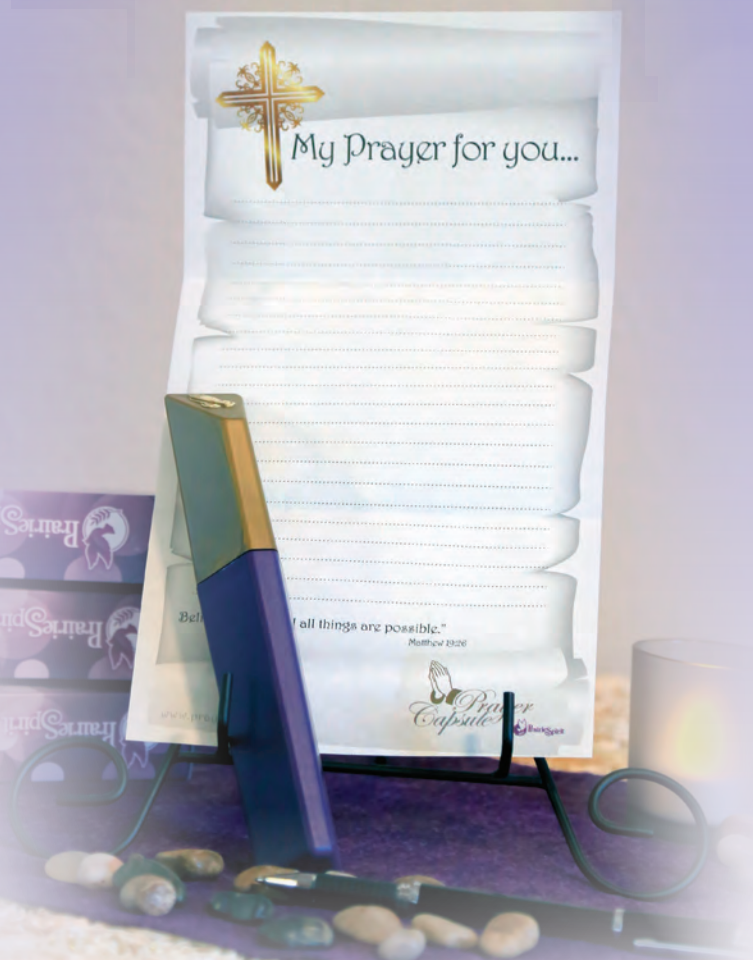
This Easter, Pray It Forward and share God's love with others.

PURCHASE HERE



Available on
amazon.com

FREE Chapter Download
Growing Through the Storm




*Prayer
Capsule*
by  **Prairie Spirit**

church,” Warren says.

Number of Faith Films Soaring

The release of *A.D., The Bible, Son of God* and similar films and TV shows is, in a way, the culmination of decades of hard work by such figures as Dr. Ted Baehr, founder of Movieguide (movieguide.org), Karen Covell, founder of the Hollywood Prayer Network (hollywoodprayernetwork.org), John Ware, founder of the 168 Film Project, and many others.

For 23 years, Baehr has prepared the Annual Report to the Entertainment Industry showing that moviegoers prefer “clean, heroic, family-friendly movies with Christian, biblical, redemptive, conservative, and patriotic faith and values.”

For example, 90 percent of the top 10 movies in 2014 contained strong or very strong Christian, redemptive, biblical and moral worldviews, including *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, *Frozen* and *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies*. Last year, movies with very strong Christian, redemptive worldviews following biblical principles averaged \$67 million at the box office compared to \$20 million for movies with very strong non-Christian worldviews.

From 1991 to 2014, the percentage of movies with at least some Christian, redemptive content increased from 10 percent to 62 percent.

“I think God would love to have this happen consistently,” Baehr says. “God is interested in redeeming the media and I just see that He’s been able to get some people’s hearts and minds (in Hollywood) changed so they want to do just that.”

Pat Boone, a legendary singer and actor who starred in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and *The Cross and the Switchblade*, says he’s thrilled by the transformation in Hollywood.

“The films like *Fireproof*, *Heaven Is for Real* and *God’s Not Dead* have done extremely well at the box office and the film industry is realizing there is a huge market out there that doesn’t want zombies, vampires and every kind of violence and depravity known to human beings,” says Boone, who plays “Doc



The legendary actor and singer Pat Boone at the Movieguide Awards

Woods” in the recent faith-based film *Booneville Redemption*.

“Ted Baehr keeps pointing out that if you want to be a success and make money with your films, make something that the whole family can go see. That’s what built Hollywood to begin with.”

Boone says film and television are “so powerful and influential” that God isn’t “going to relinquish them.”

“In fact, I don’t think we came up with (films and TV shows) ourselves,” Boone says. “I think He meant it for good because films like *The Ten Commandments* have always been huge

box-office winners. The biggest ones have almost always been ones with some kind of faith element in them and now they’re coming back.”

Growing Demand for Bible Movies

As demand for faith-based entertainment grows, Hollywood seems to be listening. A recent survey by LifeWay Research found 56 percent of Americans indicated they want more movies with Christian values.

“Faith-based movies are no longer a niche,” LifeWay Research Vice President Scott McDonnell says. “It’s smart economics—if you make a film that appeals to that audience, they will show up.”

Randall Wallace, the screenwriter for *Braveheart*, says Hollywood has discovered there is an influential audience that craves movies that respect and recognize the importance of a spiritual search.

“I intend to do more movies that celebrate our faith because I believe everyone craves inspiration and authentic spiritual connection,” Wallace says.

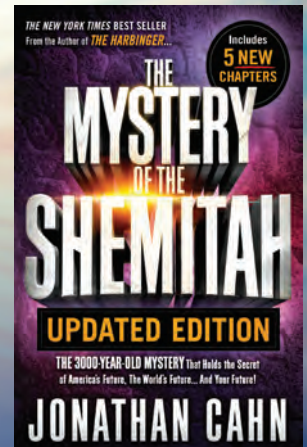
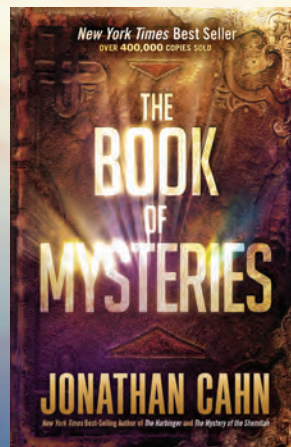
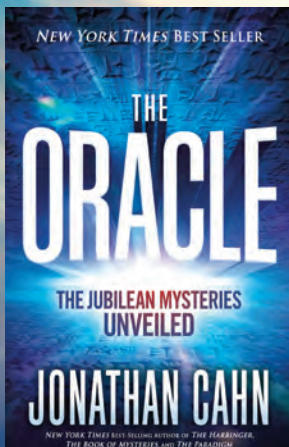
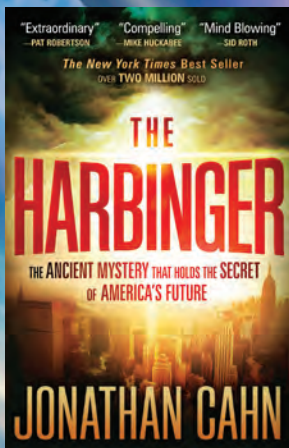
It seems Hollywood is becoming more receptive to faith-based films,



Beginning this Easter, the *A.D. The Bible Continues* series on NBC follows the events taking place after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ

IRENE ANDERSON

Uncover the Prophetic Mysteries in
JONATHAN CAHN'S
Mind-Blowing *New York Times* Best Sellers



Discover the answers that lie behind the prophetic mysteries in Jonathan Cahn's mind-blowing *New York Times* best sellers. Once you discover these ancient keys, you will see the truth lying behind the events overtaking our world today, and you will never see the world the same way again!



Get your copies NOW!
BooksByJonathanCahn.com

How to Be an Ambassador for Christ in Hollywood

It's easy to lose your way in the 'world's most influential mission field.' Mimi Sagadin and other believers offer tips on navigating Hollywood.

When Mimi Sagadin got her first role on a Hollywood set as actress Emma Thompson's stand-in, she was ecstatic. She never dreamed God would help her fulfill her childhood dream of becoming an actress. Yet she remembered the real reason she was there when an unbeliever on the set joked that they might as well "hurry up and die to see what's on the other side."

Without missing a beat, Sagadin replied, "I know what's on the other side." The ensuing conversation was a divine appointment that opened the door to sharing the gospel. She recounts a number of similar opportunities, several of which resulted in people making commitments to Christ. Sagadin compares her most recent role as Corrie ten Boom in *Return to the Hiding Place* to Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. It reminded her of her call: to be an ambassador for Christ in Hollywood.

"We want to be infiltrators," Sagadin says. "We want to be the rivers in the desert of Hollywood."

After all, Hollywood is the world's most influential mission field. Few other industries reach as many people groups around the world. Christians making faith-based films have the chance to produce excellent work that impacts viewers with biblical truths, and on secular sets they have numerous opportunities to share their faith.

One young Christian actor, much to his executive producer's chagrin, inspired his co-workers to stop cursing on the set simply by showcasing Christ with a pure life.

Being a Christian in Hollywood, though, is no walk in the park. Some of the biggest struggles are isolation and depression. Few people working in Hollywood can earn enough to live without a supplemental income. Because of the intense competition and frequent rejections for roles, Christian actors can quickly get discouraged.

In response, Karen Covell started the Hollywood Prayer Network (hollywoodprayer.network.org) in 2001, giving Christian actors and filmmakers an opportunity to connect with a prayer partner. Covell says she tries "to get (believers in Hollywood) connected with other people, to stay strong in their faith, so that they're ready to deal with the spiritual temptation."

This is also why Covell strongly encourages Hollywood Christians to get plugged in to a local church. With that support, they are more effective for Christ in their work and in impacting hearts.

"We will never see a change in the content of Hollywood until we see a change in the hearts of those creating content," Covell says.

Actor, writer and producer Shun Lee Fong also recognizes loneliness and discouragement as major struggles for Christians in Hollywood.

Through Greenhouse Arts & Media (greenhouseproductions.com) and Hollywood Connect (hollywoodconnect.com), he and his peers provide Christians and nonbelievers alike with training in their craft, financial and career advice, networking opportunities and relational support. Fong has a heart for Hollywood because "artists have a prophetic edge in their culture today. Not just locally and nationally, but globally. They're culture-shapers."

Yes, Christians exist in Hollywood, and they desperately need our prayers. They are on the frontlines of a battlefield that Satan does not want to give up. We as Christians can be supportive of our brothers and sisters in Hollywood by getting behind them, giving financially and, above all, interceding for them.

JENNY ROSE CURTIS is a writer and copy editor for Charisma and Charisma Media Group.

says Michael Scott, producer of *Do You Believe?* and *God's Not Dead*.

"Hollywood saw *The Passion of the Christ* come and go and I think this 'stir' is happening a second time, except they saw it in triplicates with *Son of God*, *God's Not Dead* and *Heaven Is for Real*," Scott says.

Scott's hope is that *Do You Believe?* will reach not only the Christian audience, but nonbelievers as well. "This can be our rallying cry," Scott says.

Another indicator of Hollywood's openness to faith-based films is the fact that Tim Gray, president of Gray Media, a media marketing company that promoted *God's Not Dead*, was invited to speak at the Sundance Film Festival about faith on film. It was the first time such a discussion was held, Gray says.

"Sundance is the world's largest independent film festival started by Robert Redford," Gray says. "This panel discussion is a big step. They have recognized, just like the world has recognized, that we are a huge audience. We may be a niche audience, but we are a huge niche."

Ware, founder of the 168 Film Project (168film.com), says the atmosphere in Hollywood presents tremendous opportunities for Christian filmmakers and screenwriters.

"I think if we had 10 amazing scripts to sell that we could sell all of them," Ware says. "We're inviting the church back to Hollywood, which has pretty much excluded it for decades. They are very receptive and that could be a real game changer."

The Passion of the Christ Shook Hollywood

Over the past decade since the blockbuster success of *The Passion of the Christ*, Hollywood has been trying to figure out the Christian market.

Mark Joseph, the founder of the MJM Entertainment Group who helped produce the rock soundtrack for *The Passion of the Christ*, explains it this way:

"Essentially, 9 million people showed up on opening week to see this movie and Hollywood didn't know who they

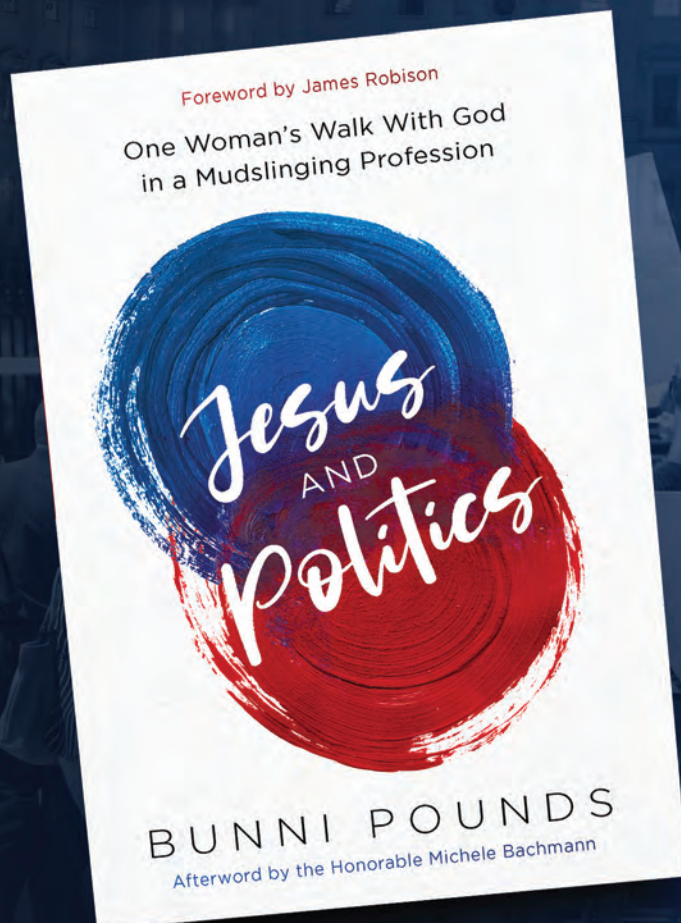


Karen Covell, founder of the Hollywood Prayer Network

The Christian life isn't about doing things the easy way— *it's about living as Christ* *even in a hostile environment.*

Living out the Christian life isn't just a suggestion; it's something we are each called to do. With *Jesus and Politics*, you'll discover how to disciple a nation, one heart at a time by:

- **Cultivating intimacy with Jesus, even in a hostile culture and amid life's pressures.**
- **Effectively sharing the gospel, discipling others, and standing up for the truth in various settings.**
- **Engaging in politics and various spheres of government to protect liberty in America.**



CHARISMA
HOUSE

CHARISMA 

MyCharismaShop.com

were! Think of Hollywood like Coca-Cola. They've been making Coke for 50 years and all of a sudden 9 million new people show up who want a little bit of a different flavor and they are wondering what to do," Joseph says. "So it's taken Hollywood 10 years to try to figure out who these people are and what they want, exactly. They are now in the middle of this process."

Joseph, who has films in the works about President Ronald Reagan and the friendship between *The Lord of the Rings* author J.R.R. Tolkien and *The Chronicles of Narnia* creator C.S. Lewis, adds:

"For the past 50 years, Hollywood has made this extraordinary effort to tell stories, minus the faith. It's a bit bizarre, so if anything, there's a movement to correct that. Faith is nothing to be afraid of. It's often the driving force in a character's life."

Terry Botwick, producer of the *Captive* film about a convict who shot a judge and other court personnel and broke into the home of a woman who read Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* to him and was freed, says there have always been films that resonate with people of faith. These kinds of films

have a long history in Hollywood.

"We can think of movies all the way back to *The Ten Commandments*, as a biblical story, and *It's a Wonderful Life*, when it comes to the value of someone's life," Botwick says. "I think the difference now is there's a demonstrable market, a way to reach people of faith, and this has caught the eye of the studios and networks."

What About Independent Christian Films?

In an effort to assist independent Christian filmmakers, former U.S. Senator and presidential candidate Rick Santorum is using a unique new model to allow churches to premier faith-based films.

"Movies have a way of impacting the culture like no other medium; and we want to empower these churches with great faith-based films to be one of the instruments of change that our culture so desperately needs," says Santorum, chief executive officer of EchoLight Studios (echolightstudios.com and echolightcinemas.com).

Hollywood is receptive to independent films, but Santorum recognizes the entertainment industry is a tough business. One of his films is *Hoovey*, the true story of Erick "Hoovey" Elliot, a star basketball player who must learn to talk and walk again after a brain tumor surgery.

"With most movies, you put your film out there and its success rides on getting enough audiences to see it in the first two weeks at theaters, but with our system, in premiering *Hoovey*, churches can sign up to show it by going to our website," Santorum says. "We give the churches a two-month exclusive so they have a period of time to show this movie and other films. Our goal is to reach 1,000 churches with *Hoovey* and build from there."

Could Hollywood Ignite an Awakening?

Given the new receptivity to faith-based films and TV shows in Hollywood, many believers are beginning to recognize that this phenomenon is opening a "big door" to spread the

Movieguide Is Transforming Hollywood—and It Needs Your Help

How to help Movieguide finish its new headquarters and encourage the entertainment industry to make more faith-based films and TV shows

Nothing succeeds like success.

Movieguide and the Christian Film & Television Commission (CFTVC) have had such tremendous success over the years, encouraging the entertainment industry to make more family-friendly and faith-based movies and television programs that they plan another expansion this year into a new building for their headquarters in Southern California.

When Movieguide (movieguide.org) and CFTVC started in 1985, there were few movies marketed to families and even fewer movies with any Christian values, much less any references to Jesus.

For example, in 1985, there was only one with clear Christian content and perhaps only two, and arguably three, major movies that had any faith elements related to Christianity at all. Last year, however, more than 62 percent of the 280 major movies released by the entertainment industry had at least some Christian content or values.

Also, since Movieguide and CFTVC began, only about 6 percent of the major movies were marketed to families, but today, at least 30 percent of the major movies are marketed to families or were deemed relatively family-friendly by Movieguide's biblical standards.

Best of all, family-friendly movies with Christian, redemptive values regularly make more money than any other kind of movie.

This success didn't just happen all by itself. It took years of working with established artists, beginning artists and key players in the entertainment industry to make movies like *Fireproof*, *The Passion of the Christ* and *God's Not Dead* or TV programs like *The Bible* miniseries a reality.

The new building for Movieguide's expanded headquarters will double the space that the ministry now has. The building is paid for, but funds are still being raised for the building's interior, which will cost \$750,000 to \$800,000.

For more information, or if you would like to make a donation, please call Movieguide and the CFTVC at (805) 383-2000.

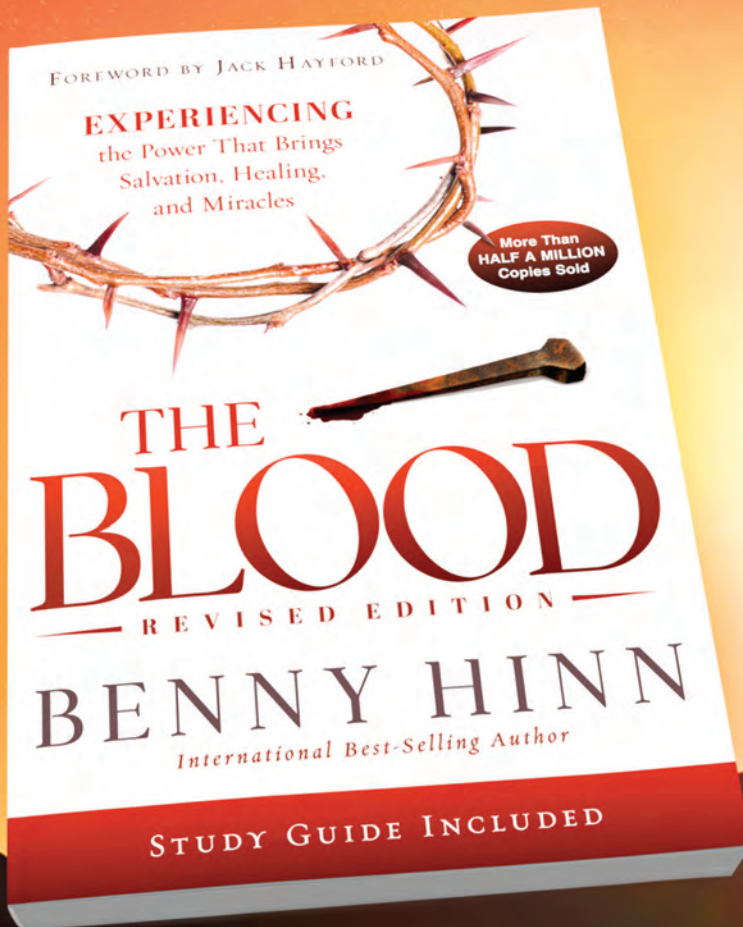
DR. TED BAEHR is the founder and publisher of Movieguide and the chairman of the Christian Film & Television Commission, as well as a noted critic, lecturer and media pundit.



Dr. Ted Baehr

The cross is so much more than a story.

IT'S THE MOST
POWERFUL EVENT
IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY!



Today, many Christians are still trying to find the key to supernatural grace, protection, and mercy.

Now, with *The Blood Revised Edition*, readers will be able to:

- Discover the importance God places on blood covenants
- Recognize areas of sin where your own flesh is tempted
- Experience the power of the blood of Jesus
- Understand how fearing God does not mean being afraid of Him
- Enter into the Holy Spirit's presence through the blood of His Son



Jesus, played by Juan Pablo di Pace, in a scene in the *A.D.* series on NBC

good news.

"I just feel like we are in desperate need of another spiritual awakening," says Andrew Erwin, the producer of *Woodlawn*, a film based on the true story of a 1970s high school football game in the midst of the Jesus Movement and racial tensions in Birmingham, Alabama. "The only way to overcome a lot of pain that is going on right now on a national scale is to have a greater law to overcome hate and that greater law is love."

Stephen Kendrick, producer of *Courageous*, *Fireproof*, *Facing the Giants* and *War Room* coming out in August, says all believers must pray for another spiritual awakening in America.

"We asked the Lord what our next film should be about and we believe He directed us towards the topic of prayer," Kendrick says. "When we look at the persecution going on of believers around the world and how desperately our nation and the church in America

is in need of revival and spiritual awakening, we believe that God is calling His church to their knees in prayer."

Covell, founder of the Hollywood Prayer Network, believes Hollywood is "the world's most influential mission field." Over the years, she has seen the power of prayer as celebrities and others have given their lives to Christ. She estimates about 10,000 Christians are working in some way in the entertainment industry in Hollywood.

"What we are seeing today is not just the result of one generation of Christians here, but several generations," Covell says. "It's been a long journey to see a spiritual impact, but we are getting to the point now after people have been working here faithfully for 20, 30, 40 and even 50 years that God is opening doors, the Christian community is growing and the mindset of people in Hollywood is changing. It's now a place unlike it ever was before."

In the same way as the Holy Spirit is

the "star" of *A.D.*, Covell says the Holy Spirit is sweeping through Hollywood.

"I think He's revealing Himself in miracles," Covell says. "We are seeing many miracles. I've watched the Holy Spirit coming in a way that is so powerful. I believe it's a result of years and years of praying for us to see miracles here and for us to see a revival. I believe we are seeing the beginning of it."

'A Blessing in the Sky'

Just as miracles purportedly occurred during the filming of *The Bible* series, a supernatural sign also accompanied the making of *A.D.*—a potential indicator of the Holy Spirit's participation in the miniseries, Downey says.

During the filming of the scene about the trial of apostles John and Peter, Downey says a single cloud in the form of a cross appeared in the sky.

"It was totally blue skies and a clear skies' day," Downey says, "and suddenly a member of our crew pointed to the sky and everyone looked up and there, out of nowhere, had appeared a cloud and the cloud was in the shape of a perfect cross. It was just extraordinary. Everyone stopped."

"Cell phones, iPhones and iPads were pulled out. It was just a moment of well, you know, it felt like a moment of reassurance—that here we were in the middle of the desert (in Morocco), in the middle of nowhere, and it just felt like something approving or like a blessing in the sky. It was really lovely." ♦

TROY ANDERSON is the executive editor of *Charisma* and the *Charisma Media Group* and a Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist, author and speaker. He spent two decades as a reporter, bureau chief, editorial writer and editor at the *Los Angeles Daily News* and other newspapers. He's also written for *Reuters*, *Newsmax* and *Human Events*.

ANNE MOUNT is an award-winning journalist and screenwriter, and a *Literary Guild* author. Her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *Reader's Digest*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Parents*, *McCall's*, *Hollywood & Vine*, and many other publications. Her current screenplay, *Terror by Night*, is a true, modern-day Job story.

Christian Entertainment Ministries

To help you stay abreast of the world of movies and media, here is a list of a few websites:

The Dove Foundation

dove.org

Focus On The Family

focusonthefamily.org

Movieguide

movieguide.org

Family Christian

familychristian.com

Christian Cinema

christiancinema.com

True Story Christian Movies

truestorychristianmovies.com

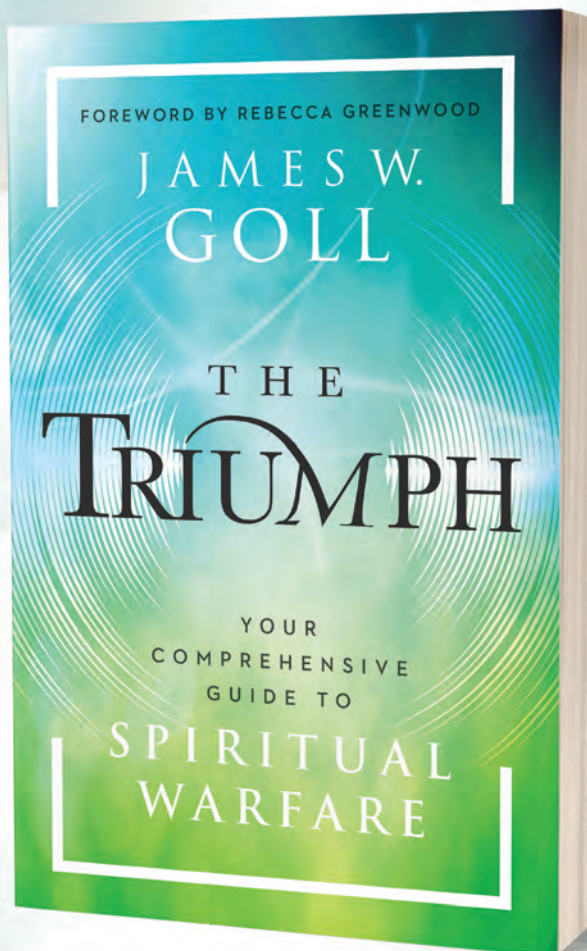
Hollywood Prayer Network

hollywoodprayernetwork.org

WAGE WAR AGAINST THE POWERS *of* THIS PRESENT DARKNESS— AND WIN!



JAMES W. GOLL



EVERY PERSON IS BORN IN A SPIRITUAL BATTLE AND FOR A SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

YET SO MANY OF US ARE UNDER-EQUIPPED AND EVEN LOSING BATTLES WE SHOULD BE WINNING.

**SHOP
NOW**

THE BATTLE IS RAGING, AND IT'S TIME FOR
YOU TO TAKE YOUR PLACE ON THE FRONT LINE.
BUT DO NOT FEAR:

YOU WERE BORN FOR THIS—
AND MADE TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST JESUS.



Chosen

a division of Baker Publishing Group



Christianbook.com



BAKER BOOK HOUSE

amazon.com

Rediscovering the Divine in Today's Cinematic Sagas

Believers in Hollywood are also spreading gospel metaphors and moral truths with 'Trojan Horse' films

There is perhaps no richer communal experience than that of telling stories. While the vehicles through which individuals exchange understanding have grown increasingly complex, the power of story to affect hearts and minds has remained constant. In today's culture, movies have become the most effective medium to not only inspire, but also transform.

Prior to 2004, faith and family films had garnered a reputation for mawkish storylines and poor production values. With the release of *The Passion of The Christ*, Mel Gibson and Icon Productions upended expectations by elevating the genre to an art form, and identified a receptive affinity among faith audiences that "primed the pump" for mainstream audiences to follow in order to reach the box-office critical mass.

The film struck a nerve within the church, and the nearly 190 million Americans who consider themselves Christian—both Protestant and Catholic. This previously unrecognized—and thereby underserved—new market also created a wave for others in Hollywood to replicate.

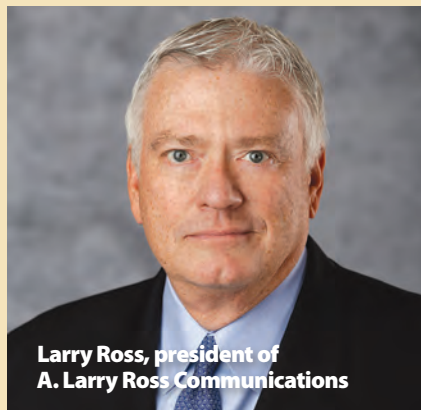
Fast-forward a decade, and media outlets as diverse as *Relevant* magazine and *The Daily Beast* proclaimed 2014 as "The Year of the Christian Movie." Indeed, numerous qualifying titles in that category were released, such as *Son of God*, *Noah*, *Exodus*, *Heaven Is for Real* and *God's Not Dead*, with more on the way this year. Some are based (albeit, at times, loosely) on the Bible, while others represent morally themed or religiously oriented films designed to reinforce and confirm strongly held biblical beliefs among the faith community.

Which begs the question "What is a Christian Movie?" Does good intent trump quality content? Do biblical themes transcend epic Bible adaptations? Can people of faith leverage truth in a storyline—even when not intentional or intended by a filmmaker—to start a spiritual conversation in their neighborhood or marketplace?

Just because a film is labeled "faith-based" does not guarantee success. Moviegoers expect and demand a storyline that not only challenges but also entertains. Some titles exhibiting a didactic, moralizing approach

to the Christian message do well with church audiences but fail to crossover to the mainstream.

Other movies incorporating authentic characters and uplifting storylines might be considered "faith light," but in a good way—celebrating a Christian worldview while not overtly preaching it. They also tap into emotions and affect the heart—more than



**Larry Ross, president of
A. Larry Ross Communications**

the brain—and it is out of the heart that actions spring.

Since Christian leaders and pastors have a ministry rather than a marketing mindset, they will support or endorse a film for one of two reasons: if it edifies their constituency or congregation or if it provides an outreach opportunity to the local community.

However, while providing publicity and marketing support of faith and family films for nearly two decades, I have realized there is a third "Trojan Horse" approach that includes projects in which spiritual themes are subtly woven into the very texture of a movie. Further, moral truths—even gospel metaphors—emerge as subtext, rather than overt messages, providing occasion for audiences to engage, explore and apply them according to their personal worldview.

The resulting impact is less about the answers given than the questions raised, and takes place not on the screen, but over coffee afterwards as believers discuss and interpret elements of the story with a friend who might never accompany them to church, but will go with them to the theater.

According to Barna Research, "From the injustice of slavery in *12 Years a Slave*, to the

effects of narcissism on our relationships in *Her*, to the idolatry of greed in *The Wolf of Wall Street* and *American Hustle*, many of (2013's) Best Picture nominations explored profoundly moral questions. For better or worse, movies are often considered to be significant societal influences."

Producers and directors who are Christians are becoming more talented, and studios that recognize the interest in and import of spiritual themes are more commonly releasing such films into the marketplace.

At the same time, fellow believers can be similarly open to Trojan Horse entertainment projects that contain spiritual messages or meaning—whether or not intended by the producer or director. A film should not be discounted merely because it isn't perceived or positioned as "Christian."

People outside the church are flocking to see today's tent pole blockbusters and independent releases. Many motion pictures—from *Interstellar* to *The Hunger Games* and *Iron Man*—have sometimes obvious but often oblique storylines that represent allegory to the gospel or address moral questions and inspirational themes that can provide a springboard for authentic spiritual dialogue using the cultural lexicon.

Filmmakers are among the guardians of the Zeitgeist who set the "spirit of the times." Guided by the Holy Spirit, people of faith who attend movies have an unprecedented opportunity to identify spiritual "ahas" or leverage the "divine moments" in movies their friends and neighbors are already attending—or go with them to the cinema.

Hollywood may unknowingly be doing the church a favor, as we "seize the day" and take what some may say is intended for evil, and use it for good—and for God.

LARRY ROSS is president of A. Larry Ross Communications, a full-service agency providing crossover media liaison at the intersection of faith and culture. With more than 38 years experience influencing public opinion, Ross' mission is to "restore faith in media," by providing Christian messages relevance and meaning in mainstream media. Follow him on Twitter @alarryross.

FIND YOUR PATH

ONE YEAR BIBLES are designed to help readers engage with the entire Bible in 365 days. Whether you're well versed in the Bible or just beginning your exploration, these Bibles help guide you through a year-long journey of exploration, reflection, and growth.



Read



Pray

On the Daily Reading Path, each day you will explore a passage from the Old Testament, the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs.



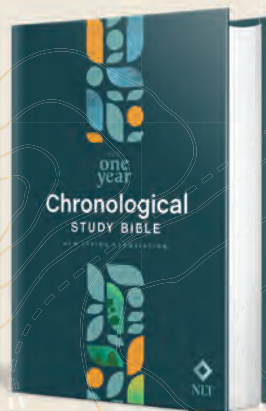
Journal



Reflect



The Chronological Reading Path helps you explore the Bible in the order the events took place.



Study



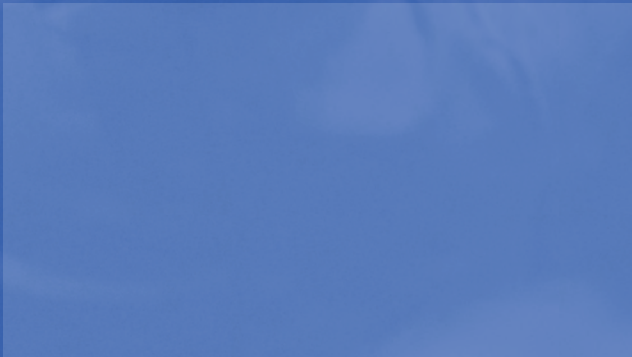
Read



Journal

FIND YOUR PATH AT THEONEYEARBIBLE.COM.

CELEBRATE RESURRECTION SUNDAY



Charisma Magazine

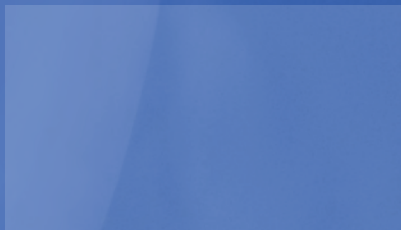
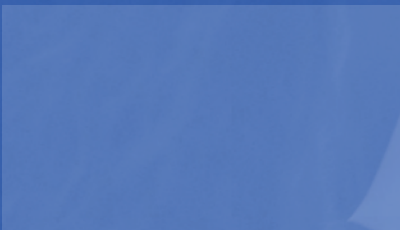
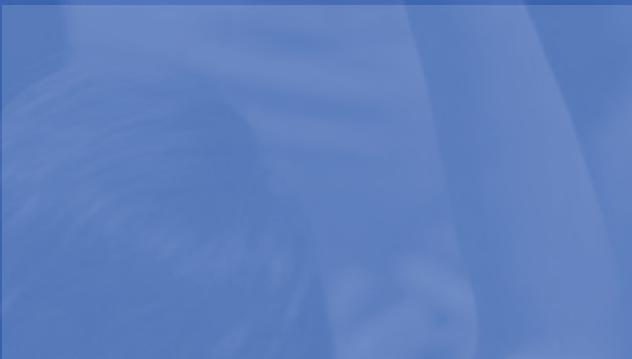


Charisma News



Strang Report

Join **CHARISMA MEDIA ON YOUTUBE!**



Get all your newest Charisma videos!
Hit your 'Subscribe' button for daily inspiration in your feed!

CLICK HERE AND



| RESURRECTION

THE
CRUCIFIXION—
EMBLAZONED IN THE
SHROUD

Discover new findings about the Shroud of Turin and what it means for today's Christian

BY KENNETH E. STEVENSON

It all began with my commute to work when I was teaching at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Like many during the energy crisis of the late 1970s, I car-pooled to save gas. During my commute that day, I had an interesting and unexpected conversation with a physicist, an aeronautical engineer, an electrical engineer and an English professor.

The subject of the Shroud of Turin came up in our conversation. Our diverse opinions ranged from devout to doubting, but we agreed on one thing: Technology could uncover the truth. With cutting-edge technology and our combined backgrounds, we could test the validity of at least one relic. So why not?

That conversation was the beginning of what would become the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP), and no one could have imagined what the ensuing years have wrought.

Leaving Opinions Behind

The members of STURP journeyed twice to Turin, Italy, in the late '70s. We took our first trip in 1977 to present a profile of research to the Italian authorities and the second in 1978 to conduct six 24-hour days of hands-on research with the enigmatic relic. While some have suggested that the STURP team was a religious group with a predetermined opinion about the shroud, the fact is the team was comprised of over 40 scientists with a variety of faith backgrounds, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews, agnostics and atheists. Most of the team believed they would likely demonstrate rather quickly that the shroud was a forgery.

Using nondestructive testing equipment from infrared to X-rays to collect data, STURP carefully and methodically analyzed for over three years the data collected. In the end, STURP members released a stunning statement: "We can conclude for

now that the shroud image is that of a real human form of a scourged, crucified man. It is not the product of an artist. The bloodstains are composed of hemoglobin and also give a positive test for serum albumin. The image is an ongoing mystery, and until further chemical studies are made, perhaps by this group of scientists, or perhaps by some scientists in the future, the problem remains unsolved."

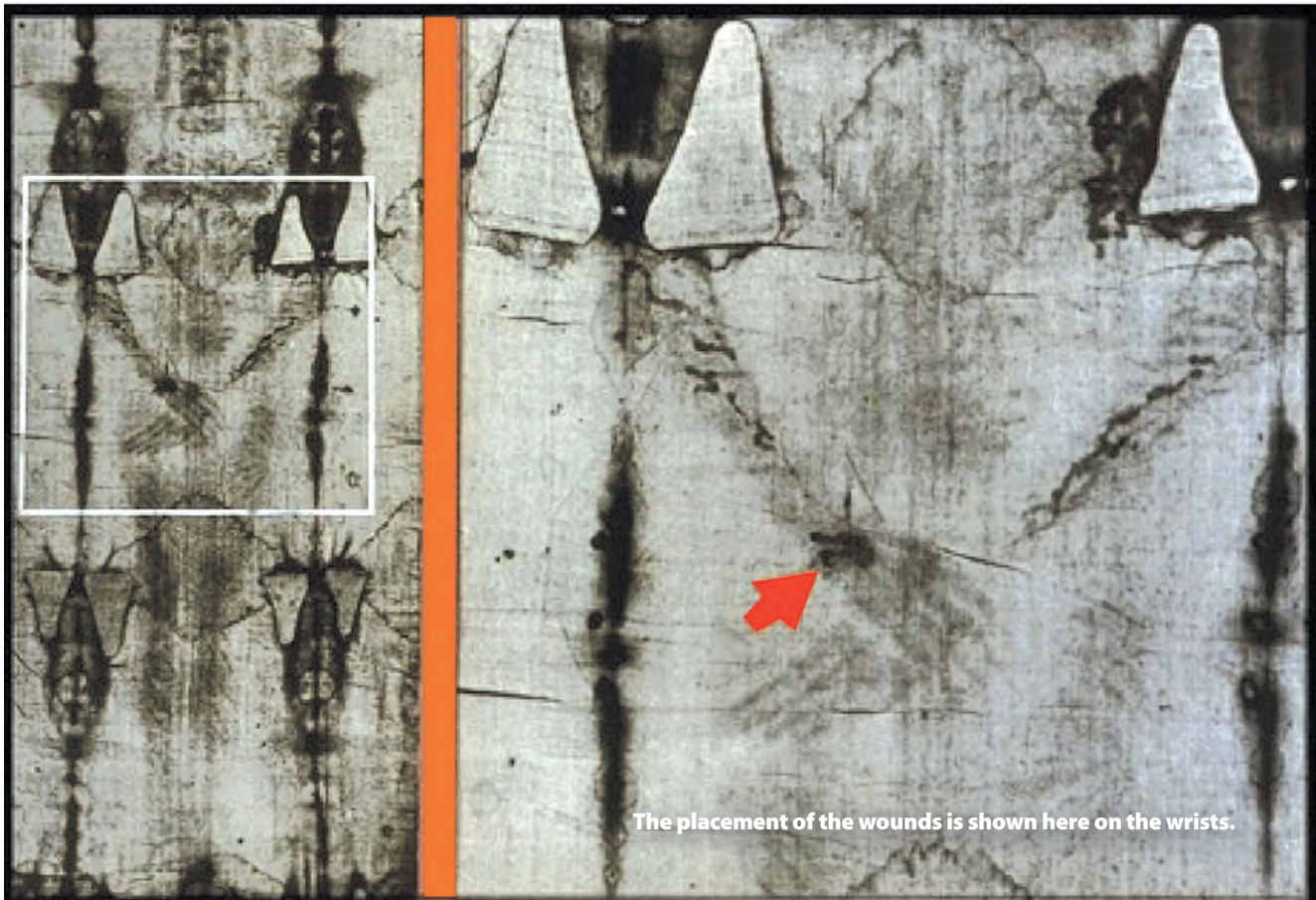
This incredible report brought a torrent of criticism. Religious traditions about Jesus' burial made it difficult for some, who argued that Jesus was wrapped like a mummy, making a full body-length image impossible. Others regarded a "real" image of Messiah out of character with the principle of faith. Some suggested it was a hoax and tried to create their own shroud-like images.

What nearly all failed to realize is that the shroud actually matches Scripture and Jewish burial customs. The image is, in essence, a photographic negative. It can be recreated to a degree using modern photography. That begs the question as to how an ancient cloth could have such an image on its fibrils.

In fact, there are 16 unique characteristics of the shroud image. Three important ones are categorized as "nondirectional" (man-made images show directionality), "superficial" (on the upper curved surface of the fibers themselves) and "three-dimensional" (absolutely unique). These characteristics have defied accurate reproduction by any man-made technique. STURP members, who were the few to "touch" and observe the cloth, were unable to duplicate all known image characteristics even using lasers and space age technology.

In opposition to STURP were those pushing for Radiocarbon, or C-14, dating to analyze the cloth. However, the C-14 testing was done without the same careful approach as STURP took, and the findings became a major source of distraction.

continued »



The placement of the wounds is shown here on the wrists.

The group violated scientific protocols for C-14 dating established to ensure the results of dating such a potentially important artifact would be reliable. First, no blind study was conducted. Second, the location of the sample taken was poorly chosen. The sample came from an area that was scorched in a fire in 1532. Carbon contamination alone could slew the date.

The group was also quick to proclaim the shroud was a fake—without any consideration of STURP’s findings. They didn’t even consult with the members of STURP, the only scientific team ever granted such unparalleled access to the shroud, before announcing their medieval date of the shroud. They also ignored the fact the shroud had been verified as an actual burial garment replete with human blood particles. They had ample opportunity to validate their findings before rushing to judgment, but anti-religious bias blinded them.

Confirming the Scriptures

My personal journey took a few

life-changing turns, beginning with a trip to Denver, Colorado. Determined to find out if the shroud matched Jewish burial customs, as John’s Gospel said of Yeshua: “Then took they the body of Yeshua, and wrapped it in linen with the spices, as is the Jewish burial custom” (John 19:40, TLV). I met with Rabbi Eliezer Urbach, founder of the American Board of Missions to the Jews (now Chosen People Ministries), to help resolve the issue.

Rabbi Urbach made it clear that the rather simple burial the shroud indicated aligned with Jewish custom. Jewish tradition also explained the presence of the odd objects that 3-D imagery discovered. He explained the box-like object in the forehead area was likely a phylactery, a box containing Scriptures worn as a reminder to keep the law. The objects obscuring the eyes were coins, which are commonly used to keep the eyes of a corpse closed. These coins had details that could be used to determine age.

The objects used are accordance with the Jewish Code of Law. In the intervening years, I’ve learned how often religious traditions are incorrect,

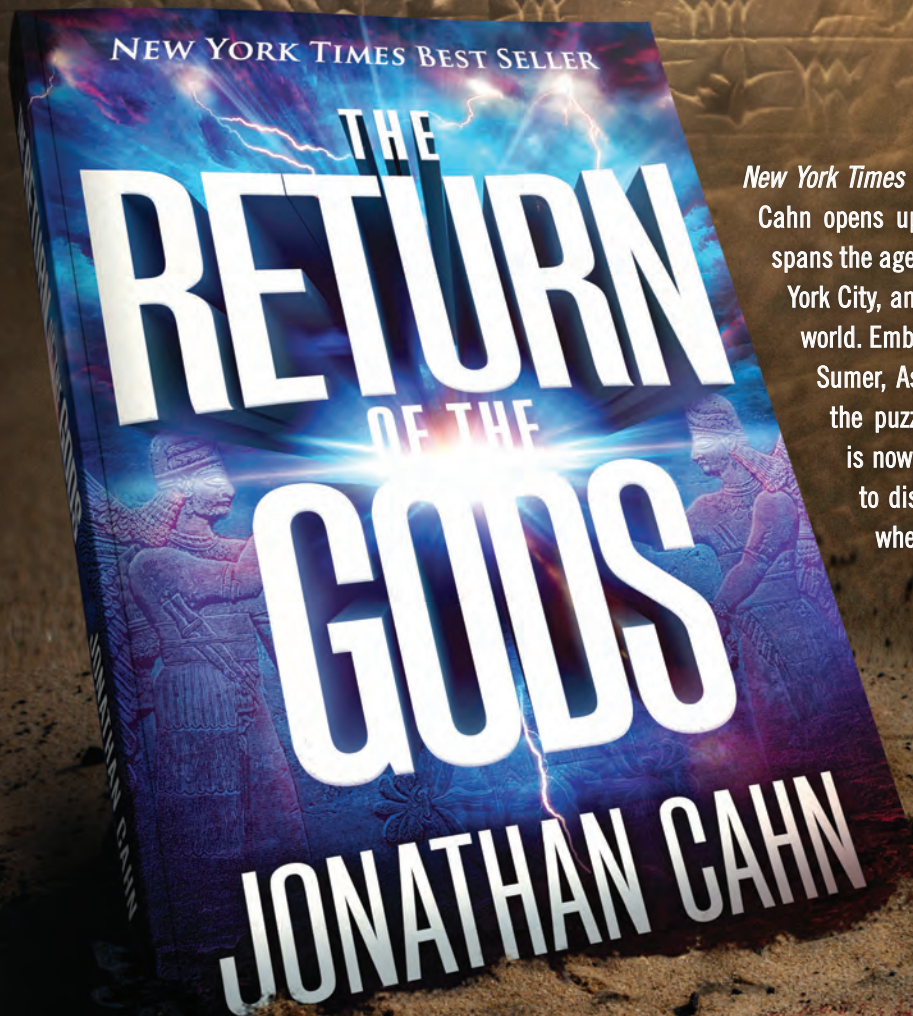
and yet the shroud consistently confirms the Scriptures.

When the Air Force and major media outlets began to report on the efforts of STURP, I was forced to choose between my chosen and beloved career as an Air Force officer and pilot and what by then had become a “magnificent obsession.” Following my pilot training, I served as a B-52 pilot on three tours in Vietnam, where in December 1972, I experienced a miraculous escape from an SA2 missile that was locked onto my aircraft.

After that harrowing experience, I thanked the Lord and promised to do whatever He wanted me to do in life. The B-52 I flew that night now “flies” at the North Gate entry to the Academy on static display.

Remembering my promise, I made the decision to separate from the Air Force to complete what I knew to be a God-given assignment. Three years later, my book *Verdict on the Shroud* was published, becoming an international best-seller. More importantly, it led many to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Is it possible that behind what is happening to America and the world lies a mystery hidden in the ancient inscriptions of the MIDDLE EAST?



New York Times best-selling author Jonathan Cahn opens up the stunning mystery that spans the ages, from ancient Akkad to New York City, and is right now changing your world. Embark on a journey from ancient Sumer, Assyria, and Babylonia to find the puzzle pieces that explain what is now taking place before our eyes to discover who are the gods and where it is all heading...

**PREPARE TO BE
BLOWN AWAY!**

NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK!
BooksByJonathanCahn.com



18450

Perhaps the most meaningful to me was the conversion of a fellow Air Force pilot who found a paperback copy in a used bookstore. He told me he read it cover to cover and then committed his heart to Christ. That was a shocking revelation, as he was the minister of music at a local church when we were stationed together, and we had often talked about the Lord.

I continue to give presentations on the shroud. Most recently, I was interviewed for a documentary based on *Verdict*. The documentary will be used for the underground church in a communist nation. I have also had a request to publish *Verdict* in the Urdu language for Pakistan.

From what I have discovered and written about the shroud throughout this incredible journey, I can say it is not in any way, shape or form your “typical” relic, nor is it as easily dismissed as it has been by some. As my dear friend the late Rev. Albert Dreisbach once opined, the shroud is “God’s love letter in linen to all mankind.”

Subsequent to *Verdict*, I wrote *The Shroud and the Controversy* to address the confusion caused by the C-14 dating and to update the incredible peer-reviewed scientific evidence documented in the interim. I also produced *Behold the Man*, a documentary aired annually by Trinity Broadcasting Network. After the first airing, Dr. Richard Eby contacted me. Dr. Eby was a medical doctor who had died, experienced heaven for over 20 hours before being sent back with a message from the Lord about His soon return. Having read his first book, *Caught Up Into Paradise*, I was elated but totally unprepared for what he told me. He described how having never seen or heard of the shroud before, he burst into loud sobs upon seeing the brutalized face of our Savior. His wife ran in to see what was wrong, but all he could say was, “It’s Jesus! But why is He dead?”

Image of the Risen Christ was my next book, published by Grant Jeffrey, to continue updating the status of ongoing research. Thanks in some measure to the C-14 dating fiasco, the scientists had more motivation to continue their research efforts, as many had



This part of the shroud reveals the legs were not broken.

already written off the shroud.

This brings me to my current work, *Nazah: White Linen and the Blood of Sprinkling*. It is the story of an incredible journey along with discoveries made that have enormous potential to impact the three major monotheistic religions.

Revealing Prophetic Purpose

During my sojourn with STURP as spokesman and editor, I was not allowed the privilege of personal opinion. “Just the facts” was my authorized domain. As a believer, that restriction can chafe. Nevertheless, the facts came forth on *Good Morning America*, the *Today* show, *People Are Talking*, and in the publications *PM Magazine*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *People*, *Us* and a host of others. Freed from such restrictions, I was intent upon incorporating the Bible into the shroud story.

Still-unsubstantiated allegations of forgery and other false claims abound. After a particularly harsh ad hominem attack, I was ready to walk away from the shroud entirely. After all, the shroud was not part of my faith, and I really didn’t need the abuse. But my beloved wife, Mary, surprised me with a statement that kept me studying the shroud and, in particular, its connection with the Scriptures.

“Honey, I think the Lord would have you to study Isaiah 52,” she said. I knew the book of Isaiah to be Messianic, but I was not prepared for what I found as I began to study.

“See, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, his visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; so he shall sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard they shall consider” (Isa. 52:13-15, MEV).

After reading this, I immediately thought of the apostle Paul, standing before two kings and telling them how they knew these same things: “The king, before whom I also speak freely, knows about these things. For I am persuaded that none of this is hidden from him, for this was not done in a corner” (Acts 26:26).

Paul implies that the kings of his generation knew something that had “not been told” (Isa. 52:15). I asked myself, “What could they have possibly seen and, more importantly, how would they actually see it?” Putting the two Scriptures together, my immediate thought was since Jesus is not coming back to be brutalized again, how could anyone living after Paul see and consider His marred face and body?

That statement from my wife became the seed that eventually germinated into *Nazah*. *Nazah* is the Hebrew word translated as “sprinkle.” But “sprinkle” is only one of its root meanings. The ancient Hebrew pictographic meaning of *nazah* is incredibly prophetic. Like “deep calling unto deep,” from that day until *Nazah* was

Find Peace. Find Joy. Discover a Childlike Faith.

Worry. Fear. Anxiety. Anger. Guilt. Depression. Addictions.

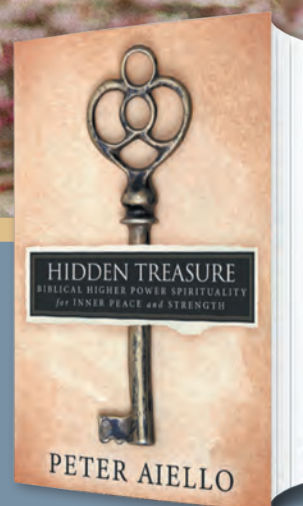
Emotional stress drains. Do you feel like peace and strength elude you?

Hidden Treasure points you to the biblical answers for receiving God's peace and strength in your life. You can defeat emotional stress, addictions, and unforgiveness in your life and be FREE!



This book is about my personal testimony of how God taught me to surrender to Him through the instruction from the Bible. It told me to be anxious for nothing by casting all of my care on Him. *Hidden Treasure* shares my insights on Biblical spirituality and how to walk in the Spirit.

Visit HiddenTreasure.website for a **FREE** download of *Hidden Treasure*



Peter Aiello



This image of the shroud shows the face and hair.

done, I was determined to understand and share the complete story of the shroud, including a proper biblical perspective. I was totally unprepared not only for what I would learn from Scripture that points to the shroud and removes the stigma associated with relics, but also that the Lord has a hidden purpose for the shroud, a prophetic purpose whose time has come.

The history of the shroud before it arrived in Europe was first proposed by British historian Ian Wilson. Swiss criminologist Max Frei performed a pollen analysis on the shroud, later validated and strengthened by Israeli botanist Avinoam Danin, confirming Wilson's account. These studies established the origin of the cloth through pollens found in Jerusalem and Turkey. They confirmed the origins and waypoints of the shroud and matched ancient accounts of a relic having an "image

not made by hands" (*acheiropoietos* in Greek). Wilson concluded that the ancient relic was, in fact, the shroud!

The missing link was a first-century icon. The icon would be a reproduction of something commonly regarded as authentic. It would confirm that ancient artists copied something they regarded as "true." Only fifth-century icons survived. But, like a modern-day Indiana Jones, Philip Dayvault, author of *The Keramion: Lost and Found*, discovered the original first-century icon, verifying an accurate, ancient replication of the shroud's image as it still looks today. The circle of the shroud's missing years was complete.

In *Nazah*, I attempt to present the total picture so the reader can reach an educated decision about the shroud. It is not my intent to create an idol to worship but rather to reveal the love of Christ as displayed through His burial garment.

The shroud also points directly to the power of His resurrection as the source of its image. I also reveal the direct connection of the shroud to the restoration of the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The apostle Paul gives intriguing hints to the shroud in several passages, perhaps the most significant in his letter to the church at Corinth. After describing in depth the gift of *agape* love, Paul interjects a seemingly unrelated statement: "For now we see through a glass, dimly, but then, face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know, even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12). In modern English, he might have said: "Now we see an obscure mirrored image, an enigma, but then we shall see face to face." What obscure, mirrored image could Paul have referred to that was also an enigma?

Paul also seems to make connections to the book of Isaiah in Romans (2:24; 3:15-17; 9:19-21, 27, 29, 33; 10:11, 15, 16, 20-21; 11:8, 26, 34; 14:11; 15:12, 21) and in Hebrews (2:13). So could the shroud be an end-time key to the salvation of Israel?

I close with these thoughts from the more than 40 years of research *Nazah* contains:

Whenever "I have spoken about the Shroud ... 1) while I believe the Shroud to be genuine, if when I am finished someone still does not, that's fine; 2) the most important thing I *did* come to do is to reveal what it cost Yeshua to go to the Cross for the sins of *all* Mankind; 3) The Shroud is a real burial garment and not a "forgery" of any kind; [and] 4) It contains the most accurate record of death by crucifixion ever seen."

One thing is certain. The shroud reveals the cost of Calvary. ♦

KENNETH E. STEVENSON is an original member of STURP (The Shroud of Turin Research Project), whose members examined and tested the cloth believed to be Christ's burial cloth. A pastor and best-selling author, Dr. Stevenson brings the group's research and his personal experience to his latest book on the shroud, *NAZAH: White Linen and the Blood of Sprinkling*. Learn more at endtimeschool.com.

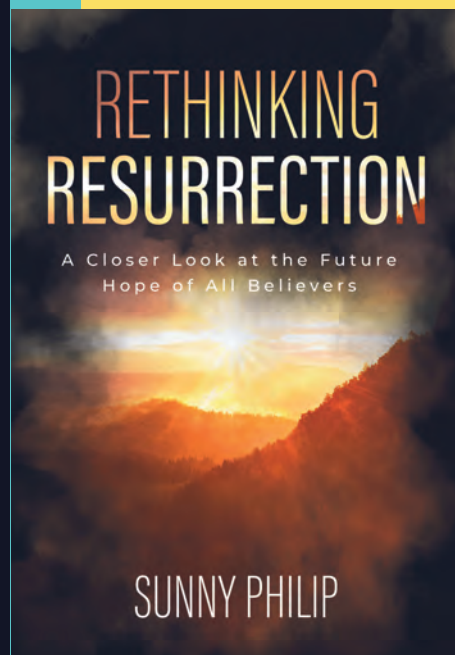
DO YOU STILL BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION STORY?

This is a question I had to face many times over the years as a speaker at conferences. I have faced this question from Christians and non-Christians. It gave me an opportunity to tell them that I am a Christian today only because I believe in the resurrection story.

As many are busy repeating clearly refuted false stories about the resurrection of Jesus, and even Christians are struggling with this question, I felt it was time to open up and write about it from my heart. I am confident that this book will give you answers to some of the questions tormenting you and strengthen your faith walk.

**Available at Amazon and
christianbooks.com**

Dr. Sunny Philip is the senior pastor of Gateway Christian Center in Long Island, New York, a multicultural Pentecostal church. He also provides Apostolic oversight for over 630 full gospel churches in India.



RESURRECTED

**Easter Sunday is what separates Jesus Christ
from every other so-called messiah**

BY DR. MICHAEL BROWN

The story is bizarre, incredible, unbelievable. It's like a movie with a plot so absurd that it stretches all credulity, except in this case, every word of the story is true. What you are about to read is not disputed by historians. They all know that this story, the story of the mystical messiah, Shabbetai Zevi, is fact, not fiction.

Zevi was born in 1626 to upper-middle-class parents in Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey), allegedly on the ninth of Av (*Tisha b'Av*), a date of tremendous importance in Jewish history. According to some rabbinic traditions, it is the day on which the Messiah will be born (or was born).

Zevi received a strong education in rabbinic texts and was recognized as a scholar while still a young man, specializing in Jewish mysticism. While still in his teens, he began to share his mystical insights with a small group of followers, and as an extreme ascetic, he set himself apart. But Zevi was not simply a precocious (and devoted) Orthodox Jew. He was prone to extreme mood swings and would claim to receive new insights while in an ecstatic state, and would contravene Jewish law or perform bizarre rituals.

This was proof to some of his followers that Zevi was actually the Messiah, one who had to break the old laws in order to introduce the new Messianic order. Why else would a religious Jewish ascetic act in such ways? In 1665, Nathan of Gaza, a well-known mystic and self-appointed prophet, made a shocking announcement. Nathan claimed to have received a prophetic vision revealing that Zevi "would be the Jewish messiah." This is when the movement exploded. A messianic fervor spread through the Jewish world.

Zevi traveled to Istanbul to reveal himself to the sultan, who would then bow down to him. But the sultan was not impressed, and rather than

bow to Zevi, he arrested him upon his arrival in the city. The sultan offered him two choices: convert to Islam or die.

And what did Zevi do? He converted to Islam! Yes, sources say "Shabbetai Tzvi became Aziz Mehmed Effendi, and, with a royal pension, lived until 1676, outwardly a Muslim but secretly participating in Jewish ritual. His letters reveal that at the time of his death, he still believed in his messianic mission."

But there is something remarkable I must point out, especially in the context of the Easter season. Obviously there was massive spiritual deception surrounding Zevi, both before and after he converted to Islam. The deception was so great that it split the Jewish world in two, representing the largest false messianic movement in Jewish history. The deception was so great that even after Zevi became a Muslim, he was still hailed as Messiah by some of his followers, with many of them becoming Muslims as well. Yet no one ever claimed that Zevi rose from the dead. There were no claims of dozens, let alone hundreds, of his followers seeing him alive from the grave.

His followers were able to believe the most far-fetched things about him, both while he was alive and then after he died. Yet no one claimed his tomb was empty.

This keeps with a common pattern. No matter how much people wish that their loved ones or leaders were still alive, physical death has a certain finality about it, and it's not hard to guard a tomb. The bereaved may feel that their deceased loved ones are somehow "present" with them. They may believe that they can communicate with each other. They may even speak of the deceased appearing to them in visions and dreams. But they do not suffer mass hallucinations that their loved ones or leaders have risen from the dead and



are appearing in bodily form.

That's why there are not numerous claims about the resurrection of spiritual leaders of the past. It's a myth that doesn't stick. It's a myth that can easily be refuted. And it's a myth that was never associated with Zevi, which is quite remarkable given the fanatical nature of his followers. If they could concoct the theory that his conversion to Islam was God's plan to bring in the redemption, surely they could concoct a theory that they saw him rise from the dead. Yet he didn't rise, and they never claimed that he did.

There is a massive difference between our Jesus Christ and Zevi, and it boils down to one word: Resurrection. Only one of these potential messiahs rose again.

An Unexpected Messiah

Virtually no one was expecting a crucified Messiah. No one expected the Savior of Israel to die a criminal's death. Had Jesus not risen from the dead, despite the many miracles He had performed and His personal charisma, His Messianic movement would have ended 2,000 years ago. The Resurrection changed everything.

Looking at this through a wider lens, it's not surprising that biographies about religious leaders in past generations celebrate their accomplishments, often presenting them in saintlike, even supernatural terms. They were bigger than life and better than other humans. They were transcendent. They were ultraspiritual. They were unique.

In stark contrast, the New Testament writings talk candidly about the failures of their early leaders, the founders of the church. These writings tell us that the first followers of Jesus, the men whose lives and testimonies laid the foundation for this movement, were full of doubt and fear, often misunderstanding Yeshua's words and intentions while He was alive, even though they were with Him day and night for a period of several years.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record how these Jewish men reacted when Jesus began to talk about His impending suffering and death: "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the

scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said this openly. And Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men'" (Mark 8:31-33).

Peter, who became one of the key leaders of the movement, could not possibly believe that Yeshua, the Messiah, would suffer a fate like this. It was so preposterous to him that he actually rebuked his master. In turn, Yeshua rebuked him, stating that Peter was seeing things through a satanic, worldly perspective rather than a divine, heavenly perspective. What a serious gaffe!

But Peter was not alone in his unbelief and spiritual dullness. After Jesus cleansed the temple, He was challenged by the local leadership: "The Jewish leaders demanded, 'What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it.' 'All right,' Jesus replied. 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' 'What!' they exclaimed. 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?' But when Jesus said 'this temple,' he meant his own body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said" (John 2:18-22, NLT).

Do you see that? The theme of bodily resurrection was on Jesus' lips from early in His public ministry. Right off the bat, it was misunderstood, especially when He expressed Himself in semimystical terms, speaking of "this temple"—which, to the Jewish leaders, would have suggested the temple—but really meaning His physical body. It was only after He rose that His disciples understood and believed. And note carefully what is written: "They believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said."

Yes, the Jewish Scriptures actually predicted the Messiah's rejection, violent death and Resurrection, and after Yeshua rose from the dead, the light went on and everything became clear. It was written there all the time!

His Unsuspecting Followers

The first disciples knew that Yeshua

was the promised Messiah—it was undeniable to them that He was the man—but His suffering and death completely threw them. They were expecting a very different outcome.

After reading about Peter rebuking Jesus in Mark 8, in the very next chapter of Mark's Gospel, we read that Jesus took His three closest followers up onto a mountain to pray. And as they prayed, He was transfigured, His face shining with the glory of God. Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke with Him, the cloud of God's presence came and the Father spoke from the cloud. It was an absolutely glorious and extraordinary experience, a clear manifestation of the Messiah's supernatural stature.

Yet Mark 9:9-10 records, "As they came down the mountain, He warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept that statement to themselves, questioning each other what the rising from the dead meant."

Note that this is recorded in Mark 9, which means the disciples had already heard Jesus talk about His death and Resurrection (as recorded in Mark 8), but they still had no idea what He meant.

Then in this very same chapter, we read, "They departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He was teaching His disciples, saying, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. After He is killed, He will rise the third day.' But they did not understand the teaching and were afraid to ask Him" (Mark 9:30-32, MEV).

They still could not figure out what Jesus was talking about, even though He was now repeating the same information over and again: "I'm going to be killed, but after three days, I will rise from the dead." They just didn't get it. But it gets worse. The night that Jesus was betrayed, all His disciples got up and ran, despite His telling them moments before exactly what would happen (Matt. 26:20-56). At this very late juncture, immediately before His crucifixion, they still didn't get it.

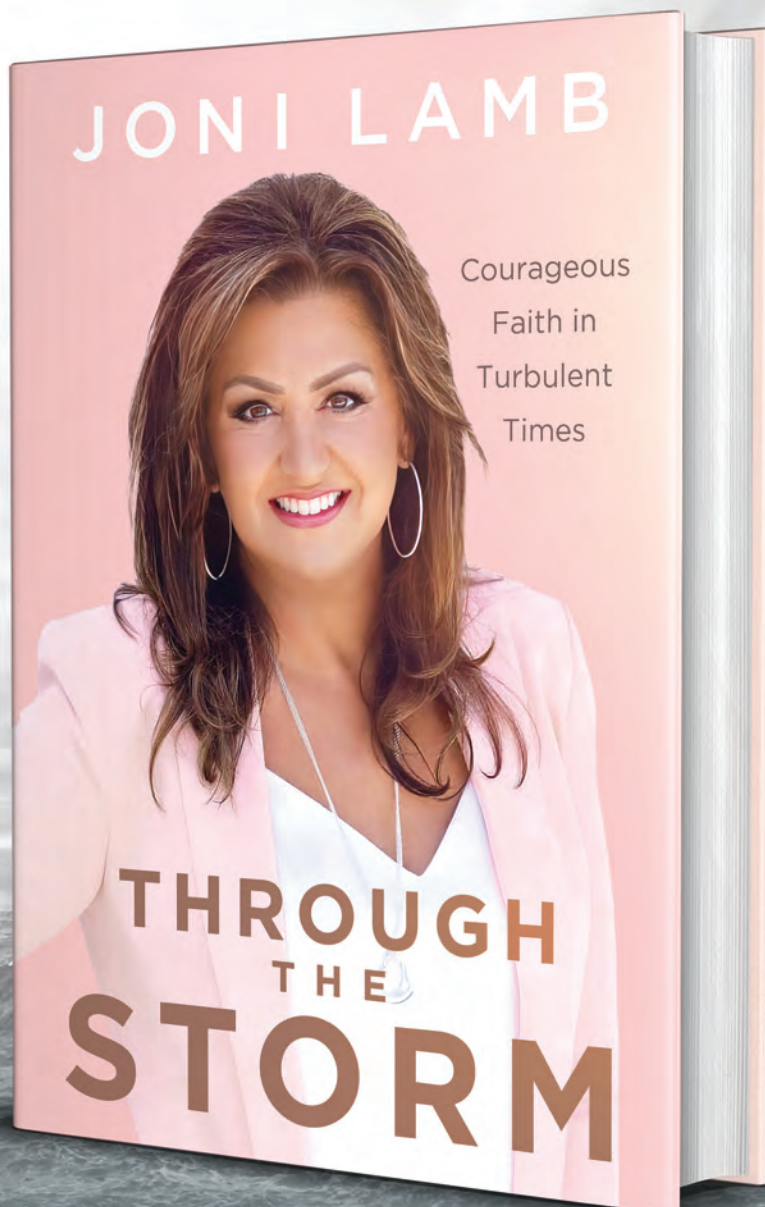
And what happened after He died, even after there were reports of His resurrection? They were in great despair, their

What if the most beautiful kind of **faith** is the type that has been tested and tried?



As the visionary and cofounder of Daystar Television Network, Joni Lamb has had a remarkable journey. In her new book, ***Through the Storm***, Joni candidly opens up about the relentless challenges she's overcome of establishing and growing the network to the personal struggles she's faced. But even in the midst of each obstacle, she unwaveringly sought the Lord to find rest in His goodness and mercy.

Discover how you can have this same resilience and redemption present in your own life and testimony!



hopes dashed to pieces.

John records that on the very night that these Resurrection reports were circulating, even after some of these men had seen that Yeshua's tomb was indeed empty, "the doors being locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you'" (John 20:19b).

For these men, the death of Jesus meant it was all over. So much for His being the Messiah! But then He rose from the dead, and everything changed.

According to reliable tradition, Peter, the one who rebuked Yeshua for saying He was going to be crucified, was himself crucified for his testimony. And tradition tells us that once-doubting Thomas took the message of Jesus to India, dying as a martyr there. These doubting, fearful and hopeless disciples became the nucleus of a world-changing, faith-filled and victorious army. And as they presented the message of their crucified and risen Messiah, He made Himself real to the hearers in many different ways, as He continues to do to this very moment.

Writing less than 25 years after the Messiah's resurrection, Paul wrote: "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: how Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and was seen by Cephas, and then by the twelve. Then He was seen by over five hundred brothers at once, of whom the greater part remain to this present time, though some have passed away. Then He was seen by James and then by all the apostles. Last of all, He was seen by me also" (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

This is absolutely remarkable. The risen Messiah did not simply appear to a select few. He appeared to all His first followers repeatedly, as Acts records: "He presented Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, appearing to them for forty days, and speaking concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). And then, somewhere during this 40-day period, He presented Himself to more than 500 at one time. Not only so, but Scripture records that He ascended to heaven in the presence of some of these very same men (Acts 1:6-11).

No wonder they then preached with



such boldness. No wonder those who fled for their lives when Jesus was betrayed now joyfully gave their lives to stand for Him. No wonder they were fearless in the face of intimidation, threats, beatings, persecution, imprisonments and even death. Yeshua rose from the dead, and they saw it with their own eyes. Their fear turned to faith, and their cowardice turned to courage. He was alive, and they could never doubt it again.

What's more, Jesus told them that when He ascended to heaven, He would send the Holy Spirit down upon them and that, empowered by the Spirit, they would do the same works that He did (see Luke 24:49, John 14:12, Acts 1:8). And they did! They too saw the same miracles take place. They too saw blind eyes open. They too saw lame people walk. They too saw the dead raised—all through the merit of (and in the name of) Yeshua, the King of the Jews, the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world.

Miracles Upon Miracles

What's even more, these same miracles are taking place to this very day through prayer that is offered in Jesus' name. He really is alive! And it's not just the "special people" who can work these miracles. It's not just the charismatic superstar leaders who have seen such remarkable answers to prayer. On the contrary, it's often through the most common, ordinary people that these miracles take place. That's because the power is in the name of Yeshua the risen Messiah, not the power of His followers.

Professor Craig Keener, one of the most respected New Testament scholars, has estimated at least 200 million people have witnessed a miracle in Jesus' name—and he means people alive today. Some

of these are miracles occurring in nature, some physical healings and some miraculous prophecies. The list is incredibly impressive.

Some of the most amazing miracles involve the Muslim world, where, on a regular basis, Muslims are having visions of Jesus and as a result, converting to Christianity. In other cases, these Muslims have a dream about someone they have never met, but they are told in the dream that this person will bring them a message that will change their life. Then shortly after having the dream, for the first time in their life, they meet the person they saw in the dream, and it just so happens that the person is a Christian missionary. Things like this are happening all the time in the Muslim world to the point that millions of Muslims are now coming to faith in Jesus. To say it again, He is risen!

At the end of his Gospel account, John wrote, "There are also many other things which Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

John wrote these words more than 1,900 years ago. How much more would this be the case today? The one true Messiah has risen from the dead. That is undeniable. But His death was not an interruption in His mission. Instead, it was an integral, absolutely central part of His mission. When you understand this, you understand it all. ◀

DR. MICHAEL BROWN served as a leader in the Brownsville Revival from 1996–2000, out of which was birthed the FIRE School of Ministry. He is the founder and president of AskDrBrown Ministries and the host of a nationally syndicated daily talk radio show.

The World Is Not Falling Apart. **IT IS FALLING INTO PLACE.**

**The church has been in a slumber,
and now God is calling us to wake up.**

With Phil Hotsenpiller's *It's Midnight in America*,
you'll see how it's time for the church to let
go of fear and embrace biblical and practical
wisdom and solutions to help us overcome the
challenges of the present and the future.

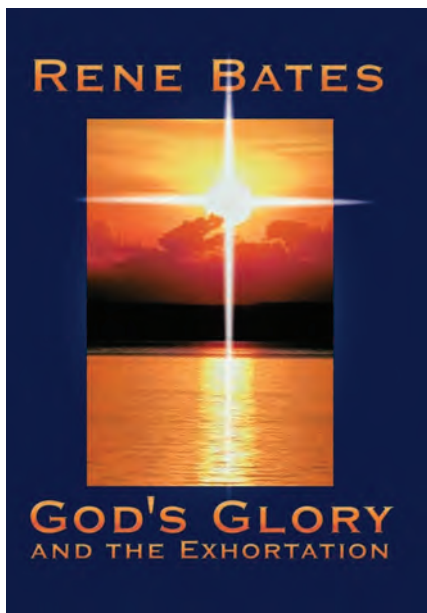


Now is the moment to embrace our calling and
PREPARE FOR THE IMMINENT RETURN OF CHRIST.

MyCharismaShop.com

CHARISMA® 

Refresh Your Spirit



THE FINAL TESTAMENT

A Warning from God to the Saved and Lost.

To the Lost: Receive Jesus Now.

To the Saved: Get Rid of Your "Traditions of Men"
Before the Soon Coming of Christ.

God's Glory and the Exhortation is an astute and provocative point of view on the ways and follies of the modern church.

Brother Rene speaks God's truth, refusing to bow to the weight of misguided tradition. His work is in line with the great but opposed prophets of the Old Testament as well as the hard-pressed apostles of the New. His writings bear the same weight of divine wisdom to both bless and course-correct the faithful few.

Available for purchase on Amazon and Barnes & Noble



Tablet of your Heart necklace



Advocate Cross necklace



Acceptance necklace

Kairos Moment Creations™ Presents the BREASTPLATE of RIGHTEOUSNESS® Collection

This collection is designed to remind you to protect your heart and soul as a witnessing tool of your faith.

TABLET OF YOUR HEART is our anchoring design. The Word of God is what anchors us. Proverbs 3:3 (NIV) states, "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart."

Each design has the hands of GOD/JESUS on them. On the Advocate Cross and Acceptance designs the Hands move to show wherever we go, HE goes with us. On the 'Tablet of Your Heart' design, the Hands are fixed because GOD's word doesn't change.

ADVOCATE CROSS is our first design. When GOD showed it to me, I sketched it and heard HIM say: The One who died on the Cross, now helps you bear your cross. JESUS is helping and advocating for us.

ACCEPTANCE design shows GOD/JESUS loves us. Future versions may be personalized.

Purchase on [**amazon**](#)

Do You Have a Void in Your Life That Only God Can Fill?

God can fill all the voids in your life. He will activate the voids, bringing you to a place of fulfillment in Him.

By allowing God to activate the voids in your life, you can be healed of ED, breast cancer, drug addiction, and more.

Buy the new book:

Fix Your Humpty Dumpty Fault Zone

By Pastor Brian Tomlinson

Pastor Brian is available to speak at your church. Pastor Brian accepts cars, boats, motor homes, and truck donations for the ministry.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 760-520-9408

Email: bodyofchristtrainingcenters@gmail.com

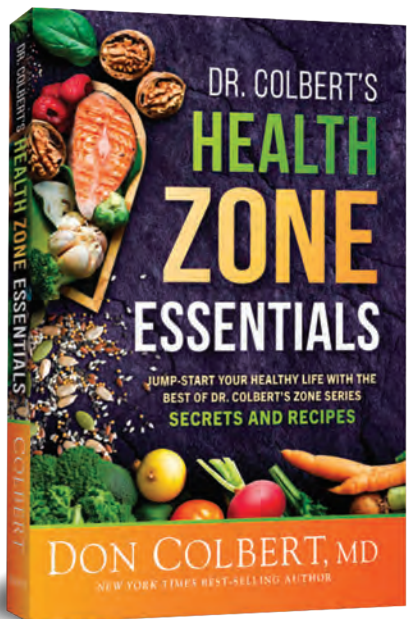
Website: Spaceboxtv.com



Seize the Moment by Michael Brown

Revival is dependent upon how much we allow the Holy Spirit to move. With Michael Brown's newest book, *Seize The Moment*, you will gain 25 proven ways to cultivate and sustain revival that goes beyond an emotional experience to creating a lasting, eternal flame for Christ. Revival doesn't have to stop at emotionalism. It can be transformed into everyday living that endures a lifetime.

MyCharismaShop.com

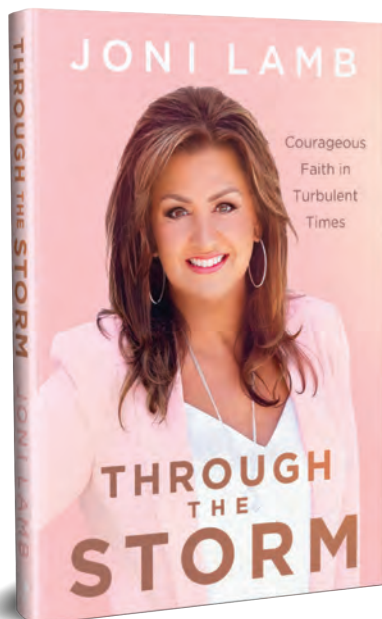


Dr. Colbert's Health Zone Essentials by Don Colbert

So many people are looking to take their health goals to the next level, but have no idea how. With *Dr. Colbert's Health Zone Essentials*, you will gain a treasure trove of wisdom and practical advice to restore your body's health at its foundation. From discovering how to optimize your hormone levels, how to reset your digestive system, and enjoy healthy, yet satisfying foods, you will see how you can experience a life filled with peace and nourishment. Instead of worrying about future ailments and diseases, you'll see how to take preventative measures while living life to the fullest. Now is the time to discover how to optimize both brain and physical restoration for the life you've always desired to have.

DrColbertBooks.com

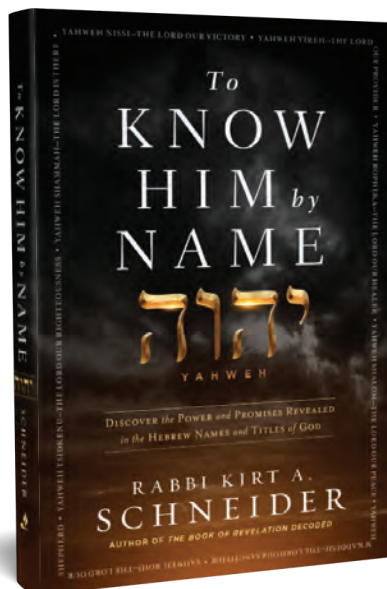
Refresh Your Spirit



Through the Storm by Joni Lamb

What if the most beautiful kind of faith is the type that has been tested and tried? As the visionary and cofounder of Daystar Television Network, Joni Lamb's journey has been incredibly remarkable. In her new book, *Through the Storm*, you'll learn what it means to overcome trials, and experience triumphs even after immense loss. Join Joni as she candidly opens up about the relentless challenges, she's overcome of establishing and growing the network, and the dire personal struggles she's also faced. *Through the Storm* doesn't just recount the moments of struggle—it shows you how to navigate and overcome these moments to experience true victory.

MyCharismaShop.com

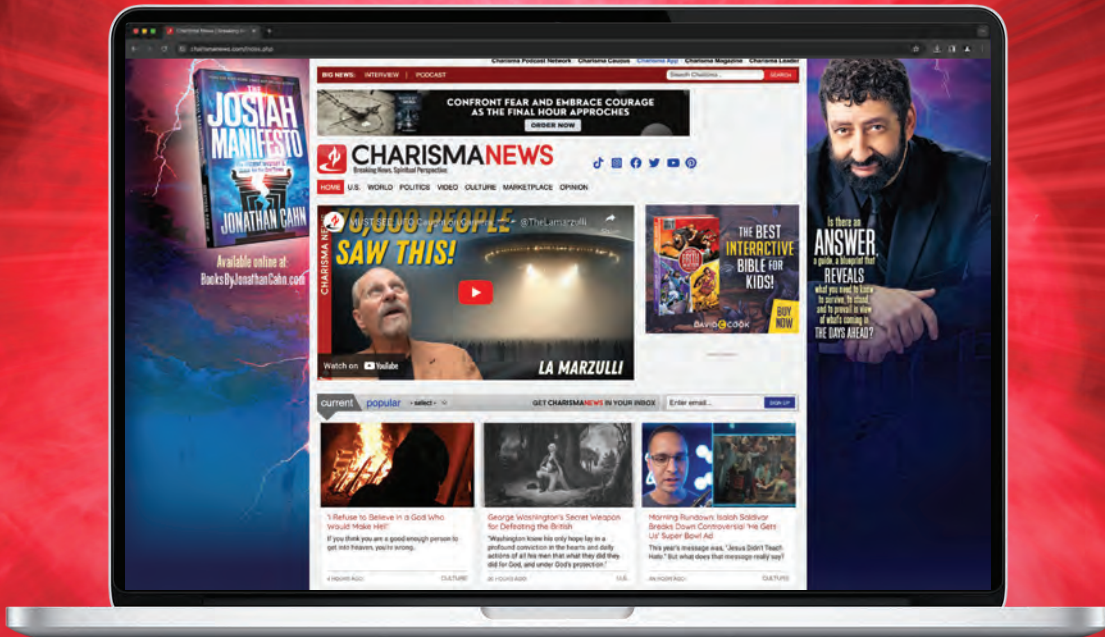


To Know Him by Name by Rabbi Kirt Schneider

When you know *what* name to call on, you know more of *whose* you are. In Rabbi Schneider's newest book, you'll discover the power and purpose behind the various Hebrew names of God. When readers see God from this perspective, they'll see him for who he truly is: provider, peace, savior, shepherd, victorious healer, and so much more. No longer do you have to live in fear and anxiety—once you spend time in His great presence, you will see how much greater life truly is with Him.

MyCharismaShop.com

WHERE DO YOU GO FOR SPIRIT-FILLED NEWS YOU CAN'T FIND IN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA?



Ever wonder if there's a deeper, spiritual dimension to the news? Charisma News brings you the stories behind the stories, revealing **prophetic messages, divine meanings, and supernatural insights you won't find anywhere else.**

- What's the **prophetic significance** of King Charles III's cancer diagnosis?
- What **divine message** lies behind the appearance of the red heifers?
- What **supernatural meaning** can be found in the Hamas attack on October 7th?

Your source for breaking news with a spiritual perspective.



CHARISMA NEWS
Breaking News. Spiritual Perspective.

Are you ready for refreshing, Spirit-led content?

Experience life-changing stories and video content that testifies of the Holy Spirit's Power with the Charisma App. With podcasts, articles and more, you'll grow your faith with every story you encounter.

Download the app
on your phone or tablet

CharismaMobile.com

CHARISMA

