

The Message Of The Church The Bible Speaks Today Bible Themes Series

Attitudes of Christian churches over the centuries towards art as a means for communicating the Gospel message, with emphasis on the Protestant viewpoint. For All Christians Who Yearn for Revival God's Way This no-compromise biblical clarion call to revival is timeless. Leonard Ravenhill clearly shows how the church can be brought from where it is to where it ought to be. The church still needs his message, first published in 1983, for as Ravenhill said, "We live in a generation which has never know revival--God's way." The message is drastic, fearless, and often radical. His goal for the church is nothing less than full restoration to the glory, power, holiness, and dignity that Christ intended for it.

Lenny Duncan is the unlikeliest of pastors. Formerly incarcerated, he is now a black preacher in the whitest denomination in the United States: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Shifting demographics and shrinking congregations make all the headlines, but Duncan sees something else at work--drawing a direct line between the church's lack of diversity and the church's lack of vitality. The problems the ELCA faces are theological, not sociological. But so are the answers. Part manifesto, part confession, and all love letter, *Dear Church* offers a bold new vision for the future of Duncan's denomination and the broader mainline Christian community of faith. *Dear Church* rejects the narrative of church decline and calls everyone--leaders and laity alike--to the front lines of the church's renewal through racial equality and justice. It is time for the church to rise up, dust itself off, and take on forces of this world that act against God: whiteness, misogyny, nationalism, homophobia, and economic injustice. Duncan gives a blueprint for the way forward and urges us to follow in the revolutionary path of Jesus.

What does the church believe? Every church has a driving confession, but what is the confession of a true and biblical church? *The Heart of the Church* answers with the gospel. It explains the story of the gospel, its basic doctrines, and God's work in salvation. Fresh yet consistent with classic expressions, it helps churches reclaim their essential identity and return from distracting pursuits. Useful for training in membership classes, discipleship groups, and elder boards—and even for devotional reading—*The Heart of the Church* is at once theological, practical, and experiential. Readers will not simply be informed, but led to believe in, rejoice in, and be transformed by the truth of God for His gathered people. Without the gospel, the church does not exist. This book is Thorn's full and detailed exploration of the message that is indispensable to the church's life and identity. For any church lacking power, any Christian feeling dry, or any person seeking truth, *The Heart of the Church* brings relief, direction, and light, leading to worship.

The vice president of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network examines biblical criteria of the man, the message, and the mission behind every church plant. An

invaluable resource for pastors and seminary students considering a church plant.

What is the church's mission in the world? What message does it proclaim, and who is to proclaim it? The mission, says Darrell Guder in this book, is to complete the work of salvation that God began in the incarnation of his son Jesus Christ. The message is the gospel -- the good news of the incarnate Christ. And the messengers are the Body of Christ -- the church -- who have been called to be his witnesses. Only as we understand Christ's incarnation and the church's role in proclaiming its meaning, according to Guder, can we understand our calling to be witnesses of God's salvation.

The fruit of many decades of study and teaching, 'The Kingdom of God' provides an impressive, systematic treatment of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. It is a comprehensive review of this crucial symbol, as well as a careful analysis of its meaning, and a creative interpretation of the Kingdom motif for the church and Christians in our age. 'The Kingdom of God begins by analyzing the background of this idea in Hebrew scripture and tradition, and in the preaching of Jesus. Fuellenbach explores how this elusive phrase presents a specific, comprehensive view of reality, and a goal for transforming the world. In Fuellenbach's reading, the Kingdom forms the core of Christian faith and the reference point of all theology, spirituality, and apostolic activity. Fuellenbach pays special attention to the relationships among Kingdom, Church, and World, arguing that with the Kingdom, Jesus proclaimed a vision that embraces God, humankind, and the whole of creation in the single most comprehensive vision of reality imaginable. 'The Kingdom of God' is balanced and nuanced in its scholarship, but also vigorous and courageous in taking positions sure to provoke debate. For example, Fuellenbach argues that the word Kingdom is to be preferred over the word Reign, despite critiques that find the word problematic in its patriarchal connotations. Designed for and tested in classrooms worldwide, The Kingdom of God will be particularly useful in both scripture and theology courses. It holds much food for thought for religious educators, pastoral workers, clergy, and others who wish for a clear, systematic understanding of Jesus' vision of the Kingdom now and to come.

Dr. Wendel Dandridge has pronounced the Church and Christianity as "dead" after a horrible diagnosis of irrelevancy. His remedy to ensure this does not continue to happen in the eyes of generations to come is "Returning to the Message of Christ" revelation of Revelation, An Urgent Message for the Church, Volume 2, The Seven Letters of Revelation focuses exclusively on revealing the message Jesus wrote concerning the entire Church Age (33 AD-the start of the great tribulation). The vision John received consists of four different stories or narratives. They are mind blowing prophecies which are the capstone of all the prophecies within the Bible itself. However, even before these visions are given, Jesus dictates one letter consisting of seven separate letters. They are meant for all His elect over the entire history of the Church Age. It is a single intimate letter addressed exclusively to His bride, the Church. It is only because of the constant use of the number seven, that we can realize Jesus is

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addressing the entire Church Age telling us of everything it will face and become. Seven is used in framing the seven days of creation; the beginning of time; the seven seals; the premature end of time outlining judgment and redemption; the seven letters to the seven churches; outlining the entire Church Age and the Lord's admonishments. When God outlines anything using the structure of sevens, He is telling us that He has included the beginning, the end, and a comprehensive explanation of what He is describing. The use of seven guarantees that nothing of significance is left out. With that in mind, we can glean from the seven letters of Revelation a whole new layer of information Jesus is trying to communicate to His beloved Church. Volume 2, *The Seven Letters of Revelation*, reveals what that message is. The message Jesus personally spoke to His elect before giving John the visions of Revelation. What does the church need to hear today? As many have said, the church must always be reforming. It must continually move closer to a truer, more faithful expression of the gospel. The risen Christ's powerful letters to the seven churches in Revelation are a guide to just that. Based on John MacArthur's exposition of these letters, *Christ's Call to Reform the Church* is a plea to the modern church to heed these divine warnings, to reform before it succumbs to the kinds of compromise and error that invite God's judgment. *Christ's Call to Reform the Church* admonishes the church today to learn from the mistakes God's people have made in the past, rather than commit them again. The Word of God has many benefits, one of which is that it reveals our blind spots. That's what this book does—it shines a light on problems we didn't know we had. May it be embraced by Christians everywhere, spurring them toward the God-honoring, grace-driven work of continued reformation.

In this substantial study Darrin W. Snyder Belousek offers a comprehensive and critical examination of penal substitution, the most widely accepted evangelical Protestant theory of atonement, and presents a biblically grounded, theologically orthodox alternative. Attending to all of the relevant biblical texts and engaging with the full spectrum of scholarship, Belousek systematically develops a biblical theory of atonement that centers on restorative -- rather than retributive -- justice. He also shows how Christian thinking on atonement correlates with major global concerns such as economic justice, capital punishment, "the war on terror," and ethnic and religious conflicts. Thorough and clearly structured, this book demonstrates how a return to biblical cruciformity can radically transform Christian mission, social justice, and peacemaking.

Acts is the sequel to Luke's gospel and tells the story of Jesus's followers during the 30 years after his death. It describes how the 12 apostles, formerly Jesus's disciples, spread the message of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean against a background of persecution. With an introduction by P.D. James

Preaching's Preacher's Guide to the Best Bible Reference for 2014 (Theology) The Bible begins and ends with God dwelling with his people--from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to the great multitude in the New Jerusalem. At each step, God gathered his people together: to speak to them, hear from them and change them to be more like him. God assembling his people, whom he loves, is what the Bible calls church. The church should aspire to be a vibrant, loving, risk-everything people who are passionately committed to living out the values of God's Word and looking forward to the new creation. Churches and their pastors and leaders need to hear what the Bible

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says about who they are and what they are to do. Chris Green takes "the message of the church" to mean three things. First, the church has a message, which is that God has saved his people through Christ. Second, the church is the created and saved result of that message. Finally, the church is a message. He has saved broken people like us, and by belonging to his people we are trying to respond to him in the ways he requires. Green's stimulating and insightful exposition begins with a survey of the church "from eternity, to Eden, to exodus, to exile, to eternity," and then focuses on various dimensions of the church's life and ministry, including its worship, unity, maturity, servants, gifts, holiness, boundaries and future.

Matthew 5-7, popularly known as the Sermon on the Mount, has been described as "the essence of Christianity" and inspired many commentaries. However, New Testament professor Charles Quarles believes a fair number of those volumes either present Christ's sermon as containing an impossible spiritual ethic or instead dilute its message so much that hardly any ethical challenge remains. Also concerning, a recent Gallup poll indicated only onethird of American adults recognize Jesus as the source of this teaching that has often inspired people who do not even embrace evangelical Christianity. Quarles' new analysis, part of the New American Commentary Studies in Bible & Theology series, aims to fill the gap between these extremes by dealing with the important questions of whether believers can live by the Sermon on the Mount today, and, if so, how. Looking at the Beatitudes, what it means to be salt and light, and the demand for superior righteousness, he writes to restore this crucial section of our Lord's teaching to its proper place in His church.

The experiences of the early church have much to say about issues that concern Christians today. What can Acts tell us about tongues and other manifestations of the Spirit? How should the church reach out into the world with the message of salvation? This revised BST volume from John Stott opens to us the early days of the church as recorded by Luke in the book of Acts.

We all struggle with sin, whether its pride, lust, anger, or something else. In this gospel-centered resource, five church leaders offer practical advice for "acting" the miracle of sanctification God has already worked within us.

We have misunderstood Paul, badly. We have read his words through our own set of assumptions. We need to begin with Paul's world view, to see things the way he saw them. - What if 'original sin' was never part of Paul's thinking? - What if the idea that we are saved by faith in Christ, as Luther argued, was based on a mistranslation of Paul's words and a misunderstanding of Paul's thinking? 'Over the centuries,' writes Steve Chalke, 'the Church has repeatedly failed to communicate, or even understand, the core of Paul's message. Although Paul has often been presented as the champion of exclusion, he was the very opposite. He was the great includer.' Steve Chalke MBE is a Baptist minister, founder and leader of the Oasis Charitable Trust, and author of more than 50 books.

With a new foreword by David E. Aune, this modern classic by Colin J. Hemer explores the seven letters in the book of Revelation against the historical background of the churches to which they were addressed. Based on literary,

epigraphical, and archaeological sources and informed by Hemer's firsthand knowledge of the biblical sites, this superb study presents in the clearest way possible a picture of the New Testament world in the later part of the first century and its significance for broader questions of church history.

Today, as in the first century, Christians must guard against false guides leading believers astray and causing divisions within the church. Responding to this ever-present danger, 2 Peter and Jude equip readers to discern truth from illusion and exhort them to loyalty, harmony, and spiritual maturity. This revised BST volume offers passage-by-passage exposition of the letters of 2 Peter and Jude.

This book will kick up a lot of "religious" dust in all of us. It's what we do when the dust settles and our eyes are opened that will determine where we go from here. It is only when we see Him, that we see our destiny. We must not get offended with the truth. The truth is the only thing that will set us free. The enemy is behind offenses, as he does not want us to reach our destiny. Each one of us has a marvelous, unique destiny marked out by the price Christ paid for it. Hebrews 12:1b puts it simply, "Let us lay aside every weight and sin which does so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." We would all agree that the church has a message for the world, but would we all agree that the world has a message for the church? They, most assuredly, do. Their cries identify the reason Christ came to earth as a man and became the sacrifice for those cries. For every cry, there is a provision in His sacrifice. Has the church in general disclosed the real Christ and His sacrifice that brings wholeness and purpose for all people; regardless of denomination, race and background? The world is crying out to the church, "Show Me This Man Called Jesus"! This book reveals truths to the world and the church that will awaken "hope" in both. Hope awakened in the church will bring her out of law into grace. Hope awakened in the world will bring the world to Christ!

Evangelical church planters face three challenges. First, they must be accepted by their target audience as viable messengers. Second, their message must be understandable to the worldview of their listeners. Third, the community they are forming must be a valid form of community for their audience. Roland Muller does a masterful job of bringing these three challenges together in one book addressing western, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist audiences. Roland Muller speaks as a practitioner to practitioners, illustrating his points with examples drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds. Discover new perspectives on how God wants to rejuvenate your ministry. Thirty one chapters and over 320 discussion questions. Used as a textbook or required reading on a variety of college courses.

The newest volume in the Bible Speaks Today Bible Themes Series, The Message of the Church offers an encouraging exposition on the church's mission and nature from select Old Testament and New Testament texts. Chris Green helps us see that the church has a message, it is the result of that message, and that the church itself is a message.

And (Jesus) said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.'
Mark 16:15 (ESV) The need for proclaiming the Good News to the world has never been

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greater. Recent statistics reveal that 63% of Americans go to church less than once a month, and almost half of that group never set foot inside a church. That puts us in a dilemma. If those in need of the message of salvation through Jesus Christ aren't coming to our churches, how do we reach them? How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? Romans 10:14-15 (ESV) Salem Media Group has an answer: Radio. Nielsen Media Research—the world's leader in media data—has found “traditional AM/FM terrestrial radio still retains its undiminished appeal for listeners; 91% of Americans, aged 12 and older, listen to this form of radio.” When radio is amplified with new technology, its reach is powerful. When matched with biblical preaching and teaching, God's Kingdom expands. Not only are the lost led to salvation, they are drawn to your church, putting them where they need to be to become disciples. This book details how a local Salem Media radio platform can partner with your church to fulfill the Great Commission and grow your ministry. From the “why” to the “how,” we give you everything you need to prayerfully consider this opportunity to pierce the darkness in your community with the Light of the World.

This is the second volume of a projected three-volume set on the study of the nature of the church (ecclesiology). The contributors in this second volume on Adventist ecclesiology share a common theological vision: the renewal of an understanding of the nature, mission and unity of the church so that it may bear a clearer witness to apostolic faith. By stimulating fresh thinking on several critical issues relating to the doctrine of the church, this volume will advance your understanding concerning the significance of unity and the renewal of a passion for mission within contemporary Adventism.

According to the Holy Spirit's prophetic predictions in the New Testament, the backside of the spiritual storm that struck the Church at its inception will once again slam against society with devastating consequences. Many prominent Christian leaders and prophetic voices of our day are speaking a common message: that the disturbing legal and moral changes currently taking place in society are signs that the full fury of this end-times storm is fast approaching. Today the spiritual climate is dramatically shifting, yet we are ordained by God to live in this crucial hour. The changes taking place before our eyes will result in one of two choices for every believer: A decision to accommodate the world or a refusal to compromise. Riding the fence will no longer be an option. To effectively stand against the backside of the spiritual storm of these last days, we must turn our attention to the message Christ spoke to His church in Pergamum when the front of the storm was first beginning to hit during the latter half of the First Century. Those men and women of God endured great pressure from an unforgiving pagan society that surrounded them on all sides. At the same time, they grappled with the internal pressure of errant church leaders trying to convince them to conform to the world's moral standards. By studying Christ's message to the church at Pergamum, we will know not only what He commanded and expected of those early believers, but also what He commands and expects of us today. It is imperative that we hear what the Spirit is saying to us in this hour we live in, for this may be the most seriously challenged time the Church has confronted in more than 1,700 years. For more information, go to: <http://www.ALID2.com>

An astonishing testimony to God's amazing saving grace and healing power What makes a successful young businesswoman give up her job and sell all that she owns? Isabel Chapman followed God's call to the Philippines where she ministered to the primitive, headhunting mountain tribes. She obeyed the great commission in its entirety and God worked with her confirming His word with signs following. Through her preaching of the gospel God's saving grace reached out to the mountain people. Many were saved from eternal damnation and received eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, and were delivered and healed from all kinds of ailments, pains and diseases. She herself was miraculously healed of typhoid fever. Since

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publishing her best-selling books *Arise and Reap* and *Reaping with Joy*, Isabel has continued to live a life dedicated to obeying the Lord's commission and has ministered in many countries. Her God-given faith is uncomplicated and uncompromising, her testimony striking and challenging.

In these firsthand accounts of the early church, the spirit of Pentecost burns with prophetic force through the fog enveloping the modern church. A clear and vibrant faith lives on in these writings, providing a guide for Christians today. Its stark simplicity and revolutionary fervor will stun those lulled by conventional Christianity. *The Early Christians* is a topically arranged collection of primary sources. It includes extra-biblical sayings of Jesus and excerpts from Origen, Tertullian, Polycarp, Clement of Alexandria, Justin, Irenaeus, Hermas, Ignatius, and others. Equally revealing material from pagan contemporaries critics, detractors, and persecutors is included as well."

The final book of the Bible, Revelation prophesies the ultimate judgement of mankind in a series of allegorical visions, grisly images and numerological predictions. According to these, empires will fall, the "Beast" will be destroyed and Christ will rule a new Jerusalem. With an introduction by Will Self.

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If Jesus were in ministry today, would he be talking about the trigger issues that seem to dominate our pulpits? Would he be marching in the streets -- either against or in favor of -- abortion, gay rights, or repealing the death penalty? Robert Blair contends that Christ would not be politically active or overtly try to influence the government. Instead, he asserts that Jesus would preach the same simple gospel that he did 2,000 years ago. In *The Great Omission*, Blair makes the case that today's church leadership often sends garbled signals about the church's main purpose. He believes that the primary objective for contemporary followers of Jesus should be doing what he would do -- preaching the Good News to every person on the planet. Only by doing that can we truly glorify God. This book outlines the need for our churches to return to the biblical message, and suggests the right methods to share that message.

THINGS WERE DIFFERENT IN THE CHURCH JESUS STARTED We sing songs to Jesus. We pray to Jesus. But do we really know and understand what Jesus preached? Before you say, "Yes," and move on, consider these shocking facts: • Most messages preached today have nothing to do with Jesus' core message • Christian universities that train pastors, missionaries, and priests don't have courses that teach what Jesus taught, and it's been this way for hundreds of years • The majority of believers in Christ have little or no understanding of what Jesus said or what He meant when He said it God is realigning His church with the message Jesus preached, and He's doing it to prepare us for Jesus' return. Get ready for a journey through the Bible that will help you: • Challenge your Christian experience and knowledge of Jesus' teachings • Learn the true heart of Christ's teachings as recorded in God's Word • Discover the Kingdom life Jesus provided for, exemplified, and taught • Shed any belief barriers that have inhibited your spiritual life to this point • Embrace and renew a walk with God that is alive, growing, fresh, and purposeful

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